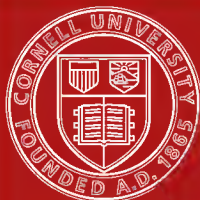


# RICHARD BAXTER



EDWARD  
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JONES



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Richard Baxter :a story of New England I



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# RICHARD BAXTER

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A STORY OF NEW ENG  
LAND LIFE OF 1830 TO 1840

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By EDWARD F. JONES

EX-LIEUT. GOVERNOR STATE OF NEW YORK

Author of "Uncle Jerry," "The Origin of the  
Flag," and the phrase "He Pays the Freight"

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Illustrated

PUBLISHED BY

JONES OF BINGHAMTON

BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

THE JONES SCALE WORKS PRESS

1904

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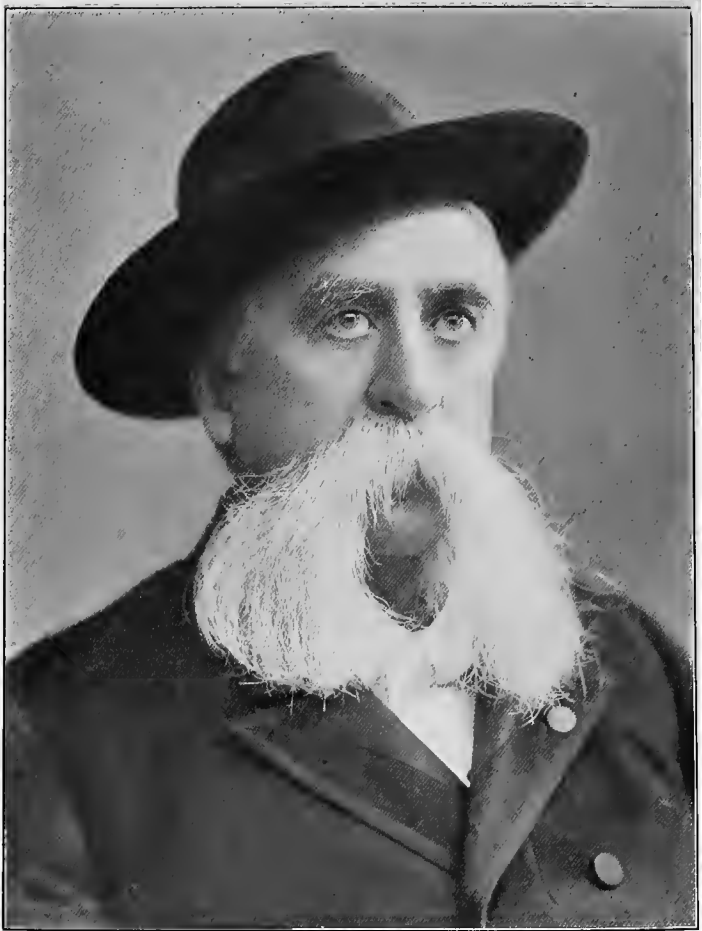
To  
AN ADOPTED DAUGHTER

Whose constant encouragement, unceasing patience and untiring industry have made its preparation possible, this book is affectionately dedicated by its blind author.









Edward Jones

## PUBLISHER'S INTRODUCTION

WITH the publication of this volume a unique figure is added to the ranks of American novel-writers, and a quaintly interesting example of American versatility claims the attention of the reading-public. That a man should command a regiment at a crisis in our country's history, that he should organize and successfully develop a great commercial industry, that he should serve for a period of years as lieutenant-governor of his state, winning for himself the popular devotion of his fellow-citizens,—this would seem enough of labor and achievement for one life time; but at the age of seventy-five, in the decline of years and almost blind, to surmount all this with such a contribution to our present-day literature as "Richard Baxter," is indeed a remarkable performance.

Edward F. Jones was born in Utica, New York, June 3d, 1828. His early years were spent on a Massachusetts farm, where he acquired that intimacy with "life close to the soil" which has made him the constant friend and patron of fairs and farmers' gatherings, and has given him the insight into rural life revealed in the pages of "Richard Baxter." It is not, perhaps, too much to say that these early experiences, together with "every-day manners,"—their natural accompaniment,—have made for General Jones more personal friends

than any other public or private citizen of his adopted state can boast.

At the outbreak of the Civil War General Jones was in command of the famous Sixth Massachusetts regiment which was attacked during its memorable march through Baltimore. The timely arrival of his command at Washington on the evening of the nineteenth of April, 1861, was a telling blow at a crucial moment in the beginning of a great conflict. "Thank God you are here!" exclaimed President Lincoln on this occasion, "for had you not arrived to-night we should have been in the hands of the rebels before morning."

At the close of the war, in October, 1865, General Jones removed to Binghamton, New York, for the purpose of establishing a scale works. This enterprise, begun in a modest fashion, has grown under skilful management and advertising until it is now known throughout the world. Few persons are not familiar with the phrase, "Jones, he pays the freight," which was adopted as a slogan for the business twenty years ago.

For a period of six years, beginning in 1885, General Jones served as lieutenant governor of the State of New York. In public office he was guided by the same careful methods that had previously distinguished him for integrity and ability, and which so inspired the confidence of political opponents that he was chosen as the head of the Capitol Commission, controlling the expenditure of more than a million dollars.

For thirty-eight years General Jones has been a large employer of labor in Binghamton, and his business more than any other agency has made that city well known.

The farmers as a class are especially under obligations to him for bringing the price of scales within their reach.

Today, at the age of seventy-five, although blind and in the decline of life, the spirit and energy of this man remain unflagged. Turning to authorship, he undertook the writing of a tale of rural life in New Hampshire, which embodies many actual experiences of his own early days. The present volume is the fruit of his labors. "Richard Baxter" in many respects is like its author—simple, strong, sincere, and filled with a love of honest living and honest men.



# INTRODUCTION

BY THE

REV. EDWARD FREDERICK TREFZ, D.D.  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

BINGHAMTON, N. Y., October 21, 1903.

My Dear General Jones:

In your portrayal of Richard Baxter, you have made an analysis of the skepticism of modern days that seems to me to be just and true. As a psychological exhibition, it has the strength of George Eliot or Hawthorne. You have avoided the mere superficial aspect of the case, by taking the man as the ground of conflict between the traditions of birth and environment and the reasoning of his conscious self toward the thing that, in itself, was true. Your skillful and inevitable conclusion—bringing him to a knowledge of truth through the overt act of prayer, I regard as the most reasonable argument against continued skepticism that could possibly be made.

I hope that your book will have a wide circulation, and I hope that the regeneration or evolution of Richard Baxter will become the topic of many sermons. It is, in a large sense, a tremendous sermon, and, if I were to select a text for it, I would choose the words of the Master, when He said: "He that doeth my will shall know of the doctrine."

Very truly yours,

EDWARD FREDERICK TREFZ.





## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Portrait of General Jones, . . . . .	vii
“Cæsar, come up here an’ be an angel” . . . .	46
Sam and His Mother Dispossessed . . . . .	110
Aunt Nancy’s Cottage . . . . .	128
“Tell me, O Rock of Ages, Granite God” . . .	154
“He turned in here, Bill” . . . . .	182
Clippings from The Boston Courier . . . . .	188-189
The Signers of the Declaration of Independence .	200
Page of Account Book . . . . .	218
Parson Snodgrass Races . . . . .	232
Music of “Uncle Ned” . . . . .	254
New England Primer . . . . .	270-274



# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. The Old Meeting-house . . . . .	1
II. Sordid Thoughts . . . . .	3
III. Cupid Tries for a Hearing . . . . .	8
IV. The Honest Lawyer . . . . .	19
V. The Hypocrite . . . . .	25
VI. The Proposal . . . . .	30
VII. A True Woman . . . . .	33
VIII. "Now or Never" . . . . .	38
IX. Mary Miles . . . . .	40
X. A Briefless Lawyer . . . . .	42
XI. "Good-bye, Sally" . . . . .	53
XII. The Knitter . . . . .	56
XIII. Courting . . . . .	64
XIV. An Angry Father . . . . .	77
XV. The Auction . . . . .	84
XVI. Love Asserts Itself . . . . .	98
XVII. Death by the Roadside . . . . .	101
XVIII. "Richard, My Richard!" . . . . .	106
XIX. "Over the Hills to the Poorhouse" . . . . .	109
XX. The Love Wail . . . . .	115
XXI. The Poorhouse . . . . .	118
XXII. School Fellows . . . . .	125
XXIII. Aunt Nancy's Home . . . . .	127
XXIV. The Philosopher . . . . .	130
XXV. "Thar's Only One Dern Fool in Sight" . . . . .	132
XXVI. "Hosses Is Very Much Like Wimmin" . . . . .	142
XXVII. The Satisfaction Found . . . . .	149
XXVIII. Three Appeals to God . . . . .	152
XXIX. Did He Love Her? . . . . .	158
XXX. "I'll Clip the Wattles of That Turkey Cock" . . . . .	161

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXXI.	Triumph of Wrong . . . . . 167
XXXII.	Town Meeting . . . . . 172
XXXIII.	A Diamond in the Rough . . . . . 178
XXXIV.	"Go Slow, Old Pal." . . . . 190
XXXV.	Poorhouse Religion . . . . . 195
XXXVI.	"The Prisoner, Your Honor, Is Dead" 198
XXXVII.	"He Doeth All Things Well" . . . . 204
XXXVIII.	The Red Life-Blood Spurted Out . . . 206
XXXIX.	An Appeal for Justice . . . . . 209
XL.	The Cachet . . . . . 212
XLI.	Eben Drisco's Ghost . . . . . 221
XLII.	Only Six Friends . . . . . 227
XLIII.	Parson Snodgrass Races . . . . . 230
XLIV.	"God Help You! God Bless You" . . . 234
XLV.	The New Trial . . . . . 238
XLVI.	Cæsar Augustus Testifies . . . . . 245
XLVII.	"Nebber Heah Dat 'Bout Dis Niggah" 250
XLVIII.	Triumph of Right . . . . . 255
XLIX.	"The Devil's to Pay" . . . . . 258
L.	Scepticism . . . . . 262
LI.	"The Lord Is My Shepherd" . . . . . 264
LII.	Childhood Memories . . . . . 268
LIII.	The Secret Revealed . . . . . 277
LIV.	"I'll Never Be Laid Out in Them Sheets" . . . . . 283
LV.	Retribution . . . . . 292
LVI.	The Death of Aunt Nancy . . . . . 294
LVII.	"Who Kissed Henrietta?" . . . . . 300
LVIII.	A Self-Made Man . . . . . 311
LIX.	Diary Extracts . . . . . 313
LX.	"Pray, Richard, Pray" . . . . . 317
LXI.	Parson Snodgrass Turned Out . . . . 320
LXII.	The Goose . . . . . 328

**RICHARD BAXTER**



# RICHARD BAXTER

## CHAPTER I

### THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

**T**HE meeting house at Manning's Corners was an ancient, weather-beaten structure, erected, according to figures over the door, in A. D. 1780. The spire or steeple was a modest affair, tapering toward the sky, the accepted location of Heaven. Surmounting the steeple as a finial and in contrast with the never changing Heavenly guide which supported it, was a weather-cock, that whiffled about with the slightest change of air. The spire, ungainly and lacking in symmetry, never changed in its perpendicularity, but held steadily and faithfully, a true exponent of the unchanging doctrines preached in the little meeting house beneath. The weather-cock not only swung from north to south and east to west, but in its shiftings took in all of the intermediate points of the compass, representing, as one might say, the many changing religious beliefs.

At the base of the steeple was a square belfry, in which hung a cone of metal, commonly called a bell.

There was no harmony or melody in the sounds which the clapper beat out of it. Some base alloy had been melted into its casting and there was no more melody in its clanging than came from the bell on the neck of the old cow that led the herd which was feeding in the pasture below.

The building was roofed with heavy split shingles and the sides covered with clapboards, also split from the pitch pine log whose resinous fibres made them as near "last forever" as was possible for any material.

The auditorium of the meeting-house was divided into square pews, with seats on four sides, which placed some of the occupants back and others sideways to the preacher; but all were in full view of the head of the family. In the rear stood the pulpit, about six feet above the pews, and over it, suspended from the ceiling, a circular sounding board, six feet in diameter, which was intended to give emphasis to the truth uttered by the preacher. At the front, over the vestibule, was the choir loft, usually occupied during service by some half-dozen men and women, who sang, accompanied by a violoncello, a bass viol, and sometimes, though always under protest from the puritanical, that "devil's delight," the fiddle.

In this quaint old meeting-house, on a pleasant spring Sunday afternoon, are several of the people with whom our readers will become acquainted if they follow the fortunes of Richard Baxter.



## CHAPTER II

### SORDID THOUGHTS

**T**HE farm at Manning's Corners had passed from father to son for several generations. The late owner, Deacon Daniel Manning, was a typical New England farmer. As a boy he had had such advantage of education as could be obtained in the district school each winter. A strong boy's service on a farm was of too much value to permit of attendance at summer schools, which were rare at that period, except in the villages. His father had been a deacon before him and had brought Daniel up not only to walk in the paths of righteousness, but to believe in all the professions of the orthodox church. Being of a sober turn of mind he took naturally to religious habits, and trained his son John to follow his footsteps, which he faithfully did, so far as professions and forms demanded; but there was no religion in his heart.

Deacon Manning had inherited the finest farm in the county, and was, as the world goes, a successful man. Every year he had added acres and dollars to his possessions, all of which, at his death, he bequeathed to John without other condition than that he must take good care of his mother, which trust the son faithfully performed until her death, which just occurred at the opening of our story.

If ever a man appreciated a mother in a pecuniary

sense it was John Manning, and her death was in that respect indeed a loss, leaving a void that could not be filled. Beyond that, there was no sentiment. Mrs. Manning was a weak woman, always subservient to her husband. From the death of his father several years previous, John had been master and she had never known any will but his since she had become a widow.

John was in many respects wonderfully like his father.

He was a fine specimen of physical manhood, tall, broad-shouldered, full-chested, and well developed. Powerful muscles, large bones, well-covered with sound flesh, but not an ounce of adipose tissue. Physically speaking, were there to have been a selection of the survival of the fittest he would have been among the first chosen. He was good-looking, and might have been called handsome had it not been for his square jaw, that gave a hard and almost cruel look to his face. His hair was brown and his eyes of that merciless steel blue, forbidding a second appeal. It was his misfortune to be an only child, and his natural selfishness was greatly increased by never having had to share with anyone. Viewed as an animal, he was a fine specimen and would have taken the blue ribbon at a man-show.

John Manning lacked in his composition one of the most beneficent elements of humanity, consideration for others. He was cold in his nature as frost, never having even blushed; for the fluid that circulated through his veins had never the warmth of a blush.

Shrewd, calculating and "near, very near," so close that he came almost to dishonesty was John Manning. No one ever got the better of him in any trade or swap, yet all his business transactions were strictly within the law. He would not rob anyone nor permit anyone to rob him. If there was a doubt, however, in the claim, he always took the benefit of the doubt. An honest man so far as the world knew, rendering unto Cæsar that which was Cæsar's, but the stamp on the penny must not be so worn as to be doubtful.

He was a member of the orthodox church in the best of standing, faithful in his religious duties, even to the habit of daily prayer and formal appeals to God at meals; thus following strictly the teachings of the old deacon, his father.

It could not be truthfully said that he was a hard-hearted man, for alas! he had no heart. A friend who knew him well used to say that when John Manning was made, just as they were closing up the work, they found his heart lying on the table. It was too much of a job to take him to pieces and put the heart in the proper place, so they threw in a few more brains and closed up the work.

Such was our young farmer when he started in quest of a woman to be his wife. He did not take the usual course of a man seeking a love-mate for life, but went about his purpose as if looking for a horse to put into the team with one that he had, one that would pull strong and even, and not balk or be fractious. He had but little knowledge of the young women of his neighborhood, not having been attracted toward

them by any of the inspirations or passions that, since the world began, have drawn the sexes together. There never had glowed in his breast that indescribable thrill inspired by the opposite sex, that should be natural for every man to feel. Woman to him was only a part of the divine scheme for the continuance of the human race. At the age of thirty he had never given a moment's thought to the subject of marriage; but when his mother died, the necessity of having a woman in the house became fully apparent, and he began to look about among his female acquaintances for a suitable one to marry.

As he sat in meeting that Sunday afternoon, certain qualifications ran through his mind. She must be young, strong and healthy, else she could not do the work. He knew it was hard, for he had always seen his mother drudging at it. From his earliest recollections she was up and busy at break of day. She toiled all day, and, for aught he knew, all night. It must have been this kind of a woman that a writer had in mind when he said:

Man's work is from sun to sun.

Woman's work is never done.

The woman he should marry must be familiar with every detail of the housework of a farm: able to milk, make butter and cheese, salt the beef and pork, cure hams, make sausages, cook the food for the family, wash and iron, clean and scrub, make soft soap; in fact, she must know how and be willing to turn her hand to everything that demanded attention in the

farmer's home. As for her looks, it was a matter of secondary consideration. He wished her to be younger than himself, or she might not take kindly to his authority.

It was on the Sunday following the burial of his mother. His mind wandered from the sermon and followed his eyes from pew to pew, scanning each demure girl face, and wondering whether the owner possessed the requirements that he mentally demanded. The bright blue eyes and pink cheeks of Josie May were not contrasted in his calculations with the black eyes and plump face of Jennie Brown, and beauty was not a factor in the problem; for he was thinking he had heard that Farmer Gibson realized two cents a pound more for the butter made by his daughter Sally than anyone else in town. Oblivious of the sermon, he solved a mathematical problem, the elements of which were: so many cows, so much butter to a cow, two cents a pound premium, would amount in a year to a certain round sum. This settled the matter in his mind, for the moment, and he determined to take Sally Gibson seriously into consideration. He was awakened out of his dream by the preacher exclaiming, "Lay not up thy treasures where moth and rust will corrupt."

After meeting, he lingered for a moment on the steps, shook hands in a mechanical sort of way with Farmer Gibson, passed around to the meeting-house shed, backed out his horse and wagon and drove away.

## CHAPTER III

### CUPID TRIES FOR A HEARING

**T**WO young farmers of the neighborhood, Sam Drisco and Bill Johnson, were walking toward home together.

"I say, Sam, when did you hear from Dick Baxter?"

"Had a letter last week."

"When is he comin' home?"

"College gets through about the middle of June, but he hasn't any home, and I don't know what he's going to do."

"Why don't he go an' live with Aunt Nancy?"

"Well, it isn't any place for him, though I s'pose she'd be glad to have him. She always took to him as if he'd been her own boy."

"Dick's a queer specimen, ain't he?"

"What is there queer about him?"

"Well, he's so awful pious. I s'pose he's goin' to be a parson, ain't he?"

"No, he's been studying law and expects to practice."

"Anybody's as pious as he is ought not to waste their piety——"

"You speak, Bill, just as if you didn't think Dick was as good as he pretends to be."

"No, I b'lieve it's all straight goods with him. Did ye notice John Mannin' a gawpin' 'round the meetin'-"

house this mornin', as ef he was a-lookin' fer somebody? I'll bet a dollar to a doughnut thet he was kinder s'archin' fer someone to run his shebang, now thet the ole woman's dead."

"Can't bet with me," said Sam, "for when I bet, I bet to win, and you can't win anything if two fellows bet the same way."

"Thet's so, thet's so," replied Bill. "I seen him more'n once a-lookin' over the back of ole Sol Gibson's head, 's if he was a-tryin' to count the few hairs thet the ole man hed left. But he wan't thinkin' of ole Gib's gray hairs; he was kinder cal'latin' in his mind how Sally would fill the bill; not 'cause she has nice golden-brown hair an' a plump figger an' a putty face, but 'cause she's a smart gal an' her father has money."

It was well known in the neighborhood that Sam Drisco looked with longing eyes toward Sally, and more than likely Bill was trying to stir him up a little, by connecting her in this indirect sort of way with John Manning. It had its effect on Sam, who sharply rejoined:

"Do you suppose that Sarah Gibson would take up with such a fellow as John Manning, the meanest, niggest, most close-fisted, hardest-hearted, narrowest-minded man in this town, a man who has no more blood in his heart than there is in a turnip?"

Bill replied: "He may not have any blood in his old turnip, but he's got the best farm in this township. Five hundred acres of woodland down in Pennsylvania, an' they say thet thar's coal er iron on it, I dunno

which. An' he's got money in the bank, too; lots of it. Why, his grandfather left him three thousan' dollars, an' then he wan't but three year ole, an' it's more'n thribled sence. An' ye know they said when the ole deacon died thet thar was more'n a hat full of bank stocks an' bonds, an' nobody knows how many mortgages, 'cept the poor folks thet he pinched fer interest. An' talk 'bout Sally Gibson not takin' him if she has a chance, I tell ye thar ain't a gal in this 'ere county thet wouldn't jump at his gold hook 's quick's he throws it into the brook. Now, mind what I tell ye, if ye count on Sal Gibson's refusin' him, ye'll be everlastin'ly disapp'inted. An' 'sides all thet, thar ain't a man in this 'ere town 's got any better idee of the value of filthy lucre than has ole Sol Gibson. An' whether Sally was willin' er not, ole Sol's fetched his fam'ly up to do as he says, an' he'll make Sal marry John Mannin' if he looks thet way fer a wife."

After this outbreak of Bill's, Sam stopped short. "I guess I'll go home cross lots," he said, and started toward the fence on the north side of the road.

"Hum cross lots!" said Bill. "Ye'll hev to go round the world afore ye reach hum in thet d'rection. Oho, oho," he said, laughing heartily, "go ahead, Sam, I wish ye good luck."

Sam had just remembered that old Gibson and his wife drove away from the meeting-house by the North road and that Sally and her little brother Johnnie had turned into what was known as the Wood road, through the Clay tract. This was not a highway, but



a road that had been opened and used to get wood and lumber out of the forest into the main road. It was too rough for carriage use, or any except heavy teaming; but was quite passable for pedestrians, who could pick their way.

The shade in the forest on this warm Sunday afternoon was delightfully pleasant. The odors of spring filled the air. This April day was unusual for the season and challenged a day in June. There was a spring freshness to everything that blended well with the nature of Sally Gibson. Every form of life harmonized with her joyous nature that day. Surely it was spring-time with her. She lingered, inhaling the sweet perfumes, and feasting her eyes on the colors of the prisms painted by God on the wild-wood flowers. The special object of her quest she did not find. She searched in vain for the trailing arbutus.

Sam knew that by striking directly across the woods he would be likely to intercept Sally before she reached the highway, and he could have a little walk in the woods with her, beside the river, remembering all at once the words of the old song:

“There’s a path by the river  
O’ershadowed with trees,  
Where two people can walk,  
And may talk if they please.”

They had sung this, and many another song, psalm and hymn at singing-school, meeting and otherwheres, each with a hand holding the same book, the little

fingers hooked together like two twigs of wood, with as little feeling as if they were bent twigs, the clasp being as passionless as it was innocent. Ah, but that was when they were girl and boy.

He thought as he hurried through the woods that if he could find some trailing arbutus it would afford an excuse for following Sally.

Although she had always treated him kindly, there had not been sufficient encouragement to warrant him in talking love. They had been children together for many years, as their families were quite close neighbors, until Farmer Gibson had sold his farm and moved over on the North road. They had been through childhood, Sal and Sam to each other, but when she reached the dignity of discarding pantalettes and lengthening her dresses to womanly proportions, he called her Sally. The remarks of his comrade, Bill Johnson, had stirred his heart to its depths, and he determined to find out if Sally really cared for him. As he started over the fence he was quite sure that it was the simplest thing in the world to make his declaration to Sally, and had high hopes in her reply; but as he stooped to gather some trailing arbutus, his courage began to fail, and even the sweet scent of the flowers gave him no inspiration. He stopped for a moment and then exclaimed:

“Sam Drisco, are you so much of a coward as to be afraid of Sally Gibson, whom you have known since you were babies together?”

He braced up and hurried on, perceived her a short distance in front of him, and was glad to see that her

little brother was quite a way ahead, busily engaged in chasing a wild hare that was humping itself with all its might to escape, having a natural instinct of what might happen if he fell into the hands of a boy. The noise of Sam's step crackling the underbrush attracted Sally's attention. She turned, and her eyes twinkled with merriment as he saluted her with "Good afternoon, Miss Gibson."

"Miss Gibson, indeed!" she responded. "What's the matter with you, Sam?"

She laughed, and he joined therein, without knowing why, as he saw nothing funny and felt very far from a laughing mood. At last he recovered his courage, and said quite in his old boyish way:

"Sally, see what I've brought you. These May flowers are the first of the season. Some of them I took from under the snow. I thought you'd like them."

"I do," she said, as she took them, and putting the little bunch to her nostrils, "How sweet they are."

"Do you remember, Sally, how many times we have been out together in the wood beyond the old South road and picked May flowers?"

"Yes, Sam, I shall never forget. We were very happy when you and I were boy and girl."

He continued:

"Have you forgotten, Sally, the day we went to the woods and played that we were lost; lay down on the turf at the foot of a large oak and covered ourselves all over with leaves, playing we were babes in the woods; and how frightened you were at a big

snake that came crawling across below our feet? You ran and screamed and I ran after you, calling you my little wife, saying that I was your big husband and wouldn't let any snakes hurt you."

Just at that moment they reached the bars, on the highway, and she called:

"Johnnie, Johnnie, come, my dear. Here is father, and we had better ride home."

Sam let down the upper bars and she quickly jumped over the other two, as if anxious to end the interview.

"Thank you very much for the flowers," she said, as Farmer Gibson drove up. Sally and Johnnie climbed quickly into the wagon. The cut of old Gibson's whip was not felt half as much on the old mare's back as was Sally's cut on Sam's heart.

It took but a moment to replace the bars, and he sat down at the foot of a tree, to think. It was quite clear to him that he had lost a golden opportunity. Would he ever have another?

As the wagon started Sally said, "Good-bye, Mr. Drisco," Johnnie sang out, "Good-bye, Sam," and the old woman, in an undertone, repeated, "Good-bye, Mr. Drisco, indeed! What's up now, Sally?" But seeing the flush on Sally's face she did not press an answer.

Sally had intended to walk home and had so told her father when she left him at the meeting-house, as he drove down the road to see Jim Budson, whom he wanted to work for him on the morrow. Why did she change her intention just at the moment when one not

skilled in the mysteries of a woman's heart might have supposed she would invent some excuse for continuing her walk, rather than one to cut it short? When she would have given the world to stay, why did she go? Ah, why? She herself could not have told.

What is the control that so often makes the young woman say no when she would gladly say yes? It is not perversity; it is not coquettishness, except in the case of the born flirt. We are speaking of women with hearts, not of syrens who wantonly lead men on to disappointment. Is there a dividing line between maidenhood and womanhood that, once crossed, can never be re-crossed? Does the avowal of an honest love constitute the crossing of that line?

Johnnie spied the little bunch of trailing arbutus and cried out: "Here, Sal, give me them posies."

Sally stretched her arm beyond his reach and Johnnie said to his mother: "Ma, make Sal give me them posies."

Generally the little tyrant had his way with his mother, but a memory passed through her consciousness, and for a moment she was a girl again. Was it, perhaps, a hidden romance that brought that blush? A dormant sentiment that had lain many years deep under the practicalities of life? Was it possible in the case of this plain-featured, unromantic-looking old woman that there was still smoldering under the ashes of the fire that Cupid had kindled so many years ago, a little of youth's young dreams? Who knows? It is not for us to search the mysteries of her life. We must go forward, not backward. Still, a few

words relating to the marriage of Mrs. Gibson will give a better understanding of conditions.

Martha Angier was a lovely girl, who had the misfortune to lose her parents when she was but six years old. She had been brought up as an unwelcome intruder in the family of an uncle, where there was no room for her either in heart or home, there being already six children, who naturally took precedence. She had grown to womanhood without ever having known the joys of filial love. When in due course of events the lover appeared on the scene, the promises of a future heaven had no attraction for her; additional happiness was not possible. But alas! the end came suddenly. Her lover was accidentally killed by the premature discharge of his gun, while hunting. She had asked him to get for her some gray squirrel-skins with which to make a muff. The pen that was unable to describe the height of her happiness lacks the power to portray the depth of her misery. Martha's uncle and aunt, neither of whom had ever loved, only tolerated her, looked upon the death of the lover as a personal affront to them, for which she was to blame; and in her agony she often called herself a murderess. Another year of misery followed, her life became intolerable, and the idea of relief by suicide often came to her mind. She received a proposal of marriage from Solomon Gibson. She told him of her lover, but as he was dead, this aroused no jealousy. He offered a home. The hell in which she lived was not a home. Her uncle and aunt said that if she did not marry Sol Gibson she would have to shift for herself. She

did marry Solomon Gibson and secured a home, but never happiness, for Gibson was a hard man, made harder by the refusal of Susan Drisco to become his wife.

Quickly recovering, Mrs. Gibson told Johnnie to keep still, he could not have the flowers. All was quiet, only interrupted by old Gibson's "g'lang," but the episode had set him to thinking, and if he had spoken his thoughts his utterance would have been:

"Oho, Sam Drisco, is it! That's the way the wind blows. Wall, he can't hev Sally. He ain't got nothin' only a mighty poor farm thet's mortgaged fer more'n it's wuth an' a good 'eal more'n 't'll sell fer, an' a bed-ridden ole mother thet's nuthin' but a care to 'im. I hate 'em both." He, in his mind, ran back to the time when this bed-ridden old mother was the prettiest girl in the township, and he and other young fellows had made love to her, all of whom she rejected, taking Eben Drisco, Sam's father. As the old man thought of all of these things a bitterness came over him, and he uttered a vigorous "g'lang," suddenly striking the old mare, who gave a jump, nearly throwing Sally and her mother over the back seat. The old woman, catching hold to save herself, cried out:

"Why, Solomon, what is the matter?"

"Nothin'," he muttered as he stopped the old horse and got down from the wagon to fix the trace which had been broken by the sudden jerk. Mr. Gibson resumed his place, and the ride home was without further event or speech, except the habitual "g'lang."

On reaching home, Sally, unobserved, carried a cup of water to her room. Then, taking from her bosom the little nosegay that she had hidden from Johnnie, she pressed it to her lips, placed it in the water, and hid the cup behind the mirror on her dressing-table.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE HONEST LAWYER

**T**HE county town in country districts was usually the centre of civilization for that locality.

There was the court-house and near by, the jail, often an academy, the country stores in which were sold wet and dry-goods of every name and nature, hardware, agricultural implements, and in fact everything likely to be wanted by a farming community. Around the square, near the court-house, were the old-fashioned tavern, barrooms that had not then assumed the dignity or title of saloons, insurance agencies, and lawyers' offices.

Directly across the square, facing the court-house, in Mendon, was a little two-story wooden building, with which our tale has much connection. On the lower floor, as the red and white pole indicated, was a barber shop. Bill Muggins, the barber, had never heard of a tonsorial parlor. You could get a hair-cut for ninepence and a shave for fourpence ha'penny, together with all the gossip of the neighborhood. Up the staircase, the treads of which had been worn thin by the heavy cowhides of generations of farmers who had shuffled up those stairs desiring the aid of the law in getting them justice, was the office of Abraham Baxter.

Many a man went up into that dingy little office,

as angry as could be, determined to get even with his neighbor for a wrong, generally fancied, and went down again somewhat cooled off and guessed he wouldn't sue. Abraham Baxter was an old-fashioned lawyer, so old-fashioned, indeed, that he was known far and wide as one of a species which perhaps is extinct, as we hear no mention of it now, (item, an honest lawyer) who used his experience and knowledge of the law to settle difficulties and not to engender strife.

The weather-worn old sign on the front of the building read: "Abraham Baxter, Attorney and Counsellor-at-Law." His practice as an attorney had long since ceased, but his opinion as a counsellor was considered of much value, not only by his clients, but by his associates of the Bar of the county of Mendon, which was also the name of the township.

It used to be told of him that when about to be consulted by a client he would say: "If you have an honest claim, I will take your case, but if you have not, go to someone else, for there are other lawyers here in town who can do better for you, as I will not help you to oppress or rob anybody." Many a would-be client left his office without further consultation.

He had been the confidential adviser of more than two generations of the people of that locality. To him was confided, without hesitation, their secrets, and in many a family he had the key to the door of the closet where hung its skeleton. But never a word of scandal or gossip went from that old man's lips to raise the flush of shame on or pale with fear the face of anyone. His clients were his friends, and not one

ever regretted placing confidence in Abraham Baxter.

An incident or two may explain the reason for the remark often made by other lawyers: "Confound old Baxter; the law will not be worth anything in this county as long as he lives. If he had his way he'd shut up the court-house, except for criminal prosecutions, and on these the Lord knows he's hard enough."

A man would come to him with his heart full of anger for some fancied wrong, determined to sue his neighbor at once. After having talked a while with "Father Abraham," as he was familiarly called, he would go away forgiving his grievance. In other cases the opponent would be called in, and everything satisfactorily settled.

This method of practicing law brought little money to Abraham Baxter. He died poor, and would have had a scanty living had it not been for the fact that the majority of the legal papers in the county were written in his beautiful, square, copper-plate hand.

The last time that he appeared in court as an attorney was in support of a will. Its probate had been opposed on the ground of forgery, the amount in contest being something over \$20,000. His client had promised him a fee of ten per cent. if he won the case. The liberality of the offer aroused his suspicion; but after having carefully examined all the facts that could be reached, he came to the conclusion that the will was the last will and testament of Abijah Ochle-tree. He went into the case with a full belief that he was in the right. He had an ambition to win, and a desire for the fee, which he sadly needed.

It is unnecessary to go into the details of the trial. The evidence had all been submitted and it was the opinion of those who had listened to the case that the jury would render a verdict in his favor without leaving their seats. In closing with quite an extended peroration he said: "Your Honor, and gentlemen of the jury, the evidence clearly shows that this will which I hold in my hand bears the genuine signature of Abijah Ochletree." Holding the open sheet between his eyes and the window, he continued: "Your Honor and gentlemen of the jury, the evidence is as clear as God's sunlight——" At that moment he stopped, turned pale, looked staringly at the sheet he held between him and the light, threw down the will, and in an agitated tone said: "Your Honor, I withdraw from this case."

He picked up his papers which were scattered on the table, put them into his green baize bag, and walked out of the court-room.

Since the last word he had spoken, silence had reigned. It was the silence of astonishment. The opposing lawyer, as the door closed on Abraham Baxter, picked up the will and held it to the light, then turning quickly to the presiding judge: "Your Honor," he said, "I desire to make an unusual motion, which I think under the circumstances Your Honor will grant. That is, to re-open this case for the purpose of re-submitting exhibit A, this will, to the jury for examination. The date of this will is March 1, 1825. The water-mark shows that the paper on which it is written was not made until 1827." The

judge directed the jury to render a verdict against the genuineness of the will, which they did, without leaving their seats.

It was a remarkably clever forgery, and had it not been for the water-mark in the paper, would never have been discovered, for all the evidence was in favor of its validity. The genuineness of the signature of the testator received the support of all those who had been familiar with it when the testator was living. It was a holograph will, and there did not seem to be the dot of an i or the crossing of a t, the tail of a g or y that had been neglected. The two witnesses, who it was alleged had appended their names "in the presence of the testator and of each other," were dead. The selection of witnesses who had died since the execution of the will showed the great shrewdness of the forger.

Abraham Baxter had always prided himself, as we have seen, upon the integrity of the causes which he advocated, and the outcome of this suit so mortified him that he never entered the court-house again, nor would he take a case that required his appearance in court.

Such, as a lawyer, was the deep sense of honor, the passion for justice and the sterling character, of Abraham Baxter.

[Note.—The writer has submitted this incident, which is a true occurrence, to many lawyers, and has never found one who said that he would have done as Abraham Baxter did, that is, have abandoned the case. They generally responded that it "is the first duty

of a lawyer to protect the interest of his client"; "contrary to the ethics of the profession"; "stick to your client, right or wrong"; "never under any obligation to furnish evidence for the other side"; "we don't hear of any such kind of fool nowadays"; "you say that this lawyer died poor. Well, I can readily believe that."]

## CHAPTER V

### THE HYPOCRITE

ON the death of his mother, Richard Baxter, at the age of fourteen, left home for school, where he spent three years, and then four years in college. His father (Abraham Baxter) died during the last year of his collegiate course, leaving to him his law library, an unsullied name, and the title "an honest lawyer." He desired that his son should adopt some other vocation than the law, wishing him to be an honest man, and knowing how difficult that was for a lawyer.

Richard admired his father when living, and now deeply honoring his memory, resolved to follow in his footsteps. He was a young man of good, not brilliant talents, had been graduated with a fair proportion of honors, and a reputation for sterling integrity; and was, indeed, a good specimen of American mediocrity. He appreciated that he did not know it all, an advantage over most young men. He was too modest for sudden success, and on leaving college bade fair to become a plodder.

He took possession of the old law office just as his father had left it. The village painter desired to paint over the old sign, but this to Richard seemed sacrilege; to put up a new sign, vanity; and during

his life the old one was never changed, except by the weather, and that worked its usual spell.

Richard was an athlete in form, but had no passion for athletic sports, although he had taken part therein during his collegiate career. He was a handsome man, and had the great good fortune never to have appreciated the fact. Many a girl had looked at him and wondered why she could not get Dick Baxter to flirt just a little. But he never thought of it, and so passed into manhood without the usual experience of most young men.

For the opposite sex he had the greatest respect, and treated every woman as mother or sister, according to her age.

The thoughts uppermost in his mind were those on religious subjects. He had been educated in the rigid dogmas of the Presbyterian faith, but did not accept them. Still you could not have found a college associate who would not have said that Dick Baxter was the most pious man in his class; though he knew that he was a hypocrite, and despised himself for it. "What ought I to do?" was a constant self-query. "I would believe if I could, God knows I would."

This appeal to God, in Whom he had no belief, was only an expression inspired by the custom so prevalent in all Christian communities. Had he acknowledged being an agnostic, the little Presbyterian world in which he dwelt would have deemed him worse even than a Roman Catholic, and cast him out as a social leper. These people would tolerate a drunkard, a thief, or even a murderer; but an infidel, never. In their opin-



ion, a man who had no belief was an outcast, for whom burning at the stake was quite too good.

The opinions of the community in which Richard Baxter lived, or even its intolerance of an infidel, were not the principal reasons that prevented his throwing off the despicable cloak of hypocrisy; for paradoxical as it may seem, he was as honest a man as ever lived; in every moral essential a good man whose life was above reproach. He felt himself to be a victim of intellectual malformation, and often wondered how it was that the great boons of belief and faith were denied to him, while the ignorant, uneducated mass believed, or at least thought that they believed. They could not know the depths of their profession. Religion, in his opinion, could only be their habit.

While at law school, he had lived where there were many Roman Catholics, simple, ignorant people, whose unwavering confidence in their church challenged his admiration.

He was called from his bed one night by a messenger who informed him that Patrick Moriarty, an Irishman whom he had often met in his walks outside the town, was dying, and "would Mr. Baxter go and make his will?"

He found at the home of the Moriarties, not only Patrick at the point of death, but also his wife Bridget.

The man was in bed at one side of the room, and on a cot opposite lay his wife. After the will was made Patrick asked some of the bystanders to move his wife's cot over to the side of his bed, and to her he

said: "Bridget, me darlint, come over here, an' Oi'll take yer hand, an' we'll walk through purgatory together, as we've ben walkin' together fer nigh forty year, an' it'll only be half as far." The priest had been there and administered the Holy Communion, and anointed them with oil. The cot was moved over to the side of the bed on which Patrick was lying, as still as if already dead. Her hand was placed in his, too feeble to reach for it. She was very restless. All at once he aroused himself, and speaking quite sharply said: "Bridget, kape still, ye'll wipe the grase all off ye." Then, closing his eyes, he started at once on his long journey; but his wife was not ready to go with him.

This incident made a lasting impression on Richard Baxter, and from that moment he respected the simple faith of the humble Christian.

As before said, Richard did not continue his hypocritical life through fear of consequences, but as a matter of conscience. He weighed everything on the scales of good, not those of truth. "Is it good?" not "Is it true?" was his test of value. The good of his fellow man was the desire of his life. He had many times asked himself the question, "Is man better for having a religion?" the answer always being in the affirmative. He had studied all the religions of the world and had never found a heathen who would not have been more of a heathen without his religion.

Richard Baxter continued his dual position on religion at the dictate of his conscience, arguing: "I am harming no one but myself by my course. 'Tis

true I am deceiving everybody, but I injure no one in so doing."

He was looked upon as a model Christian, and although the model was a false one, good came from it. No good would come from an avowal of his real sentiments; nothing but evil could follow such a course. Doubts would be sown where perfect faith was now triumphant. He had always treated everyone's honest religious belief, no matter how absurd it appeared to him, with the utmost respect, having never by act, word or look done aught to lessen the faith of anyone in the religion which he professed. He realized that to do so would be worse than robbery. It would be indeed a wicked act to take away a person's faith on the ground that in his opinion it was false, when he had nothing better to offer in its place.

Richard Baxter was an encyclopædia on religion. There was not a minister of the gospel in all that region who knew the Bible so well as he. But with all his knowledge he could never be induced to give an opinion on any religious subject nor drawn into an argument. When asked questions he was always ready to give facts, but never opinions. When forced into a corner, his reply always was, "I have never been given authority or ability to interpret the Scriptures."

No one ever appealed to him for help, pecuniary or otherwise, who did not meet with a cheerful response. The poor could always obtain legal advice without cost. Often had he appeared in court without fee, to defend them against oppression and wrong.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PROPOSAL

ON the afternoon of the opening of our story, John Manning resumed consideration of the eligible girls. He had a large field from which to choose, as the neighborhood included parts of three towns. He had seen Bill and Sam together, and as he returned, Bill was alone.

"Lost Sam, have you?" he asked. "Where has he gone?"

"Cross lots, over on the North road."

John Manning had long known of Sam Drisco's liking for Sally Gibson. It had not until that moment been a matter of any concern; but now, having Sally in mind, he felt Drisco to be an intruder. He was so intensely egotistic and knew so little of woman nature, that he assumed it to be only necessary for him to condescend to inform any woman that he had selected her.

Ah, how little did he know a woman's heart!

The next morning he drove over to the Gibson farm, and seeing the old man at work by the wayside, hailed him with a "Good-morning." Mr. Gibson approached the wagon and put out his brawny hand, returning the salute with a "Howdy, howdy." Manning was not accustomed to waste any time in discussing the weather, crops or any other make-talk subject.

In this case, as was his habit, he came directly to the point, saying: "Mr. Gibson, you know that mother is dead, and my affairs at home are badly broken up. I can't find any good woman to run things, and I think I'd better get married."

"Surely, surely," said the old man.

"I've been thinking over all the girls in the neighborhood and have concluded that your Sally is the best of the bunch, and everything being satisfactory all around, as of course it must be, we had better get married."

To say that the old man was astonished sets forth the condition of his mind very mildly. "W'y, Mr. Mannin'," he hesitatingly said, "I didn't know that you an' Sally was much more'n jest acquainted. Hadn't seen ye round our house, an' didn't know that you an' her hed ben a-keepin' comp'ny. Wall, young folks is mighty sly. Wonder 'f Mis' Gibson knows anything 'bout it. Thar ain't ben nothin' said to me."

"There hasn't been anything said to anybody. I'm not the man to waste my time chasing after girls. I only made up my mind last night to marry her, and of course haven't said anything to her about it."

"Surely, surely."

"You know, Mr. Gibson, that I'm pretty forehanded, and not a man that any girl is likely to say no to."

"Surely, surely," replied the old man. "Thet's all true 'nough, an' I don't mind a-sayin' right out that I shouldn't object to yer marryin' my Sal, ef it's 'greeable all 'round. Sal's a good gal, good's any on

'em, but she's a leetle high strung, an' kinder independent sometimes, an' she might not 'gree to it."

"She'll do as you say, won't she?"

"Wall, she allus has, but I hain't never said nothin' to 'er 'bout gittin' marri'd, an' she might kick, ye know."

"Is anybody keeping company with her?"

"No, 'tain't got to thet yit; but I've thought for some time thet Sam Drisco was kinder sneakin' 'round arter her; but she can't hev him, even if she never gits marri'd."

"Sam Drisco," sneered Manning. "I can fix him. He's of no account. I've a mortgage on his farm that's past due, and the interest will more than eat up his personal property."

"Surely, surely. This thing's all right atween you an' me, but I think you'd better go 'bout it in the ord'nary way, waste a leetle time a-courtin' an' sich like, 'cause wimmin is queer critters, an' sometimes ye can an' sometimes ye can't."

"All right, Mr. Gibson, as long as you and I understand each other I guess I won't have any trouble fixing it; but I'll accept your advice."

The attempts of John Manning to "court" Sally Gibson, as well as those of her father to drive her into his arms were, as might have been expected, miserable failures.

## CHAPTER VII

### A TRUE WOMAN

**I**N the village of Mendon lived a unique character, a woman who was the village "Jack-at-all-trades," being able to turn her hand with equal facility to the trimming of a bonnet, making a new dress, making over an old one, or cutting down the father's worn suit for the next generation. She could help out in the spinning, if anybody's "old woman" (the usual but by no means disrespectful term in which most men spoke of their wives) was behind with her work. If the mother was sick, they called in "Mis' Miles" to "nuss" her and help care for the family. In fact, "Mis' Miles" was the most important functionary of the place.

She and her daughter lived in an humble cottage at the edge of the village. The extent of the premises was about one-half an acre, on which were the little house, a hen coop, a small kitchen-garden and a mortgage, the last being an anxiety that haunted the widow day and night. The first of April, when the interest became due, had more terrors for her than the Day of Judgment.

Being a religious woman, strong in the faith and fully conscious of the rectitude of her life, she had no fear for the "hereafter." "Give us this day our daily bread" was to her the most important line in the

Lord's prayer, which she never omitted morning or evening.

Like so many other people, she had seen better days.

She wedded a well-to-do man, and passed her married life in a large city where she had all the advantages of good society. As is often the case, Mr. Miles lived up to his income, and made no provision for a "rainy day." In the prime of life he succumbed to an attack of typhus, leaving his wife and child practically penniless.

The great problem of "how to live" demanded solution. Mrs. Miles was a woman of good physique and sound health. Her early associations naturally suggested a return to country life. She must earn her living and there were no genteel avenues open for her. It was work, absolute labor that confronted her, and she met it "manfully."

After the settlement of her affairs and the disposal of household effects, there were but a few hundred dollars left.

She decided to go into the country; but where? To one place she would not go, to the home of her childhood, which she had left on the high wave of good fortune. No, she could not bring herself to bear that; but would seek some locality where it would be impossible for her history to be known, being well aware of the curiosity of country people and their suspicious nature, when one did not turn himself inside out for inspection and inquisition.

How to meet this troublesome matter perplexed her much, and she often dreamed of being tried by the



sewing society of some country town. "Who is she?" "Where did she come from?" "What's she doing here?" "Widow, did you say?" "How long has her husband been dead?" "Did he leave any property?" "How's she going to live?" "I wonder if she's respectable? Good many of these city folks ain't, you know. Can't tell by folks' looks, you know."

Mrs. Miles was a brave woman and ready to obey the laws of necessity. Hardly knowing why, she selected Mendon as the place in which to take refuge.

Before leaving the city, she sold all her fine clothing, even down to the last under-garment, shoes and stockings, and provided herself clothing suitable to the new position in society which misfortune forced her to occupy.

Her daughter Mary would remain at boarding-school, as her tuition had been paid for the year.

Mrs. Miles arrived in Mendon by stage one pleasant spring day, intending to remain at the tavern until she could mature her plans. She called on the minister and the doctor, both pleasant old gentlemen, who received her kindly, and after examining her letters, and finding her sound in faith and practice, obligingly permitted a reference to them.

On the morning after her arrival, the town was panic-stricken by a smallpox scare. At first, it was the whole of the east village that had the dreaded disease; then it was more than a dozen. It finally dwindled to one suspect, a poor Canadian hired man on Silas Brown's farm. He was warned at the risk of his life not to leave the little shanty where he slept.

The Selectmen hurriedly met to see what could be done. A resolution was promptly adopted, declaring, "the shanty on Silas Brown's farm, where that blasted Canuck has the smallpox, be and hereby is declared a pest-house, according to the law so made and provided."

That the man must be cared for was a foregone conclusion, but by whom? They felt quite certain that no one could be found; when their anxious deliberations were interrupted by the appearance of a strange woman, who told them that she was a nurse, immune, having had the smallpox, and competent to take entire charge of the case, without the aid of a doctor. The satisfaction of the Selectmen, as well as of the whole town, was unbounded, and Mrs. M. entered at once upon her duties and carried the case through successfully, surprising even herself.

She was a woman who had a wonderful ability to conform to circumstances and adapt herself to the situation. She took the position of nurse, in this case, to test her ability to meet any requirements that might arise, believing that there could be no better introduction for her.

Alexis, a Canadian with an unpronounceable surname, was the patient. He appreciated what she did for him and never after missed an opportunity to repay all that he in his humble capacity could.

While Mrs. Miles had been caring for Alexis, the town gossips had thoroughly discussed her. That was as far as they could go, for when she appeared among them, they found that although she did not

“put on airs,” she was not a woman of whom they could ask questions for the gratification of a vulgar curiosity.

## CHAPTER VIII

### “NOW OR NEVER”

SALLY, on returning from town one day, met Sam Drisco, who said to himself as he saw her coming, “Now or never.” He was quite well aware of the situation existing at the Gibson farm, as John Manning’s attempt at making Sally his wife was town gossip, and to him it seemed that his only chance was, as he said, “now or never.” He approached Sally, looking her full in the eyes, extended his hand, and said:

“God only knows, Sally, how glad I am to see you.”

She replied with all her natural frankness:

“Sam, I am glad to see you.”

They looked at each other for a moment, and without a word left the highway and turned into a path that led into the deep woods, beyond sight from the road. They walked side by side for a few moments, then: “Let us sit down upon this log,” began Sam, “I have something I wish to say to you.”

He poured out his heart, telling how his life was one longing for her, closing with: “Sally, Sally, I love you beyond my power to tell. I want you to be my wife,” and held out his hand, which she frankly took.

“Oh, Sam, you cannot love me more than I love you, but it cannot, cannot be. Father says that I must

marry John Manning, but I never will. I cannot marry you, Sam, for I dare not. He is so hard and bitter against you.”

“Sally, I am a man, you are a woman. Why should we be governed by an unreasonable father? Oh, come with me, Sally, and we shall be so happy.”

“No, no, dear Sam, I dare not; though I cannot marry you, I will never marry John Manning, nor anyone else.”

They talked for a long time, but Sally could not be turned from what she believed to be her duty.

## CHAPTER IX

### MARY MILES

**W**E have omitted to notice, though it was an event of sufficient importance in the history of Mendon to make it worth chronicling, the advent of Mrs. Miles' daughter Mary, who had been left at school when the mother had come to Mendon.

It is a difficult task to describe her. The simplest way would be to say that she was Mary Miles, unique in herself, a type of her own. It is not easy to detail the apparel of a well-dressed young lady. There is such a harmonious blending of color and style that no salient points attract attention. So it was with Mary. In form she fulfilled the requirements of the sculptor; in feature she realized the artist's dream. And still her face was not pretty, but it was beautiful, for therein were portrayed all the characters of perfect womanhood. In her character there was not an apparent defect. She at once became a great favorite in the village, as she had always been with all who had ever known her.

For a wonder she was held in equal esteem by both sexes, young and old, but especially by the aged; for to them she showed such unusual respect and courtesy that they could not help loving her. The little jealousies which so often exist among young women were

not present in this case. Her loveliness disarmed them all, and although the daughter of Widow Miles, the nurse, seamstress and general woman-of-all-work, who served those who demanded her services by the day, she was everywhere received in the best society of Mendon, as a social equal.

A natural Christian, it required on Mary's part but little effort to be good. The right path was always open, the other never suggested. She was not entitled, therefore, to such credit as are those who resist temptation.

Unlike many of the naturally good people, she was not selfish and cold-blooded, but had a warm heart, and was extremely charitable toward the shortcomings of others, especially of those of her own sex.

## CHAPTER X

### A BRIEFLESS LAWYER

**R**ICHARD BAXTER was what is known to the profession as a briefless lawyer. For such condition he was alone to blame. Many a profitable case he had turned away because he thought his client in the wrong. He had inherited from his father the integrity that bade fair to ruin his prospects as a lawyer, and had often considered the advisability of trying some other means of getting a living.

He had sat many a day watching the spiders building their cobwebs. He never disturbed them, a superstition which he could neither explain nor understand protected them. To his view they were as frail as religious faith, easy to destroy, but impossible to rebuild.

As he watched he listened for the client's footsteps on the creaking old stairs; but in vain. The small income from drawing deeds, contracts and other legal instruments hardly sufficed to pay for his food. His clothes had the shiny evidence of having seen better days, and his body showed lack of nourishment. He was getting despondent and melancholy and could not study or think. Had it not been for his pride he would have done manual labor.

“Would I not have greater respect for myself,” he



soliloquized, "if I were earning an honest living by the sweat of my face, than sitting here brooding over my misfortunes? Why should I have any regard for the opinion of those who sit like hungry vultures waiting the outcome of my problem?"

He remembered reading a notice tacked up at the post-office: "Wanted—Wood Choppers. Will pay fifty cents per cord. Joseph Barker." Joseph Barker was the owner of a wood lot about a mile and a half out on the Sheldon road, which he had begun clearing.

"Wood chopper, indeed!" Then, looking at his soft, white hands, he mused a while, and turning toward a little mirror that stood on a mantel, saw his gaunt face, which he saluted with: "Pauper, that's just what you are. Nothing more, nothing less. No, that's wrong, you are something more. You are—a fool."

He was behind with his rent, and that morning the barber who owned the building had said to him that Squire Canfield wanted to hire the office and if Mr. Baxter couldn't pay he wished he'd move out, for he could not wait longer for his rent. Richard felt greatly mortified to think that the little, insignificant, illiterate, one-legged barber was in a position to tell him, a gentleman born, a college graduate and a lawyer, to pay his rent or move out. It was quite certain, however, that he had no longer use for the premises as a law office.

His father had occupied that office for a lifetime. Richard remembered with what pride and hopes of

success he had taken possession on his graduation from the law school. Were all his ambitions to be crushed and his prospects ruined? How would his father have felt could he have foreseen the blasting of the cherished hopes for the success of his dearly beloved son?

He looked around the office and every piece of the old furniture seemed to say in chorus, "This must not be"; and jumping to his feet, he defiantly shouted, "And it shall not be!"

He determined that he would not give up yet, and soon completed his plans, which were to chop wood and earn money enough to pay his rent and keep the office, at least until he could go over all the papers that his father had left, take care of those that were of any value and destroy the rest. After freeing himself from debt he would seek other fields and begin anew. He had in his wardrobe an old corduroy boating-suit that would serve him well for working clothes. Knowing that he could not put in a full day's work at first, he would attempt but half a day. Just as he had settled on this course, old Cæsar, a negro who had "chored" for Abraham Baxter many years until his death, and had known "young Massa Baxtah eber since he was knee-high to a hoppergrass," came shuffling up the old staircase, and as he entered the door, took off his cap, bowed his head, and scraping the floor with his right foot, saluted:

"Good-mawnin', Massa Baxtah. W'y, honey w'at's de mattah? Bettah not go down get shaved dis mawnin', foh de blessed face is so long dat it cost double.

Dis niggah dunno much, but dis niggah knows w'at's de mattah wid Massa Baxtah. He done gone an' got no money to pay rent."

"How do you know that, Cæsar?"

"Kase, dis mawnin' I hab some wood to split foh de babah, down in de ya'd, an' Massa Postmastah he come 'long an' he say, 'Good-mawnin', Cæsar,' an' den he stop an' he say to dis niggah, 'Cæsar, w'at kine ob niggah be you?' an' I says, 'Massa Postmastah, I'se coal-brack niggah, I is.' Ya, ha, ha! Ya, ha, ha!" and Cæsar laughed until it seemed to Richard that the shovel and tongs danced on the hearth. He was quite sure that the grim old portrait of George Washington relaxed its solemn features, and at least smiled.

As was intended by the friendly negro, the laugh became infectious, and Richard joined quite heartily. After a moment he said:

"Cæsar, you have not told me how you know that I am short of money."

"Well, boss, it was dis way. Massa Postmastah he go into de babah shop to get shave, an' foah soon I heah him say 'Baxtah'; den I knows dat it was you dat was bein' slandahed, an' I jes' cock up dat long eah. Ye know, Massa Baxtah, dat dis 'ere niggah hab one long eah an' one short one."

"Yes, that's all right, Cæsar, but go on and tell your story."

"Well, den, Massa Baxtah, dis niggah, ole brack Cæsar, he play 'possum, an' Massa Babah he say, 'Massa Postmastah, dat young Baxtah up de stahs is dat hard up dat he can't pay de rent, an' I'se done

goin' to turn him out, foh Massa Canfield he want dat office.' ”

“Yes, Cæsar, it is true that I am short of money just now, but it will come out all right bye-and-bye.”

“Yes, yes, Massa Baxtah, dat's all right. Bye'n-bye long way off sometimes, but dis niggah got money now. Ye see, Massa Richa'd, it am dis way. Cæsar is de ole brack niggah, an' foah long time de Lawd He say, 'Cæsar, ye mis'ble brack niggah, wha' is ye? I wants ye now. You's no use down dah, you's on'y in de way. Ye ha'r's all gone, ye teefs all gone, you's got de rumaticks an' can't work no moah. Come up heah an' be an angel. I'se got some big brack wings foh ye, an' I'se a ha'p foh ye, wif a t'ousan' strings.' An' I say, 'Yes, good Lawd, I'se comin', hev Petah hol' open de gate.' An' ye see, Massa Richa'd, dis ole Cæsar is no common niggah. He's 'spect'ble, an' he wants to leave dis worl' in a 'spect'ble mannah; so ole Cæsar, he done gone an' sabe money to put ole Cæsar in de groun' in a 'spect'ble mannah. I'se got twenty-seben dollahs hid undah de chimbley-stone, an' honey, I gibs ye all on'y two dollahs, an' de s'lectmen can bury ole Cæsar. Dey'll hab to put dis ole niggah in de groun'. Live niggah bery 'fensive, but dead niggah, whew! nobody lib in same town wif dead niggah. I'd gib ye all, Massa Richa'd, on'y I wants de music w'en dey puts ole Cæsar undah de groun'. I'se 'ranged wif Eph Mo'gan foh de fife an' Ike Brown foh de drum, two dollahs foh bof. Dat's w'y, Massa Richa'd, dat ole niggah Cæsar doan' gib Massa Richa'd de whole ob dat money.”



"Cæsar, come up heah an' be an angel. I'se got some big brack wings foh ye, an' I'se a ha'p foh ye, wif a tousan' strings."



That Richard Baxter was deeply touched at this exhibition of friendship by the old negro need not be said. He exclaimed: "Thank God, I have one friend." Tears filled his eyes, and rising, he went across the room to where Cæsar stood near the door, grasped his hand and shook it warmly, saying:

"You are very kind, Cæsar, but I cannot take your money. I hope and pray to soon end my trouble."

"Pray foh help. Dat's all right, if ye knows how to pray. 'Tain't no good prayin' 'less ye does some-t'ing. De good Lawd helps dem w'at helps demselves. De Lawd nevah bring dis niggah nuffin. He allus hab to go get it. Ole Cæsar he want some chicken, an' he prayed de Lawd foh chicken. Dis niggah he pray foh free nights, dis niggah get no chicken. De Lawd nevah beah dis niggah. Den ole Cæsar pray de Lawd sen' dis niggah foh dat chicken, an' he hab de chicken de fust time."

Richard told old Cæsar that he proposed to chop wood. This disgusted Cæsar beyond his power of expression. The idea of a "gemmen choppin' wood" was more than he could tolerate, and he hesitated about lending his axe to Richard. Richard said to him:

"I can't beg and I will not borrow. Would you have me steal?"

"No, dis niggah doan' 'vocate any man to steal. Ole Cæsar nevah steal nuffin' in dis worl'—on'y chicken," he added, after a slight pause; then resuming, meditatively, "No moah sin foh de niggah take chicken dan foh white man take 'brellah."

Cæsar finally consented to lend his axe.

Early the next morning Richard, dressed in corduroy suit, started for the woods. He went early, before the villagers were up, not ashamed exactly, but very well satisfied that he was doing no wrong; still, he would rather not be seen, not just then, until he had gotten a little used to the situation himself.

It is hardly worth while to follow him through the hardening process of backache, armache and blistered hands. But Richard was not the man to put his hand to the plow and turn back. Every day when it did not storm he went regularly to his work, with which he spent the forenoon. In the afternoon he busied himself sorting out his father's old papers, for he had nearly concluded that as the law had abandoned him, he would in turn forsake it and get an honest living some other way.

Of course it wasn't three days before the whole town were discussing this, as it was called, freak of Dick Baxter's.

It did not take long for him to earn money enough to pay up his rent, but he still continued his morning work. He became healthy and hearty, lost his dependency and his woe-begone appearance. He claimed to have discovered the elixir of health, but none of his friends wanted any of the medicine. With vigorous health came happiness and visions of success in his chosen profession, and with them, renewed efforts to increase his knowledge of the law. The development of his muscles stimulated his brain. He determined not to give up the old office, so sacred to



him, for its memories of his revered father. He laughed as he asked himself:

“How would a sign look: ‘Richard Baxter, Wood Chopper and Attorney-at-Law’?”

In clearing up the office and assorting his father’s old papers, he had omitted to open a little drawer in the desk, which stuck fast. He borrowed a chisel and forced the drawer open, finding therein a sealed letter, addressed to himself, in his father’s well-known hand. He hastily broke the seal. It bore date but a short time before his father’s death. The letter read as follows:

“My Dear Son Richard: Your last letter informs me that you have determined to adopt the law as your profession for life. Although I have advised you, influenced by the hard lessons of my own experience, to seek a living in some other vocation, I must confess that I am not sorry. I would, if it were possible, point out to you the pitfalls in your path, but it would be useless, and it is better that you find them for yourself.

“My dear Richard, be true to your God and He will be true to you. I am sorry to have noticed in some of your late letters an uncertain state of mind, as if you were wavering in your faith. I hope that this is not so.

“Never be tempted to defend or to prosecute a wrong cause.

“Be an honest lawyer. It is not the road to wealth, but it will insure you at least self-respect. The law

is a noble profession, but to its shame it must be admitted that there is no crime so dastardly nor no cause so unrighteous that a lawyer cannot be procured to defend it.

“On the shelves of this old bookcase are thirty volumes of Pickering’s Reports. In them you will find treasure. As my last request I beseech you to read them carefully. I want you to read them, not to pick them up and skim them over, but to make a systematic business of it. Take volume one, read the title page; then every one to *finis*. After having read it through, I wish you, on the last page, to write and sign the following:

“This is to certify that I, Richard Baxter, have complied with my father’s last request, and have read every word in this first volume of Pickering’s Reports’; and so on, as fast as you have the time to read each volume, to the last.

“Also, I wish that you never part with this desk-bookcase. It was my father’s, it is your father’s, and will soon be yours.

“Farewell, my dear Richard. I am,

“Your affectionate Father,

“ABRAHAM BAXTER.”

“Well, my father always was queer. I do not understand what he means by treasure in Pickering’s Reports. Oh, I have it. I remember the fable of the old man on his death-bed telling his sons that on his farm was hidden a pot of gold. As soon as the old man was buried, they began digging in search of the

hidden treasure; and they dug the old farm over and over again, until it became so fertile that it produced the pot of gold many times. So, no doubt father thought that if I read Pickering's Reports studiously I should indeed find treasures in the end. However, it matters not what he thought; I will do as he wished." And from the day of the finding of that letter, he never missed, except on the Sabbath, reading more or less, according to the time he had to spare, until the task was finished.

His health, strength and mind were so much improved by his wood chopping that he continued it for a while, notwithstanding the fact that it was no longer a necessity, having earned enough to free himself from debt.

His afternoons he devoted to his office, although his clients were few and not very remunerative.

The task of looking over and sorting the papers left by his father was a greater one than he had expected, and he found so little wheat to so much chaff, that he was tempted to make a bonfire of the whole lot. It is quite probable that he might have done so had he not occasionally come across some memoranda concerning people of the village.

One day while dusting these old volumes of Pickering, he thought to look at the last one, remarking to himself: "Fifteen volumes more before I reach the final *finis*." He opened the book and was surprised to find the last two blank leaves sealed together, with a writing between the leaves. Under *finis* on the last page was written:

“Dear Richard: I have every confidence in you. I know that you will respect my last wish.

“Your affectionate Father,

“ABRAHAM BAXTER.”

Whatever might have been Richard's inclination to break the seal, there was none now. He replaced the book on the shelf and resumed his weary task, in their regular order through the dull pages of Pickering.

## CHAPTER XI

### “GOOD-BYE, SALLY”

**I**N the old first-growth pine forest, on the opposite side of the road from the Gibson farm, the trees were of immense size and limbless to a great height. The ground, free from underbrush, was covered with a thick carpet of pine needles, which emitted a pleasant balsamic odor. This had been Sally's favorite playground in childhood, and as she grew older, the beautiful spot, from late experience, had become more dear to her.

On the log where she and Sam sat that lovely afternoon (their last meeting), she had sat many times before, sewing, knitting, reading, or dreaming, as the mood had seized her.

She had been seen with Sam in the woods by one of the farm hired men, who thought to make favor by telling Mr. Gibson. This was especially unfortunate, as the old man had just been discussing with his wife, Sally and her relations with John Manning. Mrs. Gibson, in her defense of Sally, had said many bitter things which had worked the old man up to a greater fury than she had ever seen him in before.

As he passed out of the house, he met his sneaking hired man, who told him that he had seen Sam and Sally in the woods together. This added to his anger and he went into his tool shop, took down his rifle,

hastily loaded it, and crossed the road into the woods, with murder in his heart.

The hired man saw him go toward the woods with rifle in hand, but not daring to interfere, he ran quickly into the house and hastily said:

“Oh, Mis’ Gibson, Sally an’ Sam Drisco are over there in the woods, an’ Mr. Gibson’s gone over with his gun.”

The old woman was out of the house and across the road quicker than can be told, and out of sight into the woods. She knew Sally’s favorite spot, as they had spent many a happy hour there together, and hastened directly toward it. As she saw the old man she tried to scream, but could not, being dumb with terror. The gun was aimed and Sally sprang in front of Sam. With an effort, nerved by desperation, Mrs. Gibson leaped to the side of her husband and clinched his arm as he pulled the trigger, turning the gun to one side just enough to let the bullet whizz harmlessly by the heads of the lovers.

Mrs. Gibson fell in a faint, and Sam sprang toward the would-be murderer, who, seeing that he had failed, was about to reload. Sam seized the gun, which old Gibson strove to retain. There could be but one outcome between the one, young and strong, and the other, old and weak. Sam raised the rifle as if to brain the old man, but a scream from behind him brought the realization that it was *her* father whom he was about to strike down and perhaps kill. He handed the gun back to Mr. Gibson and stood eyeing him as one would eye a wild beast, crouched to leap.

The old man was dazed, as if he had just awakened from a dream, seeming not to realize the situation. Without a word, he turned and went through the bushes, toward the house.

Meanwhile Sally went to the assistance of her mother, who soon revived. They were instantly in each other's arms, sobbing as if life's fountains were breaking up. Sally turned to Sam, who eagerly clasped her in his arms and kissed her again and again. It was the first time, and with all the passion of possession. Then he held her at arm's length and looked at the face he loved so well, down which were flowing torrents of tears. She loosened the grasp of his hands and clung around his neck. Again their lips met. Where was her coyness, her reserve, her maidenly modesty? All gone. Nature was reigning.

The term of this ecstasy was but momentary. The realities of the situation pressed their claims. They separated, looking at each other for a moment, when Sally extended her hands, which Sam eagerly seized.

“Good-bye, Sam, dear Sam. God help us!”

“Good-bye, Sally, good-bye. God bless you,” he with great difficulty uttered.

They never met again in this life. Have they ever met again?

Mrs. Gibson stood motionless, gazing at this life's episode, this rending of hearts, so soon to be followed by rending of lives. Sally went immediately to the side of her mother, placed a supporting arm around her, and without a word they left the wood.

As Sally turned into the road, she looked back and waved her hand to Sam, who quickly responded.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE KNITTER

**A**MONG the noticeable characters of the neighborhood was a quaint old woman, who, although she has only a neighborly connection with our story, is, on her own merits, entitled to a few pages therein.

Aunt Nancy was about seventy-five years old, hearty and healthy; a good woman, beloved by all who knew her. She was a widow, whose husband had been dead but a few years. He had left to her a comfortable income, more than she, with her economical habits, could possibly spend. She was always benevolent and also charitable, a distinction and a difference.

Everybody in the neighborhood knew her as the "knitter." Knitting was with her a dissipation. She would knit in season and out of season. A very devout, pious woman; and although truly and conscientiously religious, she did knit on Sundays. But her Sunday stockings, as she called them, were always put in the missionary box. She used to say that as she could not read with any enjoyment she knit to keep the devil away, and that it was much less sin to knit on Sunday than to talk wicked gossip, or what was quite as bad, to think it.

She had as keen a scent for scandal as a fox hound



for his game, but her perception was used to avoid defamatory talk. She would often say, "Now, s'pose that was you, how would you like to hev it talked 'bout? Less talk 'bout suthin' else."

Whenever the subject of matrimony came under discussion she would remark, "Ye know, I don't b'lieve in long engagements."

Jonas Bond, her late husband, was a very peculiar man; a good and just man, who always intended to do right. He did not mean to be, and was not really, a hard man. His feelings were deep, especially his kindly ones, so deep that they seldom rose to the surface. He certainly did not wear his heart on his sleeve for daws to peck at.

By the death of his father he came into possession in early life of a good farm, and was termed "fore-handed." His temperament was not cold, but quiet; a man of few words. In fact, he would not have been more sparing of them had there been a word tax of one cent each to be paid on utterance. He improved on the scriptural injunction, let your communications be yea, yea, and nay, nay, by yes and no, with a preponderance of the latter.

This undemonstrative, apparently emotionless man, fell in love. One would have supposed that Jonas Bond was immune, and no matter how virulent the epidemic, would have escaped.

When his engagement was announced, no one to whom the conundrum was proposed could guess to whom, and when told that it was little Almira Jane Watkins and that she had the disease even worse than

Jonas, it could hardly be believed. The idea that this great coarse-fibred man should love such a doll of a girl, the little kitten, as she was known by her mates, or on the other hand, that the diminutive, æsthetic piece of femininity should love one of such contrast as Jonas Bond, was beyond comprehension, and furnished talk until the wedding, not long deferred after the fact of the engagement had become the property of the neighboring gossips.

She was so small and he so large that he could carry her about on his shoulder, take her in his lap and cuddle her in his bosom as he would any child.

The gossips of the neighborhood expected him to tire of his plaything, but he did not.

Soon the frail flower faded, withered and died. The baby boy she left did not compensate for her loss. This great strong man bowed under his anguish and could not be reconciled. It seemed to him that no one had ever before lost, suffered as he suffered; but, day by day, the necessities of daily duties pressed for recognition, and his friends at last had hopes that he would again become a rational being.

What troubled him most was to get a proper person to take care of the baby boy. He would not part with it. To him it was a portion of its lost mother. At night it was his care, but in the daytime it was left to the tender mercies of the ignorant Canadian woman who did the farm housework. One night the child had been more than usually fretful, and its father had walked the floor all night, in a vain effort to quiet it. At daybreak he laid the child on the bed, and in a fit

of desperation said, "You shall have a mother before another night."

He hitched up his old horse and drove to Neighbor Brown's, and asked Mrs. Brown if she knew of a good motherly woman to take care of the baby.

"Now," said she, "Jonas, it's a pow'rful short time sence Almiry Jane died, an' some folks might think it scand'lous fer you to git marri'd so soon. Thar's a-plenty of good wimmin thet 'ud marry ye, perticklerly bein' as you've got sich a good farm, but you can't hire none of 'em to go an' take care of thet poor baby, 'cause thet might make more scandal."

Mrs. Brown had known Jonas ever since he was a baby, and felt authorized to talk motherly to him.

She was busy washing her dishes, but stopped to count off on her fingers nine or ten proper women for Jonas to marry, and probably would have added more had she had more fingers. But Jonas said:

"Thet's 'nuff. I'll go an' marry one of them wimmin afore night, if she'll hev me."

Some of them were widows, to whom Jonas did not take very kindly, and he said to Mrs. Brown:

"I'd ruther not hev second-hand goods, but I s'pose I'll hev to take my chance the same's in buyin' a cow. But I allus feel safe as long's the breed's good."

"You'd better go an' look at them wimmin jes' as they come on the road, an' not omit any on 'em 'cause yer sot ag'in widders."

After finishing her breakfast dishes she wiped her hands on her apron and sat down to discuss in detail the merits of the list of eligibles she had mentioned.

“Wall, thar, Jonas, in the beginnin’ an’ fust on the road is Widder Munson. She’s a right smart woman; some folks says she’s a leetle too smart to be comfort’ble to live with. Her husband was a minister of the gospel, an’ orter ben sanctified ’nuff to live with mos’ any woman; but my ole man says, an’ he’s a putty good jedge of human nater, thet he don’t know whar Mis’ Munson’s husband went to when he died, but wharever ’twas, he don’t b’lieve thet he’s ever ben sorry. She’s a putty high stepper, an’, Jonas, I don’t b’lieve thet ye want ’er, but ye kin go an’ see fer yerself. She’s good-lookin’ an’ w’ars good close. Then, thar’s my niece, er ruther, my ole man’s niece, Mary Brown; mighty nice gal, but ’tain’t no use to bother ’bout her, ’cause she’s good’s engaged to thet young Gates thet keeps store in Mendon.”

Mr. Brown, coming out of the barn where he had been doing his chores, noticed a rig standing in the road at the front of the house. He came in to see who the visitor was, and finding Jonas Bond, shook hands and sat down to have a neighborly talk.

“Spring’s pow’rful late. Got yer oats in yit? My groun’s too wet, an’ I’m all behind with my work.”

“Wall,” broke in Mrs. Brown, “if yer all behind with yer work, ye’d better go an’ ’tend to it, fer we’s a-talkin’ over Jonas’ private affairs an’ we don’t want yer help.”

The old man rheumatically raised himself from his chair and meekly said: “Yes, mother, I kin take a hint, ye needn’t speak no plainer,” and went out. Mrs. Brown went on:

"Thar's nothin' in the world that I'd like better, Jonas, ef I warn't so ole, than to take thet leetle critter of yourn to raise. I want a baby dreffully, fer my gran'childern air so fur off they airn't no use to me. Kinder queer, ain't it, but none of my childern was half so precious as my gran'childern. Lemme see; we was a-talkin' 'bout my niece. Good gal, but she's out of the calkerlation, an', come to think 'bout it, I dunno's you'd want 'er anyhow. Wall, next on thet road's Mehitable Calkins. She's a proper good gal. She's got a class in Sunday-school, an' Parson Whitin' says she's one of the elect. Thar's never ben nothin' said agin her character, but then, I dunno's you'd want 'er. I wouldn't ef I was a man. She's nigh onto forty year ole, all skin an' bones, nothin' but a skel'ton. No, sir; I'd as soon lay in a chist of j'iner's tools as to git into bed with her. Guess ye don't want 'er, do ye, Jonas? A man nater'lly wants suthin' 'sides character an' bones fer a wife, don't he? Now, lemme see—thar, thet pot's a-b'ilin' over. I mus' 'tend to thet er I'll hev the kitchen floor to mop, an' it's only yistiddy thet I cleaned all up." Returning, Mrs. Brown said:

"Lemme see! Who was we a-talkin' 'bout? Oh, we was talkin' 'bout Mehitable. I allus call 'er Miss Scraggles. Don't s'pose she's to blame fer bein' thin. Yer good bait, Jonas, with yer nice farm, an' yer putty well fixed, too. Yer orter ketch a good fish, but yer kinder hampered, bein' in sich a hurry. Wimmin, ye know, Jonas, is queer critters. They's suthin' like fish. When I was a gal I used to go fishin' with my

brother Bill. I'd hold a nice bait right afore a fish's nose an' it wouldn't even open its mouth, but turn an' swim away jest as if he didn't see it. But ye draw it away towards another fish, then he'd grab quick. Yes, fish's queer critters, an' so's wimmin. Lemme see! Thar's Lucy Todd. I hain't nuthin' ag'in her, only she giggles. My, I dunno but she'd giggle at her own fun'ral. I seen her do it at the time they buried her mother. Then, thar's thet ole maid, Mis' Skinner. She's allus cross. She hain't got no milk of human kindness in her buzzum. She wouldn't be good fer nuthin' to nuss a baby. Wall, thar's Julia Johnson, but she's red-headed. Hev ye got any prejudice ag'in red-headed folks? I hain't. I've knowed jest as good red-headed wimmin as any other kine. My, I 'member Parson Whitin's third. She was red-headed. She was jest as good a woman as ever lived, an' when she died, thar was more real mourners at her fun'ral than ever I seen in the meetin-house afore. Thar's 'nuther one I'se 'memberin'. Thet's Nancy Pringle. She's ole an' humbly, but she mus' be good er she'd a killed thet ole she-devil of a step-mother of hern afore this. If thar's any virtue in trial an' tribulation, she's a saint. Them's all the gals an' wimmin thet I now think on wuth mentionin'; an' mind ye, I don't recommend any on 'em. They say marriage is a lottery, but ef ye git any of these wimmin 'twon't be long afore ye knows whether ye got a prize er suthin' ye don't want."

Jonas thanked Mrs. Brown and said he'd "go an' try 'em," bade her good-morning and mounted his

wagon, feeling that he had not received the help that he came for. As he drove out of the yard Mrs. Brown rushed from the house and fairly shouted:

“Say, Jonas, whatever ye do, keep away from them air Blossom gals. They’s pizener than the smallpox ever was.”

## CHAPTER XIII

### COURTING.

**I**T is of no use following Jonas all that long day. After getting Mrs. Brown's eligible list of widows, old maids, and young girls, he started on his tour of inspection. People on whom he called thought him to be demented. It certainly was a crazy way to get a wife.

At every place he bluntly told his story. Some of the widows laughed at him, others invited him to call again; but that would not answer, as he was determined that his boy should have a mother that night, and could have quoted from the pirate's song, "This night or never my bride you shall be." As to the old maids, they would have none of him, and considered themselves insulted; while the young girls simply tee-heed and ran into the house. It was nearly dark when he reached the last name on the list, that of Nancy Pringle.

Before he came in sight of the house, which was around the corner, he saw evidences of Jonathan Pringle's peculiarity. It is said that every man has a hobby, which in Jonathan's case was the auction mania. Mrs. Pringle could control her husband in everything but this. He never heard of an auction within twenty miles that he did not attend, and always came home with a lot of useless truck. Carts, wagons,



sleds, plows, harrows, fanning mills, anything and everything that could be bought cheaply, were brought home and distributed beside the road. It was all "for sale," but nothing was ever sold. Old wagons had stood beside the road for twenty years, until they had fallen to pieces.

Jonas pulled up his horse, looked to the right and to the left, and said to himself, "If Nancy is as shiftless as the ole man, I don't want 'er. But then—the boy must hev a mother," and he drove on.

Having been rebuffed so many times, he was about discouraged, and felt very much inclined to think that the last criticism that he had received, from the tongue of an attractive widow, "You're a born fool. Do you suppose any decent woman is going to marry a man without even time to wash her face?" might be true. He would try this last on his list.

Jonathan Pringle was a very worthy man, and his seven girls were respectable, not attractive. As he could not dower them, they were getting a little shopworn. The eldest, Nancy, thirty-eight years old, was a child of his first wife, and she and the step-mother had never agreed. Mrs. Pringle, the second, had tried every means that she could think of to get rid of Nancy, except poison, and Nancy was quite convinced that that method had more than once been thought of.

It was nearly dark when Jonas Bond drove into the yard. He had known Mr. Pringle for a long time. Without ado he began:

"Good-evenin', Mr. Pringle."

"Good-day, Neighbor Bond."

"I s'pose ye know, Mr. Pringle, thet I lost my wife 'bout three months ago, an' she left me a little baby."

"Jest so."

"I can't hire a suitable woman to come an' keer for the baby, 'cause I'm a widderer."

"Eggsactly. Jest so."

"An' I've made up my mind thet the child shall hev a mother."

"Jest so! Jest so!"

"I want a wife."

"Jest so!"

"Mis' Brown, she thet lives over on the Creek road, spoke well of your daughter Nancy, an' I thought I'd come an' see 'er."

"Jest so! I sartinly can't object to you an' Nancy a-keepin' comp'ny ef ye both wants to. She's of age, I s'pose ye know," and he laughed a queer little laugh.

"Yes, I know 't Nancy ain't young. We used to go to the ole brick schoolhouse together a good many years ago."

"Jest so!"

"But I ain't got no time to waste a-keepin' comp'ny with any woman. Thet ain't what I'm arter. I want a wife right off now, to-night. I want to take 'er hum with me, in this 'ere wagon, now!"

"Wall, I never! Jest so!"

The old man was struck aghast by the strange proposition. It was only the novelty of the proceeding that made him hesitate.

"Ye'd better go in, Mr. Bond, an' hev a talk with

Nancy, an' I'll talk the matter over with Mis' Pringle."

Jonas went into the house and was shown into the best room.

As Nancy entered, he said:

"Ye remember me, don't ye?"

"Oh, yes, how could I fergit ye?"

"Wall, I'm glad ye remember me. Ye hearn, didn't ye, thet my little wife died 'bout three months ago, an' left me a little baby? Wall, I'm a-lookin' fer some good woman to take care of thet little baby."

Nancy made no reply, but stood with eyes down-cast, blushing with embarrassment, which greatly increased as Jonas continued:

"I've come, Nancy, to ax ye to be my wife."

No reply. Before she was embarrassed, now thunderstruck, and countless emotions almost stagnated her thoughts. She had dreamed for many years and hoped for the lover who would come and rescue her from her miserable existence. Here was the long-looked-for deliverance, in this middle-aged man, who was older than his years.

"Won't ye ans'er me?"

"Please not now. Give me time to think on it. It's all so sudden like. I'll talk with my father to-morrow."

"To-morrow won't do. I mus' hev a wife to-night."

"To-night? Oh, no, I couldn't think on it."

During this conversation in the best room, Mr. Pringle was in the kitchen telling his wife of Bond's queer proposition.

"Wants to marry to-night? Wall, these widdersers is allus in a ter'ble hurry. I 'member one, but he wa'n't quite so fast 's this man. Wonder what she'll say to him? Guess she'll refuse 'im. Ole maids is orful pertickeler."

Jonathan saw his chance to hit back, and said: "Ya-as, jest so! I recollect' an experiance thet I hed with an ole maid once."

Mrs. Pringle didn't feel called upon to notice this side-thrust, being too anxious as to what Nancy would do. She soliloquized: "She never hed sich a oppor-tunity, an' she'll never git another. She shall marry him. I was fool 'nough to let slip a good chance to git rid on her five year ago." Then, turning to her husband:

"Jonathan, you go and talk to Mr. Bond, an' don't ye let him git away; an' send Nancy to me."

Nancy came and was scarcely in the room when her step-mother asked:

"What did ye tell 'im?"

"I tole 'im I'd talk with father to-morrow."

"What good 'll thet do to talk with yer father to-morrow? He wants to marry ye to-night."

"Oh, I can't do thet. It's too sudden."

"Hain't ye ben a-waitin' twenty year fer a chance? Shouldn't think twenty year very sudden. Wall, ye know what I tole ye five year ago, thet if ye ever let slip 'nother chance I'd bounce ye out of the house, an' I'll do it, too, an' yer ole fool of a father can't help it, either."

A good deal more of this sort of language followed,

as Mrs. Pringle was a free speaker. Nancy knew that her step-mother ruled that house with an iron hand, which was never gloved, and that all that her father dared was to say, "Yes, mother, jest so!"

Nancy had no aversion to Jonas Bond, and no doubt had she been approached in the usual manner of courtship, would, after a proper time for consideration, gladly have said yes.

There is something about the usual courtship and a formal wedding that appeals to every woman's sentimental nature. The wedding gown, the cake, the ring, and all the associated paraphernalia are the desire of every daughter of Eve.

Nancy well knew that her step-mother would keep her word and turn her out of doors. She said she would go upstairs and think a little while. She went to her room, knelt down and prayed for help. "Oh, my God, what ort I to do?" It was a serious struggle. She reasoned that there was nothing to prevent her marrying Jonas Bond, except that she did not love him. He did not love her. He only wanted someone to take care of his baby, *her* child, the child of the little woman he loved so well. If she loved it, and she knew that she would, perhaps she would soon love him, and he might love her.

At last the matter was arranged and she and her few belongings were put in the wagon. They were to drive four miles to Parson Whittaker's, and from there four miles home.

"Good-bye," she said, as they drove out of the yard, feeling that she was taking a leap in the dark.

"Hold on, hold on, Jonas," cried Jonathan Pringle. "What'll ye do ef the parson ain't to hum?"

"I'll fetch 'er back all right," responded Jonas, as he cracked his whip over the old mare's back.

Perhaps it is better to let Aunt Nancy tell the rest of the story.

"It tuk more'n half an hour to git to Parson Whittaker's, it bein' nigh onto four mile, an' Jonas never spoke a word, 'cept 'g'lang' to the ole hoss. Parson Whittaker was to hum, an' when Jonas tole 'im that we'd come to git marri'd, he said he hoped we hedn't run away, an' thet when sich young folks come to git marri'd they orter bring a written consent from their parents; but he'd let thet go this time as he knowed us both. Jonas didn't like 'is jokin', as he wa'n't no joker. We went into the house an' the parson marri'd us. Jonas gin 'im a dollar, an' then turnin' to me said, 'Git into the wagon. You're my wife, Nancy, an' we'll go hum.' 'Twas nigh onto nine o'clock thet night when Jonas an' me got hum, an' I was Mis' Jonas Bond, an' them twenty cows hedn't ben milked. Jonas said to me, 'Nancy, I'll put out the hoss, an' you go in the house. In the butt'ry off the kitchen you'll find the milk pails, an' we'll milk them cows in a jiffy.' Ye see, we'd hed our supper to my ole hum afore we started. Wall, I fergot to tell ye thet Jonas hed tuk the baby over to Mis' Williamses, an' she said she'd take care on it till Jonas got back, as he tole 'er 'twouldn't be twenty-four hour afore thet baby 'ud hev a mother, an' 'twan't, an' a good one, if it's me as does say it. Wall, 'tain't nec-

essary fer me to tell ye how we got along thet night, with settin' the milk an' kinder straightenin' things out. In the mornin' arter breaffas', Jonas hitched up the ole hoss an' we druv over to Mis' Williamses. We went into the house, an' Jonas said, 'Good-mornin', Mis' Williams. Lemme interjuce ye to Mis' Jonas Bond. We've come arter our baby.' Mis' Williams was one of them wimmin thet carries suthin' on the end of 'er tongue to throw out, w'ether it's jest the proper thing er not, an' she said, 'What, thet ole maid, Mis' Bond?' " Aunt Nancy dropped a stitch at the recollection of this sarcasm, and continued:

"Wall, thet's nigh onto forty year ago, an' I hain't forgin 'er, though she's ben dead more'n thirty year, an' I never will. 'Tis true thet I'd never ben marri'd afore, an' was in my thirty-eighth year, but she needn't a ben so mean's to throw it in my face. Wall, we tuk the baby an' went hum, an' Nathaniel never knew thet I wan't his mother, an' I never knew thet he wan't my child, fer he allus seemed so to me, seein' as how I never hed no baby of my real own. Nathaniel, poor little critter, was allus weak an' sickly. Ye see, he tuk arter 'is mother, Almiry Jane. The Watkinses w'an't none on 'em strong. The hull fam'ly's dead an' gone. It almos' broke my heart to let 'im go, an' I prayed God to lemme keep 'im, but I s'pose Almiry Jane was a-prayin' the Lord to let her hev 'im, an' bein' nearer the throne she hed the mos' influence an' got 'im. He w'an't only four year ole, poor little critter. How I'd a liked to kep' 'im! Jonas wa'n't so broke up as I 'spected. He didn't

know nothin' 'bout a mother's love. But I mus' hurry on. The neighbors hed a good 'eal to say 'bout Jonas Bond's ole maid, but them gossips is dead long ago, an' though Jonas an' me hed our little tiffs, same's I s'pose all marri'd folks does, he often said he wa'n't sorry he marri'd thet ole maid."

When Jonas buried his Almira Jane he buried his heart with her.

Up to the time of the grand episode of his life, he was in truth a hard-shell bachelor; not unkind, simply expressionless.

It is often said that when one does not have the measles in childhood, and has them in maturity, it goes harder with him. So it is with love. When a man passes the mating period in life without having experienced the divine passion, if, later, Cupid succeeds in penetrating his armor, it is a more serious matter than with a youth. Thus it was in this case. He loved Almira Jane with all the life there was in him; and that was no mean quantity, for his was a strong nature.

Nancy was a natural woman. She had always wanted somebody to love, and soon grew to love Jonas Bond. He was kind to her, always treated her with much consideration; but she was unable to kindle that dormant spark of love that shone so brightly during his life with Almira Jane.

She lavished on the boy while he lived all the love that could have been possible had he been her own.

Years went on and they became old. She hoped



and strove, all in vain. He never once had said that he loved her.

She continued to knit. In almost every room in the house where she had frequent occasion to go, might be found a stocking, with the needles in, on which more or less had been knit, lying where it could be caught up in passing. She squared the heels and rounded the toes of many a dozen socks. One might go into a room after dark, where she was sitting without a light, and know that Aunt Nancy was there by the click, click, click of her knitting needles.

But the time came when she had to lay down her knitting, for her husband was sick, sick unto death, and needed all her care, which was tenderly bestowed. She anxiously watched with the hope that at last he would utter the words of love so long hungered for. Every time that he spoke her poor starved soul leaped with expectation, only to be again disappointed. Finally the supreme moment seemed near at hand. He called:

“Nancy, Nancy.”

She sprang to the side of the bed.

“Nancy.” Again the dying man murmured in softer tones, “Nancy.”

“Yes, yes, I am here, dear Jonas,” and she bent her head close to his lips, expecting the benediction so many years waited for.

“Nancy.”

“Yes, dear Jonas.”

“Nancy, when corn gits to a dollar, you sell.”

His head fell back on the pillow, and he was dead.

Nancy fell upon her knees beside the bed and wept bitterly. Her sobs and tears were not so much because of his death, as from her disappointment at not receiving an acknowledgment of that which every woman's heart so ardently craves.

"Wall," she said to herself, "Almiry Jane hes waited a long time fer 'im, an' I s'pose that they're happy now."

Jonas Bond did love his wife. He could not have lived with her all those years without loving her, for she was a lovable woman. True, she lacked the refinement of a lady, and knew nothing of the fine arts, but in her coarse setting was a tender heart, a true woman's nature, ever mindful of her husband's least wish, expressed or discerned. He loved her and appreciated her, but he could not have told her so to save his life or hers. You do not know why; neither do I. There are things that cannot be either understood or explained.

Jonas Bond married because he needed someone to take care of Almira Jane's baby, but it was a long time after that hurried marriage ceremony at Parson Whittaker's before Nancy became his wife. He lived on a memory, nursed it, and tended it with all the care that one would bestow on a delicate plant. He strove to be loyal to it, and when his heart, in spite of himself, began to warm toward Nancy, he felt that he was verging near to unfaithfulness to Almira Jane, and thought to compromise by never opening his heart to his wife. How much happier both would have been had he avowed his love for her, one can only imagine.

At least such a course would have demonstrated whether one could love a memory and a reality and be equally true to each.

The assumption that love is a flower that only blooms in the spring, is a great mistake. Does not everyone know that the pale tints of the spring are not to be compared with the rich, ruddy glow of the autumn flowers? "Oh, how shocking! Isn't it terrible!" is the common expression, when death steps in to separate a young couple who have just started on wedded life. They are like two young trees that have been set side by side. One can be pulled up, scarcely disturbing the ground about the other, and in a short time the grass grows over the spot, and the turf is again solid. So it is with the young widowed. Were it not for the dainty little weed or the narrow mourning-band of the groom, which soon disappears, no one would ever have known of the mating. But let those trees stand side by side for ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or as is often the case, fifty years, all the time throwing out those little fibres and rootlets, ever intertwining, so you could not with Roentgen rays tell to which trunk the roots belonged. Now, when death pulls up one of these trees, it is truly "shocking, terrible."

"What God has joined together let no man put asunder."

There was nothing out of the common about Jonas Bond's funeral, except that those present who did not know Nancy Bond and her peculiarities, were astonished when into the "best room," where lay the remains

of her late husband, came the widow, knitting-work in hand, and remarking more to herself than to anyone, "I mought as well knit a few bouts while the mourners is gatherin'."

## CHAPTER XIV

### AN ANGRY FATHER

**A**FTER the murderous scene in the woods, when Solomon Gibson attempted the life of Sam Drisco, the old man went home at once, and was soon followed by Mrs. Gibson and Sally. As mother and daughter entered the house they were met by as angry a man as ever escaped apoplexy. His rage knew no bounds. Woman though Sally was, had it not been for the interference of her mother, her father would have struck her down.

“Stop, Solomon Gibson, stop!” she cried. “You shall not strike my child.”

He lowered his threatening arm and began a tirade of abuse that continued until both vocabulary and strength were exhausted. “Mind you,” he said, “you huzzy, you shall never marry that miserable Sam Drisco, an’ you *shall* marry John Mannin’.”

Sally, who had been standing gazing at him more in astonishment than fear, said quietly:

“Father, I know that it is my duty to obey you, but though I may never marry Sam Drisco, I shall not marry John Manning.”

“Git out of my sight, ye huzzy! Ye shall marry John Mannin’, ef I hev to take ye to the meetin’-house bound hand an’ foot.” This was the last time that

her father ever spoke to her directly on the subject; but he did not intend to be thwarted in his plans.

The would-be husband came from time to time, but Sally never met him, except in the presence of someone else. For this Manning did not much care, not being an ardent lover. In fact, he was no lover at all. The holy flame had never been kindled in his breast.

The arrangements for the marriage were all made and the day set. It was the custom in that community for marriages to take place in the meeting-house, and they were public. By intermarriages, most of the neighbors were cousins in some degree, and where not related, intimate friends, so that a wedding or funeral in the neighborhood was always considered a family affair, which all attended, without special invitation. The festivities were often omitted or delayed to a convenient season.

This arrangement was satisfactory to Mr. Gibson, as he feared that at the last moment Sally might refuse to submit, but hoped that her deep religious feelings would restrain her from making a scene in the meeting-house. As for John Manning, he did not desire any festivities, as he had no intimate friends whom he wished to participate.

Sally was informed by her mother that her father had fixed the day, and she simply said, "I will be ready." She requested that her dress should be plain white muslin, which was made and trimmed in accordance with her wishes; though in its plainness it was more like a shroud than a wedding gown.

It was a bright Sunday morning, just such a day as two happy hearts would wish for their wedding. Sally felt that the bright sun was mocking her, as she went sadly to her room to dress.

Mr. Gibson went out to hitch up his team, and then came back to get himself ready, by donning his Sunday clothes. The meeting-house was two miles distant. At ten o'clock he began to be uneasy, fearing that they would be late, and waited impatiently for Sally to come down. Out of patience, he went to the staircase and called angrily, but there was no response. Again and again he called, and then went hastily up to her room to exert his parental authority for the last time.

The door stood wide open, but Sally was not there. Returning, he told his wife, and they both searched the house; but Sally could not be found. Failing to find her in the house, Mr. Gibson looked through the barn and all the farm buildings, with no better success. Then, it was the most natural thing in the world for him to think that Sally had gone with Sam Drisco. He went out into the road to look for wagon tracks, but there were none in either direction. It had rained in the night and the road was a little muddy. He thought of the woods, but not a footprint was to be seen. There seemed nowhere else, as no one thought of the river, whose placid surface looked too innocent to conceal anything.

The Gibson farmhouse stood but a short distance from the river, which ran behind it. On the bank was a large oak tree, and as the current had changed it

had washed the earth away from the roots, so that many of them, in the springtime, were covered by the water. Later in the day someone walking on the river-bank saw the skirts of a white dress floating on the water, and gave an alarm. Sally Gibson lay in the deep pool beneath the oak. With her right hand she held herself under water, by grasping the root of the tree at the bottom of the river. In her left was a little dried bunch of flowers.

Sally's body was not taken from the water until nearly dark. No one could be persuaded to unclasp that hand from the root, at the bottom of the river. There was something so uncanny about her determined effort to die that many felt that to release the hand that clasped death so tightly would be an interference with fate, with God's will, perhaps. People in those days were very superstitious.

A pit-saw was brought and the root severed. There were then no telegraphs, telephones, or wireless messages, but in some surprising way the neighborhood, far and wide, had heard of the sad catastrophe and hundreds had gathered under the old oak tree. The body was taken from the water, carried to the house and laid upon a couch in the living-room.

Old man Gibson sat in a corner, his elbows on his knees, his face in his hands. The mother paced up and down the room with rapid strides, stopping every now and then to bend over the body of her child. She shed no tears, but moaned; and such a sound could only come from the depths of a human heart where unspeakable agony reigned. She went over to the



corner where the old man sat, and stopping before him, said:

"Solomon Gibson, look at your work. I hope that you are satisfied now."

He raised his head. "Oh, don't, mother, don't speak so to me."

She looked at Sally and then, turning quickly to him, said:

"No, Solomon, I will not speak so to you, and never again will I speak to you, so long as God lets me live." And she never did.

The funeral was to take place the following Tuesday, the regulation limit of time from death, established by many years' custom. Most of the farmers of that day buried their dead on the homestead. Years before, Solomon Gibson had selected a plot of ground on the summit, about an eighth of a mile west of the house, for a family burying-ground, and had enclosed it with a substantial stone wall. A gate opened into the highway. To this virgin soil the dead virgin was to be committed.

On Monday morning the village cabinet-maker was ordered to make the coffin. Meanwhile the body of Sally lay on a stretcher in the parlor, tenderly placed there by kind neighbors. The fingers of her left hand still held the dried bunch of flowers. Her mother would not permit their removal. Her right hand clasped the short piece of the root of the tree, for so rigid were the fingers that they could not be detached without violence. At evening the watchers came and sat in an adjoining room, it being the custom that the

dead should not be left alone during the night. The sad vigil was kept by two of her dear friends.

It is but just to Mr. Gibson to say that he was broken-hearted by the loss of his daughter, though the varied elements of humanity that raged in his bosom were beyond analysis. He looked upon Sam Drisco as the murderer of his child, and could not have been more certain of it had he seen him commit the deed. It was done, and, as he felt, by Drisco. It mattered not how.

On Monday, Sam Drisco came to the house. Old man Gibson met him at the door. They did not exchange compliments. Sam said at once, his utterance being so far beyond his control that his articulation was scarcely intelligible:

“Mr. Gibson, may I see—her—her—body?”

“No!” thundered Mr. Gibson, “an’ if I ever ketch ye on my premises ag’in, ye murderer, I’ll shoot ye,” shutting the door abruptly.

Sam went sadly away and walked slowly down the road, turned into the path to the woods, and sat on the log where he and Sally had had their last parting.

On Tuesday morning, when the watchers went into the parlor to replace the cloths on the face of the dead girl, they noticed that instead of the dried wild-flowers she clasped in her hand a bunch of fresh violets; whence or how they came, no one knew. Later, when Mrs. Gibson came to take the last look at her dear child, she missed a little curl of Sally’s hair. She said nothing, and even felt a satisfaction that Sally’s lover should have this token.

The hour of the funeral came, and with it the people from far and near. There was no such thing as private grief. Everybody attended a funeral, from many different motives. Some came to express their sad sympathy, others to pay their respects to the dead and to the living, others for the gratification of a morbid curiosity. On this occasion all came, except the two supposed to be most interested, John Manning and Sam Drisco; though it was said that someone saw Sam watching the procession, from behind a tree in the woods, as it passed from the house to the little graveyard on the hill. We here leave Sally Gibson, and she passes out of our story; but she never passed from the memory or lost the love of Sam Drisco, as evidenced by the fact that for more than forty years, to the end of his life, there was always to be found on her grave each springtime large bunches of trailing arbutus.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE AUCTION

**J**OHAN MANNING was a man who had not the least respect in the world for Mrs. Grundy. He did pretty much as he liked, keeping always well within the law, and never taking into consideration whether the gossips of the neighborhood might or might not approve.

As has been said, he did not attend the funeral of Sally Gibson. He was disappointed and chagrined at the outcome of his matrimonial venture. To him there was no more in the loss of Sally Gibson than there might have been in the failure of making a prospective purchase of oxen or horses. Probably there was not a person in the neighborhood who was so little touched by her death as he.

His dominant feelings that morning were anger, bitter resentment and a desire for revenge on Sam Drisco. "I'll get even," he muttered to himself, "with that meddling fool. I'll teach him a lesson in minding his own business that he'll remember quite as long as he will Sally Gibson."

He went to his bedroom, and after carefully barring the door, pulled the bed away from the side of the room, turned back the old rag carpet, and lifted a small trap-door in the floor. Beneath the floor the old deacon, his father, had walled up with stone a

space about two feet square and a foot in depth, which he used for a hiding-place for his valuables and money, when he had occasion to keep any in the house. This was covered with heavy oak plank. He took from this safe an old tin trunk which was fastened with a padlock. Taking a key from his watch-chain, he unlocked the box and took out a package of papers. Holding them in his left hand and pulling the ends over so as to uncover the inscriptions, he soon found what he wanted. "Ah," he said, "here it is. 'Eben Drisco and wife to Daniel Manning.' We'll see, Sam Drisco, whether you'll mind your own business." He put this paper in his breast-pocket, and then replacing everything, sat down at the table near the window to look over the mortgage, which was security for a note of two thousand dollars given by Eben Drisco to Daniel Manning. The inspection of the mortgage and of the accompanying note was satisfactory. "It's all right," he said. "I'll have him off that farm in just forty days."

He then went to the door, called his hired man, and told him to hitch his horse to the buggy. After changing his clothes, he drove out of the yard, and turned to the left, which was not toward Farmer Gibson's, where lay the dead bride awaiting the last rites.

"Wall, I swow," said the hired man to himself, "ef thet John Mannin' ain't the curiosesest critter thet ever I seed. He ain't a-goin' to his gal's funeral."

No, with that mortgage in his pocket and vengeance in his heart, he was hurrying away to the

county town to place it in the hands of his lawyer, to be foreclosed "just as quick as you can do it."

The interest was two years past due.

Sam Drisco had had hard luck. His old mother, of whom he never thought without a "God bless her" rising to his lips, had been for years a chronic invalid, and it had often been said by the neighbors that Dr. Sharp was swapping his pills for the Drisco farm. Mrs. Drisco's sickness had been a grievous burden, not only on account of the loss of her services in the house, but because of the doctor's bills, and the time that it took Sam from his work. It seemed that everything that he took hold of turned out badly. The year before he had a large field of corn, by the sale of which he had expected to pay the interest on the mortgage which hung over his life like a black cloud that for years had not let a ray of sunlight through. To add to all these troubles described above, there came up at this time a terrible storm. Torrents of rain fell, and the mountain streams overflowed their banks. The fierce flood swept away his cornfield, soil and all, and in its place was left the *débris* of the forest which had stood above it.

When the interest became due he could not meet it. John Manning said that he must have security or he would foreclose the overdue mortgage, though the fact was that he had already begun foreclosure proceedings. Sam said to him:

"I have nothing but the stock, the farm tools, and the furniture in the house."

"Well," replied John, "I'll take a chattel mortgage on them."

This Sam cheerfully gave, having no desire to evade his honest debts. He did not notice the short time the mortgage had to run. If he had, it would have made no difference, for there was no alternative.

Notwithstanding the giving of the security for the interest, Manning foreclosed the mortgage on the farm. At the expiration of the time allowed by law, the farm was sold at auction by the sheriff, and of course was bought in by John Manning, for the mortgage and the back interest left no equity for anyone to purchase.

Notice had been served on Sam Drisco "to quit, surrender and peacefully deliver up the property herein described."

The chattel mortgage was foreclosed, the property advertised, and the day set for a public vendue, to take place at the Drisco farm.

This chattel mortgage had been merciless in its drawing, for it not only enumerated the horse, five cows, the yoke of oxen, pigs and hens, the carts, the plows, the harnesses, the wagons, the sleds, and all the household furniture, even to the beds and bedding, but ended with the sweeping clause, "also included herein every movable article of personal property now within said cottage, occupied by the said Sam Drisco."

As if Sam's cup was not quite full, the old horse kicked him the morning of the auction, breaking one of his legs, and at nine o'clock, the advertised time of the sale, Dr. Sharp was setting the broken leg.

All of the men and boys of the neighborhood were there. John Manning looked over the assembled crowd with great satisfaction, thinking that he would certainly realize enough from the sale to pay up the interest. But few of the people who came that morning came to buy. Most of them were there from curiosity, to see "how Sam took it." Any of them would have liked a bargain, but John Manning was so much disliked in the neighborhood, and his course toward the Driscos had been so cruel, caused as all knew by the Sally Gibson incident, that there was an almost unanimous feeling of protest, which they would register by refraining from bidding.

Before the time arrived for beginning the sale, a young farmer, who had a reputation for striking out from the shoulder, defending on all occasions what he considered the right, and always helping the under dog, passed quietly through the crowd, saying in a low tone, "I don't think there's any man here who wants to bid on this property." To be sure this only appeared to be, as Joe explained it, "my humble opinion," but the hint was too significant not to be understood.

The auctioneer stood up in a wagon in the centre of the yard, and read the advertisement of the sale; then said:

"Now, gentlemen, let us begin our day's work. There are a good many articles here to be sold, and everything must go. If you will only bid lively, I'll knock the bargains down as fast as they can be trotted out. Also, gentlemen, I take pleasure in announcing



that John Manning, Esq., the mortgagee of this property, has set up a barrel of cider, a-plenty of crackers and cheese and cold meat, to partake of which you are cordially invited, at the intermission of the sale. Now, gentlemen, the first article that we will offer you, will be this old horse, old enough and experienced enough to be safe for any woman or child to drive; pulls straight in the furrow and never balks. Now, gentlemen, what am I offered for this horse? She's well worth a hundred dollars. Will you bid fifty? Do I hear fifty? Does anyone say forty? Don't be backward, gentlemen, don't be modest. A wink's as good as a nod. Will you give me thirty? Who says thirty? Who says twenty-five? Well, gentlemen, if you don't like my valuation, make your own. How much will you bid? How much will you bid?" Again and again he looked over the crowd, soliciting a bid.

One old fellow who had lost his horse the week before, opened his mouth and said "Fi——" but before he could finish the word, Joe Lynch pinched his arm, quietly saying, "I guess you don't want that horse, Mr. Spriggins."

The auctioneer was from a neighboring town, and having no knowledge of the situation, was greatly astonished; but supposing that no one wanted a horse, said:

"Well, gentlemen, as there does not seem to be anyone who wishes to bid, we will withdraw the horse and offer her again later. Now, let us try a cow." And he went through the same process, with the same re-

sult. His suspicion was at last aroused, for cows were quite scarce, were, in fact, almost legal tender in that community, and he knew that in this assemblage there must be at least twenty men who would, under ordinary circumstances, have bid on that cow. After a whispered conversation with Manning, he said:

“Gentlemen, as you do not seem to want either horses or cows, it is useless to go on further in this line. I would ask you if there is anything among the articles enumerated in the advertisement on which you would like to bid. If there is, we shall put it up.”

He waited a few moments for a response. None came.

“Well, gentlemen, as you do not desire to bid on any of the articles singly, the entire schedule enumerated in this chattel mortgage will be sold in one lot. The amount secured by the mortgage is \$250, and the expense will probably amount to twenty-five dollars more. Now, gentlemen, what am I bid for the entire property? It is certainly worth five hundred dollars. How much am I bid, bid, bid, bid? How much am I offered? What will you give? Name your own price. Will not someone make me an offer?” At last, seeing that he could get no bid from the crowd, he turned to Manning, and again said:

“How much am I bid? Will you make a bid, Mr. Manning?”

He replied: “I do not want the property, but as the law requires its sale at auction to the highest bidder, I will bid one hundred dollars.”

“Gentlemen, I am bid one hundred dollars,” said the sheriff. “One hundred dollars, one hundred dollars,” as he looked from right to left, scanning each uplifted face before him. “One hundred dollars. This is an outrageous sacrifice. One hundred dollars. Who will raise it? Gentlemen, if you will not bid, it is no use to dwell. Gentlemen, is one hundred dollars the best bid that I hear? If so, I shall knock it down. One hundred dollars, once; one hundred dollars, twice; one hundred dollars for the third and last time; and sold to John Manning, Esq.” The auctioneer then said:

“Gentlemen, I beg leave to thank you for your attendance here to-day, and regret that we could not have had closer business relations. Mr. Manning requests that you all go back to the barn and partake of the hospitable refreshments, which he has so generously provided.”

As he stepped down from the wagon, he started toward the barn, saying, “This way, gentlemen,” but not a man followed. Was it because there appeared to be a heavy shower coming up, or was their action a protest?

Many who knew the Driscos had been in the house and condoled with Sam and his mother on the multiplicity of their misfortunes that had overtaken them. All wondered what Sam and his mother would do, as they were aware that John Manning had in his pocket the dispossess warrant, and that this young man and his aged mother were penniless, homeless, actually shelterless; but not one extended a helping hand.

These people were not really heartless, only thoughtless. Each one supposed that of course there was some way, that some provision must have been made by somebody, and more than one of these men was asked by his wife when he reached home, "What's a-goin' to become of the Driscos?"; for the Driscos were favorites, having been kind and generous neighbors, who had always extended a helping hand to the unfortunate. They certainly had a large credit balance to their account, but no draft upon it would be honored without presentation, and it would never be presented by them.

"What's a-goin' to become of Sam, with his broken leg, an' his feeble ole mother?"

"Dunno," was the reply in each case. "Dunno; s'pose they'll hev to go to the poorhouse."

After the crowd had dispersed, John Manning drew from his pocket the dispossess warrant, handed it to the sheriff, and said:

"I want you to get those people out."

"What do you mean?" asked the sheriff. "You don't propose to turn them into the highway, do you?"

"I certainly do. The property is mine, and they must get out, and get out quick, too. I'll not wait a minute."

"Why, look at that storm coming, Mr. Manning. Do you mean to say that you are going to put them out into the highway now, without any shelter? Do you know that that man has a broken leg, and the old woman is sick and feeble? Why, you are liable to be indicted for murder."

Manning responded:

"I've nothing to do with the storm. I didn't break his leg, nor I didn't make the old woman sick, but they're on my property and they must get off."

Our sheriff-auctioneer had the reputation of being easy-going and not over sentimental in his legal transactions. He had secured his election by his good-fellowship. He would not hesitate to do anything which the duties of his office demanded, provided always that there was a good bond behind him; but to the utter surprise of John Manning, he stopped in his walk, faced about and, looking him squarely in the eye, said:

"Mr. Manning, as a boy, as a constable, and now that I am sheriff, I never did in all my life so mean a thing as you propose, and so help me God, I never will."

"Now, Mr. Sheriff, you needn't get up on your high horse, for it isn't any use. I know your duties, and you'll serve this dispossess warrant or I'll see that you are dispossessed of your office."

"Office or no office," replied the sheriff, "I can't forget that I have an old mother at home, and were she in Mrs. Drisco's place, and a man came to do the cowardly thing that you want me to do, I'd shoot him, if I had to hang for it. I've hanged folks, but I never hanged a man so mean as I should feel myself to be if I did this dirty business for you."

"Well, Mr. Sheriff, you are putting on a good deal of style for a man who hasn't any more property than

you have. You forget the handsome fee that I promised you, and I am willing to double it."

"Fees be d——d!" blurted out the sheriff. "You haven't money enough if you put it all into one big fee to induce me to set those Driscos out into the highway in this storm that's coming on. You are welcome to all the fees that you owe me. Your dirty money would be worse than the wages of the devil."

Just then the storm broke in all the fury of a summer thunder-shower and the downfall of water was of itself a deluge. The sheriff stepped up to the post where his horse was tied, and Manning said:

"You had better drive into the barn."

"I'd sooner seek the shelter of hell than any cover that belongs to you," and the sheriff drove out into the storm.

John Manning took shelter under the shed, disappointed, enraged. He felt that he had been deprived of a pleasure for which he had paid a high price.

The people had all gone away, with the exception of Jim Budson, who went into the house. Jim lived about half a mile down the road from the Driscos. He was a poor man who worked out by the day, had a wife and six children, who had come into the world one by one, year by year, as if they were the calendar by which he kept account of the years of his wedded life.

It seemed as if he had been allowed by Providence to earn by his work among the farmers just enough to keep his family fed and *ragg'd*; for it would have been a gross misnomer to have termed their habiliments clothing. He had worked a good deal for Sam

Drisco, and many a time, as he was going from his day's work, Mrs. Drisco had given him a basket of potatoes, a piece of pork, a loaf of bread, a little meat, tea or sugar. As he stood there looking at their misery, it seemed to him that he could see all those gifts which she had so kindly and so opportunely bestowed upon him, laid in line one by one, down the path to the road, and down the road, reaching clear to his house, and he was trying to solve in his mind some way by which he could repay those people who had been so good to him.

Just that moment the door from the woodshed opened, and in stepped Manning. Without waiting for any courtesies, he harshly said, "Sam Drisco and Mrs. Drisco," turning from Sam, who lay groaning on the couch, to Mrs. Drisco, who sat knitting in a high-back, wooden-seat rocker, "I suppose you know that I bought this property to-day, and it is mine. Everything there is under this roof. Every movable thing that's in the house, in the barn, in the yard, or anywhere else on the premises. You are intruders here, and I want you to get out."

At this moment Jim Budson said:

"Mr. Mannin', if I recollect' right, the cat wa'n't included in the schedule that the sheriff read afore he begun the sale."

To say that Manning was angry at this remark does not begin to describe the state of his mind. He was mad, mad clear through. He stepped up as if he would strike Jim Budson, who did not move, but looking him squarely in the eyes, said:

"Guess I wouldn't do thet, Mr. Mannin'. Take a leetle time to think, an' you'll remember thet I've gin you a goldarned lickin' more'n once, when we was boys, an' I'm able, an' putty nigh willin' to undertake it now, an' I think I would ef 'twa'n't fer the fact that a gentleman of your standin' wouldn't be likely to want to be mixed up in an ole-fashioned hard scrabble in the presence of a lady. But ef yer anxious to work off a leetle bit of yer surplus spite I'll try to 'commo-date, ef ye'll step out doors."

"You miserable pauper," replied Manning, "you're a curse to the neighborhood. You rob the hen roosts and the pig pens, and steal everything that you can lay your hands on, to keep your brats and that miserable bitch, their mother, from starving."

This was too much. It was more than the manly spirit of Jim Budson could brook. He made one jump, grabbed Manning by the throat with one hand, and with the other gave him a twist which threw him on his back on the floor. This quicker than could be told, and quicker than Manning could use his great strength in defense. Then placing his knee on Manning's breast, he angrily said:

"Now, you liar, take back every word thet you said, and say that you're sorry that you insulted my wife, or I'll choke the life out of you."

Mrs. Drisco screamed with terror, and cried:

"Oh, Jim, for God's sake, don't murder him!"

Sam turned on his couch so that he could see all, but did not speak.

Jim slightly relaxed his grasp on the throat of



Manning, who made an ineffectual struggle to unload him, and then said faintly:

"I didn't mean it."

"Did ye ever know er hear of my stealin' anything?"

"No, I never did," muttered the prostrate man.

"What did ye mean by callin' my wife a bitch?" And he gave the poor man's throat another clutch.

"I didn't mean it," again gasped the man on the floor.

Jim Budson then arose. "Git up an' git out, an' don't ye ever cross my path ag'in. Ef ye do, ye'll not git off as easy as ye hev this time. I wouldn't like to kill ye, but I might pinch a leetle too hard on yer gullet, an' the cor'ner 'ud decide who done it."

John Manning picked up his cap and went out, closing the door with a bang, but returning in a moment, said:

"Remember, you Driscos, that everything in this house belongs to me, and don't you touch so much as a potato. If you do, I'll have you arrested for stealing."

## CHAPTER XVI

### LOVE ASSERTS ITSELF

IT was not long after the coming of Mary Miles to Mendon before she and Richard Baxter became acquainted, and it seemed not only to them, but to an observing public, that they met at every corner of their lives. This was quite natural, as they were about the same age, associates in church and society, co-workers in the Bible class and Sunday-school, and both members of the choir of the Rev. Snodgrass' church. In addition there was a great similarity in their literary tastes, and Mary supposed that they held like views on religious matters. There being so much common ground on which they could meet and agree, it was no wonder that they became very dear friends.

There sprang up between them what they thought to be a purely Platonic friendship.

Another ever-present bond of sympathy was their poverty. He, a briefless lawyer; she, a poor school-mistress. What an incongruity would love be between two such people! They had too much good sense to think of it; at least they thought they possessed that kind of sense.

Meanwhile their intimacy became greater, their meetings more frequent. If they were to attend any function, public or private, they generally went to-

gether, and he always accompanied her home. The other young men of Mendon made way for, as they recognized in the situation, the successful lover.

Mary taught the village school, and it was a common occurrence for Richard either to come to the school at dismissal time, or to overtake her on her way home.

One day as she came into the house, after having stopped a long while at the gate talking with Richard, her mother said to her:

“Mary, are you and Richard Baxter engaged?”

“Engaged! What do you mean, mother?”

“Why, engaged to be married, of course. What else could I mean?”

“Richard Baxter and I engaged to be married!” repeated Mary, her face flushing with a rush of blood, which immediately receded and left it pale. Her left hand involuntarily clutched her heart and she fell in a faint.

A lightning flash is quick, but not so quick as the varied emotions that struggled for control between mind and matter in this emergency. Up to the moment when her mother, by an abrupt question, broke the spell, she had in her association with Richard been sailing on Lake Placid, without even a ripple of thought to disturb its surface. Her mother’s inquiry had been like the sudden coming of a whirlwind, which tossed her frail bark on the waves. She succumbed, and, as it were, passed down into the dark, deep waters. When she rose to the surface, she was another being, and to her new consciousness Richard was

a lover, and she realized an intensity of love for him beyond power of description.

Why attempt an impossibility? Those who have experienced the divine passion need no portrayal, and those who have never loved could not understand. The intercourse between Richard and Mary had been as frank and free as between brother and sister living in family intimacy from childhood. Oh, why should love assert itself to destroy their happiness!

## CHAPTER XVII

### DEATH BY THE ROADSIDE

**A**S John Manning closed the door of the Drisco cottage on the afternoon of the auction, the old mother said:

“Well, I suppose he expects us to go hungry, and I’d sooner starve than eat his food, even should he give it to us.”

“Mother, you are right,” groaned Sam, as an unendurable pain passed through his broken leg.

Jim Budson suddenly left, without saying a word.

Sam, in anxious tones, spoke: “Mother, do you know that it is only the poorhouse that will open its doors to us?”

“Yes, my son, it is only the poorhouse that will take us in. God help us to bear the disgrace.”

“Mother, there is no disgrace. Have I ever done anything to disgrace you? Could I have avoided our misfortunes? We are poor enough, God knows, but it is not our fault.”

Mrs. Drisco rocked herself in silence for a long time; then speaking as if it were a sudden conclusion:

“Sam, I have never told you, but I believe that the mortgage which is on our farm was paid by your father to Daniel Manning.”

“But, mother, the mortgage. John Manning has

the mortgage and the note. I have seen them both many times, when I have been to pay the interest."

"I can't help that. I believe that the mortgage was paid, for your father often said to me, when I would worry about our old age, 'Don't fret, mother, we'll soon have this farm free and clear, and as long as I am able to work we'll have plenty to eat, without eating any of the farm. And besides, Sam is getting to be a big boy and will soon be able to help us if we need it, and thank God he is willing. Sam is as good a boy as ever lived, and not a lazy bone in him.' Right after dinner, one day in March, your father hitched up a colt that had been driven only a few times. How well I remember! I'll never forget it. I begged him to take the old mare, as I had a feeling that something would happen, but he only laughed at me and said, 'Pshaw! mother, you must have had bad dreams last night. I'm strong enough to handle two such colts. Now, don't worry, because I'll bring good news for you when I come back. We'll have a celebration.' He didn't say anything about paying off the mortgage, but I knew what he meant, for he had told me the day before that he was going to town to meet Daniel Manning at Squire Baxter's office. I waited supper until after dark. Oh, how it thundered and lightened!" Mrs. Drisco shuddered at the recollection.

"At last I heard the wagon come into the yard. I hurried to put a candle in the window, went out the door, and saw standing there the colt, with the forward wheels of the wagon. I was all alone. You had

gone over to your Uncle Jack's. I pinned an old shawl over my head, put a candle in the lantern, and ran down the road toward Mendon. It's more than half a mile down to Minx's. When I got there Mr. Minx told his hired man to hitch right in and come after us, and we went on down the road. We had gone but a little ways, when we found your father lying almost dead, in the road. His neck was broken. I got right down in the mud where he lay, and cried out, 'Oh, speak to me, dear Eben, speak, oh! speak,' and he said, 'Paid Manning,' and died, without another word. Mr. Minx and his hired man lifted him on to the straw in the bottom of the wagon. It thundered, lightened and rained. Human nature could stand no more, and I fell. I fainted away. They laid me beside my dear, dead husband and brought us home. When I came to my senses the next day, I was lying on my bed, and heard Mrs. Minx say, 'Laws sake, she's a-comin' to!' The house was full of neighbors, who were very kind to me."

Mrs. Drisco related all this to her son, just as if she had never told it before, though she had told him many, many times; and it seemed such a consolation for her to recall all the horrid details of his father's death, that he never interrupted her, but heard it all patiently.

This reference to the story of the death of Eben Drisco by his widow makes it necessary for us to go back to the time of its occurrence.

Deacon Manning attended the funeral and made anxious inquiry of the coroner as to whether Drisco

had any papers in his pockets. He seemed much relieved when told that there were none.

The widow was for many months out of her mind, and frequently said pleadingly:

“Father, don’t take the colt. Now, please don’t take that colt.”

On the first day of January following the accident, Deacon Manning called and asked for the interest on the mortgage. This was something that Sam knew nothing about, and his mother was not in a condition to understand. The deacon told Sam that it was all right, showed him the deed and the note and the endorsements of interest regularly, the last of which was dated on the first of January before.

“Why,” said Sam, “I supposed that mortgage was paid.”

“I allus gin yer father a receipt ev’ry time he paid me money, an’ ye’ll find ’em prob’ly ’mongst his papers.”

Sam went to his father’s old desk and found the filed receipts, the last of which was, as the deacon had told him, dated the first of the previous January. Sam saw no other way than to pay the interest, which he did as soon as he could raise it; and the money had been paid every New Year’s since, until the last two.

Deacon Manning died the year following the death of Eben Drisco, and left a hard-hearted successor in his son John.

After Mrs. Drisco had closed her story, with flint and steel she lighted a candle, drew from the corner the Bible stand, opened the old family Bible and be-



gan reading aloud the twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

Sam was restlessly tossing on the lounge, evidently suffering much, and he impatiently exclaimed:

"Oh, stop, mother, or you will make an infidel of me. My cup does run over, but it is not with God's blessings."

## CHAPTER XVIII

“RICHARD, MY RICHARD!”

THE realization by Mary Miles of her love for Richard seemed to have changed her into another being. She, whose temperament, daily life, entire existence, had up to this moment been a model of equipoise, was unbalanced. Her physical and mental condition could only be compared to the machinery of the astronomical world that had been suddenly thrown out of gear, with the planets of the firmament rushing pell-mell through space.

Her mother, who in early life must have had her love episode, failed to understand the sudden shock, but considerately said nothing.

After Mary recovered from her faint, she went to her room, and did not join her mother, as was usual, in evening prayers. She sat in the dark for hours, a victim of uncontrollable, often maddening thoughts. In every group was Richard, ever Richard. Up to this time she had regarded him as a very dear brother. Many a time, in their strolls through the wood, of which they were fond, they had walked hand in hand, but the clasp was only material, not spiritual. There had never been any going-out of heart to greet heart; but now, realizing her love, she desired to rush to meet him, to throw her arms about his neck, to smother him with kisses and cry:

“Richard, my Richard! Dear Richard, God only knows how I love you!”

She seized the pillow from her bed, clasped it to her bosom, and Mary Miles, the innocent maiden who had never felt the inspiration of a lover’s kiss, hugged and kissed and hugged the inanimate object, held it at arm’s length, and then, as if looking into her lover’s eyes, ejaculated:

“Oh, Richard, dear, dear Richard, do you love me? Tell me, do you love me?” Alone with her God, nature had burst all bonds of maidenly reserve and love was reigning triumphant. She knelt down to say her prayers.

“Our Father, Richard’s Father, my Father, our Father Who art in Heaven.”

She had no sound sleep that night, but tossed feverishly, always dreaming; some, happy dreams, more that were not.

The next morning she recalled to the last detail all her insanity of the night before. Was it insanity? Each must judge from his individual viewpoint. She looked in the mirror and asked:

“Who are you? Who am I? You have the features of Mary Miles, but I who stand to make that reflection am not Mary Miles, surely not the Mary Miles of yesterday. She was happy, I am miserable. She was hopeful, I am despondent. She had a very dear friend, and I, alas, have lost my friend. Have I exchanged him for a lover? How I wish I knew! Why should not the chrysalis of friendship in his case, as it has in mine, develop into the butterfly of

love? Are the conditions the same? How can I meet him and appear my old self, with this consciousness of change? And if we do not meet as before, how shall I greet him? Why should I not speak my love? Yet, suppose that he does not love me?" Then she exclaimed, as many another girl had before, with as doubtful sincerity:

"I wish I were dead!"

## CHAPTER XIX

### “OVER THE HILLS TO THE POORHOUSE”

**A**FTER Jim Budson suddenly left the Drisco dwelling, he started for home with the intention of bringing some food, but before reaching there it occurred to him that his family had no food to spare, so he turned and went across lots, over on the South road, to Farmer Nixon's, where he told the sad story of the Driscos. He came back with a plentiful supply of food, not forgetting the tea and sugar so essential to the comfort of Mrs. Drisco, who, as she saw him enter, turned to Sam and repeated from the Psalm, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” Jim hurried away, saying:

“I'll come back early in the mornin', as ye may need some muscle.”

The night was without incident. The next morning Mrs. Drisco, though weak and feeble, was early astir. After making Sam as comfortable as possible, she prepared the remnant of their provisions for breakfast.

The food that Jim had brought them was the first bread of charity they had ever eaten.

Mrs. Drisco remembered her girlhood days and the happy home where plenty always abounded, her refusal to marry the well-to-do Sol Gibson, his curse when she chose the poor man she loved; she also re-

called her happy married life, comfortable, though not luxurious. And now, looking over her situation, she and her son paupers, did she think that she made a mistake when she refused to be the wife of Sol Gibson? Not for one moment had she a regret. Though she realized that God had always been good, she could not forget her lost husband, whose strong arm she so sadly needed in this hour of distress. "God," said she, "has always been——" looked at Sam, stopped short and burst into tears.

John Manning had been seized by a devil. He knew that he was wrong and that his treatment of the Driscos was contemptible, but the more he thought of the devilishness of his acts, the more furious he became. He arose from his bed in the night to go and turn them out with his own hands; then it occurred to him that he would be likely to have a damage suit to settle, and he reluctantly returned to his bed.

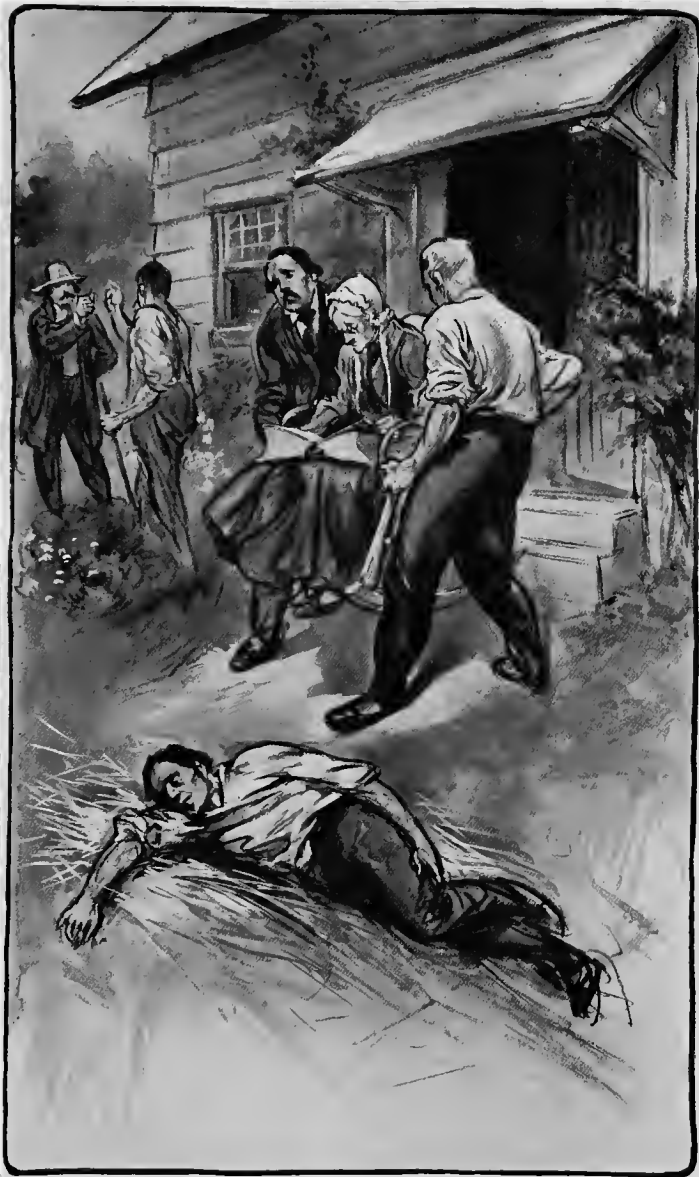
In the morning he was early at the cottage with a pliable tool in the shape of a deputy sheriff, who, whatever might be his scruples, dared not disobey Manning.

Jim Budson was also there. Mrs. Drisco sat in her rocking-chair with her Bible in her lap.

Manning entered the cottage without knocking, and said:

"Take the old woman out first. She can walk if she has a mind to, but if she won't walk, carry her out and dump her beside the road."

As she showed no disposition to walk, the deputy sheriff and a man who had come with him lifted on



**SAM AND HIS MOTHER ARE DISPOSSESSED.**





each side of the chair and carried her out of the yard and set the chair down.

“Bring back that chair,” shouted John Manning.

“Come an’ git the chair, ef ye want it,” responded Jim Budson.

Manning came to the roadside in a threatening manner, but it was not the first time that he had allowed his discretion to control his valor.

While this discussion was going on, the two men had brought Sam out and placed him on the ground. Jim hurried to the barn and brought out two bundles of straw, which Manning told him to carry back.

“You kin carry it back when I git through with it, ef ye want to. I sha’n’t.” He spread the straw on the ground, making as comfortable a bed as possible. Manning had sent word to the poormaster the night before that the Driscos would be turned out in the morning, and that he must come and care for them.

It was about eight o’clock when Poormaster Carter reached the Drisco farm. He was astonished to find Mrs. Drisco sitting by the roadside, with the old family Bible in her lap, and Sam lying on straw on the ground. He was indignant that respectable people should be so treated, and had not John Manning taken good care to get away, it is quite likely that he would have been the subject of a word-portrait that would not have flattered his vanity.

With the help of Jim Budson Mrs. Drisco was lifted into the chaise. They had to wait the arrival of the ambulance that was to take Sam. It was a farm wagon, without springs, the body resting on the axle-

trees, drawn by a yoke of oxen. There was an abundance of straw in the bottom of the wagon, on which were a feather bed and some blankets, so that the jolting and shaking should not cause unnecessary suffering. They placed him carefully in the wagon and the slow and weary journey to the poorhouse began.

It was a terrible trial for Sam, and he often wished himself dead. Had it not been for the duty that he owed and the love he bore his dear old mother, he would have shuffled off this mortal coil and faced the eternity of which he had as little fear as knowledge. But such would have been a cowardly act, and Sam Drisco was not a coward.

The poormaster drove off with Mrs. Drisco, leaving Sam to the slow progress of the ox team.

The road to the poor farm ran directly by Sol Gibson's, and when he saw the poormaster that morning driving down the road, he hailed him with:

"Hey, Carter, I seen yer cattle go down by here an hour ago, but they was so fur ahead afore I got out to the road thet I couldn't make the man hear, so I didn't find out where he was a-goin'. An' now you're a-goin' the same way with the chaise. What's up this mornin'?"

"Well, Mr. Gibson, you're a big taxpayer an' sartinly hev a right to know all thet's goin' on at the poorhouse. I hed notice las' night from John Mannin' thet he should dispossess Sam Drisco an' his mother this mornin', an' I mus' come an' take 'em to the farm. I sent my man with the ox wagon fer Sam, who has a broken leg."

“Oh, thet’s it, is it? The Driscos is a-gittin’ their desarts at last. The poorhouse is a dern sight too good fer sich cattle. Ef I hed my way, they’d rot by the roadside.”

The poormaster drove on, and, as we have seen, took Mrs. Drisco in his chaise and started on his return.

Solomon Gibson was waiting by the roadside to intercept them. As they drove toward him he signalled the poormaster to stop, and stepping to the side of the chaise, in a mock polite manner, took off his hat, and in sarcastic tones said:

“Good-mornin’, Mis’ Drisco; fine mornin’. Ridin’ out fer yer health? Glad to see ye lookin’ so fine. Fine mornin’, eh? Hope ye’ll like yer new res’dence. Ruther a come-down to go to the poorhouse. Ain’t so proud’s ye was twenty-five year ago.” At last he stopped, and Mrs. Drisco answered:

“Yes, Solomon Gibson, I am moving, and here (lifting her Bible from her lap) is all I have to take with me, thanks to John Manning.”

“Wall, Mis’ Drisco, ye’ve heerd the ole sayin’, folks makes their bed an’ has to lay in it.”

“You’re right, Solomon Gibson. I made my bed, and I’ve lain in it a great many years; and I tell you, Solomon Gibson, I’ve never, with all my misfortunes piled high on me, seen the minute that I was sorry that I didn’t marry you; and if I’d ever had a glimmer of regret, your cruel words to-day would have dispelled it. It’s true that I’ve had much suffering, but no doubt I deserved it. God’s will be done.” Then

she turned the old Bible around in her lap, and it seemed to open automatically at the twenty-third Psalm, and she began to read:

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,” etc.

This was more than Solomon Gibson could stand, and he shouted to the poormaster:

“Drive on, drive on! I wish you much joy with yer baggage!”

## CHAPTER XX

### THE LOVE WAIL

**W**HILE Mary Miles was trying to decide upon a plan of action when she should next meet Richard, her mother received a letter from an only sister, announcing her serious illness, and asking that Mary should come at once.

To Mary this was a deliverance, as it would prevent meeting Richard until she had adapted herself to her new mental condition, feeling, as she did, that she could not meet him now without betraying her love. She longed to speak, and if with him, could not avoid it. Then came the awful possibility, "Suppose he does not love me? I cannot run the risk. I must not, dare not, see him. Oh, if I could only tell my love! Why should I not speak? I will see him before I go and tell my love. I cannot live this lie of concealment. But if he does not love me, my confession would kill me." After this hysterical outburst, she became calm and had a talk with her mother about the letter, saying that she would go at once.

Mrs. Miles thought that Mary's relations with Richard had more to do with the hasty decision than her aunt's condition, but considerately said nothing, thinking that a separation would be for the best.

It was arranged that Mary should start early the next morning, and a seat in the stage was engaged.

She told her mother that if anyone called, to tell them, which was very true, that she had a very severe headache, but to say nothing of her journey. Then going to her room, she knelt down by the window, in the dark, and listened for the tread she knew so well.

At last she heard the footsteps down the road. Nearer, nearer they came, each step keeping time with her heart-beats. Then the little gate creaked on its hinges in consonance with a pain that shot through her heart. When his feet crouched on the gravel walk it seemed as if they were grinding her heart to powder. A knock at the door. It was a knock at the door of her heart. Oh, why should she not open and bid him enter! She heard her mother open the door, and the well-known voice sounded changed. There was a softness, a mildness, a love-tone that she had never recognized before. It said:

“Is Mary at home this evening?”

She heard her mother answer “Yes, but she has gone to bed, sick with a severe headache.”

“I am very, very sorry. Tell her, please.”

“Will you step in?”

“No, thank you; there’s a shower coming, and I will hurry home. Good-night.”

Mrs. Miles said “Good-night” and closed the door.

Richard had nearly reached the gate, when Mary leaned her face against the open blind-slats and cried out in tones of anguish:

“Richard, dear Richard, speak to me!”

At that instant a terrible clap of thunder drowned all other sounds and it was to Richard Baxter as if the

love-wail had never been uttered. He hastened down the road to get shelter from the rapidly breaking storm.

Mary remained on her knees for a long time, not in a swoon, nor in a faint; yet half-unconscious. When she came to a realization, she prayed; and such a prayer! She put the agony of her heart into her words, and then, becoming calmer, besought God to guide her aright. If Richard Baxter could have received a tithe of the blessings she asked in his behalf, happy indeed would he have been. Then she wrote him a hasty and rather formal note, announcing her departure, and its cause, and giving him good wishes and good-bye. She signed it, "Ever your friend, Mary Miles." The strain of the last twenty-four hours had exhausted her, but she could not sleep.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE POORHOUSE

**H**OTEL MENDON, as the poorhouse was named by some wag who had a lively idea of contrasts, was not kept on the principles that govern most hotels, namely, to make it as popular as possible, so as to increase its patronage; but on an exactly opposite plan, as every effort was to make it unpopular and to drive away patrons. The public recognized the fact that the poor must be taken care of. Common humanity demanded that they be fed and clothed, although their covering could hardly be called clothing. The theory seemed to be, that though the law would not permit the killing of paupers outright, yet there was nothing in the statutes that prevented their being starved to death.

The one who could keep paupers at the least cost was the man most popular for the place with the taxpayers. The town owned the farm and assumed all cost of maintenance, except that of food. At the spring town-meeting the paupers were bid off at auction, and the man who would take the farm and feed them at the least price was the successful bidder.

At the time of which we write, the price for maintenance was forty-nine cents each, per week. Children from five to twelve, one-half price; under five, no charge.



A pauper had not quite as good a standing in the community as a thief, for it was considered more of a disgrace to have been an inmate of a poorhouse than of a jail. The stigma was as unaccountable as it was unjust. In those days, no one willingly became a town charge. Paupers were only tolerated.

Now, poverty is not looked upon as the disgrace it was then, and poorhouses are havens of rest for the weary, or the lazy who have lost all self-respect. A majority of the inmates of our charitable institutions of to-day never lived half as well before they became wards of the public, housed as they are in magnificent architectural structures, surrounded by parks and flower-gardens, and fed on the fat of the land. It is well to be charitable, but a course that demoralizes and encourages vice and crime is not charity.

The guests at Hotel Mendon were a "motley crew" of all ages and both sexes.

There was Noah Dalrymple, of whom it was facetiously said that he came out of the ark. There was certainly no one in town old enough to dispute it. He claimed to be one hundred and seven years old; he certainly looked it. The most wonderful thing about him was his teeth. They were double all around, perfectly sound, and as white and clean as a hound's. He had a most wonderful memory, which, aided by a lively imagination and encouraged by sympathetic listeners, often carried him back to the landing of the Pilgrims. When he lapsed into his most brilliant reveries he would tell the particulars of his passage over in the Mayflower.

Next to him in age was Aunt Sally. No one knew her surname. She was a helpless imbecile, who simply existed. She was cared for, or supposed to be, by her companions, who often forgot her, and, as might be expected, she suffered from hunger and neglect. Why did God permit the continuance of her sufferings?

There was one old man entirely blind. He was the most cheerful and hopeful person in the house; always good-tempered, never low-spirited. The young children all loved Uncle Abe, for for them he had always a kind word, a ride to Banbury Cross on his foot, and a pretty story. Salute him with "Uncle Abe, how are you to-day?" and his stereotyped reply was, "Fine, superfine."

"Is God good to you to-day, Uncle Abe?"

"God is always good to me."

"How about the loss of your eyesight; do you call that being good to you?"

"God knows what's best for old Uncle Abe. It ain't for me to find fault."

There were also several other notable characters here. Heading the list was a quiet, mild-mannered little man, who assumed to be Napoleon. It is odd how many of the insane dub themselves Bonapartes. Other warriors and statesmen were also represented among the men, and among the crazy women there were queens and empresses. The violent insane were kept in separate sheds, herded like beasts, but not as well cared for as the stock on the farm; sometimes chained to the floor, wallowing in filth, or confined in

cribs; oftener naked than half-naked, and always half-starved. There were old men with the "rhumatiz," so bent and doubled that they could hardly hobble about; born idiots and other kinds of fools, viragoes and common scolds; some kind, sweet-tempered, sweet-faced, motherly old women, who did much to leaven that measure of human meal; and young women with nursing babies of doubtful parentage.

To this mixed mass of humanity were brought Sam Drisco and his old mother.

At first they were not well received by their to-be associates. It was known that they lately owned a farm, of which they had been dispossessed, and, until the storm broke, were considered "well-to-do." They were looked upon as a species of aristocracy, and were no more welcome than are the *nouveau riche* who have jumped suddenly into the society of the wealthy of longer standing. Position, be it high or low, to receive proper respect, must not be too suddenly attained. Be the rank what it may, it must be reached through regular gradations if it would be respected by those in occupancy.

The feeling against the Driscos was only a natural prejudice inspired by the circumstances, though that soon wore off, as they made no claims of superiority, implied or expressed. Sam was kind and affable, and old Mrs. Drisco, with her family Bible always at hand, loveliness itself, a constant exemplar of the "Lord's will be done." The twenty-third Psalm, as she expounded it, had a tranquillizing influence, and when Mother Drisco, as she soon was familiarly called by

the family at the poorhouse, adjusted her spectacles and began to read aloud from the Bible, this act, without dissent, took precedence over all other occupations. She had tact, and was careful not to force her religion on unwilling ears. She believed in God and in His beneficence, and that God did everything that was done, and that everything that was done was right. She never argued, not even in her own mind. If an attempt were made to combat her views, she would answer that it was not given to a poor mortal like her to question God's motives; though she did not understand, it was her duty to accept and believe. Her influence in that poorhouse family was good, and all were happier for her coming among them.

It was a pleasant sight of an afternoon to see the assemblage gathered in the living-room. There were the old men, too decrepit to get out of doors, and the old women, some with their knitting or sewing, more of them with their hands listlessly folded in their laps, all attentively listening to Mrs. Drisco as she read from the Scriptures, lying on the little Bible stand and placed near a window; for there was not much daylight in that room, its walls being darkened by many years' smoke from the huge fireplace.

Three times each day the horn was blown at the poorhouse door, to give notice that the occupants were to be fed. The room in which this function was performed was long, narrow, and dark. In the early part of the nineteenth century glass was much more costly than lumber, and in most all houses the windows were "stingy small." At the further end of the room

stood a large chimney, with an open fireplace, with its long swing cranes, pot-hooks, and trammels, and scattered about the hearth a liberal supply of pots, kettles, baking-tins and spiders, in which all the food for the family was cooked.

Down the centre of the room was a table made of pine boards, resting upon some supporting horses, accommodating twenty-four people, which was the average number of table-guests at Hotel Mendon. A bench on either side served for seats, with a few chairs for cripples who could not climb over the benches. There was no cloth on the table. It was sufficiently covered with dirt to prevent injury from the careless use of the "implements."

At each place was a pewter plate, a knife and fork, a gourd shell, from which to drink their beverage, usually a hunk of rye and Indian bread or a cut of Johnny-cake. There was no change in the breakfast. It was always the same—fried pork, boiled potatoes, and coffee. On Sunday morning, in season, each had a fried egg. The coffee was neither Old Java nor Rio nor San Domingo. It grew on the farm and consisted of a mixture of barley and wheat, browned and ground, boiled in a huge pot, with two quarts of skim-milk, a pint of molasses, and water to fill. For dinner they had either boiled corned beef and pork, cabbage and potatoes or salt codfish, and about twice a week, what in these days we would call an Irish stew. This was really the most appetizing dish that was set before them. For supper they seldom had more than bread and tea, the latter being a decoction of herbs.

It is possible that it may have been a cup that cheered, but it never inebriated. The food all being the product of the farm, was satisfactory in quality, but it lacked in quantity. There was no sickness from over-eating.

The description of the man and woman who ran this establishment at forty-nine cents per head can safely be left to the imagination of the reader, who must draw the picture according to his own conception.

It can truthfully be said of anyone who lived and died in a poorhouse of seventy-five years ago that the pains and penalties of purgatory should be remitted, since he had passed through that stage on earth.

## CHAPTER XXII

### SCHOOL FELLOWS

**R**ICHARD BAXTER and Sam Drisco were school fellows at the district school, and afterward at the academy, for the limited time that Sam could be spared from the farm, and the tuition from Farmer Drisco's scanty purse. They were drawn together as boys often are, and a friendship was formed which lasted through life. As they grew older they met less often, and while Richard was at college there was a long break in their intimacy, only interrupted by an occasional letter. Letter-writing in those days was the exception, not the habit. After Abraham Baxter's death and Richard's return to Mendon, they again clasped hands and renewed their mutual confidences.

Sam went to Richard for counsel and advice, but more frequently for sympathy. They often talked over Sam's financial condition, and what was to be expected from John Manning when the day came, as soon it must, that Sam could not meet the interest of the mortgage on the farm.

He had told Richard his mother's story, and of her belief that the mortgage had been paid, but there was no legal evidence to sustain the theory. The principals in the transaction were all dead, Abraham Baxter, who probably was the lawyer employed, Daniel Manning, who received the money, if it were paid, and

Eben Drisco, who paid the money. The county records afforded no evidence that the mortgage had been satisfied. There was nothing on which a case could be founded, except the belief of one old woman. The claim had no legal standing, and had long since ceased to be considered by our young lawyer and his client-friend.

Before its decision by the death of one of the parties thereto, there was a case which they frequently discussed at their meetings. It was that of Drisco vs. Gibson, in which the plaintiff, Samuel Drisco, freeman, was about to bring a suit against one Sally Gibson, spinster, both of the town of Mendon aforesaid, etc. As the action was to be brought in the court of Cupid, and as the plaintiff's attorney, one Richard Baxter, had never been admitted to practice in that court, he was of doubtful value as counsel. He had advised, however, that an action should be brought at once and an attachment secured, before the defendant should put the property sought, to wit, one heart, out of her possession. Another reason the learned Baxter, plaintiff's attorney, had given for immediate action was that other parties might bring suit. But the plaintiff had lacked confidence in the outcome and had let several terms of court (*i.e.*, opportunities) go by without pressing his claim.

If Richard Baxter had had the experience in love affairs that usually falls to the lot of most young men, he would have better understood the hesitancy of his client.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### 'AUNT NANCY'S HOME

**A**UNT NANCY BOND lived in a small farmhouse just off the highway, about a quarter of a mile from the Mannings, being their nearest neighbor. The older generation of the Mannings had always been very neighborly in sickness and in health. She used frequently to run over to Mrs. Manning's with her knitting. The two women depended upon each other for news; a sort of exchange of gossip, which was very pleasant for both.

In front of her house, between it and the road, was her flower-garden, in which she took great pride. Her front door opened on to a path that ran down the centre of the garden. Over the door was a trellis supporting some climbing roses. Beside the windows were running honeysuckles, Virginia creepers, morning glories and four-o'clocks. On the sides of the path, at each end and in the centre, were great clumps of the fragrant southern wood, and scattered through this garden, which was of the same width as the front of the house, was a profusion of all the common flowers, such as marigolds, bouncing-betsies, bachelor's-buttons, sweet-williams, sweet pinks, lady's-delights, purple irises, hollyhocks, tiger-lilies, and, as they would say on auction bills, "other articles too numer-

ous to mention," and no weeds. This flower-garden of Aunt Nancy's was the pride of her heart, and she took great pleasure in showing it to visitors.

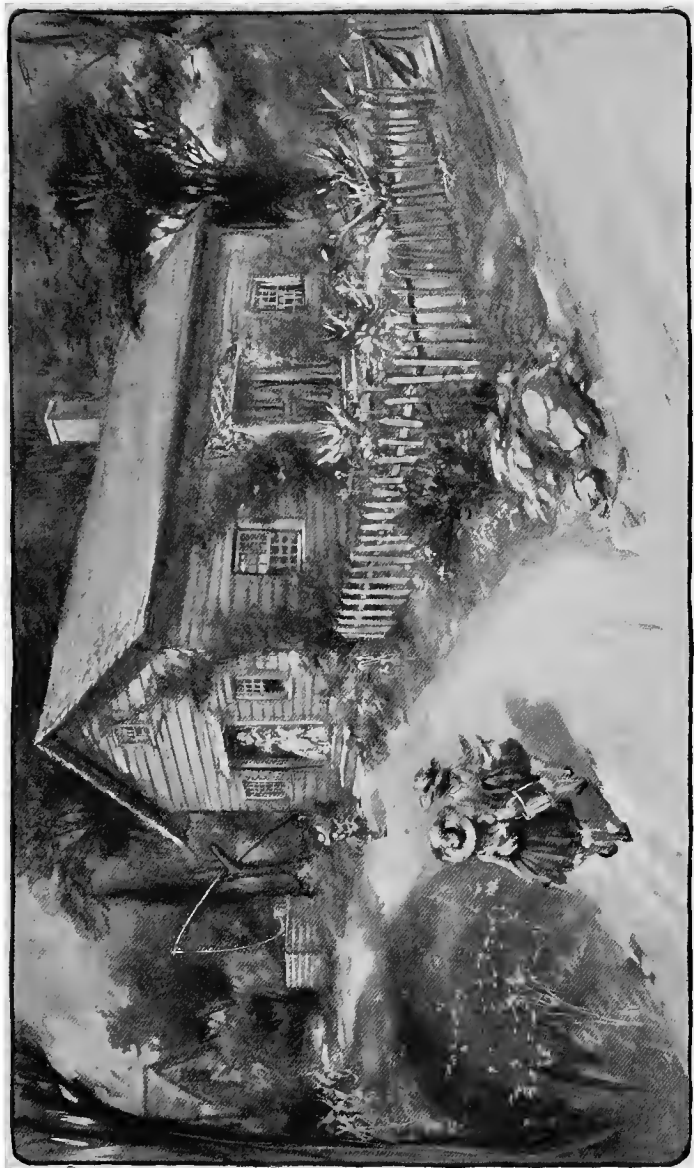
The well, with the curb that protected it, stood just beside the driveway, midway between the highway and the barn. On the well-curb, hanging to a nail, was a gourd shell, from which to drink. A tall, crotched tree-trunk supported the well-sweep, with its balance-stones at one end and the pole dangling from the other, which hung directly over the well. To it was attached the old oaken bucket.

On the fence that separated the driveway from the flower-garden was nailed a board, on which was traced with red chalk, the following notice:

No shuteing loud hear.

Aunt Nancy loved the birds, and her robins were as tame as ever wild birds get to be. The same ones came to her quiet home year after year. There was one pair of very large robins that had reared their brood for two seasons. The third year the cock robin came alone; also for two years thereafter, and then was seen no more. The old "widderer," as Aunt Nancy called him, never mated again.

Back of the barn was a berry patch, to which all the children who chose to come were welcome. Their happy faces and merry laughter brought joy and warmth to the old heart of Aunt Nancy, by which name she was always called by her many visitors. She was generally at the door, knitting in hand, to welcome them, and often when they returned from the





berry patch they would find her waiting for them with a pitcher of milk and a pan of cookies.

Mary Miles had several times accompanied her school-children on these berry-picking trips Saturday afternoons, and her acquaintance with Aunt Nancy had ripened into a warm friendship, which at a future period was to prove of very great value.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE PHILOSOPHER

SAM DRISCO was a philosopher, and endeavored to take every incident in his life philosophically. One of the first copies that was set for him when learning to write was a line from Pope's *Essay on Man*, "Whatever is, is right." This he wrote so many times that it was stereotyped on his brain and became a prominent maxim of his daily life.

Later on he met, in reading, the couplet:

"Two things will not trouble a sensible man,—  
The thing he can't help, and the thing that he can."

These useful precepts helped him over many rough places. Incidents and accidents were neutralized by repeating them. All of his misfortunes, the failure of his crops, the death of his stock, and many other trials of his life were much lightened by these bits of wisdom.

They had served well, up to the loss of Sally Gibson. Then all of his philosophy vanished into thin air. It had no substance, and Sam Drisco was nothing but common clay. He found himself on a level with other humanity that moaned in its agony and thought it found relief in cursing God. The constant claim of his mother, that "God doeth all things well,"

irritated and antagonized him, and he frequently said to her, as he did the day they were turned out of their home, that if she persisted in reading the Bible to him she certainly would make of him an infidel. He could see no goodness in a God who permitted his sufferings. The poor man had closed the only source of consolation.

## CHAPTER XXV

### “THAR’S ONLY ONE DERN FOOL IN SIGHT”

**O**N the morning that Mary Miles started to visit her aunt, the horn sounded long before daylight and the stage stopped before her mother’s cottage in its round through the village, picking up those passengers who had booked their names for seats the evening before.

Mary had been early enough to secure a back seat. The little hair-covered trunk was put in the boot and she climbed into her place. There were several other passengers, but she could not see how many, on account of the darkness. The stage was built to carry nine inside. Getting in, she heard a sharp female voice say:

“Here, Jerushy, you set up here nex’ ter me, fer I dunno what kin’ of a critter’s a-gittin’ in, an’ I’d ruther hev you nex’ ter me. I’d kinder ben in hopes thet thet air seat warn’t tuk.”

Mary soon ascertained that Jerusha was a young girl, slight in figure, and that the seat was not crowded. She thought herself fortunate to have a corner rather than to sit between two people, as she didn’t know what “kin’ of critters” they might be.

The stage rattled down the hill and again the driver woke the echoes and the sleeping villagers by a loud blast of his horn. They took another passenger in-



side and one on the box with the driver, then drove around to the post-office for the mail, and soon the wheels were running smoothly over the pike, and Mary snuggled herself away into the corner for a little dream; but she was soon disturbed by Jerusha, who said, "Say, ma, don't ye think it's 'bout time we hed suthin' to eat?"

The mild-mannered mother replied, "It's nuthin' but eat, eat with ye all the time. Ye allus eat more'n the hired man, an' ef the crops fail, we'll all hev to go to the poorhouse, jest to sat'sfy that belly of your'n. Ye can't hev no vittles till arter daylight, so thar, ye mought's well hol' yer jaw."

Jerusha subsided and Mary resumed her dreams, from which she did not wish to be disturbed. She was soon aroused, however, by the sharp voice of her fellow-passenger, this time directed at her. Ordinarily she was sweet-tempered, placid and considerate, but the shaking up of her system in her mental communing with Richard Baxter the evening before, her sleeplessness during the night, and her early rising were too much for the maintenance of her character of "sweet Mary Miles."

To the first salutation of Jerusha's mother of "What mought yer name be?" she paid no attention. After a moment or two, again the inquiry, "Say, miss, what mought yer name be?" brought from her in an unmistakably bitter let-me-alone tone, "It might be Smith, but it isn't, and it isn't Jones, either." This suspended the conversation for a while.

The next incident recalling her to things mundane

was the stopping of the stage at the toll-house. The bar was down across the pike and locked, that none might pass without paying toll. It was still dark and the gate-keeper had not left his bed, the warmth of which he seemed loath to change for the cool outside air. It was not until the stage-driver had pounded the door with a stone that he appeared. He was bare-headed and barefooted, having on neither coat nor vest. His trousers were held up by one "gallus" drawn over the left shoulder. In his left hand he held an old round tin lantern, through the perforated sides of which shone such rays as a tallow dip could furnish. Then ensued a wordy altercation, in which much profanity was used, and threats on the part of the stage-driver, that if he was stopped in this way again he'd "break the derned old bar, fer I'm a-drivin' the United States mail, an' thar ain't nothin' thet's any right to stop it." After collecting toll from the stage-driver and each passenger, during which there was quite a "jaw" with Jerusha's mother as to paying toll for Jerusha, as "she warn't only thirteen year ole," and a parting threat on her side to "hev the law on him," the stage-driver climbed on to his seat, and taking the reins that the passenger on the box had been holding, cracked up the leaders and they were once more on their journey.

Mary Miles again settled back into her corner and resumed her reveries. After thinking the matter over, she felt a little ashamed for having so spitefully resented the woman's impertinence, and resolved that if asked again she would treat her more civilly. She

was in deep thought of "Richard, my Richard," when the old woman again asked:

"What mought I call yer name?"

Mary sweetly answered: "Richard Miles—I mean Mary Baxter—no—Mary Miles."

She was greatly annoyed on hearing the suppressed titter of her fellow-passengers.

The old woman said: "Jerushy, what's yer name?"

"Jerushy Mirandy Bump," promptly replied the young hopeful.

"Thar," said Mrs. Bump, "I larnt her thet when she was two year ole an' she hain't ever forgot it."

That Mary felt annihilated there can be no question, and she hoped that her persecutor would now be merciful. But she reckoned wrongly, for it was more than fifty miles to Concord, and the performance had but just begun.

At about sunrise the stage stopped for breakfast and a change of horses. Mrs. Bump was now ready to feed her Jerusha, and provided some cold sausage, or, as she called them, "sassengers," and some corn cake, which they both ate with an apparent relish.

Mary, having had a cup of tea and a snack before starting, did not desire breakfast, but was glad of the opportunity to get out of the stage for several reasons, principal of which was that by so doing she could rid herself of that odious woman's society for twenty minutes; and for this she walked up and down the tavern piazza.

The stage was brought around from the barn with

four fresh horses. "All aboard," and again they were on their way.

When Mary got into the stage, Mrs. Bump saluted her with:

"Ain't ye hungry, Miss—er—Baxter? I'd a-gin ye some of my stuffin' ef ye hadn't ben in sich a hurry to git down."

"No, thank you, I did not want anything to eat."

"Be ye a-goin' to Concord?"

"Yes."

"Ye live thar, do ye?"

"No."

"Ye live in Mendon, don't ye?"

"Yes."

"Thought so. Most of them Mendon folks is putty much stuck up. Be ye any relation to the Baxters over to Humbolt?"

"No."

"P'r'aps yer some kin to ole Squire Abraham Baxter, thet died not long ago. He lived in Mendon. Be ye?"

"No."

"I don't 'low thet ye said w'ether ye was Miss er Missis?"

"Miss."

"Ye ain't marri'd then, be ye?"

"No."

"How ole mought ye be?"

"Twenty-two."

"Got a beau, hain't ye?"

Mary could stand it no longer. She covered her face with her hands and burst into tears.

"Oh, I see how 'tis. He's gin ye the mitten, hain't he? Lord sakes! thet ain't nothin'. Don't feel so bad 'bout it, dearie. Thar's jest as good fish in the sea as ever was caught. W'y, w'en I was eighteen year ole I hed a beau, an' we was a-goin' one night to a corn-huskin', an' I axed our hired man, Jethro Green, ef he couldn't find me a red ear, which he done, an' I tuk it an' jest slipped it into my stockin'. Putty soon arter the huskin' begun a feller got a red ear, an' he sez 'Who'll match this?' an' I reached down under the corn husks an' pulled out my red ear, an' held it up. He clim' up over the corn pile to kiss me, an' 'cause I didn't fight 'im off, w'en we was a-goin' hum Joe begun a jawin' 'bout it, an' said as how I was too willin', an' he didn't like it, an' I said, 'Joe Wilkins, ef ye don't like it, ye kin lump it.' An' he said, 'I'll see ye hum, an' then I'm done with ye.' We was 'bout three-quarters of a mile from hum, an' I said, 'Joe Wilkins, ye needn't go no funder. Thar ain't no panthers, ner wolves atween here an' hum, an' I don't see but one derved fool in the road, an' I ain't afeard of him, fer he ain't a-goin' my way. Good-night, Mr. Wilkins; I hopes ye'll be able to fin' some gal thet dunno the diff'r'nce atween a red ear an' a yaller one.' Thar was 'nuther corn-huskin' a few days arter, over to Bill Snookses. Joe Wilkins was thar, an' he didn't fetch no gal, an' he tried to shin' up to me, but 'twan't no use, fer I'd got 'nuther beau."

The relation of how Mrs. Bump got the "mitten,"

in theatrical parlance, "brought down the house"; that is, the stage full of passengers laughed heartily, in which Mary could not help joining. She said to Mrs. Bump:

"Won't you please let me be, for I have a headache."

"Headache?" repeated the old woman, "thet's too bad. Here, smell of this 'ere," and before Mary Miles could put up a hand to prevent, Mrs. Bump had a bottle of hartshorn under her nose, and she had inhaled enough to almost bring the dead to life.

"Ye see, 'twas this way: I kinder liked Joe Wilkins. He was a putty good feller, but he was kinder saft, sometimes; but he had a mighty good farm over thar to Felterville, an' I'd kinder liked to hitched up to 'im, but 'twan't a-goin' to be." Here Mrs. Bump stopped to "heave a sigh," and Jerusha broke in with:

"Ma, ma, say ma, when air ye goin' to lemme hev a beau?"

"Shet up," the old woman snapped out, and resumed: "Ye see, I'd talked Joe Wilkins all over with dad an' ma, an' dad he 'lowed thet all things considered, I couldn't do no better. But 'twan't to be, 'twas ag'in fate. Ye see, ev'rything run long jest as slick as hog's butter, but 'twan't to be. It's no use to kick ag'in fate. Joe went long callatin' to be marri'd in the spring, but I knowed 'twan't to be, 'cause 'twas ag'in scripiter, fer don't ye know the Bible says thet true love never runs smooth?" Again the old lady sighed, and repeated, "'Twan't to be, an' as ole Parson Johnson used to say, what allus was, will be."

Then Mrs. Bump folded her hands across her lap, and in silence looked, as she would have expressed it, "sol-emncolly" at the green fields.

For a while there was quiet on the back seat of the stage. The men talked about the weather and the crops, and whiled away the time in telling stories, in which Mrs. Bump occasionally joined, as she was a woman of "experiences" and liked to tell them.

At about noon, with much blowing of horn and cracking of whip, the stage rattled to the front of the Red Lion, where it was to change horses and allow the passengers to get dinner. As Mary was getting out of the stage, Mrs. Bump saluted her with:

"Say, you, Miss Baxter, don't ye want some of my vittles? I've got a-plenty."

"No, thank you, I must have some tea."

She went into the tavern and had dinner and a half-hour's relief from persecution.

The men were walking about and talking, their principal subject of conversation being Mrs. Bump and her victim. The passenger who had been riding outside said he would offer to exchange seats with the young lady. He walked over to where Mary was standing and said:

"Miss, I've heard what an uncomfortable time you are having inside the stage, and if it please you, I will change seats with you."

It was a splendid day, and if for no other reason she would have been glad to change; but she would rather have suffered exposure to a terrible storm than to have longer endured the company of Mrs. Bump.

She gladly accepted the offer and warmly thanked her deliverer.

Mrs. Bump was heard to say:

“Lors sake, ef thet gal ain’t a-climbin’ up on top! Gals nowadays don’t seem to keer how much of a show they makes of themselves.”

The stage had hardly started before Mrs. Bump turned to the newcomer and said:

“What mought yer name be?”

“Now, look here, old woman,” he replied, “you needn’t try to pump me, for I ain’t as big a fool as I look.”

“Humph,” quickly replied Mrs. Bump, “I didn’t know thet.”

The laughter from all the passengers that followed this repartee was hearty and boisterous, and much annoyed our would-be philanthropist, and he wished he had stayed outside.

Mrs. Bump was quiet for nearly an hour, when, after looking sharply at a passenger who was sitting on the front seat and facing her, she started, as it were, to address him, but seeing something in his appearance that was not inviting, she desisted. This man was dressed in black broadcloth, wore spectacles, had a smooth-shaven face, and in every respect the appearance of a minister. Beside him sat a young dandy. Again Mrs. Bump essayed to open conversation with him:

“What mought yer name be, Mister?”

The young dandy answered, “What did you say, ma’am?”



Mrs. Bump replied, "I didn't speak to you, boy. I spoke to the minister. What mought yer name be, Parson?"

"None of your d——n business," closed the conversation and squelched Mrs. Bump.

The explanation is, that our clerical friend was as deaf as a post, and neither heard nor answered; but a wag, an amateur ventriloquist, seeing a chance for a little fun, tried his talents with grand success.

## CHAPTER XXVI

“HOSSES IS VERY MUCH LIKE WIMMIN”

**J**OHAN MANNING began to tire of farm life. The difficulty that he had in getting any “help” in the house was a constant source of annoyance. He had to depend upon the ignorant Canadian women, who were the only help that could be hired. His butter was hardly fit for soap-grease, his cheese no better, and but one article that came within the women’s control brought full price; that was the eggs. The hens had not become demoralized, and their merry “cut, cut, ka, da, cut” was the most cheerful sound on the farm.

He sold his cows, and the Manning dairy, of which his old mother was so justly proud all her life, was a thing of the past. Surprising as it may be, John Manning had sentiment enough to say that he was thankful that the abandonment of the dairy did not occur until after his mother died, as it would have broken her heart. He bought a new buggy of the latest style, a fine double harness, blankets, robes, etc. He had a handsome pair of colts, of his own breeding, pure Morgan. He increased the frequency of his drives to town, which formerly were confined to market days, or when a load of produce was to be delivered; but now, leaving the “trucking” to his hired man, he went to town in his buggy, drawing the lines

over the backs of as good a pair of steppers as there was in the county.

John Manning, as one of his horsey friends put it, had begun “to feel his oats.” With better “horse furniture” came a taste for better clothes to replace the farmer’s blue frock. With his spick and span new turn-out and fine clothes, he looked like a gentleman, and, as Si Slocum said, “put on more airs than the bill called for.” In earlier days he had always driven his horse or team, as the case might be, under the tavern shed, and hitched them himself; but now he drove up in front of the tavern with a grand flourish, and called the hostler, much to the edification of the “committee,” as the regular tavern loafers were called. Some of the “committee” were always on duty, and one or all were ready to respond to the slightest hint that their society at the bar would be agreeable to someone who was about to take a drink.

In front of the tavern, a two-story building about fifty feet in length, was a piazza about six feet in width, extending the entire length. At the back of the piazza, against the building, was a seat, the occupancy of which reflected on the good name of the village of Mendon, as on pleasant days it was generally well filled; and often, when matters of interest, like the best time of Flora Temple, who was then beating the record, were under discussion, the overflow were seated on the edge of the piazza, with their feet resting on the ground.

Si Slocum was the oracle, and whatever Si said “went.”

Josiah Slocum, familiarly known to the country all about as Si, was really an authority on horse matters. It was duly accorded that what he didn't know about a horse wasn't worth knowing.

Where he came from no one seemed to know, he having tramped into the village about a dozen years before, becoming hostler at the tavern. He did not present any credentials, and as the tavern-keeper needed a handy man about the barn, and needed him right badly, no questions were asked. That opportunity being lost to ascertain Si's antecedents, the subject was not opened again by the tavern-keeper; and to the barroom loafers who exhibited any curiosity he gave short answers, and in a tone that did not encourage a continuance of the investigation.

It was not at all surprising that the good people of Mendon had looked upon him, on his first appearance among them, with suspicion. He had a hunted look, more that of a chicken thief than of a highwayman. Perhaps their opinion of him was well expressed by a remark, "Seen that new specimen at the tavern barn? Bet he's stole more'n one sheep."

This appearance of having "got away from 'em" wore off, as he made acquaintances and began to feel at home. He used to mysteriously disappear for two or three weeks, once in about six months, and when he returned would bring with him one or two old plugs, as a class of horses was familiarly known. These he rejuvenated, and generally fixed up and traded or sold to some innocent, who didn't know an old horse from a young one.

He was very skillful in this process, and would change the appearance of a horse in the course of two or three weeks, so that “his mother wouldn’t know him,” not to mention the great mass of people who only noted the general appearance of a horse. White stars on a horse’s forehead, or white feet, were readily changed to the color of the body. If desirable to reduce his age, his teeth were shortened and a hot iron would make the necessary indentations. He had a wonderful faculty for convincing a lame horse that he wasn’t lame at all, for a short period, although the old lameness would be sure to come back as soon as Si had gotten rid of the horse.

He always kept himself out of the clutches of any legal action for redress by carefully avoiding to name the age of the horse, or to warrant him to be “sound and kind.” Instead of answering questions he would ask them. The usual conversation was about like this:

“Si, how old is that horse?”

“Wall,” he would answer, “I dunno much ’bout it. But the hoss doctors all tell ye thet it’s easy ’nuff to see how ole a hoss is by the peculiar marks of his teeth. Now, less look into this ole hoss’s mouth. Ye see, ev’ry hoss’s teeth has hollers in ’em, an’ when them hollers git wore off, it shows thet the hoss is a-gittin’ ’long putty well in years, an’ a hoss without any hollers in his teeth is likely to be a dozen years ole, er more. Now, ye see, sometimes anybody thet’s dishonest an’ wants to cheat ye in a hoss trade, takes them air teeth what’s wore off, an’ scullops ’em out, an’ makes ’em look’s ef they’s colt’s teeth. Now, does

this 'ere hoss's teeth look's ef they'd ben sculoped out? You kin see jest as well as I kin. I guess, Mister, 't you're a putty good jedge of hoss flesh, an' it 'ud take a putty dern smart feller to beat ye on a hoss trade. I don't feel equal to it myself, an' I'm kinder 'fear'd to trade with ye anyhow."

He did not consider it good policy to run down the horse for which he was trading.

"Now, Mr. Slocum, what I want to know is whether that horse is sound?"

"Sound? Wall, thet's a conundrum. A hoss may be sound to-day an' not sound to-morrow; er he may be off his feed er suthin' yistiddy, an' all right to-day, to-morrow an' allus. A hoss is more like a woman than any four-legged critter that runs. You're a fam'ly man an' has a woman on yer hands, an' ye knows they's queer critters. So's hosses. Ye gits up in the mornin', builds a good fire on the hearth, hangs on the tea-kittle, takes yer pails an' starts fer the barn to do yer milkin'. Arter 'bout an hour ye comes in, 'spectin' the fried pork, eggs, an' b'iled pertaters 'll be spread on yer bountiful board, an' thar's nothin' but an empty table, an' ye sings out, 'Mandy, whar in the devil's the breakfas'?' An' a low voice ans'ers ye from the bedroom, 'Oh, Zekel, I've got sich a headache, I can't git up.' Now, ye wouldn't go to yer respected father-in-law an' say, 'Mister, thet air gal I got o' ye ain't sound, an' I want ye to take her back.' Wall, ye see, hosses is very much like wimmin, unsartin critters. Now, when ye cum away from hum, ev'rything was all right. When ye go hum, the ole

mare, I mean the ole woman, may be knocked out, clean out. Who knows? Still, she was sound when ye come away. No, hosses an' wimmin is both unsartin critters, an' I'd as soon warrant one's t'other."

Old Judge Myers wanted a horse and went to Si Slocum for advice and assistance. He flattered the old Judge, who consented to let him get a horse, as Si thought he knew where there was one that would suit to a dot. He found one, a fine animal, in every way just suited to the Judge's wants, which he sold at a really low price. The Judge was perfectly satisfied and Si took advantage of this fact, used him as a reference, and by this means scalded several people badly. They complained to the Judge and he said that all he knew about Slocum was that he bought a horse of him and that everything was just as he represented it. But finding that he was being used as a cat's-paw to pull Si's chestnuts out of the fire, he addressed him the following note, which he readily understood:

"Mr. Slocum:

"Sir—It will not be for your interest to send people to me for any further recommendation.

"JACOB MYERS."

This rebuff took Si down a few pegs, as he had expected to use the Judge's influence to assist him in selling a horse to a friend of the Judge in the next town. But Si thought he was equal to the emergency, called upon the Judge, and they had quite a parley. The Judge told Si that he had simply given him a

good trade in order that he might use his influence to cheat people, and that he would not be used in that way any longer. Si begged him to "let up" and give him a letter of introduction to his friend, promising that he should have a good trade. An idea struck the Judge, and he finally consented, sat down to his desk and wrote the following:

"J. W. Wainwright, Esq.,

"Lindentown.

"My Dear Sir:—This letter will be handed to you by Mr. Josiah Slocum, who desires to sell you a horse. Mr. Slocum is a very reliable man, and you can place confidence in any representation that he makes to you; that is to say, you can put as much confidence in him as you ought to in any man who has a horse to sell.

"Yours truly,

"JACOB MYERS."

"There," said he, as he finished the letter. "I hope that will please you," and chuckled as he read aloud the first clause in the letter, omitting the last.

Si Slocum being an illiterate man, read writing with difficulty; therefore really never saw the point of the joke.

He delivered his letter, but did not make his sale.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE SATISFACTION FOUND

ONE afternoon Richard Baxter, tired of poring over Pickering's Reports, laid down the volume, pulled a drawer from the safe containing some of his father's papers, and began inspecting them. To get at them more readily, he took the drawer out entirely, placing it on the table. As he did so, a paper dropped from between the back lining into which it must have fallen from the drawer above. The paper was a sheet of foolscap, folded twice to the usual form of legal documents. On the back was written, in Abraham Baxter's square hand:

"Satisfaction  
of  
Mortgage  
Daniel Manning  
to  
Eben Drisco.  
March 17, 1828."

"Mem. Tell E. D. that this satisfaction must be recorded.—A. B."

The satisfaction was in the regular legal form, acknowledging payment of \$2,000 and the interest, being in full satisfaction of and discharging a certain

mortgage, signed by Daniel Manning and witnessed by Abraham Baxter.

Here, then, was the solution of the mystery. Mrs. Drisco was right. The mortgage had been paid as she thought. The satisfaction had probably been left with the old lawyer, had slipped through the crack at the back of the drawer, and fallen between the lining. The sudden death of Drisco prevented his calling for it; that explained the disappearance of the satisfaction. The mortgage, it seemed, was not surrendered. It would have been of no value had the satisfaction been recorded. This also accounted for Daniel Manning's anxiety as to whether any papers were found on Drisco's body. The satisfaction not making its appearance, and the death soon after of Abraham Baxter, made the road clear for Deacon Manning to rob the widow and orphan.

Richard's knowledge of John Manning led him to suspect that he knew of the fraud, and therefore it would be necessary to proceed cautiously, for Manning undoubtedly would contest to the bitter end.

He slept but little that night, feeling that he was no longer a briefless lawyer, but instead had on his hands a case that bade fair to be one of the most important that had ever been tried in that county.

He had no evidence to sustain the genuineness of the satisfaction, all the parties to the transaction being dead. How bitterly he realized the truth of the old saying that dead men tell no tales. He knew that he had to encounter a wily, unscrupulous foe, who had four important points to defend. First, the restitu-

tion of the mortgaged property; second, the refunding of the interest that had for so many years been collected; third, damages for dispossessing and driving to the poorhouse Sam Drisco and his mother; and fourth, his character in the community in which he lived.

His first thought was that he would have the satisfaction recorded at once at the office of the County Clerk, which, had it been done when made, would have spared the Driscos so many years of suffering. Then he decided that it would not be advisable to do this until a plan of action had been settled, for if he did so, it would give John Manning a better opportunity to prepare his defense.

In the morning he consulted the County Clerk, a friend in whom he had perfect confidence, who advised that a copy of the satisfaction be made and attested, and the original placed in the office vault, as the copy would answer every purpose until the trial.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THREE APPEALS TO GOD

**T**HE morning after the finding of the satisfaction of the Manning-Drisco mortgage, Richard Baxter, with the attested copy in his pocket, started for the poor farm to inform Sam Drisco and his mother of the turn in their fortunes.

It was a delightful fall morning, the air cool and crisp, with an oxygen cocktail in every breath. Nature was at her loveliest, just decking herself in those gorgeous hues which are at the height of fashion at that season of the year.

A devout person would have seen God in everything. But Richard was never devout when alone, and had the appearance of a "believer" only when in company. He gladly threw off the robes of hypocrisy which were so much of a burden and a mortification to him, whenever he could do so without endangering his standing with the people among whom he dwelt. The "evidences" did not attract his attention. He was communing with himself, and was, as it were, at the crisis of his life. A mistake would be fatal. If he could win the important case of Drisco vs. Manning, his position as a lawyer would be established. He need no longer spend his time drawing conveyances and writing contracts, but could leave clerk's work to clerks, and Richard Baxter would be in fact Attorney and

Counsellor-at-Law. He strode rapidly along. The purple asters at the roadside were at his mercy, for he thoughtlessly struck off their heads with his light walking-stick. He was not thinking of asters. Their beauty did not attract his attention. He was recalling to mind some points in Pickering's Reports that were especially applicable to *Drisco vs. Manning*, and he said to himself:

"Father was right. Pickering's Reports are like the Scriptures, for in them lie hidden treasures."

Then his mind became reminiscent, and his thoughts ran back a dozen years or so to the time of the death of Eben Drisco. He soliloquized:

"Eben Drisco was a good man, a model man, a professed and presumably a good Christian. A kind husband, a good father, and his family had much need of him." Then turning and facing a huge boulder that had at some time, long ago, rolled down the mountain and rested by the roadside:

"They say that God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. If that is so, God must be in this rock. Now, tell me, O Rock of Ages, granite God, why this good man, who was so much needed here, was removed, and why so many miserable wretches who cumber the earth are suffered to live." Then passing on down the road, he next stopped at the foot of a giant oak, and apostrophized:

"If God is everywhere, in everything, He must be with you. Tell me, monarch of the forest, why should that poor, worthy widow and her orphan son be made to suffer unjustly so many years, and to be deprived

of the enjoyment of their own, while the wicked flourish like a green bay tree?"

He passed on, and a bend in his path brought him to the bank of the river, that flowed on down through the farm of Solomon Gibson. Stopping, he took off his hat and again spoke:

"O majestic river, beginning with the dewdrop in the mountains far away in the north, gathering volume and strength every inch that you flow to the sea, until you float great ships on your bosom, if God is omnipresent He must be in you. Tell me, beautiful river, why the weary seek rest in your depths. Why should that lovely maiden have been obliged to fly to you for shelter, to protect her from a worse fate? Why, oh, why? Will these mysteries never be explained?"

There was no sacrilege intended by Richard Baxter in the asking of these questions. They were honest inquiries inspired by the doubting mind that was born in him, and from which he would gladly have freed himself, but could not. "Lord, help my unbelief."

He resumed his walk and soon reached the poor farm.

Sam Drisco was in the field, digging potatoes. He could hobble on one crutch, handling quite effectively his potato digger, and turn the "murphys" out of the hills faster than a boy with a basket could pick them up. He had no lazy bones in him, and although it was painful for him to get about, he preferred doing it, even without pay, than lazily to drone out the day.



"TELL ME, O ROCK OF AGES, GRANITE GOD."





He was surprised by a "Hello, Sam," from Richard, to which familiar greeting he quickly responded:

"Hello, Dick. It's good for sore eyes to see you. What in time brought you out here?"

"Why, you idiot, my legs, of course. How stupid you are getting! You haven't as many eyes as a potato. Living up here among the aristocracy seems to have befuddled you. I know what is the matter. It's high living, too much to eat." He continued:

"I'm a tax-payer—pay a dollar a year poll-tax—and I've appointed Richard Baxter, Esq., Attorney and Counsellor-at-Law, a committee to inspect the poorhouse, and see that the people's money is not being carelessly wasted; and particularly that the guests at this hotel don't have too much salt on their potatoes."

This badinage on the part of Richard astonished Sam, as he had not seen him for a long time when he was not in the dumps, and he wondered what could have happened thus to raise his friend's spirits. "Well," said Sam, "tell us all about it. I'm glad to congratulate you."

"Congratulate me! You are the one to be congratulated. I have some good news."

"For me? Well, break it gently. I'm not used to that kind. I could bear additional bad news, if 'tweren't the death of my mother, God bless her."

"All right, Sam, come across the road, and we'll sit down on that log over yonder, for I've a good deal to say, and we want no eavesdroppers."

Sam went across the road slowly, and after shaking

hands cordially, they sat down together on the log; Richard drew from his pocket the copy of the satisfaction, and as he handed it to Sam, remarked:

“Read that. It is an attested copy. The original is safe in the vault at the County Clerk’s office. After you read it, I’ll tell you all about it.”

It is difficult to describe Sam Drisco’s emotions. The first thing that he said was:

“Thank God, my poor mother will have her old home to die in, for she has often said since we came here that she could endure living at the poorhouse, but the prospect of dying there and of being buried as a pauper made her miserable.”

Richard related all the details of the finding of the satisfaction; and expressed the opinion that when it was executed it was probably left with Esquire Baxter for safe keeping. This view seemed to be corroborated by the memorandum to remind Drisco to have it recorded. The accident to Eben Drisco, by which he lost his life on the way home that day, prevented any knowledge coming from him as to the transaction, beyond his last anxious words to his wife that he had paid Daniel Manning.

One thing they could not understand: Why were not the note and mortgage surrendered at the time of the payment of the money and the execution of the satisfaction? Daniel Manning, in all probability, had them in his pocket at the time, and perhaps, no demand being made, had kept them. The satisfaction not coming to light led him into a crime, which the death soon after of Abraham Baxter made it easy to

commit, and, as it turned out, difficult of detection. It was natural that the question as to whether or not John Manning had knowledge of the fraud should be discussed between them. Sam was positive that he knew all about it, in which opinion Richard concurred.

But whether he did or did not know that he was stealing from Sam Drisco was comparatively of little concern. Richard had discovered a most important document, John Manning appeared about to be vanquished, and the fortunes of the Driscos seemed again more hopeful.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### DID HE LOVE HER?

**N**OTHING has been said about the love affairs of Richard Baxter, for the reason that there was nothing to say. That the sexual affections were dormant would hardly express it correctly. We might more properly say that they were inert, undeveloped, like the strength of a giant whose muscles had never been tested. Some day, no doubt, this power would be shown. The strongest sentiment in Richard, he himself would have said, was his affection for Mary Miles; but it never occurred to him to look upon her other than as upon a sister. His love for her was an undiscovered mine, and there were no surface indications. He had not suspected the possession of the undeveloped passion.

He called the evening before Mary went away to tell her of the finding of the satisfaction, intending to talk it over and ask her advice; and went away but little disappointed, as he expected to see her on the morrow, which would do nearly as well. There were many morrows passed before they met again, and meanwhile a great many happenings of important moment in both their lives occurred. He called again the next day, received her brief note and a simple statement of the facts from Mrs. Miles.

That Richard was lonesome after Mary left can

readily be understood, as she was his nearest friend and only intimate associate. Her absence made a void that could not be filled. He felt the loss of her society more than, under the same circumstances, would most of the young men of the village, who usually spent their evenings going from store to store, where they sat on the counters, exchanged gossip and told stories. Twaddle did not suit Richard, and he never indulged in it. If there was any subject worthy of discussion, he was always ready to take part, and could talk well; but he could not make talk.

Most of the evenings that he had been in the habit of spending with Mary, he now occupied in reading. This gave him more time for Pickering's Reports; but they had become a bore.

That was not a day of magazines or periodical literature. Daily newspapers were only published in large cities, and it was seldom that a copy reached Mendon. There was a home Weekly, and no one could criticize it, in referring to it, it were spelled Weakly. There being no circulating library in Mendon, there was really a dearth of reading-matter.

The debating society held occasional meetings. Richard was a member, but not being controversial by nature, seldom took active part, though he often coached the contestants on both sides of a question, being well able to do this, from the fact that he was by far the best-read man in Mendon.

The singing-school was another diversion, but Mary's absence had robbed it of all interest to him. Another reason, though it never occurred to him, why

he took little interest in the singing-school was a prejudice against the Professor, who had been quite attentive to Mary.

The dances occasionally held at the tavern had likewise no attraction for him.

But at the spelling bee he really enjoyed himself. Being the most proficient speller in town, he headed the list of contestants selected by the leaders who had the first choice, and Mary, when present, was always chosen to head the opposite side.

## CHAPTER XXX

“ I’LL CLIP THE WATTLES OF THAT TURKEY COCK ”

**J**OHAN MANNING was a good judge of horse-flesh. He had a natural love for horses, having been brought up among them (Deacon Manning was quite a breeder when John was young), was familiar with all of their good and bad points, and could detect an unsoundness or a blemish at a glance. His opinion with regard to a horse was valued by his neighbors. He had once or twice intimated that a horse that Si Slocum was endeavoring to sell might not be perfectly sound. Though not a horse-dealer to any great extent, he was recognized as a horse-man and a member of the unorganized guild, one unwritten law of which was, that each should mind his own business.

The fact that the hinted opinion of John Manning had prevented two of Si Slocum’s prospective trades, had led the oracle to have an opinion of his own in regard to him, and that was that he was a “derved slouch”; and he went so far as to say that he would get even with that Prince of Manning’s Corners, and added with a big oath:

“I’ll clip that turkey cock’s wattles afore a great while, ye see if I don’t.”

Si was already graduated from the tavern barn,

and had long since ceased to be a hostler. He had accumulated a little money, and this capital enabled him to trade horses to advantage, as he always kept a bulge on his wallet. As evidence of his prosperity, he wore a light drab, double-breasted overcoat, with welted seams, and abundantly ornamented with big horn buttons; and a tall drab hat. From a horseman's point of view he was really quite stunning.

As has been said, Si had a great faculty for fixing up a horse. He had an equal faculty for fixing one down. On his return from one of his mysterious journeys, he brought with him a pretty little mare, which was hustled into his private stable and put under lock and key, before being seen by more than two or three. He took entire care of the horse himself, not permitting his helper to go near the animal. This conduct on his part aroused suspicion at once, for anything that wasn't as open as the day in that community, where every man minded everybody's business but his own, must necessarily need watching, and Bill Johnson, the hostler and occasional helper to Si Slocum, appointed himself a watcher. Si put up with this for a few days, and then made up his mind that it was safer to take Bill into his confidence. This he did, and Bill entered heartily into the scheme to "clip the wattles of that turkey cock."

About six weeks after Si had brought in the little mare, whose existence had been forgotten by the two or three who saw her, he one day drove out of the barn with the worst-looking specimen of horseflesh ever



seen in that community, hitched to an old buggy. Horse, harness, and buggy were all in keeping. It was a frouzelly looking, unkempt, uncurried, uncarded little mare, with her mane and tail full of burdocks.

She had a decided limp in her off foreleg, evidence of a big spavin in her nigh hindleg. Her legs were puffy, and all in all she was a pretty poor specimen of horseflesh.

Si had been watching from the barn for John Manning to drive up, as it was about the time of day that he usually came, and as soon as Manning arrived in front of the tavern, Si drove around with his wonderful equipage, which at once attracted the attention of the "committee," and someone sang out:

"Hello, Si has drawn the booby prize."

As he came along by the side of Manning's fine turnout he was saluted with:

"Hello, Si, what you got there?"

"Got a fast hoss," replied Si.

"Fast hoss?" sneered Manning.

"Yes, Mr. Mannin', a fast hoss, an' the subscriber means jest what he says."

There was considerable badgering on both sides, and jeers from the crowd. John Manning said:

"I'll bet you, Si Slocum, that that horse of yours can't be gotten over the road a mile in eighteen minutes, unless loaded in a wagon."

"Wall," said Si, "I'll bet you a hundred dollars thet she kin beat thet thar team o' your'n in a two-mile spurt. Now, put up er shet up."

"Well, if that's your little game, I'm your man. Name your terms."

"Wall," said Si, "I'll bet you a hundred dollars, an' the tavern-keeper shall hol' the stakes, thet I kin drive this ole mare, ahind which I'm a-settin', from Mannin's Corners to this 'ere tavern quicker'n you kin your spankin' bays."

"I'll take that bet," said Manning, drawing out his wallet and counting out one hundred dollars, which he gave to the landlord. Then turning to Si he said: "Cover that or close your clam shell."

Si drew from his pocket a big, bulgy wallet, from which he counted out one hundred dollars, all in small bills, and handed them to the stakeholder; then folding up his wallet, which appeared as if an elephant had stepped on it, put it in his pocket, and with a good deal of bluster said:

"I'll bet you 'nuther hundred dollars thet ye can't git here into two minutes as quick's I kin."

John Manning, who had noticed the condition of the wallet, jumped to the conclusion that it was empty, and that Si was bluffing, said he would take the bet; though he did not consider that he was running any risk, even if Si did have the money. He handed another hundred dollars to the tavern-keeper. Si pulled out his wallet and took from the inside tuck a hundred-dollar bill, which he gave to the stakeholder.

"Now," said Si, "I'll make ye 'nuther prop'sition."

Although John Manning did not like to be bluffed, he concluded that it was not best to risk any more money, beginning to feel a little suspicious.

They had no difficulty in agreeing upon four judges. A line was stretched from a window in the third story of the tavern across the driveway, to the pole upon which, in a frame at the top, swung the old tavern sign. They agreed to be at Manning's Corners at eight o'clock the next morning; two of the judges were to be there to start them.

At the appointed hour John Manning with his team, Si Slocum with the little mare hitched to a sulky, and two of the judges, in a light wagon, were at Manning's Corners ready for the race. It was agreed that they should start from a "standstill."

At the word "go" they started. For the first quarter of a mile Manning's team was well in the lead. He jeeringly called to Si to "come on." Soon the little mare warmed up to her business and left John Manning far in the rear, so far, in fact, that he soon realized that he was beaten, and had it not been for his hope of winning the second bet he would have turned and driven home.

The whole town was assembled in the square. Even the sober-minded people were there. Old Parson Snodgrass just happened to cross the road as Si Slocum drove under the line, and a mighty cheer went up, in which the Parson joined, waving his hat; then remembering who he was, hurried away to his home, not daring to trust himself longer with the excited crowd, who had cheered themselves hoarse during the time that elapsed before Manning rounded the corner. As he drove under the line he asked the judges:

"Good for second bet, ain't I?"

“Sorry to say, Mr. Manning, that you have lost both.”

The explanation of the matter was, that Si Slocum, having determined to “do” John Manning, had borrowed of a friend in a neighboring town the famous mare “Dolly,” who had a record of 2:40, fast trotting in those days.

The judges directed the tavern-keeper to give the stakes to Si Slocum, who invited the whole town to drink. Rum ran like water. It didn’t seem as if there was a teetotaler in the town, and the tavern-keeper said he hadn’t sold so much “sence las’ gin’ral trainin’.”

## CHAPTER XXXI

### TRIUMPH OF WRONG

THE never-ceasing thought of Richard Baxter and Sam Drisco was how to get restitution and damages for the outrageous wrong committed in the turning out of doors and driving to the poorhouse of Sam and his mother.

Mrs. Drisco was not told of the finding of the satisfaction, as she was inclined to be garrulous, and they were not ready to take the public into their confidence.

It was hardly probable that any compromise could be effected. The satisfaction was *prima-facie* evidence of a strong character, but they must, if possible, corroborate it. The principals were dead, and the chance of finding a witness was slight.

Most likely the defense would be that the satisfaction was a forgery, which would place Richard in a precarious position; but he saw before him a wrong to right, a duty to perform, and would not shrink from it, whatever the risk to himself. It was of the utmost importance that he should begin right and make no mistakes. It would have been of great advantage could he have counselled with someone. This he was unable to do, as every lawyer in the county was against him, because of what they called unprofessional conduct. Surely, Richard received little encouragement in his effort to be an honest lawyer,

Finding it impossible to get corroborative testimony as to the genuineness of the satisfaction, he decided to take his chances without it.

The usual legal preliminaries were begun. The announcement of the case of Samuel Drisco versus John Manning created, as might have been expected, a great sensation, and many times before the day of trial the case had been tried in the court of public opinion, and a verdict rendered each day. The sympathies of the people were with Sam Drisco, and in their verdict they gave him restitution and substantial damages; but the cool judgment of the lawyers was that without corroborative testimony the satisfaction would be thrown out of court.

The day of the trial came and there was no delay in securing a jury. Richard Baxter appeared for the plaintiff and John Canfield, who ranked as leader of the Bar in Mendon, for the defense.

The trial was short. The only witness for the plaintiff was Richard himself, and he could only testify to the finding of the satisfaction. All the evidence, except as to its genuineness, was admitted by the defense.

As Mrs. Drisco was not able to appear in court, her affidavit was submitted detailing Eben Drisco's dying words, with which the reader is familiar.

John Canfield for the defense offered no evidence, but contented himself with a claim that the satisfaction was a forgery, a deep plot to defraud his client, and in his argument charged the plaintiff's attorney with the conception and execution of the fraud, and

asked his honor, the judge, to instruct the jury that there was no cause of action. The judge did so, and the jury, without leaving their seats, rendered that verdict.

Immediately the sheriff stepped up to Richard Baxter, presented a warrant, and arrested him for forgery. He was stupefied with surprise. The consciousness of his innocence rendered his astonishment the greater. He, Richard Baxter, guilty of forgery! Who could think so? He soon realized that he had to meet the stern realities of the law, as he was under arrest. As he turned he saw standing before him John Manning, with a devilish grin of satisfaction on his face.

"Shouldn't have thought this of you, Dick," he remarked, with an ill-concealed tone of pleasure.

Canfield had drawn near, that he might enjoy the defeat of Richard, whom he had always disliked with the feeling that vice ever has toward virtue. He said nothing, however, for which Richard was thankful.

The district attorney presented the indictment found by the grand jury, and moved that the prisoner should be immediately arraigned. The judge so ordered. The clerk read the indictment. The grand jury had found a true bill against Richard Baxter for forgery in the first degree, charging the forging and issuance of a certain satisfaction for the purpose of defrauding one John Manning.

Richard pleaded not guilty. The district attorney moved that he be committed to jail to await trial at the next term of the criminal court.

"Your Honor," said Richard, addressing the Judge, "am I not entitled to bail?"

"Certainly," responded the judge, and turning to the district attorney, asked: "What amount do you suggest?"

Manning whispered quickly to Canfield, and he to the district attorney, who replied:

"Your Honor, in view of the enormity of the prisoner's offense against the law and there being no doubt of his guilt, I would move that the bail be fixed at ten thousand dollars."

The amount astonished the judge, and in response to the claim that it was excessive, he said, "I think it is. The bail is fixed at one thousand dollars."

Richard did not suppose for a moment that he would have any difficulty in securing bail, and was deeply chagrined by the refusal of a half-dozen people, not one of whom did he suppose would decline.

"Well, to jail it is, then," he despondently said to the deputy sheriff. As they went down the courthouse steps toward the jail, they saw Si Slocum hurrying across the square.

"Hold on there, Mr. Sheriff, don't be in sich a derved hurry. I want thet pris'ner. I'll go bail fer 'im."

They returned to the courtroom, and Si Slocum said to the judge that he wished to become bondsman for the appearance of Richard Baxter.

"Do you know the amount of the bond?" sneered the district attorney.



"Wall," replied Si, "I heerd 'twas a thousan' dollars."

"Your Honor," said the district attorney, "it is useless to waste the time of the court on this worthless horse-jockey. He is not worth a thousand cents."

"Would it not be well," said the judge, "to let the man speak for himself?" And turning to Si, he said:

"What is your name?"

"Si Slocum, Yer Honor."

"Mr. Slocum, do you wish to become surety for the appearance of Richard Baxter to stand trial on the charge of forgery at the next term of the criminal court?"

"I do, Yer Honor."

"Have you property to the amount of one thousand dollars, necessary to qualify you to act as bondsman?"

"I hev, Yer Honor."

"Of what does it consist, and where is it located?"

"It is in cash, Yer Honor, an' here 'tis," taking his wallet out of his pocket and counting out ten one-hundred-dollar bills.

The judge said to the clerk of the court: "Take charge of this money and prepare the bond for execution."

"I object," said the district attorney.

"On what ground?" asked the judge.

"I do not think he is a fit man."

"There, that will do. You have carried your objections quite far enough. Your conduct begins to look like persecution."

## CHAPTER XXXII

### TOWN MEETING

**I**T was election day and local politics ran high. The town hall was filled at an early hour. There was as usual a lively contest for the office of moderator, for in addition to the honor pertaining to the position, the incumbent dined at the expense of the town. It took several votes to settle the question as to who should preside over the day's deliberations. This was decided by a close vote, and the order of business began.

There were quite a number of questions regarding repairing roads and bridges and other matters of similar import during which the voting by ballot for town offices was going on, it being ordered that the polls should remain open two hours.

The officers to be elected for the ensuing year were three selectmen, a town clerk, three assessors, two constables, and a justice of the peace. The dominant party had become hopelessly divided and could not agree upon a candidate for the latter office.

There were animated discussions by little groups, and the calls of the moderator to "be in order" were not heeded. While some were not conscious of loud talk you could have heard them reason for a mile. One group was so especially turbulent that the mod-

erator called out, "Captain Shedd, come to order. What's the matter with you?" The reply came quickly, "Ebenezer Richardson wants me to vote just as I'm a mind to, and I'm d——d if I will."

In this disagreement on the election of a justice of the peace, the "boys" thought they saw an opportunity to have a little fun. They went over to the printing office and had some ballots struck off, which read:

"For  
Justice of the Peace,  
Josiah Slocum,"

and distributed them freely. Everybody took it as a good joke, and many, without considering the result, voted for Si, who had been an innocent victim, having taken no part in the game.

The tavern stood right across the square and many times and often there was occasion to "go over and see a man." The present generation did not originate the practice or the phrase. All did not go for a drink, as many went for pie and cheese, which was always in great demand for luncheon. Not a few brought their doughnuts and cheese from home. The board of selectmen took their dinners at the tavern on election day and charged the item openly in the expense account as "Paid Lory Watson for dinners for the selectment and moderator, one dollar." This was their only perquisite.

Town-meeting day was the day of all the year. Everyone came to town to visit, and the villagers were

expected to keep open house for their uncles, their aunts, their cousins, relatives, and friends generally.

The noon recess was from twelve to one, and on the return to the town hall, there was among many a feeling of "how come you so?"

One old fellow from Johnson's Corners had been complaining about a woman who scolded everybody that came near her, and who, when they didn't come near enough, would go out into the road after them. He had called the attention of the moderator to the fact several times and no action had been taken. Finally he got desperate, for the last thing that his wife said to him when he left home in the morning was, "If you don't get Sal Johnson to shut up, you needn't come home." The moderator told him that he must make a motion, and he would put it to a vote. After dinner and several drinks of New England rum, his courage reached the oratorical point and he made the following motion: "Mr. Moderator, I move that Sal Johnson is an open-mouthed old scold an' that the s'lectmen be a committee to look into it."

"Second the motion," came from all parts of the hall.

The moderator said, "You have heard the motion of Mr. Bixby. All who are in favor will say aye, contrary, no."

It was unanimously carried.

There had been quite a vigorous discussion between young Mr. Filkins, who had just graduated from college, and old Mr. Barnett, in which Mr. Filkins had

accused Mr. Barnett of making a certain statement, which the latter denied. Mr. Filkins replied:

“What you said was tantamount.”

Mr. Barnett, not understanding what his opponent had said, asked a bystander, “What did he say?”

The reply was, “He called you a catamount.”

“Mr. Moderator,” yelled Mr. Barnett. “Mr. Moderator, I didn’t come to this ’ere town meetin’ to be consulted by any little squirt, jest ’cause he come from college. Mr. Moderator, I fit in the Revolutionary, I did, an’ I’ve ben to town meetin’ more nor fifty year, an’ this is the fust time I’ve ben consulted an’ called names, an’ ef this is the way to treat an ole pensioner, I’ll go hum,” and away he went.

It was but a little while before that young Filkins was in an argument with old Mr. Dunlop, who was very lame and with difficulty hobbled about. He had stated his proposition, and Filkins, replying, had said that Mr. Dunlop was lame in his statement.

“Mister Moderator, Mister Moderator,” screamed the angry old man. “Yes, I am lame, an’ I ain’t to blame fer it, an’ I don’t like to be twitted on it. I ain’t to blame, Mister Moderator, fer bein’ lame. I couldn’t help bein’ kicked by a mule, an’ now it’s putty dern tough to be kicked by a young jackass right here in town meetin’.”

This brought down the house. Young Filkins subsided, and old Mr. Dunlop seemed mollified by the applause that he received.

The counting of the ballots cast for town offices progressed without incident, until the box for justice

of the peace was opened, and the counting begun. Then, many who had voted thoughtlessly for Si Slocum for the honorable and important office of justice of the peace began to consider their action, felt a little alarm, and hoped that he had been defeated, as either of the other candidates was, in their estimation, far better fitted for the office. The disgrace to the town of having elected a disreputable horse jockey as justice of the peace would make them the laughing stock of the whole county and perhaps the whole State. But it was too late to prevent it. The ballots were cast and the result was the election of Si Slocum by a plurality of three.

Those who styled themselves the best people were horrified, but the "boys" were jubilant, for they were quite sure, to use a modern phrase, that they would have a "wide-open town."

In the village that night they had a great celebration, almost equal to that of the Fourth of July. They borrowed the blacksmith's anvil and fired thirteen guns, as they termed the explosions of powder. They "chipped in" and bought some spirits of turpentine and candle wicking enough to make a dozen fire-balls, and made all the arrangements for a grand pow-wow. Rum flowed freely across the tavern bar, and it looked as if there wouldn't be a sober man of the "committee" by eight o'clock. The Continental Band, bass drum, kettle drum and fife, were on hand. The men comprising this band were each over eighty years old. Evidently there is something about the soul-stirring drum and the ear-piercing fife that is

conducive to longevity. The arrangements were all complete and the ceremonies were to begin with a serenade beneath the window of Si Slocum's room at the tavern, where it was thought he had hidden himself to prepare a speech. The whole thing was intended to be a surprise to him, but it was the crowd who were surprised, for Si could not be found; but the play went on without him.

The hostler at the tavern barn said that Squire Slocum hitched up his trotter at about six o'clock, saying that he guessed he'd take a spin up the pike. He did not return until long after the rioters had gone home and the town was quiet.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

**T**HE act of Si Slocum in becoming his bondsman was as great a surprise to Richard Baxter as it was to everybody else. After the execution of the bond and his release, they walked over to the office and Richard asked for an explanation.

“Why, Mr. Slocum, did you become my bondsman?”

“Ye see, Mr. Richard, I was allus misfortunate. Was born in the poorhouse. I never hed no father, as I know on. My mother ’ud never tell me nothin’ ’bout ’im, an’ I don’t know as she knowed what become of ’im. I stayed in the poorhouse till I was twelve year ole; then they bound me out to Farmer Jinkins, an’ ef thar ever was a meaner man than ole Jinkins, it was Mis’ Jinkins, his wife. Thar warn’t no children, but he allus called ’er mother. Why, Mr. Richard, she was thet mean thet a respectable skunk wouldn’t hev owned her fer a mother. Mr. Richard, I’d a starved to death ef I hedn’t a hed milk to live on.”

“So they gave you plenty of milk to drink, did they?”

“Give me milk to drink? Not much! Never hed a drink o’ milk all the time I lived with ole Jinkins. No, sir, I larnt a trick thet made me fat. It took



some time to git expert, an' Mis Jinkins use to say, 'Si, w'at's thet on yer frock? Ye ben a-drinkin' milk out o' the pail?' 'No, marm,' I use to say. 'I don't like milk, 'speci'ly w'en it's warm.' Ye see, Mr. Richard, 'twas this way. Ye take holt o' the cow's teats so, an' I got so I could bend the teats jest right, an' squirt two streams inter my mouth to onct, an' it didn't take long to git a pint er a quart, ef I wanted so much, an' I allus tuk the strippins 'cause thet's putty much all cream.

"I stayed at ole Jinkins' nigh onto three year, an' I got to be a big boy, an' strong fer my age, an' done more work than the hired man.

"Ole Jinkins never let me go to school, 'though 'twas writ in the 'greement with the overseer of the poor thet I should allus go to the winter school. But ole Jinkins didn't keer fourpence ha'penny fer 'is 'greement. One day I said very 'spectfully, 'Mister Jinkins, ain't ye goin' to lemme go to school this winter?' He said, 'I'll l'arn ye all ye want to l'arn,' an' he grabbed me by the neck of my frock an' shook me, an' he said, 'Don't ye know yer bound out?' an' he let go an' tried to kick me. I got my mad up fin'ly, an' threw 'im down putty middlin' solid on the hard ground. Then I jumped over the fence into the road. The ole man was a-pickin' hisself up, an' I said, 'Good-bye, Mister Jinkins. Give my love to Mis' Jinkins. I'm bound out, do ye hear? I'm bound out, I be.' An' thet was the las' time I ever seen Mister Jinkins. He stud thar ahind the fence, a-shakin' a fist at me.

“Wall, I run round from pillar to post, as I’ve hearn tell on, fer nigh on to three year, got lots o’ hard work, gin’lly ’nuff to eat, but no schoolin’ ner no money nuther; thet’s to say ’mountin’ to nuthin’. They allus managed somehow to cheat me out o’ my wages, er bring me in debt. I tell ye, Squire Baxter, these ’ere farmers is a tough lot, an’ closer than the bark on a tree.

“I heerd a good deal ’bout goin’ to sea, an’ I thought the water couldn’t be wuss fer me than the land was, so I tramped down to Boston an’ tuk a job on a big ship thet was a-goin’ to sail thet arternoon fer Calcutty. I axed the feller ‘How long shall we be gone?’ an’ he said, ‘Oh, I reckon a couple o’ weeks.’ Wall, ’twas nigh onto two year afore I seen Boston ag’in, an’ I got ’nuff o’ goin’ to sea. The cappen was wuss nor ole Jinkins. Ye couldn’t jaw back ner say nuthin’ till arter ye was soun’ asleep in yer hammock, down in the fo’castle. Ef ye did, ye’d be hit over the head with a marlin spike, er strung up to the stays an’ gin forty lashes with the rope’s end. Don’t want no more o’ thet kind o’ boardin’ school in mine, ef ye please.”

“Well, I don’t blame you, Si,” interrupted Richard; “sea captains are cruel tyrants.”

“I allus look on my voyage to Calcutty,” continued Si, “same’s two years in the workhouse. The cappen was wuss nor a hog, an’ hedn’t it ben fer the mate, who was a good feller, thar’d ben a mutiny, an’ the black flag ’ud ’a gone to the masthead, fer thar was more’n one sailor aboard thet ship who’d ben a pirate.

I never was gladder in all my life than when we hauled up side o' Long Wharf.

"W'en the ship was discharged I hed more money than I'd ever hed in all my life. I fell into the han's of the sailor boardin'-house keepers. These crimpers are the wust men thet ever lived, reg'lar land pirates, an' afore ten days my money was all gone. I was shanghaied, an' w'en I come out o' my drunk I foun' myself two days out to sea, on one o' Enoch Train's Liverpool liners.

"I got back to Boston in 'bout three months, an' w'en I was paid off I thought I'd profit by the lesson I'd l'arnt an' keep away from them rum holes; but I didn't, an' 'twarn't three days, one Saturday night, afore I fell into the han's o' the same gang thet robbed me afore. But this time I wasn't stupid drunk, but fightin' drunk, an' in the fight I struck the man who'd robbed me, a blow thet killed 'im; so I thought at the time, but, thank God, he didn't die. I got away from the drunken crowd as quick's possible. Though I was crazy drunk w'en the fracas begun, I was as sober a man as ever lived in a minute.

"I heerd the cry of 'Watch, watch!' an' run down Ann street as fast as my legs could carry me. It seemed to me thet thar was a thousan' men arter me. I turned suddenly into a dark alley, an' stumbled over a derrick thet stood leanin' ag'in the wall. I fell, an' as I picked myself up, I thought thet if I could climb up the derrick I'd stan' a good chance to beat 'em. My sailor experience was wuth havin'. I clim' up one side of the derrick an' hed straddled the cross-

piece at the top, w'en the watch, followed by the crowd, reached the alley. 'He turned in here, Bill. Two of ye run round to t'other end an' head 'im off.' The watch sprang their rattles fer help, an' passed d'rectly under me, an' up the alley in the dark. They come back much slower than they went in, an' I heerd 'em say, 'He's a slick un. He's got away sure. He's mos' likely made down to one o' the wharves an' 'll hide 'board some vessel. I know whar to look fer sich fellers.' They hurried down Ann street, an' turned toward the wharves.

"It soon got quiet, but I didn't dast to come down. Must 'ave stayed up on thet cross-bar more nor two hour, not able to make up my min' what to do. As I was 'bout to come down, I heerd somebody comin'. It turned out to be a man staggerin' drunk. He turned into the alley, an' sunk down on the ground. I listened a few minutes, then slid down one side o' the derrick, an' run out o' the alley.

"I didn't git more'n ten fathoms afore I hed an idee, an' I run back into the alley an' stooped down to feel o' the critter. He was dead-drunk sure 'nuff. I took off all 'is clothes, an' then pulled off my togs an' got him into 'em, an' put on hissen. I foun' four an' sixpence in my pockets, an' thet was all the swag the robbers hed lef' me out o' three months' wages. I tuk my belt an' sheath knife, thinkin' it mought be handy in helpin' a murderer to git away. I started down Ann street, not feelin' very comfort'ble in my new togs. I felt suthin' in the pockets, an' at the fust light looked over what I'd got, an' foun' I hed a



**"HE TURNED IN HERE, BILL."**



leather purse an' in it was some gold, an' thar was a gold watch in the waistcoat pocket.

"Fer 'bout two minits I was as happy 's ef I'd foun' a gold mine. Then I hed a set-to with Si Slocum. 'Yer a thief, are ye, Si Slocum? Ye hed to swap clothes 'cause yer neck 'ud be stretched ef they ketched ye. Now, Si Slocum, ye killed a man 'cause ye had to. Ye swapped clothes 'cause ye hed to to save yer neck, but the time hain't come w'en ye hed to steal, an' ye ain't a-goin' to.' 'Yes, thet's all very well, but ef I don't take this swag, someone else will afore mornin', sure.' 'Wall, p'raps they will an' p'raps they won't, but more'n likely yer right, an' some thief 'll come 'long an' rob the poor drunken cuss, but you ain't a-goin' to do it, Si Slocum.' Wall, Mr. Richard, arter this argument I went back to the alley, an' put the watch an' the purse into the man's pockets."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Richard. "I'm glad you didn't rob the man."

"An' I've ben glad ever sence. I've ben orful hard up, many a time, but I never longed fer thet money.

"I saw a barber's pole in a cellarway an' went down.

"'Bress de Lawd! Bress de Lawd!! Bress de Lawd!!!' said a coal-black nigger.

"'W'at's the matter with you?"

"'W'y, honey, I'se ben prayin' foh ye to come foh more'n two hours, foh I needs de money. Hain't ben a man in heah all de day long.'

"'Wall, I'm here now. Cut my hair an' shave me, quick.'

"He begun a-clippin' with 'is shears. Stoppin' all

at onct, he looked at a wooden clock thet stud on a shelf. 'Twas ten minutes of twelve.

"'Can't do it in dat time,' said he, an' turned the han's back to half-pas' 'leven.

"'W'at's thet fer?' I axed 'im. 'Well, boss, I'll 'splain. I'se a perfessed, I is, an' I can't work on de Lawd's day.'

"I knew thet my only chance fer escape was to git out o' Boston quick's I could. I went up Ann street, through Dock Square, up Washington street, an' over the neck to Roxbury, out on to the Dedham road. I knowed by the feelin' thet my clothes was finer nor I'd ben used to, an' w'en it got light I seed thet I was togged like a gentleman, an' anybody 'ud see in a minute thet the rig warn't mine.

"I seed a little ways off a farm house, an' a big barn. I was mos' starved, an' tired. W'y, Mr. Richard, ef I'd a ben pullin' on the mainsail fer a week I couldn't a ben more tired. Thar was more'n twenty cows in the linter. I foun' a milkin'-stool an' sot down aside a leetle heifer, got breakfas' as I use to at ole Jinkins'. 'Twas sunrise by this time an' I heerd voices, which made it necessary fer me to hide quick's I could. What scart me more'n anything else was a dog barkin', an' I heerd a man say, 'W'at's the matter, Skip? Ben some chicken thieves round here, eh?'

"On one side of the barn floor was a fixed ladder runnin' up on to the scaffold, w'ich was full o' hay. Standin' on the floor an' leanin' 'gainst the ladder was some rakes an' forks. On 'em was some bags a-hangin' to dry. I was keerful not to tip over these



things, but clim' up the ladder quick, into the hay-mow, an' crawled over the hay, clear to the end o' the barn' an' hid under the hay. The dog gin short barks, as ef follerin' my tracks. I could hear the man a-talkin' to the dog. 'Oh, he got into thet winder, did he? Thar, go fin' 'im.' I thought thet he h'isted the dog into the winder, as I heerd barkin' in the barn below. 'Ah, he milked this heifer. Thar's the stool whar he left it. Go fer 'im, Skip. Oh, yer fooled thar. He didn't go up the ladder, fer thar's the bags jest whar I hung 'em las' night. Come outside, Skip, an' see ef we kin track 'im.'

"I slep' in the hay till long arter noon, an' was 'woke up by the cacklin' of a hen thet hed jes' laid an egg in a stolen nest. I felt hungry an' hunted the nest an' foun' a half-dozen eggs, an' sucked 'em.

"Soon's 'twas dark I started on the road. I was 'fraid my clothes 'ud gin me away, so I didn't dast to travel in the daytime. I passed a farm house an' saw a man undress an' go to bed. He laid 'is clothes on a cheer right side the open winder. Here's 'nuther chance to change my clothes, I thought. I waited fer an hour fer ev'rything to git still, then I sneaked up to the winder, an' without makin' any noise, pulled the clothes out. It tuk but a minute to slip mine off an' put hissen on. I laid mine on the cheer, an' arter git-tin' some vittles out of a pantry winder, I went on.

"Toward mornin' I crep' inter 'nuther barn an' stayed all day. At night I started ag'in, an' toward mornin' I overtuk a circus on the way to Taunton. I j'ined thet comp'ny an' stayed with 'em nigh three

year. I was helper to the hoss doctor, an' thet's how, Mr. Richard, I got my hoss l'arnin'. We travelled all over the country, down south in the winter an' up north in the summer. It's the wuss life ever a man lived an' I don't b'lieve thet I was real sober three times in the hull three years, thet is, I mean, got the rum all out of me. Thar was a big fight with the perlice down in New Orleans an' I hed to skip.

"Wall, Squire, I'm a-spinnin' this into a yarn, but I'll hurry up an' tell ye how I happened to hev an on-settled account with the ole Squire, yer father. 'Twas this way. I staggered into Mendon one night. I'd never ben here afore. I was on a long drunk. In wand'rin' 'bout I happened to set down on the ole Squire's front doorsteps, an' fell asleep, er stupid drunk, I guess, an' the Squire come hum an' foun' me thar. He tuk me, drunk an' sick, into the house, an' it was three weeks afore I was well 'nuff to git about, an' the only question he ever axed me was, 'W'at's yer name?' He never axed me whar I come from, ner no other questions thet I wouldn't liked to hev answered. When I was well 'nuff to work, he got the tavern-keeper to give me a job round the barn.

"'Bout six weeks arter I went to work, 'long come a deputy sheriff from Cass County an' tuk me fer hoss stealin', an' ole Squire Abraham went bail fer me, an' he went over to Cass County an' testified thar thet I was in his house sick at the time the hoss was stole.

"An' asides, Squire Richard, you hes allus treated me like as I was a human critter, an' never throwed any airs at me. An' Squire Richard, thet's why I

went into court to-day an' put up a thousan' dollars, all the money I've got, to keep you from layin' in jail till yer trial comes on."

Richard took Si by the hand, and started to thank him, beginning, "Mr. Slocum," when Si interrupted him with:

"None o' your misterin' me. I'm Si Slocum."

"Well, then, Si, I am deeply grateful to you, and thankful to find that I have one friend in this town. But how do you know that I'll not give you the slip and run away; and then you would lose your money."

"Thar's two reasons why I don't think you'll skip over into Canady. Fust is, I don't think ye ever writ thet sat'sfaction piece, an' second, ye ain't the run-away kin', ain't built thet way; an' asides, Squire Richard, ef ye air guilty, thet's jes' what I wants ye to do, an' thet won't no more'n pay my debt to yer father."

"No, I am not guilty; I will not run away." And again taking Si by the hand, "You are a good fellow. What a pity that some of those folks who profess so much are not like you."

The following from the *Boston Courier* of the time, as connected with Si Slocum's narrative, are of interest:

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"Yes."

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**DRUNKEN BRAWL AND MURDER.**

Another of those disgraceful scenes that have become so frequent of late took place last night in a grogery under the sailors' boarding house of one John Mondy, who also is proprietor of the rum hole where the tragedy took place. It seems that about 9 o'clock a party of drunken sailors led by one Si Slocum came into the bar room where there were some fifteen or twenty other sailors and longshoremen all of whom were pretty full. Si Slocum invited everybody to take a drink but Mondy refused to set out the liquor until the money was put up. Slocum told Mondy to take it out of his money which Mondy had robbed him of. There was much angry discussion which culminated in a fight between Slocum and Mondy. Slocum gave Mondy a blow under the ear and he fell dead. In the excitement Slocum ran out and down Ann street; soon followed however by the crowd leading two of the watch, who always have a habit of getting there a little too late. Slocum had a good start but could be seen by his followers as he passed under the street lights. All at once he disappeared up one of the dark alleys so frequent on Ann Street. Diligent but unsuccessful search was made for him. It is quite possible that he secreted himself on some vessel and more likely than not is now well out at sea. Another murder and another escape is added to the long list charged to the inefficiency of our watch.

**LATER.**

Fortunately, we were about to write unfortunately, Slocum's blow was not fatal. Had it been the city would have been well rid of one of its worst characters.

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sale.

## A MYSTERY.

As two of the watch, Bill Sykes and Joe Manley, the same men from whom the sailor got away, were coming up Ann Street this morning Bill said "Let's go over to Back Alley and see if we can find how that sailor got away from us last night." As they turned into the alley they saw as they supposed the sailor lying on the ground. "There he is now." They turned the man who was lying face down and found to their great surprise that it was not the sailor but Col. Atherton of Beacon Street, in a state of stupor. As they raised him he recovered somewhat and exclaimed "where am I?" and then looking at the clothes that he had on, "Who in the devil am I? these duds don't belong to me. They have changed everything but my boots. Lucky they left them or I could not identify myself." It was evident that the sailor had changed clothing with the Colonel. In the trousers' pocket was found the Colonel's purse containing more than one hundred dollars in gold, and in the jacket his gold chronometer watch. This showed that the sailor only wanted the Colonel's clothing to aid in his escape and would not rob his victim. The Colonel's explanation was as follows. "I had some friends who were to sail on the Rob Roy lying at T wharf, for Liverpool this morning, and they went aboard last night, as the ship was to pull out at about midnight, and sail with the tide this morning.

I went aboard last night to give them a good send off and must have got pretty full as the last I remember was leaving the ship and coming up T wharf to Sea street."

## COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

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## CHAPTER XXXIV

### “GO SLOW, OLE PAL”

**T**HE election of Si Slocum to the office of justice of the peace took place the day after Richard Baxter's arrest for forgery. His qualifying as bondsman for Richard in his hour of need, and the relation of his life-story to him, inspired not only a feeling of obligation, but of respect. He thought that he saw in Slocum's character some traits of an entirely different nature than had yet been developed, and he said to Si:

“Now is your opportunity. Why not cut loose from your present associates, take a new departure, and make a man of yourself. 'Tis true you lack education, but that can be largely overcome by a strenuous effort on your part. As justice of the peace, you will need an office. You are welcome to come here with me, and I will gladly do all I can to assist you.”

Si sat and thought for a few moments in silence; then grasping Richard by the hand, said:

“Thank ye. Them's the fust encouragin' words ever spoke to me. My life hes ben a fight all alone by myself, with ev'rybody ag'in me. Now I've got one friend, I'll start new, an' so help me God I'll make a man of myself! Jest as much of a man as He'll let me,” he added. That was the reason why Si Slocum hitched up his trotter and took a spin up the pike, in-

stead of joining in the festivities arranged to celebrate his election.

A neat little sign, bearing the legend:

<p>“Josiah Slocum, Justice of the Peace,”</p>
---

made its appearance at the foot of the stairs leading to Richard Baxter’s office, the next morning.

Early in the day the constable brought in one of the “committee,” charged with being drunk and disorderly, and beating his wife. He pleaded not guilty, and with a leer and a wink at the justice, said: “Go slow, ole pal.”

The squire heard the evidence, and then remarked:

“Ef it hed only ben a plain drunk, Joe, I’d a let ye off, bein’ as how it’s the fust offense, so fer as the records of this court shows; but wife-beatin’ don’t git no encouragement in this shop, so I fine ye ten dollars er ten days in jail.”

If Joe Bunker had seen the ghost of his great-grandfather, he couldn’t have been more astonished. He was really dumbfounded, but said nothing.

“Pay up?” interrogated the justice.

“Hain’t got no money,” said Joe.

The squire then made out the commitment and handed it to the constable, who had not recovered from his surprise. He took his prisoner to jail and locked him up. Thus ended the first session of Squire Slocum’s court.

"Court's adjourned," announced Si, although there was no one but himself in the room.

He put on his hat and went down to Joe Bunker's house to see how matters were, and found Joe's wife, with five small children, without an ounce of any kind of food. As he turned up the road toward town, he might have been heard to say:

"Thank God, I'm a bachelor, an' hain't got sich respons'bil'ties on my shoulders."

He went into the Emporium and said:

"Mr. Palmer, Joe Bunker's in jail, an' his fam'ly hain't got no vittles. Send 'em 'round suthin' to eat."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Palmer. "But ye see, Joe's credit ain't very good."

"Wall, all right, I'll pay it."

"Yes, yes, but I dunno's your credit's any better."

"P'raps not," answered Si. "Thar's two dollars fer ye. An' by the way, I think I've a complaint ag'in ye fer lettin' yer cows run in the highway, ag'in the statutes made an' pervided, an' yer hereby summoned to appear afore Squire Si Slocum, justice of the peace, at his office, to-morrow mornin' at nine o'clock. Hereof fail not, under due penalty of the law, so made an' pervided."

Deacon Palmer laughed contemptuously as Si went out. "Thet's what comes o' puttin' a beggar on hoss-back," he muttered.

The deacon paid no attention the next morning to Squire Slocum's verbal summons. The squire waited half an hour and then sent the constable with a warrant, who returned, saying that Deacon Palmer said



that he was busy and would come over in a day or two. This was too much for the dignity of the court, and Squire Slocum arose in his wrath. He had had in several places a little police-court experience, although it was not on the bench, had learned a little something about the dignity of the court, and that it need not permit itself to be trifled with.

“Mister Constable,” he said, “you bring the body of Deacon Palmer, dead er alive, afore this court at once, er I’ll hev ye afore the grand jury fer the disruption of the statutes.”

This settled the question for the constable, and he again started for Deacon Palmer’s, as he did not dare to face so serious a charge as “disruption of the statutes.” It wasn’t more than ten minutes before he returned, and this time he brought the deacon, who at once sat down.

“The pris’ner will stan’ up.”

The deacon hesitated a moment, then stood up, and began to say something about not understanding such ridiculous proceedings, when he was interrupted by the squire, who said:

“The constable will take off the pris’ner’s hat.”

The squire announced to the deacon, who began to think matters were getting serious, that he was “fined one dollar fer lettin’ yer critters run in the highway ag’in the statute so made an’ pervided. One dollar fer contempt of court in not appearin’ accordin’ to summons. One dollar fer contempt of court fer not comin’ when sent fer; an’ two dollars more fer contempt of court ag’in, in as how the constable hed to

go an' fetch ye, which sum total makes jest about five dollars, 'cordin' to Daboll."

"Sha'n't pay a cent!" thundered the outraged deacon.

The news of what was going on in the justice's office had spread through the village, the office was crowded full, and the audience were volubly expressing surprise.

"Hats off," said the squire, "an' be seated." This last was an impossibility, as there were only a half-dozen chairs for more than thirty people. As soon as order was restored, Squire Slocum very blandly asked:

"Does the court understan' thet the pris'ner refuses to pay his fines?"

The deacon answered, "I'll be dod-rotted afore I'll pay."

"Very well," replied the squire. "Thar'll be 'nuther dollar fer commitment to jail. You are hereby an' hereon committed to jail in default of payment of six dollars, whar ye shall remain till the fine be paid. Constable, take yer pris'ner to jail. Court's adjourned."

By this time the deacon began to realize that he was really in the clutches of the law, paid his fine, was released, and went away muttering vengeance.

One of the spectators who had been "down to Boston" and had seen the play of "Julius Cæsar," remarked: "I wonder what kin' of meat they're a-feedin' to our Cæsar, thet he's a-gittin' so fat?"

## CHAPTER XXXV

### POORHOUSE RELIGION

**W**HILE Mrs. Drisco was at the poorhouse, Parson Whiting came once a month to perform, yes, that's just the word, to perform religious services, it being on his part simply a performance, for which the town authorities paid him one dollar.

Mrs. Drisco was a member of his church and in by-gone days had been an active worker in the parish. That was in the days of prosperity, when the Driscos were esteemed to be well-to-do people.

While the Driscos were prosperous, Parson Whiting was a frequent caller, and many a cup of Old Hyson tea and dish of crullers had Mrs. Drisco set before him, much to his enjoyment. Many a leg of lamb, loin of veal, and spare rib had found their way to the parsonage from the Drisco farm. As their fortunes waned, the visits of the parson fell off, and before the climax of their troubles, ceased entirely. Mrs. Drisco charitably excused this by saying, "The minister is getting old and his parish is increasing." Her self-esteem came to the aid of her charity, and she did not seriously sorrow; Sam, who had no respect for Parson Whiting, was glad to have his visits cease.

His deep regard and love for his mother often caused him to refrain from expressing his opinion, es-

pecially on religious matters, when it did not agree with hers, and always when there was a possibility of wounding her feelings. This restraint on his part often unintentionally deceived and led her to think that they agreed, when the opposite was the fact. Hence, Mrs. Drisco's ideas regarding Sam's religious beliefs were quite erroneous.

As a matter of duty to his mother, he attended morning and evening prayer and reading of the Scriptures. Much to his satisfaction, she did the reading and praying. Some time after his father's death she said:

"Sam, don't you think it would be more seemly if you were to invoke God's blessing at meals, as you are the head of the family? I wish you would do so, my son."

"All right, mother, if it will please you." And from that time he had *said* the blessing.

Once in haying season, with much hay down, when they could hardly spare the time for dinner, as the clouds were threatening thunder-showers, they ate quickly, and he hurriedly returned thanks, ending with "all of which we ask—for Christ's sake Orlando get the oxen," as he and the hired man hastened from the table.

The first Sunday that Parson Whiting came to the poorhouse after the Driscos were domiciled there, was never forgotten by Mrs. Drisco; for notwithstanding her prayers to forgive him, the remembrance always aroused what she called an unchristian and unforgiving spirit. The inmates of the poorhouse were

gathered in the large room, awaiting the arrival of the minister, whose turn it was to officiate on that day. Mrs. Drisco was seated near the door and distinctly heard the welcome greeting of Mrs. Carter and the response of Parson Whiting. Mrs. Carter said to him:

“Mis’ Drisco’s right by the door, ef ye want to speak to ’er.”

He replied, “All paupers are the same to me. I cannot make any distinction,” and passed, without noticing her, to the table by the window and began the service.

As soon as she could control her emotions she arose quietly, went to her own room, opened her Bible at the habitual twenty-third Psalm, and began to read:

“The Lord is my Shepherd.”

In spite of all her efforts, “Old Hyson, crullers, all paupers are alike to me,” would crowd every other thought from her mind, and once she burst forth, “I hate the old hypocrite.” With all her efforts to be a Christian, she could not again enter that man’s presence. In this instance old Adam triumphed, and the human controlled the spiritual.

She did not tell Sam of this incident, as she felt quite sure that she would get no comfort from him.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### “THE PRISONER, YOUR HONOR, IS DEAD”

ON the morning of his trial, Squire Slocum went with Richard Baxter to the courthouse and surrendered him to the sheriff, and Richard was once more a prisoner. The district attorney said to the sheriff that he had better put the prisoner in jail, as he was not ready to call the case. The sheriff, the same who had declined to dispossess Sam Drisco at the demand of John Manning, replied, “I know my business, and you are not my bondsman”; and turning to Richard, said, “I can trust you and have no desire to mortify you by needlessly putting you in jail.”

Richard replied, “You may rest assured I will make you no trouble by trying to escape.”

The case was called.

Richard was escorted by the sheriff to the prisoner’s box. He was conscious of his innocence and knew there could be no true testimony against him. Having no money, he was forced to act as his own counsel. The result again verified the old adage that he who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client.

The district attorney opened the case with much flourish and bravado, saying in part:

“Gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner at the bar, Richard Baxter, attorney-at-law, and a disgrace to

the legal profession, is guilty of deliberate, long-planned, and most skilfully executed forgery. The annals of this court fail to furnish so criminal a case.

"We will show you, gentlemen of the jury, that the prisoner at the bar had the ability to commit the forgery.

"We will show you, gentlemen of the jury, that there was abundance of motive to urge the commission of this, in his case especially, reprehensible crime.

"These motives were to furnish the means of living, which he had not the ability to gain from the profession which he has so outrageously disgraced, and to help a life-long, intimate friend to recover his farm, which he had lost by the foreclosure of a mortgage.

"We will prove to you, gentlemen of the jury, by witnesses who are familiar with the signatures of Daniel Manning and Abraham Baxter, that those appended to this satisfaction are forgeries.

"This, gentlemen of the jury, we admit is to a certain extent circumstantial evidence, but we will place on the witness-stand one who actually saw the defendant commit the crime. It was an attempt to rob a highly respected citizen of this town, a gentleman noted for integrity, liberality, generosity, and good citizenship, not only of his money, but of that which is far dearer to John Manning, Esq., his character, his good name.

"With these facts, gentlemen of the jury, placed before you, there can be but one verdict."

This outrageous arraignment by the district attor-

ney not only astonished Richard Baxter, it staggered and bewildered him. In this dazed condition, not really comprehending his situation, he listened as one who had no personal interest in the testimony.

"First," said the district attorney, "we will show the ability of the prisoner to commit forgery. Clerk, call James Foster."

"James Foster! James Foster!" A slim young man stepped out from the audience.

"Take the stand. Hold up your right hand. You solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in the evidence you will give in the case of the Commonwealth against Richard Baxter?"

The district attorney put the usual questions as to name, age, residence, etc. He then asked:

"Do you know the prisoner?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you known him?"

"Nearly twenty years."

"Did you go to school with him?"

"Yes, sir."

"I desire to put in evidence this paper, which I will ask the clerk to mark for identification, exhibit A." To the witness, "Did you ever see that paper before?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it?"

"It's a copy of the names of the signers of the Declaration of Independence."

"Is it your property?"

"Yes, sir."







"Will you tell the jury all about it?"

"Dick Baxter made it when we went to school together and gave it to me."

Then the district attorney handed it to the foreman of the jury, remarking:

"There, gentlemen of the jury, is a specimen of the ability of the prisoner to forge other people's names. Look at that bold signature of John Hancock. Don't you think that the old Governor would have thought that he wrote it himself? That's all, Mr. Foster, unless (turning to the dock) the prisoner's counsel desires to cross-examine the witness," to which there was no response.

He then called the barber to show Richard's inability to pay his rent; Sam Drisco, to show that he and Richard had always been close friends, and to prove that there had been a conspiracy between him and the prisoner to defraud John Manning; but in this last he utterly failed.

The next witness was James Cook, a former student in Richard Baxter's office.

The district attorney handed him the satisfaction. "Did you ever see that paper before seeing it in court to-day?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you go on in your own way and tell all about it?"

"One day Mr. Baxter had been busy writing all day. He said to himself, 'There, I don't believe the devil could detect that.' I said, 'What did you say, sir?' and he answered, 'I didn't say anything.' Just that

minute somebody called, and he went out with him, after putting the paper in the desk, under some other papers. I'd been suspicious for some time that he was up to something wrong, so I took the paper out and read it, and it was this satisfaction."

"Are you certain that this is the same paper? Tell how you identify it?"

"I marked the letter C on that corner."

"Why did you mark it?"

"Because I thought that there was something wrong that might come out some day."

Two more witnesses were called by the prosecution, both of whom testified that they were familiar with the signatures of Daniel Manning and Abraham Baxter, and that they did not think those on the satisfaction genuine.

"The prosecution rests," announced the district attorney.

The judge arose and said:

"Does the defendant desire to present any testimony? If not, the case is closed."

"Your Honor," said the district attorney, "the prosecution has no desire uselessly to consume the time of this honorable court; therefore is ready to submit the case to the jury without argument."

"Does the defense desire to submit argument?" asked the judge.

No reply came. The judge waited but a moment, and then proceeded to charge the jury.

"Gentlemen of the jury, there are no points of law to which I desire to call your attention. The law

makes you the judge of the evidence. The fact that no defense has been offered is a virtual plea of guilty, a confession, one might say. As I have said, the law makes you the judge of the evidence; therefore, if you believe the evidence, and I do not see how you can doubt it, you will bring in a verdict of guilty. The case is in your hands, gentlemen of the jury, and you can, if you are agreed, and I have no doubt that you are, render a verdict without leaving your seats."

The foreman consulted with the jury for a moment, and announced:

"We have agreed upon a verdict."

"What is the verdict?" asked the judge, and the foreman replied:

"Guilty, Your Honor."

"Clerk, poll the jury."

This was done, and showed that the jury were unanimous in the verdict.

Richard Baxter had sat for the last two hours with his head leaning upright against the corner of the box, his eyes wide open, and his face bloodlessly pale. At the declaration of the verdict the judge arose and said:

"The prisoner will stand and receive sentence."

There was no move on the part of Baxter, and the judge impatiently called to the sheriff:

"Mr. Sheriff, make the prisoner stand up to receive sentence."

The sheriff went to the corner of the box where Richard sat, obscured by the shadows of the late afternoon, took hold of his hand, and quickly turning, said:

"The prisoner, Your Honor, is dead."

## CHAPTER XXXVII

“HE DOETH ALL THINGS WELL”

**A**S soon as Sam Drisco was able to work, he looked about for a job, and had no difficulty in finding one at good wages. He was distressed beyond power of telling by the misfortune of his friend, Richard Baxter, and said that he would rather have died than to have had it happen. Added to his misery was the fact that he was unable to assist him.

When Sam went to work he made arrangements for a temporary home for his mother, which she refused, saying that she was quite comfortable at the poor-house. As to the disgrace, it would not be increased by a longer stay, and she felt it a duty to remain at least for the present, for the good of the inmates. Mrs. Drisco was indeed a power for good, which was recognized by all. The poormaster said that rather than have her leave he would “board her fer nuthin’.” Sam arranged to pay her board and went to work with one trouble less on his mind, hoping that the time would come when he could give his mother a home. His hopes, however, were not very high since the loss of his suit against John Manning. His mother frequently said to him:

“God has not forsaken us. He never forsakes His children, and we are God’s children. It’s only a tem-

porary cloud that is passing. The sky may not clear while I live, but all will be right hereafter, if not now. Don't, dear Sam, ever doubt God's goodness. Whatever He does is right. He doeth all things well. It is not for us poor mortals to criticize God's doing."

The sublime faith of this pious old woman influenced for good all who knew her.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE RED LIFE-BLOOD SPURTED OUT

**A**T the announcement of Richard Baxter's death, the courtroom was immediately in an uproar. James Cook, the witness who swore that he saw Richard writing the satisfaction, turned deathly pale and said to John Canfield, beside whom he sat: "My God, what have you made me do, curse you!" and fell on the floor in a fit.

Everybody crowded around the prisoner.

"Well," said one, "Dick Baxter, poor devil, is well out of it, for he would have gotten ten years at least; but I don't believe that he is any more guilty than I am."

"Then you do not believe the evidence," replied his friend.

"No, I do not. It's all a conspiracy between—well, I'm not going to get myself involved in a libel suit by mentioning names, but I think that you can guess. I will say, however, that it is my opinion that if these men had their deserts they would be serving time in the State's prison at Concord."

"Order! order!" cried the judge, pounding on the desk with his cane. "Sheriff, you must keep order. Sit down, everybody. Is there a doctor in the courtroom?"

Dr. Small had already pushed through the crowd



to Richard Baxter, opened his vest, placed an ear to his heart, and announced:

“The man is not dead, but he soon will be, unless you stand back and give him air.”

The sheriff forced back the crowd. The doctor pushed up the sleeve on Richard’s left arm, sprung his lancet into the flesh, and the red life-blood spurted out. The judge directed the crier to adjourn court, which he did in the usual manner of “Hear ye, hear ye,” etc.

With the assistance of his deputies, the sheriff carried Richard to the jail, and placed him in a bed in one of the family rooms, not in a cell. Believing in his innocence, he desired to keep him from feeling the horror of his position as much as possible.

That Richard was critically ill there could be no question. The doctor predicted brain fever, which fully developed the next day. The sheriff’s wife was away from home, and the sheriff sent for Mrs. Miles, who came at once and took full charge, as she was abundantly capable of doing.

Mrs. Miles was very fond of Richard. He was her *beau ideal* of a true man; but the love of Mary for him greatly distressed her. She would have hailed with delight Richard Baxter as a son-in-law had she not realized the incongruity of such a match. He was only a briefless lawyer with no future prospects, before this miserable business. Though she believed him innocent, she had seen so much of the injustice of the world that she had no hopes for his relief. She was anxious to know to what extent Richard and Mary

were entangled, knowing Mary well enough to be quite sure that this unfortunate affair would make her cling closer to him. The only hope was that Richard did not love her daughter.

In his ravings, at the height of his fever, he seldom spoke of Mary, except as his dear sister, and never in a manner that would have attracted attention or made gossip, had the whole town heard it. This was especially gratifying to Mrs. Miles. In his convalescence he frequently asked about Mary, how she was getting along, when she would come back, and other very natural questions.

Mrs. Miles told him that she had written Mary, giving to her all the particulars of the case, his sickness, etc., and he was highly gratified when she told him that Mary said she knew that it was simply impossible for him to have committed the crime.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### AN APPEAL FOR JUSTICE

**W**HEN Richard Baxter had sufficiently recovered his health he was brought into court and sentenced to ten years hard labor in the State prison. The judge was abusive, saying that the prisoner had disgraced everyone connected with the legal profession.

The sheriff, who had never thought Richard guilty, was an old friend of the warden of the State prison, and when he delivered him had a long private conference, during which he told the story of Richard's life, and especially all the details of the trial. He begged the warden to delay putting the prisoner in stripes as long as he possibly could, assuring him that he believed that some day Richard Baxter would be fully vindicated, and that he hoped to have the pleasure of bringing to the prison some of the rascals who had been instrumental in putting him there. He also requested the warden to give Richard employment befitting his station.

The warden asked the sheriff, "To what extent can I place confidence in this man?"

The sheriff replied, "You can trust Richard Baxter with your fortune, your honor, and your life."

"Well, if that's the kind of man he is, I have a

place for him, and it will be a long time before I can find a prison suit that will fit him."

The sheriff returned home well pleased that he had been able to do so much for Richard.

We have naught to do with his prison life. Suffice it to say that he was placed at pleasant employment in the prison office, never locked in a cell, and was a prisoner of honor, who could at any time have escaped. Being bound by his honor, it never occurred to him to run away. After he had been at the prison about a month and fully recovered his health, with the approval and at the suggestion of the warden he wrote the following letter to His Excellency the Governor:

"To His Excellency,

"Henry Harvey,

"Governor State of New Hampshire.

"Sir:—You cannot have forgotten your old classmate and life-long friend, the late Abraham Baxter, Esq., of Mendon. I am his son. I speak of the above simply to tell you who I am, and that the criminal who addresses you, if I am a criminal, is not so by heredity. I do not ask any favor on account of being the son of my father. I have carefully prepared, and take the liberty to transmit herewith, a detailed statement of my case, duly attested, to which I beg your careful attention.

"If, after examination, you deem that I am entitled to executive clemency, will you grant it in the form of an order for a new trial?

*"I do not wish a pardon for a crime that I never*

*committed*, but ask a vindication, if I can prove myself worthy.

“Respectfully,

“RICHARD BAXTER.”

To which the warden appended a very strong endorsement.

## CHAPTER XL

### THE CACHET

SOON after Mrs. Miles came to Mendon, she purchased the cottage mentioned earlier in these pages, on which she had from time to time made payments, leaving a balance of two hundred dollars, secured by mortgage.

John Manning had again come into the matrimonial market and was looking for an investment. He no longer sought a good butter-maker, but, esteeming himself a gentleman, was looking for a lady. He had never made the acquaintance of Mary Miles, though he had often seen her and was attracted by her attractiveness, as were all who saw her. He accidentally heard of this little mortgage of the Widow Miles, and thought that possibly it might in some way be useful to him. He persuaded the mortgagee, for a small premium, to sell him the mortgage, although he had promised Mrs. Miles not to part with it, without giving her notice.

Quite a number of years prior to the opening of our story the late Daniel Manning purchased, at a low price, several thousand acres of wild land in Pennsylvania. This, John Manning had never seen and knew nothing of its worth. He had heard that it was near where coal had been discovered. For two or three years he had been thinking of going to examine it.

This, however, involved a horseback ride of several weeks' duration. He did not wish to go alone, and could get no companion, unless at his expense, so he decided to make the journey alone. Arrangements had to be made for an extended absence. He had a very good man who would care for the outside work of the farm, but it was difficult to provide for the house-keeping. The house must be kept open, as the farm help lived there. The only women available were the ignorant Canucks, and they were incompetent to take charge. A brilliant idea occurred to him. He expressed it in these words:

“Widow Miles is the man for me.”

He went to town that afternoon and called at Mrs. Miles' cottage. He had never met her before, but recognized a lady at once, and was unusually courteous. Notwithstanding her humble surroundings, he somehow felt in her presence that his arrogant manners would be entirely out of place. There was that in the mother which had attracted him in the daughter. Stating the object of his visit, he ended with offering double the amount that he had thought of paying. She told him frankly that she was not very favorably inclined toward acceptance, but would take it into consideration and give him her decision after hearing from her daughter, whom she desired to consult, and to whom she would at once write.

John Manning congratulated himself on having made a good move. If successful, it would result in getting Mary Miles into his house, and his egotism

assured him that if once there she would stay. But it was a case of man proposes and woman disposes.

When Mary received her mother's letter, she was indignant, yes, furious, angered by the recollection of John Manning's insolent stares and his persecution of Richard, her Richard. If the telegraph had then been invented, even electricity would have been too slow to transmit her indignant "no." She could not answer at once, as her aunt required her attention; besides, there was no mail until the morrow. After consideration she changed her mind, thinking that perhaps she might find in the Manning house evidence that would prove Richard's innocence. "John Manning, ah, yes, John Manning! 'Whom the gods would destroy they first make'—fools of. Yes, John Manning, I'll go to your house, but not until after you have left it." She wrote her mother, simply advising the acceptance of the offer.

When John Manning again called, Mrs. Miles agreed to his proposition, if he would employ Alexis as a hired man, not wishing to go to the farm with strangers. He said:

"I hope to have the pleasure of seeing your daughter at the house before I leave."

This she wrote to Mary, and in reply, received the following:

"Dear Mother:—Write me when John Manning has started, and I will come two days after I receive your letter.

"Affectionately,

"MARY."



The morning after Mrs. Miles was settled as housekeeper for John Manning, he mounted his horse and started on his long journey; of which fact she immediately wrote Mary. Great was her surprise in the evening to hear the sound of horses' feet in the yard, and John Manning calling for a man to care for his horse. He came in at once, excused his return by saying that he had neglected to take some important papers, and that he would make another start in the morning. He asked Mrs. Miles if her daughter had gone to bed so early, and was very much surprised to learn that she was not expected for several days. He had been only as far as Mendon, and hearing there that Mary had returned, concluded to spend the day at Mendon and at nightfall to return home. He went to bed very much disappointed and took an early start next morning, as he could not wait longer.

Mary arrived as planned, and found her mother installed as the mistress of the Manning farmhouse. She was very much gratified at having escaped the meeting with John Manning, whom she despised and had the same desire to avoid that she had any loathsome object. Had it not been for the sake of Richard Baxter, her Richard, she never would have entered the Manning house. She hoped to find in that old house evidence that would free and restore to his place in society and clear up the character of Richard Baxter, her Richard, always her Richard. She did not stop to analyze her title. Was her sentiment infatuation? No, it was life.

She had not forgotten the old maxim that no crim-

inal ever entirely destroyed the evidence against him, and at once began her search. In those days every house had its secret hiding-place for valuable papers and property. Some secret drawer in a bookcase, or false bottom to a chest, obscure panel in the wall, or some other "cachet" known only to the heads of the family. She searched the house from the bottom of the cellar to the top of the garret, but without success; she told her mother for what she was looking, but received no encouragement. Mrs. Miles was a conscientious woman and did not think it right, and she told Mary that whatever was done must be without her assistance or even knowledge, for if she were to help in such search it would be a breach of trust; she did not feel quite sure that it was right to permit Mary to stay at the Manning farm, under the circumstances. However, before she had settled with her conscience as to what course to pursue, Mary had reached a point where conscience was troubling her.

Mrs. Miles was afflicted with what most men hold as a very bad habit, that of house-cleaning. She was not to blame in this instance, for the old house had not been cleaned during the long sickness of Mrs. Manning, and it was far beyond being dirty; it was filthy. She went at the job systematically, beginning at the garret and working down. At last reaching John Manning's room, she hesitated about meddling with that, but after looking it over carefully concluded that everything could be returned to place, so that if he did not miss the dirt he would not know that anything had been disturbed. With the help of

Alexis she carried out every movable piece of furniture, took down the bedstead, and removed the rag carpet. The room was cleaned and the floor mopped.

Mrs. Miles did not notice a trap-door in the floor, but the sharp eyes of Mary saw it and she was quite sure that here was the secret hiding-place, but said nothing. A sick headache compelled her mother to go to bed, leaving Mary to put things to rights. This gave her the desired opportunity to investigate the trap in the floor. Stopping a moment to think, her conscience began to work. It seemed to say:

“Mary Miles, Mary Miles, you are deceiving your mother. You know that you are doing wrong.”

“Couldn’t help it if I would. It is for Richard, my Richard.”

Then closing the door, she put up the bar, and feeling safe from interruption, knelt down by the trap in the floor and tried to raise it, but could not. It seemed swollen from the mopping. Sadly disappointed, she sat down on the floor and had a real good cry, which relieved her. Ashamed of her weakness, she arose and searched the room for some tool with which to force the swollen door, and found on the mantel a bed wrench. With this she again tried, but failed. Was it a question of strength? Should she call Alexis? He would do anything that she asked. No, the task must be accomplished alone. She wanted no partner, either in the knowledge that might be obtained, or in the wrong-doing.

After further examination she concluded that there was something beyond the swelling of the boards that

<i>Dr. Dem Drisco</i>		<i>Dr. Drisco</i>	
1918	To Money Lent	200.00	
1919	Interest	90.00	Jan 1 1919 by Cash 90.00
1920	ditto	120.00	Jan 15 1920 " ditto 120.00
1921	ditto	120.00	Jan 20 1921 " ditto 120.00
1922	ditto	120.00	Jan 1 1922 " do 120.00
1923	ditto	120.00	Feb 15 1923 " ditto 120.00
1924	ditto	120.00	Jan 1923 " ditto 120.00
1925	ditto	120.00	Jan 1924 " ditto 120.00
1926	ditto	120.00	Jan 17 1925 " ditto 120.00
1927	ditto	120.00	Jan 1 1925 " ditto 120.00
1928	ditto	120.00	Jan 1 1927 " ditto 120.00
1929	ditto	25.67	Jan 1 1928 " ditto 120.00
			Jan 17 by Cash 202.567
		<u>3195.67</u>	<u>3195.67</u>

prevented the opening of the trap-door, and began a careful search for some hidden spring. Standing on the hearth, leaning against the mantel, she felt under her foot a loose brick. This she lifted from its place and found beneath an iron rod, with a loop handle. She pulled on the handle; the rod did not move easily, but using the bed wrench for a lever, she pulled it back about two inches. Lifting the floor, she found beneath, the heavy plank which has been described in a previous chapter. This she removed. In the vault below was the tin trunk in which John Manning kept his deeds, mortgages, and other valuable papers. This was securely locked, and she did not dare to break it open. Burglary was a new business for her. There were also some tea and tablespoons, marked D. M., an old silver watch and a silver tankard, some quaint old jewelry and a locket in which was a braid of black and brown hair. These things did not interest her, but what did were some old account-books. She sat down on the floor and began their inspection, looking through several, but finding nothing of interest. In the last one there was, about midway of the book, that which paid her for all her trouble. It was the account between Daniel Manning and Eben Drisco. Returning everything but this account-book, she replaced the heavy oak plank and the trap in the floor, pushed the bolt, then put back the brick in the hearth. She said to herself:

“Richard Baxter was right, honest, and true. I knew it. I did not need this evidence. Daniel Manning was a thief, and his son John is a rascal. But

what am I to do with this book? Why am I not a thief? Is it right to do wrong that good may come of it? But, oh, it is for Richard Baxter's sake—my Richard! Thief or no thief, I must keep it." She took it to her room and hid it.

## CHAPTER XLI

### EBEN DRISCO'S GHOST

MARY MILES had been at Manning's Corners but a day or two when she went over to see Aunt Nancy Bond. Aunt Nancy lived alone and was always glad to have her friends run in. Their visits were infrequent, as neighbors were few and far between. Aunt Nancy came to the door, knitting in hand, and was much pleased to see Mary.

Mary had a purpose in making the call, for she had heard Aunt Nancy say that she had known the Mannings all her life, and had been very intimate at Manning's Corners, until the death of Mrs. Manning. Aunt Nancy liked to talk almost as well as she liked to knit. Mary was naturally a good listener, and now especially so, as she was listening for a very important purpose. She ran over every day, and ingratiated herself more fully by asking Aunt Nancy to teach her to knit. Day after day Aunt Nancy knit stockings with her fingers and spun yarns with her lips, on the (to Mary) very interesting topic, the daily life of the Mannings. In her garrulity she unintentionally told many family secrets, but as soon as she realized it, would say, "Now, dearie, ye won't tell thet, will ye? I shouldn't orter hev mentioned it." One day she said:

"Mis' Mannin' an' me was proper intimate. She

was over here er me over thar mos' ev'ry day, so thet 'twas naterel thet when thar was trouble thet we should be together whar the trouble was.

"The deacon was tuk sick, an' moped roun' the house a few days, an' then tuk to 'is bed, an' he never riz ag'in. Mis' Mannin' she'd watch with 'im one night, an' the nex' I'd take a turn. Sometimes some of the neighbors from the Great Road 'ud come over an' spell us. The ole deacon he hung along all winter. He didn't seem to want to let go o' airthly things, though he was a perfessed, an' a deacon asides. He seemed kinder 'fraid like to cross the river, as Parson Snodgrass calls it. I knowed thar was suthin' on 'is min' thet troubled 'im 'bout the Driscos. I heerd 'im say many a time when he was asleep er dreamin', 'Eben Drisco, ye needn't ha'nt me so. I tell ye I'll make it all right, all right.'

"Wall, dearie, the night the ole deacon died, he'd ben orful wild all day, ter'ble restless, an' allus callin' on Eben Drisco to let 'im die in peace. Mis' Mannin' an' me hed ben at 'is bedside the hull time fer two days an' nights, an' she'd gone to lay down in the bedroom, to git a leetle rest, poor soul, fer she warn't very strong. I tuk my knittin' an' sot down by the side of the bed. I reckon 'twan't more'n two minnits afore I dropped off, fer I was clean tired out, an' nater would hev its way. When I woke I heerd talkin'. 'Twas the deacon, an' his voice was strong an' clear.

"I kep' perfectly quiet, with my eyes shet. The deacon said, 'John, is anybody in the room?' An' John he answered: 'Nobody but Aunt Nancy, an'



she's asleep.' 'Are ye sure, John?' axed the deacon. John answered, 'Yes, father, she's soun' asleep. She's stopped knittin'.' 'Now, John, I've suthin' to tell ye, an' ye mus' do jest as I tell ye. Will ye promise, John?' He answered right prompt and quick, 'Yes, father, I'll do jest as ye say.' 'Wall, John, listen, fer I can't talk long. I've gin ev'rything to you, John, an' thar's a good bit on it, too, but ye mus' promise to take good care of yer ole mother. Will ye do it?' 'Yes, father, I'll take good care o' mother.' 'An' don't ye be in a hurry to git marri'd an' fetch some giddy young gal here to boss yer ole mother 'round.' 'No, I won't, father.' 'Now, John, thar's suthin' else thet troubles me more'n all the rest, an' I dassent go to meet it. It's Eben Drisco's ghost. He's a-stan'in' thar at the foot o' the bed now. Don't ye see 'im? Don't ye hear 'im? He's a-sayin', "Restitution, Deacon Mannin'. Restitution to the las' sixpence."'

"The deacon's head fell back on the piller mos' clean gone. I thought thet he was dead, but John gin him a few spoonfuls o' rum out of a glass on the stand, an' the deacon come to, an' begun to talk again.

"'Listen to me, John, fer this is the las' chance, an' ef I go without makin' restitution, I'll go straight to hell, an' be ferever damned. Hear me, John. In 1818 I lent Eben Drisco two thousan' dollars, an' tuk a note an' mortgage on his farm. He lost the money, er his partner stole it. He allus paid the interes' putty good, an' in the fore part o' March, 1828, he tole me one day thet on the 17th he'd be ready to take up the

note an' pay off the mortgage, an' I agreed to meet 'im at Squire Baxter's office at three o'clock in the arternoon, an' bring the note an' the mortgage with me. All thet mornin' thar was somebody roun' the house, so thet I couldn't git at the vault under the bed without bein' seen, so I went to town without the note an' mortgage. Eben Drisco was a-waitin' fer me, an' I tole 'im I hedn't got the papers, an' he axed Squire Baxter, "What am I a-goin' to do? I went over yistiddy an' got the money from the savin's bank at Wellin'ton, an' I didn't sleep las' night fer the worry an' watchin' it, an' I don't want it 'nuther night." Squire Baxter said thet Drisco could pay the money to me an' take a sat'sfaction piece, an' as long as Drisco hed thet the note an' mortgage wasn't wuth nuthin' an' I could give 'im the note an' mortgage arterwards. Thet was how 'twas settled. He paid me two thousan' dollars, an' the interes' an' I gin 'im the sat'sfaction, an' Squire Baxter was witness.

"Thet night on 'is way hum Eben Drisco was killed, an' I never heerd of the sat'sfaction. I went the nex' day over an' put the money in the Wellin'ton Savings Bank, an' thar 'tis now. Ben a-layin' thar more nor ten year. I never dast to tech it. 'Bout a week arter Eben Drisco's death Squire Baxter hed a shock an' he died. Not hearin' anything of the sat'sfaction, the devil tempted me an' I hain't ben happy sence. When the fust o' Januuary come 'round I notified the Driscos thet the interest on the mortgage was due, an' Sam tole me he s'posed the mortgage was paid. He said his father tole his mother so the las'

words he said, when he lay a-dyin' by the roadside. I showed him the mortgage an' the note, an' tole him 'twan't so. He said he couldn't pay it then, but paid it afore the fust o' June, an' he's paid it ever sence.

"'The money an' the interest is all in the bank at Wellin'ton, an' now, John, I want you to make restitution. Will ye do it? Ye mus' do it. The money 'll be a curse to ye, John. Besides, ye got 'nuff. Ye don't need it. John, put the Bible on the bed 'side o' me; an' now, John, lay yer hand on it. Now, sw'ar ye'll make restitution to them Driscos.' 'I sw'ar,' said John, an' I thought I heerd suthin' at the foot of the bed say in a hoarse voice, 'I sw'ar.'

"Deacon Mannin' hed fell back on the piller, this time dead fer sartin. I hain't said nothin' 'bout this only once. I didn't dast to say nothin'. I was 'feard of John Mannin'. I knowed how ugly he was. Ye see, I've knowed him ever sence he was born. Two er three years went 'long an' I seed thar warn't goin' to be no restitution fer them poor Driscos, an' they was a-gettin' drefful poor, an' Mis' Drisco as good a woman as ever lived, an' Sam a good boy, an' my conscience troubled me, an' I thought I mus' say suthin' to somebody.

"So one day Parson Whitin' came to see me, an' I tole him I hed a secret thet I couldn't carry no longer, an' tole him all 'bout it, jest as I've tole you. He never said nothin' all the time I was a-tellin' him, an' when I got through, he swung his chair 'round, an' lookin' me square in the eyes, jest as ef he thought he'd scare me, he said:

“ ‘Sister Bond, ye must a ben a-dreamin’. Hev ye ever tole yer dream to anyone afore this?’ I said no. He said, ‘Sister Bond, don’t ye ever tell it ag’in. Sich dreams makes trouble sometimes. Don’t ye know thet Dan’el Mannin’ was the corner-stun of the society an’ his son John one of our pillers, an’ gives more to s’port the meetin’ than anybody else? Sich talk, Sister Bond, is wuss nor heresy. An’ ag’in, s’pose ye warn’t a-dreamin’. What does a poor ole critter like you know ’bout the doin’s of the Lord, an’ s’pose the good God sees fit to punish them air Driscos fer some sin of theirn, er suthin’ thet their fathers done, what business hev you to interfere?’

“He got down on his knees, an’ he said: ‘Let us pray.’ He needn’t a said us, fer I didn’t pray. I sot right thar in my chair, an’ I never knit so fast in all my life. He tole the Lord a good deal thet warn’t so. Near’s I kin recollect’ he said: ‘Oh, Lord, look down on this sinful ole critter, who the devil hes sot up to slander good people dead an’ alive.’ He went on a lot more, an’ I jest got up, an’ kinder tip-toed out into the kitchen to git supper. Ye see, Parson Whitin’ was so deaf he didn’t hear me go. I dunno how long he prayed. He sneaked out of the front door, an’ I didn’t see no more on ’im.

“I jest felt thet I didn’t want to be a Christian no more, leastways thet kind of a Christian.”

## CHAPTER XLII

### ONLY SIX FRIENDS

**G**OVERNOR HARVEY granted Richard Baxter's application for a new trial and his stay at the prison was short, but long enough to gain the friendship and confidence of the warden.

Si Slocum again became Richard's bondsman, in the same manner as before, and he went back to Mendon.

He found on his return that he had but six friends who stood the test of his misfortunes. They were Mary Miles, Sam Drisco (broken-hearted Sam, for he seemed to feel that he was responsible for Richard's misfortunes). Next came Si Slocum, justice of the peace and horse jockey; Jason Wetherbee, the clerk of the court and county clerk; Adam Getchell, the sheriff, and last but not least in true friendship was Cæsar Alexander, with as many other names as the time and patience of the listener would allow. These friends were all deeply interested in establishing the innocence of Richard Baxter, and all earnestly searching for evidence.

One day when Richard and Si Slocum were discussing the great question, Cæsar was quietly listening. All at once he burst out with:

"W'y, boss, dis niggah knows all 'bout dat. Ole Cæsar sot right dar w'en Massa Drisco he pay dat

money to Massa Manning, an' Massa Manning he done go an' gib Massa Drisco dat satisfaction." Cæsar went on and told all the details of the transaction, establishing the date by the fact that he cut his foot that morning with an axe. He also remembered that it was St. Patrick's Day, because he met Pat Maloney drunk at the foot of the stairs.

Squire Slocum and Richard questioned old Cæsar for an hour, and wrote down his testimony, which fully established the payment of the money by Eben Drisco to Deacon Daniel Manning. Then Richard put it in the form of an affidavit, to which Cæsar appended his mark, and made oath.

It was decided by Richard and his friends that they would take no more risk of conviction by default. Aaron Richards, of Concord, a criminal lawyer of great ability, was retained, and here again Si Slocum showed his friendship and his money.

Lawyer Richards came up to Mendon to have a consultation with the junta, as Si Slocum called Richard's six friends. At this conference the whole ground was gone over with great care. Mary Miles told of having in her possession the old account-book of Daniel Manning, and how much her conscience troubled her and asked what she ought to do about it.

"We must produce it, of course. Everything is fair in love and law," said Lawyer Richards, slightly changing an old saying, and asked, "How did you get that book, Miss Miles?"

"Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies," she pertly replied.

"It is very valuable to us, and they cannot probably deny its authenticity; neither can they compel us to tell where we got it."

It was also decided that the testimony of Aunt Nancy must be procured if possible. From Mary Miles' description of Aunt Nancy, Lawyer Richards said it would never do to put her on the witness-stand, as she would most likely go all to pieces on cross-examination.

"You must persuade her to make an affidavit, Miss Miles. Clerk Wetherbee can go out and take it, and I'll run my chance of getting it before the jury, although it is quite possible that the judge will rule it out. I would if I were on the bench."

Cæsar told his story, much to the amusement and satisfaction of Lawyer Richards, who said, "You're a good one."

"Yis sah, yis sah, dis niggah knows dat. Ya, ha, ha! Ya, ha, ha!"

Mary did not find it an easy task to persuade Aunt Nancy to make an affidavit. She "didn't know nuthin' 'bout affydavits, an' was s'picious on 'em." It took several interviews to get her consent, and it was not until Mary had told all about her love for Richard Baxter that she yielded.

Aunt Nancy, like all the world, dearly loved a lover.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### PARSON SNODGRASS RACES

WE have had no desire to neglect our friend Si Slocum, justice of the peace; but while he has for the time being been crowded out of our story, he has been taking his share in passing events, as will be seen.

His election to the honorable, and in that community, somewhat distinguished position, was astonishing; but his manner of administering the duties of his office was dumbfounding the "good people" who had never heretofore even recognized his existence. They began saying as they met, "Good-morning, Mr. Slocum."

Old Parson Snodgrass at first nodded to him, and after a few days, extended his hand for a friendly shake.

"Humph" said Si Slocum to himself. "Thet's only a preliminary move toward gittin' a hand in my pocket fer a contribution towards the s'port of the meetin'-house."

The intimacy between the parson and the squire grew apace, for there was a bond of sympathy between them. They both loved the horse, and knew all the fine points of a good animal. The old minister had been an itinerant in his younger days, and, if the truth were told, the principal part of his salary



came from his horse trades. As has been said, he dearly loved a good horse, and more than once Si Slocum had seen him watching with much interest as he sped by up the pike. The only rides that the old parson had nowadays were with some farmer at a plowing gait.

As the parson and the squire became better acquainted, Si said to himself one day, "Wonder ef the ole man 'ud risk his character in a ride with me? Good mind to ax him. I swum, ef he's around to-morrow I will ax him." The next day he did ask the parson to take a little ride, "jest to obsarve the movement of the leetle critter thet I'm a-breakin' to harness."

The parson could not go that morning, but said that he would go the next.

That night there came to the tavern, driving a pretty good-looking horse, one of those, as Si expressed it, "previous fellers." He strutted around and talked loud, had a chip on his shoulder, so to speak, and bragged that he had the fastest animal in the "keounty, and I've got money to sustain my opinion."

Si knew that he was driving at him, but kept quiet for a while; then approaching the stranger, said:

"Mister, I've got twenty-five dollars thet I'll lay on a leetle mare thet I hev in the barn, fer a mile spurt, ag'in your hoss. Time, to-morrow mornin' at nine o'clock. Place, up the pike."

"Well," replied the stranger, "I'll see you in the morning."

"Beg pardon, Mister, but we don't do biz thet way. 'Round here it's put up er shet up, an' that gentleman," pointing to the landlord, "is our banker, an' here's my twenty-five dollars," handing the money to the landlord.

Without more ado the stranger drew his wallet and covered the stakes.

It was cool, and a strong wind was blowing as they drove out of the yard the next morning. When the squire reached the parsonage, he held up, waiting for the parson, who was coming out of the gate.

The parson was an old man, at least eighty years. He looked as if he might be a hundred. He had on a long, straight-bodied, clerical-cut coat, much affected by ministers in those days. On his Roman nose was a pair of horn spectacles, which gave his smooth-shaven face an owlish look. His white hair, which was thick and bushy, was very long, reaching quite down his back. On his head he wore a drab wool hat.

Seeing the other horse coming around the corner, he suspected that there might be a "brush on foot" and hesitated about getting in, remarking, "Don't know, Squire, about the propriety."

"It's all right, Parson, jump in."

The parson got in, muttering to himself, "Just this once."

The two teams trotted along side by side until they reached the pike well out of sight of the village, when the horses, as if by instinct, began to put in their paces and stretched out for a good spurt. The parson braced his feet against the dasher, and reaching



PARSON SNODGRASS RACES.



over behind Si, held on to the seat firmly with his right hand, and with his left clutched his hat. The stranger came alongside and appeared to be gaining a little. The parson became excited, and getting uneasy, said, "Say, Squire, can't you let her out a little?"

"Git, Nellie," said the squire. Nellie made a jump, and off went the parson's hat, his long white hair streaming out like the tail of a comet. "Never mind the hat," he quickly said, and another "Git, Nellie," from the squire left the stranger two lengths in the rear, as they passed the guide-board.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted the parson, as he slapped the squire on the back.

As the stranger drove up he said, "The money's yours, Squire Slocum. You've won it fairly."

Then the parson realized that he had been part of a horse race, and turning to Si said, "I think I'll walk back, Squire," to which Si responded, "All right. I'll come to meetin' Sunday," and smiled one of his genial smiles, which attracted the attention of a man who was hoeing corn on the other side of a five-acre lot.

Squire Slocum went to church on Sunday, and Parson Snodgrass found a five-dollar bill in the contribution.

## CHAPTER XLIV

“GOD HELP YOU! GOD BLESS YOU!”

ON the evening before the new trial, the weather was very cold and it rained heavily. Richard Baxter sat alone in his office, which was lighted only by a tallow dip. The storm seemed mournful and discouraging. He had, as he sat there, been carefully going over the details of his defense, to make sure that there was not a broken or a weak link in the chain. He well knew that beyond the desire of the district attorney to win the case and send him back to prison, he was actuated by a personal hatred, the malignity of which was unaccountable. As he sat here thinking he said to himself:

“What have I ever done that Ben Thurston should hate me? We were boys at school together, and jolly good companions. We were classmates in college; our rivalry was always friendly and that friendship continued until he went into partnership with John Canfield. Is it possible that Canfield could have influenced him against me? And if he has, why should he have done it? I cannot understand it. Well, of one thing I am certain, they are both my enemies and will injure me if they can.”

While Richard was ignorant of the cause of Ben Thurston's hatred, there was one person who could, had she chosen, have given a full explanation.

Soon after Mary Miles came to Mendon, Ben Thurston made her acquaintance and that acquaintance, on his part, rapidly ripened into love, which was not reciprocated. He was an ardent, impetuous lover and abruptly declared his love at an inopportune time, meeting with a deserved rebuff from Mary. The time and circumstances attending the declaration were such as to make her feel that the episode was an insult, and she refused him in terms that not only mortified but angered him, and he retorted in words that she could not forgive nor forget. This incident closed not only their friendship but their acquaintance.

Richard knew nothing of this.

As he was putting his papers in order, being about to leave the office for the night, he heard the hoofbeats of a galloping horse, followed by “Whoa!” Immediately there were rapid footsteps on the staircase and the door to his office was suddenly opened by a man, soaked from head to foot with rain, and bespattered with mud.

“Are you Richard Baxter?” he asked.

“I am.”

“The bridge at Sunny Creek was washed away to-day, the stage drove off the bank and upset, and Mr. Aaron Richards was almost drowned. They pulled him out, with one leg broken and his head jammed. As soon as his leg was set he sent me to tell you that he couldn’t come to-morrow.” The man left almost as suddenly as he came, remarking that he must go to the tavern to dry his clothes and get something warm.

Richard blew out the candle and sat down. Its feeble rays were a mockery. He could not see even a glimmer of light in his future. His hopes of an acquittal had been raised high by the encouragement he had received from his attorney. What should he do? What could he do? He knew that he was now at the mercy of his enemies, with no help in sight.

After a while he arose suddenly and without waiting to lock his office, went down the stairs, out into the road, having formed no intention of what to do or where to go; but wandering in the storm, which was now more furious than ever, before he realized it he was rapping at the door of Mrs. Miles' cottage, crying, "Mary, Mary, I want to see you! I must see you!"

Mary, from the window above, asked, "Is that you, Richard? What is the matter? I've gone to bed."

"I must see you, Mary. I have bad news."

"Wait, and I'll come down."

Hurriedly dressing, she came down and opened the door. Richard staggered in and dropped heavily into a chair.

"Tell me, Richard," anxiously asked Mary, "what is the matter. Are you hurt?"

"No, I am not hurt, but I wish I were, to the death. All is lost." He then rapidly repeated the story that had been brought by the horseman.

She sat down, buried her face in her hands and moaned, "All is lost, all is lost." Then suddenly springing to her feet, she exclaimed, "All is not lost. God is with you and you shall have your rights, Rich-



ard. You depended upon your attorney. He had no interest in this case beyond that of a lawyer for his client. You are client and must be your own attorney. You have all the details and plans of the defense as decided upon by you and Mr. Richards. Go to the court to-morrow morning and defend yourself. You can do it. You must.”

Richard attempted to speak, but she stopped him with an imperious gesture, and said:

“Go, Richard, go, and may God never spare me to look upon your face again unless you secure your acquittal. God help you! God bless you! Go!”

He arose and left the cottage without saying a word.

She closed the door, quickly put the bar in place, and falling upon her knees, with her face against the door and both hands grasping the bar, prayed the prayer of her life.

## CHAPTER XLV

### THE NEW TRIAL

**T**HE next morning the courthouse was packed to its fullest capacity. John Canfield was to assist the district attorney, who knew that he was unable to cope with Aaron Richards, the ablest criminal lawyer in the State.

It was expected to be difficult to secure an unprejudiced jury, as the case had been the subject general since the petition for a new trial had been granted. After the disposition of a few motions made by attorneys who were present for that purpose, the case of the Commonwealth against Richard Baxter was called. The accident to Aaron Richards was known to all. The judge made a few sympathetic remarks, and asked:

“Who appears for the defense in place of Lawyer Richards?”

Richard Baxter arose. Someone in speaking of the occurrence afterwards said: “Tall as Dick Baxter is, he appeared a foot taller than ever, and there was a look in his eyes that seemed to say, ‘I defy you all.’” He bowed respectfully to the judge and said:

“May it please Your Honor, I will appear for the defense.”

“I object!” shouted the district attorney.

“On what ground?” asked the judge.

"On the ground that he is a convicted felon and disbarred by the Constitution and laws of this State from practicing in any court thereof. I trust, Your Honor, that you are too familiar with the law to make it necessary for me to quote decisions on this point." With a triumphant glare toward Baxter, he sat down.

The judge thought for a moment and then said: "I regret that I am compelled to sustain this objection. The prisoner must select other counsel."

Richard had remained standing, and without a change of attitude or feature. "Your Honor," he said, "I do not desire other counsel. I am well within my rights, as protected by the Constitution and the laws of the State of New Hampshire. Every accused has the right to appear in his own behalf."

"You are right," replied the judge after a moment's consideration; "you may appear in your own behalf."

"I note an exception," said the district attorney.

The judge said, "Now, attention will be given to the formation of the jury."

"I arise, Your Honor," said the district attorney, "to call the attention of the court to the fact that the prisoner is not in the dock."

"I know of no statute," remarked the court, "which provides for putting the prisoner in any special place in the courtroom. It is customary, I am well aware, to lock the prisoner in the dock. That is a precautionary measure by which the sheriff protects himself against the prisoner's escape; but as the sheriff is responsible for the custody of the prisoner, he has the

right to place him where he chooses, and I can see no objection, under the circumstances, to his taking his seat at the counsel-table."

With bad grace the district attorney sat down, but being prompted by a whisper from Canfield, who sat by his side, he again arose, and addressing the court, said:

"I regret, Your Honor, to appear captious, but there is another intruder within the bar. I refer to Si Slocum, the horse jockey."

"Squire Slocum," responded the judge, "by virtue of the office he holds, is entitled to the courtesy of a seat within the bar. Now, Mr. District Attorney, we will proceed to draw the jury."

During the drawing of the jury, Si Slocum was quite active in suggesting to Richard challenges, and must have been of great service from the fact of his personal knowledge of the opinions and prejudices of almost everybody in that locality.

At last the jury was complete and the trial about to begin. A motion was made by the district attorney to postpone the trial on account of the absence of an important witness, John Manning; but this was overruled on the agreement of the defense to admit his testimony as taken at the previous trial.

"I desire, Your Honor," said Baxter, "before the opening of this case, to make a statement to be followed by a motion which is out of the usual order. We have present in court, in obedience to a subpoena, Jonathan Talcott, Esq., treasurer of the Savings Bank at Wellington. He has with him the receiving

and paying books of the bank, both of which were in use at the time of the claimed payment of the mortgage which Eben Drisco gave to Daniel Manning. These books to which I refer are now in daily use at the bank, and no business can legally be done in their absence. Therefore, Your Honor, I would most respectfully ask that Mr. Talcott's evidence be now taken in such manner as Your Honor may direct."

Up jumped the district attorney with, "I object, Your Honor."

"On what ground?"

"Your Honor, this is a violation of law, the law of custom, so long established that it cannot be set aside. There is no precedent for such a course."

"The district attorney will hardly take the ground," said the judge, "that the court cannot entertain any motion that it chooses. The trial of the case of the Commonwealth versus Richard Baxter is temporarily suspended, and Jonathan Talcott will be sworn."

Talcott produced exhibits A and B, the receiving and disbursing books of the Wellington Savings Bank, which showed that on the 16th of March, 1828, Eben Drisco drew from the bank two thousand dollars in gold, and that on the 18th day of March, 1828, Daniel Manning deposited two thousand dollars in gold.

"That's all, Your Honor."

The jury examined the books. The judge said that at the proper time the admission of the evidence would be considered.

In the opening of the case the district attorney was

simply ugly. One would have thought that not only was Richard Baxter the worst criminal who ever went unchanged, but that he had done the district attorney mortal injury. So vindictive was he that it aroused the sympathy of the jury for the prisoner. There was no new evidence offered on behalf of the prosecution.

Richard Baxter, in his opening for the defense, created a great sensation by the announcement of what he would prove.

“Gentlemen of the jury, we will show how this satisfaction was found, by the evidence of the prisoner himself, and we will ask the prosecution why they have not called the perjurer who swore at the former trial that he saw the prisoner forge that document. We will place a witness on the stand who saw that satisfaction written by Abraham Baxter, the prisoner’s father, and who also saw Deacon Daniel Manning sign and deliver the same to Eben Drisco. We will bring testimony to show why the mortgage and the note were not delivered to Eben Drisco, when he paid the amount due on the mortgage. We will produce and offer in evidence the account-book of Daniel Manning, in which are entered, in his own handwriting, the account of the loan, every payment of interest, and the payment on March 7, 1828, of the principal and balance of the interest. We will give you the last words of Eben Drisco to his wife, as he lay dying on the highway, on that same night, March 17, 1828, which were, ‘Paid Manning.’ We will relate a deathbed scene, wherein Daniel Manning confessed that he had

defrauded the Driscos, admitted that he had received the payment of the mortgage, and made his son, John Manning, swear that he would make restitution to the Driscos. I predict, gentlemen of the jury, that when you have listened to this evidence you will acquit the prisoner, without leaving your seats."

The crowd in the courtroom listened breathlessly to the opening of the defense, and a murmur of astonishment burst forth. The district attorney and John Canfield looked dumbfounded.

"As the first witness for the defense I desire to be sworn and give my testimony in relation to the finding of the satisfaction."

"I object," said Canfield. "I object, Your Honor, to the admission of the testimony of a convicted felon."

The court overruled the objection, saying, "The jury will judge of the value of the evidence."

Richard gave his testimony as to the finding of the satisfaction, which is well known to the reader. The cross-examination was by the district attorney, whose questions were framed for the evident purpose of insulting the prisoner, rather than with any expectation of weakening his testimony. This Richard endured until the murmurs in the courtroom and subdued cries of "shame" aroused his manhood. He arose quickly, bowed respectfully to the judge and quietly said:

"Your Honor, there is a point beyond which endurance ceases to be a virtue. That point has been reached." Then turning suddenly, he outstretched his right arm, pointed his index-finger at District-Attorney Thurston, and said in a defiant tone: "I

will not submit longer to these insults. I warn you here and now, Mr. District Attorney, that if you continue them, I will hold you personally—and bodily—responsible.”

The words had scarcely been uttered when someone in the courtroom shouted: “Three cheers for Dick Baxter!” which were given with a will, the spectators rising. The district attorney paled and sat down. The sheriff shouted for order, and the disturbance ceased as quickly as it had arisen. The judge was furious and announced:

“If there is another outrage on the dignity of the court, the room will be cleared of everyone not directly connected with the case.”

Richard’s threat of personal violence against the district attorney had its effect upon the coward, who had been shielding himself behind his official position; and he did not again insult Richard during the remainder of the trial.

The next witness was Cæsar, who created much amusement in court. His testimony we give in full.



## CHAPTER XLVI

### CÆSAR AUGUSTUS TESTIFIES

“**W**HAT is your name?”  
“Cæsar Augustus Alexander George Washington Benton.”

“All right. For short we will call you Cæsar, as that is the name by which you are generally known.”

“Yah, boss, dat’s all right.”

“Where were you born?”

“Dunno. Can’t say. Ain’t quite sartin’ ’bout dat, boss.”

“Well, it doesn’t matter. How long have you lived in Mendon?”

“Dat’s nudder conundrum. Not sartin’ ’bout dat, boss. Long time. Dis niggah’s wool was brack when he run into Mendon. I’s ole niggah, an’ I t’ink de good Lawd mus’ have done gone an’ forgot ole Cæsar.”

“Did you know Mr. Abraham Baxter?”

“Yes, sah. Knowed him well. He was de bes’ frien’ dis niggah eber had.”

“When did you first become acquainted with Mr. Baxter?”

“’Twas one awful dark night, an’ I had los’ de norf star, an’ I wandered into dis ’ere town, an’ was tryin’ to fin’ Mistah Baxtah, kase he was one ob de

names an' dis de place dat de Abolitionist, Parson May, gib me, an' Mistah Baxtah kep' de depot."

"What depot?"

"De depot ob de railroad."

"Railroad? There is no railroad here. Explain."

"De undergroun' railroad. Dat's de road I come on."

"We understand. Did you work for Mr. Baxter?"

"Yes, sah."

"How long?"

"I'se worked foh him till he died."

"What did you do?"

"W'y, boss, I can't jes' numerate. I milk, cut wood, an' do jes' what any lazy niggah would do."

"Did you know Mr. Daniel Manning?"

"Yes, sah."

"Did you know Mr. Eben Drisco?"

"Yes, sah. I seed 'em bof many times."

"Where did you see those gentlemen?"

"W'y, I seed 'em all ober."

"Did you ever see them together in Mr. Baxter's office?"

"Yes, sah."

"How many times did you see them together in Mr. Baxter's office?"

"Nebber seed 'em bof dar at de same time, togedder, but only one time."

"Can you tell me the year and month and day?"

"No, Massa Richard, couldn't do dat, kase I ain't no almanac. I'se only a pore niggah. Don't know much nohow."

"Can't you fix the date?"

"No, boss, hain't got nuffin to fix it wif."

"What happened to you about that time?"

"I cut my foot wif de axe."

"That same day?"

"Yah, boss, dat same day."

"Did you ever cut your foot with an axe but once?"

"No, sah. How big fool you t'ink dis niggah? Dis niggah no sich fool as dat. Only dis one time."

"Well, tell us what you saw and heard in Mr. Baxter's office."

"Massa Baxtah, he say, 'Cæsar, hab you ben a-foolin' wif dat clock?' 'No, sah, I hain't done gone touch dat clock.' 'Well,' Massa Baxtah say, 'dem gemmen's late.' Den fus' come Massa Manning, den come Massa Drisco. Massa Baxtah he go an' fetch some papahs from dat ole desk o' hissens, an' laid 'em on de table. Den he figger an' he figger long time, an' den Massa Baxtah he say, 'Dat's de sum,' an' Massa Manning he puts on his specs an' he figger an' he figger, an' he say, 'Dat, I s'pose, am c'rect'; an' den Massa Drisco he puts on his specs an' he figger an' he figger, an' den he say, 'Dat's all right'; an' den he pulls out his bladdah an' pour on de table sich a pile o' money as makes mah eyes shine, an' say to mahself, 'I wish dis niggah had dat gold.' Den Massa Drisco he say to Massa Manning, 'Count dat,' an' Massa Manning he counted an' say, 'Two t'ousan' dollahs,' an' Massa Drisco he pull de eel skin out ob his pocket an' turn some money on de table, den he say, 'Massa Manning,

dar's de int'res' an' now I wants dat satisfaction.' He spoke rough. He nebber talk quiet like, an' when I hears satisfaction, I 'spected a fight, kase I'd seen gemmen down souf say dat dey want satisfaction, an' den go shootin'.

"Massa Baxtah he say, 'Here's de satisfaction,' an' den Massa Manning he take de quill an' write his name, den Massa Baxtah he say, 'Mistah Manning, hol' yer han',' an' den Massa Baxtah sw'ar'd Massa Manning, an' den Massa Baxtah he write on de papah, an' den Massa Baxtah he take a little peppah box an' shake it on de papah. Dar warn't nuffin in dat; den he say, 'Cæsar, take de shubbel an' gib me some ashes.' I hol' de shubbel out to him an' he say, 'You fool nig-gah, I doan want hot ashes,' I den gib him some col' ashes, an' he shakes some on de papah. Den Massa Baxtah he holds de papah, den he writes on one end, an' he gibs de papah to Massa Drisco, den Massa Manning he pulls his bladdah an' puts all de money in de bladdah, 'cept half a dollah dat he gibs Massa Baxtah, an' Massa Baxtah he pulls his eel skin an' puts de half dollah in, an' den puts dat air eel skin in his pocket, an' den Massa Manning he goes away, an' Massa Drisco gib Massa Baxtah dat air papah. Massa Drisco say, 'Squire Baxtah, put dat in your safe foh me, an' I'll come when I wants it.' Den Massa Baxtah takes de papah, den he goes to de closet, an' takes de big key an' unlocks de big brack safe, de same one dat is up in young Massa Baxtah's office, an' he puts de papah in dat safe, an' locks de doah, an' den Massa Drisco he goes 'way."

“That is all,” said Richard, and turning to John Canfield and the district attorney, said: “You can have the witness, but I reserve the right to recall should I desire.”

## CHAPTER XLVII

“NEBBAH HEAH DAT 'BOUT DIS NIGGAH ”

**J**OHAN CANFIELD was a lawyer who was brutal in his cross-examinations and depended much upon his ability to frighten witnesses. He was a man about fifty years old, very pompous in his manner, especially when under the influence of liquor, which he used freely. He had an extra load on this day, and was even more abusive than usual.

“Cæsar-forty-names, how old are you?”

“Dunno, Massa Canfield.”

“Are you ten years old?”

“Specs I be, Massa Canfield.”

“Are you a hundred years old?”

“Dunno, Massa Canfield. Specs I putty neah dat.”

“Do you know anything?”

“Reckon I does.”

“Well, what do you know?”

“I know Massa Canfield cross w'en he's ben a-drinkin', an' I nebber seed him w'en he wasn't cross.”

“You are a saucy nigger.”

“Yes, Massa Canfield. Dat's 'bout right. Ole Cæsar is sassy niggah. Ya, ha, ha!” filling the courtroom with laughter, which infected the audience, all joining except the judge and Lawyer Canfield.

“You ought to be sent back to slavery, and I'd see

to it that your old master had you, if you were worth the cost.”

“Dat’s ’bout right, Massa Canfield. Ole Cæsar ain’t worf much. Dis ole niggah’s got moah eat dan work in him.”

The courtroom was crowded, and everybody laughed uproariously. Even the judge, as he rapped for order, had difficulty in maintaining his dignity.

John Canfield exhibited more anger than embarrassment. “Aren’t you known all over town as that lying nigger Cæsar?”

“Dunno, Massa Canfield. Nebbah heah dat ’bout dis niggah afoah.”

“Where were you born?”

“Dunno, Massa Canfield. Reckon ’twas Virginny, er specs it mought be Kaintuck. I was dar at de time, but jes’ disremembah.”

“I wish there was something that you did know.”

“Dar is, Massa Canfield.”

“Well, what is it?”

“I knows dat you owes me a half dollah foh sawin’ wood, more’n foah yeah.”

Everybody laughed.

“Was there anybody in Squire Baxter’s office at the time you speak of, besides Mr. Manning, Mr. Drisco, and the squire?”

“Yes, sah.”

“Who was there?”

“Dis niggah, an’ one udder pusson ob coloh.”

“Who was it?”

“Massa Manning’s brack dog.”

"How many chairs were there in Squire Baxter's office?"

Counting on his fingers, Cæsar answered, "Five."

"Well, I'm glad if there's something that you know. How do you remember that there were five chairs?"

"Kase, Massa Baxtah he sot in de armchair, an' Massa Manning he sot in de chair tipped up ag'in de wall atween de windahs, Massa Drisco he sot in de chair by de desk, an' Cæsar he sot in de chair by de chimbley."

"And I suppose the dog sat in the other chair?"

"Yes, sah."

"The dog sat in the other chair?"

"Yes, sah."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes, sah."

"What makes you so sure of that?"

"Kase, w'en de cat run 'cross de floah, de dog jump, kick ober de chair, an' raise de debbil all ober de floah."

"Were you ever in jail for stealing chickens?"

"Dis niggah doan 'membah no circumstance ob dat kin'."

"Well, you are a runaway slave, aren't you?"

"Doan 'mit dat."

"Are you or are you not, a runaway slave? Answer yes or no."

Hereupon Richard interposed, "I object, Your Honor."

"On what ground?"

"On the ground that the answer might incriminate or humiliate the witness."



Objection sustained.

“That’s all I want of this worthless nigger,” said Lawyer Canfield, sitting down.

Richard then asked, “Will the prosecution admit that the date of the alleged transaction has been proven?”

“We admit nothing,” responded Lawyer Canfield.

Richard then recalled Cæsar Augustus, Etc., Benton, saying, “Your Honor, I am about to introduce some corroborative testimony that I would gladly have omitted. Cæsar, do you remember anything that took place that day, in which Lawyer Canfield was connected?”

“Yes, sah.”

“What was it?”

“Well, sah, Massa Manning an’ Massa Drisco dey go ’way, Massa Baxtah he tell dis ole niggah he bes’ go hum, an’ not ketch ’em col’ in dat foot w’at I cut wid de axe. I comes down de sta’rs an’ I seed right afoah de doah Pat Maloney drunk full, an’ I say, ‘Pat, w’ere you ben?’ an’ he say, ‘It be Saint Patrick’s Day an’ eberybody gets drunk dis day.’”

“Then what?”

“W’y, den, dis niggah goes down Lundy Lane. W’en he gets right afoah de house, w’ere Massa Canfield lib, de doah open, Mis’ Canfield she jump out wid de baby in de arms squallin’ like mad, an’ Massa Canfield he puts his big boot right agin’ her back, an’ she fall down on de groun’ an’ Massa Canfield he shets de doah. Dis niggah he picks up Mis’ Canfield, an’

she say, Massa Canfield drunk. She'd go hum to her father."

John Canfield did not further cross-examine Cæsar.

To fix the date of the occurrences testified to by Cæsar, Richard put in evidence the account-book of Dr. Billings, in which was the following item:

"March 17, 1828.

"Nigger Cæsar. Bandaging foot cut with axe, twenty-five cents."

The effort on the part of John Canfield to break down the testimony of old Cæsar was a perfect failure.

At the adjournment of court for dinner, Cæsar was the hero of the hour, and received a great ovation. He was called upon to dance, but declined, saying, "No, no. Dis ole niggah nebber do de double shuffle no moah. Dis niggah am too ole foah dat, but dis ole niggah will sing, if de gemmen will pass de hat." And he sang with much pathos "Ole Uncle Ned."

The hat was passed. Adding the contribution to his witness fees made a good day's pay for old Cæsar.

# UNCLE NED.

Written and Composed

by S. C. FOSTER Esq!

*PIANO FORTE.*

The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand plays a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is common time (C).

Dere was an old Nigga, dey call'd him uncle Ned— He's dead long a-go, long a-

The first line of the song features a vocal melody on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff. The lyrics are: "Dere was an old Nigga, dey call'd him uncle Ned— He's dead long a-go, long a-

go! He had no wool on de top ob his head— De

The second line of the song continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "go! He had no wool on de top ob his head— De

*Bass Voice.*  
place whar de wool ought to grow. Den lay down de shubble and de hoe . . . . .

The third line of the song is marked "Bass Voice." and features a bass vocal melody on a bass clef staff and piano accompaniment on a grand staff. The lyrics are: "place whar de wool ought to grow. Den lay down de shubble and de hoe . . . . ."



## CHAPTER XLVIII

### TRIUMPH OF RIGHT

**A**T the opening of the afternoon session of the court, Richard offered the affidavit of Nancy Bond, stating as a reason for so doing instead of producing the witness in person, that she was an old woman and very feeble. Objection was made to its reception by the district attorney, and a long argument between counsel ensued. The judge directed the reading of the affidavit for information. Then Richard read it, paragraph by paragraph, arguing their admissibility, so that the jury almost learned the contents by heart. The judge denied the admission of the affidavit; but it had been gotten before the jury too thoroughly to be ruled out of their minds by the judge.

The same course was pursued with the affidavit of Mrs. Drisco, with like result.

Next was offered the account-book of Daniel Manning. The district attorney objected to its admission until the defense should prove that it was the account-book of Daniel Manning, and show how it came in their possession. Richard replied that he would submit the account-book to the jury and leave it to them to decide whether it was genuine. How it came into possession of the defense was none of the business of the court or of the prosecution. The judge admitted

the book and left the jury to decide as to its genuineness.

"We have also, Your Honor and gentlemen of the jury," said Richard, "one other affidavit that we wish to submit. I will read it for the information of the court. It is made by a witness in the former trial, who has left the United States and taken up his residence in Canada, considering himself safer there":

"MONTREAL, April 15, 1839.

"I, James Cook, being duly sworn, do depose and swear that on or about the 10th of September, 1838, I was reading law in the office of John Canfield, attorney and counsellor-at-law, in the town of Mendon, county of Mendon, State of New Hampshire, United States of America. That on the day above mentioned I was called into the back room of said office by John Canfield, and was there introduced to Mr. John Manning, whom I had previously known by sight. He said to me, 'I suppose, young man, you would not object to earning a bit of money,' and I replied, 'That's what I want.' He then said to Canfield, 'Explain it to him.' Then Canfield told me that they wanted a little evidence against Richard Baxter, and as I used to be in his office, I was the proper person to give it. He further said, 'What we want of you is this, to swear that you saw Richard Baxter write a certain satisfaction-piece. I will tell you all about it.' Before I had time to answer, John Manning said to me, 'If you will do this, I'll give you twenty-five dollars.' I said that was a pretty small sum for a State-prison offense. 'You had better make it fifty,' said Canfield.

"Then it will be all right, won't it?" I said yes, and Manning gave fifty dollars to Canfield, which money was paid to me after the trial. Canfield gave me the instructions as to what he wanted me to swear to, and I gave the evidence at the trial of Richard Baxter for forgery, just as I had been instructed.

"And I furthermore depose and swear that the evidence given by me at the trial of Richard Baxter for forgery was in every particular false and untrue."

"Subscribed and sworn to before me,

"JEAN MARCO,

"Consul of the United States at Montreal."

There was a heated argument on the admissibility of the affidavit. It was rejected by the court, but it had its effect on the jury.

"We rest, Your Honor," said Richard.

The district attorney had nothing to offer in rebuttal. Richard said that he did not wish to sum up, as he thought the jury abundantly capable of doing that.

John Canfield, in behalf of the prosecution, talked in the bitterest strain for two hours, abusing the prisoner and the witnesses.

The judge charged the jury. They rendered a verdict of not guilty, without leaving their seats, and the people who crowded the courtroom cheered. Those who after the other trial were anxious to ride Richard Baxter out of town on a rail were now just as ready to carry him on their shoulders in a triumphal march through town; which shows how fickle is the populace and how little to be trusted.

## CHAPTER XLIX

### “THE DEVIL’S TO PAY”

**I**MMEDIATELY on the acquittal of Richard Baxter, John Canfield wrote the following letter to John Manning:

“MENDON, May 1, 1839.

“John Manning, Esq.,  
“Stevens House,  
“Broadway,  
New York City.

“DEAR JOHN:—The devil’s to pay. The fat’s in the fire, and the jig is up, for the present at least. You must not return to Mendon until there is a change in the weather, *i.e.*, public sentiment; for in the present temper of the people you might be lynched. Even your old friend, Parson Snodgrass, is reputed to have said to-day that ‘John Manning is as big a rascal as ever escaped the State prison.’

“Dick Baxter had his new trial to-day and was acquitted without the jury leaving the box.

“The defense proved that your father received the payment of the mortgage from Drisco, that the satisfaction was genuine, and that you knew it from a statement made by your father to you on his death-bed. Don’t you think that when you employ a law-



“Why you had better place enough confidence in him to tell him the truth?”

“So that is the situation, and my advice is that you send to me a power of attorney to make whatever terms I can with the Driscos, for as sure as there is a God in Heaven, if the case goes to a jury, you will get mulcted in an enormous amount, for they have an old account-book of your father’s that tells the whole story.

“Hastily yours,

“JOHN CANFIELD.

To which in due time came the following reply:

“STEVENS HOUSE,

“NEW YORK, May 15, 1839.

“John Canfield, Esq.,

“Attorney and Counsellor-at-Law,

“Mendon, N. H.

“DEAR JOHN:—You must have been on a terrible drunk when you wrote that letter. I don’t believe things are half as bad as you write them to be, and if you want my business you have got to brace up and not lose your nerve.

“That cursed Miles girl must have found the old account-book somewhere in the house. I don’t remember ever to have seen it.

“Now, I want you to go to the county clerk’s office and get a copy of a mortgage I hold on the Widow Miles’ property, and foreclose as quickly as the law

will let you. That's all I can do to punish that sly minx of a Miles girl.

"I'm 'doing' the city and having lots of fun. The girls are gay, and everything is gay, so, 'go it while you're young.'

"JOHN."

"MENDON, N. H., May 22, 1839.

"John Manning, Esq.,

"Stevens House,

"Broadway,

New York City.

"DEAR JOHN:—It's all right to 'go it while you're young,' and all that sort of thing, but I tell you, John Manning, that it is time to stop your nonsense and attend to your business.

"There's a warrant in the hands of Sheriff Getchell for your arrest, you having been indicted by the grand jury yesterday. I know this from the district attorney, who is my friend, and is willing for a consideration to be yours. It is quite probable that this warrant will go to New York, and extradition be demanded. I know also that the papers are being prepared for a civil action against you by Sam Drisco and others by his mother. Aaron Richards is retained with Baxter, and you know what that means.

"If you don't settle this business you won't have enough money left to pay stage fare to Concord. Again I tell you, attend to this, or you'll be forever sorry.

"If you dare to risk it, come at once, but secretly,

and if not, send me an unrestricted power of attorney, without delay. No more nonsense. Let your girls slide. Don’t put this off for a day. If you come, come to my house in the night. I can hide you while we settle on some plan.

“Hastily,  
“JOHN CANFIELD.”

John Manning at last began to realize the seriousness of the situation, and leaving his dissipations made his way toward Mendon.

Like many another who had been reared in the austerity of a religious country life, he had easily yielded to the temptation of a great city, and plunged without reserve into the vortex of city vice. He had learned to sing:

“Women and wine,  
Toast divine,  
Drown all sorts of sorrow,” etc.

His hitherto moral and religious life was no stronger barrier against the temptations of immorality than is a splendid physique against an attack of typhus or malaria.

He arrived in Mendon in the night, and was concealed for two days by his attorney. It was rumored that he had been seen in an adjacent village, and an effort was being made to trace him. This so alarmed Canfield that it was decided that Manning should leave at once for Canada, where he would be safe.

## CHAPTER L

### SCEPTICISM

**R**ICHARD BAXTER was a thoughtful man. He was always thinking. His brain was never idle, at least not in his waking hours. His mind was well disciplined, and he could generally confine his thoughts to the subject that he wished to consider. When he had not legal points to solve he reviewed in his mind what he had read that day in Pickering's Reports, for he was faithfully executing his father's last request; he was doing it from a sense of duty, not from a conviction that he would receive a compensating benefit. Like most young men, he thought that his father was a little old-fogyish in desiring him to read that ancient history, when there was so much more interesting legal matter of later date. By this reading, suggested by Abraham Baxter, Richard was getting a discipline that in later life he fully appreciated, and for which he was duly grateful.

We have noted the thoughts that generally occupied his mind during the day. These might properly be termed "office thoughts." But in the still hours of the night one subject continually haunted him. It was God. There was an uncontrollable conflict forever raging. It was a conflict for belief between what had been so faithfully instilled in his mind by his early

Christian teaching, and the scepticism which of late years had had triumphant possession.

## CHAPTER LI

### “THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD”

**T**HE acquittal of Richard Baxter having established the satisfaction as a genuine document, it was duly recorded, and Sam Drisco took possession of his farm, after which, by due process of law, all the foreclosure proceedings were annulled. This was by default, as neither John Manning nor anyone in his behalf appeared to oppose. In the absence of Manning, all papers were served on his attorney, and he had enough sense to prevent offering a useless defense.

It must be remembered that the Drisco farm had been running down for many years. Sam and his mother had been hardly able to keep soul and body together, as a result of which the farm had suffered. And it had suffered still more during the two years that John Manning had possession, as he had reaped but never sown, having even gone so far in his process of skinning the farm that he had actually carted off the manure that was made there.

It was clear that restitution would have to be made of the interest that had been illegally collected for more than ten years, as well as a liberal sum paid for damages. Not a dollar of this sum had been received by Sam, but his now undisputed title to the farm, together with his expectations, gave him all the credit

that was needed, and he therefore felt justified in making repairs and improvements to the old house, that his mother might have a comfortable home in which to end her days.

His love for his mother was the strongest element in Sam's nature. To his natural affection for her was added all the love that would have been Sally Gibson's, had she lived to become his wife.

Anyone who knew the strong nature of Sam Drisco, and his affection for her whom he had lost, would not expect for a moment that her place in his heart or his arms would ever again be filled. His was a nature that could love but once. The heat of his passion had so entirely destroyed its tenement that it was never again inhabitable.

It took a long time to renovate the old house. The cleaning and whitewashing was a slow job. At last it was complete and its mistress was to return to her own. But Mrs. Drisco was not anxious to leave the poorhouse. Her repugnance had entirely disappeared, and had it not been for her mother-love for Sam, she would have preferred to end her days among those poor victims of misfortune, to whom she had become so dear.

Her health had meanwhile greatly improved. She and Sam had a dispute as to whether she should do her own work or hire a girl. Sam did not waste much time in argument, but settled the question by securing the services of a stout Canadian girl, whom Mrs. Drisco found installed when she came home.

Sam and his mother started again in life, as happy

as they could be. She had hardly taken her things off before she opened the old Bible on the little stand, and began reading from the twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd—sit down Sam—I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures—why don't you sit down, Sam, dear?—He leadeth me beside the still waters—Sam, if you weren't any bigger than you once were, I'd box your ears. I don't know but I'll do it as it is.—He restoreth my soul." "Yes, mother, dear, I'm quiet, ain't I?" "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.—Now, Sam, you must allow that God is good to us.—Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." "Mother, I must take care of the horse, or I'll have a broken wagon." "For thou art with me"—"Can't stop any longer, mother, dear." Sam left to care for his horse, and the old woman read on, finishing the Psalm without further interruption.

The only thing that now grieved Mrs. Drisco was what she termed "Sam's irreligious tendencies." He certainly had strayed from the fold, and she almost looked upon him as a lost sheep. The burden of her constant prayer to God was a beseechment for the saving of his soul.

It was not very surprising that Sam's misfortunes during the last two years had somewhat unsettled his faith in the goodness of God. Like many another good man, for Sam Drisco was a good man, he could not understand the justice of his being obliged to carry such a load of misfortunes. How much hap-



pier we all should be if that little word of three letters, WHY, had been left out of our language! Sam had been carefully trained in his youth by his mother, who, as we have seen, lacked neither in faith nor in works, and he was a religious man rather from habit than conviction. He had never professed religion, nor really given the subject very serious attention. He was naturally a man of the strictest morality, and if he had been asked if he concurred in the prevalent religious dogmas, would have answered, "Why, yes, of course." This was his condition until the time when his misfortunes came thick and fast, when he soon found that he lacked the "abiding faith" of his good old mother. She did not believe; she knew. Richard had, so to speak, drifted into his condition of religious belief, or it were better said, unbelief; but Sam Drisco had by his misfortunes been forced into the condition, which so grieved his mother.

## CHAPTER LII

### CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

**R**ICHARD BAXTER had much leisure time which he faithfully employed in reading Pickering's Reports. As his misfortunes increased he seemed to live more in the past and felt more anxious to comply with his father's request than he at first had been. "Everything has an end except eternity," said he to himself, "and to-morrow, if I live, I will finish Pickering's Reports and get at this secret which my father has sealed up at the end of the last volume. The reading has been to me terribly tiresome; still I should have been far more *ennuied* if I had not had this compulsory work to do. 'Tis true, also, that I have acquired much knowledge which I never would had it not been for this freak of my good old father."

The next morning he went cheerfully at his task, inspired by the nearness of the end, though without any especial curiosity, feeling fully satisfied that his father's intention was only to induce him to that extra amount of study which would be of great benefit. At about eleven o'clock he read the last page and *finis*, laid down the book and sat thinking, remembering. Back went his memory to his earliest recollections. He was a child again, cuddled in his mother's lap. How vividly came to him the little prayer;

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

This not only came to his mind, but it came out of his mouth, as gently as if his sainted mother were guiding its utterance.

And now, older, he kneels at his mother's knee. This time it was the Lord's prayer. How reverently he spoke it! There was devotion in every syllable:

“ Our Father Who are in Heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who  
trespass against us,  
Lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil,  
For Thine is the kingdom,  
And the power,  
And the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen.”

It all came back to him, and he repeated it in paragraphs, just as he had learned it at his mother's knee.

Next in the recollections of his religious education came the picture primer. The first scene, the Garden of Eden, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, with Adam and Eve. The serpent coiled around the trunk



In Adam's Fall  
We finned all.

Thy Life to mend,  
This Book attend.

The Cat doth play,  
And after flay.

A Dog will bite  
A Thief at Night.

An Eagle' flight  
Is out of fight.

The idle Fool  
Is whipt at School.



As runs the Glas,  
Man's life doth pass.

Viv Book and Heart  
shall never part.

Job feels the rod,  
Yet blesses God.

Kings should be good  
No men of blood.

The Lion bold  
The Lamb doth hold

The Moon gives light  
In time of night.



Nightingales sing  
In time of Spring,

Young Obadiah,  
David, Josias,  
All were pious.

Peter denies  
His Lord, and cries.

Queen Esther sues  
And saves the Jews.

Rachel doth mourn,  
For her first-born.

*Samuel* anoints  
Whom *God* appoints



Time cuts down all,  
Both great and small.

Uriah's beauteous Wife  
made David seek his life

Whales in the Sea,  
GOD's Voice obey.

Xerxes the great did die  
And so must you and I.

Youth forward slips,  
Death soonest nips.

Zaccheus he  
Did climb the Tree  
His Lord to see.

B

of the tree. Eve had picked the apple and was holding it out to Adam, whose hand was outstretched to take it.

Also the picture of Shadrach, Meshac and Abednego in the fiery furnace, apparently walking about in the flames, unharmed. Then, that of Jonah standing on the beach, and an immense whale that had just ejected him. Next in the list of object-lessons was Daniel in the Lion's Den, petting the wild beasts, who did him no harm. One never-to-be-forgotten illustration was that of the devil. He had horns on his head and cloven hoofs, a long tail which terminated in the shape of an arrow head. In his hand a three-tined fork with which to pitch the wicked sinners into the burning lake of brimstone.

These pictures had made an ineffaceable impression on his youthful mind, as they must have on all other children who saw them. The old New England primer was about the only literature of that period for children.

This morning Richard was in one of his cogitative moods. The reminiscences of his childhood and the recollections of his early religious teaching seemed to him like dreams. They certainly were visions of the past that had made an indelible impress on his mind, which never could be obliterated. As the twig is bent the tree is inclined. He looked out of his window and saw a dead hen lying on the opposite side of the road. Deuteronomy, fourteenth chapter, twenty-first verse, flashed into his mind, and he repeated to himself, "Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself;



thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien." His sense of right revolted, and he added, "This mandate was issued to the children of Israel by Moses, the servant of God. Was this in accordance with the doctrine of Jesus Christ, Who said, 'Do unto others as you would that they should do to you?'"

Another matter of doctrine which disturbed him was that of infant damnation, he being very fond of children, and they fond of him. Nearly all the children in the village knew him, and he had always a pleasant greeting for them. Mothers punished their little ones by keeping them from going out to say good-morning to Squire Baxter, or rewarded them by permitting them to go to greet him. Often when seeing these little innocents he would say to himself:

"How can people believe that a good God or a just God would permit such a thing as infant damnation, for did not Christ say, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven'? What an inconsistency!"

Lack of occupation for his intellect had rendered Richard morbid. He was ready to doubt everything. He said to himself:

"What a beautiful sentiment that Golden Rule contains! How lovely everything on earth would be if the rule were obeyed!" He then ran over in his mind all the professors of religion that he had ever known, to see if he could find one who had lived up to the Golden Rule. He could not recall any, not a single one, whom he thought had even tried. "I know that

I am a hypocrite, and what are they? Are they not worse hypocrites than I, and do they know it?" He sat silent for a while thinking, and then said to himself:

"I have never met a professed Christian who had not more humanity than Christianity."

He replaced the last volume of Pickering's Reports in the bookcase and forgetting his dinner and all else, permitted his legs to carry him to the deep pine forest, a refuge to which he often fled.

## CHAPTER LIII

### THE SECRET REVEALED

**R**ICHARD BAXTER did not return to his office that afternoon. The next morning he remembered that he had finished the reading of Pickering's Reports and that his father's letter awaited him. He took from the shelf the last volume, sat down in his usual place at the bookcase, and turning to the blank leaves at the back, separated them with his penknife, which loosened a sheet of the same size as the leaves. On this sheet or page was written, in his father's well-remembered hand, the following:

“DEAR RICHARD:

“*My Dear Son*:—You have faithfully complied with the request of your father, and are now about to receive your deserved reward, which is concealed in the back of the bookcase, before which I have sat so many years, and at which I hope you will be seated when you read this.

“This bookcase and desk stands flat against the wall. Turn it to a right angle, so that the light from the window will fall on the back, on which is pasted a covering of heavy brown paper. This is marked with fifteen squares, of equal size, numbered 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15. Take your knife and cut through the line around square number 8, and remove

the paper. On the panel beneath the paper are punched with a pegging-awl one hundred holes. With an awl press into each hole until you meet with an obstruction, then push hard and a spring will release the panel. What is there concealed are the savings of a lifetime. They are yours. Make good use of them.

"Dear Richard, may you get as much good in their use as I have had satisfaction in their accumulation for you.

"May the good God bless and keep you.

"Your Father,

"ABRAHAM BAXTER."

Richard was bewildered and felt a hesitancy in opening up the long-concealed secret. He then tried to move the desk-bookcase, but could not. There was but one man to whom he could trust this great secret; that was Si Slocum, who was then across the road, sitting on the fence, talking with two or three idlers. Richard called and Si came over.

"Here, Si, I want you to help turn this bookcase. It is so heavy that I cannot move it alone."

"Turn thet bookcase! It must be thet you want to call up the ghost of the squire. Why, thet case prob'ly hain't ben moved in forty year. 'Twould be wicked to move it."

"Never mind, Si, I have my father's orders." Richard then told Si of his father's letter, to which he answered, "Wall, thet's 'nuther hoss. Of course I'll help you."

The two had no difficulty in turning the bookcase, and Si said: "Now, as ye hev some private biz to 'tend to, I'll go."

"No, no," quickly replied Richard. "I've no business private from you, my good friend."

He then ran down the stairs to the cobbler's next door, and borrowed a pegging-awl.

In his absence Si examined the diagram on the back of the bookcase, and hailed Richard with, "What hev we here, a Chinese puzzle?"

Richard cut around the square numbered 8, took off the paper, and found, as described in his father's letter, the perforated panel, which looked as if a charge of medium shot had been fired into it. He began his search with the awl, and tried, as he thought, more than forty holes before he found the right one. A hard push relieved a spring. The panel fell to the floor, disclosing a shelf on which stood, entirely filling the place as if it had been made for this exact purpose, five tin cannisters, five inches high and about one and one-half inches in diameter. They were bright and shone as if they had just come from the tin shop. Richard took out one of the cannisters, removed the cover, and saw on top a twenty-dollar gold piece. He emptied the can on the table. Just at that moment the old grandfather clock in the office began to strike ten.

Richard looked quickly out of the window, over toward the courthouse, and saw on the piazza a group of men. He gathered the gold pieces into each hand, and thrusting them into his right and left trousers'

pockets, sprang for the door, and hurried down the stairs, bareheaded, calling back, "Stay there, Si." Jumping the courtyard fence, he ran as fast as his legs could carry him toward the group on the courthouse piazza. He heard:

"One hundred dollars, one hundred dollars. Is that all, gentlemen? One hundred dollars, first. One hundred dollars, second. Fair warning. One hundred dollars, third and last——"

"Hold on, hold on, I want to bid," shouted he, as he rushed up the steps. The referee paused, and Richard asked, "What is the amount required?"

The referee, who was Richard's old enemy, District-Attorney Thurston, answered very curtly:

"The amount of the mortgage is two hundred dollars, interest and costs are thirty-eight dollars and twenty-five cents, and the terms are cash down. Do *you* wish to bid?"

Richard did not resent the insinuation made in the emphatic "cash down" and the question "Do *you* wish to bid?" and replied:

"I bid two hundred and thirty-eight dollars and twenty-five cents."

As that amount covered the mortgage and costs which John Manning held against Mrs. Miles, there was no reason for raising the bid, but the formula of asking for a raise was gone through by the referee, and getting no response, he struck it off, and demanded, "What name?"

"Sarah Miles," responded Richard Baxter.

"Well, Mister Sarah Miles, if you will step into the

courthouse and pay the cash, I will deliver the deed, which is all ready, except for the filling in the name and signature."

The transaction was quickly completed and Richard took the deed to the office of the county clerk to be recorded. He then returned to his office, not having been absent more than fifteen minutes, during which time he had consummated an act which gave him more pleasure than anything he had ever done in his whole life. As he entered the office, Si Slocum greeted him with:

"Seems to me ye mus' be crazy to run off an' leave uncouncted gold with folks ye don't know putty well."

"I know you pretty well, Si Slocum, and I'm not at all alarmed. Now we'll take account of stock."

They emptied the other cannisters and found that the entire amount was two thousand dollars.

Richard sat down, rested his elbows on the desk, and leaned his forehead upon his hands. He was dazed, and he thought of his father with a reverence which he had never before felt. He had known of the self-denial of his father's life, but he had always supposed that it was necessitated and not voluntary. His reveries were interrupted by Si, who said:

"Dick, I allus knew thet yer father hed good stuff. See what he done fer me."

A long talk followed as to what had best be done with the money. Si had seen what had become of two hundred and thirty-eight dollars and twenty-five cents, but of this investment he heartily approved, for he felt quite sure that some day Richard and Mary would

marry, and this would turn out to be a loan, without interest, as usually reckoned. Knowing his friend's generous nature and impulsive character, he feared that more of the money might go as quickly, but not in so meritorious a manner. They decided that Si should drive Richard over to Wellington in the morning and place the money in the Savings Bank. He willingly promised Si that he would not draw any of the money without first having a talk with him about it.



## CHAPTER LIV

“ I’LL NEVER BE LAID OUT IN THEM SHEETS ”

**D**URING Mrs. Drisco’s sojourn at the poor-house, several of her old neighbors called, some to express real sympathy, but most, as they said to their friends, “to see how she bore the come-down.”

The Driscos were deservedly popular, and as a matter of course aroused envy. Sam had always been neighborly and obliging, ready to lend any of his farm tools and to go and get them. Mrs. Drisco had been a bright and shining light in the church, for many years president of the Dorcas Society, which oftener met at her house than anywhere else. For there its members found Old Hyson and crullers in abundance, which they greedily consumed, and went home wondering how Mrs. Drisco could be so free with her Old Hyson when they couldn’t afford anything better than Souchong, even when the parson called. One woman said she had heard that Mrs. Drisco had a brother who was “cappen of a Chiny ship” and that he brought her the Old Hyson. The fact was that Mrs. Drisco had no brother in the China trade. Her Old Hyson was her one pet extravagance, which she only paraded on what might be termed “state occasions.” The daily table beverage of the family was

herb tea and barley coffee, home productions, both. Her crullers came of skill in cooking.

When Sam entered again upon his own and brought his dear old mother home, he said:

“Mother, I have bought you a pound of Old Hyson, but please don’t give it to those old frauds who forsook us in the days of our misery. Boneset is far too good for them and not half as bitter as I would like to give them.”

It was not long before the neighbors began to call. One would have thought by the manner of their greeting that Mrs. Drisco had only been down to Boston to spend the winter with some rich relatives. The disgrace of the poorhouse was ignored, but never for a moment forgotten either by Mrs. Drisco or her guests. The experience at the poorhouse had given her an insight into character of which she had never dreamed. She treated all of her guests with politeness. There was a born gentility in her that prevented rudeness to any, but she held her cordiality well in check and was not imposed upon by the gushing flattery of her visitors. There were a few old friends stanch and true whom she welcomed as of old, but the majority of her callers had to put up with common politeness, and they came but once.

Parson Whiting had the effrontery to call, but there was no Old Hyson and crullers set out for him. In response to a remark that he “hoped to see Mrs. Drisco and her son in their old pew at the meeting-house,” she replied that when she felt well enough to go to meeting they would ride to Mendon and worship

with Parson Snodgrass. On receipt of this information the parson left abruptly and never called again.

His departure was a great relief to Mrs. Drisco, for notwithstanding the kindly, sympathetic tone in which all his remarks were couched, she could only hear, “All paupers are alike to me.” She had feared that Parson Whiting would call, dreaded the interview, and was glad when it was over. As soon as her son came in she said:

“Sam, who do you think has been here this afternoon?”

“Oh, I can’t guess. Some of your old tea-toper friends, I’ve no doubt.”

“Well, it was Parson Whiting.”

“What, that old hypocrite! Has he had the gall to enter this house? Well, as I don’t see any of your best china or smell any Old Hyson, I’m inclined to think that *for once* you did not give the old scoundrel a very warm welcome.”

“Why, Sam, how can you speak so of a minister of the gospel?”

“Minister of the gospel be——” Sam almost swore, but finished with “blowed.”

“What have you against Parson Whiting?”

“What have I against that old reprobate? I only spoke just as you feel, mother. Mrs. Carter told me what he said at the poorhouse about all paupers being alike to him. I never said anything about it, but I should have said something if I had found him here drinking tea.”

"Well, Sam dear, don't get excited. He's gone, and I don't think that he will ever come again."

Among the old friends who came early to see Mrs. Drisco was Mrs. Simpkins, to whom Mrs. Drisco extended a warm welcome. "I am very glad to see you, Helen."

"I knew you'd be, Susan."

"Take off your things and sit right down here in the kitchen while I light a fire in the parlor."

"Oh, don't take so much trouble, I sha'n't stay long."

"Yes, you'll spend the afternoon and take tea; then Sam will hitch up and take you home."

Mrs. Simpkins said she didn't see how she could, for she was "so busy to hum," but she had on her "best bib and tucker" and also her knitting in her reticule. Her hesitation was a bit of comedy that it was the custom to act, as she had all the while intended to spend the afternoon and stay to tea.

These two old women, as different as well could be in form, feature, and character, the one with the natural breeding of a lady, the other an illiterate, commonplace person, were very dear friends, who had known each other from childhood.

"No trouble to light the fire, for it is all laid in the fireplace, and all that I have to do is to take in a shovel of hot coals and put them on top of the pine knots and it will be blazing in a minute."

It was but a few moments before the two old friends were sitting, each in a Boston rocker, before a blazing fire of dry hickory, whose bright rays lighted the little

low-ceiled dark parlor and gave the dingy old furniture a cheerful look.

There is a fascination in a blazing fire. It is a stimulant to the memory, a help to the imagination, hopeful and optimistic.

Mrs. Simpkins had had an experience, in the death of her friend Mrs. Crocker, within the last few days, which she felt that she must tell to somebody, as evidenced by this remark to her husband: “Zekel, I mus’ go an’ talk to somebody ’bout Mis’ Crocker, er I shall bust. Guess I’ll go over an’ see Susan Drisco.” This was really the cause of her neighborly visit this afternoon.

Hardly had the two old friends got the rocking-chairs in motion before the fire, when Mrs. Simpkins said, “Ye heerd thet Mis’ Crocker died, hain’t ye?”

“Yes, I heard of Mrs. Crocker’s death, but have had no particulars. As you were an old friend of hers, I suppose you were there when she died. Please tell me all about it.”

“Ye see, Susan, thet Mis’ Crocker hed ben pow’rful sick fer a long time, nigh onto six month. Lemme see, she hadn’t ben to meetin’ fer more’n eight month, I guess. Lemme see, Mis’ Crocker died las’ Friday night. Wall, ’twas Thursday arternoon when Mister Crocker he druv into the yard, an’ he says to Zekel, ‘Whar’s Mis’ Simpkins?’ Zekel he says, ‘She’s in the house makin’ sassengers.’ Ye see we killed the day afore, an’ was all pow’rful busy, tryin’ the lard an’ makin’ sassage an’ sich work as allus comes at killin’ time. I allus tole Zekel how much handier it ’ud be

ef he'd only sorter divide up the work like, an' kill the hams an' the salted pieces sep'rate from the rest of the hog.

"Wall, Zekel he come to the door an' he says to me, 'Helen, here's Mister Crocker out here wants to see ye,' so I wiped my han's on my apern an' went to the door, an' Mister Crocker he says (ye know Mister Crocker is allus perlite), he says, 'Mis' Simpkins, I bids ye good-day,' an' I says, 'Good-day, Mister Crocker; how's Mis' Crocker?' an' he says, 'Mis' Crocker's tuk drefful bad an' she can't las' long, an' she sent me over to fetch ye, as she wants to see ye afore she goes,' an' I says to Mister Crocker, 'I'm orful sorry she tuk so bad, an' I'll come over an' see 'er to-morrow.' 'Thet won't do,' he says, 'fer she ain't a-goin' to las' till to-morrow. Can't ye go right back with me?' 'Lors sake alive, is she so bad's thet? Wall, then, I'll hev to go back with ye.' Then I says to Zekel, 'You come in an' put things to rights, an' I'll jes' tidy up a bit an' go with Mister Crocker.' Ye see I hed to wash up an' change my ole duds, fer I was all grease.

"Wall, Susan, I hurried as fas' as I could, an' in less than twenty minnits we wus a-drivin' out of the yard an' on the road a-goin' towards Mis' Crocker's, faster nor I likes to ride.

"When we got down to Mis' Crocker's, I went right in, an' Mis' Crocker was thar in bed all alone, an' afore I hed time to speak she says, 'Mis' Simpkins, it's pow'rful good in ye to come right in the middle o' hog-killin', but ye see, Mis' Simpkins, I've got a job

on hand too, that won't wait. Can't put 't off much longer.'

"The doctor come soon arter, an' he tole Mis' Crocker that she couldn't live till mornin'. She says, 'I know that, Doctor, an' I'm ready to go. My children need me, wharever they air, more'n the ole man does, an' I'd ruther be with 'em anyhow.' The doctor said 'Good-bye,' an' Mis' Crocker says, 'Ye needn't come no more, fer Mister Crocker can't afford to pay ye.'

"I axed Mis' Crocker what I could do for her. She said she wanted me to go upsta'rs, an' in the bottom drawer of the bureau, in the spare room, I'd find her shroud that she was to be buried in, an' two new sheets that she was to be laid out on.

"'Twas 'bout dark, an' I 'spected Zekel ev'ry minnit, fer I tole 'im to drive down 'bout dark. Mister Crocker he was out a-milkin' an' doin' his chores. I tole Mis' Crocker I didn't like to leave 'er alone, an' she said, 'Ye needn't mind me. I ain't alone. God's here with me, an' He'll stay by me till I go with Him.' I says, 'Mis' Crocker, ain't ye 'feard to die?' 'Feard,' says she, 'feard o' what? Hain't I allus lived up to the Scripters? What's I got to fear?'

"I lit the candle an' went upsta'rs, whar she tole me to go, in the spare room, an' I foun' the things, an' I felt kinder cur'ous like 'bout the shroud, so I opened it to see how she'd trimmed it. An' Susan, do you b'lieve me when I tell it, thar was three rows o' flutin' 'round the neck, an' two down the front, an' three rows round each wrist, an' 'twas buttoned clean down

the front with real pearl buttons. Wall, I was s'prised, fer Mis' Crocker wasn't giv to dress. I tuk the things down sta'rs, an' Mis' Crocker she said, 'Mis' Simpkins, see ef ye don't think this 'ere shroud's putty.' So I opened it jes' the same's ef I hadn't seen it afore in the spare room. It seemed to me kinder orful to talk so light 'bout sich solemn matters. Then she tole me to unfold the sheets. The mice hed gnawed 'em an' they was full o' holes. She said, 'I'll never be laid out in them sheets. I sha'n't die to-night, fer I'll never be laid out in sich sheets. I'll hev Mister Crocker go to Mendon in the mornin' an' git some white cotton, an' I'll hev some sheets made.'

"She called Mister Crocker, who was in the kitchen with Zekel. 'You kin go hum, Mis' Simpkins. Mister Crocker kin do all I want done. Wish ye'd come down to-morrow night an' lay me out.' I said I'd stay, but she wouldn't hev me. Zekel an' me druv hum, a-talkin' all the way 'bout how queer Mis' Crocker was.

"An' do you b'lieve it, Susan, Mister Crocker druv up to Mendon the nex' mornin' an' got at Rice's store ten yards o' white sheetin' a yard wide, an' tuk Sally Beers hum with 'im, an' she sewed up the sheets an' hemmed 'em jest as Mis' Crocker tole her, while she lay thar on the bed a-dyin'.

"Mis' Crocker axed Sally Beers if she'd got them sheets done, three er four times, an' the las' time she said, 'Ye'll hev to hurry up, fer I can't hol' on much longer.' Sally tuk the las' stitch, an' said to Mis'



Crocker, "Them sheets is done,' an' Mis' Crocker said 'Done,' an' she died right off.

"Now, Susan, did ye ever hear anything queer's thet in all yer life?"

"I never did," replied Mrs. Drisco.

## CHAPTER LV

### RETRIBUTION

**T**HROUGH the influence of the district attorney, who was John Manning's friend, the indictment for obtaining money fraudulently was *nolle prossed*.

Through John Canfield, he settled with Sam Drisco, returning at compound interest the amount fraudulently collected, and also the payment of two thousand dollars damages.

The two thousand dollars Sam wished to give to Richard Baxter to compensate him as far as that was possible for the trouble that had been brought on him by his connection with the matter. But Richard would not take it, and the two old friends came very near having a serious quarrel. It was finally settled by his acceptance of one thousand dollars, accompanied by the remark, "Dick, my boy, if the time ever comes that you need money, and I have it, you won't have to wait long." But the time never came, for Richard developed prosperity.

The atmosphere of Mendon was not congenial to John Manning, and he did not return there to live. He progressed into a regular debauchee and spent his money in riotous living. Fortunately for some woman, he never married.

Mrs. Drisco lived to a good old age, and left Sam true to his affection for Sally Gibson. The only thing that ever seemed to give him real happiness was the coming of the arbutus, and the opportunity it afforded him every springtime to cover her grave with these delicate flowers.

More than fifty years subsequent to the occurrence of the events herein related, while some friends were preparing the body of an old man for the observance of the last sad rites usual in every Christian community, they discovered an oilskin envelope, suspended from his neck by a silver chain, and so arranged as to support the envelope directly against his heart. In this envelope they found some powder, apparently from crushed leaves, and some fibres that looked as if they once had been the skeleton and stems of flowers and leaves. There was also a curl of golden-brown hair. None knew but all respected the secret, and reverently replaced the envelope where it was found. It was the body of Sam Drisco. The curl was from Sally Gibson's golden-brown locks, and the powder was the dust left from the little nosegay of trailing arbutus that Sam picked for Sally so long, long ago.

## CHAPTER LVI

### THE DEATH OF AUNT NANCY

**P**OOR old Aunt Nancy. She was fast reaching the end of her knitting. This lovely old woman was getting very feeble. Lovely! Yes, she was lovely, not to look at, but to love. As you saw her at the door knitting, for she was always knitting, she was indeed a grim and unattractive personality, but if you were one of her many young friends and she smiled on you, it warmed you clean through.

There was not a young person in the neighborhood but would tell you, for he knew by experience, that there never was anybody who could make such delicious cookies, jumbles, and crullers as dear old Aunt Nancy. As she grew feeble, her friends insisted that she must have someone to stay with her. But Aunt Nancy would have none of it.

“Don’t you know, dearie, thet I ain’t as young as I once was, an’ I can’t hev anyone to wait on.”

“No, no, Aunt Nancy, you don’t understand. Have a hired girl.”

“A hired gal! Thar, thar! Don’t talk to me ’bout a hired gal. Thar, you’ve made me drop a stitch. Don’t say nuthin’ to me ’bout the lazy huz-zies. Things is dif’reent from what they was when I was young an’ worked out.”

Mary Miles came every day, and would have stayed

with her if Aunt Nancy had permitted. She was really the only one that the old woman was willing should do anything for her. Jim Budson's oldest boy used to run over three times every day to see what she wanted, and attend to any little chores, and his father generally came once a day. Aunt Nancy's door was never barred. She always said that she was "too poor to be afeard."

One morning when the boy came he found her sitting in the rocking-chair, knitting in hand, just where he had left her the evening before. The candle that he had lighted for her had burned to the socket and gone out. He said, "Good-morning, Aunt Nancy, you're up early." No reply came, and he spoke again, but there was no reply. Then he realized that for the first time in his life he was in the presence of death. Aunt Nancy had dropped her last stitch. He ran home as frightened as a child would naturally be under the circumstances.

Jim Budson and his wife came back with him at once. As they opened the door they saw Aunt Nancy sitting in her usual rocking-chair, knitting in hand, the tortoise-shell kitten purring in her lap. The contrast between the bright yellow and Aunt Nancy's best bombazine was vivid. They could not realize that she was dead. The kitten, seeing them, arose to her feet, humped up her back, then stretching herself lengthwise, jumped down, knocking off the ball of yarn, which rolled across the floor. This challenge to play was accepted by the kitten. Truly, a picture of life and death.

Yes, poor old Aunt Nancy was dead. But no one would have thought it, so placid her countenance, so peaceful her look. There she sat, knitting in hand. One could easily fancy that he heard the click, click of the needles. There had been no contest with the grim monster. He had evidently been expected, and no doubt welcomed.

Pinned to the bosom of her dress was a small slip of paper, on which was written, "Don't tech me. Git Mary Miles." They left her sitting in her old rocking-chair beside the chimney, where she had drawn it. Mrs. Budson carefully covered Aunt Nancy's face with her best green barege veil, and Jim hurried over to Farmer Nixon's for a horse, and drove to Mendon as fast as he could, to bring Mary Miles. Mary was not surprised to hear of Aunt Nancy's death, as she had daily been expecting it. She went back with Jim Budson and took charge of everything.

It would seem as if Aunt Nancy had made an appointment with Death, and the appointment had been punctually kept. They had talked many times of this moment, and Mary had promised that she would carry out Aunt Nancy's wishes. These desires on the part of Aunt Nancy were so unusual and eccentric that Mary had asked her to write them down. They were found in the Bible-stand drawer, and were as follows:

"I shall know w'en I'm a-goin' ter die an' will be all reddy an' wil hev on the close thet I wanter be berrid in. Mary Miles nos w'at ter do."

In her talk with Mary she had said that as she had

no relatives, she'd be chief mourner at her own funeral. She did not want any coffin brought in until after the funeral exercises, but was to sit there with knitting in hand, just as if she were alive, and after the services was to be placed in her coffin and buried beside her husband.

In the Bible-stand drawer was also found Aunt Nancy's will. It was a unique document.

"Ter evryboddy as has eny biznes :

"I give ter Mary Miles all my things an' evrything Iv got. Ther farm an' evrything.

"NANCY BONN."

"I see her sine it ter day.

"JIM BUDSON."

"I seen her sine it ter day.

"MARY BUDSON."

"Mendon, November 16, 1838."

Thus armed with authority that no one was disposed to dispute, Mary went on with the funeral preparations. The rocking-chair was carefully drawn into the parlor, which probably had not been opened since the funeral of Jonas Bond, and placed in the corner of the room, facing the front door, as Aunt Nancy had specifically directed.

She wanted to be buried the next day after she died, as "Thar's no mournin' to be made, they needn't wait fer thet, an' asides corpses don't look well arter

they've laid 'round two er three days." Parson Whiting was not to attend the funeral. She said:

"Ef he comes, I'll git up an' walk out an' they sha'n't hev no fun'ral."

Everything was done just as Aunt Nancy wished. There she sat, dressed just as she had dressed herself, in her best. Her fine lace cap, with two rows of insertion and two rows of ruffles, both "real thread," and wide white cap strings. Two grey curls hung in front of each ear, her spectacles in place, and knitting in hand. No one would have for a moment suspected that she was the "late lamented."

The attendance at the funeral was greater than the little house would hold, as the news of the peculiarities of the ceremony had spread with gossip rapidity. Parson Snodgrass read the passage of Scripture that Aunt Nancy had selected, made a prayer, and then a few remarks about the "virtues of our deceased sister," closing with a benediction. They placed Aunt Nancy in her coffin, with her knitting work in hand, and then laid her at rest.

Aunt Nancy's disposition of her property had all been discussed and arranged some time before her death and she had said:

"Now, Mary, arter I'm gone, an' I'm a-goin' right soon, you kin do with what's your'n jest as you like; but ef I was agoin' to say anything, which I ain't, I'd say that I hope you'll do suthin' fer them air Budsons, poor critters."

Mary felt well inclined toward doing something for "the poor critters," and she, on very liberal terms, in-



stalled Jim Budson and *eight* children (it will be remembered that two years have elapsed since six were reported) in Nancy Bond's old farm-house, where they lived and prospered for many years.

Jim Budson was one of those men who only needed an opportunity. He could never make one.

## CHAPTER LVII

### “WHO KISSED HENRIETTA?”

EVERY country town has its great man, that is to say, some man who, in his own estimation, if not that of his neighbor's, holds that position. In Mendon he was Deacon Palmer, the sole proprietor of the Emporium. He is the person whom we introduced earlier in our story, through the medium of Squire Slocum's court. Deacon Palmer was the wealthiest man in that locality, the leading citizen, being foremost in religious, political, and social affairs. Of his antecedents he never spoke. There were not many who remembered the ingress of the ragged, barefooted lad who first made his appearance as chore boy at Deacon Coggswell's grocery. Whence the lad came none knew, but all guessed that he must have been a waif from some poorhouse, without a certificate of birth. He remembered neither father nor mother, but only of having been passed from one old crone to another, in the poorhouse, under whose care he had simply grown, never having had any bringing up. Deacon Coggswell took to the boy, who was bright, intelligent, industrious and faithful. He won the confidence of the old deacon, the motherly affection of the deacon's wife, and as a young man, the love of the deacon's daughter, whom he married when twenty-one, at that time receiving from Dea-

con Coggswell a half partnership in the store, from which had grown the great Emporium of Mendon.

The only issue of Deacon Palmer's marriage was a daughter, whom he loved with all the affection of a fond parent, and upon whom he lavished everything that money could command.

Deacon Palmer received his office and title at an unusually early age. Of this he felt very proud, as did his wife, and she never addressed him without prefixing the title, so that it was not at all strange from so constantly hearing it that the first word that little Henrietta picked up when she began to talk was “deekin.” This was thought by her fond parents to be very cunning and they encouraged it. When the time came that they would like to have her use the word papa, it was too late, and when she passed from “deekin” on to plainer speech, she called her father “deacon,” and ever after spoke to or of him as Deacon or Deacon Palmer. As Henrietta grew in years, she grew in his affection. When old enough he sent her to Boston to Madame Ristori's, the most famous boarding school of that period. Her curriculum embraced all the accomplishments, including Monsieur Papanti's dancing school and the best masters in music and painting. Her school life unfitted her for life at Mendon, where she came twice a year, to turn up her nose in disgust at all her home surroundings, and was so airy that there were but few people in Mendon recognized by her.

A malicious Mendon young man, whom she had snubbed while visiting Boston, told the people at home

that Henrietta Palmer was the original of the song entitled "Who Kissed Henrietta?" the first two lines of which were:

"Who stole the pie, and kissed the maid,  
While crackers on the sideboard laid?"

which mortified her very much, but she had no redress.

This perfect specimen of a spoiled child had a natural goodness which went far toward redeeming her. She was well formed, *petite* in figure, with a really pretty face.

She graduated with high honors, as did all of Madame Ristori's pupils, who were the daughters of rich men. At graduation, she came home, bringing several trunks of clothing, illy adapted to country life, that at meeting on Sunday distracted attention from Reverend Snodgrass' sermon.

Deacon Palmer bought for her a piano, the first and for a long time the only one in the county of Mendon. Henrietta was fond of music, but not fond enough to be relieved thereby of the inevitable *ennui* of her new life.

The recreation most enjoyed by her was riding her pet saddle horse. Her lessons at the riding school in Boston had given her a good mount, and few excelled her as an equestrienne.

Henrietta Palmer was of a lively temperament, and with her fun and frolic took precedence. Like most girls, she was fond of flirtation, having as little pity for her victim as has the boy who stones the frogs.

To be sure young men or frogs are not always hit, but when they are, it hurts. The little flirtations with the young gallants that she used to meet on Tremont street mall were greatly missed by her. There was no stock of eligibles in Mendon from which to fill this void. All the young men of the class with whom she would have flirted had opportunity afforded, were either married or gone to Boston to seek their fortunes. Henrietta had not been at home long before her coquetting desire asserted itself, and she looked about the town for someone upon whom to play her art. She was attracted to Dick Baxter, but found no enjoyment in playing round an iceberg. As for Ben Thurston, he presumed so much at their first meeting that he disgusted her. The next, so far as appearances went, for an eligible candidate, was Si Slocum. This will surprise our readers, if they do not take into consideration the fact that our old friend was, at the time of which we write, a very different person than when we first met him. He was a good-looking man, and naturally, quite attractive to the other sex. With his education came good manners and a taste for good clothes, and there was not a better dressed man in Mendon. For the want of any other with whom to flirt she determined to have a little fun with Si Slocum; but Si did not take any notice of her alluring glances, not supposing for a moment that that fine young lady, with her Boston education and manners could be intending to make eyes at him; so where any ordinary young man, who had a particle of vanity, would have “caught on,”

Si Slocum was not tempted. Henrietta had made up her mind, and she was not to be baffled. She had frequently met Si riding when out for her daily exercise in the saddle, and had determined upon a nice little trick, by the playing of which he could not well avoid her. One day as Si was riding in the country, at rather a slow gait, she came rapidly out of a wood road, her horse apparently running away. Passing Si she screamed, dropped the lines, and clutched the horse's mane with one hand and the saddle with the other. Si took in the situation at a glance, passed her rapidly and jumped off his horse, that had been taught at the command of "whoa" to stand. As Henrietta's horse came up, Si caught the bridle bit with his left hand, throwing the horse back on to his haunches, and Henrietta fell from the saddle, apparently in a swoon, grasped round the waist by Si's right arm, and somehow, accidentally of course, her left arm fell around his neck. Si was in a quandary as to what to do. He could not hold the girl and her horse, so let Henrietta slide on to the grassy roadside, quickly threw the rein over a root of the stump fence, and turned to the assistance of Henrietta, whom he found in a heap, with her clothing disarranged. Si was a modest man. Had he been called upon to testify in court, he would reluctantly have admitted on cross-examination that Miss Palmer wore on that eventful day red stockings. Not daring to touch her clothing, he gently raised her from the ground to a perpendicular position, and her riding habit fell to its proper place. He then set her down

gently, leaning against a stump. This limp figure who Si thought had fainted, had rosy cheeks, which incongruity he did not notice, as his limited experience had not taught him that fainting girls' cheeks are not rosy. Up to this time he had not spoken, but now said, “Miss Palmer, Miss Palmer,” a little louder, “how can I help you?”

There was no response.

Within a few feet was a gushing spring, beside which was a gourd shell. He stepped to the spring quickly, filled the gourd and returned. When about to sprinkle her face Henrietta sat up and laughing merrily, said:

“Don't put any water on me, Mr. Slocum. You'll spoil my ruffles.”

Si instantly threw the contents of the gourd in her face, and without a word, mounted his horse and galloped away, feeling that he had been insulted, made a fool of, but did not think that he was quite right in letting his anger get the better of him.

As Slocum rode away, Henrietta jumped to her feet, and stamped violently, as angry as any little vixen could be. In a moment her temper changed and she laughed a merry laugh, and said to herself: “He served me right. Si Slocum is no prig. There's good stuff in him. I'll get even for this, or my name is not Henrietta Palmer.”

It was two or three weeks before they met again, as Si had purposely avoided her, by going through the Clay tract for his usual rides. But Henrietta had not given up her game.

One day while riding slowly through the woods Si heard a horse coming up behind him. Turning his head, he saw Miss Palmer, and spurred his horse, but she had the faster animal, and was soon by his side.

“Good morning, Mr. Slocum. Don’t run away. I won’t eat you; besides, I have something very important to say,” as they both slackened the speed of their horses. “I want to apologize, Mr. Slocum, for the trick I played the other day. I don’t think you ought to be angry, as I had the worst of it.”

“Miss Palmer,” replied Si, “I certainly was very angry at the time, but I soon recovered, and am heartily ashamed of my rudeness; it is I who ought to apologize.” She quickly replied:

“If that’s the way you feel, we’ll call it square, and let’s be friends,” reaching out a hand, which he took in one of his, while he raised his hat with the other. They rode on through the woods, discussing the weather and the beautiful scenery, he listening, she doing most of the talking. After this meeting, their rides together were quite frequent, and they became very friendly. As the summer went on, their association grew into intimacy, and from that intimacy developed, unawares to either, a mutual affection.

One day on returning from a long ride, Henrietta analyzed her feelings, resulting in the discovery that she really loved Si Slocum, and that he loved her she was quite certain, but she did not believe that he would ever say so, except in answer. It was her intention from the first that he should love her, but had not meant to be caught in the meshes herself.



“Well,” she soliloquized, “I am very certain that after all that Si has said about fortune hunters, he will never ask me to marry him. It is queer, considering his origin, what a high sense of honor he has. Si Slocum is a rough diamond, but I can polish him. Well, if he won’t propose to me, I will to him.” The next day while riding, she asked:

“Si, why don’t you get married?”

“Married!” he replied. “Whom should I marry?”

“Why me, of course. You are not fool enough to think I’d let you marry anyone else.”

“I can’t marry you, Henrietta.”

“Why not?”

“For several reasons. In the first place, you are rich, and I will never be accused of fortune hunting, and then, your father would never consent; but that is not of so much consequence.”

“No, I don’t think Deacon Palmer, with his high notions, would ever consent to my marrying you, but I am of age and will marry whom I choose, and as to my fortune, you ought to consider that an advantage.”

“No,” he replied, “I can’t be accused of fortune hunting.”

“Si, would you marry me if I were a poor girl?”

“I would if you would have me.”

“Well, then, Si, I will have you, rich or poor.”

On the day of this conversation, Deacon Palmer heard that Si Slocum and Henrietta had been seen riding together several times. He hurried home, very angry, and said to Henrietta:

“Have you been riding with Si Slocum?”

"Yes, Deacon Palmer."

"How many times?"

"Oh, a good many times. Almost every fair day all summer."

"What do you mean by this?"

"Why, Deacon Palmer, I mean to marry Si Slocum, if he'll have me, but that side of the question is not settled."

"Marry Si Slocum! A daughter of mine marry that low-born vagabond of a horse jockey." He was sitting at the time near the open piano, on the keys of which he brought down his fist with such force that it knocked an octave permanently out of business.

Henrietta was as composed as her father was angry.

"Deacon Palmer, you have never told me about the great man that I suppose my grandfather must have been. I have never seen hanging on these walls any genealogical tree. Still, with your high notions, I am not surprised that you should take exception to my marriage with Si Slocum, but marry him I will, if he'll have me."

"Have you? Do you suppose that beggar will hesitate for a moment to take you and your money? But, mind you, young lady, never a dollar of my money shall he have, nor you either, if you marry him." And growing still more furious, "Promise me now that you will never have anything more to do with Si Slocum, or out of this house you go this very day. On this I am determined."

"I am Deacon Palmer's daughter, and to the Palm-

er determination is added some Coggswell blood, and I am quite as determined as you, so, good morning, Deacon Palmer, and good-bye.”

Henrietta went immediately to her room, properly dressed herself, and went out of the house. Going directly to Mrs. Miles' cottage she told her story and sent a note, asking Si Slocum to come to her immediately. He came, and they were closeted together in Mrs. Miles' little parlor for an hour. Henrietta began by saying:

“You said, Si, that if I were a poor girl and would have you, you would marry me. Both conditions are fulfilled. I am a poor girl and will marry you. Deacon Palmer has turned me out of doors and disinherited me. Now, what shall we do?” Si replied:

“Get married, I suppose, as soon as the law will let us.”

The law required that an intention of marriage should be posted by the town clerk in the meeting house for three weeks, and no marriage within the State would be legal without compliance. She could stay with Mrs. Miles for the necessary three weeks, but that would make three weeks of gossip, so they concluded that they had better go over the line into Vermont and be married at once. This they did, and on returning to Mendon, for want of a better place, took board at the tavern. Their honeymoon and several months passed happily, without incident worthy of mention. It will be remembered that up to the day of their marriage, they had never met, except in the saddle, consequently their courtship had

consisted of cavalry maneuvers only; but later they were glad to adopt infant-ry tactics.

Henrietta had met her father many times on the street, and always saluted him with a courteous "good morning, Deacon Palmer," of which he took no notice. It was understood in the village that Deacon Palmer had made a new will, and after providing for his wife and a few small legacies, had given the bulk of his property to the founding of an orphan asylum at Concord. About six months after Henrietta's marriage Deacon Palmer was taken seriously ill, and was not expected to recover. Henrietta said one morning:

"Si, I am going over to see Deacon Palmer."

"All right, my dear. You know what is best. I certainly have no objection."

She was met at the door by Mrs. Palmer, who, though having been forbidden ever to speak to her again, gave her a motherly welcome. She went at once to her father's bedside, took his hand, and for the first time in her life, addressed him as father, adding: "I am very sorry you are sick."

"Henrietta, I am glad to see you. I am happy that you have given in, for I could not, and now I can die in peace."

Realizing his critical condition, he immediately sent for Richard Baxter and made a new will, giving all his property to her, after a liberal provision for the mother. No doubt the visit of Henrietta saved Deacon Palmer's life, for he rapidly recovered. He became reconciled to Si Slocum and they were soon not only good friends, but very fond of each other.

## CHAPTER LVIII

### A SELF-MADE MAN

**S**I SLOCUM is a character who is entitled to a larger space in our story than we have given him. A boy of unknown parentage, turned loose in the world to shift for himself, under the most unfavorable influences for the development of respectability or even decency, who achieves in life as good a standing as did Si Slocum, is entitled to great credit. He was a self-made man, and when we consider the material with which he had to work he certainly had no reason to be ashamed of his job.

When Si Slocum, through an election joke, became Squire Slocum, he became in many respects a new man. He was at that time illiterate, could with difficulty read, and his writing accomplishment was confined to the execution of a very crude signature. Under the influence and guidance of Richard Baxter, he applied himself diligently to the rudiments of a common-school education. His heart was in his work and he made rapid progress. He was spurred on by a healthy ambition, and used often to say to himself, "I'll be a man yet."

Among other changes he rearranged his horse principles. Heretofore, everything was fish that came to his net. After he became Squire Slocum he told the people that he proposed to be known as Square Slo-

cum, and that anyone who wanted to buy a horse at a fair price could be accommodated, but anyone who wanted to swap horses had better cut their eye-teeth before they came to him, as he would beat them if he could, and if they beat him he wouldn't whine. After this forewarning, he had no pity for the horse jockey who tried to get the best of him in a swap.

Squire Slocum became not only a prominent man in Mendon, but one of its most respected citizens, and the day came when Parson Snodgrass did not hesitate to ride behind one of the Squire's fast trotters or his spanking team right out in the open. He was re-elected justice of the peace year by year, with practically no opposition, until he outgrew the office, and would have no more of it. He acquired, principally by absorption, as good an education as the majority of his fellow-citizens; served two terms in the State Legislature and two terms in the Congress.

He never lost his love for a good horse.

## CHAPTER LIX

### DIARY EXTRACTS

**E**XTRACTS from the diary of Mary Miles:  
"Richard, my Richard, came up to see me last night, and we had a long talk on religious matters. There are several points on which we do not exactly agree. I am afraid that he is not quite sound in the faith."

"I am afraid that Richard has not that all-abiding faith in God and His goodness that I have."

"Richard came again last evening. Oh, how I love that man! Does he love me? I do not know, but I am quite certain that he does not love anyone else."

"Mother asks me, 'What is the matter with you, Mary? You act as if you were thinking of something else all the time.' No, it is not something else that I am thinking of, nor somebody else."

"I think that there are some matters in which women should have the same rights as men. If a woman love a man, why should she not say so?"

"When Richard said last night, 'I'll come over in the morning,' how I wish I might have put my arms

around his neck, and with a kiss, quoted from that lovely old song, ah, Richard, my dear,

“Come in the evening or come in the morning,  
Come when you’re looked for, or come without  
warning.

Kisses and welcome you’ll find here before you,  
And the oftener you come, the more I’ll adore you.’

But no, that would not have been proper. Oh, of how much happiness the proprieties do rob us!”

“I dreamed last night of Richard, my Richard. I dream of him almost every night. I dreamed that Richard, my Richard, came and said, ‘Mary, let us take a walk,’ and I replied, ‘Yes, Richard, I will walk anywhere with you.’ Then he said, ‘Let’s go to Paradise,’ and he took me by the hand and walked through Paradise. How I wish that I could describe its beauties! What is Paradise? It is an ecstasy of soul that one can feel but cannot describe.”

“I’ve been reading over some of my diary, and it is ‘Richard, my Richard,’ on almost every page. I suppose if others were to read it they would say, ‘How silly!’ and I have no doubt that I should say the same of someone else’s diary. I cannot help it. I don’t want to. Oh, Richard, my Richard!”

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Extracts from the diary of Richard Baxter:

“Si Slocum asked me a question to-day. He said, ‘Dick, why don’t you get married?’ ‘Married,’ I said,



‘and to whom, Squire?’ ‘Why, Mary Miles, to be sure.’ ‘To tell the truth, Squire, I never thought of it, and I do not know that she would have me.’ ‘Humph,’ said the squire, ‘would a duck swim?’ ”

“Mary and I discussed religion last night. I would give anything and everything if I only had the belief and the faith in God that she has. It is sublime.”

“There is one thing they cannot accuse me of, infidel or no infidel, that is of ever saying anything to weaken anyone’s belief in God.”

“Old Parson Snodgrass to-day preached a long sermon on infant damnation. Good, kind-hearted old man. I do not think that he believes all the cruel things that he preaches. How I would like to have a good free talk with him, but that would not do, for I would then betray my own unbelief.”

“On religious subjects, if a man thinks he doubts, and if he doubts, he is damned.”

“I want a God. This, I think, is every man’s nature. But I want a God whom I can love and respect according to my standard of right. I want a just God, whom I can respect for His never-failing equity. I want a merciful God, whom I can revere for His never-varying beneficence. Justice and mercy are the only attributes that I desire in my God.”

“I have never forgotten the scene at the death-bed of Patrick Moriarty. That grand faith that enabled him to take the sleep of death as calmly as if it were but the natural nightly slumber. To me it has always been the subject of wonder and admiration.”

“Do people really believe what they think they do? I wish that I knew.”

“Rob a Christian of his religious belief! Or even a heathen, for that matter! Never!”

## CHAPTER LX

“PRAY, RICHARD, PRAY!”

**G**EORGE HOWARD, who was associated with Richard Baxter in Sunday-school work, had been sick for a long time with that awful disease, consumption. One night word came to Richard that his friend was dying and wished to see him. He went reluctantly, but quickly overcame his repugnance by a realization of his duty.

George Howard was indeed dying, and spoke with difficulty. “It is good of you, Richard, to come to your old friend in this last emergency. I am dying, and in a few moments shall be in the arms of Jesus, whom we both love so well. I am not afraid to meet God. It was not fear that led me to send for you, but a wish to have a true Christian by my side in this awful hour, to hold my hand at the last moment, to pass me over, as it were, to God, our Heavenly Father, who is so dear to both of us. Pray, Richard.”

How could *he* pray? To whom could he pray? He felt that his mantle of hypocrisy was too short. He could not pray, neither could he refuse the last request of his dying friend. There beside the bed stood the wife, the little child, the old father and mother, a brother and sister, all waiting, as it were, for him to escort the departing spirit to the gates of Heaven, where stood Christ ready to receive him. Richard

quickly reviewed in his mind the consequence of his refusal, which would disclose his unbelief, and what a shock that would be, not only to his dying friend, but to the bystanders, to the community in which he lived his miserable, hypocritical life.

In his anguish his soul cried out, "Oh, God, help me!" And he fell on his knees. Thinking that he could do no less than to repeat the Lord's Prayer, he began: "Our Father who art in Heaven," then as if inspired, "Great, good, and everlasting God, Supreme Existence, listen to an insignificant atom that presumes to appeal to Omnipotence for mercy. We recognize, O God, our need of Thee at all times, but now, O God, while the soul of our dear brother is parting from its tenement of clay, we cannot do without Thy help. Great Creator of all, Author of all being, Supreme Ruler of the universe, grant us Thy blessing. Oh, Lord, receive this soul now on its flight from time to eternity, and sanctify to us our loss, and make us to realize Thy greatness, Thy goodness, Thy allness, and to realize our own littleness, and while we continue on earth, may we ever be Thy humble, dutiful children, and when we pass on to join our departing brother, may we be worthy of a place at Thy feet, and humbly serve Thee to all eternity. Amen."

As Richard arose from his knees, the spirit of George Howard took its flight to the bourne from which no traveller has ever returned. As it ever after seemed to Richard, the departing soul of his friend took with it all of his doubts and unbeliefs, and from that moment, he was indeed a Christian. So deeply

did his conversion impress him, that he recognized it as a call from God to devote his life especially to His service.

After a few years he gave up the efforts to succeed as an honest lawyer, and became an eminent minister of the gospel.

## CHAPTER LXI

### PARSON SNODGRASS TURNED OUT

PARSON SNODGRASS was very old, was getting feeble, and unable to attend to many of the duties of his office. There were more slippers worked for him by the young women than he could wear, more calls to be made than he could make.

Many of his people had long talked of his resigning or dying. As he seemed not inclined to do either, some other course must be taken. Somebody must talk to the old parson. It was a case of who should "bell the cat."

Parson Snodgrass was a shrewd old man, had been watching with great interest all that had been going on in his parish, and knew all about their intention to get rid of him. He knew, too, who his friends were. Finally a committee of two, who thought that they had the courage of their convictions, called on him and stated the case. He listened without comment until they had finished, and then calmly asked:

"What do you want?"

They hesitatingly looked from one to the other. Deacon Palmer at last gained sufficient audacity to say:

"Well, Parson, don't you think that you had better resign and let some young man take your place?"

"What is to become of me and my wife?"

“Well, don’t know.”

“Well, I know. We should have to beg or starve. We couldn’t go to the Mendon poorhouse, as I don’t own any real estate, and as minister I’ve been exempt from taxation; consequently, have no rights in the poorhouse. What have you to say to that, Deacon Palmer?”

“Well, that may be the situation, but I don’t see how we are to blame. We’ve always paid your salary, an’ ’tain’t our fault if you hain’t saved nothin’ fer a rainy day.”

“Saved!” exclaimed the parson bitterly. “Saved! One hundred and fifty dollars a year, and saved out of that? I shall not resign until I die,” he firmly added.

“Well,” said Deacon Palmer, “of course we can’t make you resign, but you won’t get no more pay, an’ you’ll have to move your stuff out of this house. We kinder thought you might be a leetle obstreperous, so we’re a-goin’ to proceed legally, an’ accordin’ to law, an’ we’ve got the papers from Squire Canfield.”

Then they handed the following notice to Parson Snodgrass:

“To Reverend Jonathan Snodgrass:

“Take notice and fail not.

“We, Joseph Palmer and Jacob Riker, deacons of the First Society of Mendon, and duly authorized so to do, by a vote of said Society, hereby forbid you to longer occupy the pulpit of the meeting-house of said Society or to preach any more in said meeting-house,

and to vacate at once the parsonage now occupied by you. Hereof fail not, or suffer the penalty of the law in such case made and provided.

“JOSEPH PALMER, Deacon.

“JACOB RIKER, Deacon.”

Parson Snodgrass took the paper, and very calmly said:

“Deacons, do you not know that next Sunday will be the fiftieth anniversary of the day that I became minister to this Society? I have looked forward to preaching a sermon on that day, and would ask the favor that you permit me to occupy my pulpit on that morning, and I shall thereafter obey your command and not preach again.”

To this the deacons assented, and at Parson Snodgrass' suggestion wrote at the bottom of their ukase the following:

“Next Sunday being the fiftieth anniversary of Parson Snodgrass' preaching, the above order is so far amended as to allow him to preach on the morning of that day.”

The parson bowed them out, closed the door, and stood for a moment shaking his fist at the innocent door. “I'll be even with you yet, though I ought to be thankful for the good turn you have unwittingly done me.”

He never bestowed so much care on any sermon before, except the one he had preached when ordained to the ministry, almost sixty years before. It was a long sermon. It ran up to eighteenthly.



## PARSON SNODGRASS TURNED OUT 323

The fiftieth anniversary came, and a more beautiful day could not have been. It was known by all Mendon that Parson Snodgrass had been turned out and was to preach for the last time on that day. The little meeting-house was packed full, for everybody thought that the old parson "might say something."

The early part of the sermon was a history of his connection with the Society, chronologically arranged. In feeling terms he spoke of many who had passed over the border, lovingly of a few who still remained. Many of his hearers he had baptized, joined most in marriage. Parson Snodgrass had been settled at Mendon fifty years, and there were not more than three or four of the original church-members left. He knew the family history of every member of his congregation, and he felt justified in not sparing them. He threw open their private closets, and not only exposed the skeletons therein, but dragged them out, and figuratively scattered them all over the floor. Among other things he said:

"There's Deacon Palmer. Seems to have forgotten that the Bible says that false weights are an abomination. His yard-sticks are not over thirty-five inches long. The measures for his molasses, oil, and spirits have the bottoms bulged in and the sides battered so that they are short about one pint in the gallon. His balance-weights are from one to two ounces light in the pound. The bottoms of his wooden measures are set up in the rim so that they are a cheat and a fraud. He has one set of measures for buying and another

for selling. There's sand in his sugar, stones in his coffee, and water in his rum.

'Then, there's Deacon Riker, the miller. He takes unlawful toll. 'Tis often said that the miller's hogs are always fat, and well they may be.

'There are others in the congregation to whom I might pay my respects, but time will not permit.

'I have been ordered by a committee of the Society not again to occupy this pulpit, from which I have preached God's word for fifty years. I shall obey. Before closing the service, I desire to read a paper which I think will be of interest to you:

'MENDON, May 12, 1788,  
and the twelfth year of the Independence of the  
United States.

'To Whom it May Concern:

'Be it known that according to a vote of the parish of Mendon, made this day at a meeting held for such purpose, that Abijah Snow and Adam Brown, deacons of the said parish, are hereby duly authorized to make such arrangements with Reverend Jonathan Snodgrass for preaching as they in their wisdom and by the grace of God may believe to be for the interest of our parish.

'Witness our hand and seal this 12th day of May, A.D. 1788.

'JAMES CRANDALL, Moderator.

'Attest: JONAS BROWN, Clerk.'

## PARSON SNODGRASS TURNED OUT 325

'Be it Known,

'To Whom it May Concern:

'That we, with good authority from the First Presbyterian Society of Mendon, make the following contract with Reverend Jonathan Snodgrass, to wit:

'That he, the Reverend Snodgrass, for and in consideration of the covenants and agreements herein contained, agrees to be the minister of the parish aforesaid for as long as he may live, unless he should voluntarily resign, in which case he forfeits all claims on the Society. The pay for such service as minister is to be as follows:

'For the first ten years he is to have fifty dollars per year. For the second ten years he is to have one hundred dollars per year. Also the use of the parsonage, and twenty acres of land on which the same is located. The Society is to keep the personage in as good repair as it now is. He, Jonathan Snodgrass, shall have for his own the cow and the shote now at the parsonage, also the hens.

'Also be it further provided, agreed and understood that the Society may by a majority vote of the members, dismiss the Reverend Jonathan Snodgrass from being their minister, but if he does not agree to such dismissal, the compensation above provided shall be continued as long as he may live.

'ABIJAH SNOW, Deacon.

'ADAM BROWN, Deacon.

'Attest: JONAS BROWN, Clerk.'

"The command by Deacons Palmer and Riker, that

I shall not longer be your minister will be obeyed by me, but as my contract with the Society provides for my support, I shall stay among you as long as I am permitted to live, and it is hardly necessary to say that it will afford me great pleasure to see my friends at the parsonage. Each one can judge for himself whether he is invited." The parson spread his arms, upturned his face, the congregation arose, and he pronounced the benediction.

Parson Snodgrass was about the only person who left the meeting-house. He came down from the pulpit and passed out of the little door that opened into the yard of the parsonage.

All were surprised, as the parson had not taken anyone into his confidence, and there was not a member of the Society left who had ever heard of the life contract. They gathered into little groups and talked the situation over, but no move toward any official action was taken. The surprise at learning of the life contract was so great that for the moment the sermon was forgotten, except by those who had been personally attacked. They, of course, felt very sore. It was, however, only a publication of what everybody knew.

After a few days' consideration, it was unanimously conceded that they must have a minister, that they could not afford to pay two salaries, therefore they must eat "humble pie," and ask old Parson Snodgrass to resume pastoral relations. Deacons Palmer and Riker called on him, and very humbly requested per-

mission to withdraw the dismissal, which, only the week before, they had so arrogantly thrust in his face. Much to their surprise, the old parson said:

“No, I guess that things are in as good shape as they can be.”

## CHAPTER LXII

### THE GOOSE

**W**E have to introduce to our readers one more character, who just looks in as we are about to end our story. The meeting-house was closed for two Sundays. Then arrangements were made with the Rev. Willis Parker, a young clergyman, fresh from the Divinity School, who came to Mendon on trial.

He procured board at the cottage of Mrs. Miles, and at first sight became infatuated with Mary, and the more he knew her the greater was his admiration. She accompanied him to and from meeting on Sunday and to the weekly meeting on Tuesday evening. So strongly was he drawn toward her that it was with great difficulty that he restrained himself from open expression. He did manage to control his tongue, but his eyes were not under subjection. He might as well have tried to prevent the steel from following the magnet.

Mary saw this flood-tide of love coming in, and would gladly have checked it had she known how to do so. Her efforts were as futile as were those of the old woman in the story, who tried to sweep back the ocean tide with her broom. In her anxiety she cried, "Richard, my Richard, why do you not come to my help?" There seemed but one thing to do, and that

was to avoid Willis Parker as much as she could. She was not a flirt, but a true woman, according to the best specimen that God had ever made, and the only sensations that Willis Parker's feelings toward her aroused were pain and pity. In her own estimation she was Richard Baxter's, joined to him by God. To be sure there had been no marriage ceremony nor had he even avowed his love, but her consciousness gave assurance that he belonged to her. Oh, why would he not speak!

Meanwhile, what were Richard's sentiments? He felt that she belonged to him, and at some convenient season they would be united by legal form. He had never given the subject serious thought. In his mind it did not demand it. It was all right, of course it was. Richard had noticed, and so had everyone else, the infatuation of Willis Parker for Mary, and while he would not acknowledge jealousy, it set him to thinking. He soliloquized:

"Why should we not get married? We are certainly old enough and I am able to support a wife. I suppose that she would want time to get ready. What queer notions women have about getting married."

While almost everybody else liked the young minister, Richard took a very strong dislike to him, absented himself from meeting, and quite unconsciously showed his dislike in many ways. If he had been asked why he did not like him, he might have answered, and thought that he did so truthfully,

“I do not love thee, Doctor Fell,  
The reason why I cannot tell,  
But this, forsooth, I know full well,  
I do not love thee, Doctor Fell.”

But everybody else knew why he disliked the young minister.

Mary was very unhappy, for she daily saw the river of Willis Parker's love rising, feared an overflow of its banks, and dreaded to give him the pain that she must, if he should speak. Her intense love for Richard enlightened her as to the shock that she must give Willis Parker if he ever told his love.

One evening Richard came to see her, and was much gratified to learn that the young minister had gone to make a sick call. As the evening was very pleasant, he suggested that they should take a stroll in the woods. Mary was very glad to go. They had been walking hand in hand, and silent, until they entered the pine forest, when Richard abruptly said:

“Mary, when shall we get married?”

She quickly and a little sharply replied:

“*We* get married? You never before have said anything about our getting married.”

“Haven't I? I supposed you knew that we were to marry.”

“Why, Richard, you never even said that you loved me.”

“Love you, Mary Miles! Why, I have always loved you. That is a self-evident proposition that requires no demonstration.”



"No demonstration, no working out of the problem, no expression! 'You have no right to rob a woman of her wooing.' Would you that we should walk side by side and not reach out one to the other the companion hand, not to clasp in fond embrace and feel the heart to heart throb responsive, not to seal our love with ecstatic kisses? If you expect this, Richard Baxter, you are a goose."

"Goose, am I? Well, I'll show you that I am more of a bear than a goose," as he swung around, clasped her unresisting in his arms, hugged and kissed her until she exclaimed, "Oh Richard, Richard, I'll take it all back. You are not a goose, you are nothing but a gander."

"Well, then, if we have settled our ornithological relation, let us sit down on this log. Mary, dear Mary, I have always loved you, and thousands of times I have tried to tell you, but there has been an uncontrollable something that has stopped me, a feeling perhaps that you didn't love me. I asked you so abruptly when we should be married, that I might shock out the truth. Isn't it queer, Mary, that we have lived so intimately and never found each other out until now. Why, Mary, ever since the day I first met you, you have been my good angel, my ideal, my inspiration. And now, my dear, perhaps you are ready to answer the question I asked you when we entered the forest."

"Yes, Richard, my Richard, I am ready. It shall be whenever you wish."



















