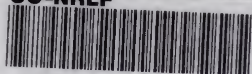
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JOHN BRENT.

BY

THEODORE WINTHROP,

AUTHOR OF "CEÇIL DREEME."

EIGHTH EDITION.

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JOHN BRENT.

CHAPTER I.

AURI SACRA FAMES.

I WRITE in the first person; but I shall not maunder about myself. I am in no sense the hero of this drama. Call me Chorus, if you please, — not Chorus merely observant and impassive; rather Chorus a sympathizing monitor and helper. Perhaps I gave a certain crude momentum to the movement of the play, when finer forces were ready to flag; but others bore the keen pangs, others took the great prizes, while I stood by to lift the maimed and cheer the victor.

It is a healthy, simple, broad-daylight story. No mystery in it. There is action enough, primeval action of the Homeric kind. Deeds of the heroic and chivalric times do not utterly disdain our day. There are men as ready to gallop for love and strike for love now, as in the age of Amadis.

Roughs and brutes, as well as gentlemen, take their places in this drama. None of the characters have scruples or qualms. They act according to their laws, and are scourged or crowned, as their laws suit Nature's or not.

To me these adventures were episode; to my friend, the hero, the very substance of life.

But enough backing and filling. Enter Richard Wade — myself — as Chorus.

A few years ago I was working a gold-quartz mine in California.

It was a worthless mine, under the conditions of that time. I had been dragged into it by the shifts and needs of California life. Destiny probably meant to teach me patience and self-possession in difficulty. So Destiny thrust me into a bitter bad business of QUARTZ MINING.

If I had had countless dollars of capital to work my mine, or quicksilver for amalgamation as near and plenty as the snow on the Sierra Nevada, I might have done well enough.

As it was, I got but certain pennyworths of gold to a most intolerable quantity of quartz. The precious metal was to the brute mineral in the proportion of perhaps a hundred pin-heads to the ton. My partners, down in San Francisco, wrote to me: "Only find twice as many pin-heads, and our fortune is made." So thought

those ardent fellows, fancying that gold would go up and labor go down, — that presently I would strike a vein where the mineral would show yellow threads and yellow dots, perhaps even yellow knobs, in the crevices, instead of empty crannies which Nature had prepared for monetary deposits and forgotten to fill.

So thought the fellows in San Francisco. They had been speculating in beef, bread-stuffs, city lots, Rincon Point, wharf property, mission lands, Mexican titles, Sacramento boats, politics, Oregon lumber. They had been burnt out, they had been cleaned out, they had been drowned out. They depended upon me and the quartz mine to set them up again. So there was a small, steady stream of money flowing up from San Francisco from the depleted coffers of those sanguine partners, flowing into our mine, and sinking there, together with my labor and my life.

Our ore — the San Francisco partners liked to keep up the complimentary fiction of calling it ore — was pretty stuff for an amateur mineralogical cabinet. A professor would have exhibited specimens to a lecture-room with delight. There never was any quartz where the matrix was better defined, better shaped to hold the gold that was not in it. For Macadam, what royal material it would have been! Park roads made of it would have glittered gayer than marble. How brilliant-

ly paths covered with its creamy-white fragments would have meandered through green grass!

If I had had no fond expectations of these shining white and yellow stones, I should have deemed their mass useful and ornamental enough, — useful skeleton material to help hold the world together, ornamental when it lay in the sun and sparkled. But this laughing sparkle had something of a sneer in it. The stuff knew that it had humbugged me. Let a man or a woman be victor over man or woman, and the chances are that generosity will suppress the pæan. But matter is so often insulted and disdained, that when it triumphs over mind it is merciless.

Yes; my quartz had humbugged me. Or rather — let me not be unjust even to undefended stone, not rich enough to pay an advocate — I had humbugged myself with false hopes. I have since ascertained that my experience is not singular. Other men have had false hopes of other things than quartz mines. Perhaps it was to teach me this that the experience came. Having had my lesson, I am properly cool and patient now when I see other people suffering in the same way, — whether they dig for gold, fame, or bliss; digging for the bread of their life, and getting only a stone. The quartz was honest enough as quartz. It was my own fault that I looked for gold-bearing quartz, and so

found it bogus and a delusion. What right have we to demand the noble from the ignoble!

I used sometimes fairly to shake my fist at my handsome pile of mineral, my bullionless pockets of ore. There was gold in the quartz; there are pearls in the Jersey muds; there are plums in boarding-house puddings; there are sixpences in the straw of Broadway omnibuses.

Steady disappointment, by and by, informs a man that he is in the wrong place. All work, no play, no pay, is a hint to work elsewhere. But men must dig in the wrong spots to learn where these are, and so narrow into the right spot at last. Every man, it seems, must waste so much life. Every man must have so much imprisonment to teach him limits and fit him for freedom.

Nearly enough, however of *Miei Prigioni*. A word or two of my companions in jail. A hard lot they were, my neighbors within twenty miles! Jail-birds, some of them, of the worst kind. It was as well, perhaps, that my digging did not make money, and theirs did. They would not have scrupled to bag my gold and butcher me. But they were not all ruffians; some were only barbarians.

PIKES, most of these latter. America is manufacturing several new types of men. The Pike is one of the newest. He is a bastard

pioneer. With one hand he clutches the pioneer vices; with the other he beckons forward the vices of civilization. It is hard to understand how a man can have so little virtue in so long a body, unless the shakes are foes to virtue in the soul, as they are to beauty in the face.

He is a terrible shock, this unlucky Pike, to the hope that the new race on the new continent is to be a handsome race. I lose that faith, which the people about me now have nourished, when I recall the Pike. He is hung together, not put together. He inserts his lank fathom of a man into a suit of molasses-colored homespun. Frowzy and husky is the hair Nature crowns him with; frowzy and stubby the beard. He shambles in his walk. He drawls in his talk. He drinks whiskey by the tank. His oaths are to his words as Falstaff's sack to his bread. I have seen Maltese beggars, Arab camel-drivers, Dominican friars, New York Aldermen, Digger Indians; the foulest, frowziest creatures I have ever seen are thorough-bred Pikes. The most vigorous of them leave their native landscape of cotton-wood and sand-bars along the yellow ditches of the West, and emigrate with a wagon-load of pork and pork-fed progeny across the plains to California. There the miasms are roasted out of them; the shakes warmed away; they will grow

rich, and possibly mellow, in the third or fourth generation. They had not done so in my time. I lived among them *ad nauseam*, month after month, and I take this opportunity to pay them parting compliments.

I went on toiling, day after day, week after week, two good years of my life, over that miserable mine. Nothing came of it. I was growing poorer with every ton we dug, poorer with every pound we crushed. In a few months more, I should have spent my last dollar and have gone to day labor, perhaps among the Pikes. The turnpike stuff refused to change into gold. I saw, of course, that something must be done. What, I did not know. I was in that state when one needs an influence without himself to take him by the hand gently, by the shoulder forcibly, by the hair roughly, or even by the nose insultingly, and drag him off into a new region.

The influence came. Bad news reached me. My only sister, a widow, my only near relative, died, leaving two young children to my care. It was strange how this sorrow made the annoyance and weariness of my life naught! How this responsibility cheered me! My life seemed no longer lonely and purposeless. Point was given to all my intentions at once. I must return home to New York. Further plans when I am there! But now for home! If any one wanted

my quartz mine, he might have it. I could not pack it in my saddle-bags to present to a college cabinet of mineralogy.

I determined, as time did not absolutely press, to ride home across the plains. It is a grand journey. Two thousand miles, or so, on horseback. Mountains, deserts, prairies, rivers, Mormons, Indians, buffalo, — adventures without number in prospect. A hearty campaign, and no carpet knighthood about it.

It was late August. I began my preparations at once.

CHAPTER II.

GERRIAN'S RANCH.

It happened that, on a journey, early in the same summer, some twenty miles from my mine, I had come upon a band of horses feeding on the prairie. They cantered off as I went riding down the yellow slope, and then, halting just out of lasso reach, stopped to reconnoitre me. Animals are always eager to observe man. Perhaps they want ideas against the time of their promotion to humanity, so that they need not be awkward, and introduce quadruped habits into biped circles.

The mass of the herd inspected me stupidly enough. Man to them was power, and nothing else,—a lasso-throwing machine,—something that put cruel bits into equine mouths, got on equine backs, and forced equine legs to gallop until they were stiff. Man was therefore something to admire, but to avoid,—so these horses seemed to think; and if they had known man as brother man alone knows him, perhaps their opinion would have been confirmed.

One horse, however, among them, had more courage, or more curiosity, or more faith. He withdrew from the gregarious commonalty, — the haughty aristocrat! — and approached me, circling about, as if he felt a certain centripetal influence, — as if he knew himself a higher being than his mustang comrades, — nearer to man, and willing to offer him his friendship. He and I divided the attention of the herd. He seemed to be, not their leader, but rather one who disdained leadership. *Facile princeps!* He was too far above the noblest of the herd to care for their unexciting society.

I slipped quietly down from my little Mexican caballo, and, tethering him to a bush with the lariat, stood watching the splendid motions of this free steed of the prairie.

He was an American horse, — so they distinguish in California one brought from the old States, — A SUPERB YOUNG STALLION, PERFECTLY BLACK, WITHOUT MARK. It was magnificent to see him, as he circled about me, fire in his eye, pride in his nostril, tail flying like a banner, power and grace from tip to tip. No one would ever mount him, or ride him, unless it was his royal pleasure. He was conscious of his representative position, and showed his paces handsomely. It is the business of all beautiful things to exhibit.

Imagine the scene. A little hollow in the prairie, forming a perfect amphitheatre; the yellow grass and wild oats grazed short; a herd of horses staring from the slope, myself standing in the middle, like the ring-master in a circus, and this wonderful horse performing at his own free will. He trotted powerfully, he galloped gracefully, he thundered at full speed, he lifted his fore-legs to welcome, he flung out his hind-legs to repel, he leaped as if he were springing over bayonets, he pranced and curvetted as if he were the pretty plaything of a girl; finally, when he had amused himself and delighted me sufficiently, he trotted up and snuffed about me, just out of reach.

A horse knows a friend by instinct. So does a man. But a man, vain creature! is willing to repel instinct and trust intellect, and so suffers from the attempt to revise his first impressions, which, if he is healthy, are infallible.

The black, instinctively knowing me for a friend, came forward and made the best speech he could of welcome,—a neigh and no more. Then, feeling a disappointment that his compliment could not be more melodiously or gracefully turned, he approached nearer, and, not without shying and starts, of which I took no notice, at last licked my hand, put his head upon my shoulder, suffered me to put my arm

round his neck, and in fact lavished upon me every mark of confidence. We were growing fast friends, when I heard a sound of coming hoofs. The black tore away with a snort, and galloped off with the herd after him. A Mexican vaquero dashed down the slope in pursuit. I hailed him.

"A quien es ese caballo — el negrito?"

"Aquel diablo! es del Señor Gerrian." And he sped on.

I knew Gerrian. He was a Pike of the better class. He had found his way early to California, bought a mission farm, and established himself as a ranchero. His herds, droves, and flocks darkened the hills. The name reminded me of the giant Geryon of old. Were I an unscrupulous Hercules, free to pillage and name it protection, I would certainly drive off Gerrian's herds for the sake of that black horse. So I thought, as I watched them gallop away.

It chanced that, when I was making my arrangements to start for home, business took me within a mile of Gerrian's ranch. I remembered my interview with the black. It occurred to me that I would ride down and ask the ranchero to sell me his horse for my journey.

I found Gerrian, a lank, wire-drawn man, burnt almost Mexican color, lounging in the shade of his adobe house. I told him my business in a word.

"No bueno, stranger!" said he.

"Why not? Do you want to keep the horse."

"No, not partickler. Thar ain't a better stallion nor him this side the South Pass; but I can't do nothing with him no more 'n yer can with a steamboat when the cap'n says, 'Beat or bust!' He 's a black devil, ef thar ever was a devil into a horse's hide. Somebody 's tried to break him down when he was a colt, an now he wont stan' nobody goan near him."

"Sell him to me, and I 'll try him with kindness."

"No, stranger. I've tuk a middlin' shine to you from the way you got off that Chinaman them Pikes was goan to hang fur stealing the mule what he had n't stoled. I've tuk a middlin' kind er shine to you, and I don't want to see yer neck broke, long er me. That thar black 'll shut up the hinge in yer neck so tight that yer 'll never look up to ther top of a red-wood again. Allowin' you haint got an old ox-yoke into yer fur backbone, yer 'll keep off that thar black kettrypid, till the Injins tie yer on, and motion yer to let him slide or be shot."

"My backbone is pretty stiff," said I; "I will risk my neck."

"The Greasers is some on hosses, you 'll give in, I reckon. Well, thar ain't a Greaser on my ranch that 'll put leg over that thar streak er

four-legged lightning; no, not if yer 'd chain off for him a claim six squar leagues in the raal old Garden of Paradise, an stock it with ther best gang er bullocks this side er Santer Fee."

"But I 'm not a Mexican; I 'm the stiffest kind of Yankee. I don't give in to horse or man. Besides, if he throws me and breaks my neck I get my claim in Paradise at once."

"Well, stranger, you 've drawed yer bead on that thar black, as anybody can see. An ef a man 's drawed his bead, thar ain't no use tellin' him to pint off."

"No. If you 'll sell, I 'll buy."

"Well, if you wunt go fur to ask me to throw in a coffin to boot, praps we ken scare up a trade. How much do you own in the Foolonner Mine?"

I have forgotten to speak of my mine by its title. A certain Pike named Pegrum, Colonel Pegrum, a pompous Pike from Pike County, Missouri, had once owned the mine. The Spaniards, finding the syllables Pegrum a harsh morsel, spoke of the colonel, as they might of any stranger, as Don Fulano, — as we should say, "John Smith." It grew to be a nickname, and finally Pegrum, taking his donship as a title of honor, had procured an act of the legislature dubbing him formally Don Fulano Pegrum. As such he is known, laughed at, become a public

man and probable Democratic Governor of California. From him our quartz cavern had taken its name.

I told Gerrian that I owned one quarter of the Don Fulano Mine.

"Then you 're jess one quarter richer 'n ef you owned haff, and jess three quarters richer 'n ef you owned the hull kit and boodle of it."

"You are right," said I. I knew it by bitter heart.

"Well stranger, less see ef we can't banter fur a trade. I 've got a hoss that ken kill ayry man. That 's so; ain't it?"

"You say so."

"You 've got a mine, that 'll break ayry man, short pocket or long pocket. That 's so; ain't it?"

"No doubt of that."

"Well now; my curwolyow 's got grit into him, and so 's that thar pile er quartz er yourn got gold into it. But you cant git the slugs out er your mineral; and I can get the kicks a blasted sight thicker 'n anything softer out er my animal. Here 's horse agin mine, — which 'd yer rether hev, allowin' 't was toss up and win."

"Horse!" said I. "I don't know how bad he is, and I do know that the mine is worse than nothing to me."

"Lookerhere, stranger! You 're goan home

across lots. You want a horse. I 'm goan to stop here. I 'd jess as lives gamble off a hundred or two head o' bullocks on that Foolonner Mine. You can't find ayry man round here to buy out your interest in that thar heap er stun an the hole it cum out of. It 'll cost you more 'n the hul 's wuth ef you go down to San Frisco and wait tell some fool comes along what 's got gold he wants to buy quartz with. Take time now, I 'm goan to make yer a fair banter."

"Well, make it."

"I stump you to a clean swap. My hoss agin your mine."

"Done," said I.

"I allowed you 'd do it. This here is one er them swaps, when both sides gits stuck. I git the Foolonner Mine, what I can't make go, and you 'll be a fool on a crittur what 'll go a heap more 'n you 'll want. Haw! haw!"

And Gerrian laughed a Pike's laugh at his pun. It was a laugh that had been stunted in its childhood by the fever and ague, and so had grown up husk without heart.

"Have the black caught," said I, "and we 'll clinch the bargain at once."

There was a Mexican vaquero slouching about. Gerrian called to him.

"O Hozay! kesty Sinyaw cumprader curwol-

yow nigereeto. Wamos addelanty! Corral curwolyose toethoso!"

Pike Spanish that! If the Mexicans choose to understand it, why should Pikes study Castilian? But we must keep a sharp look-out on the new words that come to us from California, else our new language will be full of foundlings with no traceable parentage. We should beware of heaping up problems for the lexicographers of the twentieth century: they ought to be free for harmonizing the universal language, half-Teutonic, half-Romanic, with little touches of Mandingo and Mandan.

The bukkarer, as Gerrian's Spanish entitled Hozay, comprehended enough of the order to know that he was to drive up the horses. He gave me a Mexican's sulky stare, muttered a caramba at my rashness, and lounged off, first taking a lasso from its peg in the court.

"Come in, stranger," said Gerrian, "before we start, and take a drink of some of this here Mission Dolorous wine."

"How does that go down?" said he, pouring out golden juices into a cracked tumbler.

It was the very essence of California sunshine, — sherry with a richness that no sherry ever had, — a somewhat fiery beverage, but without any harshness or crudity. Age would better it, as age betters the work of a young genius; but still

there is something in the youth we would not willingly resign.

"Very fine," said I; "it is romantic old Spain, with ardent young America interfused."

"Some likes it," says Gerrian; "but taint like good old Argee to me. I can't git nothin' as sweet as the taste of yaller corn into sperit. But I reckon thar ken be stuff made out er grapes what 'll make all owdoors stan' round. This yer wuz made by the priests. What ken you spect of priests? They ain't more 'n haff men nohow. I 'm goan to plant a wineyard er my own, and 'fore you cum out to buy another quartz mine, I 'll hev some of ther strychnine what 'll wax Burbon County 's much 's our inyans here ken wax them low-lived smellers what they grow to old Pike."

CHAPTER III.

DON FULANO.

Hector of Troy, Homer's Hector, was my first hero in literature. Not because he loved his wife and she him, as I fancy that noble wives and husbands love in the times of trial now; but simply because he was Hippodamos, one that could master the horse.

As soon as I knew Hector, I began to emulate him. My boyish experiments were on donkeys, and failed. "I could n't wallop 'em. O no, no!" That was my difficulty. Had I but met an innocent and docile donkey in his downy years! Alas! only the perverted donkey, bristly and incorrigible, came under my tutorship. I was too humane to give him stick enough, and so he mastered me.

Horses I learned to govern by the law of love. The relation of friendship once established between man and horse, there is no trouble. A centaur is created. The man wills whither; the horse, at the will of his better half, does his best to go thither. I became, very early, Hippodamos,

not by force, but by kindness. All lower beings, — fiendish beings apart, — unless spoilt by treachery, seek the society of the higher; as man, by nature, loves God. Horses will do all they know for men, if man will only let them. All they need is a slight hint to help their silly willing brains, and they dash with ardor at their business of galloping a mile a minute, or twenty miles an hour, or of leaping a gully, or pulling tonnage. They put so much reckless, break-neck frenzy in their attempt to please and obey the royal personage on their back, that he needs to be brave indeed to go thoroughly with them.

The finer the horse, the more delicate the magnetism between him and man. Knight and his steed have an affinity for each other. I fancied that Gerrian's black, after our mutual friendly recognition on the prairie, would like me better as our intimacy grew.

After hobnobbing with cracked tumblers of the Mission Dolores wine, Gerrian and I mounted our mustangs and rode toward the corral.

All about on the broad slopes, the ranchero's countless cattle were feeding. It was a patriarchal scene. The local patriarch, in a red flannel shirt purpled by sun and shower, in old buckskin breeches with the fringe worn away and decimated along its files whenever a thong was wanted, in red-topped boots with the

maker's name, Abel Cushing, Lynn, Mass., stamped in gilt letters on the red, — in such costume the local patriarch hardly recalled those turbaned and white-robed sheiks of yore, Abraham and his Isaac. But he represented the same period of history modernized, and the same type of man Americanized; and I have no doubt his posterity will turn out better than Abraham's, and scorn peddling, be it Austrian loans or "ole clo'."

The cattle scampered away from us, as we rode, hardly less wild than the buffaloes on the Platte. Whenever we rose on the crest of a hillock, we could see several thousands of the little fierce bullocks, — some rolling away in flight, in a black breadth, like a shaken carpet; some standing in little groups, like field officers at a review, watching the movements as squadron after squadron came and went over the scene; some, as arbitrators and spectators, surrounding a pair of champion bulls butting and bellowing in some amphitheatre among the swells of land.

"I tell you what it is, stranger," said Gerrian, halting and looking proudly over the landscape, "I would n't swop my place with General Price at the White House."

"I should think not," said I; "bullocks are better company than office-seekers."

It was a grand, simple scene. All open country, north and south, as far as the eye could see. Eastward rose the noble blue barrier of the Sierra, with here and there a field, a slope, a spot, or a pinnacle of the snow that names it Nevada. A landscape of larger feeling than any we can show in the old States, on the tame side of the continent. Those rigorous mountain outlines on the near horizon utterly dwarf all our wooded hills, Alleghanies, Greens, Whites. A race trained within sight of such loftiness of nature must needs be a loftier race than any this land has yet known. Put cheap types of mankind within the influence of the sublimities, and they are cowed; but the great-hearted expand with vaster visions. A great snow-peak, like one of the Tacomas of Oregon, is a terrible monitor over a land; but it is also a benignant sovereign, a presence, calm, solemn, yet not without a cheering and jubilant splendor. A range of sharp, peremptory mountains, like the Sierra Nevada, insists upon taking thought away from the grovelling flats where men do their grubbing for the bread of daily life, and up to the master heights, whither in all ages seers have gone to be nearer mystery and God.

It was late August. All the tall grass and wild oats and barley, over lift, level, and hollow, were ripe yellow or warm brown, — a golden mantle

over the golden soil. There were but two colors in the simple, broad picture, — clear, deep, scintillating blue in the sky, melting blue in the mountains, and all the earth a golden surging sea.

"It 's a bigger country 'n old Pike or Missourer anywhar," says Gerrian, giving his 'curwolyow' the spur. "I 'd ruther hev this, even ef the shakes wuz here instidd of thar, and havin' their grab reglar twicet a day all the year round."

As we rode on, our ponies half hidden in the dry, rustling grass of a hollow, a tramp of hoofs came to us with the wind, — a thrilling sound! with something free and vigorous in it that the charge of trained squadrons never has.

"Thar they come!" cried Gerrian; "thar 's a rigiment wuth seeing. They can't show you a sight like that to the old States."

"No indeed. The best thing to be hoped there in the way of stampede is when a horse kicks through a dash-board, kills a coachman, shatters a carriage, dissipates a load of women and children, and goes tearing down a turnpike, with 'sold to an omnibus' awaiting him at the end of his run-away!"

We halted to pass the coming army of riderless steeds in review.

There they came! Gerrian's whole band of horses in full career! First, their heads suddenly

lifted above a crest of the prairie; then they burst over, like the foam and spray of a black, stormy wave when a blast strikes it, and wildly swept by us with manes and tails flaring in the wind. It was magnificent. My heart of a horseman leaped in my breast. "Hurrah!" I cried.

"Hurrah 't is!" said Gerrian.

The herd dashed by in a huddle, making for the corral.

Just behind, aloof from the rush and scamper of his less noble brethren, came the black, my purchase, my old friend.

"Ef you ever ride or back that curwolyow," says Gerrian, "I'll eat a six-shooter, loaded and capped."

"You 'd better begin, then, at once," rejoined I, "whetting your teeth on Derringers. I mean to ride him, and you shall be by when I do it."

It was grand to see a horse that understood and respected himself so perfectly. One, too, that meant the world should know that he was the very chiefest chief of his race, proud with the blood of a thousand kings. How masterly he looked! How untamably he stepped! The herd was galloping furiously. He disdained to break into a gallop. He trotted after, a hundred feet behind the hindmost, with large and liberal action. And even at this half speed easily overtaking his slower comrades, he from time to time

paused, bounded in the air, tossed his head, flung out his legs, and then strode on again, writhing all over with suppressed power.

There was not a white spot upon him, except where a flake of foam from his indignant nostril had caught upon his flank. A thorough-bred horse, with the perfect tail and silky mane of a noble race. His coat glistened, as if the best groom in England had just given him the final touches of his toilette for a canter in Rotten Row. But it seems a sin to compare such a free rover of the prairie with any less favored brother, who needs a groom, and has felt a currycomb.

Hard after the riderless horses came José, the vaquero, on a fast mustang. As he rode, he whirled his lasso with easy turn of the wrist.

The black, trotting still, and halting still to curvet and caracole, turned back his head contemptuously at his pursuer. "Mexicans may chase their own ponies and break their spirit by brutality; but an American horse is no more to be touched by a Mexican than an American man. Bah! make your cast! Dont trifle with your lasso! I challenge you. Jerk away, Señor Greaser! I give you as fair a chance as you could wish."

So the black seemed to say, with his provoking backward glance and his whinny of disdain.

José took the hint. He dug cruel spurs into

his horse. The mustang leaped forward. The black gave a tearing bound and quickened his pace, but still waited the will of his pursuer.

They were just upon us, chased and chaser, thundering down the slope, when the vaquero, checking his wrist at the turn, flung his lasso straight as an arrow for the black's head.

I could hear the hide rope sing through the summer air, for a moment breezeless.

Will he be taken! Will horse or man be victor!

The loop of the lasso opened like a hoop. It hung poised for one instant a few feet before the horse's head, vibrating in the air, keeping its circle perfect, waiting for the vaquero's pull to tighten about that proud neck and those swelling shoulders.

Hurrah!

THROUGH IT WENT THE BLACK.

With one brave bound he dashed through the open loop. He touched only to spurn its vain assault with his hindmost hoof.

"Hurrah!" I cried.

"Hurrah! 't is," shouted Gerrian.

José dragged in his spurned lasso.

The black, with elated head, and tail waving like a banner, sprang forward, closed in with the caballada; they parted for his passage, he took his leadership, and presently was lost with his suite over the swells of the prairie.

"Mucho malicho!" cried Gerrian to José, not knowing that his Californian Spanish was interpreting Hamlet. "He ought to hev druv 'em straight to corral. But I don't feel so sharp set on lettin' you hev that black after that shine. Reg'lar circus, only thar never was no sich seen in no circus! You 'll never ride him, allowin' he 's cotched, no more 'n you 'll ride a alligator."

Meantime, loping on, we had come in sight of the corral. There, to our great surprise, the whole band of horses had voluntarily entered. They were putting their heads together as the manner of social horses is, and going through kissing manœuvres in little knots, which presently were broken up by the heels of some ill-mannered or jealous brother. They were very probably discussing the black's act of horsemanship, as men after the ballet discuss the first *entrechat* of the danseuse.

We rode up and fastened our horses. The black was within the corral, pawing the ground, neighing, and whinnying. His companions kept at a respectful distance.

"Don't send in José!" said I to Gerrian. "Only let him keep off the horses, so that I shall not be kicked, and I will try my hand at the black alone."

"I 'll hev 'em all turned out except that black devil, and then you ken go in and take your own

resk with him. Akkee José!" continued the ranchero, "fwarer toethose! Dàyher hel diablo!"

José drove the herd out of the staked enclosure. The black showed no special disposition to follow. He trotted about at his ease, snuffing at the stakes and bars.

I entered alone. Presently he began to repeat the scene of our first meeting on the prairie. It was not many minutes before we were good friends. He would bear my caresses and my arm about his neck, and that was all for an hour. At last, after a good hour's work, I persuaded him to accept a halter. Then by gentle seductions I induced him to start and accompany me homeward.

Gerrian and the Mexican looked on in great wonderment.

"Praps that is the best way," said the modern patriarch, "ef a man has got patience. Looker here, stranger, ain't you a terrible fellow among women?"

I confessed my want of experience.

"Well, you will be when your time comes. I allowed from seeing you handle that thar hoss, that you had got your hand in on women, — they is the wust devils to tame I ever seed."

I had made my arrangements to start about the first of September, with the Sacramento mail-

riders, a brace of jolly dogs, brave fellows, who, with their scalps as well secured as might be, ran the gauntlet every alternate month to Salt Lake. That was long before the days of coaches. No pony express was dreamed of. A trip across the plains, without escort or caravan, had still some elements of heroism, if it have not to-day.

Meantime one of my ardent partners from San Francisco arrived to take my place at the mine.

"I don't think that quartz looks quite so goldy as it did at a distance," said he.

"Well," said old Gerrian, who had come over to take possession of his share of our bargain; "it *is* whiter 'n it 's yaller. It *does* look about as bad off fur slugs as the cellar of an Indiana bank. But I b'leeve in luck, and luck is olluz comin' at me with its head down and both eyes shet. I 'm goan to shove bullocks down this here hole, or the price of bullocks, until I make it pay."

And it is a fact, that by the aid of Gerrian's capital, and improved modern machinery, after a long struggle, the Fulano mine has begun to yield a sober, quiet profit.

My wooing of the black occupied all my leisure during my last few days. Every day, a circle of Pikes collected to see my management. I hope they took lessons in the law of kindness. The

horse was well known throughout the country, and my bargain with Gerrian was noised abroad.

The black would tolerate no one but me. With me he established as close a brotherhood as can be between man and beast. He gave me to understand, by playful protest, that it was only by his good pleasure that I was permitted on his back, and that he endured saddle and bridle ; as to spur or whip, they were not thought of by either. He did not obey, but consented. I exercised no control. We were of one mind. We became a Centaur. I loved that horse as I have loved nothing else yet, except the other personages with whom and for whom he acted in this history.

I named him Don Fulano.

I had put my mine into him. He represented to me the whole visible, tangible result of two long, workaday years, dragged out in that dreary spot among the Pikes, with nothing in view except barren hill-sides ravaged by mines, and the unbeautiful shanties of miners as rough as the landscape.

Don Fulano, a horse that would not sell, was my profit for the sternest and roughest work of my life! I looked at him, and looked at the mine, that pile of pretty pebbles, that pile of bogus ore, and I did not regret my bargain. I never have regretted it. "My kingdom for a

horse,"—so much of a kingdom as I had, I had given.

But was that all I had gained,—an unsalable horse for two years' work? All,—unless, perhaps, I conclude to calculate the incalculable; unless I estimate certain moral results I had grasped, and have succeeded in keeping; unless I determine to value patience, purpose, and pluck by dollars and cents. However, I have said enough of myself, and my share in the preparations for the work of my story.

Retire, then, Richard Wade, and enter the real hero of the tale.

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN BRENT.

A MAN who does not love luxury is merely an incomplete man, or, if he prefers, an ignoramus. A man who cannot dispense with luxury, and who does not love hard fare, hard bed, hard travel, and all manner of robust, vigorous, tense work, is a weakling and a soft. Sybaris is a pretty town, rose-leaves are a delicate mattrass, Lydian measures are dulcet to soul and body: also, the wilderness is "no mean city"; hemlock or heather for couch, brocken for curtain, are not cruelty; prairie gales are a brave lullaby for adults.

Simple furniture and simple fare a campaigner needs for the plains, — for chamber furniture, a pair of blankets; for kitchen furniture, a frying-pan and a coffee-pot; for table furniture, a tin mug and his bowie-knife: Sybaris adds a tin plate, a spoon, and even a fork. The list of provisions is as short, — pork, flour, and coffee; that is all, unless Sybaris should indulge in a modicum of tea, a dose or two of sugar, and a vial of vinegar for holidays.

I had several days for preparation, until my companions, the mail-riders, should arrive. One morning I was busy making up my packs of such luxuries as I have mentioned for the journey, when I heard the clatter of horses' feet, and observed a stranger approach and ride up to the door of my shanty. He was mounted upon a powerful iron-gray horse, and drove a pack mule and an Indian pony.

My name was on an elaborately painted shingle over the door. It was my own handiwork, and quite a lion in that region. I felt, whenever I inspected that bit of high art, that, fail or win at the mine, I had a resource. Indeed, my Pike neighbors seemed to consider that I was unjustifiably burying my artistic talents. Many a not unseemly octagonal slug, with Moffatt & Co.'s imprimatur of value, had been offered me if I would paint up some miner's hell, as "The True Paradise," or "The Shades and Caffy de Paris."

The new-comer read my autograph on the shingle, looked about, caught sight of me at work in the hot shade, dismounted, fastened his horses, and came toward me. It was not the fashion in California, at that time, to volunteer civility or acquaintance. Men had to announce themselves, and prove their claims. I sat where I was, and surveyed the stranger.

"The Adonis of the copper-skins!" I said to myself. "This is the 'Young Eagle,' or the 'Sucking Dove,' or the 'Maiden's Bane,' or some other great chief of the cleanest Indian tribe on the continent. A beautiful youth! O Fenimore, why are you dead! There are a dozen romances in one look of that young brave. One chapter might be written on his fringed buckskin shirt; one on his equally fringed leggings, with their stripe of porcupine-quills; and one short chapter on his moccasons, with their scarlet cloth instep-piece, and his cap of otter fur decked with an eagle's feather. What a poem the fellow is! I wish I was an Indian myself for such a companion; or, better, a squaw, to be made love to by him."

As he approached, I perceived that he was not copper, but bronze. A pale-face certainly! That is, a pale-face tinged by the brazen sun of a California summer. Not less handsome, however, as a Saxon, than an Indian brave. As soon as I identified him as one of my own race, I began to fancy I had seen him before.

"If he were but shaved and clipped, black-coated, booted, gloved, hatted with a shiny cylinder, disarmed of his dangerous looking arsenal, and armed with a plaything of a cane,—in short, if he were metamorphosed from a knight-errant into a carpet-knight, changed from a smooth

rough into a smooth smooth, — seems to me I should know him, or know that I had known him once."

He came up, laid his hand familiarly on my arm, and said, "What, Wade? Don't you remember me? John Brent."

"I hear your voice. I begin to see you now. Hurrah!"

"How was it I did not recognize you," said I, after a fraternal greeting.

"Ten years have presented me with this for a disguise," said he, giving his moustache a twirl. "Ten years of experience have taken all the girl out of me."

"What have you been doing these ten years, since College, O many-sided man?"

"Grinding my sides against the Adamant, every one."

"Has your diamond begun to see light, and shine?"

"The polishing-dust dims it still."

"How have you found life, kind or cruel?"

"Certainly not kind, hardly cruel, unless indifference is cruelty."

"But indifference, want of sympathy, must have been a positive relief after the aggressive cruelty of your younger days."

"And what have you been doing, Richard?"

"Everything that Yankees do, — digging last."

"That has been my business, too, as well as polishing."

"The old work, I suppose, to root out lies and plant in truth."

"That same slow task. Tunnelling too, to find my way out of the prison of doubt into the freedom of faith."

"You are out, then, at last. Happy and at peace, I hope."

"At peace, hardly happy. How can such a lonely fellow be happy?"

"We are peers in bereavement now. My family are all gone, except two little children of my sister."

"Not quite peers. You remember your relatives tenderly. I have no such comfort."

Odd talk this may seem, to hold with an old friend. Ten years apart! We ought to have met in merrier mood. We might, if we had parted with happy memories. But it was not so. Youth had been a harsh season to Brent. If Fate destines a man to teach, she compels him to learn,—bitter lessons, too, whether he will or no. Brent was a man of genius. All experience, therefore, piled itself upon him. He must learn the immortal consolations by probing all suffering himself.

Brent's story is a short one or a long one. It can be told in a page, or in a score of volumes.

We had met fourteen years before in the same pew of Berkeley College Chapel, grammars by our side and tutors before us, two well-crammed candidates for the Freshman Class. Brent was a delicate, beautiful, dreamy boy. My counterpart. I was plain prose, and needed the poetic element. We became friends. I was steady; he was erratic. I was calm; he was passionate. I was reasonably happy; he was totally miserable. For good cause.

The cause was this; and it has broken weaker hearts than Brent's. His heart was made of stuff that does not know how to break.

Dr. Swerger was the cause of Brent's misery. The Reverend Dr. Swerger was a brutal man. One who believes that God is vengeance naturally imitates his God, and does not better his model.

Swerger was Brent's step-father. Mrs. Brent was pretty, silly, rich, and a widow. Swerger wanted his wife pretty, and not too wise; and that she was rich balanced, perhaps a little more than balanced, the slight objection of widowhood.

Swerger naturally hated his step-son. One intuition of Brent's was worth all the thoughts of Swerger's life-time. A clergyman who starts with believing in hells, devils, original sin, and such crudities, can never be anything in the nine-

teenth century but a tyrant or a nuisance, if he has any logic, as fortunately few of such misbelievers have. Swerger had logic. So had the boy Brent,— the logic of a true, pure, loving heart. He could not stand Swerger's coming into his dead father's house and deluding his mother with a black fanaticism.

So Swerger gave him to understand that he was a child of hell. He won his wife to shrink from her son. Between them they lacerated the boy. He was a brilliant fellow, quite the king of us all. But he worked under a cloud. He could not get at any better religion than Swerger's; and perhaps there was none better — or much better — to be had at that time.

One day matters came to a quarrel. Swerger cursed his step-son; of course not in the same terms the sailors used on Long Wharf, but with no better spirit. The mother, cowed by her husband, backed him, and abandoned the boy. They drove him out of the house, to go where he would. He came to me. I gave him half my quarters, and tried to cheer him. No use. This bitter wrong to his love to God and to man almost crushed him. He brooded and despaired. He began to fancy himself the lost soul Swerger had called him. I saw that he would die or go mad; or, if he had strength enough to react, it would be toward a hapless rebellion against con-

ventional laws, and so make his blight ruin. I hurried him off to Europe, for change of scene. That was ten years ago, and I had not seen him since. I knew, however, that his mother was visited by compunctions; that she wished to be reconciled to her son; that Swerger refused, and renewed his anathemas; that he bullied the poor little woman to death; that Brent had to wring the property out of him by a long lawsuit, which the Swergerites considered an unconstitutional and devilish proceeding, another proof of total depravity. Miserable business! It went near to crush all the innocence, faith, hope, and religion out of my friend's life.

Of course this experience had a tendency to drive Brent out of the common paths, to make him a seer instead of a doer. The vulgar cannot comprehend that, when a man is selected by character and circumstance, acting together under the name of destiny, to be a seer, he must see to the end before he begins to say what he sees, to be a guide, a monitor, and a helper. The vulgar, therefore, called Brent a wasted life, a man of genius *manqué*, a pointless investigator, a purposeless dreamer. The vulgar loves to make up its mind prematurely. The vulgar cannot abide a man who lives a blameless life so far as personal conduct goes, and yet declines to accept worldly tests of success, worldly principles of

action. If a man rebels against laws, and takes the side of vice, *that* the vulgar can comprehend; but rebellion on the side of virtue is revolutionary, destroys all the old landmarks, must be crucified.

Brent, therefore, boy and man, had had tough experience. I knew of his career, though we had not met. He had wished and attempted, perhaps prematurely, to make his fine genius of definite use. He wanted to make the nation's prayers; but the Swergerites pronounced his prayers Paganism. He wanted to put the nation's holiest thoughts into poetry; they called his poetry impious. He wanted to stir up the young men of his day to a franker stand on the side of genuine liberty, and a keener hatred of all slavery, and so to uphold chivalry and heroism; the cynical people scoffed, they said he would get over his boyish folly, that he ought to have lived before Bayard, or half-way through the millennium, but that the kind of stuff he preached and wrote with such unnecessary fervor did not suit the nineteenth century, a practical country and a practical age.

So Brent paused in his work. The boyhood's unquestioning ardor went out of him. The interregnum between youth and complete manhood came. He gave up his unripe attempt to be a doer, and turned seer again. Observation

is the proper business of a man's third decade; the less a spokesman has to say about his results until thirty, the better, unless he wants to eat his words, or to sustain outgrown formulas. Brent discovered this, and went about the world still pointless, purposeless, *manqué*, as they said,— minding his own business, getting his facts. His fortune made him independent. He could go where he pleased.

This was the man who rode up on the iron-gray horse. This was the Indianesque Saxon who greeted me. It put color and poetry into my sulky life to see him.

"Off, old fellow?" said Brent, pointing his whip at my traps. "I can't hear him squeak, but I'm sure there is pig in that gunny-bag, and flour in that sack. I hope you're not away for a long trip just as I have come to squat with you."

"No longer than home across the plains."

"Bravo! then we'll ride together, instead of squatting together. Instead of your teaching me quartz-mining, I'll guide you across the Rockys."

"You know the way, then."

"Every foot of it. Last fall I hunted up from Mexico and New Mexico with an English friend. We made winter head-quarters with Captain Ruby at Fort Laramie, knocking about all winter

in that neighborhood, and at the North among the Wind River Mountains. Early in the spring we went off toward Luggernel Alley and the Luggernel Springs, and camped there for a month."

"Luggernel Alley! Luggernel Springs! Those are new names to me; in fact, my Rocky Mountain geography is naught."

"You ought to see them. Luggernel Alley is one of the wonders of this continent."

So *I* think now that I have seen it. It was odd too, what afterward I remembered as a coincidence, that our first talk should have turned to a spot where we were to do and to suffer, by and by.

"There is something Frenchy in the name Luggernel," said I.

"Yes; it is a corruption of La Grenouille. There was a famous Canadian trapper of that name, or nickname. He discovered the springs. The Alley, a magnificent gorge, grand as the Via Mala, leads to them. I will describe the whole to you at length, some time."

"Who was your English friend?"

"Sir Biron Biddulph,—a capital fellow, pink in the cheeks, warm in the heart, strong in the shanks, mighty on the hunt."

"Hunting for love of it?"

"No; for love itself, or rather the lack of love.

A lovely lady in his native Lancashire would not smile; so he turned butcher of buffalo, bears, and big-horn."

"Named he the 'fair but frozen maid'?"

"Never. It seems there is something hapless or tragic about her destiny. She did not love him; so he came away to forget her. He made no secret of it. We arrived in Utah last July, on our way to see California. There he got letters from home, announcing, as he told me, some coming misfortune to the lady. As a friend, no longer a lover, he proposed to do what he could to avert the danger. I left him in Salt Lake, preparing to return, and came across country alone."

"Alone! through the Indian country, with that tempting iron-gray, those tempting packs, that tempting scalp, with its love-locks! Why, the sight of your scalp alone would send a thrill through every Indian heart from Bear River to the Dalles of the Columbia! Perhaps, by the way, you 've been scalped already, and are safe?"

"No; the mop 's my own mop. Scalp 's all right. Wish I could say the same of the brains. The Indians would not touch me. I am half savage, you know. In this and my former trip, I have become a privileged character, — something of a medicine-man."

"I suppose you can talk to them. You used to have the gift of tongues."

"Yes; I have choked down two or three of their guttural lingos, and can sputter them up as easily as I used to gabble iambic trimeters. I like the fellows. They are not ideal heroes; they have not succeeded in developing a civilization, or in adopting ours, and therefore I suppose they must go down, as pine-trees go down to make room for tougher stalks and fruitier growth: but I like the fellows, and don't believe in their utter deviltry. I have always given the dogs a good name, and they have been good dogs to me. I like thorough men, too; and what an Indian knows, he knows, so that it is a part of him. It is a good corrective for an artificial man to find himself less of a man, under certain difficulties, than a child of nature. You know this, of course, as well as I do."

"Yes; we campaigners get close to the heart of Mother Nature, and she teaches us, tenderly or roughly, but thoroughly. By the way, how did you find me out?"

"I heard some Pikes, at a camp last night, talking of a person who had sold a quartz mine for a wonderful horse. I asked the name. They told me yours, and directed me here. Except for this talk, I should have gone down to San Francisco, and missed you."

"Lucky horse! He brings old friends together, — a good omen! Come and see him."

CHAPTER V.

ACROSS COUNTRY.

I LED my friend toward the corral.

"A fine horse that gray of yours," said I.

"Yes; a splendid fellow,—stanch and true! He will go till he dies."

"In tip-top condition, too. What do you call him?"

"Pumps."

"Why Pumps? Why not Pistons? or Cranks? or Walking-Beams? or some part of the steam-engine that does the going directly?"

"You have got the wrong clue. I named him after our old dancing-master. Pumps the horse has a favorite amble, precisely like that skipping walk that Pumps the man used to set us for model,—a mincing gait, that prejudiced me, until I saw what a stride he kept for the time when stride was wanting."

"Here is my black gentleman. What do you think of him?"

Don Fulano trotted up and licked a handful of corn from my hand. Corn was four dollars

a bushel. The profits of the "Foolonner" Mine did not allow of such luxuries. But old Gerrian had presented me with a sack of it.

Fulano crunched his corn, snorted his thanks, and then snuffed questioningly, and afterwards approvingly, about the stranger.

"Soul and body of Bucephalus!" says Brent. "There is a quadruped that is a HORSE."

"Is n't he?" said I, thrilling with pride for him.

"To look at such a fellow is a romance. He is the most beautiful thing I ever saw."

"No exceptions?"

"Not one."

"Woman! lovely woman!" I cried, with mock enthusiasm.

"If I had ever seen a woman to compare with that horse, after her kind, I should not be here."

"Where then?"

"Wherever she was. Living for her. Dying for her. Chasing her if she were dragged from me. Snatching her from the jaws of death."

"Hold hard! You talk as furiously as if you saw such a scene before your eyes."

"Your horse brings up all the chivalric tales I have ever read. If these were knightly days, and two brothers in arms, like you and myself, ever rescued distressed damsels from the grip of caitiffs vile, we ought to be mounted upon a pair

of Don Fulanos when we rode the miscreants down."

The fine sensitiveness of a poetic man like Brent makes a prophet of him,—that is to say, a man who has the poet's delicate insight into character anticipates everything that character will do. So Brent was never surprised; though I confess I was, when I found men, horses, and places doing what he had hinted long before.

"Well," continued I, "I paid two years' work for my horse. Was it too much? Is he worth it?"

"Everything is worth whatever one gives for it. The less you get, the more you get. Proved by the fact that the price of all life is death. Jacob served seven years for an ugly wife; why should n't an honester man serve two for a beautiful horse?"

"Jacob, however, had a pretty wife thrown in when he showed discontent."

"Perhaps you will. If the Light of the Harem of Sultan Brigham should see you prancing on that steed, she would make one bound to your crupper and leave a dark where the Light was."

"I do not expect to develop a taste for Mormon ladies."

"It is not very likely. They are a second-hand set. But still one can imagine some luckless girl with a doltish father; some old chap

who had outlived his hopes at home, and fancied he was going to be Melchisedec, Moses, and Abraham, rolled into one, in Utah, toted out there by some beastly Elder, who wanted the daughter for his thirteenth. That would be a chance for you and Don Fulano to interfere. I 'll promise you myself and Pumps, if you want to stampede anybody's wives from the New Jerusalem as we go through."

"I suppose we have no time to lose, if we expect to make Missouri before winter."

"No. We will start as soon as you are ready."

"To-morrow morning, if you please."

"To-morrow it is."

To-morrow it was. Having a comrade, I need not wait for the mail-riders. Lucky that I did not. They came only three days after us. But on the Humboldt, the Indians met them, and obliged them to doff the tops of their heads, as a mark of respect to Indian civilization.

We started, two men and seven animals. Each of us had a pack mule and a roadster pony, with a spare one, in case accident should befall either of his wiry brethren.

Pumps and Fulano, as good friends as their masters, trotted along without burden. We rode them rarely. Only often enough to remind

them how a saddle feels, and that dangling legs are not frightful. They must be fresh, if we should ever have to run for it. We might; Indians might cast fanciful glances at the tops of our heads. The other horses might give out. So Pumps, with his fantastic dancing-step, that would not crush a grasshopper, and Fulano, grander, prouder, and still untamable to any one but me, went on waiting for their time of action.

I skip the first thousand miles of our journey. Not that it was not exciting, but it might be anybody's journey. Myriads have made it. It is an old story. I might perhaps make it a new story; but I crowd on now to the proper spot where this drama is to be enacted. The play halts while the scenes shift.

One figure fills up to my mind this whole hiatus of the many-leagued skip. I see Brent every step and every moment. He was a model comrade.

Camp-life tests a man thoroughly. Common toil, hardship, peril, and sternly common *viaticum* of pork, dough-cakes, and coffee *sans* everything, are a daily ordeal of good-nature. It is not hard for two men to be civil across a clean white table-cloth at a club. If they feel dull, they can study the *carte;* if spiteful, they can row the steward; if surly, they can muddle themselves cheerful;

if they bore each other, finally and hopelessly, they can exchange cigars and part for all time, and still be friends, not foes. But the illusions of sham good-fellowship vanish when the *carte du jour* is *porc frit au naturel*, *damper à discretion*, and *café à rien*, always the same fare, plain days or lucky days, served on a blanket, on the ground.

Brent and I stood the test. He was a model comrade, cavalier, poet, hunter, naturalist, cook. If there was any knowledge, skill, craft, or sleight of hand or brain wanted, it always seemed as if his whole life had been devoted to the one study to gain it. He would spring out of his blankets after a night under the stars, improvise a matin song to Lucifer, sketch the morning's view into cloudland and the morning's earthly horizon, take a shot at a gray wolf, book a new plant, bag a new beetle, and then, reclining on the lonely prairie, talk our breakfast, whose Soyer he had been, so full of Eden, Sybaris, the holocausts of Achilles, the triclinia of Lucullus, the automaton tables of the Œil de Bœuf, the cabinets of the Frères Provençaux, and the dinners of civilization where the wise and the witty meet to shine and sparkle for the beautiful, that our meagre provender suffered "change into something rich and strange"; the flakes of fried pork became peacocks' tongues, every quoit

of tough toasted dough a *vol au vent*, and the coffee that never saw milk or muscovado a diviner porridge than ever was sipped on the sunny summits of Olympus. Such a magician is priceless. Every object, when he looked at it, seemed to revolve about and exhibit its bright side. Difficulty skulked away from him. Danger cowered under his eye.

Nothing could damp his enthusiasm. Nothing could drench his ardor. No drowning his energy. He never growled, never sulked, never snapped, never flinched. Frosty nights on the Sierra tried to cramp him; foggy mornings in the valleys did their worst to chill him; showers shrank his buckskins and soaked the macheers of his saddle to mere pulp; rain pelted his blankets in the bivouac till he was a moist island in a muddy lake. Bah, elements! try it on a milksop! not on John Brent, the invulnerable. He laughs in the ugly phiz of Trouble. Hit somebody else, thou grizzly child of Erebus!

Brent was closer to Nature than any man I ever knew. Not after the manner of an artist. The artist can hardly escape a certain technicality. He looks at the world through the spectacles of his style. He loves mist and hates sunshine, or loves brooks and shrinks from the gloom of forests primeval, or adores meadows and haystacks, and dreads the far-sweeping plain and the sovran

snow-peak. Even the greatest artist runs a risk, which only the greater than greatest escape, of suiting Nature to themselves, not themselves to Nature. Brent with Nature was like a youth with the maiden he loves. She was always his love, whatever she could do; however dressed, in clouds or sunshine, unchanging fair; in whatever mood, weeping or smiling, at her sweetest; grand, beautiful for her grandeur; tender, beautiful for her tenderness; simple, lovely for her simplicity; careless, prettier than if she were trim and artful; rough, potent, and impressive, a barbaric queen.

It is not a charming region, that breadth of the world between the Foolonner Mine and the Great Salt Lake. Much is dusty desert; much is dreary plain, bushed with wild sage, the wretchedest plant that grows; much is rugged mountain. A grim and desolate waste. But large and broad. Unbroken and undisturbed, in its solemn solitude, by prettiness. No thought of cottage life there, or of the tame, limited, submissive civilization that hangs about lattices and trellises, and pets its chirping pleasures, keeping life as near the cradle as it may. It is a region that appeals to the go and the gallop, that even the veriest cockney, who never saw beyond a vista of blocks, cannot eliminate from his being. It does not order man to sink into

a ploughman. Ploughmen may tarry in those dull, boundless plough-fields, the *prairie* lands of *mid*-America. These desert spaces, ribbed with barren ridges, stretch for the Bedouin tread of those who

> "Love all waste
> And solitary places, where we taste
> The pleasure of believing what we see
> Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be."

It may be a dreary region; but the great white clouds in the noons of that splendid September, the red dawns before us, the red twilights behind, the vague mountain lines upon the far horizon, the sharp crag lines near at hand, the lambent stars that lit our bivouacs, the moon that paled the lambent stars, — all these had their glory, intenser because each fact came simple and alone, and challenged study and love with a force that shames the spendthrift exuberance of fuller landscapes.

In all this time I learned to love the man John Brent, as I had loved the boy; but as mature man loves man. I have known no more perfect union than that one friendship. Nothing so tender in any of my transitory loves for women. We were two who thought alike, but saw differently, and never quarrelled because the shield was to him gold and to me silver. Such a friendship justifies life. All bad faith is worth en-

countering for the sake of such good faith, — all cold shoulder for such warm heart.

And so I bring our little party over the first half of its journey.

I will not even delay to describe Utah, not even for its water-melons' sake, though that tri-color dainty greatly gladdened our dry jaws, as we followed the valley from Box Elder, the northernmost settlement, to the City of the Great Salt Lake.

In a few days of repose we had exhausted Mormon civilization, and, horses and men fresh and in brave heart, we rode out of the modern Mecca, one glorious day of early October.

CHAPTER VI.

JAKE SHAMBERLAIN.

IF Heaven's climate approaches the perfect charm of an American October, I accept my place in advance, and book my lodgings for eternity.

The climate of the best zone in America is transcendent for its purpose. Its purpose is to keep men at their keenest, at high edge and high ardor all the time. Then, for enchanting luxury of repose, when ardent summer has achieved its harvest, and all the measure of the year is full, comes ripe October, with its golden, slumberous air. The atmosphere is visible sunshine. Every leaf in the forest changes to a resplendent blossom. The woods are rich and splendorous, but not glaring. Nothing breaks the tranquil *wealthy* sentiment of the time. It is the year's delightful holiday.

In such a season we rode through the bare defiles of the Wasatch Mountains, wall of Utah on the east. We passed Echo Cañon, and the other strait gates and rough ways through which

the Latter-Day Saints win an entrance to their Sion.

We met them in throngs, hard at work at such winning. The summer emigration of Mormons was beginning to come in. No one would have admitted their claim to saintship from their appearance. If they had no better passport than their garb, "Avaunt! *Procul este profani!*" would have cried any trustworthy janitor of Sion. Saints, if I know them, are clean, — are not ragged, are not even patched. Their garments renew themselves, shed rain like Macintosh, repel dust, sweeten unsavoriness. These sham saints needed unlimited scouring, persons and raiment. We passed them, when we could, to windward. Poor creatures! we shall see more of their kindred anon.

We hastened on, for our way was long, and autumn's hospitable days were few. Just at the foot of those bare, bulky mounds of mountain by which the Wasatch range tones off into the great plains between it and the Rockys, we overtook the Salt Lake mail party going eastward. They were travelling eight or ten men strong, with a four-mule waggon, and several horses and mules driven beside for relays.

"If Jake Shamberlain is the captain of the party," said Brent, when we caught sight of them upon the open, "we 'll join them."

"Who is Jake Shamberlain?"

"A happy-go-lucky fellow, whom I have met and recognized all over the world. He has been a London policeman. He was pulling stroke-oar in the captain's gig that took me ashore from a dinner on board the Firefly, British steamer, at the Piræus. He has been a lay brother in a Carthusian convent. He married a pretty girl in Boston once, went off on a mackerel trip, and when he came back the pretty girl had bigamized. That made Mormon and polygamist of him. He came out two or three years ago, and, being a thriving fellow, has got to himself lands and beeves and wives without number. Biddulph and I stayed several days with him when we came through in the summer. His ranch is down the valley, toward Provo. He owns half the United States mail contract. They told me in the city that he intended to run this trip himself. You will see an odd compound of a fellow."

"I should think so; policeman, acolyte, man-of-war's-man, Yankee husband, Mormon! Has he come to his finality?"

"He thinks so. He is a shrewd fellow of many smatterings. He says there are only two logical religions in the civilized world, — the Popish and the Mormon. Those two are the only ones that have any basis in authority. His convent experience disenchanted him with Catholicism. He is

quite irreverent, is the estimable Jake. He says monks are a set of snuffy old reprobates. He says that he found celibacy tended to all manner of low vice; that monogamy disappointed him; so he tried the New Revelation, polygamy and all, and has become an ardent propagandist and exhorter. Take the man as he is, and he has plenty of brave, honest qualities."

We had by this time ridden up to the mail party. They were moving slowly along. The night's camping-spot was near. It was a bit of grassy level on the bank of a river, galloping over the pebbles with its mountain impetus still in it, — Green River, perhaps; Green, or White, or Big Sandy, or Little Stony. My map of memory is veined with so many such streams, all going in a hurry through barren plains, and no more than drains on a water-shed, that I confuse their undistinguishing names. Such mere business-like water-courses might as well be numbered, after the fashion of the monotonous streets of a city, too new for the consecration of history. Dear New England's beloved brooks and rivers, slow through the meadows and beneath the elms, tumbling and cascading down the mountain-sides from under the darkling hemlocks into the sparkle of noon, and leaping into white water between the files of Northern birches, — they have their well-remembered titles, friendly and domestic, or

of sturdy syllables and wilderness sound. Such waters have spoiled me for gutters, — Colorados, Arkansaws, Plattes, and Missouris.

"Hillo, Shamberlain!" hailed Brent, riding up to the train.

"Howdydo? Howdydo? No swap!" responded Jake, after the Indian fashion. "Bung my eyes! ef you 're not the mate of all mates I 'm glad to see. Pax vobiscrum, my filly! You look as fresh as an Aperel shad. Praisèd be the Lord!" continued he, relapsing into Mormon slang, "who has sent thee again, like a brand from the burning, to fall into paths of pleasantness with the Saints, as they wander from the Promised Land to the mean section where the low-lived Gentiles ripen their souls for hell."

Droll farrago! but just as Jake delivered it. He had the slang and the swearing of all climes and countries at his tongue's end.

"Hello, stranger!" said he, turning to me. "I allowed you was the Barrownight."

"It 's my friend, Richard Wade," said Brent.

"Yours to command, Brother Wade," Jake says hospitably. "Ef you turn out prime, one of the out and outers, like Brother John Brent, I 'll tip 'em the wink to let you off easy at the Judgment Day, Gentile or not. I 've booked Brother John fur Paradise; Brother Joseph's got a white robe fur him, blow high, blow low!"

We rode along beside Shamberlain.

"What did you mean just now?" asked my friend. "You spoke of Wade's being the baronet."

"I allowed you would n't leave him behind."

"I don't understand. I have not seen him since we left you in the summer. I 've been on to California and back."

"The Barrownight 's ben stoppin' round in the Valley ever since. He seems to have a call to stop. Prehaps his heart is tetched, and he is goan to jine the Lord's people. I left him down to my ranch, ten days ago, playing with a grizzly cub, what he 's trying to make a gentleman of. A pooty average gentleman it 'll make too."

"Very odd!" says Brent to me. "Biddulph meant to start for home, at once, when we parted. He had some errand in behalf of the lady he had run away from."

"Probably he found he could not trust his old wounds under her eyes again. Wants another year's crust over his scarified heart."

"Quite likely. Well, I wish we had known he was in the Valley. We would have carried him back with us. A fine fellow! Could n't be a better!"

"Not raw, as Englishmen generally are?"

"No; well ripened by a year or so in America."

"Individuals need that cookery, as the race did."

"Yes; I wish our social cuisine were a thought more scientific."

"All in good time. We shall separate sauces by and by, and not compel beef, mutton, and turkey to submit to the same gravy."

"Meanwhile some of my countrymen are so under-done, and some so over-done, that I have lost my taste for them."

"Such social dyspepsia is soon cured on the plains. You will go back with a healthy appetite. Did your English friend describe the lady of his love?"

"No; it was evidently too stern a grief to talk about. He could keep up his spirits only by resolutely turning his back on the subject."

"It must needs have been a weak heart or a mighty passion."

"The latter. A brave fellow like Biddulph does not take to his heels from what he can overcome."

By this time we had reached camp.

Horses first, self afterwards, is the law of the plains travel. A camp must have, —

1. Water.
2. Fodder.
3. Fuel.

Those are the necessities. Anything else is luxury.

The mail party were a set of jolly roughs. Jake Shamberlain was the type man. To encounter such fellows is good healthy education. As useful in kind, but higher in degree, as going to a bear *conversazione* or a lion and tiger concert. Civilization mollifies the race. It is not well to have hard knocks and rough usage for mind or body eliminated from our training.

We joined suppers with our new friends. After supper we sat smoking our pipes, and talking horse, Indians, bear-fights, scalping, and other brutal business, such as the world has not outgrown.

CHAPTER VII.

ENTER, THE BRUTES!

THE sun had just gone down. There was a red wrangle of angry vapors over the mounds of mountain westward. A brace of travellers from Salt Lake way rode up and lighted their camp-fire near ours. More society in that lonely world. Two families, with two sets of Lares and Penates.

Not attractive society. They were a sinister-looking couple of hounds. A lean wolfish and a fat bony dog.

One was a rawboned, stringy chap, — as gaunt, unkempt, and cruel a Pike as ever pillaged the cabin, insulted the wife, and squirted tobacco over the dead body of a Free State settler in Kansas. The other was worse, because craftier. A little man, stockish, oily, and red in the face. A jaunty fellow, too, with a certain shabby air of coxcombry even in his travel-stained attire.

They were well mounted, both. The long ruffian rode a sorrel, big and bony as himself, and equally above such accidents as food or no food.

The little villain's mount was a red roan, a Flat-head horse, rather naggy, but perfectly hardy and wiry, — an animal that one would choose to do a thousand miles in twenty days, or a hundred between sunrise and sunset. They had also two capital mules, packed very light. One was branded, "A. & A."

Distrust and disgust are infallible instincts. Men's hearts and lives are written on their faces, to warn or charm. Never reject that divine or devilish record!

Brent read the strangers, shivered at me, and said, *sotto voce*, "What a precious pair of cut-throats! We must look sharp for our horses while they are about."

"Yes," returned I, in the same tone; "they look to me like Sacramento gamblers, who have murdered somebody, and had to make tracks for their lives."

"The Cassius of the pair is bad enough," said Brent; "but that oily little wretch sickens me. I can imagine him when he arrives at St. Louis, blossomed into a purple coat with velvet lappels, a brocaded waistcoat, diamond shirt-studs, or a flamboyant scarf pinned with a pinchbeck dog, and red-legged patent-leather boots, picking his teeth on the steps of the Planters' House. Faugh! I feel as if a snake were crawling over me, when I look at him."

"They are not very welcome neighbors to our friends here."

"No. Roughs abhor brutes as much as you or I do. Roughs are only nature; brutes are sin. I do not like this brutal element coming in. It portends misfortune. You and I will inevitably come into collision with those fellows."

"You take your hostile attitude at once, and without much reluctance."

"You know something of my experience. I have had a struggle all my life with sin in one form or other, with brutality in one form or other. I have been lacerated so often from unwillingness to strike the first blow, that I have at last been forced into the offensive."

"You believe in flooring Apollyon before he floors you."

"There must be somebody to do the merciless. It 's not my business — the melting mood — in my present era."

"We are going off into generalities, *apropos* of those two brutes. What, O volunteer champion of virtue, dost thou propose in regard to them? When will you challenge them to the ordeal, to prove themselves honest men and good fellows?"

"Aggression always comes from evil. They are losels; we are true knights. They will do some sneaking villany. You and I will thereupon up and at 'em."

"Odd fellow are you, with your premonitions!"

"They are very vague, of course, but based on a magnetism which I have learnt to trust, after much discipline, because I refused to obey it. Look at that big brute, how he kicks and curses his mule!"

"Perhaps he has stolen it, and is revenging his theft on its object. That brand 'A. & A.' may remind him what a thief he is."

"Here comes the fat brother. He 'll propose to camp with us."

"It is quite natural he should, saint or sinner, — all the more if he is sinner. It must be terrible for a man who has ugly secrets to wake up at night, alone in bivouac, with a grisly dream, no human being near, and find the stars watching him keenly, or the great white, solemn moon pitying him, yet saying, with her inflexible look, that, moan and curse as he may, no remorse will save him from despair."

"Yes," said Brent, knocking the ashes out of his pipe; "night always seems to judge and sentence the day. A foul man, or a guilty man, so long as he intends to remain foul and guilty, dreads pure, quiet, orderly Nature."

The objectionable stranger came up to our camp-fire.

"Hello, men!" said he, with a familiar air, "it 's a fine night"; and meeting with no re-

sponse, he continued: "But, I reckon, you don't allow nothin' else but fine nights in this section."

"Bad company makes all nights bad," says Jake Shamberlain, gruffly enough.

"Ay; and good company betters the orneriest sort er weather. The more the merrier, eh?"

"Supposin' its more perarer wolves, or more rattlesnakes, or more horse-thieving, scalpin Utes!" says Jake, unpropitiated.

"O," said the new-comer a little uneasily, "I don't mean sech. I mean jolly dogs, like me and my pardener. We allowed you 'd choose company in camp. We 'd like to stick our pegs in alongside of yourn, ef no gent haint got nothin' to say agin it."

"It 's a free country," Jake said, "and looks pooty roomy round here. You ken camp whar you blame please, — off or on."

"Well," says the fellow, laying hold of this very slight encouragement, "since you 're agreeable, we 'll fry our pork over your fire, and hev a smoke to better acquaintance."

"He ain't squimmidge," said Jake to us, as the fellow walked off to call his comrade. "He 's bound to ring himself into this here party, whoever says stickleback. He 's one er them Algerines what don't know a dark hint, till it begins to make motions, and kicks 'em out. Well, two more men, with two regiments' allowance of

shootin' irons won't do no harm in this Ingine country."

"Well, boys!" said the unpleasant fatling, approaching again. "Here is my pardener, Sam Smith, from Sacramenter; what he don't know about a horse ain't worth knowin'. My name is Jim Robinson. I ken sing a song, tell a story, or fling a card with any man, in town or out er town."

While the strangers cooked their supper, my friend and I lounged off apart upon the prairie. A few steps gave us a capital picture. The white wagon; the horses feeding in the distance, a dusky group; the men picturesquely disposed about the fire, now glowing ruddy against the thickening night. A Gypsy scene. Literal "Vie de Bohême."

"I am never bored," said Brent to me, "with the company or the talk of men like those, good or bad. *Homo sum; nil humani*, and so forth, — a sentiment of the late Plautus, now first quoted."

"You do not yet feel a reaction toward scholarly society."

"No; this Homeric life, with its struggle against elements, which I can deify if I please, and against crude forces in man or nature, suits the youth of my manhood, my Achilles time. The world went through an epoch of just such life as

we are leading. Every man must, to be complete and not conventional."

"A man who wants to know his country and his age must clash with all the people and all the kinds of life in it. You and I have had the college, the *salon*, the club, the street, Europe, the Old World, and Yankeedom through and through; when do you expect to outgrow Ishmael, my Jonathan?"

"Whenever Destiny gives me the final accolade of merit, and names me Lover."

"What! have you never been that happy wretch?"

"Never. I have had transitory ideals. I have been enchanted by women willowy and women dumpy; by the slight and colorless mind and body, by the tender and *couleur de rose*, and by the buxom and ruddy. I have adored Zobeide and Hildegarde, Dolores and Dorothy Ann, imp and angel, sprite and fiend. I have had my little irritation of a foolish fancy, my sharp scourge of an unworthy passion. I am heart-whole still, and growing a little expectant of late."

"You are not cruising the plains for a lady-love! It is not, 'I will wed a savage woman'? It is not for a Pawnee squaw that you go clad in skins and disdain the barber?"

"No. My business in Cosmos is not to be the father of half-breeds. But soberly, old fellow, I

need peace after a life driven into premature foemanship. I need tranquillity to let my character use my facts. I want the bitter drawn out of me, and the sweet fostered. I yearn to be a lover."

As he said this, we had approached the campfire. Jim Robinson, by this time quite at home, was making his accomplishments of use. He was debasing his audience with a vulgar song. The words and air jarred upon both of us.

"*Nil humani a me alienum puto*, I repeat," said Brent, "but that foul stuff is not the voice of humanity. Let 's go look at the horses. They do not belie their nobler nature, and are not in the line of degradation. I cannot harden myself not to shrink from the brutal element wherever I find it; whether in two horse-thieves on the plains, or in a well-dressed reprobate of society at the club in New York."

"Brutes in civilization are just as base, but not so blatant."

"Old Pumps and the Don, here, are a gentler and more honorable pair than these strangers."

"They are the gentlemen of their race."

"It 's not their cue to talk; but if the gift of tongues should come to them, they would disdain all unchivalric and discourteous words. They do now, with those brave eyes and scornful nostrils, rebuke whatever is unmanly in men."

"Yes; they certainly look ready to co-operate in all knightly duties."

"One of those, as I hinted before, is riding down caitiffs."

We left our horses, busy at their suppers, beside the brawling river, and walked back to camp. It was a Caravaggio scene by the firelight. Jim Robinson had produced cards. The men of the mail party were intent over the game. Even Jake Shamberlain had easily forgotten his distrust of the strangers. The two suspects, whether with an eye to future games, or because they could not offend their comrades and protectors for this dangerous journey, were evidently playing fair. Robinson would sometimes exhibit a winning hand, and say, with an air of large liberality, "Ye see, boys, I ked rake down yer dimes, ef I chose; but this here is a game among friends. I 'm playin' for pastime. I 've made my pile olreddy, and so 's my pardener."

The gambler's face and the gambler's manner are the same all over the world. Always the same impassible watchfulness. Always the same bullying cruelty or feline cruelty. Always the same lurking triumph, and the same lurking sneer at the victim. The same quiet satisfaction that gamesters will be geese, and gamblers are deputed to pluck them; the same suppressed chuckle over the efforts of the luckless to re-

trieve bad luck; the same calm confidence that the lucky player will by and by back the wrong card, the wrong color, or the wrong number, and the bank will take back its losses. What hard faces they wear! Wear, — for their faces seem masks merely, dropped only at stealthy moments. Always the same look and the same manner. Young and beautiful faces curdle into it. Women's even. I have seen women, the slaves of the hells their devils kept, whose faces would have been fair and young, if this ugly mask could but be torn away. All men and all women who make prey of their fellows, who lie in wait to seize and dismember brothers and sisters, get this same relentless expression. It fixes itself deepest on a gambler; he must hold the same countenance from the first lamp-lighting until indignant dawn pales the sickly light of lamps, and the first morning air creeps in to stir the heavy-hearted atmosphere, and show that it is poison.

"I 've seen villains just like those two," said Brent, "in every hell in Europe and America. They always go in pairs; a tiger and a snake; a bully and a wheedler.

"Mind and matter. The old partnership, like yours and mine."

Next morning the two strangers were free and accepted members of the party. They travelled on with us without question. Smith the gaunt

affected a rough frankness of manner. Robinson was low comedy. His head was packed with scurvy jokes and stories. He had a foul leer on his face whenever he was thinking his own thoughts. But either, if suddenly startled, showed the unmistakable look that announces worse crime than mere knavery.

They tangled their names so that we perceived each was an *alias* hastily assumed. Smith compared six-shooters with me. I detected on his the name Murker, half erased. Once, too, Brent heard Murker, *alias* Smith, call his partner Larrap.

"Larrap is appropriate," said I, when Brent told me this; "just the name for him, as that unlucky mule branded 'A. & A.' could testify."

"The long ruffian studied my face, when he made that slip, to see if I had heard. He might as well have inspected the air for the mark of his traitorous syllables."

"You claim that your phiz is so covered with hieroglyphs, inscriptions of fine feeling, that there is no room to write suspicions of other men's villany?"

"A clean heart keeps a clean face. A guilty heart will announce itself at eyes and lips and cheeks, and by a thousand tremors of the nerves. I have no prejudices against the family Larrap. But when Larrap's mate spoke the name, he

looked at me as if he had been committing a murder, and had by an irresistible impulse proclaimed the fact. Look at him now! how he starts and half turns whenever one of our horses makes a clatter. He dares not quite look back. He knows there is something after him."

"The dread of a vengeance, you think. That's a blacker follower than '*Atra cura post equitem.*'"

I tire of these unwholesome characters I am describing. But I did not put them into the story. They took their places themselves. I find that brutality interferes in most dramas and most lives. Brutality the male sin, disloyalty the female sin, — these two are always doing their best to baffle and blight heroism and purity. Often they succeed. Oftener they fail. And so the world exists, and is not annulled; its history is the history of the struggle and the victory. This episode of my life is a brief of the world's complete experience.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MORMON CARAVAN.

STILL, as we rode along, the same rich, tranquil days of October; the air always potable gold, and every breath nepenthe.

Early on one of the fairest of afternoons when all were fairest, we reached Fort Bridger. Bridger had been an old hunter, trapper, and by and by that forlorn hope of civilization, the holder of an Indian trading-post. The spot is better known now. It was there that that miserable bungle and blunder of an Administration more fool, if that be possible, than knave, — the Mormon Expedition in 1858, — took refuge, after its disasters on the Sweetwater.

At the moment of our arrival, Bridger's Fort had just suffered capture. Its owner was missing. The old fellow had deemed himself the squatter sovereign of that bleak and sere region. He had built an adobe mud fort, with a palisade, on a sweep of plain a degree less desert than the deserts hard by. That oasis was his oasis, so he fondly hoped; that mud fort, his mud fort; those

willows and alders, his thickets; and that trade, his trade.

But Bridger was one man, and he had powerful neighbors. It was a case of "*O si angulus iste!*" — a Naboth's-vineyard case. The Mormons did not love the rugged mountaineer; that worthy Gentile, in turn, thought the saints no better than so many of the ungodly. The Mormons coveted oasis, fort, thicket, and trade. They accused the old fellow of selling powder and ball to hostile Indians, — to Walker, chief of the Utes, a scion, no doubt, of the Hookey Walker branch of that family. Very likely he had done so. At all events, it was a good pretext. So, in the name of the Prophet, and Brigham, successor of the Prophet, the Latter-Day Saints had made a raid upon the post. Bridger escaped to the mountains. The captors occupied the Gentile's property, and spoiled his goods.

Jake Shamberlain told us this story, not without some sympathy for the exile.

"It 's olluz so," says Jake; "Paul plants, and Apollyon gets the increase. Not that Bridger 's like Paul, any more 'n we 're like Apollyon; but we 're goan to have all the cider off his apple-trees."

"I 'm sorry old Bridger has come to grief," said Brent to me, as we rode over the plain toward the fort. "He was a rough, but worth all

the Latter-Day Saints this side of Armageddon. Biddulph and I stayed a week with him last summer, when we came from the mountains about Luggernel Alley."

"How far is Luggernel Alley from this spot?"

"Fifty miles or so to the south and east. I almost fancy I recognize it in that slight notch in the line of the blue sierra on the horizon. I wonder if I shall ever see it again! If it were not so late, I should insist upon taking you there now. There is no such gorge in the world. And the springs, bold, liberal fountains, gushing out on a glittering greensward! There are several of them, some boiling, some cold as ice; and one, the Champagne Spring, wastes in the wilderness the most delicate, sparkling, exhilarating tipple that ever reddened a lip or freshened a brain."

"Wait half a century; then you and I will go there by rail, with our grandchildren, for draughts of the Fountain of Youth."

"I should like to spend a honeymoon there, if I could find a wife plucky enough to cross the plains."

How well I remembered all this conversation afterwards, and not long afterwards!

We rode up to the fort. A dozen or so of somewhat rubbishy soldiers, the garrison, were lounging about.

"Will they expect a countersign," asked I, — "some slogan of their vulgarized Islamism?"

"Hardly!" replied Brent. "Only one man in the world can care about assailing this dismal den. They need not be as ceremonious with strangers as the Dutchmen are at Ehrenbreitstein and Verona."

Jake and the main party stopped at the fort. We rode on a quarter of a mile farther, and camped near a stream, where the grass was plenteous.

"Fulano and Pumps are in better condition than when we started," said I, while we were staking them out for a long feed. "The mustangs have had all the drudgery; these aristocrats must be set to do their share soon."

"They are in prime racing order. If we had had them in training for three months for a steeple-chase, or a flight, or a Sabine adventure, or a rescue, they could not be in better trim than this moment. I suppose their time to do their duty must be at hand, they seem so ardent for it."

We left our little caballada nibbling daintily at the sweetest spires of self-cured hay, and walked back to the fort.

We stood there chatting with the garrison. Presently Brent's quick eye caught some white spots far away on the slope of the prairie, like sails on the edge of a dreamy, sunny sea.

"Look!" said he, "there comes a Salt Lake emigration train."

"Yes," said a Mormon of the garrison, "that 's Elder Sizzum's train. Their forerunner came in this morning to choose the camping-spot. There they be! two hundred ox-teams, a thousand Saints, bound for the Promised Land."

He walked off to announce the arrival, whistling, "Jordan is a hard road to travel."

I knew of Sizzum as the most seductive orator and foreign propagandist of Mormonism. He had been in England some time, very successful at the good work. The caravans we had already met were of his proselytes. He himself was coming on with the last train, the one now in view, and steering for Fort Bridger.

As we stood watching, the lengthening file of white-hooded wagons crept slowly into sight. They came forward diagonally to our line of view, travelling apart at regular intervals, like the vessels of a well-ordered convoy. Now the whole fleet dipped into a long hollow, and presently the leader rose slowly up over the ridge, and then slid over the slope, like a sail winging down the broad back of a surge. So they made their way along over the rolling sweep of the distance.

"Beautiful!" said Brent. "See how the white canvas goldens in this rich October haze. Such scenes are the poetry of prairie life."

"I am too sorry for the crews, to enjoy the sunlit sails."

"Yes, the safer their voyage, the surer their wreck in that gulf of superstition beyond the mountains."

"Perhaps we waste sympathy. A man who has no more wit than to believe the trash they teach, has no business with anything but stupid drudgery. He will never suffer with discovering his faith to be a delusion."

"You may say that of a grown man; but think of the children, — to grow up in desecrated homes, and never know the close and tender influence of family nurture."

"The state owes them an interference and an education."

"So it does; and the women protection from polygamy, whether they will or no."

"Certainly. Polygamy makes woman a slave, either by force, or influence stronger than force. The state exists only to secure the blessings of liberty to every soul within its borders, and so must free her."

"Good logic, but not likely, quite yet, to guide legislation in our country."

"This is Sizzum's last train; if the women here are no more fascinating than their shabby sisters of its forerunners, we shall carry our hearts safe home."

"I cannot laugh about that," said Brent. "My old dread revives, whenever I see one of these caravans, that there may be in it some innocent girl too young to choose, carried off by a fanatic father or guardian. Think of the misery to a woman of any refinement!"

"But we have not seen any such."

Larrap and Murker here joined us, and, overhearing the last remarks, began to speak in a very disgusting tone of the women we had seen in previous trains.

"I don't wish to hear that kind of stuff," said Brent, turning sternly upon Larrap.

"It 's a free country, and I shall say what I blame please," the fellow said, with a grin.

"Then say it by yourself, and away from me."

"You 're blame squimmidge," said Larrap, and added a beastly remark.

Brent caught him by the collar, and gave him a shake.

Murker put his hand to a pistol and looked "Murder, if I dared!"

"None of that," said I, stepping before him.

Jake Shamberlain, seeing the quarrel, came running up. "Now, Brother Brent," said Jake, "no shindies in this here Garden of Paradise. If the gent has made a remark what teches you, apologies is in order, an he 'll make all far and squar."

Brent gave the greasy man a fling.

He went down. Then he got up, with a trace of Bridger's claim on his red shirt.

"Yer need n't be so blame hash with a feller," said he. "I did n't mean no offence."

"Very well. Learn to talk like a man, and not like a brute!" said Brent.

The two men walked off together, with black looks.

"You look disappointed, Shamberlain," said I. "Did you expect a battle?"

"Ther 's no fight in them fellers," said Jake; "but ef they can serve you a mean trick they 'll do it; and they 're ambushin' now to look in the dixonary and see what it is. You 'd better keep the lariats of that black and that gray tied round your legs to-night, and every good horse-thief night while they 're along. They may be jolly dogs, and let their chances slide at cards, but my notion is they 're layin' low for bigger hauls."

"Good advice, Jake; and so we will."

By this time the head wagons of Elder Sizzum's train had crept down upon the level near us. For the length of a long mile behind, the serpentine line held its way. On the yellow rim of the world, with softened outlines against the hazy horizon, the rear wagons were still climbing up into view. The caravan lay like a

slowly writhing hydra over the land. Along its snaky bends, where dragon-wings should be, were herds of cattle, plodding beside the "trailing-footed" teams, and little companies of Saints lounging leisurely toward their evening's goal, their unbuilt hostelry on the plain.

Presently the hydra became a two-headed monster. The foremost wagon bent to the right, the second led off to the left. Each successor, as it came to the point of divergence, filed to the right or left alternately. The split creature expanded itself. The two wings moved on over a broad grassy level north of the fort, describing in regular curve a great ellipse, a third of a mile long, half as much across.

On either flank the march was timed and ordered with the precision of practice. This same manœuvre had been repeated every day of the long journey. Precisely as the foremost teams met at the upper end of the curve, the two hindmost were parting at the lower. The ellipse was complete. It locked itself top and bottom. The train came to a halt. Every wagon of the two hundred stopped close upon the heels of its file leader.

A tall man, half pioneer, half deacon, in dress and mien, galloped up and down the ring. This was Sizzum, so the by-standers informed us. At a signal from him, the oxen, two and three yoke

to a wagon, were unyoked, herded, and driven off to wash the dust from their protestant nostrils, and graze over the russet prairie. They huddled along, a great army, a thousand strong. Their brown flanks grew ruddy with the low sunshine. A cloud of golden dust rose and hung over them. The air was loud with their lowing. Relieved from their drags, the herd frisked away with unwieldy gambolling. We turned to the camp, that improvised city in the wilderness.

Nothing could be more systematic than its arrangement. Order is welcome in the world. Order is only second to beauty. It is, indeed, the skeleton of beauty. Beauty seeks order, and becomes its raiment. Every great white-hooded, picturesque wagon of the Mormon caravan was in its place. The tongue of each rested on the axle of its forerunner, or was ranged upon the grass beneath. The ellipse became a fort and a corral. Within, the cattle could be safely herded. Marauding Redskins would gallop about in vain. Nothing stampedable there. Scalping Redskins, too, would be baffled. They could not make a dash through the camp, whisk off a scalp, and vanish untouched. March and encampment both had been marshalled with masterly skill.

"Sizzum," Brent avowed to me, *sotto voce*, "may be a blind guide with ditchward tendencies in faith. He certainly knows how to handle

his heretics in the field. I have seen old tacticians, Maréchales and Feldzeugmeisters, in Europe, with El Dorado on each shoulder, and Golconda on the left breast, who would have tied up that train into knots that none of them would be Alexander enough to cut."

CHAPTER IX.

SIZZUM AND HIS HERETICS.

No sooner had this nomad town settled itself quietly for the night, than a town-meeting collected in the open of the amphitheatre.

"Now, brethren," says Shamberlain to us, "ef you want to hear exhortin' as runs without stoppin', step up and listen to the Apossle of the Gentiles. Prehaps," and here Jake winked perceptibly, "you 'll be teched, and want to jine, and prehaps you wont. Ef you 're docyle you 'll be teched, ef you 're bulls of Bashan you wont be teched."

"How did you happen to be converted yourself, Jake?" Brent asked. "You 've never told me."

"Why, you see I was naturally of a religious nater, and I 've tried 'em all, but I never fell foul of a religion that had real proved miracles, till I seed a man, born dumb, what was cured by the Prophet Joseph looking down his throat and tellin' his palate to speak up, — and it did speak up, did that there palate, and went on talkin' most

oncommon. It 's onbeknown tongues it talks, suthin like gibberidge ; but Joseph said that was how the tongues sounded in the Apossles' time to them as had n't got the interruption of tongues. I struck my flag to that there miracle. I 'd seen 'em gettin' up the sham kind, when I was to the Italian convent, and I knowed the fourth-proof article. I may talk rough about this business, but Brother Brent knows I 'm honest about it."

Jake led us forward, and stationed us in posts of honor before the crowd of auditors.

Presently Sizzum appeared. He had taken time to tone down the pioneer and develop the deacon in his style, and a very sleek personage he had made of himself. He was clean shaved; clean shaving is a favorite coxcombry of the deacon class. His long black hair, growing rank from a muddy skin, was sleekly put behind his ears. A large white blossom of cravat expanded under his nude, beefy chin, and he wore a black dress-coat, creased with its recent packing. Except that his pantaloons were thrust into boots with the maker's name (Abel Cushing, Lynn, Mass.) stamped in gold on a scarlet morocco shield in front, he was in correct go-to-meetin' costume, — a Chadband of the plains.

He took his stand, and began to fulmine over the assemblage. His manner was coarse and overbearing, with intervals of oily persuasive-

ness. He was a big, powerful man, without one atom of delicacy in him, — a fellow who never could take a flower or a gentle heart into his hand without crushing it by a brutal instinct. A creature with such an amorphous beak of a nose, such a heavy-lipped mouth, and such wilderness of jaw, could never perceive the fine savor of any delicate thing. Coarse joys were the only joys for such a body; coarse emotions, the pleasures of force and domination, the only emotions crude enough for such a soul.

His voice was as repulsive as his mien and manner. That badly modelled nose had an important office in his oratory. Through it he hailed his auditors to open their hearts, as a canal-boatman hails the locks with a canal horn of bassoon calibre. But sometimes, when he wished to be seductive, his sentences took the channel of his mouth, and his great lips rolled the words over like fat morsels. Pah! how the recollection of the fellow disgusts me! And yet he had an unwholesome fascination, which compelled us to listen. I could easily understand how he might overbear feeble minds, and wheedle those that loved flattery. He had some education. Travel had polished his base metal, so that it shone well enough to deceive the vulgar or the credulous. He did not often allow himself the broad coarseness of his brother preachers in the church.

Shall I let him speak for himself? Does any one wish to hear the inspirations of the last faith humanity has chosen for its guide?

No. Such travesty of true religion is very sorry comedy, very tragical farce. Vulgar rant and cant, and a muddle of texts and dogmas, are disgusting to hear, and would be weariness to repeat.

Sizzum's sermon suited his mixed character. He was Aaron and Joshua, high-priest and captain combined. He made his discourse bulletin for to-day, general orders for to-morrow. He warned against the perils of disobedience. He raved of the joys and privileges of Latter-Day Saintship on earth and in heaven. He heaped vindictive and truculent anathemas upon Gentiles. He gave his audience to understand that he held the keys of the kingdom; if they yielded to him without question, they were safe in life and eternity; if they murmured, they were cast into outer darkness. It was terrible to see the man's despotism over his proselytes. A rumble of Amens from the crowd greeted alike every threat and every promise.

Sizzum's discourse lasted half an hour. He dismissed his audience with an Amen, and an injunction to keep closer to the train on the march to-morrow, and not be "rabbling off to catch grasshoppers because they were bigger and handsomer than the Lancashire kind."

"And this is one of the religions of the nineteenth century, and such a man is its spokesman," said Brent to me, as the meeting broke up, and we strolled off alone to inspect the camp.

"It is a shame to all churches that they have not trained men to judge of evidence, and so rendered such a delusion impossible."

"But Christianity tolerates, and ever reveres, myths and mythic histories; and such toleration and reverence offer premiums on the invention of new mythologies like this."

"We, in our churches, teach that phenomena can add authority to truth; we necessarily invite miracle-mongers, Joe Smiths, Pio Nonos, to produce miracles to sustain lies."

"I suppose," said Brent, "that superstition must be the handmaid of religion, except in minds very holy, or very brave and thorough in study. By and by, when mankind is educated to know that theology is a science, to be investigated and tested like a science, Mormonism and every like juggle will become forever impossible."

"Certainly; false religions always pretend to a supernatural origin and a fresh batch of mysteries. Let Christianity discard its mysteries, and impostors will have no educated credulity to aid them."

So Brent and I commented upon the Sizzum

heresy and its mouthpiece. We abhorred the system, and were disgusted with its apostle, as a tempter and a knave. Yet we could not feel any close personal interest in the class he deluded. They seemed too ignorant and doltish to need purer spiritual food.

Bodily food had been prepared by the women while the men listened to Sizzum's grace before meat. A fragrance of baking bread had pervaded the air. A thousand slices of fat pork sizzled in two hundred frying-pans, and water boiled for two hundred coffee or tea pots. Saints cannot solely live on sermons.

Brent and I walked about to survey the camp. We stopped wherever we found the emigrants sociable, and chatted with them. They were all eager to know how much length of journey remained.

"We 're comin' to believe, some of us," said an old crone, with a wrinkle for every grumble of her life, "that we 're to be forty year in the wilderness, like the old Izzerullites. I would n't have come, Samwell, if I 'd known what you was bringin' me to."

"There 's a many of us would n't have come, mother," rejoined "Samwell," a cowed man of anxious look, "if we 'd known as much as we do now."

Samwell glanced sadly at his dirty, travel-worn

children, at work at mud pies and dust *vol-au-vents*. His dowdy wife broke off the colloquy by announcing, in a tone that she must have learned from a rattlesnake, that the loaf was baked, the bacon was fried, and supper should n't wait for anybody's talking.

All the emigrants were English. Lancashire their accent and dialect announced, and Lancashire they told us was their home in the old step-mother country.

Step-mother, indeed, to these her children! No wonder that they had found life at home intolerable! They were the poorest class of towns-people from the great manufacturing towns, — penny tradesmen, indoor craftsmen, factory operatives, — a puny, withered set of beings; hardly men, if man means strength; hardly women, if woman means beauty. Their faces told of long years passed in the foul air of close shops, or work-rooms, or steamy, oily, flocculent mills. All work and no play had been their history. No holidays, no green grass, no flowers, no freshness, — nothing but hard, ill-paid drudgery, with starvation standing over the task and scourging them on. There were children among them already aged and wrinkled, ancient as the crone, Samwell's mother, for any childish gayety they showed. Poor things! they had been for years their twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours at work in

stifling mills, when they should have been tumbling in the hay, chasing butterflies, expanding to sunshine and open air.

"We have not seen," said Brent, "one hearty John Bull, or buxom Betsy Bull, in the whole caravan."

"They look as if husks and slops had been their meat and drink, instead of beef and beer."

"Beef and beer belong to fellows that have red in their cheeks and guffaws in their throats, not to these lean, pale, dreary wretches."

"The saints' robes seem as sorry as their persons," said I. "No watchman on the hill-tops of their Sion will hail, 'Who are these in bright array?' when they heave in sight!"

"They have a right to be way-worn, after their summer of plodding over these dusty wastes."

"Here comes a group in gayer trim. See! — actually flounces and parasols!"

Several young women of the Blowsalind order, dressed in very incongruous toggery of stained and faded silks, passed us. They seemed to be on a round of evening visits, and sheltered their tanned faces against the October sunshine with ancient fringed parasols. Their costume had a queer effect in the camp of a Mormon caravan at Fort Bridger. They were in good spirits, and went into little panics when they saw Brent in his Indian rig, and then into "Lor me!" and

"Bless us!" when the supposed Pawnee was discovered to be a handsome pale-face.

"Perhaps we waste sympathy," said Brent, "on these people. Why are not they better off here, and likely to be more comfortable in Utah than in the slums of Manchester?"

"Drudgery for drudgery, slavery for slavery, barren as the Salt Lake country is, and rough the lot of pioneers, I have no doubt they will be. But then the religion!"

"I do not defend that; but what has England's done for them to make them regret it? Of what use to these poor proletaires have the cathedrals been, or the sweet country churches, or the quiet cloisters of Oxford and Cambridge? I cannot wonder that they have given an easy belief to Mormonism, — an energetic, unscrupulous propagandism, offering escape from poverty and social depression, offering acres for the mere trouble of occupying; promising high thrones in heaven, and on earth also, if the saints will only gather, march back, and take possession of their old estates in Illinois and Missouri."

We had by this time approached the upper end of the ellipse. Sizzum, as quartermaster, had done his duty well. The great blue land-arks, each roofed with its hood of white canvas stretched on hoops, were in stout, serviceable order, wheels, axles, and bodies.

Within these nomad cottages order or chaos reigned, according to the tenants. Some people seem only to know the value of rubbish. They guard old shoes, old hats, cracked mugs, battered tins, as articles of *virtu*. Some of the wagons were crowded with such cherished trash. Some had been lightened of such burdens by the wayside, and so were snug and orderly nestling-places; but the rat's-nests quite outnumbered the wren's-nests.

A small, neat wagon stood near the head of the train. We might have merely glanced at it, and passed by, as we had done elsewhere along the line; but, as we approached, our attention was caught by Murker and Larrap. They were nosing about, prying into the wagon, from a little distance. When they caught sight of us, they turned and skulked away.

"What are those vermin about?" said Brent.

"Selecting, perhaps, a Mormoness to kidnap to-night, or planning a burglary."

"I hate to loathe any one as I loathe those fellows. I have known brutes enough in my life to have become hardened or indifferent by this time, but these freshen my disgust every time I see them."

"I thought we had come to a crisis with them this afternoon, when you collared Larrap."

"You remember my presentiments about them

the night they joined us. I am afraid they will yet serve us a shabby trick. Their 'dixonary,' as Shamberlain called it, of rascality is an unabridged edition."

"Such carrion creatures should not be allowed about such a pretty cage."

"It is, indeed, a pretty cage. Some neater-handed Phyllis than we have seen has had the arranging of the household gear within."

"Yes; the mistress of this rolling mansion has not lost her domestic ambition. This is quite the model wagon of the train. Refinement does not disdain Sizzum's pilgrims; as *ecce signum* here!"

"The pretty cage has its bird,—pretty too, perhaps. See! there is some one behind that shawl screen at the back of the wagon."

"The bird has divined Murker and Larrap, and is hiding, probably."

"Come; we have stared long enough; let us walk on."

CHAPTER X.

"ELLEN! ELLEN!"

We were turning away from the pretty cage, in order not to frighten the bird, pretty or not, when an oldish man, tending his fire at the farther side of the wagon, gave us "Good evening!"

There is a small but ancient fraternity in the world, known as the Order of Gentlemen. It is a grand old order. A poet has said that Christ founded it; that he was "the first true gentleman that ever lived."

I cannot but distinguish some personages of far-off antiquity as worthy members of this fellowship. I believe it coeval with man. But Christ stated the precept of the order, when he gave the whole moral law in two clauses, — Love to God, and Love to the neighbor. Whoever has this precept so by heart that it shines through into his life, enters without question into the inner circles of the order.

But to protect itself against pretenders, this brotherhood, like any other, has its formulas, its passwords, its shibboleths, even its uniform.

These are external symbols. With some, the symbol is greater than the thing signified. The thing signified, the principle, is so beautiful, that the outward sign is enough to glorify any character. The demeanor of a gentleman — being art, the expression of an idea in form — can become property, like any art. It may be an heirloom in an ancient house, like the portrait of the hero who gave a family name and fame, like the portrait of the maiden martyr or the faithful wife who made that name beloved, that fame poetry, to all ages. This precious inheritance, like anything fine and tender, has sometimes been treated with over care. Guardians have been so solicitous that a neophyte should not lose his inherited rank in the order of gentlemen, that they have forgotten to make a man of him. Culturing the flower, they have not thought to make the stalk sturdy, or even healthy. The demeanor of a gentleman may be possessed by a weakling, or even inherited by one whose heart is not worthy of his manners.

The formulas of this order are not edited; its passwords are not syllabled; its uniform was never pictured in a fashion-plate, or so described that a snob could go to his tailor, and say, "Make me the habit of a gentleman." But the brothers know each other unerringly wherever they meet; be they of the inner shrine, gentlemen heart and

life; be they of the outer court, gentlemen in feeling and demeanor.

No disguise delays this recognition. No strangeness of place and circumstances prevents it. The men meet. The magnetism passes between them. All is said without words. Gentleman knows gentleman by what we name instinct. But observe that this thing, instinct, is character in its finest, keenest, largest, and most concentrated action. It is the spirit's touch.

John Brent and I, not to be deemed intruders, were walking away from the neat wagon at the upper end of the Mormon camp, when an oldish man beside the wagon gave us "Good evening."

"Good evening, gentlemen," said the wan, gray-haired, shadowy man before us.

And that was all. It was enough. We knew each other; we him and he us. Men of the same order, and so brothers and friends.

Here was improbability that made interest at once. Greater to us than to him. We were not out of place. He was, and in the wrong company.

Brent and I looked at each other. We had half divined our new brother's character at the first glance.

How legible are some men! All, indeed, that have had, or are to have, a history, are books in a well-known tongue to trained decipherers. But some tragedies stare at us with such an earnest

dreariness from helpless faces, that we read with one look. We turn away sadly. We have comprehended the whole history of past sorrow; we prophesy the coming despair.

I will not now anticipate the unfinished, melancholy story we read in this new face. An Englishman, an unmistakable gentleman, and in a Mormon camp, — there was tragedy enough. Enough to whisper us both to depart, and not grieve ourselves with vain pity; enough to imperatively command us to stay and see whether we, as true knights, foes of wrong, succorers of feebleness, had any business here. The same instinct that revealed to us one of our order where he ought not to be, warned us that he might have claims on us, and we duties toward him.

We returned his salutation.

We were about to continue the conversation, when he opened a fresh page of the tragedy. He called, in a voice too sad to be querulous, — a flickering voice, never to be fed vigorous again by any lusty hope, —

"Ellen! Ellen!"

"What, father dear?"

"The water boils. Please bring the tea, my child."

"Yes, father dear."

The answers came from within the wagon.

They were the song of the bird whose nest we had approved. A sad song. A woman's voice can tell a long history of sorrow in a single word. This wonderful instrument, our voice, alters its *timbre* with every note it yields, as the face changes with every look, until at last the dominant emotion is master, and gives quality to tone and character to expression.

It was a sad, sweet voice that answered the old gentleman's call. A lady's voice, — the voice of a high-bred woman, delicate, distinct, self-possessed. That sound itself was tragedy in such a spot. No transitory disappointment or distress ever imprinted its mark so deeply upon a heart's utterance. The sadness here had been life-long, had begun long ago, in the days when childhood should have gone thoughtless, or, if it noted the worth of its moments, should have known them as jubilee every one; — a sadness so habitual that it had become the permanent atmosphere of the life. The voice announced the person, and commanded all the tenderest sympathy brother-man can give to any sorrowful one in the sisterhood of woman.

And yet this voice, that with so subtle a revelation gave us the key of the unseen lady's history, asked for no pity. There was no moan in it, and no plaint. Not even a murmur, nor any rebel bitterness or sourness for defeat. The undertone

was brave. If not hopeful, still resolute. No despair could come within sound of that sweet music of defiance. The tones that challenge Fate were subdued away; but not the tones that calmly answer, "No surrender," to Fate's untimely pæan. It was a happy thing to know that, sorrowful as the life might be, here was an impregnable soul.

There was a manner of half command and half dependence in the father's call to his daughter, — a weak nature, still asserting the control it could not sustain over a stronger. And in her response an indulgence of this feeble attempt at authority.

Does all this seem much to find in the few simple words we had heard? The analysis might be made infinitely more thorough. Every look, tone, gesture of a man is a symbol of his complete nature. If we apply the microscope severely enough, we can discern the fine organism by which the soul sends itself out in every act of the being. And the more perfectly developed the creature, the more significant, and yet the more mysterious, is every habit, and every motion mightier than habit, of body or soul.

In an instant, the lady so sweetly heralded stepped from beneath the hood of the wagon, and sprang to the ground in more busy and cheerful guise than her voice had promised.

Again the same subtle magnetism between her and us. We could not have been more convinced of her right to absolute respect and consideration if she had entered to us in the dusky light of a rich drawing-room, or if we had been presented in due form at a picnic of the grandest world, with far other scenery than this of a "desart idle," tenanted for the moment by a Mormon caravan. The lady, like her father, felt that we were gentlemen, and therefore would comprehend her. She saluted us quietly. There was in her manner a tacit and involuntary protest against circumstances, just enough for dignity. A vulgar woman would have snatched up and put on clumsily a have-seen-better-days air. This lady knew herself, and knew that she could not be mistaken for other than she was. Her base background only made her nobility more salient.

She did not need any such background, nor the contrast of the drudges and meretricious frights of the caravan. She could have borne full light without any shade. A woman fit to stand peer among the peerless.

We could not be astonished at this apparition. We had divined her father rightly, as it afterward proved. Her voice has already half disclosed her character. Let her face continue the development. We had already heard her called

by her Christian name, Ellen. That seemed to bring us, from the beginning, into a certain intimacy with the woman as woman, sister, daughter, and to subordinate the circumstances of the life, to be in future suggested by the social name, to the life itself.

Ellen, then, the unknown lady of the Mormon caravan, was a high-bred beauty. Englishwomen generally lack the fine edge of such beauty as hers. She owed her dark fairness, perhaps, to a Sicilian bride, whom her Norman ancestor had pirated away from some old playground of Proserpine, and brought with him to England when he came there as conqueror. Her nose was not quite aquiline.

Positive aquiline noses should be cut off. They are ugly; they are immoral; they are sensual; they love money; they enjoy others' misery. The worst birds have hooked beaks; and so the worst men, the eagles and vultures of the race. Cut off the beaks; they betoken a cruel pounce, a greedy clutch, and a propensity to carrion. Save the exceptions, but extirpate the brood.

This lady's nose was sensitive and proud. It is well when a face has its share of pride in the nose. Then the lips can give themselves solely to sweetness and archness. Besides, pride, or, if the word is dreaded, a conscious and resolute personality, should be the characteristic of a face.

The nose should express this quality. Above, the eyes may changefully flash intelligence; below, the mouth may smile affection; the cheeks may give balance and equability; the chin may show the cloven dimple of a tender and many-sided, or the point of a single-hearted and concentrated nature; the brow, a non-committal feature, may look wise or wiseacre; but every one of them is only tributary to the nose, standing royally in the midst, and with dignity presiding over its wayward realm.

Halt! My business is to describe a heroine,— not to discuss physiognomy, with her face for a type.

As I said, her nose was sensitive and proud. There might have once been scorn in the curve of her nostril. Not now. Sorrow and pity had educated away the scorn, as they had the tones of challenge from her voice. Firmness, self-respect, latent indignation, remained untouched. A strong woman, whose power was intense and passionate. Calm, till the time came, and then flame. Beware of arousing her! Not that there was revenge in her face. No; no stab or poison there. But she was a woman to die by an act of will, rather than be wronged. She was one who could hold an insulter by a steady look, while she grew paler, paler, purer, purer, with a more unearthly pureness, until she had crushed the boiling blood

back into her heart, and stood before the wretch white and chill as a statue, marble-dead.

What a woman to meet in a Mormon caravan! And yet how able to endure whatever a dastard Fate might send to crush her there!

Her hair was caught back, and severely chided out of its wish to rebel and be as beautiful as it knew was its desert. It was tendril hair, black enough to show blackness against Fulano's shoulder. Chide her locks as she might, they still insisted upon flinging out here and there a slender curling token of their gracefulness, to prove what it might be if she would but let them have their sweet and wilful will.

Her eyes were gray, with violet touches. Her eyebrows defined and square. If she had had passionate or pleading dark eyes, — the eyes that hardly repress their tears for sorrow or for joy, — and the temperament that such eyes reveal, she would long ago have fevered or wept herself to death. No woman could have looked at the disgusts of that life of hers through tears, and lived. The gray eyes meant steadiness, patience, hope without flinching, and power to master fate, or if not to master, to defy.

She was somewhat pale, thin, and sallow. Plodding wearily and drearily over those dusty wastes toward exile could not make her a merry Nut-Brown Maid. Only her thin, red lips proved

that there were still blushes lurking out of sight.

A mature woman; beyond girlhood, body and soul. With all her grave demeanor, she could not keep down the wiles of gracefulness that ever bubbled to the surface. If she could but be her happy self, what a fair world she would suddenly create about her!

She was dressed in rough gray cloth, as any lady might be for a journey. She was evidently one whose resolute neatness repels travel-stains. After the tawdry, draggled silks of the young women we had just seen, her simplicity was charmingly fresh. Could she and they be of the same race of beings? They were apart as far as coarse from fine, as silvern from brazen. To see her here among this horde was a horror in itself. No horror the less, that she could not blind herself to her position and her fate. She could not fail to see what a bane was beauty here. That she had done so was evident. She had essayed by severe plainness of dress to erase the lady from her appearance. A very idle attempt! There she was, do what she would, her beauty triumphing over all the wrong she did to it for duty's sake.

All these observations I made with one glance. Description seems idle when one remembers how eyes can see at a flash what it took æons to prepare for and a lifetime to form.

Brent and I exchanged looks. This was the result of our fanciful presentiments. Here was visible the woman we had been dreading to find. It still seemed an impossible vision. I almost believed that the old gentleman's blanket would rise with him and his daughter, like the carpet of Fortunatus, and transport them suddenly away, leaving us beside a Mormon wagon in Sizzum's camp and in the presence of a frowzy family cooking a supper of pork.

I looked again and again. It was all real. There was the neat, comfortable wagon; there was the feeble, timid old gentleman, pottering about; there was this beautiful girl, busy with her tea, and smiling tenderly over her father.

CHAPTER XI.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

"Come, gentlemen," said the father, in a lively way. "We are all campaigners. Sit down and take a cup of tea with us. No ceremony. *A la guerre, comme à la guerre.* I cannot give you Sèvres porcelain. I am afraid even my delf is a little cracked; but we 'll fancy it whole and painted with roses. Now plenty of tea, Ellen dear. Guests are too rare not to be welcomed with our very best. Besides, I expect Brother Sizzum, after his camp duties are over."

It was inexpressibly dreary, this feeble conviviality. In the old gentleman's heart it was plain that disappointment and despondency were the permanent tenants. His gayety seemed only a mockery, — a vain essay to delude himself into the thought that he could be happy even for a moment. His voice, even while he jested, was hollow and sorrowful. There was a trepidation in his manner, half hope, half fear, as if he dreaded that some one would presently announce to him a desperate disaster, or fancied

that some sudden piece of good luck was about to befall him, and he must be all attention lest it pass to another. Nothing of the anxiety of a guilty man about him, — of one who hears pursuit in the hum of a cricket or the buzz of a bee; only the uneasiness of one flying forever from himself, and hoping that some chance bliss will hold his flight and give him a moment's forgetfulness.

We of course accepted the kindly invitation. Civilization was the novelty to us. Tea with a gentleman and lady was a privilege quite un heard of. We should both have been ready to devote ourselves to a woman far less charming than our hostess. But here was a pair — the beautiful daughter, the father astray — whom we must know more of. I felt myself taking a very tender interest in their welfare, revolving plans in my mind to learn their history, and, if it might be done, to persuade the father out of his delusion.

"Now, gentlemen," said our friend, playing his part with mild gracefulness, like an accomplished host; "sit down on the blankets. I cannot give you grand arm-chairs, as I might have done once in Old England, and hope to do if you ever come to see me at my house in Deseret. But really we are forgetting something very important. We have not been formally introduced.

Bless me! that will never do. Allow me gentlemen to present myself, Mr. Hugh Clitheroe, late of Clitheroe Hall, Clitheroe, Lancashire,— a good old name, you see. And this is my daughter, Miss Ellen Clitheroe. These gentlemen, my dear, will take the liberty to present themselves to you."

"Mr. Richard Wade, late of California; Mr. John Brent, a roving Yankee. Pray let me aid you Miss Clitheroe."

Brent took the teakettle from her hand, and filled the teapot. This little domestic office opened the way to other civil services.

It was like a masquerading scene. My handsome friend and the elegant young lady bending together over four cracked cups and as many plates of coarse earthenware, spread upon a shawl, on the dry grass. The circle of wagons, the groups of Saints about their supper fires, the cattle and the fort in the distance, made a strangely unreal background to a woman whose proper place, for open air, was in the ancient avenue of some ancestral park, or standing on the terrace to receive groups of brilliant ladies coming up the lawn. But character is superior to circumstance, and Miss Clitheroe's self-possession controlled her scenery. Her place, wherever it was, became her right place. The prairie, and the wagons, and the rough accessories, gave force to her refinement.

Mr. Clitheroe regarded the pair with a dreamy pleasure.

"Quite patriarchal, is it not?" said he to me. "I could fancy myself Laban, and my daughter Rachel. There is a trace of the Oriental in her looks. We only need camels, and this would be a scene worthy of the times of the Eastern patriarchs and the plains of the old Holy Land. We of the Latter Day Church think much of such associations; more I suppose than you world's people."

And here the old gentleman looked at me uneasily, as if he dreaded lest I should fling in a word to disturb his illusion, or perhaps ridicule his faith.

"I have often been reminded here of the landscape of Palestine," said I, "and those bare regions of the Orient. Your friends in Utah, too, refresh the association by their choice of Biblical names."

"Yes; we love to recall those early days when Jehovah was near to his people, a chosen people, who suffered for faith's sake, as we have done. In fact, our new faith and new revelation are only revivals and continuations of the old. Our founder and our prophets give us the doctrines of the earliest Church, with a larger light and a surer confidence."

He said this with the manner of one who is

repeating for the thousandth time a lesson, a formula which he must keep constantly before him, or its effect will be gone. In fact, his resolute assertion of his creed showed the weak belief. As he paused, he looked at me again, hoping, as I thought, that I would dispute or differ, and so he might talk against contradiction, a far less subtle enemy than doubt. As I did not immediately take up the discussion, he passed lightly, and with the air of one whose mind does not love to be consecutive, to another subject.

"Hunters, are you not?" said he, turning to Brent. "I am astonished that more of you American gentlemen do not profit by this great buffalo-preserve and deer-park. We send you a good shot occasionally from England."

"Yes," said my friend. "I had a capital shot, and capital fellow too for comrade, this summer, in the mountains. A countryman of yours, Sir Biron Biddulph. He was wretchedly out of sorts, poor fellow, when we started. Fresh air and bold life quite set him up. A month's galloping with the buffalo, and a fortnight over the cliffs, after the big-horn, would 'put a soul under the ribs of death.' Biddulph left me to go home, a new man. I find that he has stayed in Utah, for more hunting, I suppose."

Brent was kneeling at Miss Clitheroe's feet,

holding a cup for her to fill. He turned toward her father as he spoke. At the name of Biddulph, I saw that her red lips' promise of possible blushes was no false one.

"Ah!" thought I; "here, perhaps, is the romance of the Baronet's history. No wonder he found England too narrow for him, if this noble woman would not smile! Perhaps he has stopped in Utah to renew his suit, or volunteer his services. A strange drama! with new elements of interest coming in."

I could not refrain from studying Miss Clitheroe with some curiosity as I thought thus.

She perceived my inquisitive look. She made some excuse, and stepped into the wagon.

"Biddulph!" said the father. "Ellen dear, Mr. Brent knows our old neighbor, Biron Biddulph. O, she has disappeared, 'on hospitable thoughts intent.' I shall be delighted to meet an old friend in Deseret. We knew him intimately at home in better days, — no! in those days I blindly deemed better, before I was illumined with the glories of the new faith, and saw the New Jerusalem with eyes of hope."

Miss Clitheroe rejoined us. She had been absent only a moment, but, as I could see, long enough for tears, and the repression of tears. I should have pitied her more; but she seemed, in her stout-hearted womanhood, above pity, asking

no more than the sympathy the brave have always ready for the sorrowful brave.

Evidently to change the subject, she engaged Brent again in his tea-table offices. I looked at that passionate fellow with some anxiety. He was putting a large share of earnestness in his manner of holding cups and distributing hard-tack. Why so much fervor and devotion, my friend? Seems to me I have seen cavaliers before, aiding beauties with like ardor, on the carpet, in the parlor, over the Sèvres and the silver. And when I saw it, I thought, "O cavalier! O beauty! beware, or do not beware, just as you deem best, but know that there is peril! For love can improvise out of the steam of a teapot a romance as big and sudden and irrepressible as the Afreet that swelled from the casket by the sea-shore in the Arabian story.

We sat down upon the grass for our picnic. I should not invite the late Mr. Watteau, or even the extant Mr. Diaz, to paint us. The late Mr. Watteau's heroes and heroines were silk and satin Arcadians; they had *valets de chambre* and *filles de chambre*, and therefore could be not fully heroes and heroines, if proverbs be true. The present Mr. Diaz, too, charming and pretty as he is, has his place near parterres and terraces, within the reach of rake and broom. Mr. Horace Vernet is equally inadmissible, since

that martial personage does not comprehend a desert, except with a foreground of blood, smoke, baggy red pantaloons, and *mon General* on a white horse giving the Legion of Honor to *mon enfant* on his last legs. But I must wait for some artist with the gayety of Mr. Watteau, the refinement of Mr. Diaz, and the soldierly force of Mr. Vernet, who can perceive the poetry of American caravan-life, and can get the heroine of our picnic at Fort Bridger to give him a sitting. Art is unwise not to perceive the materials it neglects in such scenes.

Mr. Clitheroe grew more and more genial as we became better acquainted. He praised the sunshine and the climate. England had nothing like it, so our host asserted. The atmosphere of England crushed the body, as its moral atmosphere repressed perfect freedom of thought and action.

"Yes, gentlemen," said he, "I have escaped at last into the region I have longed for. I mean to renew my youth in the Promised Land,—to have my life over again, with a store of the wisdom of age."

Then he talked pleasantly of the incidents of his journey,—an impressible being, taking easily the color of the moment, like a child. He liked travel, he said; it was dramatic action and scene-shifting, without the tragedy or the over-absorb-

ing interest of dramatic plot. He liked to have facts come to him without being laboriously sought for, as they do in travel. The eye, without trouble, took in whatever appeared, and at the end of the day a traveller found himself expanded and educated without knowing it. There was a fine luxury in this, for a mature man to learn again, just as a child does, and find his lessons play. He liked this novel, adventurous life.

"Think of it, sir," he said, "I have seen real Indians, splendid fellows, all in their war-paint; just such as I used to read of with delight in your Mr. Fenimore's tales. And these prairies too, — I seem to have visited them already in the works of your charming Mr. Irving, — a very pleasant author, very pleasant indeed, and quite reminding me of our best essayists; though he has an American savor too. Mr. Irving, I think, did not come out so far as this. This region has never been described by any one with a poetic eye. My brethren in the Church of the Latter Day have their duties of stern apostleship; they cannot turn aside to the right hand nor to the left. But when the Saints are gathered in, they will begin to see the artistic features of their land. Those Wind River Mountains — fine name, by the way — that I saw from the South Pass, — they seem to me quite an

ideal Sierra. Their blue edges and gleaming snow-peaks were great society for us as we came by. We are very fond of scenery, sir, my daughter and I, and this breadth of effect is very impressive after England. England, you know, sir, is tame, — a snug little place, but quite a prison for people of scope. Lancashire, my old home, is very pretty, but not grand; quite the contrary. I have grown really quite tired of green grass, and well-kept lawns, and the shaved, beardless, effeminate look of my native country. This rough nature is masculine. It reminds me of the youth of the world. I like to be in the presence of strong forces. I am not afraid of the Orson feeling. Besides, in Lancashire, particularly, we never see the sun; we see smoke; we breathe smoke; smoke spoils the fragrance and darkens the hue of all our life. I hate chimneys, sir; I have seen great fortunes go up them. I might perhaps tell you something of my own experience in looking up a certain tall chimney not a hundred miles from Clitheroe, and seeing ancestral acres fly up it, and ancestral pictures and a splendid old mansion all going off in smoke. But you are a stranger, and do not care about hearing my old gossip. Besides, what is the loss of houses and lands, if one finds the pearl of great price, and wins the prophet's crown and the saint's throne?"

And here the gray-haired, pale, dreamy old gentleman paused, and a half-quenched fire glimmered in his eye. His childish, fanatical ambition stirred him, and he smiled with a look of triumph.

I was silent in speechless pity.

His daughter turned, and smiled with almost tearful tenderness upon her father.

"I have not heard you so animated for a long time, dear father," she said. "Mr. Wade seems quite to inspire you."

"Yes, my dear, he has been talking on many very interesting topics."

I had really done nothing except to bow, and utter those civil monosyllables which are the "Hear! hear!" of conversation.

If I had been silent, Brent had not. While the garrulous old gentleman was prattling on at full speed, I had heard all the time my friend's low, melodious voice, as he talked to the lady. He was a trained artist in the fine art of sympathy. His own early sorrows had made him infinitely tender with all that suffer. To their hearts he came as one that had a right to enter, as one that knew their malady, and was commanded to lay a gentle touch of soothing there. It is a great power to have known the worst and bitterest that can befall the human life, and yet not be hardened. No sufferer can resist

the fine magnetism of a wise and unintrusive pity. It is as mild and healing as music by night to fevered sleeplessness.

The lady's protective armor of sternness was presently thrown aside. She perceived that she need not wear it against a man who was brother to every desolate soul, — sisterly indeed, so delicate was his comprehension of the wants of a woman's nature. In fact, both father and daughter, as soon as they discovered that we were ready to be their friends, met us frankly. It was easy to see, poor souls! that it was long since they had found any one fit company for them, any one whose presence could excite the care-beguiling exhilaration of worthy society. They savored the aroma of good-breeding with appetite.

CHAPTER XII.

A GHOUL AT THE FEAST.

Mr. Clitheroe's thoughts loved to recur to his native Lancashire, smoky though its air might be, and clean-shaved the grass of its lawns. I could not help believing that all the enthusiasm of this weak, gentle nature for the bleak plains and his pioneer life was a delusion. It would have been pretty talk for an after-dinner rhapsody at the old mansion he had spoken of in England. There, as he paced with me, a guest, after pointing out the gables, wings, oriels, porches, that had clustered about the old building age after age, he might have waved it away into a vision, and spoken with disdain of civilization, and with delight of the tent and the caravan. It had the flavor of Arcady, and the Golden Age, and the simple childhood of the world, when an enthusiastic Rousseauist Marquis talked in '89 of the rights of man and universal fraternity; it would seem a crazy mockery if the same enthusiast had held the same strain a few years later, in the tumbril, as he rolled

slowly along through cruel crowds to the guillotine.

Speaking of Lancashire, we fell upon the subject of coal-mining. I was surprised to find that Mr. Clitheroe had a practical knowledge of that business. He talked for the first time without any of his dreamy, vague manner. His information was full and clear. He let daylight into those darksome pits.

"I am a miner, too," said I, "but only of gold, a baser and less honorable substance than coal. Your account has a professional interest to me. You talk like an expert."

"I ought to be. If I once saw half my fortune fly up a factory chimney, I saw another half bury itself in a coal-pit. I have been buried myself in one. I am not ashamed to say it; I have made daily bread for myself and my daughter with pick, shovel, and barrow, in a dark coal-mine, in the same county where I was once the head of the ancient gentry, and where I saw the noblest in the land proud to break my bread and drink my wine. I am not ashamed of it. No, I glory that in that black cavern, where daylight never looked, the brightness of the new faith found me, and showed the better paths where I now walk, and shall walk upward and onward until I reach the earthly Sion first, and then the heavenly."

Again the old gentleman's eye kindled, and his chest expanded. What a tragic life he was hinting! My heart yearned toward him. I had never known what it was to have the guidance and protection of a father. Mine died when I was a child. I longed to find a compensation for my own want, — and a bitter one it had sometimes been, — in being myself the guardian of this errant wayfarer, launched upon lethal currents.

"Your faith is as bright as ever, Brother Hugh," said a rasping voice behind me, as Mr. Clitheroe was silent. "You are an example to us all. The Church is highly blessed in such an earnest disciple."

Elder Sizzum was the speaker. He smiled in a wolfish fashion over the group, and took his seat beside the lady, like a privileged guest.

"Ah, Brother Sizzum!" said Mr. Clitheroe, with a cheerless attempt at welcome, very different from the frank courtesy he had showed toward us, "we have been expecting you. Ellen dear, a cup of tea for our friend."

Miss Clitheroe rose to pour out tea for him. Sheep's clothing instantly covered the apostle's rather wolfish demeanor. He assumed a manner of gamesome, sheepish devotion. When he called her Sister Ellen, with a familiar, tender air, I saw painful blushes redden the lady's cheeks.

Brent noticed the pain and the blush. He looked away from the group toward the blue sierra far away to the south; a hard expression came into his face, such as I had not seen there since the old days of his battling with Swerger. Trouble ahead!

Sizzum's presence quenched the party. And, indeed, our late cheerfulness was untimely, at the best. It was mockery, — as if the Marquis should have sung merry chansons in the tumbril.

Miss Clitheroe at once grew cold and stern. Nothing could be more distant than her manner toward the saint. She treated him as a high-bred woman can treat a scrub, — sounding with every gesture, and measuring with every word, the ineffaceable gulf between them. Yet she was thoroughly civil as hostess. She even seemed to fight against herself to be friendly. But it was clear to a by-stander that she loathed the apostle. That she was not charmed with his society, even his coarse nature could not fail to discover. Anywhere else the scene would have been comic. Here he had the power. No escape; no refuge. That thrust all comedy out of the drama, and left only very hateful tragedy. Still it was a cruel semblance of comedy over a tragic under-plot, to see the Mormon's cringing approaches, and that exquisite creature's calm

rebuffs. Sizzum felt himself pinned in his proper place, and writhed there, with an evil look, that said he was noting all and treasuring all against his day of vengeance.

And the poor, feeble old father, — how all his geniality was blighted and withered away! He was no more the master of revels at a festival, but the ruined man, with a bailiff in disguise at his dinner-table. Querulous tones murmured in his voice. The decayed gentleman disappeared; the hapless fanatic took his place. Phrases of cant, and the peculiar Mormon slang and profanity, gave the color to his conversation. He appealed to Sizzum constantly. He was at once the bigoted disciple and the cowed slave. Toward his daughter his manner was sometimes timorously pleading, sometimes almost surly. Why could she not repress her disgust at the holy man, at least in the presence of strangers? — that seemed to be his feeling; and he strove to withdraw attention from her by an eager, trepidating attempt to please his master. In short, the vulgar, hard-headed knave had this weak, lost gentleman thoroughly in his power. Mr. Clitheroe was like a lamb whom the shepherd intends first to shear close, then to worry to death with curs, and at last to cut up into keebaubs.

Brent and I kept aloof as much as we might. We should only have insulted the chosen vessel,

and so injured our friends. Indeed, our presence seemed little welcome to Sizzum. He of course knew that the Gentiles saw through him, and despised him frankly. There is nothing more uneasy than a scrub hard at work to please a woman, while by-standers whom he feels to be his betters observe without interference. But we could not amuse ourselves with the scene; it sickened us more and more.

Sunset came speedily, — the delicious, dreamy sunset of October. In the tender regions of twilight, where the sky, so mistily mellow, met the blue horizon, the western world became a world of happy hope. Could it be that wrong and sin dwelt there in that valley far away among the mountains! Baseness where that glory rested! Foulness underneath that crescent moon! Could it be that there was one unhappy, one impure heart within the cleansing, baptismal flow of that holy light of evening!

With sunset, Elder Sizzum, after some oily vulgarisms of compliment to the lady, walked off on camp duty.

We also rose to take our leave. We must look after our horses.

Mr. Clitheroe's old manner returned the instant his spiritual guide left us.

"Pray come and see us again this evening, gentlemen," said he.

"We will certainly," said Brent, looking toward Miss Clitheroe for her invitation.

It did not come. And I, from my position as Chorus, thought, "She is wise not to encourage in herself or my friend this brief intimacy. Mormons will not seem any the better company to-morrow for her relapse into the society of gentlemen to-night."

"O yes!" said Mr. Clitheroe, interpreting Brent's look; "my daughter will be charmed to see you. To tell you the truth, our brethren in the camp are worthy people; we sympathize deeply in the faith; but they are not altogether in manners or education quite such as we have been sometimes accustomed to. It is one of the infamous wrongs of our English system of caste that it separates brother men, manners, language, thought, and life. We have as yet been able to have little except religious communion with our fellow-travellers toward the Promised Land, — except, of course, with Brother Sizzum, who is, as you see, quite a man of society, as well as an elect apostle of a great cause. We are quite selfish in asking you to repeat your visit. Besides the welcome we should give you for yourselves, we welcome you also as a novelty." And then he muttered, half to himself, "God forgive me for speaking after the flesh!"

"Come, Wade," said my friend. And he griped my arm almost savagely. "Until this evening then, Mr. Clitheroe."

As we moved away from the wagon, where the lady stood, so worn and sad, and yet so lovely, her poor father's only guard and friend, we met Murker and Larrap. They were sauntering about, prying into the wagons, inspecting the groups, making observations — that were perhaps only curiosity — with a base, guilty, burglarious look.

"He, he!" laughed Larrap, leering at Brent. "I'll be switched ef you're not sharp. You know where to look for the pooty gals, blowed ef yer don't!"

"Hold your tongue!" Brent made a spring at the fellow.

"No offence! no offence!" muttered he, shrinking back, with a cowardly, venomous look.

"Mind your business, and keep a civil tongue in your head, or there will be offence!" Brent turned and walked off in silence. Neither of us was yet ready to begin our talk on this evening's meeting.

Our horses, if not their masters, were quite ready for joyous conversation. They had encountered no pang in the region of Fort Bridger. Grass in plenty was there, and they neighed us good evening in their most dulcet tones.

They frisked about, and, neighing and frisking, informed us that, in their opinion, the world was all right, — a perfectly jolly place, with abundance to eat, little to do, and everybody a friend. A capital world! according to Pumps and Don Fulano. They felt no trouble, and saw none in store. Who would not be an animal and a horse, unless perchance an omnibus horse sprawling on the Russ pavement, or a family horse before a carryall, or in fact any horse in slavish position, as most horses are.

We shifted our little caballada to fresh grazing-spots sheltered by a brake. We meant to camp there apart from the Mormon caravan. The talk of our horses had not cheered us. We still busied ourselves in silence. Presently, as I looked toward the train, I observed two figures in the distance lurking about Mr. Clitheroe's wagon.

"See," said I; "there are those two gamblers again. I don't like such foul vultures hanging about that friendless dove. They look villains enough for any outrage."

"But they are powerless here."

"In the presence of a steadier villany they are. That foul Sizzum is quite sure of his prey. John Brent, what can be done? I do not know which I feel most bitterly for, the weary, deluded old gentleman, doubting his error, or that noble girl. Poor, friendless souls!"

"Friendless!" said Brent. "She has made a friend in me. And in you too, if you are the man I know."

"But what can we do?"

"I will never say that we can do nothing until she repels our aid. If she wants help, she must have it."

"Help! how?"

"I will find a way or make one. Sidney's thought is always good. You and I can never die in a better cause than this. And now, Dick, do not let us perplex ourselves with baseless talk and plans. We will see them again to-night, when Sizzum is not by. It cannot be that *she* is in sympathy with these wretches."

"No; that horrible ogre, Sizzum, is evidently disgusting to her; but here he has her in his den. It is stronger than any four walls in the world, — all this waste of desert."

"Don't speak of it; you sicken me."

Something more in earnest than the tenderest pity here. I saw that the sudden doom of love had befallen my friend. In fact, I have never been quite sure but that the same would have been my fate, if I had not seen him a step in advance, and so checked myself. His time had come. Mine had not. Will it ever?

But love here was next to despair. That consciousness quickened the passion. A man must

put his whole being into the cause, or the cause was hopeless, — must act intensely, as only a lover acts, or not at all.

I determined not to perplex myself yet with schemes. I knew my friend's bold genius and cool judgment. When he was ready to act, I would back him.

CHAPTER XIII.

JAKE SHAMBERLAIN'S BALL.

It grew dusk. Glimmering camp-fires marked the circle of the Mormon caravan. The wagons seemed each one, in the gloaming, a giant white nightcap of an ogress leaning over her coals. The world looked drowsy, and invited the pilgrims toward the Mecca of the new Thingamy to repose. They did not seem inclined to accept. The tramping and lowing cattle kept up a tumult like the noise of a far city. And presently another din!

As Brent and I approached the fort, forth issued Jake Shamberlain, with a drummer on this side and a fifer on that. "Pop goes the Weasel," the fifer blew. A tuneless bang resounded from the drum. If there was one thing these rival melodists scorned, time was that one thing. They might have been beating and blowing with the eight thousand miles of the globe's diameter between them, instead of Jake Shamberlain's person, for any consideration they showed to each other.

Jake, seeing us, backed out from between his orchestra, who continued on, beating and blowing in measureless content.

"We 're going to give a ball, gentlemen, and request the honor of your company in ten minutes, precisely. Kids not allowed on account of popular prejudice. Red-flannel shirts and boots with yaller tops is rayther the go fur dress."

"A ball, Jake! Where?"

"Why, in that rusty hole of old Bridger's. Some of them John Bulls has got their fiddles along. I allowed 't would pay to scare up a dance. Guess them gals wont be the wus fur a break-down or an old-fashioned hornpiper. They hain't seen much game along back, ef their looks tells the story. I never seed sech a down-heel lot."

Jake ran off after his music. We heard them, still disdaining time, march around the camp announcing the fandango.

"This helps us," said Brent. "Our friends, of course, will not join the riot. When the Mormons are fairly engaged, we will make our visit."

"It is a good night for a gallop," said I.

He nodded, but said nothing.

Presently Jake, still supported by his pair of melodists, reappeared. A straggling procession

of Saints followed him. They trooped into the enclosure, a motley throng indeed. Even that dry husk of music, hardly even cadence, had put some spirits into them. Noise, *per se*, is not without virtue; it means life. Shamberlain's guests came together, laughing and talking. Their laughter was not liquid. But swallowing prairie-dust does not instruct in dulcet tones. Rather wrinkled merriment; but still better than no merriment at all.

We entered with the throng. Within was a bizarre spectacle. A strange night-scene for a rough-handed Flemish painter of low life to portray.

The palisades of old Bridger's Malakoff enclosed a space of a hundred feet square. A cattle-shed, house, and trading-shop surrounded three sides of the square. The rest was open court, paved with clod, the native carpet of the region. Adobes, crumbling as the most strawless bricks ever moulded by a grumbling Hebrew with an Egyptian taskmaster, were the principal material of Bridger's messuage. The cattle on Mr. Mechi's model farm would have whisked their tails and turned away in utter contempt from these inelegant accommodations. No high-minded pig would have consented to wallow there. The khan of Cheronæa, abhorred of Grecian travellers, is a sweeter place.

The khan of Tiberias, terror of pilgrims, is a cleaner refuge. Bridger's Fort was as musty and infragrant a caravansary as any of those dirty cloisters of the Orient, where the disillusioned howadji sinks into the arms of that misery's bedfellow, the King of the Fleas, — which kangaroo-legged caliph, let me say, was himself, or in the person of a vigorous vizier, on the spot at the Fort, entertaining us strangers according to his royal notions of hospitality.

Into this Court of Dirt thronged the Latter-Day Saints, in raiment also in its latter day.

"The ragamuffin brigade," whispered I to Brent. "Jake Shamberlain's red-flannel shirts and yaller-topped boots would be better than this seediness of the furbelowed nymphs and ole clo' swains. Evidently suits of full dress are not to be hired at a pinch on the boulevards of Sizzumville."

Brent made no answer, and surveyed the throng anxiously.

"They have not come, — the father and daughter," he said. "I cannot think of the others now."

"Shall we go to them?"

"Not yet. Sizzum sees us and will suspect."

We stood by regarding, too much concerned for our new friends to feel thoroughly the humor of the scene. But it made its impression.

For lights at the Shamberlain ball, instead of the gas and wax of civilization, a fire blazed in one corner of the court, and sundry dips of unmitigated tallow, with their perfume undiluted, flared from perches against the wall. Overhead, up in the still, clear sky, the barefaced stars stared at the spectacle, and shook their cheeks over the laughable manœuvres of terrestrials.

The mundane lights, fire and dips, flashed and glimmered; the skylights twinkled merrily; the guests were assembled; the ball waited to begin.

Jake Shamberlain, the master of ceremonies, cleared a space in the middle, and "called for his fiddlers three."

A board was laid across two barrels, and upon it Jake arrayed his orchestra, with Brother Bottery, so called, for leader. Twang went the fiddles. "Pardners for a kerdrille!" cried Jake.

Sizzum led off the ball with one of the Blowsalinds before mentioned. Dancing is enjoined in the Latter-Day Church. They cite Jephthah's daughter and David dancing by the ark as good Scriptural authority for the custom.

"Right and left!" cried Jake Shamberlain. "Forrud the gent! The lady forrud! Forrud the hull squad. Jerk pardners! Scrape away, Bottery! Kick out and no walkin'! Prance in,

gals! Lamm ahead, boys! Time, TIME! All hands round! Catch a gal and spin her! Well, that was jest as harnsome a kerdrille as ever I seed."

And so on with another quadrille, minuet, and quadrille again. But the subsequent dances were not so orderly as the first. Filled with noise and romping, they frequently ended in wild disorder. The figures tangled themselves into a labyrinth, and the music, drowned by the tumult, ceased to be a clew of escape. Nor could Jake's voice, half suffocated by the dust, be heard above the din, until, having hushed his orchestra, he had called "Halt!" a dozen times.

In the intervals between the dances we observed Larrap distributing whiskey to the better class of the emigrants. Sizzum did not disdain to accept the hospitality of the stranger. Old Bridger's liquid stores, now Mormon property, and for sale at the price of Johannisberger, diminished fast on this festal night.

"Shall we go?" whispered I to Brent, after a while.

"Not quite yet. Old Bottery announces that he is going to play a polka. Fancy a polka here! That will engage Sizzum after his potations, so that he will forget our friends."

"Now, brethren and saints," cried Jake, "attention for the polky! Pipe up, Bottery!"

Evidently not the first time that this Strauss of some Manchester casino had played the very rollicking polka he now rattled off from his strings. How queerly ignoble those strident notes sounded in the silence of night in the great wilderness. For loud as was the uproar in the court, overhead were the stars, quiet and amazed, and, without, the great, still prairie protested against the discordant tumult. Some barbaric harmony, wild and thrilling, poured forth from strong-lunged brass, or a strain like that of the horns in Der Freischutz, would have chimed with the spirit of the desert. But Bottery's mean twang suited better the bastard civilization that had invaded this station of the banished pioneer.

At the sound of the creaking polka, a youth, pale and unwholesome as a tailor's apprentice, led out a sister saint. Others followed. Some danced teetotum fashion. Others bounced clumsily about. Around them all stood an applauding circle. The fiddles scraped; the dust flew. Sizzum and Larrap, two bad elements in combination, stood together, cheering the dancers.

"Come," said Brent, "let us get into purer air and among nobler creatures. How little we thought," he continued, "when we were speaking of such scenes and people as we have just left as a possible background, what figures would stand in the foreground!"

"I am glad to be out of that noisy rabble," said I, as we passed from the gate. "The stars seem to look disdainfully on them. I cannot be entertained by that low comedy, with tragedy sitting beside our friends' wagon."

"The stars," said Brent, bitterly, "are cold and cruel as destiny. There is heaven overhead, pretending to be calming and benignant, and giving no help, while I am thinking in agony what can be done to save from any touch of shame or deeper sorrow that noble daughter."

"It is a fine night for a gallop," I repeated.

"There they are. We must keep them out of the fort, Wade. If you love me, detain the old man in talk for half an hour."

"Certainly; half a century, if it will do any good."

Mr. Clitheroe and his daughter were walking slowly toward the fort. He appealed to us as we approached.

"I am urging my daughter to join in the amusements of the evening," said he. "You know, my dear, that many of our old Lancashire neighbors still would be pleased to see you a lady patroness of their innocent sports, and lending your countenance to their healthy hilarity. A little gayety will do you good, I am sure. This ball may not be elegant; but it will be cheerful, and of course conducted with great propriety,

since Brother Sizzum is present. I am afraid he will miss us, and be offended. That must not be, Ellen dear. We must not offend Brother Sizzum in any way whatever. We must consider that his wishes are sovereign; for is he not the chosen apostle?"

Brent and I could both have wept to hear this crazy, senile stuff.

"Pray, father dear," said Miss Clitheroe, "do not insist upon it. We shall both be wearied out, if we are up late after our day's march."

It was clearly out of tenderness to him that she avoided the real objections she must have to such a scene.

"It is quite too noisy and dusty for Miss Clitheroe in the fort," said I, and I took his arm. "Come, sir, let us walk about and have a chat in the open air."

I led him off, poor old gentleman, facile under my resolute control. All he had long ago needed was a firm man friend to take him in hand and be his despot; but the weaker he was, the less he could be subject to his daughter. It is the feeble, unmasculine men who fight most petulantly against the influence and power of women.

"Well, Mr. Wade," said he, "perhaps you are right. We have only to fancy this the terrace outside the chateau, and it is as much according

to rule to promenade here, as to stifle in the ball-room. You are very kind, gentlemen, both, to prefer our society to the entertainment inside. Certainly Brother Bottery's violin is not like one of our modern bands; but when I was your age I could dance to anything and anywhere. I suppose young men see so much more of the world now, that they outgrow those fancies sooner."

So we walked on, away from the harsh sounds of the ball. Brent dropped behind, talking earnestly with the lady. How sibylline she looked in that dim starlight! How Cassandra-like,—as one dreams that heroic and unflinching prophetess of ills unheeded or disdained!

CHAPTER XIV.

HUGH CLITHEROE.

Mr. Clitheroe grew more and more communicative, as we wandered about over the open. I drew from him, or rather, with few words of guidance now and then, let him impart, his history. He seemed to feel that he had an explanation to offer. Men whose life has been error and catastrophe rarely have much pride of reticence. Whatever friendly person will hear their apology can hear it. That form of more lamentable error called Guilt is shyer of the confessional; but it also feels its need of telling to brother man why it was born in the heart in the form of some small sin.

Again Mr. Clitheroe talked of the scenes of his youth and prosperity. He "babbled of green fields," and parks, and great country-houses, and rural life. So he went on to talk of himself, and, leaving certain blanks, which I afterward found the means of filling, told me his story. A sad story! A pitiful story! Sadder and more pitiful to me because a filial feeling toward this hapless

gentleman was all the while growing stronger in my heart. I have already said that I was fatherless from infancy. This has left a great want in my life. I cannot find complete compensation for the lack of a father's love in my premature manhood and my toughening against the world too young. I yearned greatly toward the feeble old man, my companion in that night walk on the plain of Fort Bridger. I longed to do by him the duties of sonship; as, indeed, having no such duties, I have often longed when I found age weak and weary. And as I began to feel son-like toward the father, a sentiment simply brotherly took its place in my heart for the daughter, whose love my friend, I believe, was seeking.

A sad history was Mr. Clitheroe's. He was a prosperous gentleman once, of one of the ancient families of his country.

"We belong," he said, "to the oldest gentry of England. We have been living at Clitheroe Hall, and where the Hall now stands, for centuries. Our family history goes back into the pre-historic times. We have never been very famous; we have always sustained our dignity. We might have had a dozen peerages; but we were too much on the side of liberty, of free speech and free thought, to act with the powers that be.

"There was never a time, until my day, when one of us was not in Parliament for Clitheroe Clitheroe had two members, and one of the old family that gave its name to the town, and got for it its franchises, was always chosen without contest.

"It is a lovely region, sir, where the town, of Clitheroe and the old manor-house of my family stand, — the fairest part of Lancashire. If you have only seen, as you say, the flat country about Liverpool and Manchester, you do not know at all what Lancashire can do in scenery. Why, there is Pendle Hill, — it might better be called a mountain, — Pendle Hill rises almost at my door-step, at the door of Clitheroe Hall. Pendle Hill, sir, is eighteen hundred and odd feet high. And a beautiful hill it is. I talked of the Wind River Mountains this afternoon; they are very fine; but I never should have learned to love heights, if my boyhood had not been trained by the presence of Pendle Hill.

"And there is the Ribble, too. A lovely river, coming from the hills; — such a stream as I have not seen on this continent. I do not wish to make harsh comparisons, but your Mississippi and Missouri are more like ditches than rivers, and as to the Platte, why, sir, it seems to me no better than a chain of mud-pools. But the Ribble is quite another thing. I suppose I love

it more because I have dabbled in it a boy, and bathed in it a man, and have seen it flow on always a friend, whether I was rich or poor. Nature, sir, does not look coldly on a poor man, as humanity does. The river Ribble and Pendle Hill have been faithful to me, — they and my dear Ellen, always.

"Perhaps I tire you with this chat," he said.

"O no!" replied I. "I should be a poor American if I did not love to hear of Mother England everywhere and always."

"I almost fear to talk about home — our old home, I mean — to my dear child. She might grow a little homesick, you know. And how could she understand, so young and a woman too, that duty makes exile needful? Of course I do not mean to suggest that we deem our new home in the Promised Land an exile."

And here he again gave the same anxious look I had before observed; as if he dreaded that I had the power to dissolve an unsubstantial illusion.

"I wish I had thought," he continued, "to show you, when you were at tea, a picture of Clitheroe Hall I have. It is my daughter Ellen's work. She has a genius for art, really a genius. We have been living in a cottage near there, where she could see the Hall from her window, — dear old place! — and she has made a capital drawing of it."

"You had left it?" I asked. He had paused, commanded by his melancholy recollections.

"O yes! Did I not tell you about my losses? I was a rich man and prosperous once. I kept open house, sir, in my wife's lifetime. She was a great beauty. My dear Ellen is like her, but she has no beauty, — a good girl and daughter, though, like all young people, she has a juvenile wish to govern, — but no beauty. Perhaps she will grow handsome when we grow rich again."

"Few women are so attractive as Miss Clitheroe," I said, baldly enough.

"I have tried to be a good father to her, sir. She should have had diamonds and pearls, and everything that young ladies want, if I had succeeded. But you ought to have seen Clitheroe Hall, sir, in its best days. Such oaks as I had in my park! One of those oaks is noticed in Evelyn's Silva. One day, a great many years ago, I found a young man sitting under that oak writing verses. I was hospitable to him, and gave him luncheon, which he ate with very good appetite, if he was a poet. I did not ask his name; but not three months after I received a volume of poems, with a sonnet among them, really very well done, very well done indeed, inscribed to the Clitheroe Oak. The volume, sir, was by Mr. Wordsworth, quite one of our best poets, in his way, the founder of a new school."

"A very pleasant incident!"

"Yes indeed. The poet was fortunate, was he not? But if you are fond of pictures, I should have liked to show you my Vandykes. We had the famous Clitheroe Beauty, an earl's daughter, maid of honor to Queen Henrietta Maria. She chose plain Hugh Clitheroe before all the noblemen of the court; — we Clitheroes have always been fortunate in that way. I said plain Hugh, but he was as handsome a cavalier as ever wore rapier. He might have been an earl himself, but he took the part of liberty, and was killed on the Parliament side at Edgemoor. I had his portrait too, a Vandyke, and one of the best pictures he ever painted, as I believe is agreed by connoisseurs. You should have seen the white horse, sir, in that picture, — full of gentleness and spirit, and worthy the handsome cavalier just ready to mount him."

As the old gentleman talked of his heroic ancestor, a name not unknown to history, he revived a little, and I saw an evanescent look of his daughter's vigor in his eye. It faded instantly; he sighed, and went on.

"I should almost have liked to live in those days. It is easier to die for a holy cause than to find one's way along through life. I have found it pretty hard, sir, — pretty hard, — and I hope my day of peace is nearly come."

How could I shatter his delusion, and thunder in his ear that this hope was a lie?

"I had a happy time of it," he continued, "till after my Ellen's birth, and I ought to be thankful for that. I had my dear wife and hosts of friends, — so I thought them. To be sure I spent too much money, and sometimes had rather too gay an evening over the claret at my old oak dining-table. But that was harmless pleasure, sir. I was always a kind landlord. I never could turn out a tenant nor arrest a poacher. I suppose I was too kind. I might better have saved some of the money I gave to my people in beef and beer on holidays. But it made them happy. I like to see everybody happy. That was my chief pleasure. The people were very poor in England then, sir, — not that they are not poor now, — and I used to be very glad when a good old English holiday, or a birthday, gave me a chance to give them a little festival."

I could imagine him the gentle, genial host. Fate should have left him there in the old hall, dispensing frank hospitality all his sunny days and bland seasons through, lunching young poets, and showing his Vandykes with proper pride to strangers. His story carried truth on its face. In fact, the man was all the while an illustration of his own tale. Every tone and phrase convicted him of his own character.

"It sometimes makes me a little melancholy," he continued, "to speak of those happy days. Not that I regret the result I have at last attained! Ah, no! But the process was a hard one. I have suffered, sir, suffered greatly on my way to the peace and confidence I have attained."

"You have attained these?" I said.

"Yes; thank God and this Latter-Day revelation of his truth! I used to think rather carelessly of religion in those times. I suppose it is only the contact with sin and sorrow that teaches a man to look from the transitory to the eternal. Shade makes light precious, as an artist would say. I was brought up, you know, sir, in the Church of England; but when I began to think, its formalism wearied me. I could not understand what seemed to me then the complex machinery of its theology. I thought, sir, as no doubt many people of the poetic temperament and little experience think, that God deals with men without go-betweens; that he acts directly on the character by the facts of nature and the thoughts in every soul. It was not until I grew old and sad that I began to feel the need of something distinct and tangible to rest my faith upon, and even then, sir, I was sceptical of the need of revelations and Messiahs and miracles, until I learnt through the testimony of living witnesses — yes, of living

witnesses — that such things have come in the Latter Day. Yes, sir, the facts of what you call Mormonism, its miracles, its revelations, which do not cease, and its new Messiah, have proved to me the necessity of other like supernatural systems in the past, and given me faith in their evidences, which before seemed scanty."

"Ah! old Mother Church of England!" I thought, "could you do no better by your son than this? Whose fault is this credulity? How is it that he needs phenomena to give him faith in truth?"

"But I have not told you," the old gentleman went on, "about my disasters. Perhaps you are getting tired of my prattle, sir, my old man's talk. I am really not so very old, if my hair is thin, and my beard gray, — barely fifty, and after this journey I expect to be quite a boy again. I suppose you were surprised this afternoon, when I spoke of having worked in a coal-mine, were you not?"

The old man seemed to have some little pride in this singularity of fortune. I expressed the proper interest in such a change of destiny.

"You shall hear how it happened," he said. "You remember, — no, you are too young to remember, but you have heard how we all went mad about mills and mines in Lancashire some twenty years ago."

"Yes," said I, "it was then that steam and cotton began to understand each other, and coal and negroes became important."

"What a panic of speculation we all rushed into in Lancashire!" said the old gentleman. "We all felt, we gentlemen, that we were mere idlers, not doing our duty, as England expects every man to do, unless we were building chimneys, or digging pits. We were all either grubbing down in the bowels of the earth for coal, or rearing great chimneys up in the air to burn it. I really think most of us began to like smoke better than blue sky; certainly it tasted sweeter to us than our good old English fog.

"Well, sir," continued he, "I was like my neighbors. I must dabble in milling and mining. I was willing to be richer. Indeed, as soon as I began to speculate, I thought myself richer. I spent more money. I went deeper into my operations. One can throw a great treasure into a coal-mine without seeing any return, and can send a great volume of smoke up a chimney before the mill begins to pay. It is an old story. I will not tire you with it. I was all at once a ruined man."

He paused a moment, and looked about the dim, star-lit prairie, with the white wagons and the low fort in the distance.

"Well," said he, in the careless, airy manner

which seemed his characteristic one, "if I had not been ruined, I should have stayed stupidly at home, and never worked in a coal-mine, or travelled on the plains, or had the pleasure of meeting you and your friend here. It is all fresh and novel. If it were not for my daughter and my duties to the church, I should take my adventures as lightly as you do when your gun misses fire and you lose a dinner.

"The thing that troubled me most at the time of my disasters," he resumed, "was being defeated for Parliament. There had always been a Clitheroe there. When my father died, I took his seat. I used to spend freely on elections; but I thought they sent me because they liked me, or for love of the old name. When I lost my fortune there came a snob, sir, and stood against me. He accused me of being a free-thinker, — as if the Clitheroes had not always been liberal! He got up a cry, and bought votes. My own tenants, my old tenants, whom I had feasted out of pure good-will a hundred times, turned against me. I lost my election and my last shilling.

"It was just then, sir, that my dear wife died, and my dear Ellen was born."

He turned sadly around to look at his daughter. She was walking at some distance with Brent. The earnest murmur of their voices came to us through the stillness. I felt what my friend must be saying in that pleading tone.

"Everything went disastrously with me," continued Mr. Clitheroe. "I tried to recover my fortunes, fairly and honestly, but it was too late. My creditors took the old Hall. Hugh Clitheroe in Harry the Eighth's time built it, on land where the family had lived from before Egbert. I lost it, sir. The family came to an end with me. I found sheriff's officers making beer rings on my old oak dining-table. The Vandykes went. Hugh of Cromwell's days was divorced from his wife, the Beauty. I tried to keep them together; but scrubs bought them, and stuck them up in their vulgar parlors. Sorry business! Sorry business!"

"You kept a brave heart through it all."

"Yes, until they accused me of dishonesty. That I felt bitterly. And everybody gave me the cold shoulder. I could get nothing to do. There is not much that a broken-down gentleman can do; but no one would trust me. I grew poorer than you can conceive. I lost all heart. Men are poor creatures, — as a desolate man finds."

"Not all, I hope," was my protest.

"Truly not all. But the friends of prosperity are birds that come to be fed, and fly away when the crumbs give out. All are not base and time-serving; but men are busy and careless, and fancy that others can always take care of them-

selves. I could not beg, sir; but it came near starvation to me in Christian England, — to me and my young daughter, within a year after my misfortunes. Perhaps I was over-proud or over-vain; but I grew tired of the slights of people that had known me in my better days, and now dodged me because I was shabby and poor. I wanted to get out of sight of the ungrateful, ungracious world. The blue sky grew hateful to me. I must live, or, if life was nothing to me, my daughter must not starve. I had a choice of factory or coal-mine to hide myself in. I sank into a coal-mine."

"A strange contrast!" I said, after a pause.

"I am trying to make the whole history less dreamy. Each seems unreal, — my luxurious life at Clitheroe Hall, and my troglodyte life down in the coal-pit. Idler and slave; either extreme had its own special unhappiness and unhealthiness."

How much wisdom there was in the weakness of the old man's character! The more I talked with him, the more pitiable seemed his destiny. "O John Brent!" I groaned in my heart, "plead with the daughter as man never pleaded before. We must save them from the dismal fate before them. And if she cannot master her father, and you, John Brent, cannot master her, there is no hope."

My friend made no sign that he was ready to close his interview with the lady. The noise of the ball still came to us with the puffs of the evening wind. I prompted the communicative old gentleman to renew his story.

"I have seen the interior of some of the Lancashire mines; I have read the Blue Book upon them," I said. "You must have been in a rough place, with company as rough."

"It was hard for a man of delicate nurture. But the men liked me. They were not brutes,—not all,—if they were roughs. Brutes get away from places where hard work is done. My mates down in the mine made it easy for me. They called me Gentleman Hugh. I was rather proud, sir, I confess, to find myself liked and respected for what I was, not for what I had. It was a hard life and a rough life; but it was an honest life, and my child was too young to miss what her birth entitled her to.

"It was in our mine that I first knew of the Latter-Day Church. For years I had drudged there, and never thought, or in fact, for myself, much cared, to come out. I had tried the pleasures and friendships of gay life; they had nothing new or good to give me. For years I had toiled, when the first apostle came out and began to make proselytes to the faith in our country. They have never disdained the mean and the

lowly. I tell you, sir, that we in our coal-pit, and our brothers in the factories, listened to apostles who came across seas and labored among us as if they loved our souls. The false religions and outgrown religions left us in the dark; but the true light came to us. My mates in the Lancashire mine joined the church by hundreds. I was still blind and careless. It was not until long afterwards that the time for my conversion came.

"As my daughter grew up, I felt that I ought to be by her. I had worked a long time in the mine, and was known to have some education. The company gave me a clerkship in their office, and there I drudged again for years, asking no help or favor. It was in another part of the county from my old residence, where nobody knew me. My dear child, — she has always been a good child to me, except that she sometimes wishes to rule a little too much, — my dear Ellen became almost a woman, and all I lacked was the means of giving her the position of her rank. Education she got herself. We were not unhappy, she and I together, lonely as we might be, and out of place."

The old gentleman had been talking of himself in such a cheerful, healthy way, and showed that he had borne such a brave heart through his troubles, that I began to puzzle myself what

could have again changed his character, and made of him the weakling I had recognized in the interview with Sizzum.

"It is very kind of you," he said, "to listen to a garrulous old fellow. Your sympathy is very pleasant; but I must not test it too far. I will end my long story presently.

"I supposed myself entirely forgotten, as I was quite willing to be. By and by I was remembered and sought. A far-away kinsman had left me a legacy. It was enough for a quiet subsistence for us two, for Ellen and me. I returned to the neighborhood of my old home. I found a little cottage on the banks of Ribble, within sight of my old friend, Pendle Hill. There we lived."

From this point Mr. Clitheroe's manner totally changed. His voice grew peevish and complaining. All the manly feeling he had showed in briefly describing his day-laborer's life passed away. He detailed to me how the new proprietor at Clitheroe Hall patronized him insufferably; how his old neighbors turned up their noses at him, and insulted him by condescension. How miserable he found it to cramp himself and save shillings in a cottage, with the house in sight where he had lavished pounds as Lord of the Manor! How he longed to have his daughter as well dressed as any of the young ladies about,

her inferiors in blood, — for no one there could rival the Clitheroes' lineage. How he wished himself back in his mine, in his industrious clerkship, and how time hung drearily on his hands, with nothing to do except dream of bygone glories. I saw that he had sighed to be a great man again, and had a morbid sense of his insignificance, and that this had made him touchy, and alienated well-meaning people about him. He spoke with some triumph of his arguments with the rector of his parish, who endeavored to check him when he lent what influence he had, as a gentleman, to get the Mormons a hearing about Clitheroe. He did not, as he said, as yet feel any great interest in their doctrines; but he remembered them with good-will from his coal-pit days, and whenever an emissary of the faith came by, he always found a friend in Hugh Clitheroe. They had evidently flattered him. It was rare, of course, to find a protector among the gentry, and they made the most of the chance.

Poor old man! I could trace the progress of his disappointment, and his final fall into that miserable superstition. He had been a free-thinker; never industrious or self-possessed enough to become a fundamental thinker. No man can stand long on nothing, — he must think out a religion, or accept a theology. Now that busy

days were over, and careless youth gone by, Mr. Clitheroe began to be uneasy, and was ready to listen to any scheme which promised peace. If a Jesuit had happened to find him at this period, Rome would have got a recruit without difficulty. The Pope and Brigham Young are the rival bidders for such weaklings in the nineteenth century. Brigham with polygamy is the complement of Pio with celibacy.

Instead of Jesuit, Sizzum arrived. Sizzum was far abler than any of his Mormon compeers. He was proselyting about Clitheroe, where he found it not difficult to persuade the poor slaves up in the mill and down in the mine to accept a faith that offered at once a broad range on earth, and, in good time, a high seat in heaven.

Sizzum was the guest of the discontented and decayed gentleman. He saw the opportunity. There was an old name and a man of gentle birth to rally followers about. It would be a triumph for the Latter-Day Saints to march away from Clitheroe, a thousand strong, headed by the representative of the family who named the place, and had once been in Parliament foı it. Here was a proselyte in a class which no Mormon had dreamed of approaching. Here too was some little property. And here was a beautiful daughter.

I could divine the astute Sizzum's method and success with his victim, enfeebled in body and spirit. How, seeing his need of something final and authoritative in religion, Sizzum showed him the immanence of inspiration in his church. How he threatened him with wrath to come, unless he was gathered from among the Gentiles. How he persuaded him that a man of his education and station would be greater among the saints than ever in his best days in England. How he touched the old man's enthusiasm with tales of caravan life, with the dust of the desert and the pork of the pan quite left out of view. How, with his national exaggeration run riot, he depicted the valley of the Great Salt Lake as a Paradise, and the City as an apocalyptic wonder, all jasper and sardonyx, all beryl and chrysoprase; and no mud and no adobe. How he suggested that in a new country, under his advice, the old man's little capital would soon swell to a great inheritance for his daughter.

By the light of that afternoon's scene, over the tea, I could comprehend the close of Mr. Clitheroe's dreary story, and see how at last Sizzum had got him in his gripe, property, person, and soul.

Did he wish to escape?

No. On! on! he must go on. Only some

force without himself, interposed, could turn him aside.

What was this force to be?

Nothing that I could say or do; *that* I saw clearly. His illusions might be nearly gone; but he would hate and distrust any one who ventured to pull the scales from his eyes, and show him his crazy folly. Indeed, I dreaded lest any attempt to enlighten him would drive him into actual madness by despair. If he had given me a shadow of encouragement, I was ready to follow out the hint I had dropped when I said to Brent, "What a night for a gallop!" My own risk I was willing to take. But escape for the lady, without him, was barbarous, and we could not treat him like a Sabine damsel, and lug him off by the hair.

What could his daughter do? Clearly nothing. He had evidently long ago revolted against her. If I did not mistake her faithful face, she would stand by her father to the last. Plead as he might, John Brent would never win her to save herself and lose her father; and indeed that was a desertion he could never recommend.

A dark look for all parties.

Whence was the force to come that should solve the difficulty?

CHAPTER XV.

A LOVER.

Two long hours I had kept Mr. Clitheroe in talk. For my friend's sake I would have prolonged the interview indefinitely. For my own, too. He was a new character to me, this gentle soul, so sadly astray. My filial feeling for him deepened momently. And as my pity grew more exquisitely painful, I shrank still from quitting him, and so acknowledging that the pity was hopeless.

We approached the fort. The fiddlers three were dragging their last grumbling notes out of drowsy strings. The saints began to stream by toward their wagons. We turned away to avoid recognition.

Miss Clitheroe and Brent joined us, — a sadder pair than we. The stars showed me the glimmer of tears in her eyes. But her look was brave and steady. She left my friend, and laid her hand on her father's arm. A marked likeness, and yet a contrast more marked, between these two. He had given her his refinement, a

quality so in him and of him that he colored whatever came near him with an emanation from himself, and so was blinded to its real crude tints. By this medium he made in his description that black hole of a coal mine, where so many of his years had been buried, a grotto of enchantment. He filled the world with illusions. Whatever was future and whatever was past, seen through his poetic imagination, seemed to him so beautiful, or so strange and interesting, that he lost all care for the discomforts of the present. And this same refinement of nature deluded him in judging character. Bad and base motives seemed to him so ugly, that he refused to see them, shrank from belief in them, and insisted upon trusting that men were as honorable as himself. He was a man for prosperity. What did fate mean by maltreating him with the manifold adversities of his life? To what end was this sad error?

A strange contrast, with all the likeness, between his daughter and him. A more vigorous being had mingled its life with hers. Or perhaps the stern history of her early days had taught her to forge the armor of self-protection. She seemed to have all her father's refinement, but she used it to surround and seclude herself, not to change and glorify others. Godiva was not more delicately hidden from the vulgar world by

the mantle of her own golden hair, than this sweet lady by her veil of gentle breeding.

As she took her father's arm to lead him away to the camp, I could read in her look that there were no illusions for her. But she clave to her father, — the blinder and more hopelessly errant he might be, the closer she clave. He might reject her guidance; she still stood by to protect him, to sweeten his life, and when the darkness came, which she could not but foresee, to be a light to him. However adversity had thus far failed to teach him self-possession, it had made her a heroine and a martyr, — a noble and unselfish soul, such as, one among the myriads, God educates to shame the base and the trifling, and to hearten and inspire the true.

"Now, dear father," she said, "we must bid these kind friends good night. We start early. We need rest."

She held out her hand to me.

"Dear lady," said I, taking her aside a moment while Brent spoke to Mr. Clitheroe, "we are acquaintances of to-day; but campaigners must despise ceremony. Your father has told me much of your history. I infer your feelings. Consider me as a brother. Nothing can be done to aid you?"

"Your kindness and your friend's kindness touch me greatly. Nothing can be done."

She sobbed a little. I still held her hand.

"Nothing!" said I, "nothing! Will you go on with these people? you, a lady! with your fate staring you in the face!"

She withdrew her hand and looked at me steadily with her large gray eyes. What a woman to follow into the jaws of death!

"My fate," she said, "can be no worse than the old common fate of death. That I accept, any other I defy. God does not leave the worthy to shame."

"We say so, when we hope."

"I say it and believe."

"Come, Ellen dear," called her father.

There was always between them, whenever they spoke, by finer gentleness of tone and words of endearment, a recognition of how old and close and exclusive was their union. Only when Sizzum was present at tea, the tenderness, under that coarsening influence, passed away from the father's voice and manner, making the daughter's more and more tender, that she might win him back to her.

"Good bye!" she said. "We shall remember each other kindly."

"Yes, gentlemen," said Mr. Clitheroe. "This has been quite the pleasantest episode of our journey. You must not forget us when you are roaming through this region again."

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He said this with his light, cheerful manner. They turned away. It seemed as if Death arose and parted us. We followed at a distance and watched them safe to their wagon. The night wind had risen, and went sighing over the desert reaches, bringing with it the distant howling of wolves.

"Do not speak to me," said Brent, "I will talk to you by and by."

He left me and went toward our horses. It had been imprudent to leave them so long at night, with bad spirits about.

I looked into the fort again. The dancers had gone. Bottery was fumbling drunkenly over his fiddle. A score of men were within the house carousing. Old Bridger's whiskey had evidently flowed freely. In one corner Larrap had unrolled a greasy faro-cloth and was dealing. Murker backed him. They were winning largely. They bagged their winnings out of sight, as fast as they fell in. Sizzum, rather to my surprise, was a little excited with liquor, and playing recklessly, losing sovereigns by the handful. As he lost, he became furious. He struck Larrap in the face and called him cheat. Larrap gave him an ugly look, and then, assuming a boozy indifference, caught Sizzum by the hand and vowed he was his best friend. Murker kept aloof from the dispute. The game

began again. Again Sizzum and the Mormons lost. Again Sizzum slapped the dealer, and, catching the faro-cloth, tore it in two. The two gamblers saw that they were in danger. They had kept themselves sober and got the others drunk for such a crisis. They hurried out of the way. Sizzum and his brother saints chased them; but presently, losing sight of them in the dusk, they staggered off toward camp, singing uproariously. Their leader on this festival had somewhat forgotten the dignity of the apostle and captain.

This low rioting was doubly disgusting to me, after the sad evening with our friends. I found Sizzum more offensive as a man of the world than as a saint. I say man of the world, because the gambling scenes of nominal gentlemen are often just as hateful, if more decorous, than those of that night. I walked slowly off toward camp, sorrowful and sick at heart. Baseness and vulgarity had never seemed to me so base and vulgar till now.

I suddenly heard a voice in the bushes. It was Larrap. He was evidently persuading his comrade to some villany. I caught a suspicious word or two.

"Ah!" thought I, "you want our horses. We will see to that."

I walked softly by. Brent was seated by the

embers of a camp-fire, cowered in a heap, like a cold Indian. He raised his face. All the light had gone out of him. This trouble had suddenly worn into his being, like the shirt of Nessus, and poisoned his life.

"John," said I, "I never knew you despondent before."

"This is not despondency."

"What then?"

"Despair."

"I cannot offer to cheer you."

"It is bitter, Wade. I have yearned to be a lover for years. All at once I find the woman I have seen and thought of, and known from my first conscious moment. The circumstances crowded my love into sudden intensity. I made the observations and did the work of months of acquaintance in those few moments while we were at tea. My mind always acts quick. I seem always to have been discussing my decisions with myself, years before the subject of decision comes to me. Whatever happens, falls on me with the force of a doom. I loved Miss Clitheroe's voice the instant I heard its brave tenderness answering her father. I loved her unseen, and would have died for her that moment. When she appeared, and I saw her face and read her heart, I knew that it was the old dream, — the old dream that I never

thought would be other than a dream. The ancient hope and expectation, coeval with my life, was fulfilled. She is the other self I have been waiting for and seeking for."

"Have you told her so?"

"Can a man stop the beating of his heart? Can a man not breathe? Not in words, perhaps I did not use the lover words. But she understood me. She did not seem surprised. She recognizes such a passion as her right and desert."

"A great-hearted woman can see how a man worthy of her can nullify time and space, and meet her, soul to soul, in eternity from the first."

"So I meet her; but circumstances here are stronger than love."

"Can she do nothing with her father?"

"Nothing. She failed in England when this delusion first fell upon him."

"Did she know what it meant for her and him?"

"Hardly. She even fancied that they would be happier in America than at home, where she saw that his old grandeur was always reproaching him."

"Did he conceal from her the goal and object of his emigration?"

"She knew he was, or supposed himself to be, a Mormon. But Mormonism was little more

than a name to her. She believed his perversion only a transitory folly. It is but recently, only since they were away from succor, off in the desert, that she has perceived her own risk. She hoped that the voyage from England would disenchant her father, and that she could keep him in the States. No; he was committed; he was impracticable. You have seen yourself how far his faith is shaken. Just so far that his crazy cheerfulness has given place to moping; but he will hear nothing of reason."

"What does she anticipate?"

"She says she only dares to endure. Day by day they both wear away. Day by day her father's bright hope dwindles away. Day by day she perceives the moment of her own danger approaching. She could not speak to me of it; but I could feel by her tone her disgust and disdain of Sizzum. O, how steady and noble she is! All for her father! All to guide him with the fewest pangs to that desolate death she knows must come! She gave me a few touches of their past history, so that I could see how much closer and tenderer than the common bond of parent and child theirs had been."

"That I saw, from the old gentleman's story. Sorrow and poverty ennoble love."

"She thanked me and you so sweetly for our society, and the kind words we had given them.

She had not seen her father so cheerful, so like himself, since they had left England."

"What a weary pilgrimage they must have had, poor errant souls!"

"O Wade, Wade! how this tragedy of theirs cures me forever of any rebellion against my own destiny. A helpless woman's tragedy is so much bitterer than anything that can befall a man."

"Must we say helpless, John?"

"Are we two an army, that we can take them by force? She has definitely closed any further communication on our part. She said that I could not have failed to notice how Elder Sizzum disliked our presence. I must promise her not to be seen with them in the morning. Sizzum would find some means to punish her father, and that would be torture to her. It seems that villain plays on the old man's religious superstitions, and can terrify him almost to madness."

"The villain! And yet how far back of him lies the blame, that such terrors can exist in any man's mind, when God is Love."

"I promised her not to see her again — for you and myself; to see her no more. That good-bye was final. Now let me alone for a while, my dear old boy; I am worn out and heart-broken."

He mummied himself in his blankets, and lay

on the grass, motionless as a dead man. It was not his way to shirk camp duties. Indeed, his volunteer services had left me in arrears.

I put our fire-arms in order in case of attack, and extinguished our fire. Our horses, too, I drove in and tethered close by. My old suspicion of Murker and Larrap had revived from their mutterings. I thought that, after their great winnings of to-night, they would feel that they could make nothing more of the mail party, and might seize the chance to stampede or steal some of the Mormon horses or ours. It was a capital chance in the sleepy hours after the revel. Horse-stealing, since the bad example of Diomed, has never gone out of fashion. Fulano and Pumps were great prizes. I knew that Larrap hated Brent for his undisguised abhorrence and the ugly words and collision of to-day. The pair bore good-will to neither of us. Their brutality had jarred with us from the beginning. I knew they would take personal pleasure in serving us a shabby trick out of their dixonary. On the whole, I determined to watch all night.

Easy to purpose; hard to perform. I leaned against my saddle and thought over the day. How I pitied poor Brent! Pitied him the more thoroughly, since I was hardly less a lover than he. Long afterwards, long after the misery of love dead in despair, comes the time when one

can say, "Ich habe gelebt und geliebet"; can know, "'T is better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all." But no such soothing poetry could sing resignation to my friend in his unselfish misery. All he could do — all I could do — was to bear the agony of this sudden cruel wrong; to curse the chances of life that had so weakened the soul of our new friend and so darkened his sight that he could not know truth from falsehood. Doubly to curse the falsehood. Before, it had only been something to scorn. Here tragedy entered. The mean, miserable, ludicrous invention of Mormonism, the foolish fable of an idler, had grown to be a great masterly tyranny. These two souls were clutched by this foul ogre, and locked up in an impregnable prison. And we two were baffled. Of what use was our loyalty to woman? What vain words those unuttered words of our knightly vow to succor all distressed damsels, — the vow that every gentleman takes upon himself, as earnestly now, and wills to keep as faithfully, as any Artegall in the days gone by, when wrong took crudder and more monstrous form! More monstrous form! Could any wrong be more detestable! Did knight, who loved God and honored his lady, ever encounter more paynim-like horde than this, — the ignorant misled by the base?

In such dreary protest and pity I passed an

hour. The evening breeze had strengthened into a great gusty wind, blowing from the mountains to the southward. I drowsed a little. A perturbed slumber overcame me. The roaring night-wind aroused me at intervals with a blast more furious, and I woke to perceive ominous and turbulent dreams flitting from my brain, — dreams of violence, tyranny, and infamous outrage.

Suddenly another sensation went creeping along my nerves. I sat bolt upright. There was a feeling of human presence, of stealthy approach coming up against the night-wind and crushing its roar with a sound more penetrating.

Brent, too, was on the alert.

"Some one at our horses," he whispered.

We dashed forward. There was a rustle of flight through the bushes. We each fired a shot. The noise ceased.

"Stop!" said my friend, as I was giving chase. "We must not leave the horses. They will stampede them while we are off."

"They? perhaps it was only a cayote or a wolf. Why, Fulano! old fellow!"

Fulano trotted up, neighing, and licked my hand. His lariat had been cut, — a clean cut with a knife. We were only just in time.

"We must keep watch till morning," said I.

"I have been drowsing. I will take the first hour."

Brent, with a moan of weariness, threw himself down again on the grass. I sat watchful.

The night-wind went roaring on. It loves those sweeps and surges of untenanted plain, as it loves the lifts and levels of the barren sea. The fitful gale rushed down as if it boiled over the edge of some great hollow in the mountains, and then stayed to gather force for another overflow. In its pauses I could hear the stir and murmur of the Mormon cattle, a thousand and more. But once there came a larger pause; the air grew silent, as if it had never known a breeze, or as if all life and motion between earth and sky were utterly and forever quelled.

In that one instant of dead stillness, when the noise of the cattle was hushed, and our horses ceased champing to listen, I seemed to hear the clang of galloping hoofs, not far away to the southward.

Galloping hoofs, surely I heard them. Or was it only the charge of a fresh blast down the mountain-side, uprooting ancient pines, and flinging great rocks from crag to chasm?

And that strange, terrible, human, inhuman sound, outringing the noise of the hoofs, and making the silence a ghastly horror, — was it a woman's scream?

No; it could only be my fevered imagination, that found familiar sounds in the inarticulate voices of the wilderness. I listened long and intently. The wind sighed, and raved, and threatened again. I heard the dismal howling of wolves far away in the darkness.

I kept a double watch of two hours, and then, calling Brent to do his share, threw myself on the grass and slept soundly.

CHAPTER XVI.

ARMSTRONG.

I AWOKE in the solemn quiet dawn of the next morning with my forebodings of ill gone, and in their stead what I could not but deem a baseless hopefulness for our new friends' welfare.

Brent did not share it. His usual gay matin-song was dumb. He cowered, chilled and spiritless, by our camp-fire. Breakfast was an idle ceremony to both. We sat and looked at each other. His despair began to infect me. This would not do.

I left my friend, sitting unnerved and purposeless, and walked to the mail-riders' camp.

Jake Shamberlain was already stirring about, as merry as a grig, — and that is much to say on the Plains. There are two grigs to every blade of grass from Echo Cañon to the South Pass, and yet every one sings and skips, as gay as if merriment would make the desert a meadow.

"You are astir early after the ball, Jake," said I.

"Ef I wait till the gals in the train begins to polky round, I shan't git my men away nayry time. They olluz burr to gals, like all young fellers. We 'll haul off jest as soon as you 're ready."

"We are ready," I said.

I made our packs, and saddled the mustangs.

"Come, Brent," said I, shaking him by the shoulder, "start, old fellow! Your ride will rouse you."

He obeyed, and mounted. He was quite cowed and helpless. I did not know my brave, cheerful friend in this weak being. He seemed to me as old and dreary as Mr. Clitheroe. Love must needs have taken a very cruel clutch upon his heart. Indeed, to the delicate nature of such a man, love is either life of life, or a murderous blight worse than death.

As we started, a gray dawn was passing into the violet light just before sunrise. The gale had calmed itself away. The tender hues of morning glorified the blue adobes of Bridger's shabby fort. It rested on the plain, still as the grave, — stiller for the contrast of this silent hour with last night's riot. A deathly quiet, too, dwelt upon the Mormon caravan. There were the white-topped wagons just growing rosy with the fond colors of early day. No abandoned camp of a fled army could have looked

more lonely. Half a mile from the train were the cattle feeding quietly in a black mass, like a herd of buffalo. There was not one man, out of our own party, to be seen.

"Where are their sentinels, Jake?" said I.

"Too much spree for good watch," says he.

"Elder Sizzum ought to look sharper."

"He 's a prime leader. But he tuk dance, argee, and faro last night with a perfect looseness. I dunno what 's come over Sizzum; bein' a great apossle 's maybe too much for him. But then he knows ther ain't no Utes round here, to stampede his animals or run off any of his gals. Both er you men could have got you a wife apiece last night, and ben twenty miles on the way, and nobody the wiser. Now, boys, be alive with them mules. I want to be off."

"Where are Smith and Robinson?" I asked, missing the two gamblers as we started.

"Let 'em slide, cuss 'em!" said Jake. "'Taint my business to call 'em up, and fetch 'em hot water, and black their boots. They moved camp away from us, over into the brush by you. Reckon they was afeard some on us would be goin' halves with 'em in the pile they raked last night. Let 'em slide, the durn ripperbits! Every man for hisself, I say. They snaked me to the figure of a slug at their cheatin' game; an' now they may sleep till they dry and turn to grasshopper pie, for *me*."

Jake cracked his long whip. The mules sprang forward together. We started.

I gave one more look at the caravan we had seen winding so beautifully down on the plain, no longer ago than yesterday evening. Rosy morning brightened on every wagon of the great ellipse. Not a soul was to be seen of all their tenants. I recognized Mr. Clitheroe's habitation at the farther end. That, too, had the same mysterious, deserted air, as if the sad pair who dwelt in it had desperately wandered away into the desert by night.

Brent would not turn. He kept his haggard face bent eastward, toward the horizon, where an angry sunrise began to thrust out the quiet hues of dawn.

I followed the train, doggedly refusing to think more of those desolate friends we were leaving. Their helpless fate made all the beauty of the scene only crueller bitterness. What right had dawn to tinge with sweetest violet and with hopeful rose the shelters of that camp of delusion and folly!

We rode steadily on through the cool haze, and then through the warm, sunny haze, of that October morning. Brent hardly uttered a word. He left me the whole task of driving our horses. A difficult task this morning. Their rest and feast of yesterday had put Pumps and Fulano in

high spirits. I had my hands full to keep them in the track.

We had ridden some eighteen miles, when Brent fell back out of the dust of our march, and beckoned me.

"Dick," said he, "I have had enough of this."

He grew more like himself as he spoke.

"I was crushed and cowardly last night and this morning," he continued. "For the first time in my life, my hope and judgment failed me together. You must despise me for giving up and quitting Miss Clitheroe."

"My dear boy," said I, "we were partners in our despair."

"Mine is gone. I have made up my mind. I will not leave her. I will ride on with you to the South Pass. That will give the caravan a start, so that I can follow unobserved. Then I will follow, and let her know in some way that she has a friend within call. She must be saved, sooner or later, whether she will or no. Love or no love, such a woman shall not be left to will herself dead, rather than fall into the hands of a beast like Sizzum. I have no mission, you know," and he smiled drearily; "I make one now. I cannot fight the good fight against villany and brutishness anywhere better than here. When I get into the valley, I will camp down at Jake's. I can keep my courage up hunting

grizzlys until she wants me. Perhaps I may find Biddulph there still. What do you say, old fellow? I am bound to you for the journey. Will you forgive me for leaving you?"

"You will find it hard work to leave me. I go with you and stand by you in this cause, life or death."

"My dear friend! my brother!"

We took hands on this.

Our close friendship passed into completed brotherhood. Doubts and scruples vanished. We gave ourselves to our knight-errantry.

"We will save her, John," said I. "She is my sister from this moment."

His face lighted up with the beauty of his boyish days. He straightened himself in his saddle, gave his fair moustache a twirl, and hummed, for gayety of heart, "Ah non giunge!" to the beat of his mustang's hoofs.

We were riding at the bottom of a little hollow. The dusty trail across the unfenced wilderness, worn smooth and broad as a turnpike by the march of myriad caravans, climbed up the slopes before and behind us, like the wake of a ship between surges. The mail train had disappeared over the ridge. Our horses had gone with it. Brent and I were alone, as if the world held no other tenants.

Suddenly we heard the rush of a horseman after us.

Before we could turn he was down the hillock, — he was at our side.

He pulled his horse hard upon his haunches and glared at us. A fierce look it was; yet a bewildered look, as of one suddenly cheated of a revenge he had laid finger on.

He glared at us, we gazed at him, an instant, without a word.

A ghastly pair — this apparition — horse and man! The horse was a tall, gaunt white. There were the deep hollows of age over his bloodshot eyes. His outstretched head showed that he shared his master's eagerness of pursuit. Death would have chosen such a steed for a gallop on one of death's errands.

Death would have commissioned such a rider to bear a sentence of death. A tall, gaunt man, with the loose, long frame of a pioneer. But the brown vigor of a pioneer was gone from him. His face was lean and bloodless. It was clear where some of his blood had found issue. A strip of old white blanket, soiled with dust and blood, was turbaned askew about his head, and under it there showed the ugly edges of a recent wound.

When he pulled up beside us, his stringy right hand was ready upon the butt of a revolver. He dropped the muzzle as he looked at us.

For what horror was this man the embodied Nemesis!

"Where are they?"

He whispered this question in a voice thick with stern purpose, and shuddering with some recollection that inspired the purpose.

"They! who?"

"The two murderers."

"They stayed behind at Bridger."

"No. The Mormons told me they were here. Don't hide them! Their time is come."

Still in the same curdling whisper. He crushed his voice, as if he feared the very hillocks of the prairie would reverberate his words, and earth would utter a warning cry to those he hunted to fly, fly, for the avenger of blood was at hand.

No need to be told whom he sought. The two gamblers — the two murderers — the brutes we had suspected; but where were they? Where to be sought?

We hailed the mail train. It was but a hundred yards before us over the ridge. Jake Shamberlain and his party returned to learn what delayed us.

The haggard horsemen stared at them all, in silence.

"I 've seen you before, stranger," said Shamberlain.

"Yes," said the man, in his shuddering whisper.

"It 's Armstrong from Oregon, from the Umpqua, aint it? You don't look as if you were after cattle this time. Where 's your brother?"

"Murdered."

"I allowed something had happened, because he warnt along. I never seed two men stick so close as you and he did. They didn't kill him without gettin' a lick at you, I see. Who was it? Indians?"

"Worse."

"I reckon I know why you 're after us, then."

"I can't waste time, Shamberlain," said Armstrong, in a hurried whisper. "I'll tell you in two words what 's happened to me, and p'r'aps you can help me to find the men I mean to find."

"I'll help you, if I know how, Armstrong. I haint seen no two in my life, old country or new country, saints or gentiles, as I 'd do more for 'n you and your brother. I 've olluz said, ef the world was chock full of Armstrongs, Paradise would n't pay, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob mout just as well blow out their candle and go under a bushel-basket, unless a half-bushel would kiver 'em."

The stranger seemed insensible to this compliment. He went on in the same whisper, full of

agony, pain, and weariness. While he talked, his panting horse drew up his lip and whinnied, showing his long, yellow teeth. The spirit of his rider had entered him. He was impatient of this dalliance.

"We were coming down from the Umpqua, my brother and I," says Armstrong, "goan across to the States, to drive out cattle next summer. We was a little late one morning, along of our horses havin' strayed off from camp, and that was how we met them men. Two on 'em ther' was, — a tall, most ungodly Pike, and a little fat, mean-lookin' runt. We lighted on 'em jest to the crossin' of Bear River. They was comin' from Sacramenter, they said. I kinder allowed they was horse-thieves, and wanted to shy off. But Bill — that was my brother ——"

Here the poor fellow choked a little.

"Bill, he never could n't think wrong of nobody. Bill, he said, 'No. Looks was nothin',' he said, 'and we 'd jine the fellers.' So we did, and rode together all day, and camped together on a branch we cum to. I reckon we talked too much about the cattle we was goan to buy, and I suppose ther' aint many on the Pacific side that aint heard of the Armstrongs. They allowed we had money, — them murderers did. Well, we camped all right, and went to sleep,

and I never knowed nothin', ef it warnt a dream that a grizzly had wiped me over the head, till I woke up the next day with the sun brilin' down on my head, and my head all raw and bloody, as ef I 'd been scalped. And there was Bill — my brother Bill — lyin' dead in his blankets."

A shudder passed through our group. These were the men we had tolerated, sat with at the camp-fire, to whose rough stories and foul jokes we had listened. Brent's instinct was true.

Armstrong was evidently an honest, simple, kindly fellow. His eyes were pure, gentle blue. They filled with tears as he spoke. But the stern look remained, the Rhadamanthine whisper only grew thicker with vengeance.

"Bill was dead," he continued. "The hatchet slipped when they come to hit me, and they was too skeared, I suppose, to go on choppin' me, as they had him. P'r'aps his ghost cum round and told 'em 't warnt the fair thing they 'd ben at, and 't warnt. But they got our horses, Bill's big sorrel and my Flathead horse, what 's made a hunderd and twenty-three miles betwixt sunrise and sunset of a September day, goan for the doctor, when Ma Armstrong was tuk to die. They got the horses, and our money belts. So when I found Bill was dead, I knowed what my life was left me for. I tied up my head, and somehow I crep, and walked, and run, and got to Box

Elder. I don't know how long it took, nor who showed me the way; but I got there."

Box Elder is the northernmost Mormon settlement, or was, in those days.

"I'll never say another word agin the Mormon religion, Jake," Armstrong went on. "They treated me like a brother to Box Elder. They outfitted me with a pistol, and this ere horse. They said he 'd come in from a train what the Indians had cut off, and was a terrible one to go. He is; and I believe he knows what he 's goan for. I 've ben night and day ridin' on them murderers' trail. Now, men, give me time to think. Bill's murderers aint at Bridger. They was there last midnight. They must be somewheres within fifty miles, and I 'll find 'em, so help me God!"

His hoarse whisper was still. No one spoke.

Another rush of hoofs down the slope behind!

CHAPTER XVII.

CAITIFF BAFFLES OGRE.

Another rush of horses' feet behind us.

What?

Elder Sizzum!

And that pale, gray shadow of a man, whose pony the Elder drags by the bridle, and lashes cruelly forward, — who?

Mr. Clitheroe.

Sizzum rode straight up to Brent.

The two men faced each other, — the big, hulking, bullying saint; the slight, graceful, self-possessed gentile. Sizzum quailed a little when he saw the other did not quail. He seemed to change his intended form of address.

"Brother Clitheroe wants his daughter," said Sizzum.

"Yes, yes, gentlemen," said Mr. Clitheroe in feeble echo, "I want my daughter."

Brent ignored the Mormon. He turned to the father, and questioned eagerly.

"What is this, dear sir? Is Miss Ellen missing? She is not here. Speak, sir! Tell us

at once how she was lost. We must be on her track instantly. Wade, shift the saddles to Fulano and Pumps, while I make up our packs. Speak, sir! Speak!"

Brent's manner carried conviction, even to Sizzum.

"I did not like to suspect you, gentlemen," said Mr. Clitheroe, "after our pleasant evening and your kindness; but Brother Sizzum said it could not be any one else."

"Get the facts, Wade," said Brent, "I cannot trust myself to ask."

Sizzum smiled a base, triumphant smile over the agony of my friend.

"Tell us quick," said I, taking Mr. Clitheroe firmly by the arm, and fixing his eye.

"In the night, an hour or more after you left us, I was waked up by two men creeping into the wagon. They whispered they would shoot, if I breathed. They passed behind the curtain. My daughter had sunk on the floor, tired out, poor child! without undressing. They threw a blanket over her head, and stifled her so that she could not utter a sound. They tied me and gagged me. Then they dragged her off. God forgive me, gentlemen, for suspecting you of such brutality! I lay in the wagon almost strangled to death until the teamster came to put to the oxen for our journey. That is all I know."

"The two gamblers, murderers, have carried her off," said I; "but we 'll save her yet, please God!"

"O," said Sizzum, "ef them devils has got her, that 's the end of her. I haint got no more interest in *her* case. I believe I 'll go. I 've wasted too much time now from the Lord's business."

He moved to go.

"What am I to do?" said Mr. Clitheroe.

Forlorn, bereaved, perplexed old man! Any but a brute would have hesitated to strike him another blow. Sizzum did not hesitate.

"You may go to the devil across lots, on that runt pony of yourn, with your new friends, for all I care. I 've had enough of your daughter's airs, as if she was too good to be teched by one of the Lord's chosen. But she 'll get the Lord's vengeance now, because she would n't see what was her place and privileges. And you 're no better than a backslider. You 've been grumblin' and settin' yourself up for somebody. I would cuss you now with the wrath to come if such a poor-spirited granny was wuth cussin'."

The base wretch lashed his horse and galloped off.

Even his own people of the mail party looked and muttered contempt.

Mr. Clitheroe seemed utterly stunned. Guide, Faith, Daughter, all gone! What was he to do, indeed!

"Never mind, Mr. Clitheroe," said Brent, tenderly, "I hope you have not lost a daughter. I know you have gained a son, — yes, two of them. Here, Jake Shamberlain!"

"Here, sir! Up to time! Ready to pull my pound!"

"Wade and I are going after the lady. Do you take this gentleman, and deliver him safe and sound to Captain Ruby at Fort Laramie. Tell Ruby to keep him till we come, and treat him as he would General Scott. Drive our mules and the mustangs to Laramie, and leave them there. We trust the whole to you. There 's no time to talk. Tell me what money you want for the work, and I 'll pay you now in advance, whatever you ask."

"I 'll be switched round creation ef you do. Not the first red! You think, bekase I 'm a Mormon, as you call it, I haint got no nat'ral feelin's. Why, boys, I 'd go with you myself after the gal, and let Uncle Sam's mail lie there and wait till every letter answered itself, ef I had a kettrypid what could range with yourn. No, no, Jake Shamberlain aint a hog, and his mail boys aint of the pork kind. I 'll take keer of the old gentleman, and put him through jest

'z if he was my own father, and wuth a million slugs. And ef that aint talkin' fair, I dunno what is."

We both griped Jake Shamberlain's friendly fist.

Mr. Clitheroe, weary with his morning's ride, faint and sick after his bonds of the night, and now crushed in spirit and utterly bewildered with these sudden changes, was handed over to his new protector.

The emancipating force had found him. He was free of his Mormonism. His delusion had discarded him. A rough and cruel termination of his hopes! How would he bear this disappointment? Would his heart break? Would his mind break? his life break?

We could not check ourselves to think of him. Our thoughts were galloping furiously on in succor of the daughter, fallen on an evil fate.

While this hasty talk had been going on, I had shifted our saddles to Pumps and Fulano. Noble fellows! they took in the calm excitement of my mood. They grew eager as a greyhound when he sees the hare break cover. They divined that THEIR MOMENT HAD COME! Now their force was to be pitted against brutality. Horse against brute,—which would win? I dared not think of the purpose of our going. Only, Begone!

Begone! was ringing in my ears, and a figure I dared not see was before my eyes.

I was frenzied with excitement; but I held myself steady as one holds his rifle when a buck comes leaping out of the forest into the prairie, where rifle and man have been waiting and trembling, while the hounds' bay came nearer, nearer. I drew strap and tied knot of our girths, and doubled the knot. There must be no chafing of saddles, no dismounting to girth up. That was to be a gallop, I knew, where a man who fell to the rear would be too late for the fight.

Brent, meantime, had rolled up a little stock of provisions in each man's double blanket. We were going we knew not how far. We must be ready for work of many days. A moment's calmness over our preparations now might save desolate defeat or death hereafter. We lashed our blankets with their contents on firmly by the buckskin thongs which are attached to the cantle of a California saddle, — the only saddle for such work as we — horses and men — have on the plains.

"Rifles?" said I.

"No. Knives and six-shooters are enough," said Brent, as cool as if our ride were an ornamental promenade *à cheval*. "We cannot carry weight or clumsy weapons on this journey."

We mounted and were off, with a cheer from Jake Shamberlain and his boys.

All this time, we had not noticed Armstrong. As we struck off southward upon the trackless prairie, that ghastly figure upon the gaunt white horse was beside us.

"We 're bound on the same arrant," whispered he. "Only the savin 's yourn and the killin 's mine."

Did my hope awake, now that the lady I had chosen for my sister was snatched from that monstrous ogre of Mormonism?

Yes; for now instant, urgent action was possible. We could do something. Gallop, gallop, — that we could do.

God speed us! — and the caitiffs should only have baffled the ogre, and the lady should be saved.

If not saved, avenged!

CHAPTER XVIII.

A GALLOP OF THREE.

We were off, we Three on our Gallop to save and to slay.

Pumps and Fulano took fire at once. They were ready to burst into their top speed, and go off in a frenzy.

" Steady, steady," cried Brent. " Now we 'll keep this long easy lope for a while, and I 'll tell you my plan.

" They have gone to the southward, — those two men. They could not get away in any other direction. I have heard Murker say he knows all the country between here and the Arkansaw. Thank Heaven ! so do I, foot by foot."

I recalled the sound of galloping hoofs I had heard in the night to the southward.

" I heard them, then," said I, " in my watch after Fulano's lariat was cut. The wind lulled, and there came a sound of horses, and another sound, which I then thought a fevered fancy of my own, a far-away scream of a woman."

Brent had been quite unimpassioned in his

manner until now. He groaned, as I spoke of the scream.

"O Wade! O Richard!" he said, "why did you not know the voice? It was she. They have terrible hours the start."

He was silent a moment, looking sternly forward. Then he began again, and as he spoke, his iron gray edged on with a looser rein.

"It is well you heard them; it makes their course unmistakable. We know we are on their track. Seven or eight full hours! It is long odds of a start. But they are not mounted as we are mounted. They did not ride as we shall ride. They had a woman to carry, and their mules to drive. They will fear pursuit, and push on without stopping. But we shall catch them; we shall catch them before night, so help us God!"

"You are aiming for the mountains?" I asked.

"For Luggernel Alley," he said.

I remembered how, in our very first interview, a thousand miles away at the Fulano mine, he had spoken of this spot. All the conversation then, all the talk about my horse, came back to me like a Delphic prophecy suddenly fulfilled. I made a good omen of this remembrance.

"For Luggernel Alley," said Brent. "Do you recollect my pointing out a notch in the

Sierra, yesterday, when I said I would like to spend a honeymoon there, if I could find a woman brave enough for this plains' life?"

He grew very white as he spoke, and again Pumps led off by a neck, we ranging up instantly.

"They will make for the Luggernel Springs. The Alley is the only gate through the mountains towards the Arkansaw. If they can get by there, they are safe. They can strike off New Mexico way; or keep on to the States out of the line of emigration or any Mormon pursuit. The Springs are the only water to be had at this season, without digging, anywhere in that quarter. They must go there. We are no farther from the spot than we were at Bridger. We have been travelling along the base of the triangle. We have only lost time. And, now that we are fairly under way, I think we might shake out another reef. A little faster, friends, — a little faster yet!"

It was a vast desert level where we were riding. Here and there a scanty tuft of grass appeared, to prove that Nature had tried her benign experiment, and wafted seeds hither to let the scene be verdant, if it would. Nature had failed. The land refused any mantle over its brown desolation. The soil was disintegrated, igneous rock, fine and well beaten down as the most thoroughly laid Macadam.

Behind was the rolling region where the Great Trail passes; before and far away, the faint blue of the Sierra. Not a bird sang in the hot noon; not a cricket chirped. No sound except the beat of our horses' hoofs on the pavement. We rode side by side, taking our strides together. It was a waiting race. The horses travelled easily. They learned, as a horse with a self-possessed rider will, that they were not to waste strength in rushes. "Spend, but waste not,"—not a step, not a breath, in that gallop for life! This must be our motto.

We three rode abreast over the sere brown plain on our gallop to save and to slay.

Far — ah, how terribly dim and distant! — was the Sierra, a slowly lifting cloud. Slowly, slowly they lifted, those gracious heights, while we sped over the harsh levels of the desert. Harsh levels, abandoned or unvisited by verdancy. But better so; there was no long herbage to check our great pace over the smooth race-course; no thickets here to baffle us; no forests to mislead.

We galloped abreast,—Armstrong at the right. His weird, gaunt white held his own with the best of us. No whip, no spur, for that deathly creature. He went as if his master's purpose were stirring him through and through. That stern intent made his sinews steel, and put an agony of power into every stride. The man never

stirred, save sometimes to put a hand to that bloody blanket bandage across his head and temple. He had told his story, he had spoken his errand, he breathed not a word; but with his lean, pallid face set hard, his gentle blue eyes scourged of their kindliness, and fixed upon those distant mountains where his vengeance lay, he rode on like a relentless fate.

Next in the line I galloped. O my glorious black! The great, killing pace seemed mere playful canter to him, — such as one might ride beside a timid girl, thrilling with her first free dash over a flowery common, or a golden beach between sea and shore. But from time to time he surged a little forward with his great shoulders, and gave a mighty writhe of his body, while his hind legs came lifting his flanks under me, and telling of the giant reserve of speed and power he kept easily controlled. Then his ear would go back, and his large brown eye, with its purple-black pupil, would look round at my bridle hand and then into my eye, saying as well as words could have said it, "This is mere sport, my friend and master. You do not know me. I have stuff in me that you do not dream. Say the word, and I can double this, treble it. Say the word! let me show you how I can spurn the earth." Then, with the lightest love pressure on the snaffle, I would say, "Not yet! not yet!

Patience, my noble friend! Your time will come."

At the left rode Brent, our leader. He knew the region; he made the plan; he had the hope; his was the ruling passion, — stronger than brotherhood, than revenge. Love made him leader of that galloping three. His iron-gray went grandly, with white mane flapping the air like a signal-flag of reprieve. Eager hope and kindling purpose made the rider's face more beautiful than ever. He seemed to behold Sidney's motto written on the golden haze before him, "*Viam aut inveniam aut faciam.*" I felt my heart grow great, when I looked at his calm features, and caught his assuring smile, — a gay smile but for the dark, fateful resolve beneath it. And when he launched some stirring word of cheer, and shook another ten of seconds out of the gray's mile, even Armstrong's countenance grew less deathly, as he turned to our leader in silent response. Brent looked a fit chieftain for such a wild charge over the desert waste, with his buckskin hunting-shirt and leggins with flaring fringes, his otter cap and eagle's plume, his bronzed face, with its close, brown beard, his elate head, and his seat like a centaur.

So we galloped three abreast, neck and neck, hoof with hoof, steadily quickening our pace over the sere width of desert. We must make the

most of the levels. Rougher work, cruel obstacles were before. All the wild, triumphant music I had ever heard came and sang in my ears to the flinging cadence of the resonant feet, tramping on hollow arches of the volcanic rock, over great, vacant chasms underneath. Sweet and soft around us melted the hazy air of October, and its warm, flickering currents shook like a veil of gauzy gold, between us and the blue bloom of the mountains far away, but nearing now and lifting step by step.

On we galloped, the avenger, the friend, the lover, on our errand, to save and to slay.

CHAPTER XIX.

FASTER.

It came afternoon, as we rode on steadily. The country grew rougher. The horses never flinched, but they sweated freely, and foam from their nostrils flecked their shoulders. By and by, with little pleasant admonitory puffs, a breeze drew down from the glimmering frosty edges of the Sierra and cooled us. Horses and men were cheered and freshened, and lifted anew to their work.

We had seen and heard no life on the desert. Now in the broken country, a cayote or two scuttled away as we passed. Sometimes a lean gray wolf would skulk out of a brake, canter after us a little way, and then squat on his haunches, staring at our strange speed. Flight and chase he could understand, but ours was not flight for safety, or chase for food. Men are queer mysteries to beasts. So our next companions found. Over the edge of a slope, bending away to a valley of dry scanty pasture at the left, a herd of antelopes appeared. They were close to us,

within easy revolver shot. They sprang into graceful flight, some score of them, with tails up and black hoofs glancing. Presently, pausing for curiosity, they saw that we fled, not followed, and they in turn became pursuers, careering after us for a mile or more, until our stern business left their gambolling play far behind.

We held steadily for that notch in the blue Sierra. The mountain lines grew sharper; the country where we travelled, rougher, every stride. We came upon a wide tract covered with wild-sage bushes. These delayed and baffled us. It was a pigmy forest of trees, mature and complete, but no higher than the knee. Every dwarfed, stunted, gnarled bush, had the trunk, limbs, twigs, and gray, withered foliage, all in miniature, of some tree, hapless but sturdy, that has had a weatherbeaten struggle for life on a storm-threshed crag by the shore, or on a granite side of a mountain, with short allowance of soil to eat and water to drink. Myriads of square miles of that arid region have no important vegetation except this wild-sage, or Artemisia, and a meaner brother, not even good to burn, the greasewood.

One may ride through the tearing thickets of a forest primeval, as one may shoulder through a crowd of civilized barbarians at a spectacle. Our gallop over the top of this pigmy wood was as difficult as to find passage over the heads of

the same crowd, tall men and short, men hatted with slouched hats, wash-bowls, and stove-pipes. It was a rough scramble. It checked our speed and chafed our horses. Sometimes we could find natural pathways for a few rods. Then these strayed aside or closed up, and we must plunge straight on. We lost time; moments we lost, more precious than if every one were marked by a drop in a clepsydra, and each drop as it fell changed itself and tinkled in the basin, a priceless pearl.

"It worries me, this delay," I said to Brent.

"They lost as much—more time than we," he said.

And he crowded on, more desperately, as a man rides for dearer than life,—as a lover rides for love.

We tore along, breaking through and over the sage-bushes, each man where best he could. Fulano began to show me what leaps were in him. I gave him his head. No bridle would have held him. I kept my mastery by the voice, or rather by the perfect identification of his will with mine. Our minds acted together. "Save strength," I still warned him, "save strength, my friend, for the mountains and the last leaps!"

A little pathway in the sage-bushes suddenly opened before me, as a lane rifts in the press

of hurrying legions 'mid the crush of a city thoroughfare. I dashed on a hundred yards in advance of my comrades.

What was this? The bushes trampled and broken down, just as we in our passage were trampling and breaking them. What?

Hoof-marks in the dust!

"The trail!" I cried, "the trail!"

They sprang toward me. Brent followed the line with his eye. He galloped forward, with a look of triumph.

Suddenly I saw him fling himself half out of his saddle, and clutch at some object. Still going at speed, and holding on by one leg alone, after the Indian fashion for sport or shelter against an arrow or a shot, he picked up something from the bushes, regained his seat, and waved his treasure to us. We ranged up and rode beside him over a gap in the sage.

A lady's glove! — that was what he had stooped to recover. An old buckskin riding gauntlet, neatly stitched about the wrist, and pinked on the wristlet. A pretty glove, strangely, almost tragically, feminine in this desolation. A well-worn glove, that had seen better days, like its mistress, but never any day so good as this, when it proved to us that we were on the sure path of rescue.

"I take up the gauntlet," said Brent. "Gare à qui le touche!"

We said nothing more; for this unconscious token, this silent cry for help, made the danger seem more closely imminent. We pressed on. No flinching in any of the horses. Where we could, we were going at speed. Where they could, the horses kept side by side, nerving each other. Companionship sustained them in that terrible ride.

And now in front the purple Sierra was growing brown, and rising up a distinct wall, cleft visibly with dell, gully, ravine, and cañon. The saw-teeth of the ridge defined themselves sharply into peak and pinnacle. Broad fields of cool snow gleamed upon the summits.

We were ascending now all the time into subalpine regions. We crossed great sloping savannas, deep in dry, rustling grass, where a nation of cattle might pasture. We plunged through broad wastes of hot sand. We flung ourselves down and up the red sides of water-worn gullies. We took breakneck leaps across dry quebradas in the clay. We clattered across stony arroyos, longing thirstily for the gush of water that had flowed there not many months before.

The trail was everywhere plain. No prairie craft was needed to trace it. Here the chase had gone, but a few hours ago; here, across grassy slopes, trampling the grass as if a mower had

passed that way; here, ploughing wearily through the sand; here, treading the red, crumbling clay; here, breaking down the side of a bank; here, leaving a sharp hoof-track in the dry mud of a fled torrent. Everywhere a straight path, pointing for that deepening gap in the Sierra, Luggernel Alley, the only gate of escape.

Brent's unerring judgment had divined the course aright. On he led, charging along the trail, as if he were trampling already on the carcasses of the pursued. On he led and we followed, drawing nearer, nearer to our goal.

Our horses suffered bitterly for water. Some five hours we had ridden without a pause. Not one drop or sign of water in all that arid waste. The torrents had poured along the dry watercourses too hastily to let the scanty alders and willows along their line treasure up any sap of growth. The wild-sage bushes had plainly never tasted fluid more plenteous than seldom dewdrops doled out on certain rare festal days, enough to keep their meagre foliage a dusty gray. No pleasant streamlet lurked anywhere under the long dry grass of the savannas. The arroyos were parched and hot as rifts in lava.

It became agonizing to listen to the panting and gasping of our horses. Their eyes grew staring and bloodshot. We suffered, ourselves,

hardly less than they. It was cruel to press on. But we must hinder a crueller cruelty. Love against Time, — Vengeance against Time! We must not flinch for any weak humanity to the noble allies that struggled on with us, without one token of resistance.

Fulano suffered least. He turned his brave eye back, and beckoned me with his ear to listen, while he seemed to say: "See, this is my Endurance! I hold my Power ready still to show."

And he curved his proud neck, shook his mane like a banner, and galloped the grandest of all.

We came to a broad strip of sand, the dry bed of a mountain-torrent. The trail followed up this disappointing path. Heavy ploughing for the tired horses! How would they bear the rough work down the ravine yet to come?

Suddenly our leader pulled up and sprang from the saddle.

"Look!" he cried, "how those fellows spent their time, and saved ours. Thank Heaven for this! We shall save her, surely, now."

It was WATER! No need to go back to Pindar to know that it was "the Best."

They had dug a pit deep in the thirsty sand, and found a lurking river buried there. Nature never questioned what manner of men they were that sought. Murderers flying from vengeance and planning now another villain outrage, — still

impartial Nature did not change her laws for them. Sunshine, air, water, life, — these boons of hers, — she gave them freely. That higher boon of death, if they were to receive, it must be from some other power, greater than the undiscriminating force of Nature.

Good luck and good omen, this well of water in the sand! It proved that our chase had suffered as we, and had been delayed as we. Before they had dared to pause and waste priceless moments here, their horses must have been drooping terribly. The pit was nearly five feet deep. A good hour's work, and no less, had dug it with such tools as they could bring. I almost laughed to think of the two, slowly bailing out the sliding sand with a tin plate, perhaps, and a frying-pan, while a score of miles away upon the desert we three were riding hard upon their tracks to follow them the fleeter for this refreshment they had left. "Sic vos non vobis!" I was ready to say triumphantly; but then I remembered the third figure in their group, — a woman, like a Sibyl, growing calmer as her peril grew, and succor seemed to withdraw. And the pang of this picture crushed back into my heart any thoughts but a mad anxiety and a frenzy to be driving on.

We drank thankfully of this well by the wayside. No gentle beauty hereabouts to enchant

us to delay. No grand old tree, the shelter and the landmark of the fountain, proclaiming an oasis near. Nothing but bare, hot sand. But the water was pure, cool, and bright. It had come underground from the Sierra, and still remembered its parent snows. We drank and were grateful, almost to the point of pity. Had we been but avengers, like Armstrong, my friend and I could wellnigh have felt mercy here, and turned back pardoning. But rescue was more imperative than vengeance. Our business tortured us, as with the fanged scourge of Tisiphone, while we dallied. We grudged these moments of refreshment. Before night fell down the west, and night was soon to be climbing up the east, we must overtake, — and then ?

I wiped the dust and spume away from Fulano's nostrils and breathed him a moment. Then I let him drain deep, delicious draughts from the stirrup-cup. He whinnied thanks and undying fealty, — my noble comrade ! He drank like a reveller. When I mounted again, he gave a jubilant curvet and bound. My weight was a feather to him. All those leagues of our hard, hot gallop were nothing.

The brown Sierra here was close at hand. Its glittering, icy summits, above the dark and sheeny walls, far above the black phalanxes of clambering pines, stooped forward and hung over

us as we rode. We were now at the foot of the range, where it dipped suddenly down upon the plain. The gap, our goal all day, opened before us, grand and terrible. Some giant force had clutched the mountains, and riven them narrowly apart. The wild defile gaped, and then wound away and closed, lost between its mighty walls, a thousand feet high, and bearing two brother pyramids of purple cliffs aloft far above the snow line. A fearful portal into a scene of the throes and agonies of earth! and my excited eyes seemed to read, gilded over its entrance, in the dead gold of that hazy October sunshine, words from Dante's inscription, —

> "Per me si va tra la perduta gente;
> Lasciate ogni speranza voi, ch' entrate!"

"Here we are," said Brent, speaking hardly above his breath. "This is Luggernel Alley at last, thank God! In an hour, if the horses hold out, we shall be at the Springs; that is, if we can go through this breakneck gorge at the same pace. My horse began to flinch a little before the water. Perhaps that will set him up. How are yours?"

"Fulano asserts that he has not begun to show himself yet. I may have to carry you *en croupe*, before we are done."

Armstrong said nothing, but pointed impa-

tiently down the defile. The gaunt white horse moved on quicker at this gesture. He seemed a tireless machine, not flesh and blood,—a being like his master, living and acting by the force of a purpose alone.

Our chief led the way into the cañon.

CHAPTER XX.

A HORSE.

YES, John Brent, you were right when you called Luggernel Alley a wonder of our continent.

I remember it now, — I only saw it then; — for those strong scenes of nature assault the soul whether it will or no, fight in against affirmative or negative resistance, and bide their time to be admitted as dominant over the imagination. It seemed to me then that I was not noticing how grand the precipices, how stupendous the cleavages, how rich and gleaming the rock faces in Luggernel Alley. My business was not to stare about, but to look sharp and ride hard; and I did it.

Yet now I can remember, distinct as if I beheld it, every stride of that pass; and everywhere, as I recall foot after foot of that fierce chasm, I see three men with set faces, — one deathly pale and wearing a bloody turban, — all galloping steadily on, on an errand to save and to slay.

Terrible riding it was! A pavement of slippery,

sheeny rock; great beds of loose stones; barricades of mighty boulders, where a cliff had fallen an æon ago, before the days of the road-maker race; crevices where an unwary foot might catch; wide rifts where a shaky horse might fall, or a timid horseman drag him down. Terrible riding! A pass where a calm traveller would go quietly picking his steps, thankful if each hour counted him a safe mile.

Terrible riding! Madness to go as we went! Horse and man, any moment either might shatter every limb. But man and horse neither can know what he can do, until he has dared and done. On we went, with the old frenzy growing tenser. Heart almost broken with eagerness.

No whipping or spurring. Our horses were a part of ourselves. While we could go, they would go. Since the water, they were full of leap again. Down in the shady Alley, too, evening had come before its time. Noon's packing of hot air had been dislodged by a mountain breeze drawing through. Horses and men were braced and cheered to their work; and in such riding as that, the man and the horse must think together and move together, — eye and hand of the rider must choose and command, as bravely as the horse executes. The blue sky was overhead, the red sun upon the castellated walls a thousand feet above us, the purpling chasm

opened before. It was late, these were the last moments. But we should save the lady yet.

"Yes," our hearts shouted to us, "we shall save her yet."

An arroyo, the channel of a dry torrent, followed the pass. It had made its way as water does, not straightway, but by that potent feminine method of passing under the frowning front of an obstacle, and leaving the dull rock staring there, while the wild creature it would have held is gliding away down the valley. This zigzag channel baffled us; we must leap it without check wherever it crossed our path. Every second now was worth a century. Here was the sign of horses, passed but now. We could not choose ground. We must take our leaps on that cruel rock wherever they offered.

Poor Pumps!

He had carried his master so nobly! There were so few miles to do! He had chased so well; he merited to be in at the death.

Brent lifted him at a leap across the arroyo.

Poor Pumps!

His hind feet slipped on the time-smoothed rock. He fell short. He plunged down a dozen feet among the rough boulders of the torrent-bed. Brent was out of the saddle almost before he struck, raising him.

No, he would never rise again. Both his fore

legs were broken at the knee. He rested there, kneeling on the rocks where he fell.

Brent groaned. The horse screamed horribly, horribly, — there is no more agonized sound, — and the scream went echoing high up the cliffs where the red sunlight rested.

It costs a loving master much to butcher his brave and trusty horse, the half of his knightly self; but it costs him more to hear him shriek in such misery. Brent drew his pistol to put poor Pumps out of pain.

Armstrong sprang down and caught his hand.

"Stop!" he said in his hoarse whisper.

He had hardly spoken, since we started. My nerves were so strained, that this mere ghost of a sound rang through me like a death yell, a grisly cry of merciless and exultant vengeance. I seemed to hear its echoes, rising up and swelling in a flood of thick uproar, until they burst over the summit of the pass and were wasted in the crannies of the towering mountain-flanks above.

"Stop!" whispered Armstrong. "No shooting! They 'll hear. The knife!"

He held out his knife to my friend.

Brent hesitated one heart-beat. Could he stain his hand with his faithful servant's blood?

Pumps screamed again.

Armstrong snatched the knife and drew it across the throat of the crippled horse.

Poor Pumps! He sank and died without a moan. Noble martyr in the old, heroic cause!

I caught the knife from Armstrong. I cut the thong of my girth. The heavy California saddle, with its macheers and roll of blankets, fell to the ground. I cut off my spurs. They had never yet touched Fulano's flanks. He stood beside me quiet, but trembling to be off.

"Now Brent! up behind me!" I whispered, — for the awe of death was upon us.

I mounted. Brent sprang up behind. I ride light for a tall man. Brent is the slightest body of an athlete I ever saw.

Fulano stood steady till we were firm in our seats.

Then he tore down the defile.

Here was that vast reserve of power; here the tireless spirit; here the hoof striking true as a thunderbolt, where the brave eye saw footing; here that writhing agony of speed; here the great promise fulfilled, the great heart thrilling to mine, the grand body living to the beating heart. Noble Fulano!

I rode with a snaffle. I left it hanging loose. I did not check or guide him. He saw all. He knew all. All was his doing.

We sat firm, clinging as we could, as we must. Fulano dashed along the resounding pass.

Armstrong pressed after, — the gaunt white

horse struggled to emulate his leader. Presently we lost them behind the curves of the Alley. No other horse that ever lived could have held with the black in that headlong gallop to save.

Over the slippery rocks, over the sheeny pavement, plunging through the loose stones, staggering over the barricades, leaping the arroyo, down, up, on, always on, — on went the horse, we clinging as we might.

It seemed one beat of time, it seemed an eternity, when between the ring of the hoofs I heard Brent whisper in my ear.

"We are there."

The crags flung apart, right and left. I saw a sylvan glade. I saw the gleam of gushing water.

Fulano dashed on, uncontrollable!

There they were, — the Murderers.

Arrived but one moment!

The lady still bound to that pack-mule branded A. & A.

Murker just beginning to unsaddle.

Larrap not dismounted, in chase of the other animals as they strayed to graze.

The men heard the tramp and saw us, as we sprang into the glade.

Both my hands were at the bridle.

Brent, grasping my waist with one arm, was awkward with his pistol.

Murker saw us first. He snatched his six-shooter and fired.

Brent shook with a spasm. His pistol arm dropped.

Before the murderer could cock again, Fulano was upon him!

He was ridden down. He was beaten, trampled down upon the grass, — crushed, abolished.

We disentangled ourselves from the *mêlée.*

Where was the other?

The coward, without firing a shot, was spurring Armstrong's Flathead horse blindly up the cañon, whence we had issued.

We turned to Murker.

Fulano was up again, and stood there shuddering. But the man?

A hoof had battered in the top of his skull; blood was gushing from his mouth; his ribs were broken; all his body was a trodden, massacred carcass.

He breathed once, as we lifted him.

Then a tranquil, childlike look stole over his face, — that well-known look of the weary body, thankful that the turbulent soul has gone. Murker was dead.

Fulano, and not we, had been executioner. *His* was the stain of blood.

CHAPTER XXI.

LUGGERNEL SPRINGS.

"I AM shot," gasped Brent, and sank down fainting.

Which first? the lady, or my friend, slain perhaps for her sake?

"Her! see to her!" he moaned.

I unbound her from the saddle. I could not utter a word for pity. She essayed to speak; but her lips only moved. She could not change her look. So many hours hardening herself to repel, she could not soften yet, even to accept my offices with a smile of gratitude. She was cruelly cramped by her lashings to the rough pack-saddle, rudely cushioned with blankets. But the horror had not maddened her; the torture had not broken her; the dread of worse had not slain her. She was still unblenching and indomitable. And still she seemed to rule her fate with quiet, steady eyes,—gray eyes with violet lights.

I carried her a few steps to the side of a jubi-

lant fountain lifting beneath a rock, and left her there to Nature, kindliest leech.

Then I took a cup of that brilliant water to my friend, my brother.

"I can die now," he said feebly.

"There is no death in you. You have won the right to live. Keep a brave heart. Drink!"

And in that exquisite spot, that fair glade of the sparkling fountains, I gave the noble fellow long draughts of sweet refreshment. The rescued lady trailed herself across the grass and knelt beside us. My horse, still heaving with his honorable gallop, drooped his head over the group. A picture to be remembered!

Who says that knighthood is no more? Who says the days of chivalry are past? Who says it, is a losel.

Brent was roughly, but not dangerously, shot along the arm. The bullet had ploughed an ugly path along the muscles of the fore-arm and upper-arm, and was lodged in the shoulder. A bad wound; but no bones broken. If he could but have rest and peace and surgery! But if not, after the fever of our day, after the wearing anguish of our doubtful gallop; if not? —

Ellen Clitheroe revived in a moment, when she saw another needed her care. Woman's gentle duty of nurse found her ready for its offices. My blundering good-will gave place will-

ingly to her fine-fingered skilfulness. She forgot her own weariness, while she was magnetizing away the pangs of the wounded man by her delicate touch.

He looked at me, and smiled with total content.

"My father?" asked the lady, faintly, as if she dreaded the answer.

"Safe!" said I. "Free from the Mormons. He is waiting for you with a friend."

Her tears began to flow. She was busy bandaging the wound. All was silent about us, except the pleasant gurgle of the fountains, when we heard a shot up the defile.

The sharp sound of a pistol-shot came leaping down the narrow chasm, flying before the pursuit of its own thundering echoes. Those grand old walls of the Alley, facing each other there for the shade and sunshine of long, peaceful æons, gilded by the glow of countless summers, splashed with the gray of antique lichens on their purple fronts, draped for unnumbered Octobers with the scarlet wreaths of frost-ripened trailers, — those solemn walls standing there in old silence, unbroken save by the uproar of winter floods, or by the humming flight of summer winds, or the louder march of tempests crowding on, — those silent walls, written close with the record of God's handiwork in the long cycles of creation, lifted up their indignant voices when

the shot within proclaimed to them the undying warfare of man with man, and, roaring after, they hurled that murderous noise forth from their presence. The quick report sprang out from the chasm into the quiet glade, where the lady knelt, busy with offices of mercy, and there it lost its vengeful tone, and was blended with the rumble of the mingled rivulets of the springs. The thundering echoes paused within, slowly proclaiming quiet up from crag to crag, until one after another they whispered themselves to silence. No sound remained, save the rumble of the stream, as it flowed away down the opening valley into the haze, violet under gold, of that warm October sunset.

I sprang up when I heard the shot, and stood on the alert. There were two up the Alley; which, after the shot, was living, and which dead?

Not many moments had passed, when I heard hoofs coming, and Armstrong rode into view. The gaunt white horse galloped with the long, careless fling I had noticed all day. He moved machine-like, as if without choice or volition of his own, a horse commissioned to carry a Fate. Larrap's stolen horse trotted along by his old master.

Armstrong glanced at Murker's body lying there, a battered mass.

"Both!" he whispered. "The other was sent right into my hands to be put to death. I knew all the time it would be sent to me to do killing. He was spurring up the Alley on my own horse. He snapped at me. My pistol did not know how to snap. See here!"

And he showed me, hanging from his saddle-horn, that loathliest of all objects a man's eyes ever lighted upon, a fresh scalp. It sickened me.

"Shame!" said I. "Do you call yourself a man, to bring such a thing into a lady's presence?"

"It was rather mean to take the fellow's hair," says Armstrong. "I don't believe brother Bill would have did it. But I felt orful ugly, when I saw that fat, low-lived devil, and thought of my brother, a big, hul-hearted man as never gave a bad word to nobody, and never held on to a dollar or a slug when ayry man wanted it more 'n him. Come, I 'll throw the nasty thing away, if you say so."

"Help me drag off this corpse, and we 'll bury man and scalp together," I said.

We buried him at the gate of the Alley, under a great cairn of stones.

"God forgive them both," said I, as I flung the last stone, "that they were brutes, and not men."

"Brutes they was, stranger," says Armstrong; "but these things is ordered somehow. I allow your pardener and you is glad to get that gal out of a Mormon camp, ef it did cost him a horse and both on you an all day's tremble. Men don't ride so hard, and look so wolfish, as you two men have did, onless their heart is into it."

"It is, indeed, strange," said I, rather thinking aloud than addressing my companion, "that this brute force should have achieved for us by outrage what love failed in. Fate seems to have played Brute against Brute, that Love might step between and claim the victory. The lady is safe; but the lover may have won her life and lost his own."

"Look here, stranger," says Armstrong, "part of this is yourn," pointing to the money-belt, which, with the dead man's knife and pistol, he had taken from the corpse. "Halves of this and the other fellow's plunder belongs to your party."

I suppose I looked disgusted; yet I have seen gentle ladies wearing boastfully brooches that their favorite heroes had taken from Christian men dead on the field at Inkermann, and shawls of the loot of Delhi cover many shoulders that would shudder over a dead worm.

"I 'm not squimmidge," said Armstrong.

"It 's my own and my brother's money in them belts. I 'll count that out, and then, ef you wont take your part, I 'll pass it over to the gal's father. I allowed from signs ther was, that that thar boss Mormon had about tuk the old man's pile. Most likely these shiners they won last night is some of the very sufferins Sizzum got from him. It 's right he should hev 'em back."

I acknowledged the justice of this restitution.

"Now," said Armstrong again, "you want to stay by your friend and the gal, so I 'll take one of the pack mules and fetch your two saddles along before dark lights down. It was too bad to lose that iron gray; but there 's more 'n two horses into the hide of that black of yourn. He was the best man of the lot for the goin', the savin', and the killin'. Stranger, I 've ben byin' and sellin' and breedin' kettrypids ever since I was raised myself; but I allow I never seed a HORSE till I seed him lunge off with you two on his back."

Armstrong rode up the Alley again. Another man he was since his commission of vengeance had been accomplished. In those lawless wilds, *vendetta* takes the place of justice, becomes justice indeed. Armstrong, now that his stern duty was done, was again the kindly, simple fellow nature made him, the type of a class between pioneer and settler, and a strong, brave, effective

class it is. It was the education, in youth, in the sturdy habits of this class, that made our Washington the manly chief he was.

I returned to my friends by the Springs.

Emerging from the austere grandeur of the Alley, dim with the shadows of twilight, the scene without was doubly sweet and almost domestic. The springs, four or five in number, and one carrying with it a thread of hot steam, sprang vigorously out along the bold edges of the cliffs. All the ground was verdure, — green, tender, and brilliant, a feast to the eyes after long staring over sere deserts. The wild creatures that came there every day for refreshment, and perhaps for intoxication in the aerated tipple of the Champagne Spring, kept the grass grazed short as the turf of a park. Two great spruce-trees, each with one foot under the rocks, and one edging fountainward, stood, pillar under pyramid. Some wreaths of drooping creepers, floating from the crags, had caught and clung, and so gone winding among the dark foliage of the twin trees; and now their leaves, ripened by autumn, shook amid the dusky green like an alighting of orioles. Except for the spruces posted against the cliffs, the grassy area of an acre about the springs was clear of other growth than grass. Below, the rivulet disappeared in a green thicket, and farther down were large

cottonwoods, and one tall stranger tree, the feminine presence of a drooping elm, as much unlooked for here as the sweet, delicate woman whom strange chances had brought to dignify and grace the spot. This stranger elm filled my heart with infinite tender memories of home, and of those early boyish days when Brent and I lay under the Berkeley College elms, or strayed beneath the elm-built arches up and down the avenues of that fair city clustered round the College. In those bright days, before sorrow came to him, or to me my harsh necessity, we two in brotherhood had trained each other to high thoughts of courtesy and love,—a dreamed-of love for large heroic souls of women, when our time of full-completed worthiness should come. And his time had come. And yet it might be that the wounded knight would never know his lady, as much loving as beloved; it might be that he would never find a sweeter soothing in her touch, than the mere touch of gratitude and common charity; it might be that he would fever away his beautiful life with the fever of his wound, and never feel the holy quiet of a lover's joy when the full bliss of love returned is his.

I gave a few moments to the horses and mules. They were still to be unsaddled. Healthy Fulano had found his own way to water, and now

was feasting on the crisp, short grass along the outlet of the Champagne Spring, tickling his nose with the bubbles of gas as they sped by. Sup, Fulano! This spot was worth the gallop to see. Sup, Fulano, the brave, and may no stain of this day's righteous death-doing rest upon your guiltless life!

Brent was lying under the spruces, drowsing with fatigue, reaction, and loss of blood. Miss Clitheroe sat by watching him. These fine beings have an exquisitely tenacious vitality. The happiness of release had suddenly kindled all her life again. As she rose to meet me, there was light in her eyes and color in her cheeks. Her whole soul leaped up and spoke its large gratitude in a smile.

"My dear friend," she said; and then, with sudden tearfulness, "God be thanked for your heroism!"

"God be thanked!" I repeated. "We have been strangely selected and sent, — you from England, my friend and I, and my horse, the hero of the day, from the Pacific, — to interfere here in each other's lives."

"It would seem romance, but for the sharp terror of this day, coming after the long agony of my journey with my poor, errant father."

"A sharp terror, indeed!"

"But only terror!" and a glow of maidenly

thankfulness passed over her face. "Except one moment of rough usage, when I slipped away my gag and screamed as they carried me off, those men were considerate to me. They never halted except to dig a well in the sand of a river-bed. I learned from their talk that they had made an attempt to steal your horses in the night, and, failing, dreaded lest you, and especially Mr. Brent, would follow them close. So they rode hard. They supposed that, when I was found missing, whoever went in pursuit, and you they always feared, would lose time along the emigrant road, searching eastward."

"We might have done so; but we had ourselves ridden off that way in despair of aiding you," — and I gave her a sketch of the events of the morning.

"It was the hope of succor from you that sustained me. After what your friend said to me last evening, I knew he could not abandon me, if he had power to act." And she looked very tenderly at the sleeper, — a look to repay him for a thousand wounds.

"Did you find my glove?" she asked.

"He has it. That token assured us. Ah! you should have seen that dear wounded boy, our leader, when he knew we were not astray."

I continued my story of our pursuit, — the lulling beat of the stream undertoning my words

in the still twilight. When I came to that last wild burst of Fulano, and told how his heroic charge had fulfilled his faithful ardor of the day, she sprang up, thrilled out of all weariness, and ran to the noble fellow, where he was taking his dainty banquet by the brookside.

She flung her arms around his neck and rested her head upon his shoulder. Locks of her black hair, escaping into curls, mingled with his mane.

Presently Miss Clitheroe seemed to feel a maidenly consciousness that her caresses of the horse might remind the horse's master that he was not unworthy of a like reward. She returned to my friend. He was stirring a little in pain. She busied herself about him tenderly, and yet with a certain distance of manner, building a wall of delicate decorum between him and herself. Indeed, from the beginning of our acquaintance yesterday, and now in this meeting of to-day, she had drawn apart from Brent, and frankly approached me. Her fine instinct knew the brother from the lover.

Armstrong presently rode out again.

When he saw his brother's sorrel horse feeding with the others, he wept like a child.

We two, the lady and I, were greatly touched.

"I 've got a daughter myself, to home to the Umpqua," said Armstrong, turning to Miss Clitheroe; "jest about your settin' up, and jest

about as many corn shuckins old. Ellen is her name."

"Ellen is my name."

"That's pretty" (pooty he pronounced it). "Well, I'll stand father to you, just as ef you was my own gal. I know what a gal in trouble wants more 'n young fellows can."

Ellen Clitheroe gave her hand to Armstrong in frank acceptance of his offer. He became the paternal element in our party, — he protecting her and she humanizing him.

We lighted our camp-fire and supped heartily. Except for Brent's uneasy stir and unwilling moans, we might have forgotten the deadly business of that day.

We made the wounded man comfortable as might be with blankets, under the sheltering spruces. After all, if he must be hurt, he could not have fallen upon a better hospital than the pure open air of this beautiful shelter; and surely nowhere was a gentler nurse than his.

Armstrong and I built the lady a bower, a little lodge of bushes from the thicket.

Then he and I kept watch and watch beneath the starlight.

Sleeping or waking, our souls and our bodies thanked God for this peace of a peaceful night, after the terror and tramp and battle of that trembling day.

CHAPTER XXII.

CHAMPAGNE.

How soundly I slept, in my sleeping hours, after our great victory, — Courage over Space, Hope over Time, Love over Brutality, the Heavenly Powers over the Demon Forces!

I sprang up, after my last morning slumber, with vitality enough for my wounded friend and myself. I felt that I could carry double responsibility, as Fulano had carried double weight. God has given me the blessing of a great, vigorous life. My body has always been a perfect machine for my mind's work, such as that may be; and never a better machine, with every valve, crank, joint, and journal in good order, than on that dawn at Luggernel Springs.

If I had not awaked alive from top to toe, from tip to tip, from end to end, alive in muscle, nerve, and brain, the Luggernel Champagne Spring would have put life into me.

Champagne of Rheims and Epernay! Bah!

Avaunt, Veuve Clicquot, thou elderly Hebe! Avaunt, with thy besugared, begassed, bedevilled,

becorked, bewired, poptious manufacture! Some day, at a dull dinner-party, I will think of thee and poison myself with thy poison, that I may become deaf to the voice of the vulgar woman to whom some fatal hostess may consign me. But now let no thought of Champagne, even of that which the Veuve may keep for her moment most lacrymose of "veuvage," interfere with my remembrance of the Luggernel Spring.

Champagne to that! More justly a Satyr to Hyperion; a stage-moon to Luna herself; an Old-World peach to a peach of New Jersey; a Democratic Platform to the Declaration of Independence; a pinching, varnished boot to a winged sandal of Mercury; Faustina to Charlotte Corday; a senatorial speech to a speech of Wendell Phillips; anything crude, base, and sham to anything fine, fresh, and true.

Ah, poor Kissingen! Alas, unfragrant Sharon! Alack, stale Saratoga! Ichabod! Adieu to you all when the world knows the virtues of Luggernel!

But never when the *O-fortunatus-nimium* world has come into this new portion of its heritage,— never when Luggernel is renowned and fashion blooms about its brim,— never when gentlemen of the creamiest cream in the next half-century offer to ladies as creamy beakers bubbling full of that hypernectareous tipple,— never will any

finer body or fairer soul of a woman be seen there about than her whom I served that morning. And, indeed, among the heroic gentlemen of the riper time to come, I cannot dream that any will surpass in all the virtues and courtesies of the cavalier my friend John Brent, now dismounted and lying there wounded and patient.

Oranges before breakfast are good. There be who on awakening gasp for the cocktail. And others, who, fuddled last night, are limp in their lazy beds, till soda-water lends them its fizzle. Eye-openers these of moderate calibre. But, with all the vigorous vitality I have claimed, perhaps I might still have remembered yesterday with its Gallop of Three, its suspense, its eager dash and its certainty, and remembered them with new anxieties for to-day, except for my morning draught of exhilaration from the unbottled, unmixed sources of Luggernel. Thanks La Grenouille, rover of the wilderness, for thy froggish instinct and this blissful discovery!

I stooped and lapped. Long ago Gideon Barakson recognized the thorough-going braves because they took their water by the throatful, not by the palmful. And when I had lapped enough, and let the great bubbles of laughing gas burst in my face, I took a beaker, — to be sure it was battered tin, and had hung at the belt of a dastard, — a beaker of that "cordial julep" to my

friend. He was awake and looking about him, seeking for some one.

"Come to your gruel, old fellow!" said I.

He drank the airy water and sat up revived.

"It is like swallowing the first sunbeam on the crown of a snow-peak," he said.

Miss Clitheroe dawned upon us with this. She came forth from her lodge, fresh and full of cheer.

Brent stopped looking about for some one. The One had entered upon the scene.

I dipped for her also that poetry in a tin pot.

"This," said she, "is finer balm than the enchanted cup of Comus; never did lips touch a draught

'To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.'

To-day my life is worthy of this nepenthe. My dear friend, this is the first night of peaceful, hopeful rest I have had, since my poor father was betrayed into his delusion. Thank you and God for it!"

And again her eyes filled with happy tears, and she knelt by her patient. While she was tenderly and deftly renewing the bandages, Armstrong stood by, and inspected the wound in silence. Presently he walked off and called me to help him with our camp-fire.

"Pretty well ploughed up, that arm of his'n," said he.

"I have seen amputation performed for less."

"Then I'm dum glad there's no sawbones about. I don't believe Nater means a man's leg or arm to go, until she breaks the solid bone, so that it ain't to be sot nohow. But what do you allow to do? Lamm ahead or squat here?"

"You are the oldest; you have most experience; I will take your advice."

"October is sweet as the smile of a gal when she hears that her man has made fifteen hundred dollars off the purceeds of a half-acre of onions, to the mines; but these yer fall storms is reg'lar Injuns; they light down 'thout sendin' on handbills. We ought to be p'intin' for home if we can."

"But Brent's wound! Can he travel?"

"Now, about that wound, there's two ways of lookin' at it. We ken stop here, or we ken poot for Laramie. I allow that it oughter take that arm of his'n a month to make itself right. Now in a month ther'll be p'r'aps three feet of snow whar we stand."

"We must go on."

"Besides, lookerhere! Accordin' to me the feelin's mean suthin', when a man's got any. He'll be all the time worryin' about the gal till he gets her to her father. It's my judgment she'd better never see the old man agin; but I

would n't want my Ellen to quit me, ef I was an unhealthy gonoph like him. Daughters ought to stick closer 'n twitch-grass to their fathers, and sons to their mothers, and she ain't one to knock off lovin' anybody she 's guv herself to love. No, she 's one of the stiddy kind, — stiddy as the stars. He knows that, that there pardener of yourn knows it, and his feelin's won't give his arm no rest until she 's got the old man to take care of and follow off on his next streak. So we must poot for Laramie, live or die. Thar 'll be a doctor there. Ef we ken find the way, it should n't take us more 'n ten days. I 'll poot him on Bill's sorrel, jest as gentle a horse as Bill was that rode him, and we 'll see ef we hain't worked out the bad luck out of all of us, for one while."

Armstrong's opinion was only my own, expressed Oregonly. We went on preparing breakfast.

"That there A. & A. mule," says Armstrong, "was Bill's and mine, and this stuff in the packs was ours. I don't know what the fellers did with the two mean mustangs they was ridin' when they found us fust on Bear River, — used 'em up, I reckon."

Here Brent hailed us cheerily.

"Look alive there, you two cooks! We idlers here want to be travelling."

"I told you so," said Armstrong. "He understands this business jest as well as we do. He 'll go till he draps. Thar 's grit into him, ef I know grit."

Yes; but when I saw him sit still with his back against the spruce-tree, and remembered his exuberant life of other days, I desponded. He soon took occasion to speak to me apart.

"Dick," said he, "you see how it is. I am not good for much. If we were alone, you and I might settle here for a month or so, and write 'Bubbles from the Brünnen.' But there is a lady in the case. It is plain where she belongs. I know every inch of the way to Laramie. I can take you through in a week" — he paused and quavered a little, as he continued — "if I live. But don't look so anxious. I shall."

"It would be stupid for you to die now, John Brent the Lover, with the obstacles cut away and an heroic basis of operations."

"A wounded man, perhaps a dying man, has no business with love. I will never present her my services and ask pay. But, Dick, if I should wear out, you will know what to say to her for me."

At this she joined us, her face so illumined with resolution and hope that we both kindled. All doubt skulked away from her presence. Brent was nerved to rise and walk a few steps

to the camp-fire, supported by her arm and mine.

Armstrong had breakfast ready, such as it was. And really, the brace of wood grouse he had shot that morning, not a hundred yards from camp, were not unworthy of a lady's table, though they had never made journey in a crowded box, over a slow railroad, from Chicago to New York, in a January thaw, and then been bought at half price of a street pedler, a few hours before they dropped to pieces.

We grouped to depart.

"I shall remember all this for scores of sketches," said Miss Clitheroe.

And indeed there was material. The rocks behind threading away and narrowing into the dim gorge of the Alley; the rushing fountains, one with its cloud of steam; the two great spruces; the greensward; the thickets; and above them a far-away glimpse of a world, all run to top and flinging itself up into heaven, a tumult of crag and pinnacle. So much for the scenery. And for personages, there was Armstrong, with his head turbaned, saddling the white machine; the two mules, packed and taking their last nibbles of verdure; Miss Clitheroe, in her round hat and with a green blanket rigged as riding-skirt, mounted upon the sturdy roan; Brent resting on my shoulder, and stepping on

my knee, as he climbed painfully to his seat on the tall sorrel; Don Fulano waiting, proud and eager. And just as we were starting, a stone fell from overhead into the water; and looking up, we saw a bighorn studying us from the crags, wishing, no doubt, that his monster horns were ears to comprehend our dialect.

I gave the party their stirrup-cup from the Champagne Spring. The waters gurgled adieu. Rich sunrise was upon the purple gates of the pass. We struck a trail through the thicket.

Good bye to the Luggernel Springs and Luggernel Alley! to that scene of tragedy and tragedy escaped!

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN IDYL OF THE ROCKYS.

I SHALL make short work of our journey to Laramie.

We bent northeastwardly by ways known to our leader, — alas! leader no more. He could guide, but no more gallop in front and beckon on the cavalcade.

It was a grand journey. A wild one, and rough for a lady. But this lady was made of other stuff than the mistresses of lapdogs.

We crossed the backbone of the continent, climbing up the clefts between the ragged vertebræ, and over the top of that meandering spine, fleshed with great grassy mounds; then plunging down again among the rifts and glens.

A brilliant quartette ours would have been, but for my friend's wound. Four people, all with fresh souls and large and peculiar experience.

Except for my friend's wound!

My friend, closer than a brother, how I felt for him every mile of that stern journey! He never

complained. Only once he said to me, "Bodily agony has something to teach, I find, as well as mental."

Never one word of his suffering, except that. He wore slowly away. Every day he grew a little weaker in body; but every day the strong spirit lifted the body to its work. He must live to be our guide, that he felt. He must be cheerful, gay even, lest the lady he had saved should too bitterly feel that her safety was daily paid for by his increasing agony. Every day that ichor of love baptized him with new life. He breathed love and was strong. But it was love confined to his own consciousness. Wounded, and dying perhaps, unless his life could beat time by a day or an hour, he would not throw any share of his suffering on another, on her, by calling for the sympathy which a woman gives to her lover.

Did she love him? Ah! that is the ancient riddle. Only the Sphinx herself can answer. Those fair faces of women, with their tender smiles, their quick blushes, their starting tears, still wear a mask until the moment comes for unmasking. If she did not love him, — this man of all men most lovable, this feminine soul in the body of a hero, this man who had spilled his blood for her, whose whole history had trained him for those crowning hours of a chiv-

alric life when the lover led our Gallop of Three; if she did not love him, she must be, I thought, some bloodless creature of a type other than human, an angel and no woman, a creature not yet truly embodied into the body of love we seemed to behold.

She was sweetly tender to him; but that the wound, received for her sake, merited; *that* was hardly more than the gracious thankfulness she lavished upon us all. What an exquisite woman! How calmly she took her place, lofty and serene, above all the cloudy atmosphere of such a bewildering life as hers had been! How large and deep and mature the charity she had drawn, even so young, from the strange contrasts of her history! How her keen observation of a woman of genius had grasped and stored away the diamond, or the dust of diamond, in every drift across her life!

She grew more beautiful daily. Those weary days when, mile after dreary mile, the listless march of the Mormon caravan bore her farther and farther away into hopeless exile, were gone forever. She breathed ruddy hope now. Before, she had filtered hope from every breath and only taken the thin diet of pale endurance. All future possibility of trial, after her great escape, seemed nothing. She was confident of Brent's instant recovery, with repose, and a surgeon

more skilful than she, at Fort Laramie. She was sure that now her father's wandering life was over, and that he would let her find him a home and win him a living in some quiet region of America, where all his sickly fancies would pass away, and his old age would glide serenely.

It would be long, too long, for the movement of this history, should I attempt to detail the talks and minor adventures of that trip by which the character of all my companions became better known to me.

For the wounded man's sake we made lengthened rests at noonday, and camped with the earliest coming of twilight. Those were the moonlight nights of brilliant October. How strange and solemn and shadowy the mountains rose about our bivouacs! It was the poetry of camp-life, and to every scene by a fountain, by a torrent, in a wild dell, on a mountain meadow with a vision of a snow-peak watching us all the starry night and passing through rosiness into splendor at sunrise, — to every scene, stern or fair, our comrade gave the poetry of a woman's presence and a woman's fine perception of the minuter charm of nature.

And then — think of it! — she had a genius for cookery. I have known this same power in other fine poetic and artistic beings. She had a genius for imaginative cookery, — a rich inheri-

tance from her father's days of poverty and coal-mining. She insisted upon her share of camp-duty; and her great gray eyes were often to be seen gravely fixed upon a frying-pan, or watching a roasting bird, as it twirled slowly before the fire, with a strip of pork featly disposed overhead to baste that succulent revolver; while Brent, poor fellow, lay upon the grass, wrapped in blankets, slowly accumulating force for the next day's journey, and watched her with wonderment and delight that she could condescend to be a household goddess.

"Ther ain't her ikwill to be scared up," would Armstrong say on these occasions. "I'm gittin' idees to make my Ellen the head woman on all the Umpqua. I wish I had her along; for she's a doughcyle gal, and takes nat'ral to pooty notions in thinkin' and behavior and fixin' up things ginerally."

Armstrong became more and more the paternal element in our party. Memory of the Ellen on the Umpqua made him fatherly thoughtful for the Ellen here, a wanderer across the Rocky Mountains. And she returned more than he gave, in the sweet civilizing despotism of a lady. That grizzly turban presently disappeared from his head. Decorous bandages replaced it. With that token went from him the sternness. He was a frank, honest, kindly fellow, shrewd and

unflinching, but one who would never have lifted his hand against a human being except for that great, solemn duty of an exterminating vengeance. That done, he was his genial self again. We never tired of his tales of plains and Oregon life, told in his own vivid dialect. He was the patriarchal pioneer, a man with the personal freedom of a nomad, and the unschooled wisdom of a founder of states in the wilderness. A mighty hunter, too, was Armstrong. No day passed that we did not bag an antelope, a deer, or a big-horn. It was the very land of Cocaigne for game. The creatures were so hospitable that it hardly seemed proper gratitude to kill them; even that great brown she-bear, who one night "popped her head into the shop," and, muttering something which in the Bruin lingo may have been, "What! no soap!" smote Armstrong with a paw which years of sucking had not made tender.

Except for Brent's wound, we four might have had a joyous journey, full of the true savor of brave travel. But that ghastly, murderous hurt of his needed most skilful surgery, and needed most of all repose with a mind at peace. He did not mend; but all the while

> "The breath
> Of her sweet tendance hovering over him
> Filled all the genial courses of his blood
> With deeper and with ever deeper love."

But he did not mend. He wasted daily. His sleeps became deathly trances. We could not wear him out with haste. Brave heart! he bore up like a brave.

And at last one noon we drew out of the Black Hills, and saw before us, across the spurs of Laramie Peak, the broad plain of Fort Laramie.

Brent revived. We rode steadily. Just before sunset, we pulled up at our goal.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DRAPETOMANIA.

For the last hour I had ridden close to Brent. I saw that it was almost up with him. He swayed in his saddle. His eye was glazed and dull. But he kept his look fixed on the little group of Laramie Barracks, and let his horse carry him.

I lifted up my heart in prayer that this noble life might not be quenched. He must not die now that he was enlarged and sanctified by truest love.

At last we struck open country. Bill Armstrong's sorrel took a cradling lope; we rode through a camp of Sioux "tepees," like so many great white foolscaps; we turned the angle of a great white wooden building, and halted. I sprang from Fulano, Brent quietly drooped down into my arms.

"Just in time," said a cheerful, manly voice at my ear.

"I hope so," said I. "Is it Captain Ruby?"

"Yes. We 'll take him into my bed. Dr. Pathie, here 's a patient for you."

We carried Brent in. As we crossed the veranda, I saw Miss Clitheroe's meeting with her father. He received her almost peevishly.

We laid the wounded man in Ruby's hospital bed. Evidently a fine fellow, Ruby; and, what was to the point, fond of John Brent.

Dr. Pathie shook his head.

So surgeons are wont to do when they study sick men. It is a tacit recognition of the dark negative upon which they are to turn the glimmer of their positive, — a recognition of the mystery of being. They are to experiment upon life, and their chief facts are certain vaguish theories why some men die.

The surgeon shook his head. It was a movement of sympathy for the man, as a man. Then he proceeded to consider him as a machine, which it was a surgeon's business to repair. Ruby and I stood by anxiously, while the skilled craftsman inspected. Was this insensible, but still breathing creature, only panting away the last puffs of his motive power? or was it capable mechanism still?

"Critical case," said Dr. Pathie, at last. He had great, umbrageous eyebrows, and a gentle, peremptory manner, as of one who had done much merciful cruelty in his day. "Ugly wound.

Never saw a worse furrow. Conical ball. He must have been almost at the muzzle of the pistol. He ought not to have stirred for a month. How he has borne such a journey with that arm, I cannot conceive. Strong character, eh? Passionate young fellow? Life means something to him. Well, Nature nominates such men to get into scrapes for other people; she gets them wounded, and drains them of their blood. Lying on their backs is good for them, and so is feeling weak. They take in more emotion than they can assimilate while they are wide awake. They would go frenzied with overcrowded brain, if they were not shut up into themselves sometimes, by sickness or sorrow. There 's not much to do for him. A very neat hand has been at his bandages. Now, if he is a man with a distinct and controlling purpose in his life,—if he has words to say, or deeds, or duties to do, and knows it,—he will hold by his life; if not, not. Keep him quiet. And do not let him see, or hear, or feel the presence of that beautiful young woman. She is not his sister, and she will have too much trouble herself to be a tranquil nurse for him here."

I left him with his patient, and went out to care for our horses. Ruby, model host, had saved me all trouble.

"I have given Miss Clitheroe my sole guest-

chamber," he said. "She has a lady's-maid in the brawny person of an Irish corporaless. What a transcendent being she is! I don't wonder Brent loves her, as I divined he did from what Jake Shamberlain — shrewd fellow Jake — said when he consigned the father to me."

"I must have a talk with the old gentleman. O, there he is with Armstrong."

Armstrong was handing him the money-belt. His eyes gleamed as he clutched it.

"Walk off with me a step," said Ruby, "before you speak to him."

We strolled off through the Sioux encampment. The warriors, tall fellows with lithe forms, togaed in white blankets, were smoking in a circle. Only the great chiefs were in toggery of old uniforms, blossoming into brass buttons wherever a button could bourgeon. And only the great chiefs resembled frowzy scarecrows. The women, melancholy, as the abused women of barbarians always are, were slouching about at slave work. All greeted Ruby as a friend, with sonorous grunts.

Society, even of Sioux, dwelling under buffalo hide foolscaps, was humane after our journey The barracks of Laramie, lonely outpost on a bleak plain, were fairly beautiful in their homelike homeliness. Man without a roof is mere chaos.

"Trouble in store, I fear," said Captain Ruby, "for Mr. Clitheroe and all who care for him."

"He ought to be at peace at last."

"He is not. Dr. Pathie says he is a case of DRAPETOMANIA."

"I have heard that outlandish word used to express the tendency — diseased of course — that negroes have to run away from their masters."

"Mr. Clitheroe is wild to get away from his proper master, namely, himself."

"A desperate malady! At his age almost fatal."

"So Pathie says. When a man of Mr. Clitheroe's age is not at peace within, he goes into war with his circumstances. He cannot conquer them, so he runs away. He has always before him a shadow of a dream of what he might have been, and that ghost drives him and chases him, until it wears him out."

"Yes; but it is not only the forlorn and disappointed that this pitiable disease attacks. Very rich and prosperous suffer, become drapetomaniacs, sell houses and build new, change neighborhoods, travel furiously, never able to escape from that inevitable companion of a reproaching self."

"Mr. Clitheroe is chafing to be gone. I start a train for the States to-morrow, — the last chance to travel with escort this season, — a small topo-

graphical party going back. He has been for the last few days in a passion of impatience, almost scolding me and your party, his daughter, and circumstances, lest you should not arrive in time for him to go."

"To go where? What does he intend?"

"He is full of great schemes. I do not know, of course, anything of him except what I have picked up from his communicativeness; but you would suppose him a duke from his talk. He speaks of his old manor-house,—I should know it by sight now,—and says he intends to repurchase it and be a great man again. He is constantly inviting me to share his new splendors. Really, his pictures of life in England will quite spoil me for another winter of cooling my heels in this dismal place, with a scalp on my head and a hundred Sioux looking at it hungrily."

"He must be deranged by his troubles. I am sure he has no basis for any hopes in England. Sizzum stripped him. He has alienated his friends at home. His daughter is his only friend and guardian, except ourselves."

"He sprang up when he saw you coming, and was frantic with joy,—not for his daughter's safety, but because he could start with the train to-morrow. I suppose she is a tested traveller by this time."

"As thoroughly as any man on the plains."

"She can go very comfortably in the train. Two or three soldiers' wives go. Females, I believe; at least their toggery alleges the softer sex, whatever their looks and voices do."

"The chance is clearly not to be lost. I do not like to part with my fascinating comrade. It was poetry to camp with such a woman. Travel will seem stale henceforth. I wish we could keep her, for Brent's sake."

"Poor fellow! Pathie looks very doubtful. You must tell me your story more fully after supper."

I found Mr. Clitheroe in a panic to be moving. He thanked me in a grand manner for our services. But he seemed willing to avoid me. He could not forget the pang of his disenchantment from Mormonism. I belonged to the *dramatis personæ* of a period he would willingly banish. He regarded me with a suspicious look, as if he feared again that my coming would break up new illusions as baseless as the old. He was full of large, vague plans. England now; he must be back in England again. His daughter must be reinstated in her place. He treated her coldly enough; but still all his thought seemed to be ambition for her. The money Armstrong had given him, too, seemed to increase his confidence in the future. That was wealth for the moment. Other would come.

Miss Clitheroe had yielded to fatigue. I did not see her that night. In fact, after all the wearing anxiety of our trip, I was glad to lie down on a white buffalo-robe, with the Sybaritic luxury of a pair of clean sheets, and show my gratitude to Ruby by twelve hours' solid sleep.

A drum-beat awaked me next morning. It was not reveille, it was not breakfast, it was not guard mounting. I sprang up, and looked from the window. How odd it seemed to peer from a window, after the unwindowed wilderness!

The four white-hooded wagons of the little homeward train were ready to start. The drum was calling in the escort. The fifty soldiers of Ruby's garrison were grouped about, lending a hand to their luckier comrades, homeward bound. Ruby was taking leave of his brother officers. Armstrong stood a little apart with his horses. A busy scene, and busier when some vixenish pack-mule shook heels, and scattered the by-standers into that figure known to packers as the Blazing Star.

Aloof from the crowd, Mr. Clitheroe was striding up and down beside the wagons, with the eager, unobserving tramp of a man concerned with nothing but a morbid purpose of his own. He had bought of some discharged soldier a long military surtout, blue-gray, with a cape. Wearing this, he marched to and fro like a sentry.

His thin, gray hair and long, bifid beard gave him a ghastly look; and then he trod his beat as if it were a doom, — as if he were a sentinel over his own last evasive hope.

"Drapetomania!" I thought, "and a hopeless case."

A knock at my door, and the brawny corporaless summoned me to Miss Clitheroe.

"We are going," she said. "Take me to him!"

Did she love him?

I braved Dr. Pathie's displeasure, and led her to the bedside of the lover.

Brent was still in a stupor. We were alone.

She stood looking at him a moment. He was breathing, but unconscious; dead to the outer world and her presence. She stood looking at him, and seeming with her large, solemn eyes to review those scenes of terror and of relief since she had known him. Tears gathered in the brave, quiet eyes.

Suddenly she stooped and kissed his forehead. Then she passionately kissed his lips. She grew to him as if she would interfuse anew that ichor of love into his being.

She turned to me, all crimsoned, but self-possessed.

"I meant you should see me prove my love," she said. "I am proud of myself for it, — proud

of my heart that it can know and love this noblest and tenderest nature. Tell him so. Tell him it is not gratitude, but love. He will know that I could not stay. My life belongs to my father. Where he goes, I must go. What other friend has he than me? I go with my father, but here my heart remains. Tell him so. Please let me write to you. You will not forget your comrade. I owe more than life to you. Do let me keep myself in your memory. I dread my life before me. I will keep you informed of my father's plans. And when this dearest one is well again, if he remembers me, tell him I love him, and that I parted from him — so."

She bent again, and kissed him passionately, — then departed, and her tears were on his cheek.

CHAPTER XXV.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

BRENT'S stupor lasted many days. Life had been strained to its utmost. Body, brain, heart, all had had exhausting taxes to pay. The realm must rest.

While his mind slept, Nature was gently renewing him. Quiet is cure to an untainted life. There was no old fever of discontent in his brain. He had regrets, but no remorses. Others had harmed him; his life had been a sad one; he had never harmed himself. The thoughts and images tangled in his brain, the "stuff that dreams are made of," were of happy omen. No Stygian fancies made his trance unrest. Life did not struggle for recovery that it might plunge again into base or foul pursuits, or the scuffles of selfishness. A man whose life is for others is safe from selfish disappointment when he is commanded to stand aside and be naught for a time.

I knew the images that hovered about my sleeping friend's mind, for I knew the thoughts

that were the comrades of his waking life. His memory was crowded full of sights and sounds of beauty, and those thoughts that are the emanations of fair visions and sweet tones, and dwell unuttered poetry in the soul. I knew how, long ago in childhood, he had made Nature friend, and found his earliest comrades among flowers and birds. I knew, for he had been my teacher, how, when youth first looked widely forth for visions of the Infinite, he had learned to comprehend, day after day, night after night, the large delight of heaven; whether the busy heaven, when the golden sun makes our sky blue above us, and reveals on earth the facts that we must deal with and by which we must be taught our laws, or the quiet heaven of night, with its starry tokens of grander fruition, when we shall live for grander days. Sky and clouds, sun and stars, brooks and rivers, forests and hills, waves and winds, — these had received him to their sweet companionship, as his mind could gradually grasp the larger conceptions of beauty. And so, when his time came to perceive the higher significance of Art, as man's rudimentary efforts toward creations diviner and more orderly than those of earth, he had gone to Art with the unerring eye and interpreting love of a fresh soul, schooled by Nature only, blind to Art's baser fancies, and hospitable to its holier dreams.

No ugly visions could visit the uncontrolled hours of a brain so stored. His trance was peace.

More than peace; for as I watched his quiet face, I knew that his spirit was conscious of a spiritual presence, and Love was hovering over him, a healing element.

At last he waked. He threw volition into the scale of recovery. He was well in a trice.

Captain Ruby and Doctor Pathie were disposed to growl at the rapidity of Brent's cure.

"I have half a mind to turn military despot, and arrest you," said Ruby. "A pair of muffs, even, would be welcome in the winter at Laramie. You have made a wretched bungle of it, Pathie. Why did n't you mend your man deliberately, a muscle a week, a nerve a month, and so make it a six months' job?"

"He took the matter out of my hands, and mended himself. There 's cool, patient, determined vitality in him, enough to set up a legion, or father a race. Which is it, Mr. Wade, words to say or duties to do, that has made him condense his being on recovery?"

"Both, I believe. He is mature now, and wants, no doubt, to be at his business of saying and doing."

"And loving," said Ruby.

"Ay," said Pathie. "That has had more to do with it. I hope he will overtake and win; for

I love the boy. I keep my oldish heart pretty well locked against strangers; but there is a warm cell in it, and in that cell he has, sleeping and waking, made himself a home."

"Ah, Doctor," said Ruby, "you and I, for want of women to love, have to content ourselves with poetic rovers like Brent. He and Biddulph were balls, operas, champagne on tap, new novels, flirtations, and cigars to me last winter."

We were smoking our pipes on the veranda one warm November day, when this conversation happened.

I had not quite forgotten the Barrownight, as Jake Shamberlain pronounced him, nor quite forgotten, in grave cares, my fancy that his stay in Utah was for Miss Clitheroe's sake.

I was hardly surprised when, that very evening, a bronzed traveller, face many shades darker than hair and beard, rode up to the post with a Delaware Indian, and was hailed by Ruby as Biddulph.

"We were talking of you not an hour ago," said Ruby, greeting him. "Wishing you would come to make last winter's party complete. Brent is here, wounded."

"Has he a lady with him?" said the newcomer. His voice and manner were manly and frank,—a chivalrous fellow, one of us, one of the comradry of knights errant.

"Mr. Wade will give an account of her."

"Come in to Brent," said I, "and we will talk matters over."

Ruby, model host, cleared the way for a parley whose interest he divined.

"I will see after your horses. Don't lose your appetite for supper. We have potatoes!"

"Potatoes!!" cried Biddulph. "Not I!"

"Yes, and flapjacks and molasses, ready in half an hour."

"Flapjacks and molasses! Potatoes and flapjacks! — Yes, and molasses!" Biddulph again exclaimed. "Jewel of a Ruby! This is the Ossa on Pelion of *gourmandise*. How underdone and overdone all the banquets of civilization seem! I charge thee, Ruby, when the potatoes and the flapjacks and molasses are ready, that thou peal a jubilee upon the bell. Now, Mr. Wade, let me see this wounded friend, and hear and tell."

The two gentlemen met with cordiality. Brent, I believe, had never identified Miss Clitheroe with the lady Biddulph fled from, and I had never mentioned my suspicions.

"Not one word, John!" said the Briton, "until I know what you have done with Ellen Clitheroe. Is she safe?"

Brent comprehended the Baronet's heart and mind at the word. The other, I think, saw as

plainly on Brent's face that he was a lover, and perhaps the more fortunate one. These two loyal men drew closer at this, as wholly loyal souls will do, for all the pang of knowing that one has loved and lost.

Brent told our story in brief.

"I divined that you were one of the pair who had started on the rescue. I could not mistake you, man and horse and dress, from the Mormon's description."

"You saw Sizzum, then?"

"I saw his dead body."

"What? Dead!" A sense of relief, that the world had one tempter the less, passed through our minds.

"Yes, shot dead, just where the Wasatch Mountains open, and there is that wonderful view of Salt Lake City. His Nemesis met him there. I heard the shot fired, as I was riding out to meet the train, and saw him fall!"

"Who shot him, of the many that had a right?"

"As mild a mannered man as ever shuddered at the crack of an egg-shell."

"Vendetta for woman-stealing?"

"Wife-stealing. The man was a poor music-teacher, with a pretty spouse in Quincy, Illinois. He had told me his own story, without proclaiming his purpose, though I conjectured it. The

pretty spouse grew tired of poverty and five children. She went off with Sizzum. The music-master hired himself to a drover, named Armstrong, and plodded out to Utah. When he got there, he found Sizzum gone. He turned hunter. I met him in the mountains, a crack shot. He waited his time, ambushed the train, and shot Sizzum dead, as he first caught sight of the Valley."

"A thought of poetry in his justice. What then?"

"I could see him creeping away among the rocks, while the Mormons were getting their rifles. They opened fire, a hundred of them. Ring, ping! the balls tapped all about him. He was just clear, just springing over a little ridge of shelter, when a shot struck him. He flung out his arms in an attitude of imprecation, and fell over the rocks. Dead, and doubly dead from the fall."

"Our two evil forces are erased from the world, Wade," said Brent.

"May it be good omen for coming difficulties! But how did you learn of the events at Fort Bridger?" I asked the Baronet.

"The Lancashire people in the train all took an interest in the Clitheroes. They knew from Sizzum what happened when he followed you, and your purpose to give chase. I knew John

Brent well enough to believe that he would achieve the rescue. Happy fellow! I forgive you, John; hard it is, but I forgive you for stepping in before me. I was waiting there in Utah to do what I could for my old love and my old friend. I should like to have had a bullet in my arm in the cause; but the result is good, whether I gain or lose."

"I never thought of you, Biron. In fact, from the moment I saw her, I thought of no one else."

"Yes; that is her power. We were old neighbors in Lancashire. My father bought the old Hall after Mr. Clitheroe's disasters. The disappearance and the mysterious reappearance of the old gentleman and his beautiful daughter were the romance of the region. No one knew where they had been. My father was dead. My mother tried to befriend them. But the old gentleman was soured and disappointed. He could not forgive us for inhabiting the old mansion of his happier days. God knows how gladly I would have reinstated him there. But she could not love me; so I came away, and we looked up Luggernel Springs and the Alley together, John, to give you a chance to snatch my destiny away from me."

Brent, in his weakness, had no answer to make, except to give his hand to this gentle rival.

"How did you learn of their Mormon error?" I asked.

"My mother wrote me. She loves Miss Clitheroe like a daughter. She pities the father. His wife was her friend. A genial, lovable man he was, she says, until, after his losses, people whom he had aided turned and accused him of recklessness and dishonesty, — a charge as false and cruel as could be made. My mother wrote, told me of Sizzum's success in Clitheroe, and of our friends' departure. She ordered me, on my obedience, never to come back to England until I could tell her that Ellen was safe out of Sizzum's power. She had gone to hear him preach, and abhorred him. I received her letter after we had parted, John, and I camped with Jake Shamberlain, waiting for the train. What I could have done, I do not know; but my life was Miss Clitheroe's."

How easy his chivalry seemed to this noble fellow! "*Noblesse obligé*"; but the obligation was no burden.

"You are a stanch friend, Biron," said Brent. "She may need you yet."

"Yes," said he; "Christian England is a savage, cruel as any of these brutes she has encountered here, to a beautiful girl with a helpless, crazy father. When can you travel, John?"

"Nearly a month I have been here fighting

death and grasping at life. Give me two days more to find a horse and ride about a little, and we are off."

"Armstrong, fine old fellow, left the sorrel for you," I said. "He is in racing trim now."

"Capital!" said Brent. "One Armstrong is a brave weight on the true side of the balance, against an army of pioneers who have gone barbarous."

"I have something to show you, John," said Biddulph. "See here. I bought this of a Mormon. He had very likely stolen it from Mr. Clitheroe's wagon. It was the only relic I could get of them."

The very drawing of Clitheroe Hall its former owner had wished to show me at Fort Bridger. An able sketch of a thoroughly English house. If England were sunk in the sea, and its whole history perished, English life, society, and manners could be reconstructed from the inspection of such a drawing, as a geologist recalls an æon from a trilobite. I did not wonder that it had been heart-breaking to quit the shelter of that grand old roof. I fixed the picture in my mind. The time came when that remembrance was precious.

"Now, Biddulph!" called Ruby, "supper waits. Potatoes! Flapjacks and molasses!"

"They shall be a part of me instantly."

CHAPTER XXVI.

HAM.

Two days Biddulph solaced himself on those rare luxuries of Ruby's *ménage;* the third, we started.

Ruby and the surgeon rode with us a score of miles. It was hard to say good-bye. We were grateful, and they were sorry.

"What can we do for you, Ruby?"

"Raze Laramie, abolish the plains, level the Rockys, nullify the Sioux, and disband the American army."

"What can we do for you, Doctor?"

"Find me a wife, box her up so that no one will stop her *in transitu*, mark Simeon Pathie, M. D., U. S. A., and ship to Fort Vancouver, Oregon, where I shall be stationed next summer. Your English lady in half a day has spoiled my philosophy of a life."

"Good-bye and good luck!"

It was late travelling througn that houseless waste. Deep snow already blanched the Black Hills, and Laramie Peak, their chief. Mr. Bier-

stadt, in his fine picture in this year's Academy, has shown them as they are in the mellow days of summer. Now, cold and stern, they warned us to hasten on.

We did hasten. We crowded through the buffalo; we crossed and recrossed the Platte, already curdling with winter; we dashed over the prairies of Kansas, blackened by fire and whitened by snow, but then unstained by any peaceful settler's blood.

Jake Shamberlain, returning with his party, met us on the way.

"I passed the train with the young woman and her father," said he. "We camped together one night, and bein' as I was a friend of your 'n, she give me a talk. Pooty tall talkin' 't wuz, and I wuz teched in a new spot. I 've felt mean as muck ever sence she opened to me on religion, and when I git home I 'm goan to swing clear of the Church, ef I ken cut clear, and emigrate to Oregon. So, Barrownight, next time you come out, you 'll find me on a claim there, out to the Willamette or the Umpqua, just as much like a gentleman's park in England as one grasshopper is to another, only they hain't got no such mountains to England as I 'll show you thar."

"Well, Jake, we 'll try to pay you our respects."

We hastened on. Why pause for our adven-

tures? They were but episodes along our new gallop of three. This time it was not restless, anxious gallop. We had no doubt but that in good time we should overtake our friends, in regions where men are not shot along the right arm when they protect insulted dames.

Brent was himself again. We rode hard. Biddulph was as fine a fellow as my grandmother England has mothered. Find an Englishman vital enough to be a Come-outer, and you have found a man worthy to be the peer of an American with Yankee education, Western scope, and California irrepressibility.

Winter chased us close. Often we woke at night, and found our bivouac sheeted with cold snow, — a cool sheet, but luckily outside our warm blankets. It was full December when the plains left us, fell back, and beached us upon the outer edge of civilization, at Independence, Missouri.

The muddy Missouri was running dregs. Steamboats were tired of skipping from sand-bar to sand-bar. Engineer had reported to Captain, that "Kangaroo No. 5 would bust, if he did n't stop trying to make her lift herself over the damp country by her braces." No more steamboating on the yellow ditch until there was a rise; until the Platte sent down sand three and water one, or the Yellowstone mud three and

water one, or the Missouri proper grit three and water one. We must travel by land to St. Louis and railroads.

We could go with our horses as fast as the stage-coaches. So we sold our pack beasts, and started to continue our gallop of three across Missouri.

Half-way across, we stopped one evening at the mean best tavern in a mean town, — a frowzy county town, with a dusty public square, a boxy church, and a spittley court-house.

Fit entertainment for beast the tavern offered. We saw our horses stabled, and had our supper.

"Shall we go into the Spittoon?" said Biddulph.

"Certainly," said Brent. "The bar-room — I am sorry to hear you speak of it with foreign prejudice — is an institution, and merits study. Argee, upon the which the bar-room is based, is also an institution."

"Well, I came to study American institutions. Let us go in and take a whiff of disgust."

Fit entertainment for brute the bar-room offered. In that club-room we found the brute class drinking, swearing, spitting, squabbling over the price of hemp and the price of "niggers," and talking what it called "politics."

One tall, truculent Pike, the loudest of all that blatant crew, seemed to Brent and myself an old

acquaintance. We had seen him or his double somewhere. But neither of us could fit him with a pedestal in our long gallery of memory. Saints one takes pains to remember, and their scenes; but satyrs one endeavors to lose.

"Have you had enough of the Spittoon?" I asked Biddulph. "Shall we go up? They 've put us all three in the same room; but bivouacs in the same big room — Out-Doors — are what we are best used to."

Two and a half beds, one broken-backed chair, a wash-stand decked with an ancient fringed towel and an abandoned tooth-brush, one torn slipper, and a stove-pipe hole, furnished our bedchamber.

We were about to cast lots for the half-bed, when we heard two men enter the next room. The partition was only paper pasted over lath, and cut up as if a Border Ruffian member of Congress had practised at it with a bowie-knife before a street-fight. Every word of our neighbors came to us. They were talking of a slave bargain. I eliminate their oaths, though such filtration does them injustice.

"Eight hundred dollars," said the first speaker, and his voice startled us as if a dead man we knew had spoken. "Eight hundred, — that 's the top of my pile fur that boy. Ef he warn't so old and had n't one eye poked out, I agree he 'd be wuth a heap more."

"Waal, a trade 's a trade. I 'll take yer stump. Count out yer dimes, and I 'll fill out a blank bill of sale. Murker, the boy 's yourn."

"Murker!" — we both started at the name. This was the satyr we had observed in the bar-room. Had Fulano's victim crept from under his cairn in Luggernel Alley, and chased us to take flesh here and harm us again. Such a superstitious thought crossed my mind.

The likeness — look, voice, and name — was presently accounted for.

"You 're lookin' fur yer brother out from Sacramenter, 'bout now, I reckon," said the trader.

"He wuz comin' cross lots with a man named Larrap, a pardener of his'n. Like enough they 've stayed over winter in Salt Lake. They oughter rake down a most a mountainious pile thar."

"Mormons is flush and sarcy with their dimes sence the emigration. Now thar 's yer bill of sale, all right."

"And thar 's yer money, all right."

"That are 's wut I call a screechin' good price fur an old one-eyed nigger. Fourteen hundred dollars, — an all-fired price."

"Eight hundred, you mean."

"No; fourteen. Yer see, you 're not up ter taime on the nigger question. I know 'em like a church-steeple. When I bought that are boy,

now comin' three year, I seed he wuz a sprightly nigger, one er yer ambitious sort, what would be mighty apt to git fractious, an' be makin' tracks, onless I got a holt on him. So sez I to him, 'Ham, you 're a sprightly nigger, one of the raal ambitious sort, now aincher?' He allowed he warnt nothin' else. 'Waal,' sez I, 'Ham, how 'd you like to buy yerself, an' be a free nigger, an' hev a house of yer own, an' a woman of yer own, all jess like white folks?' 'Lor,' sez he, 'Massa, I 'd like it a heap.' 'Waal,' sez I, 'you jess scrabble round an' raise me seven hundred dollars, an' I 'll sell you to yerself, an' cheap at that.' So yer see he began to pay up, an' I got a holt on him. He 's a handy nigger, an' a likely nigger, an' a pop'lar nigger. He ken play on ther fiddle like taime, — pooty nigh a minstril is that are nigger. He ken cut hair an' fry a beefsteak with ayry man. He ken drive team, an' do a little j'iner work, an' shoe a mule when thar ain't no reg'lar blacksmith round. He made these yer boots, an' reg'lar stompers they is. He 's one er them chirrupy, smilin' niggers, with white teeth an' genteel manners, what critturs an' foaks nat'rally takes to. Waal, he picked up the bits and quarters right smart. He 's ben at it, lammin' ahead raal ambitious, for 'bout three year. Last Sunday, after church, he pinted up the last ten of the six hundred. So I allowed

't wuz come time to sell him. He wuz gettin' his bead drawed, an' his idees sot on freedom very onhealthy. I did n't like to disapp'int him to ther last; so I allowed 't wuz jest as well to let you hev him cheap to go down River. That 's how to work them fractious runaway niggers. That are 's my patent. You ken hev it for nothin'. Haw! haw!"

"Haw, haw, haw! You are one er ther boys. I 'm dum sorry that are trick can't be did twicet on the same nigger. I reckon he knows too much for that. Waal, s'pose we walk round to the calaboose, 'fore we go to bed, an' see ef he 's chained up all right."

They went out.

Biddulph spoke first.

"Shame!"

"Yes," said Brent; "do you wonder that we have to run away to the Rockys and spend our indignation on grizzlys?"

"What are we going to do now?"

"Try to abolish slavery in Ham's case. Come; we 'll go buy him a file."

"We seem to have business with the Murker family," said I.

"A hard lot they are. Representative brutes!"

"I am getting a knowledge of all classes on your continent," said Biddulph. "Some I like better than others!"

"Don't be too harsh on us malecontents for the sin of slavery. It is an ancestral taint. We shall burn it out before many decades."

"You had better, or it will set your own house on fire."

It was late as we walked along the streets, channels of fever and ague now frozen up for the winter. We saw a light through a shop door, and hammered stoutly for admission.

A clerk, long-haired and frowzy, opened ungraciously. In the back shop were three others, also long-haired and frowzy, dealing cards and drinking a dark compost from tumblers.

"Port wine," whispered Brent. "Fine Old London Dock Port is the favorite beverage, when the editor, the lawyer, the apothecary, and the merchant meet to play euchre in Missouri."

We bought our files from the surly clerk, and made for the calaboose. It was a stout log structure, with grated windows. At one of these, by the low moonlight, we saw a negro. It was cold and late. Nobody was near. We hailed the man.

"Ham."

"That 's me, Massa."

"You 're sold to Murker, to go south to-morrow morning. If you want to get free, catch!"

Brent tossed him up the files.

"Catch again!" said Biddulph, and up went a rattling purse, England's subsidy.

Ham's white teeth and genteel manners appeared at once. He grinned, and whispered thanks.

"Is that all we can do?" asked the Baronet, as we walked off.

"Yes," said Brent, taking a nasal tone. "Ham 's a pop'lar nigger, a handy nigger, one er your raal ambitious sort. He ken cut hair, fry a beefsteak, and play on the fiddle like a minstril. He ken shoe a mule, drive a team, do a little j'iner work, and make stompers. Yes, Biddulph, trust him to gnaw himself free with that Connecticut rat-tail."

"Ham against Japhet; I hope he 'll win."

"Now," said Brent, "that we 've put in action Christ's Golden Rule, Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, and All-the-wisdom's Preamble to the Constitution, we can sleep the sleep of well-doers, if we have two man-stealers — and one the brother of a murderer — only papered off from us."

CHAPTER XXVII.

FULANO'S BLOOD-STAIN.

"What a horse beyond all horses yours is!" said Biddulph to me next morning, as we rode along cheerily through the fresh, frosty air of December. "I think, when your continent gets to its finality in horse-flesh, you will beat our island."

"Think what training such a trip is! This comrade of mine has come two thousand miles with me, — big thought, eh! — and he freshens up with the ozone of this morning, as if he had been in the stable a week, champing asphodel."

Fulano felt my commendation. He became electrified. He stirred under me. I gave him rein. He shook himself out, and began to recite his accomplishments.

Whatever gait he had in his legs together, or portion of a leap in either pair of them; whatever gesticulations he considered graceful, with toes in the air before, or heels in the air behind; whatever serpentine writhe or sinewy bend of the body, whatever curve of the proud neck,

fling of the nead, signal of the ear, toss of the mane, whisk of the tail, he knew, — all these he repeated, to remind me what a horse he was, and justify my praise.

What a HORSE, indeed!

How far away from him every lubberly roadster, every hack that endures the holidays of a tailor, every grandpapa's cob, every sloucher in a sulky! Of other race and other heart was this steed, both gentle and proud. He was still able to be the better half of a knight-errant when a charger worth a kingdom must be had, — when Love needed his mighty alliance in the battle with Brutality. He was willing now, in piping times of peace, to dance along his way, a gay comrade to the same knight-errant, riding homeward a quiet gentleman, with armor doffed and unsuspecting further war.

What sport we had together that morning! We were drawing near the end of our journey. Not that that was to part us! No, he was to be my companion still. I had a vision of him in a paddock, with a fine young fellow, not unlike myself, patting his head, while an oldish fellow, not unlike myself, in fact very me with another quarter of a century on my head, told the story of the Gallop of Three and the wild charge down Luggernel Alley to that unwearying auditor, while a lady, very like my ideal of a wife,

stood by and thrilled again to the tale. Such a vision I had of Fulano's future.

But now that our journey was ending, he and I were willing, on this exhilarating winter's day, to talk it over. What had he gained by the chances by flood and field we had encountered together?

"I have not gone," Fulano notified me, "two thousand miles, since my lonely, riderless days among the herds of Gerrian, since our first meeting on the prairie and my leap through the loop of Jose's lasso, — I have not gone my leagues of continent for nothing.

"See what lessons I have learnt, thanks to you, my schoolmaster! This is my light step for heavy sand; this is my cautious step over pebbles; my high step over boulders; my easy, unwasteful travelling gait; my sudden stop without unseating my rider; so I swerve without shying; and so I spring into top speed without a strain. Your lady-love could canter me; your baby could walk me; because I please to be your friend, my friend. But you know me; I am the untamable still, except by love."

And then he rehearsed the gaits he had studied from the creatures on the plains.

"Look, upper half of the Centaur," he said, in the Centaur language; "see how an antelope goes!"

He doubled his legs under him and went off in high, jerky leaps, twice his length every one.

"Look! A buffalo!"

He lumbered along, shoulders low, head handled like a battering-ram, and tail stiff out like a steering-oar.

"Here 's a gray wolf."

And he shambled forward in a loose-jointed canter, looking back furtively, like a thief, sorry he didn 't stop to steal the other goose, but expecting Stop thief! every minute.

"And so go I, Don Fulano, the Indomitable, a chieftain of the chiefest race below the man,—so go I when walk, pace, gallop, run, leap, career, tread space and time out of being, to show the other half of the Centaurship what my half can do for the love of his."

"Magnificent!" applauded Biddulph at this display.

"His coquetries are as beautiful as a woman's," said Brent. "One whose sweet wiles are nature, not artifice."

And I — but lately trained to believe that a woman may have the myriad charm of coy withdrawal, and yet not be the traitress youth learns from ancient cynics to fear — accepted the comparison.

Ah, peerless Fulano! that was our last love-passage!

The day, after the crisp frostiness of its beginning, was a belated day of Indian summer; mild as the golden mornings of that calm, luxurious time. We stopped to noon in a sunny spot of open pasture near a wide muddy slough of the Missouri. This reservoir for the brewage of shakes for Pikes had been refilled in some autumn rise of the river, and lay a great stagnant lake along the road-side, a mile or so long, two hundred yards broad. Not very exhilarating tipple, but still water; the horses would not disdain it, after their education on the plains; we could qualify it with argee from our flasks, and ice it with the little films of ice unmelted along the pool's edges. We were fortified with a bag of corn for the horses, and a cold chicken for the men.

We camped by a fallen cottonwood near the slough. The atmosphere was hopeful. We picnicked merrily, men and beasts. "Three gentlemen at once" over a chicken soon dissipated this and its trimmings. We lighted the tranquil calumet, and lounged, watching our horses at their corn.

Presently we began to fancy we heard, then to think we heard, at last to be sure we heard the baying of hounds through the mild, golden air.

"Tally-ho!" cried Biddulph, "what a day for a fox-hunt! This haze will make the scent lie almost as well as the clouds."

"Music! Music!" cried he again, springing up, as the sound, increasing, rose and fell along the peaceful air that lay on earth so lovingly.

"Music, if it were in Merrie England, where the hunt are gentlemen. A cursed uproar here, where the hunt are man-stealers," said Brent.

"No," said Biddulph. "Those are fables of the old, barbarous days of the Maroons. I can't believe in dogs after men, until I see it."

"I 'm afraid it 's our friend Ham they are after. This would be his line of escape."

At the word, a rustling in the bushes along the slough, and Ham burst through. He turned to run. We shouted. He knew us, and flung himself, livid with terror and panting with flight, on the ground at our feet, — the "pop'lar nigger"!

"O Massa!" he gasped. "Dey 's gone sot de dogs on me. What 'll I do!"

"Can you swim," said I, — for to me he was kneeling.

"No, Massa; or I 'd been across thisyer sloo fore dis."

"Can you ride!"

"Reck'n I kin, Massa."

A burst of baying from the hounds.

The black shook with terror.

I sprang to Fulano. "Work for you, old

boy!" said I to him, as I flung the snaffle over his head.

"Take mine!" said my two friends at a breath.

"No; Fulano understands this business. Chase or flight, all one to him, so he baffles the Brutes."

Fulano neighed and beat the ground with eager hoofs as I buckled the bridle.

"Can't we show fight?" said Biddulph.

"There 'll be a dozen on the hunt. It is one of the entertainments hereabouts. Besides, they would raise the posse upon us. You forget we 're in a Slave State, an enemy's country."

I led Fulano to the brink. He stood motionless, eying me, just as he eyed me in that terrible pause in Luggernel Alley.

"Here, Ham, up with you! Put across the slough. He swims like an alligator. Then make for the north star, and leave the horse for Mr. Richard Wade, at the Tremont House, Chicago. Treat him like a brother, Ham!"

"Lor bress you, Massa! I will dat."

He vaulted up, like "a sprightly nigger, one of the raal ambitious sort."

The baying came nearer, nearer, ringing sweetly through the golden quiet of noon.

I launched Fulano with an urgent whisper.

Two hundred yards to swim! and then all clear to Freedom!

Fulano splashed in and took deep water magnificently.

What a sight it is to see a noble horse nobly breast the flood, — to see his shoulders thrust aside the stream, his breath come quick, his eyes flash, his haunches lift, his wake widen after him!

And then — Act 2 — how grand it is to see him paw and struggle up with might and main upon the farther bank, — to see him rise, all glossy and reeking, shake himself, and, with a snort, go galloping free and away! Aha! a sight to be seen!

We stood watching Act 1. The fugitive was half-way across. The baying came closer, closer on his trail.

Two thirds across.

The baying ceased. The whole pack drew a long wail.

"They see him," said Biddulph.

Almost across! A dozen more plunges, Fulano!

A crowd of armed men on horseback dashed up to the bank two hundred yards above us. It was open where they halted. They could not see us among the bushes on the edge of the slough.

One of them — it was Murker — sprang from his saddle. He pointed his rifle quick and

steady. Horse and man, the fugitives, were close to the bank and the thicket of safety.

Ping!

Almost over, as the rifle cracked, Ham had turned at the sound of his pursuers crashing through the bushes. Fulano swam high. He bore a proud head aloft, conscious of his brave duty. It was but a moment since he had dashed away, and the long lines of his wake still rippled against the hither bank.

We heard the bullet sing. It missed the man as he turned. It struck Fulano. Blood spirted from a great artery. He floundered forward.

Ham caught the bushes on the bank, pulled himself ashore, and clutched for the bridle.

Poor Fulano! He flung his head up and pawed the surface with a great spasm. He screamed a death-scream, like that terrible cry of anguish of his comrade martyred in the old heroic cause in Luggernel Alley. We could see his agonized eye turn back in the socket, sending toward us a glance of farewell.

Noble horse! again a saviour. He yielded and sank slowly away into that base ditch.

But Ham, was he safe? He had disappeared in the thicket. His pursuers called the hounds and galloped off to chase him round the slough.

Ham was safe. He got off to freedom. From his refuge in Chicago he writes me that he is

"pop'lar"; that he has "sot up a Livery Institootion, and has a most a bewterful black colt a growin' up fur me."

Ham was saved; but Fulano gone. Dead by Murker's rifle. The brother had strangely avenged his brother, trampled to death in the far-away cañon of the Rocky Mountains. Strange Nemesis for a guiltless crime! That blood-stain for a righteous execution clung to him. Only his own blood-shedding could cleanse him.

We three on the bank looked at each other forlornly. The Horse, our Hero, had passed away from the scene, a marytr.

We turned to our journey with premonitions of sorrowful ill.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SHORT'S CUT-OFF.

"DEAR MR. WADE:—

"We are hastening on. I can write you but one word. Our journey has been prosperous. Mr. Armstrong is very kind. My dear father, I fear, is shattered out of all steadiness. God guard him, and guide me! My undying love to your friend.

"Your sister,

"ELLEN CLITHEROE."

Armstrong handed us this note at St. Louis. Biddulph, once a sentimental pinkling, now a bronzed man of the wilds, exhibited for this occasion only the phenomenon of a brace or so of tears. I loved him for his strong sorrow.

"It's not for myself, Wade," he said. "I can stand her loving John, and not knowing that she has me for brother too; I'm not of the lacrymose classes; but this mad error of the father and this hopeless faithfulness of the daughter touches me tenderly. And here we are three weeks or more behind them."

"Yes," said Armstrong, "full three weeks to the notch; an ef ayry one of you boys sets any store by 'em, you 'd better be pintin' along their trail afore it gets cold. That 's what I allow. He 's onsafe, — the old man is. As fine-hearted a bein' as ever was; but luck has druv him out of hisself and made a reg'lar gonoph of him."

"GONOPH is vernacular for Drapetomaniac, I suppose," said I; "and a better word it is. Miss Ellen bore the journey well, Armstrong?"

"That there young woman is made out of watch-spring. Ther ain't no stop to her. The more you pile on, the springier she gits. She was a mile an hour more to the train comin' on. We did n't have anything ugly happen until we got to the river. We cum down from Independence in the Floatin' Pallis, No. 5. Some er them gamblin' Pikes on board got a holt on the old man. He 's got his bead drawed on makin' a pile again, and allows that gamblin' with Pikes on a river-boat is one of the ways. He sot his white head down to the poker-table, and stuck thar, lookin' sometimes sly as a kioty, sometimes mean and ugly as a gray wolf, and sometimes like a dead ephergee cut out er chalked wax. She nor I could n't do nothin' with him. So I ambushed the gamblers, an twarn't much arter midnight when I cotched 'em cheatin' the old man. They could n't wait to take his pile slow an' sure. So I

called an indignation meetin', and when I told the boys aboard I was Luke Armstrong from Oregon, they made me chairman, an' guv me three cheers. I know'd it warn't pollymentary for the chairman to make motions, but I motioned we shove the hul kit an boodle of the gamblers ashore on logs. 'T was kerried, quite you-an-I-an-a-muss. So we guv 'em a fair show, with a big stick of cottonwood and a shingle apiece, and told 'em to navigate. The Cap'n slewed the Pallis's head round and opened the furnace-doors to light 'em across, and they poot for shore, with everybody yellin', and the Pallis blowin' her whistle like all oudoors."

"That 's the American method, Biddulph," said I. "Lynch-law is nothing but the sovereign people's law, executed without the intervention of the forms the people usually adopt for convenience."

"With Armstrong for judge, it may do," said Biddulph.

"After that," continued Armstrong, "we got on well, except that the old man kep on the stiddy tramp up an' down the boat, when he warn't starin' at the engyne, and Ellen could n't quiet him down. He got hash with her, too, and that ain't like his nater. His nater is a sweet nater, with considerable weakenin' into it. Well, when we got here, I paid their ticket plum through to York out of my own belt, and shoved

a nest er dimes into the carpet-bag she asked me to buy her. But money wunt help the old man. I don't believe anything but dyin' will. I never would have let 'em go on alone ef I had n't had my own Ellen, and all my brother Bill's big and little ones to keep drivin' for. Now, boys, I git more 'n more oneasy the more I talk about 'em; but I ken put you on the trail, and if Mr. Brent is as sharp on trails where men is thick, as he is where men is scerce, and if she 's got a holt on him still, he 'll find 'em, and help 'em through."

"That I will, Armstrong," said Brent.

And next morning we three pursued our chase across the continent.

At New York another hurried note for me.

"We sail at once for home. My father cannot be at peace until he is in Lancashire again. Don't forget me, dear friends. I go away sick at heart.

"ELLEN CLITHEROE."

They left me, — the lover and the ex-lover, — and followed on over seas.

I had my sister's orphans to protect and my bread to win. The bigger the crowd, the more to pay tribute to an Orson like myself. I fancied that I could mine to more advantage in New York than at the Foolonner. There are sixpences in the straw of every omnibus for somebody to find.

I am not to maunder about myself. So I omit the story how I saw a vista in new life, hewed in and took up a "claim," which I have held good and am still improving.

Meantime nothing from Brent, — nothing from Miss Clitheroe. I grew bitterly anxious for both, — the brother and the sister of my adoption. These ties of choice are closer than ties of blood, unless the hearts are kindred as well as the bodies. My sister Ellen, chosen out of all womanhood and made precious to me by the agony I had known for her sake, — I could not endure the thought that she had forgotten me; still less the dread that her father had dragged her into some voiceless misery.

And Brent. I knew that he did not write, because he must thus set before his eyes in black, cruel words that his pursuit had been vain. The love that conquered time and space had beaten down and slain Brutality, — was it to be baffled at last? I longed to be with him, lending my cruder force to his finer skill in the search. Together we might prevail, as we had before prevailed. But I saw no chance of joining him. I must stay and earn my bread at my new business.

Nothing, still nothing from the lady or the lover, and I suffered for both. I wrote Brent, and re-wrote him; but no answer.

That winter, my old friend Short perfected his

famous Cut-off. Everybody now knows Short's Cut-off. It saves thirty per cent of steam and fifty per cent of trouble and wear and tear to engineer and engine.

Short burst into my office one morning. He and Brent and I, and a set of other fellows worth knowing, had been comrades in our younger days. We still hold together, with a common purpose to boost civilization, so far as our shoulders will do it.

"Look at that," cried Short, depositing a model and sheets of drawings on my table. "My Cut-off. What do you think of it?"

I looked, and was thrilled. It was a simple, splendid triumph of inventive genius, — a difficulty solved so easily, that it seemed laughable that no one had ever thought of this solution.

"Short," said I, "this is Fine Art. Hurrah for the nineteenth century! How did you happen to hit it? It is an inspiration."

"It was love that revealed it," said Short. "I have been pottering over that cut-off for years, while SHE did not smile; when SHE smiled, it came to me like a sneeze."

"Well, you have done the world good, and made your fortune."

"Yours too, old fellow, if you like. Pack up that model and the drawings, go to England, France, Germany, wherever they know steam

from tobacco-smoke, take out patents, and introduce it. Old Churm says he will let me have half a million dollars, if I want it. You shall have free tap of funds, and charge what percentage you think proper."

So I took steamer for England, with Short's Cut-off to make known.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A LOST TRAIL.

It was June when I reached London. Business, not fashion, was my object. I wished to be at a convenient centre of that mighty huddle of men and things; so I drove to Smorley's Hotel, Charing Cross.

In America, landlords dodge personal responsibility. They name their hotels after men of letters, statesmen, saints, and other eminent parties. Guests will perhaps find a great name compensation for infinitesimal comfort.

They do these things differently in England. Smorley does not dodge. Not Palmerston, nor Wordsworth, nor Spurgeon, is emblazoned in smoky gold on Smorley's sign; but Smorley. Curses or blessings, therefore, Smorley himself gets them. Nobody scowls at the sirloin, and grumbles, *sotto voce*, "Palmerston has cut it too fat to-day"; nobody tosses between the sheets and prays, "O Wordsworth, why didst thou begrudge me the Insect-Exterminator?" Nobody complains, "Spurgeon's beer is all froth, and

small at that." Smorley, and Smorley alone, gets credit for beef, beds, and beer.

Smorley's Hotel stands at the verge of the East, and looks toward the West End of London. The Strand passes by its side, so thick with men, horses, and vehicles, that only a sharp eye viewing it from above detects the pavement. The mind wearies with the countless throng, going and coming in that narrow lane, and turns to look on the permanent features of Smorley's landscape.

The chief object in the view is a certain second-rate square, named to commemorate a certain first-rate victory. But the square, second-rate though it be, is honored by a first-rate railing, a balustrade of bulky granite, which may be valuable for defence when Crapaud arrives to avenge Trafalgar. Inside the stone railing, which is further protected by a barricade of cabs, with drivers asleep and horses in nose-bags, are sundry very large stone fountains, of very smoky granite, trickling with very small trickles of water, which channel the basins as tears channel the face of a dirty boy. The square is on a slope, and seems to be sliding away, an avalanche of water-basins, cabs, and balustrade, from a certain very ugly edifice, severely classic in some spots, classic as a monkish Latin ballad in others, and well sprouted at the top with small sentry-boxes, perhaps shel

ters for sharp-shooters, should anybody venture to look mustard at the building. A bronze horseman, on a bronze horse sixteen hands high, is at work at the upper corner of the square, trying to drive it down hill. A bronze footman, on a column sixteen hundred feet high, or thereabouts, stands at the foot of the square, hailing that fugacious enclosure from under a nautical cocked hat to do its duty, as England expects everything English will, and not to run away from the ugly edifice above.

Such is the square at the very centre of the centre of the world, as I saw it from Smorley's corner window, while dining in the June twilight, the evening of my arrival in London.

I sat after dinner looking complacently out upon the landscape. A man never attains to that stolidity of content except in England, where the air's exciting oxygen is well weakened with fog, and the air's exhilarating ozone is quite discharged from dancing attendance. London and England were not strange to me; but a great city is ever new, and after two years' inane staring at a quartz-mine, town and townsfolk were still lively contrast to my mind.

I was quietly entertaining myself, sipping meanwhile my pint of Port, — Fine old Crusty, it was charged in the bill, when I saw coming down St. Martin's Lane, between the cabs and

the balustrade of the square, two gentlemen I knew.

Brent and Biddulph! Biddulph, surely. There could be no mistaking that blonde, manly giant, relapsed again into modified Anglicism of dress; but walking freely along, with a step that remembered the prairie.

But that pale, feeble fellow hanging on the other's arm! Could that be John Brent? He was slouching along, looking upon the ground, a care-worn, dejected man. It cost me a sharp pang to see my brilliant friend so vanquished by a sorrow I could comprehend.

I sprang up, snatched my hat, and rushed out. Eight quiet men, dining systematically at eight tables in the coffee-room, were startled at a rapidity of movement quite unknown to the precincts of Smorley, and each of the eight choked over his mouthful, were it ox-tail, salmon, mutton, bread, or Fine old Crusty. Eight waiters, caught in the act of saying "Yessir! D'rectly Sir!" were likewise shocked into momentary paralysis.

I dashed across the street, knocking the nose-bag off the forlorn nose of a hungry cab-horse, and laid my hand on my friend's shoulder. He turned, in the hasty, nervous manner of a man who is expecting something, and excited with waiting.

"I was half inclined to let you pass," said I.

"You have not written. I had no right to suppose you alive."

"I could only write to pain you and myself. I have not found her. I am hardly alive. I shall not long be."

"Come," said Biddulph, with his old friendly, cheery manner; "now that Wade has joined us, we will have a fresh start, and better luck. Walk on with us, Wade, and Brent will tell you what we have been doing."

"Why should I tire him with the weary story of a fruitless search?" said Brent.

It was the same utterly disheartened manner, the same tone of despair, that had so affected me that evening on the plain of Fort Bridger. Not finding whom he sought was crushing him now, as losing her crushed him then. But I thought by what a strange and fearful mercy our despair of that desolate time had been changed to joy. Coming newly to the fact of loss, I could not see it so darkly as it was present to him. A great confidence awoke in me that our old partnership renewed would prosper. I determined not to yield to his mood.

"Your search, then, is absolutely fruitless," said I. "Well, if she is not dead, she must have forgotten us?"

"Is she a woman to forget?" said Brent, roused a little by my wilful calumny.

"Like other women, I suppose."

"You must have forgotten the woman we met and saved, and had for our comrade, to think so."

I rejoiced at the indignation I had stirred.

"Why, then, has she never written?" I queried.

"I am sure as faith that she has, but that her father has cunningly suppressed her letters."

"The same has occurred to me. The poor old fellow, ashamed of his Mormon life, would very likely be unwilling that any one who knew of it should be informed of his whereabouts."

"He might, too, have an undiscriminating, senile terror of any letter going to America, lest it should set Danites upon his track, as a renegade. He might fear that we would take his daughter from him. There are twenty suppositions to make. I will not accept that of death nor of neglect."

"No," said Biddulph; "dead people cannot hide away their bodies, as living can."

"You know that they are in England?"

"They landed in Liverpool from the Screw. There they disappeared. Biddulph took me to Clitheroe, up to the old Hall. A noble place it is. It is poetry to have been born there. I do not wonder Mr. Clitheroe loved it."

"You must go down with me, Wade, as soon

as the season is over," said Biddulph. "I wish I could quarter you in town. Brent is with me. But you will dine with us every day, when you have nothing better to do, and be at home with us always. I can give you flapjacks and molasses, Laramie fashion."

"Thank you, my dear fellow!"

"You must not think," says Brent, "that I went up to Clitheroe even for Biron's hospitality. We were both on the search all through the country. We thought Mr. Clitheroe might have betaken himself to a coal-mine again. We discovered the very mine where he formerly worked. They remembered him well. The older generation of those grimy troglodytes well remembered Gentleman Hugh and his daughter, little Lady Ellen, and the rough fellows and their rough wives had a hundred stories to tell of the beautiful, gentle child, — how she had been a good angel to them, and already a protectress to her father. In the office, too, of the coal-mine, we found traces of him under another name, always faithful, honest, respected, and a gentleman. It was interesting to have all his sad story confirmed, just as he told it to you the night of Jake Shamberlain's ball; but it did not help our search. Then we enlarged its scope, and followed out every line of travel from Liverpool and to London, the great monster, that draws in

all, the prosperous and the ruined, the rich to spend and the poor to beg.

"We have had some queer and some romantic adventures in our search, eh, Brent? Some rather comic runaways we 've overhauled," said Biddulph; "but we 'll tell you of them, Wade, when we are in good spirits again, and with our fugitives by us to hear what pains we took for their sake."

"And all this while you have found no trace?" I said.

"One slight trace only," replied my friend; "enough to identify them disappearing among these millions of London. We found a porter at the Paddington station, who had seen a young lady and an old man stepping from a third-class carriage of a night-train. 'You see, sir,' said the man,—he evidently had a heart under his olive corduroys,—'I marked the old gent and the young woman, she was so daughterly with him. I 've got a little girl of my own, and mayhap I shall come out old and weakly, and she 'll have to look after me. It was the gray of the morning when the train come in. There warn't many passengers. It was cold winter weather,—the month of February, I should say. The young woman,—she had dark hair, and looked as if she was one to go through thick and thin,—she jumped out of the carriage, where she had

been settin' all that cold night, and gave the old gent her hand. I heard her call him "Father," and tell him to take care; and he had need. He seemed to be stiff with cold. He was an old gent, such as you don't see every day. He had a long white beard, — a kind of swallow-tail beard. His clothes, too, was strange. He had a long gray top-coat, grayish and bluish, with a cape of the same over his shoulders, and brass buttons stamped with an eagle. A milingtary coat it was. I used to see such coats on the sentinels in France when I went over to dig on the Chalong Railway. The old gent looked like a foreigner, with his swallow-tail beard and that milingtary coat; but there was an Englishman under the coat, if I knows 'em. And the young woman, sir, was English, — I don't believe there 's any such out of Old England.'"

"It must be they," cried I. "I saw him in that very coat, tramping up and down like a hunted man, beside the wagons that were to take him from Fort Laramie."

"You did? That completes the identification. But what good? This was a trace of them in London; so is a sailor's cap on a surge a token of a sailor sunk and lying somewhere under the gray waste of sea. We lost them again utterly."

With such talk, we had descended from Trafalgar Square, gone down Whitehall, turned in

at the Horse Guards, and, crossing Green Park, had come out upon Hyde Park Corner. It was the very top moment of the London season. The world, all sunshine and smiles and splendor, was eddying about the corner of Apsley House. Piccadilly was a flood of eager, busy people. The Park blossomed with gay crowds. But under all this laughing surface, I saw with my mind's eye two solitary figures slowly sinking away and drowning drearily, — two figures solitary except for each other, — a pale, calm woman, with gray, steady eyes, leading a vague old man, with a white beard and a long military surtout.

"Lost utterly!" said Brent again, as if in answer to my thought.

"No," said I, shaking off this despondency. "We have seemed to lose her twice more desperately than now. It looked darker when we left them at Fort Bridger; much darker when we knew that those ruffians had got time and space the start of us; darkest of all when poor Pumps fell dead in Luggernel Alley. Searching in a Christian city is another thing than our agonized chase in the wilderness."

"A Christian city!" said Brent, with a slight shudder. "You do not know what this Christian city is for a friendless woman. There are brutes here as evil and more numerous than in all barbarism together. Many times, in my

searches up and down the foul slums of London, I have longed to exchange their walls for the walls of Luggernel Alley, and endure again the frenzy of our gallop there. You think me weak, perhaps, Wade, for my doubt of success; but remember that I have been at this vain search over England and on the Continent for five months."

"But understand, Wade," said Biddulph, "that we do not give it up, although we have found no clew."

"Give it up!" cried Brent with fervor. "I live for that alone. When the hope ends, I end."

How worn he looked, "with grief that 's beauty's canker!" Life was wasting from him, as it ever does when man pursues the elusive and unattained. When a man like Brent once voluntarily concentrates all his soul on one woman, worthy of his love, thenceforth he must have love for daily food, or life burns dim and is a dying flame.

"To-morrow," said I, halting at the Park corner, "I must be at work setting my business in motion. I have letters to write this evening, and a dozen of famous mechanicians to see to-morrow. In the evening we will put our heads together again."

"Over my claret and a weed after it, understand," said Biddulph.

"Yes, I'll try whether you can take the taste of Missouri argee and pigtail out of my mouth."

"You must be prepared to be made a lion of by my mother and cousins. They know the history of Don Fulano as well as a poet knows the pedigree of Pegasus. I have brought tears to many gentle eyes with the story of his martyrdom for liberty."

"Ah, Fulano! if we only had him here! He would know how to aid us."

I left them, and walked down Piccadilly to Smorley's. Some of the eight waiters, who had seen me bolt, still regarded me with affright. I wrote my letters and went to bed.

My brain was still rolling in my skull with the inertia of its sea voyage. The blur and bustle of London perplexed me. I slept; but in my worried sleep I seemed to hear, above the roar in the streets, a far-away scream of a woman, as I had heard it in the pause of the gale at Fort Bridger. Then I seemed to have unhorsed the Iron Duke from his seat at Hyde Park Corner, and, mounted in his place and armed with the Nelson Column for a lance, to be charging along the highways and by-ways of London in chase of two dim, flying figures, — a lady pale as death, and a weary man in a long gray surtout.

CHAPTER XXX.

LONDON.

SHORT'S Cut-off shut out all other subjects from my head next morning.

It was an innovation, a revolution. Mankind objects to both. It came from America, and though America has given tobacco, woman's rights, the potato, model yachts, model States, and trotting horses to the Old World, that World still distrusts our work as boyish. We in turn deem the Old World a mere child, and our youth based on a completer maturity than they will attain for half a millennium.

Short's Cut-off was so simple that it puzzled everybody.

I consulted half a dozen eminent engineers.

"Very pretty, indeed!" they said, and at once turned the conversation to the explosions on Western rivers. "Had I ever been blown up? How did it feel?"

But as to Short's Cut-off, they only thought it a neat contrivance, but evidently by a person who did not comprehend intricate machinery.

I took it to a man of another order. England is the world's machine-shop; he was England's chief engineer. A great man he was, dead, alas! now. A freeman, who recognized the world as his country, and genius everywhere as his brother.

He understood Short's Cut-off at a glance.

How I wish old Short could have been there, to see this great man's eye glow with enthusiasm as he said: "Admirable! This is what we have all been waiting for. Padiham must see this. We must have it in every engine in England. Command my services to aid in making it known."

"Can you recommend me," said I, presently, "a thorough mechanic. I want some more models made of these valves and machinery, to illustrate their action."

"You must go to Padiham, the best artisan I know in all England."

"Worth seeing for himself, as the man whom you name best among these millions of craftsmen."

"Padiham is the man."

"He ought to have name and fame."

"He might if he chose."

"Worth knowing, again, for this rare abnegation."

"He is an oddity. Some unlucky mode of life stunted him, mind and body, until he was a ma-

ture man. He is dwarfed in person, and fancies his mind suffers too. It makes him a little gruff to feel that he is a man of tools, and not of principles, — a mechanic, not a philosopher. There is nothing of morbidness or disappointment in him. Only he underrates himself, and fancies his powers blunted by his deformity. He keeps out of the way, and works alone in a little shop. He will only do special jobs for me and one or two others. He says he would be our equal, if he were full-grown. We deem him our peer, and treat him as such; but he will not come out and take the place he could have at once before the world. I thought of him, and wished him to see this Cut-off, as soon as you showed it to me. You must tell him I sent you, or he may be surly at first, and so drive you away, or perhaps refuse to do your work."

"I think I can make my way with such a person; but if not, I will use your name. Where is he to be found?"

"This is his address. An out-of-the-way place, you see, if you know London. A by-street on the Surrey side of the Thames. He is well to do; but lives there for a special economy. He has a method of charity, which is like himself thoroughly original. More good he does in his odd way than any man I know. He owns the whole house over his shop, and uses it as a private

hospital or hospice for poor but worthy sick and broken-down people."

"His own dwarfishness makes him sympathetic?"

"Yes; instead of souring, it softens him to the feeble. He may perhaps feel a transitory resentment at big, strong fellows like you and me; but he is always tender to the weak. His wonderful knowledge of machinery comes into play in his hospital. From the machines man makes, he has passed to a magical knowledge of the finest machine of all."

"The human body?"

"The machine that invents and executes machines, the human body, — the most delicate mechanism of all, the type of all its own inventions. Padiham achieves magical cures. He is working by practice, and lately by study, into profound surgical skill. There is no man in England whom I would trust to mend me if I broke, as I would Padiham."

"He avenges himself upon Nature for not perfecting him, by restoring her breakages. Why do you not suggest to him to become a professed repairer of mankind?"

"I have suggested it. He says he must take his own way. Besides, mechanics can hardly spare him. Many of my own inventions would have stayed in embryo in my brain, if Padiham

had not played Vulcan, and split a passage for them. I talk over my schemes to him; he catches the idea and puts it into form at once."

"You interest me very much," said I. "I must see the man and know him, for my own sake as well as for Short's Cut-off."

"Take care he does not drive you away in a huff. You 'll find him a rough-hewn bit."

I went at once. A man who had warred with Pikes at the Foolonner Mine, to say nothing of other ruder characters, was not to be baffled, so he trusted, by a surly genius.

As I walked through the crush of the streets, again there came to me that vision of the old man and his daughter lost in the press, — more sadly lost, more vainly seeking refuge here, than in the desert solitudes where we had found them.

Every one familiar with great cities knows of strange rencounters there, and at every turn I looked narrowly about, fancying that I should see the forms I sought, just vanishing, but leaving me a clew of pursuit. This expectation grew so intense, that I exaggerated slight resemblances of costume or of port, and often found myself excitedly hurrying quite out of my way, and shouldering through huddles of people, to come at some figure in the distance. But when I overtook the old man of feeble step, or the young woman moving fearlessly amid the pitiless crowd,

or the pair I had followed, and stared at them eagerly, strange and offended looks met me instead of the familiar, perhaps the welcome, look I had hoped; and I turned away forlornly exaggerating the disappointment as I had the fancy.

I cooled at last from this flurry. Nothing but blanks in the lottery. It was folly to be wasting my energy in this way. Trusting Providence, or rather this semblance of Providence, this mere chance, was thin basis for action. So I resumed my proper course, and turned my steps quietly toward Padiham's shop.

But when presently I stood upon London Bridge, between two cities of men, between the millions I had escaped and the million I was to plunge among, a great despair grew heavier and heavier upon me.

This terrible throng, here as everywhere hurrying by me! And I compelled to note every man and every woman, and to say to myself, "This is not he,"—"This is not she,"—"These are not they!" All the while this stream of negatives rushing by, and every one bearing a little fraction of hope away.

In that great city — in its nests and its prisons — were people who had been living side by side for a life-time, and yet had never had one glimpse of each other's form or feature; who were, each to each, but a name on a door, a step overhead, a

tread on the stair, a moan of anguish, a laugh, or a curse. There were parallel streets, too, whose tenants moved parallel and never met, and never would meet. There were neighborhoods farther distant than Cornhill is from Cairo, or Pimlico from Patagonia. It was a dark den — that monster city — for any one who loved to lurk, or be buried away from sight of friend or foe; it was a maze, a clewless labyrinth for one who sought a foe to punish or a friend to save.

Evening was approaching. I must consider Short and his Cut-off, and all England wasting steam at the rate of millions of pounds a year (enough to save the income tax) until that Cut-off should be applied. In that populous realm were ten thousand cylinders devouring one third more steam than was healthy working allowance; and I was halting on London Bridge, staring like a New-Zealander at the passers, a mere obstacle to progress, a bad example, a stationary nuisance now, as I had been a mobile and intrusive one before.

I had some little difficulty in finding Padiham's retiring-place. I had already dissected it out on the map, identified it by its neighborhood to a certain artery and its closer neighborhood to a certain ganglion. It was Lamely Court, a quiet retreat in a busy region. It looked, indeed, as if it had never taken a very active part in the world, or as if, when it offered itself to bustle

and traffic, more enterprising localities had hustled it aside, and bade it decline into a lethargy. The withered brick houses had the air and visage of people who have seen better days, and subsided into the desponding by-ways, apart from the thoroughfares of the bold and sturdy. Mean misery and squalor did not abide there. It was not a den for the ragged, but a shy retreat for the patched, — for the decent and decorous poor.

Half-way down the court, on the sunny side, I found Padiham's house. It was quietly, not obtrusively, neater and fresher than its neighbors. Its bricks had a less worm-eaten look, and its window-panes were all of glass and none of newspaper. The pot roses in an upper story window were in bloom, and had life enough to welcome the June sunshine, while sister plants in other garrets all about the court were too far blighted ever to dream of gayer product than some poor jaundiced bud. These roses up in Padiham's window cheered the whole neighborhood greatly, with their lively coloring. It was as if some pretty maiden, with rosy cheeks and riper rosy lips, were looking down into that forlorn retreat, and warming every old, faded soul, within every shabby tenement, with bright reminiscence of days when life was in its perfume and its flower.

Such was the aspect of Padiham's abode. His shop lurked in the basement.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A DWARF.

It was with much curiosity and interest in Padiham that I stepped down into the basement, and entered his shop. I reverence as much a great mechanic, in degree, perhaps in kind, as I do any great seer into the mysteries of Nature. He is a king, whoever can wield the great forces where other men have not the power. And none can control material forces without a profound knowledge, stated or unstated, of the great masterly laws that order every organism, from dust to man and a man-freighted world. A great mechanic ranks with the great chiefs of his time, prophets, poets, orators, statesmen.

Padiham was in his shop at work. No mistaking him. A stunted, iron-gray man, not misshapen, but only shut together, like a one-barrelled opera-glass.

A very impressive head was Padiham's. No harm had been done to that by whatever force had driven in his legs and shut his ribs together. His head was full grown. In contrast with his

body, it seemed even overgrown. His hair and beard were iron-gray. He had those heavy, square eyebrows that compel the eyes from roving, and shut them down upon the matter in hand, so that it cannot escape. Not a man, this, to err on facts or characters. A pretender person, a sham fact, he would test at once and dismiss. Short's Cut-off had never met a sterner critic than this man with the square forehead and firm nose.

He was hard at work at a bench, low according to his stature, filing at some fine machinery. The shop was filled with a rich sunny duskiness. Here and there surfaces of polished brass sparkled. Sunbeams, striking through the dim windows, glinted upon bits of bright steel strewn about. I perceived the clear pungent odor of fresh steel filings, very grateful after the musty streets, seething in June sunshine and the exhalations of the noisome Thames. It was a scene of orderly disorder, ruled by the master-workman there.

Padiham had, of course, observed my entrance. He took no notice of me, and continued his work.

I held my station near the door. I did not wish to spoil his job by the jar of an interruption. Besides, I thought it as well to let him speak first. I was prepared for an odd man; he might make the advances, if he pleased.

Padiham went on filing, in a grim, intelligent way. I glanced about the shop.

There were models all about of machines, some known, some strange to me; disconnected portions of inventions lying side by side, and wanting only a bolt or a screw to be organized and ready to rush at pumping, or lifting, or dragging, or busy duty of some useful kind. There was store, too, of interesting rubbish, — members of futile models, that could not do busy duty of their kind for some slight error, and worth careful study as warnings; for failure with mechanics is the schoolmaster of success. Drawings of engines hung all about the walls. As guardian genius of the spot, there was a portrait of that wise, benignant face of my friend of this morning, that great engineer who had directed me hither.

Apart in a dusky corner, by the chimney and forge, hung two water-color drawings in neat gilt frames. They were perhaps a little incongruous with the scenery of the gnome's cavern. I did not, of course, expect to find here a portrait of a truculent bruiser or a leering bar-maid. Beery journeymen keep such low art hanging before them to seduce them from any ambition to become master hands and beguile them back of beer. Padiham would of course need drawings of models and machines, and enjoy them;

but I did not look for Art proper in his shop. There, however, in the dim background, hung the two cheerful drawings, in their neat frames. They renewed and repeated the feeling which the gay roses in the upper windows had given me. My fancy supplied a link between the drawings and the flowers. They infused a pleasant element of refinement into the work-a-day atmosphere of the shop.

One of these drawings — I could just faintly distinguish their subject, and not the skill, greater or less, of their handling — was a view of an old brick many-gabled manor-house on a lawn dotted with stately oaks. Its companion — and the light hardly permitted me to decipher it — seemed to be a group of people seated on the grass, and a horse bending over them. I glanced at these objects as my eye made the tour of the shop; but my head was filled with Short's Cut-off and this grim dwarf before me.

Presently Padiham laid down his file, and took up a pair of pincers from the confusion on his bench. He gave a bit of wire a twist, and, as he did so, looked at me. The square eyebrows seemed to hold me stiff, while he inspected. He studied my face, and then measured me from top to toe. There was a slight expression of repellence in his features, as if he thought, "This big fellow probably fancies that his long legs make him my master; we 'll try a match."

He addressed me in a sweet, hearty voice, quite in discord with his gruff manner. No man could be a bear and roar so gently. I perceived the Lancashire accent. The dialect, if it had ever been there, was worn away. Tones are older in a man than words. He can learn a new tongue; his organ he hardly alters. If Nature has ordained a voice to howl, or snarl, or yelp, or bray, it will do so now and then, stuff our mouths with pebbles as we may.

Padiham's frank, amiable voice neutralized his surly manner, as he said: "Now then, young man, what are you staring at? Do you want anything with me? Say so, if you do. If not, don't stand idling here; but go about your business."

"I want you to do a job for me."

"Suppose I say, I don't want to do it?"

"Then I'll try to find a better man."

"Umph! where 'll you look for him?"

"In the first shop where there's one that knows enough to give good words to a stranger."

"Well; say what your job is."

"You 're ready to do it then?

"I'm not ready to waste any more time in talk."

"Nor I. I want some working models of a new patent Cut-off."

"I wont undertake any tom-foolery."

"If you can make tom-foolery out of this, you 're a cleverer man than I am."

"That may not be much to say. I 've had so many shams brought to me in the way of cut-offs that I shall not spend time on yours unless it looks right at first glance.

"You 'll see with half an eye that this means something."

"Show me your drawings; that will settle it."

I produced the working drawings.

Padiham studied them a few moments. I volunteered no explanation.

Presently he looked up, and fixed me with his square eyebrows, while he examined me from head to foot again.

"Did you invent this?" said he.

"No."

"Umph! Thought not. Too tall. Who did?"

"Mr. Short."

"Don't Mister the man that thought out this. His whole name I want, without handles. He don't need 'em."

"George Short."

"George,—that 's my name too. I suppose he is a Yankee. I know every man in England likely to have contrived this; but none of them have quite head enough."

"He is an American."

"Is he a Mormon?"

"No."

"Are you?"

"No. It is an odd question."

"I don't know much about your country, except that you invent machines, keep slaves, blow up steamboats, and beguile off Englishmen with your damned Mormonism. The Mormons have done so much harm in my country, — Lancashire that is, — that I've sworn I'd never have anything to do with any Yankee, unless I first knew he was not one of those wolves. But if you're not, and George Short is not, I'll do your job. Now tell me precisely what you want made, for I can't spend time with you."

"I want six sets of these models at once."

"I'll order the castings this evening. I have materials here for the fine parts. Can you handle tools? — I mean useful tools, — files and saws and wrenches, not pens and sand-boxes."

"I'm a fair workman with your tools."

"You can help me then. Come over to-morrow morning at seven. No; you're an idler, and I'll give you till eight. If you're not here by that time you'll find me busy for the day."

So saying, Padiham turned off to his work. He gave me no further attention; but filed away grimly. I watched him a moment. What in-

tensity and earnestness were in this man! Like other great artists, who see form hidden within a mass of brute matter, he seemed to be urged to give himself, body and soul, to releasing the form from its cell, to setting free the elemental spirit of order and action locked up in the stuff before him.

His brief verdict upon my friend's invention settled its success in my mind. Not that I doubted before; but the man's manner was conclusive. He pronounced the fiat of the practical world, as finally as the great engineer had done of the theoretical. I thrilled for old Short, when this Dwarf, lurking away in a by-court of London, accepted him as his peer. The excitement of this interview had for a time quite expelled my anxieties. For a time I had lost sight of the two figures that haunted me, and ever vanished as I pursued. They took their places again as I left the shop and issued from Lamely Court into the crowded thoroughfare at hand.

I took a cab, and drove to my hotel, and so to Biddulph's. The dinner at the Baronet's shall not figure in these pages. It was my first appearance as hero. I and my horse were historic characters in this new circle. I was lionized by Lady Biddulph, a stately personage, inheritress of a family rustle, — a rustle as old as the Plantagenets, and grander now by the accumulations

of ages. A lovely young lady, with dark hair, who blushed when I took my cue and praised Biddulph, she also lionized me. A thorough-bred American finds English life charming, especially if he is agreeably *lionné;* a scrubby American considers England a region of cold shoulder, too effete to appreciate impertinence.

Lady Biddulph gave me further facts of the history of the Clitheroes.

"Our dear Ellen!" she concluded. "If she had known how much I loved her, she would have disregarded her natural scruples," — and she glanced at her son, — "and let me befriend and protect her. It goes to my heart to see Mr. Brent so worn and sad. He, too, has become very dear to us all. I have adopted him as my son as long as he pleases, and try to give him a mother's sympathy."

Brent walked back with me to Smorley's.

"How different we are!" he said, as we parted. "I am all impulse; you are all steadiness."

"Suffering might throw me off my balance. Remember that I have had trial and experience, but no torture."

"Torture, that is the word; and it has unmanned me like a wearing disease. Your coming makes a man of me again."

"Give me a day or two for Short's Cut-off and

the mechanical nineteenth century, and we will take our knight-errantry upon us again. We are dismounted cavaliers now, to be sure, — no Pumps or Fulano to help us, — but we shall find, I will not doubt, some other trusty aid against the demon forces."

Brent bade me good night with a revival of his old self. We were to meet again to-morrow.

I sat down to gladden Short with the story of my success to-day, and wrote hard and fast to catch to-morrow's steamer.

The dwarf, I knew, would be a man after Short's own heart, — these men of iron and steel are full of magnetism for each other. I gave Short a minute description of Padiham's shop.

As I described, I found that my observation had been much keener than I supposed. Every object in the shop came back to me distinctly. I saw the Rembrandt interior, barred with warm sunbeams; the grim master standing there over his vice; the glinting steel; the polished brass; the intelligent tools, ready to spring up and do their duty in the craftsman's hands; that little pretty plaything of a steam-engine, at rest, but with its pocket-piece of an oscillating cylinder hanging alert, so that it could swing off merrily at a moment's notice, and its piston with a firm grip on the crank, equally eager to skip up and down in the cylinder on its elastic cushion of steam.

All the objects in Padiham's shop, one after another, caught my look, as I reviewed the whole in memory. Suddenly I found myself gazing intently at my image of those two water-color drawings in neat gilt frames, hanging in a dusky corner by the chimney, — those two drawings which had revived in my mind the sentiment of the bright, healthy roses in the upper windows.

Suddenly these drawings recurred to me. They stared at me like an old friend neglected. They insisted upon my recognition. There was a personality in them which gazed at me with a shy and sad reproach, that I had given them only a careless glance, and so passed them by.

The drawings stared at me and I at them.

An ancient, many-gabled brick manor-house, on a fair lawn dotted with stately oaks, — that was the first.

Had I not already seen a drawing, the fellow of this? Yes. In Biddulph's hands at Fort Laramie. The same gables, the same sweet slope of lawn, the same broad oaks, and one the monarch of them all, — perhaps the very one Wordsworth had rounded into a sonnet.

And the companion drawing that I hardly deciphered in the dimness, — that group of figures and a horse bending over them?

How blind I was!

Fulano!

Fulano surely. He and no other.

And that group?

Ourselves at the Luggernel Springs. Brent lying wounded, while I gave him water, and a lady bound up his wounds.

Can this be so? Am I not the victim of a fancy? Is this indeed my noble horse? Is he again coming forward to bear us along the trail of our lost friend.

I stared again at my mental image of the two drawings. I recalled again every word of my interview with Padiham.

The more I looked, the more confident I became. Short's Cut-off had held such entire possession of me in the afternoon, that I could only observe with eyes, not with volition, could not value the treasure I was grasping ignorantly. But I had grasped it. This is Fulano! Except for him, I might doubt. Except for his presence, the other drawing of an old brick manor-house would be a commonplace circumstance.

"Now let me see," I thought, pushing aside my letter to Short for a moment, "what are my facts?

"Mr. Clitheroe and his daughter have disappeared, and are probably in London.

"I have found — God be thanked! — a clew, perhaps a clew. Work by the lady's hand.

"And where? In Padiham's shop.

"Padiham is a Lancashire man. So is Mr. Clitheroe.

"Padiham has a horror of Mormons. Why was I so hurried as not to pursue the conversation, and discover what special cause he had for his disgust?

"Padiham, in a secluded part of London, keeps a hospital for the poor and the sick.

"There are bright roses in the upper windows. No masculine fingers know how to lure blossoms into being so tenderly.

"Bright roses in the rooms above; able drawings giving refinement to the rusty shop below.

"Can it be that they are there, under the very roof of that grim good Samaritan?

"In the three millions have I come upon my two units?

"Going straight forward and minding my own business, have I effected in one day what Brent has failed in utterly after a search of months?

"But let me not neglect the counter facts?

"I did not recognize these pictures when I saw them. Perhaps what I find in them now is fancy. My own vivid remembrance of the scene at Luggernel may be doing artist-work, and dignifying some commonplace illustration of an old ballad. Ours was not the first such group since men were made and horses made for them. Fulano has had no lack of forefathers in heroism.

"And the manor-house? There are, perhaps, in Padiham's own county, a hundred such ancient many-gabled brick halls, a hundred lawns fair as the one that falls away gently from Mr. Clitheroe's ancestral mansion, scores of oaks as stately as the one that was lucky enough to shadow Wordsworth, and so cool his head for a sonnet in grateful recompense.

"Padiham may have a daughter who draws horses and houses to delude me, — imaginative fellow that I am becoming!

"Or, what do I know? Suppose these fugitives have taken refuge with Padiham, — it may be to escape pursuit. Poor Mr. Clitheroe! Who knows what poverty may have permitted him to do? Better to hide in Lamely Court than to be stared at in a prison!

"My facts are slender basis for conclusion," — so I avowed to myself on this review.

"But I would rather have a hope than no hope. The filmiest clew is kinder than no clew.

"I will finish my letter to old Short, dear boy, inventor of a well-omened Cut-off; I will sleep like a top, with no mysterious disappearances to disturb me; I will be with the Dwarf by seven. If that is Fulano in the drawing, he shall carry double again. He shall conduct the Lover and Friend to the Lady."

CHAPTER XXXII.

PADIHAM'S SHOP.

How jubilant I felt the next morning as I made my way toward Lamely Court! The Thames really seemed to me a pure and lucent current. I began to fancy that there might be a stray whiff of ozone in the breezes of Albion.

What a cheerful clock it was, in some steeple near at hand, that struck seven as I set foot upon Padiham's steps! What a blessing to a neighborhood to have a clock so utterly incredulous of dolefulness, — a clock that said All 's well to the past hour, and prophesied All 's well to the coming!

"Now," I thought, "I must have my wits about me. My business is with Padiham the mechanic, not with Padiham the good Samaritan. My time and mind belong to Short's Cut-off. I must not dash off into impertinent queries about people the dwarf may know nothing of, may wish to tell nothing of. Keep cool, Richard Wade! mind your own business, and then you can mind other people's. Be ready to

be disappointed! Destiny is not so easy to propitiate as you seemed to believe last night.

As the clock dallied on its last stroke of seven, I entered Padiham's shop.

My first glance — eyes never looked more earnestly — was toward the two drawings.

There they were, — fact not fancy.

I could still hold to the joy of a hope.

They were too far away in this dusky corner for absolute recognition; but there were the familiar gables of the old hall; and there was my horse, yes, himself, bending over that very group of Luggernel Springs. I must cling to my confidence; I would not doubt. If I doubted, I should become a stupid bungler over the models, and probably disgust Padiham by my awkwardness.

"Good morning, Mr. Padiham."

"Good morning," said he, in that hearty voice which resolutely declined being surly.

He was standing, filing away, just where I had left him yesterday. Put him on a pair of properly elongated legs, shake the reefs out of his ribs, in short, let Procrustes have half an hour at him, and a very distinguished-looking man would be George Padiham. In fact, as he was, his remarkable head raised him above pity. Many of us would consent to be dwarfed, to be half man below the Adam's apple, if above it we

could wear the head of a Jupiter Tonans, such a majestic head as this stunted man, the chief artisan of all England.

Padiham was as gruff as yesterday, but his gruffness gave him flavor. Better a boor than a flunkey. There is excitement in talking with a man who respects you exactly in proportion to your power, and ignores you if you are a muff.

We went at our work without delay. For nearly two hours I put myself and kept myself at Short's Cut-off. Padiham's skill and readiness astonished me. Great artists are labor-saving machines to themselves; they leap to a conclusion in a moment, where a potterer would be becalmed for a tide.

By and by, I found that I could be of no further use to this master craftsman.

"You understand this job better than I do," said I.

"I understand it," said he.

"I 'll take a short spell," said I, "and look about the shop a little."

"Don't be setting my tools by the ears."

"No; I want to see those pictures by the chimney."

He said nothing. His lathe buzzed. His chisel tortured bars of metal until they shrieked. The fragrance of fresh-cut steel filled the shop.

I sprang to the dusky corner. My heart choked me. I wanted to shout so that John Brent, miles away across the wilderness of the great city, could hear and come with one step.

For here was what I hoped.

Here we were, our very selves, in this bold, masterly drawing. John Brent himself, the wounded knight; myself, bringing him water from the fountain; our dear Ellen, kneeling beside; and bending over us, Don Fulano, the chiefest hero of that terrible ride through the cañon.

And more, if I needed proof. For here, in among the water-plants by the spring, there in the grass under Wordsworth's oak, lurked the initials, E. C.

Found! Ah, not yet. A clew; but perhaps a clew that would break in my hands, as I traced it.

I lost no time.

"These are pretty pictures," said I, crushing myself into self-possession.

"What has that got to do with this job?"

"You think I 'm a pretty good mechanic?"

"Middling. You handle tools well enough for a gentleman."

"Well, if I were not a bit of an artist, I should not even be a middling mechanic. I like to see fine art, such as these drawings, hung up before

a working man. I can understand how appreciating such things has helped you to become the first mechanic in England."

"Who says I am that?"

"So the first engineer in England told me when he sent me here."

"O, he sent you! I supposed you did not find your own way."

"There has been no chance in my coming here," said I, and my heart thanked God.

"You 're right about those drawings, young man," Padiham said, and his voice seemed to find a sweeter tone even than before. "They do me good, and put a finer edge on my work. They 're good work, and by a good hand."

"Whose?"

The dwarf turned about and surveyed me strictly. Then he started his lathe again, tore off a narrow ringlet of steel from a bit he was shaping, and flung another stream of steely perfume into the air.

"Whose hand?" I asked again.

"Do you ask because you want to know, or only to make idle talk?"

"I want to know."

"What for?"

"I think the drawings are good. I should like a pair by the same hand. Can you direct me to the artist?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"The artist don't like strangers. I will order you what you want."

"That will not do. I prefer to talk over the subjects with the painter."

The dwarf turned again and gave me a probing look, and again took up his chisel and cut shining curls without reply.

I grew impatient of this parley. He knew something, and it must out.

"Look at me, George Padiham!" I said. "Stop your lathe a minute, and charge me for the time a hundred times over! I know the hand that painted these pictures. My portrait and my friend's, and my horse's portrait, are here on your wall. Only one person in the world can have painted them, Ellen Clitheroe. Here are her initials in the corner. You know where she is. I wish to see her. I must see her, at once, now!"

"Keep cool, young man! This is my shop. I'm master here. I've put bigger men than you out of this door before. What's all this must and shall about? What's your name?"

"Richard Wade."

Padiham left his lathe, came toward me, surveyed me earnestly again, and then took down the drawing wherein I appeared. He compared

the man standing before him with his counterfeit presentment. There could be no mistaking me. I had the honor to resemble myself, as the artist had remembered me.

"You 're the man," said Padiham. "I 've heard of you. I was n't looking sharp not to have known you when you first came in and stood there by the door waiting for me to speak first. Richard Wade, give me your hand! I suppose if I am the best mechanic in England, called so on good authority, you wont mind striking palms with me."

I shook him by the hand pretty vigorously.

"You 've got a middling strong grip of your fist for one of the overgrown sort," said he. "Where 's your friend, John Brent?"

"Here in London, searching for Miss Clitheroe!"

"Where 's your horse? — the Black?"

"Dead! Shot and drowned in the Missouri, helping off a fugitive slave."

"That 's brave. Well, Richard Wade, my dear child Ellen Clitheroe and her father are here in my house. They are safe here, after all their troubles, up in that room where perhaps you marked the roses in the window. She has been sick at heart to have heard nothing from you since she came to England. It will be the one thing she lacks to see you, and if you will

let me say a few words to you first, I'll take you to them."

"Go on. If you have protected my friends, you are my friend, and I want to hear what you have to say."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS."

"I AM short, and I shall try to make a long story short," said Padiham. "I wish to tell you, in as few words as I may, why Mr. Clitheroe and his daughter are in my house.

"Look at me, a stunted man! Life in a coal-mine stunted me. I suppose I was born underground. I know that I never remember when I was not at work, either harnessed like a dog, and dragging coals through a shop where I could not stand upright, or, when I grew stronger, — bigger I was not to grow, — down in the darkest holes, beating out with a pickaxe stuff to make other men's houses warm and cheery. If I had had air and sun and light and hope, I might have been a shapely man.

"It was in Lancashire, the coal-mine where I had been shut up, boy and man, some twenty years, as I reckon. There came one day a weakly man, who had n't been used to work hard, into the shaft, and they put him at drawing out the coals I dug. Hugh was the name he

gave, and he had n't been long enough underground to get his face black, before we 'd baptized him Gentleman Hugh. I had never seen a gentleman to know him, but I had a feeling of what one ought to be, and so had my mates in the pit. Gentleman Hugh seemed to us to suit the nickname we gave him. We 're roughs down in the coal-pits, and some of us are brutes enough; but Gentleman Hugh managed to get us all on his side, and there was n't a man of us that would n't give him a lift.

"Gentleman Hugh took a fancy to me, and so did I to him. Nature had misused me, and life had misused him. We had something to pity each other for. But I had the advantage in the dark damp hole where we worked. I had lost nothing; I knew of nothing better; I was healthy and strong, if I was stunted; I could help Gentleman Hugh, and save him wearing himself out. And so I did. He was the first person or creature I had ever cared for.

"I did what I could for him in lightening his work; but he gave me back a hundred times what I could give. I was hands without head, or without any head that could make my hands of use. He had head enough, and things in his head, but his hands were never meant for tools to get a living. Gentleman Hugh waked up my brains. I knew how to pick and dig, and some-

times wondered if that was all I should ever be at. But air and daylight seemed as if they did not belong to me. I was a drudge, and never thought of anything but drudging, until Gentleman Hugh came down into my shaft and began to tell me what there was outside of coal-mines.

"He told me about himself; that he was Hugh Clitheroe, a gentleman, and how he had been ruined by factories and coal speculations. It was his losing his fortune in a coal-mine that set him on coming into ours to make his bread, and poor bread too, for a gentleman. He said he was sick of daylight. It was better to be a drudge, so he said, down in the blackest and wettest hole of any coal-pit in Lancashire, than to beg bread of men that pretended to be his friends when he was rich, and sneered at him for his folly in losing his wealth. I found out that there were wrongs and brutality above ground as well as under it.

"By and by, when Gentleman Hugh and I had got to be friends, he took me one holiday and showed me his daughter. She was a sweet little lass. He had left her with the rough women, the miners' wives. But she had her own way with them, just as he had had with us. They called her little Lady Ellen, and would have cut up their own brats, if they had n't been too tough, if she had wanted such diet. Little Ellen, sweet lass!

was not afraid of me, Dwarf George and Runt George as they called me. She did not run away and cry, or point and laugh at me as the other children did. She was picking daisies on the edge of an old coal-pit when we first saw her, — a little curly-haired lass of five years old. She was crowned with daisies, and she did n't seem to me to belong to the same class of beings as the grimy things I had been among all my days. She gave me a daisy, and asked me if I knew who made it. And when I said I did n't know, unless it came of itself, she named God to me. Nobody had named God to me before except in oaths.

"Do I tire you, sir," said Padiham, "with this talk about myself?"

"Certainly not; you interest me greatly."

"The old gentleman will hardly be ready to see you yet. It is almost nine, and at the stroke of nine he has his breakfast. I always go up then to give him good morning. You can go with me."

"Meantime, tell me how you found them again."

"I found them by a drawing of hers. But I will go on straightforward with my story.

"I could n't stay a dolt, though I had to drudge for many a day after I first saw little Ellen, and she gave me the daisy and named God

to me. Whenever I could get away, and that was only once a quarter or a half-year, I went up to see her. She made a friend of me, and told me to take care of her father. He was very much down, quite broken and helpless, with just enough strength to do half his appointed work. So I helped him with the rest.

"After a long time the owners found out that he had education, and they took him into the office. All the men were sorry to lose Gentleman Hugh, and when he went, I lost heart, and took to drinking up my miserable earnings with the rest. There I was, a drudge in the dark, and getting to be a drunkard, when Gentleman Hugh came to me and told me how some one had left him a legacy, and I must get out of the pit and share with him. He said little Ellen would not be happy unless she had me.

"So he took me up into the air and sun, and put me to school. But I could never learn much out of books. Put tools in my hands and I can make *things*, and that is what my business is in the world. You see those arms, well made as your own. You see those hands, strong as a vice, and those fingers, fine as a woman's. They are tools, and able to handle tools. The rest of my body is stunted; my brain is stunted. I 'm no fool; but I 'm not the man I ought to be. Every day I feel that I cannot put my thoughts into the highest form."

"Every man of any power feels that," I said, "by whatever machinery his power finds expression."

"Perhaps so. Well, when Mr. Clitheroe had once given me a start in the open air, and I had got tools in my hands, pretty soon they began to talk of me as one of the masters in Lancashire. There 's a great call in England for thorough workmen. I came up to London. I fell in with the gentleman who sent you here, and I got on well. There 's as much good work goes out of this little shop as out of some big establishments with great names over the door. People try to get me to start a great shop, and make a great fortune, and have George Padiham talked about. But I 'm Dwarf George, born in a coal-mine and stunted in a coal-mine; and Lamely Court, with my little shop in the basement, suits me best.

"I never forgot how I owed all my good luck to Gentleman Hugh and my dear little Ellen. If it had not been for them, I should have died underground of hard work, before thirty, as most of my mates did. Their help of me gave me a kindly feeling toward broken-down gentlefolks. I owed the class my luck, and when I got on and had money to spend, having no one of my own to spend it for, I looked up people as badly off as Gentleman Hugh was when I first knew him, and helped them. They are a hard class to help,

— proud as Lucifer sometimes, with their own kind. I took this house here, out of the way as much as any spot in London. Whenever I knew of a gentleman, or a gentlewoman, given out, or worn out, so that they could n't take care of themselves, I brought them in here. If they were only given out, I put stuff into them again, cheered them up, and found some work for them to do. Gentlefolks are not such fools, if they only had education. If I found one that was worn out beyond all patching, I packed him into a snug corner up-stairs, and let him lie there. They like it better than public hospitals and retreats.

"All the while I was getting on and getting rich in a small way, with some small shares in patents I own. But I kept my eye on Gentleman Hugh. I knew what would come to him, and I never took in ten shillings that I did not put away one for him and his daughter.

"I knew of his going to America with the Mormons, — damn 'em! I went down to Clitheroe to persuade him to give up the plan. He would not. He quarrelled with me, — our first hard words. He forbade his daughter to write to me.

"I knew he would come back some time or other, stripped and needy. I watched the packet's lists of passengers. He did not come under his own name; but I saw last winter an old Lan-

cashire name on a list of arrivals, — the name of that worn-out shaft where Ellen had picked the daisy for me. It was a favorite spot of his. Part of his money had gone down it, and he used to sit and stare into it as if the money was going to bubble up again. I traced them by that to London. Here for a time I lost them.

"He got very low in London, — poor old man!" continued Padiham.

"Nothing dishonest, I hope," said I.

"No, no. Only gambling, with a crazy hope of getting even with the world again. In this way he spent all that he had left, and Ellen's hard earnings beside. It made him wild for her to refuse him; so she was forced to give him all that she could spare, — all except just enough to pay for a poor place to live in and poorer fare. She never knew where he spent the long nights; she only saw him creep back to his garret in the early morning destitute and half alive. Richard Wade, you may read books, and hear tales, and go through the world looking for women that help and hope, and never give up helping and hoping; but you 'll never find another like her, — no, not like my dear lass, — as grand a beauty, too, as any at the Queen's court."

"You are right, Padiham. None like her."

"But I promised you to talk as short as I could. I must tell you how I found them. The

poor gentle-folks that I take care of generally know something of ornamental work that they learnt to do, for play, when they were better off. I set them at doing what they can do best, and sell it for them. There is always some one among my family can draw. What of their drawings I can't dispose of at the print-shops I buy myself, and scatter 'em round among mechanics to light up their benches. You were right when you said a man cannot be a good artisan unless he has a bit of the artist in him.

"It was by going to a print-shop with drawings to sell that I found my dear lass. She had painted me, and sold the picture to the dealer for bread. I would n't have noticed the picture except for the dwarf in it, and now I would n't be a finished man for the world. Yes, there I was, Dwarf George, picking daisies on the edge of a coal-pit; there I was, just as I used to look, with the coal-dust ground into me, trying to make friends with the fresh innocent daisies in the sunshine.

"By that picture I found them just in time. When I got to their garret, Ellen was lying sick, ill in body, and tired and sorrowed out. Their money was all gone, for Gentleman Hugh had been robbed of his last the night before. I brought my dear child and her father here. What I had was theirs.

"As soon as her father was safe with me, his old friend, she got well. As soon as his daughter was out of the way of harm and want, and the old gentleman had nothing to be crazy about and nothing to run away from, he stopped dead. He fell into a palsy.

"There he is now up-stairs. Ellen chose the upper room, where they could look over the house-tops and of clear days see the Surrey Hills. I 've got some skill in my fingers for mending broken men, but Hugh Clitheroe can't be mended. It 's as well for him that he can't. He 's been off track too long ever to run steady in this world. But he has come to himself, and sees things clearer at last. He lies there contented and patient, waiting for his end. He sees his daughter, who has gone with him though thick and thin, by his side, and knows she will love him closer every day. And he knows that his old mate, Dwarf George, is down here in the basement, strong enough to keep all up and all together."

"Let me be the one, Mr. Padiham," said I, "to ask the honor of shaking hands with you. I think better of the world for your sake."

"Young man," said he, with his clear, frank voice, "a noble woman like my Ellen betters every true man. There strikes nine. A pleasant church-clock that! I gave it to 'em. Now

you 're well tired of my talk, I dare say. Come, Ellen will have all she has missed when she sees you and your friend. Many times she has told me of that ride of yours. Many times she has cried, as a woman only cries for one loss, when she told me how day after day she waited to hear from you, and had never heard."

"She wrote?"

"Repeatedly."

"We never heard."

"Her father took her letters from her to post."

"And kept them or destroyed them for some crazy suspicion."

"She dreaded you might have been chased and cut off by the Mormons. She would not believe that you had forgotten her."

"Forgotten! Come, I'll follow you."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LAST OF A LOVE-CHASE.

"How easy it seems for noble souls to be noble!" thought I, as I followed Padiham up the neat staircase of his House of Charity. "What a beautiful vengeance it is of this man upon nature for blighting him! A meaner being would be soured, and turn cynic, and perhaps chuckle that others were equalized with him by suffering. He simply, and as if it were a matter of course, gives himself to baffling sorrow and blight. It is Godlike." And I looked with renewed admiration at the strange figure climbing the stairs before me.

He was all head and shoulders, and his motions were like a clumsy child's. I went slowly after him. Was it true that this long love-chase over land and sea was at its ending? Joy is always a giant surprise, — success a disappointment among the appointed failures. Was this grim dwarf to be a conjurer of happiness?

Padiham tapped at a door in the upper story.

A voice said, "Come in."

Her voice! That sweet, sad voice! That unmurmuring, unrebellious voice! That voice of gentle defiance, speaking a soul impregnable! How full of calm hopefulness! while yet I could detect in it the power of bursting into all the horror of that dread scream that had come through the stillness to our camp at Fort Bridger.

The dwarf opened the door quietly.

The sunshine of that fresh June morning lay bright upon the roses in the window. My glance perceived the old blue-gray infantry surtout hanging in a corner. Mr. Clitheroe was sitting up in bed, lifting a tea-cup with his left hand. His long white beard drifted over the cool bedclothes. An appetizing breakfast, neatly served, was upon a table beside him. And there in this safe haven, hovering about him tenderly as ever in the days of his errant voyaging in the hapless time gone by, was his ministering angel, that dear daughter, the sister of my choice.

She turned as we entered.

The old steady, faithful look in the gray eyes. The same pale, saddened beauty. The unblenching gaze of patient waiting.

She looked at me vaguely, while life paused one pulse. Then, as I stepped forward, the eloquent blood gushed into her face, — for she knew that the friend could not long outrun the lover. She sprang into my arms. Forgive me, John

Brent, if I did put my lips close to her burning cheek. It was only to whisper, "He is in London, searching for you. He has never rested one moment since you were lost to us. In an hour he will be here."

"Dear father," she said, drawing herself away, and smiling all aglow, while tears proclaimed a joy too deep for any surface smile to speak, "this is our dear friend, my preserver, Mr. Wade."

Mr. Clitheroe studied me with a bewildered look, as I have seen an old hulk of a mariner peer anxiously into a driving sea-fog from the shore, while he talked of shipmates shaken from the yard, or of brave ships that sunk in unknown seas. Then the mist slowly cleared away from the old gentleman's dim eyes, and he saw me in the scenery of my acting with him.

"Ah yes!" he said, in a mild, dreamy voice, "I see it all. Sizzum's train, Fort Bridger, the Ball, the man with a bloody blanket on his head, you and your friend galloping off over the prairie, — I see it all."

He paused, and seemed to review all that wild error of his into the wilderness.

"Yes, I see it all," he continued. "My dear Mr. Wade, I remember you with unspeakable gratitude. You and your friend saved me this dearest daughter. I have suffered wearing dis-

tress since then, and you must pardon me for forgetting you one instant. Excuse my left hand! Dwarf George is a capital machinist, but he says he cannot put new springs into my right. That is nothing, my dear Mr. Wade, that is nothing. God has given me peace of mind at last, my dear daughter has forgiven me all my old follies, and my stanch old mate will never let me want a roof over my head, or a crust of his bread and a sup of his can."

There is a Hansom cab-horse, now or late of London, who must remember me with asperity.

But then there is a cabman who is my friend for life, if a giant fare can win a cabman's heart.

By the side of the remembrance of my gallop down Luggernel Alley, I have a picture in my mind of myself, in a cab, cutting furiously through the cañons of London in chase of a lover. The wolves and cayotes of the by-streets — there are no antelopes in London — did not attempt to follow our headlong speed. We rattled across Westminster Bridge, up Whitehall, and so into May Fair to Lady Biddulph's door.

The footman — why did he grin when he saw me? — recognized me as the family friend of yesterday, and ushered me without ceremony into the breakfast-room, where the family were all assembled.

Why did the footman grin? I perceived, as I entered. A mirror fronted me. My face was like a Sioux's in his war-paint. There had been flies in Padiham's shop, and I had brushed them away from my face, alas! with hands blackened over the lathe.

All looked up amazed at this truculent intruder. It was, —

"*Enter Orlando, with his sword drawn.*"

"Forbear, and eat no more!"

An injunction not necessary for poor Brent, who sat dreary and listless.

The rest forbore at my apparition. Egg-spoon paused at egg's mouth. Sugar sank to the floor of coffee-cup. Toast silenced its crackle.

Brent recognized me in the grimy pirate before him.

He sprang to his feet. "You have found her!" cried he.

"Yes."

He looked at me eagerly.

"Well and happy," I said; "in a safe haven with a faithful friend. Lady Biddulph will pardon me, bringing such tidings, for rushing in in my war-paint, American fashion."

"You are always welcome, Mr. Wade, in what costume you please," said she. "Doubly so with this happy news. My dear Ellen! I must see her at once, — as soon as closer friends have

had their hour. But, Mr. Brent, you are not going without your breakfast!"

Everybody smiled.

"Come! Come!" cried Brent.

"Come!" and as we hurried away, there was again the same light in his eye, — the same life and ardor in his whole being, as when, in that wild Love-Chase on the Plains, we galloped side by side.

THE END.

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