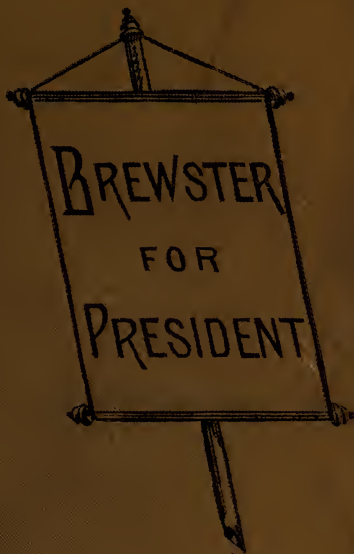


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# A FAMOUS VICTORY

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# A FAMOUS VICTORY.

"But what good came of it at last?"

Quoth little Peterkin.

"Why, that I cannot tell," said he:

"But 't was a famous victory."

CHICAGO:

JANSEN, McCLURG & COMPANY,

1880.

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# A FAMOUS VICTORY.

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## CHAPTER. I.

### A SHORT JOURNEY.

IN the early summer of 18— a score of railway trains between the Atlantic sea-board and the Mississippi, were hurrying along the threads of an iron cobweb, and carrying to the center thereof crowds of party politicians. The passengers aboard *one* of them, might, through the glass sides of its "palace" cars, have beheld an ever-changing panorama of forest, rock, and distant mountains, blending their blue relief with the tints of the sky. A midnight shower had endowed the landscape with fresh charms and seemed to have washed the firmament itself to a crystal clearness.

As the train curved sharply round the mountains, the morning sun blazed in, first on this side, now on that, shattering its beams into myriad fragments upon the mirrors and metallic ornaments within. Those who trust their senses only, would have imagined it a mighty pendulum swinging in the heavens, or a comet playing hide-and-seek among the moun-

tains. It whisked behind great heights casting shadows broad as a German duchy athwart the dripping forests. It stared down the sloping aisles of the water gaps; then was hopelessly extinguished in the rock-hewn railroad "cuts," whose sombre-tinted walls oozed with the overflow of ice-cold fountains.

The invisible scene-shifters of this lordly theatre were capricious beyond all reckoning. One minute they rushed forward, a cluster of white houses, looking, in the far-off "clearing" like a nestful of eggs; the next they transformed it into a winding stream; into sloping fields green with young oats; into a red-covered bridge, to the eye no bigger than a mousetrap, alluring the horses, which, no bigger than mice, crawled along the yellow road. Without warning, they shot it all from sight behind a screen of forest; or of boulders down which cascades leaped; or of ragged precipices adorned with lonely evergreens, or clinging birches.

But the patriots on the train barely glanced at "the pictures painted mile on mile," partly because, like Dr. Johnson, "they never heeded such nonsense," chiefly because they were too seriously interested in "the whole of our broad land" to waste attention on a few paltry acres of scenery. For nearly all were delegates or interested spectators, on their way to their party convention, called at a self-important western city, whose name is impartially omitted here.

Most of them were clad in the conventional dark suit which lends individual dignity to public men, but which, in conventions where, like insects, they break

groups and swarm again, increases that ravenous mien common to small animals running to and fro in search of sustenance.

While the politicians affirmed, denied, begged, bullied, until they yawned with fatigue, the morning grew into noon, and the voice of hunger out-clamored even the syren notes of the Goddess of Liberty ; for, in relieving the people of the toil and vexation of selecting their rulers, the American party "worker" could not, were he earning his honest living, labor harder or more faithfully.

Two porters in uniform brought from the pantry at the end of the car salad, sandwiches, oranges, bananas, and champagne, and set them on the little tables.

This attracted the attention of an Irish doctor, whose business was "politics," medicine his recreation, and the fervent heat of whose energy, as if not finding full vent below in voice and gesture, burst through above in the blaze of his hair and beard. He was in the act of committing verbal assault, with intent to persuade, upon an equally fiery merchant of American nativity, who knew which candidate "his folks wanted better 'n any Castle Garden gradooate could tell 'em—leastwise one that did n't bring nothing into the country but impudence and a suit o' clothes."

"An' all ye brought was the ampudence, like ivery one borrun here," retorted the doctor; whereat there was a laugh, while the doctor dived into his seat at the table, and the square under-jaw, always at the service of his adopted country, wagged a stiff brush of chin whiskers until his fierce hunger was abated.

An ardent statesman, with blue-black hair and an enormous bristling moustache, was laboring in great excitement for his State's "favorite son." His big veins swelled like hose at a fire, and, by moistening his hot face with a flood of perspiration, perhaps prevented spontaneous combustion.

"He'll go out of my State with fifty thousand majority," said this almost livid statesman to a Pennsylvania giant whom he was trying to alarm, and who, wrapped in a mainsail of linen "duster," displayed on his broad shoulders two large maps of the water-courses of a previous perspiration shed in behalf of his own "favorite son."

"Do you believe it?" asked the giant.

"Believe it! No, I don't believe it," echoed the swarthy statesman, and, with his forearm, violently pumped the emphasis into his outstretched finger; "I *know* it!"

He raised the handle again, but catching sight of the luncheon, dropped into his seat, and drank off two or three glasses of champagne.

Back of him sat a tall, thin delegate, with smoothly shaven face, who never suffered his voice to rise above or fall below the level of his dignity, but, when interrupted with roaring protest, cut short his sentence, and, tranquility being restored, calmly took up again the thread of his discourse where the shears of impatience had clipped it.

At the same table was a dapper little man, who, through the apertures left by larger ones, always squeezed to the center of every group; and a "boss"

whose head, if there be truth in phrenology, might, with its combative and acquisitive bumps have been mistaken for a boy's pocket at the height of the "top" season.

Opposite, was a graceful, self-regarding gentleman, with smooth hands, English side-whiskers, an intelligent forehead, and an aristocratic nose which disdained caucuses and caucus mandates, though its proprietor never refused obedience to either, and whose disgust with the offensive table-manners near it, was just visible in the sensitive play of its nostrils.

Picturesque among them, with ruddy cheeks and snow-white hair, sat Israel Stratton, who, traveling for pleasure, took no part in the bustle, except when an acquaintance accosted him.

"Well, Stratton, whom are you going to vote for this time?" asked an ex-governor, a grizzled, farmer-like person, sitting in the chair next him and peeling a banana as he spoke.

"That depends upon whether you people do what I suppose you'll do next week."

"What do you think we'll do?"

"Nominate my townsman, Brewster, declare war on the banks, throw a sop to the inflationists, and stir up every loafer against property and order. A man of your brains must feel sick at the thought of it."

"O, yes, *you* know how I feel, for in that case you'll have to stand by some old war horse."

"It's a choice of evils," remarked Stratton, "but they always stick to us or we stick to them in this country; and elsewhere, too, for that matter. People

take it quite as a matter of course that a man who comes out strong in stormy weather is the man that is wanted in peace ; that sea-captains make good architects, and cannon are the best cook-stoves. Twenty-five years from now, somebody in Iowa or Michigan will still be voting for the Savior of His Country just as in Pennsylvania they used to vote for that patriotic rowdy, Andrew Jackson, long after he had ——”

“Turned to Clay, so to speak,” interrupted the dapper little man in the chair opposite, who always looked around for a laugh as he spoke.

The ex-governor made no direct reply, but after rising, lighting a cigar and sitting down again, said, with an almost imperceptible grimace, “Yes, I’m afraid we’ll have to take Brewster, though he’s a bitter dose; but it’s money we want, and he’s rich as mud.”

“Down my way,” remarked Stratton, “they say dirty water ’ll fetch the pump when clean can’t be had, and I guess you ’re all too thirsty to be particular.”

“Well,” said the ex-governor with a resigned air, “after you’ve got quite done abusing Brewster, *he’s the smartest man in the United States.*”

“O, yes, he’ll admit *that* himself,” said Stratton shrugging his shoulders.

“But, seriously, other men are afraid of him. He never wastes time in self-defense, but gives the other fellow all he wants picking the shot out of his own skin.”

“He’s shrewd enough to know,” said Mr. Stratton, “that a great many people will take the smart man for an honest one, if he can make them believe the other fellows are scamps.”



“I take a good deal of stock in the Major,” said the dapper little man, spinning the stem of his glass in his fingers; “if he goes to the bad place, as his enemies say he will, first thing *they’ll* know, he’ll be starting a skating rink, and ruining the business of the original proprietor.”

“Well, the country’s made up of all sorts of people,” said the ex-governor, philosophically, “and you must take them as you find them.”

“You didn’t treat your swamp farm in that way. You improved it.”

“There comes Carroll,” said the ex-governor.

## CHAPTER II.

## A LONG JOURNEY.

THE door opened, admitting from the forward car a gentleman, whose tall, well-outlined form and swinging, firm-stepping gait, seemed to lay assured claim to his full share of the planet.

Though past thirty years of age, his face was as round and fresh as a child's. Wherever he went, his genial social climate quickly melted a space about him. He was the devoted adherent of Brewster's rival for the nomination, Elliot Wharton, which, though not his real name, will answer the purpose of identifying him. Carroll was the acknowledged leader of that gentleman's forces at the convention, such as they were, and his sanguine expectation as to the result, had led him to prepare a witty and brilliant speech, not only in nominating Wharton, but another quite as eloquent in celebration of his triumph.

"Hullo, Carroll! we were just talking about Brewster's chances," said the ex-governor.

"Well, if a man's time is of no value to him, I suppose he might as well spend it talking about that as any other creature of his imagination."

"If you could only dispose of him as easily as

that at the convention, he would n't come very near to the nomination I admit," said the ex-governor.

"He'll come as near as the man came to making twice two equal five,—within one of it," replied Carroll.

"Why, if you've figured it down as close as that, it makes a pretty good show for Brewster."

"Yes, if Wharton is n't the one, Brewster will be," said Carroll. "It's all nonsense talking about Brewster's chances. His noise has nothing to do with it."

"The steamboat that's tied up and blowing off raises the racket, not the one making its trip," commented the dapper little man.

"I must have a paper," said Mr. Stratton as the newsboy came in. "Good Heavens!" he exclaimed as his eye glanced down the financial columns, "gold has gone up five per cent."

An exclamation of surprise went around the circle.

"It has more faith in Brewster's nomination than you have," said Mr. Stratton.

"It's only a flurry," said Carroll with assumed carelessness.

"It is no wonder," continued Mr. Stratton, "with millions of silver in the country, and constantly increasing, Europe recovering from the hard times, and threats to give Congress sole control over the issue of paper! I sometimes think I'd leave the country along with the gold, if I could."

At this moment the sharp, short shrieks of the locomotive, the sudden grinding of the air-brakes, and the almost painful jerking of the fast-checked train

thrilled the passengers with alarm, as the cars pulled up at a little station in the mountain solitudes, at which the express trains never stopped. There was a slight stir among three or four men in homespun on the little platform, as the conductor came back from the telegraph room, and sprang on the train:

"Stopped for some Brewster delegates!" exclaimed Carroll, nodding toward the group on the platform.

"A dispatch for Mr. Carroll," said the conductor, excitedly.

Carroll opened the envelope in such haste that he tore the message in two. Casting one glance at it, he let it drop and fell back into his seat.

"Is there an answer?" asked the conductor.

Carroll shook his head, and, as the train moved on, motioned to Mr. Stratton to pick up the telegram. He did so and read aloud these words:

"Wharton died, in his library chair, just after breakfast."

In spite of the increasing clatter of the train, one perceived a solemn stillness in the car, and might almost have heard the echo of Edmund Burke's words concerning "the worthy gentleman who has been snatched from us in the middle of the contest, while his desires were as warm and his hopes as eager as ours."

Much of Carroll's hope and ambition would be buried with the coffin of his chief, and with bowed head he walked forward to his own car, saying, with an accent of sincerity:

"I would gladly have died for him "

"If Wharton had been elected, he expected to be in the cabinet or have a foreign mission," said the ex-governor.

"A very hopeful temperament that!" sniffed the dapper little man; "he'd invite you to his champagne supper while setting out his grape-vines."

Though knowing that this intervention had assured them the victory, the partisans of Brewster were as decorous as possible. Perhaps they felt that their opponent had been swept away by a tide which even *their* leader could not beat back, and from which at some time he could not retreat.

"It's a national calamity," said Mr. Stratton; "but then, he never would have been nominated. He was too d—— fair, as somebody said, awhile ago. We've not many such men, and they are esteemed much as a missionary is in the Cannibal Islands—excellent to make game of."

"Well, now, do you know I'd as soon be in the hot place on a July day without a fan as to hear a grown man go on in that style," said Congressman Bunkery, from the State of "Injanner."

From an aperture which, in a freak of indulgence, Nature had bestowed for the double service of mouth and tobacco-pouch, he dashed, as he spoke, an amber sea upon the spotless concave of the porcelain spittoon.

"Wharton didn't believe his own party was born without sin, and that all others are totally depraved," continued Mr. Stratton.

"Yes, I've heard a good deal of that nonsense in

my day," said Bunkery, taking down his legs from the seat in front of him; "it mostly comes from Sunday School teachers, and fellows that waste their time playing on the piano, when there's poker and Californy Jack. Wharton was one of those namby-pamby chaps. As you say, there's mighty few of them, and that's lucky. Just when things are squally, and you want to belay your best rope, they'll let it slip back on you by admitting that the party sometimes does wrong and makes mistakes. *I'd* slip 'em along with the heathen Chinees. 'Old Zach,' as they used to call him, was *my* idee of a leader. No bread-and-milk poultices for him. *He* always soothed the other fellows with a curry comb. 'T was worth a trip to Washington, just to hear him say 'double-dyed traitor' at four o'clock in the morning. 'T would set you up for six months. The boys fairly adored him. There's mighty few such men now-a-days; so the country's playing out. You never hear *them* admit, even if they believe it, that the other party ever did a good thing or that there are honest patriots in it. No sir, they know better. They know your gov'ment could n't run a one-horse town down in Arkansaw on any such principull as that. No, sir. I b'leeve in the old doctrine that a hoss-thief always belongs to the other party. Then there 's that other nonsense of Wharton and his kidney—about runnin' the gov'ment on business principulls, by keepin' the boys always in office, if they behave themselves. 'T would ruin the country if it could be put into operation. Lucky it's such *cussed* nonsense, it'll never get a foothold here. If we've got

to go to Yew-rup for ideas, we might as well shut up shop, and be done with it."

"His bark's worse 'n his bite," said the ex-governor, and filling glasses afresh they drank to the success, whichever party might be in power, of these fundamental principles of government.

Mr. Stratton made no reply, for just as Bunkery finished, he got off at his destination.

Even though men's hearts stop beating, politics and railroad trains must go on, and the next morning the politicians arrived at the city of the convention. In consequence of Wharton's death, the opposition to Brewster, one of the nation's millionaires in full control of the party machine, broke down, and his nomination lacked even the applause which conflict confers on victory. The party "pointed with pride to its past," and adjourned to the day of judgment—in the following November.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE COMPLETE LETTER-WRITER.

THOUGH a manufacturer in the small city of Roxbury, Conn., where he usually spent the summer and fall, Major Brewster, for political and other reasons, owned a residence on the famous Bonanza Square, in the city of New York. This opulent quadrangle is so successfully secluded from the vulgar gaze that those who have never dared peep into its precincts, currently believe it paved with something of the metallic luxury that emblazons the streets of the New Jerusalem. Its Eminent Respectability adds lustre to names oftener seen or heard in the newspaper and on "the street" than in the tax-lists, where, of all places, the wealth of Bonanza Square is never vulgarly flaunted, nor the humbler tax-payer abashed with rows of its swollen and supercilious ciphers. Some of its residents, retiring from the business by which in earlier days they acquired their fortunes, basking in the gentle warmth of life's Indian summer, contrived, by hobbies adapted to their tastes and habits, to divert their venerable minds and still attract the public interest.

One amused his declining years by collecting railroad *bric-a-brac*—lines that went nowhere in particular and brought nothing back—stumps, splinters, and



other useless fragments of transportation, whose ingenious dovetailings into the huge main systems filled up the time of the *virtuoso*, and saved him from the cark of idleness; while his neighbor, having a distaste for railway curiosities, was engrossed in the cultivation of telegraph posts, industriously setting them out along the public highways, and watching, with tender solicitude, the increased budding of their green-glass bulbs and the yearly growth of their vigorous cross-pieces.

Unless it were in the heavier stone balusters on the front steps, the greater massiveness and depth of color of the doors leading into the tiled and frescoed vestibule, and in a business office in the rear, accessible by a side entrance, Major Brewster's house did not greatly differ from his neighbors. So far as he was concerned at the present time, this office was the principal part of the house, for it was here that he was personally conducting his presidential campaign.

It was a July morning, 18—, and the Major was at his desk. His big, round head, well-covered with long, thick locks of "sable silvered," was set on broad shoulders, which readily wedged their way to the front, and bore with ease the burdens of life. Though tall and heavy, he so compactly disposed of two hundred pounds about him, that a casual observer would have much underestimated his weight. His face was gnarly but massive, seamed with strong lines about the eyes and across the forehead. His nose belonged to no particular order of architecture, but, like himself, was mutinous and defiant of classification. His jaws, like a rock on a dangerous coast, seemed to pro-

ject their iron firmness toward those who, during his stormy moods, ventured too near. His eyebrows overhung, like window-caps, his large, keen eyes, which in calm times were a handsome gray, but under excitement grew dark with the enlargement of the pupil. All these features, or rather, this combination of features, which separately were far from comely, composed a strong and attractive face. Many even thought him a handsome man, though his vanity was not of a sort to be wounded by calling him otherwise.

His dress was, designedly, so sober, unostentatious and common-place as scarcely to warrant description. Believing that he had thereby reinforced the strong and aggressive temper, the audacity and the enterprise on which he depended for success, he strove to repress, rather than excite attention to his outward personality and surroundings.

He was more than a clever man ; he was a workman-like man, never shirking the slavish drudgery of details nor disdaining the most trivial assistance. One vote, one man, was one vote or one man more than he could with reasonable diligence afford to lose. He was the most famous party organizer in the country. He put his hand on the vast "machine" and it responded to his touch in Oregon as well as in Connecticut. He was strong and crafty, with a faculty for binding to his interests those who most disliked him. When infused by the good humor and high animal spirits of the man, his temper was attractive and almost sunny. Men were drawn to him by an amused interest in his buoyant and unoffending self.

complacency, in his readiness at repartee, in his fund of anecdotes, in his happy dramatic knack at vigorous portrayal of both personage and circumstance.

Especially diverting was his appearance in farce after taking the principal part in a pretended tragedy. During the heated debate of Senate Chamber or Representatives Hall, his voice would be the loudest and hottest in "stirring up" his opponents to indiscretion of speech and in denouncing them as state criminals deserving of ignominious punishment. In half an hour he would be the center of a roaring group, many of whom, now convulsed with mirth, were the recent victims of his imaginary guillotine and the resuscitated traitors he had unceremoniously hung upon his fictitious gallows. In his private moods almost everybody liked him; in his public attitude he was adored by unthoughtful partisans, careless of all defects and immersing all scruples and criticisms in their admiration for the versatility of his mind and the brilliancy of his resources. He had something of that quality which, in "the bright lexicon" of the American politician, is defined as "magnetism," and which if it did not, like charity, cover a multitude of sins, was with many deemed a charming and lively substitute for dull and sober virtues like honesty and truth.

But for the rich desks and a tall Chinese screen, gaily ornamented with birds, flowers and fishes, his office would have been plainly furnished.

Half a dozen secretaries were answering letters. Telegrams, some like burglars masked in cipher, some

like honest men in no need of disguise, were flying back and forth over the wires. Party leaders, deputies from various leagues, unions, societies and other "Keely Motors" for making people rich, virtuous and happy, by the turn of a crank or the passage of a law, constantly came and went. Some of his visitors were aggressive and interrupted him; others were modest and waited. His doors were always open, for he believed, with Cicero, that nothing so helps a politician as keeping himself in constant contact with the the crowd.

On one desk was placed, every morning, a huge stack of circulars, which before night were dispatched by the hundreds to the local representatives of Brewster's party, who in turn, mailed them to such persons as, in their judgment, might be influenced thereby. They were lithographed imitations of his hand-writing and read as follows:

"DEAR SIR:— Regretting that circumstances will prevent my having, as I would like to have with so intelligent a person, a *personal interview*, I can only urge you to activity and vigilance in the promotion of our cause and to assure you that in case of my election, your efforts will not go unrecognized.

Very truly, yours,

AARON B. BREWSTER."

A stack of magazines and newspapers for which he said he did n't care a *sou-marqué*, lay upon his own table. It was the duty of one of his secretaries to open them and mark the articles which Brewster would probably like to see. He took up the Western Hemisphere Review and speedily found himself up to his eyes in a sketch of his career.

“This man,” said the writer in conclusion, “represents the meanness and corruption of our politics, the sordidness in our national character, and the dishonesty in our national disposition. He is the natural leader of those who, by knavishness as a mob, like to compensate themselves for the virtuous self-denial of their individual honesty.”

Brewster slightly flushed as he glanced hastily over it, but, on concluding, murmured: “Lawrence” in a low voice.

A wing of the screen, which stood near the Major’s desk swung half way around, disclosing a small table, on which lay a bunch of nicely sharpened lead pencils and packages of red-lined blank paper for shorthand writing.

A young man of medium height and somewhat spare of body with keen bright eyes, and quick, nervous motion, stepping from behind it came toward Brewster’s desk.

“Find report between Tapton and me!”

“Do you remember what year?”

“Eighteen hundred and seventy-nine.”

Going to the further end of the office, he opened the door of a safe built into the wall, lit the gas inside, and from a collection of bound manuscripts brought away a volume, whose sheets were covered with the odd quirks of a short-hand reporter.

After rummaging through the book he began reading, when the Major stopped him.

“That is enough; I remember it.”

The young man went back into his rudimentary

closet, and at his table, of course, could hear all that went on in the room. Moreover, visitors had to sit next the screen, and the Major's desk was so broad that they were obliged to speak loud, enabling the reporter to hear them. But in these interviews he never took down Major Brewster's words, unless that gentleman began his sentence with a slight "Ahem!"

The Major dictated to his secretary, Lawrence Danforth, the following letter as "points" for an editorial in his party journal—"The Orb of Day:"

"*Sir*: One Charles Tapton has seen fit in the 'Western Hemisphere Review' to attack me with the grossest scurrility. It pretends to be the organ of the so-called cultured and respectable people—the high-toned, kid-gloved, and tea-table aristocrats who fatten themselves on the interest of the debts which the people have to pay. As you might expect, therefore, it is the receptacle into which hired scribblers empty the sewerage of their minds when disappointment or envy prompts them to attack decent people.

In an interview with me this man said:

"'There's too much timidity in our politics. We need a man who will pry into, shake down and tear up everything, no matter how much dust it raises. We need a national house-cleaning from garret to cellar. There are some departments so rotten that a vigorous kick will knock them all to pieces. *You* are not afraid to give it. We need more red life-blood in our politics. The cares and burdens of the multitude are neglected. *You* are their natural champion. Go on bravely and you will win your reward.'

"Then he asked me for *his*, which was an appointment to St. Petersburg. I told him it was too early to make promises; that it was n't well to buy the tiger's skin until after you had killed the tiger. I understand that he has since had an offer from the other side. If he desires proof of all this, he shall be accommodated at any time.

"Respectfully yours

"AARON B. BREWSTER."

All this was true in the main, and yet not exactly true. For many years Tapton had been a warm

admirer of Brewster, and had written eulogistic books and magazine articles about him. Having at last lost faith in the Major, and done a good deal of harm in his day by setting up such an idol for popular worship, he thought it was high time to change his demigod back into a demagogue. In quoting him, Brewster had perverted his words. He did indeed say that the country needed such a man, but he did not say that Brewster was the man, though perhaps he meant it, and on Brewster's asking him why he didn't get an appointment to the Berlin, Paris or London mission, he said he wanted to go to St. Petersburg, if anywhere, for the sake of studying the Russian people.

Lawrence, having copied the letter into ordinary writing, put it into the mail box alongside of fifty more.

In the meantime Brewster ran his eye over several newspapers which had been hostile to his nomination. Their editors were sitting down to that intellectual repast known in American politics as "eating crow," which consists in either impudently ignoring what you once solemnly pronounced the truth about a public man; impudently explaining that you abused him while laboring under a delusion about his real character; or that the triumph of the party and its measures is of far more importance than the "mere character" of its leaders.

A grim smile played lightly over the face of the veteran politician, as he read:

"When there are blows to give, the blow of the 'Daily Bugle' is the clearest of the clarion notes which ring out for our ancient liberties and the old Constitution. But we must face vital issues.

On a careful examination of the charges we once felt compelled to bring against our gallant standard-bearer, we find that we were misled," etc.

Presently he knit his brows at the "Red Pine Bumble-Bee," buzzing away in a thriving Colorado town, and intimating, with charming Western candor and Shakspearean wealth of scurrility, that no convention could make its editor retract a word *he* had ever uttered in regard to its candidate; he "would sooner be kicked to the bottom of the deepest gulch in Colorado by an army mule;" "that no sickly galoot of a politician" could make him "bend the knee before the ugly idol after which our party has gone astray."

"We speak only within bounds and with a full sense of our responsibility, when we call him a boil on his party's nose, a sty in its eye, a rotten tooth in its jaw, a green-apple ache in its stomach a hornet in its councils, and a pumpkin-lantern in its campaigns. He infests the party as trichinæ infest a ham, and undermines its constitution like a blast of malaria from a morass," etc., etc.

Ordinarily, Brewster would have paid no attention to an article of this sort; but it represented a western politician of considerable influence who had been high in the councils of his party, and had several times come into collision with Brewster. Its "vigor" had attracted notice also, and it was having a free run in the newspapers.

"Lawrence," said the Major, handing a memorandum, "look this man up!"

Lawrence went again to the safe, and picking out a large blank book, turned to a check on a Chicago bank signed "Maurice Tatem." Thereupon Brewster dictated to Danforth the following:



“DEAR SIR: I see that a paper under your control continues hostile to Major Brewster. The Major, as I happen to know, has in his possession a check once signed by yourself in another man's name. This harmless scribbling on a certain kind of paper creates a good deal of prejudice in some quarters, and is punishable by strict seclusion from the society of one's fellow creatures for a term of years. Allow me, as a friend, to suggest that Brewster's prudence in preventing this paper from falling into hostile hands, may perhaps modify the views of his character and political career which are attributed to your inspiration. If history is not at fault, shortly after this check was discovered and made good by your friends, you went to Colorado to ‘*cure your asthma.*’

“To the Hon. THOMAS MCINTYRE,  
“Red Pine, Colorado.”

“Sign your own name to that, Lawrence,” said Brewster. “That *Bee* will stop stinging and go to making honey.”

A succeeding issue justified Brewster's prophecy. A copy of it was sent to him with the following article marked at the top, the bottom, and along the sides, so that it could by no manner of means be overlooked:

“We have received information, from the *very highest sources*, that compels us as an honest man to retract what we have heretofore said about the eminent candidate of our glorious old party. We are assured that he is *entirely sound on the main question*. In critical times mere personal prejudices must give way to the good of the party. We are glad to sacrifice our private feelings on its altar,” etc., etc.

Brewster's faint smile was almost constant as he went over column after column of praise from old friends and old foes. Suddenly a thunder-cloud overspread his face:

“By the Lord,” said he, “that fellow does n't

know whom he's dealing with. I have spared him long enough. Lawrence," he cried, almost explosively.

Lawrence arose, afraid lest he had committed some blunder, until Brewster's order re-assured him:

"Bring me 'the Tickler'!"

Danforth brought a tin-box, fastened by a trusty lock, for Brewster allowed no one but himself to handle "The Tickler." He took from the box a scrap-book, filled with photographic copies of various documents — threads and webs of evidence, which, in this world of sins and follies, get unsuspectedly woven into people's lives, sometimes pushing them to despair and suicide, or desperation and murder.

His anger was aroused by Congressman Rodney from the 42nd district of New York, who, in a lively speech, had been dissecting Brewster's political biography, and making sport of his inconsistencies. It was one of the sensations of the hour, and angered Brewster all the more, because he understood that such a speech was far more damaging than mere abuse.

With the swiftness of an actor writing imaginary letters in a play, he scratched off a note to a friend of Rodney's:

"DEAR SIR: I see Rodney has undertaken to attack me in public. I do not object to fair criticism, but when it comes to personalities, I propose to make it uncomfortable for anybody that likes that style of controversy. There is a Turkish proverb 'He who steals the Sultan's hen will return it to him a cow.' Tell him for me that I have a photographic copy of a certain hotel register, by which it appears, that Mr. R. S. Rodney and wife occupied Room No. 33, Monster Hotel, New York, Dec. 30th, 1877. As

Mrs. Rodney was 500 miles from that city on that 30th of December, perhaps he may be less free with personalities if he reflects how easily she might be agitated by a few words from

“Yours truly,

“AARON B. BREWSTER.”

“TO JAMES BIZMOTH, ESQ.”

Three days afterward Rodney repeated his caustic speech almost within Brewster's hearing, and in the meanwhile sent him the following reply:

“DEAR BREWSTER: I see you are taking a fatherly interest in my domestic affairs. I have been an orphan for over thirty years, and it is a comfort to feel there 's one willing to follow my footsteps with such vigilance and to guide them into the paths of righteousness. I hope you will keep those documents and read them whenever you want to relieve yourself of the wear and tear of statesmanship. Let them remain as I do,

“Yours,

“RODNEY.

“P. S.—Mrs. R. has been dead these three months.”

“Rodney's pretty sharp for a rattlehead,” said Brewster to himself. “It is useless to get into a rage with *him*. ‘Dost thou well to be angry with this gourd?’”

Brewster had even more respect for him, when, after the election, he heard that Rodney's wife was, after all, alive and hearty, and that Rodney's postscript had duped him. However, this was a rare experience, and only added new variety to a much diversified life.

These matters disposed of, he again took up the “Hemisphere Review,” and read the article more carefully :

“Major Aaron B. Brewster, the smartest man in the United States, as his friends delight to call him, has fairly won this highest title to nobility which is conferred in the American Republic ;

for, in order to attain that honor, it is necessary to gain success rather than to deserve it. He is an excellent reformer—out of office ; a public-spirited patriot—on the stump.

“What *he* does with impunity would hopelessly bury ordinary men ; but he never winces at his failures. Proofs of his tampering with votes ; proofs of mercantile transactions in which his partners nearly always end by denouncing him, in words more or less carefully chosen, as a swindler, seem in no way to diminish his popularity, or at least his control of the party machine.

“It has been charged that his deciding vote in a congressional committee granted rich subsidies to a railroad running through an Arizona desert, and that he was subsequently found possessed of a large ‘block’ of its bonds. The evidence, contained in certain compromising letters, he wrested from the man who held them. According to one story, Brewster choked him into insensibility ; according to others, he went down upon his knees, and, with tears in his eyes, begged for their surrender. The favorite version describes him as resorting to strangulation when begging proved useless. Escape from the mesh of testimony woven about him, becoming at last impossible, he adopted the device of Richelieu in the play, and pretended that he was dying from the excessive agony into which these unholy persecutions had thrown him. It was noticed, however, that soon after the public cried, ‘let up on him ; do not harrass a dying man,’ he grew as high-colored and bumptious as ever. Whenever entangled in some of the difficulties that embarrass smart men, he invariably rises to the occasion and exposes the vile conspiracies of the other side. His worshipers in the party press applaud him with Hindoo servility and Persian extravagance. His very latest speech is always the most powerful ever delivered by the illustrious orator ; his arguments are always ‘weighty ;’ his eloquence ‘fiery ;’ his ‘invective scathing ;’ his impudence ‘brilliant.’

“In Brewsters’s opinion the righteousness of a cause depends upon the number of votes it can secure. He believes in the omniscience of his party’s majority. If that majority can not touch truth at the bottom of any conceivable well of human knowledge, ‘who can ? That’s what *he’d* like to know.’ This nonsense about the study of history, law, finance, and the science of government is

worthy of a European despotism! Votes can be tallied and counted, that is plain. But this overhauling the records of the past and digging up the experience of dead men, 'can you put *that* into a ballot box,—copy it on to a tally-sheet election night, and ascertain eternal truth before sunrise?'

"As the representative of an omniscient party majority, Brewster can do no wrong, and needs no conscience. He has an infallible spiritual director in the political almanacs. As it was useless at Rome arguing with the master of forty legions, so a discussion with Brewster, if he has a thumping majority behind him, is a pure waste of time. Like that celebrated Englishman, when his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt end of it. An American philosopher once declared that one with the Almighty is a majority, but in Brewster's scheme of the universe, one with the majority is the Almighty, or at least the 'smartest man in the United States,' which, in his opinion, is almighty near it," etc., etc.

How much truth there was in this brief biography it is difficult to say. Its style and method are what, the world over, is known as "politics;" and, as such, it must stand for what it is worth. His opponents believed every word of it—or tried to. His friends and supporters paid the homage which vice owes to virtue, by declaring that it was a "campaign slander" upon a man trying to do his duty and serve his country. And the most of them believed that—or tried to.

Brewster disdained finishing the article, but tossed the magazine contemptuously to one side.

"Pshaw!" said he, "I am a fool to call attention to it. Most of those who see it, will vote against me in any event. I can't afford to advertise it."

Going to the letter box, he picked out his communication to the "Orb of Day," and tore it into fragments.

"I must run down to Roxbury," he said, and, summoning Danforth, in a few minutes was whirling out of the city.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MAJOR'S AGRICULTURAL TASTES.

As they rattled along, the passengers from the other cars came out at intervals upon the platform, and, through the broad panes of the drawing-room coach, stared at the celebrated candidate. The rumor of his journey, as rumors will, mysteriously spread, and, at each station, travelers and idlers, in hopes of catching a glimpse of him, drifted toward the rear of the train. The bolder attempted pushing into the car, but found their patriotism thwarted by the conductor. Major Brewster, always alert, observed it, and, stepping out upon the platform of the car, bowed, shook hands, and, when time allowed, made brief speeches, which were purposely full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

Ostensibly to chat with a legal acquaintance, really to gratify the curiosity of his fellow travelers, he finally went forward; whereupon a procession began moving past him through the aisle, and an almost endless chain, the links consisting of a line of eyes that, staring, emerged through one door, and, staring, disappeared through the other, passed before him, and of which the imperturbable Major did not appear to be in the slightest degree conscious.

Near the rear of the column, and with a partially embarrassed and yet eager air, straggled an elderly man, clad, notwithstanding the heat, in a new and ill-fitting broadcloth suit, and an outer envelope of dark drab "duster." On entering the car he awkwardly removed his hat, displaying a distinct demarcation between his bald, bleached forehead and the russet hue with which the wind and sun had stained him.

There was a perplexed hesitation in his walk, and he looked at Major Brewster with anxiety and inquisitiveness which, though doubtful of recognition, was tempered by an apparent consciousness of his proper claims to the great man's notice. His doubts were quickly dispelled; for the Major, catching sight of him, arose, extended his hand, and motioning him to a seat by his side, exclaimed:

"Ah, Mr. Sampson! An unexpected pleasure. You're a good ways from home."

The tall, large-boned man, nervously shuffling his chocolate-colored glazed straw hat from one hand to another, dropped into the seat.

"And how are those peaches?" exclaimed Major Brewster, in a hearty tone. "I have n't forgotten the taste of them yet. You got your appropriation for your horticultural society?"

Under this subtle flattery, the face of Mr. Sampson—who came from the "peach belt" of western Michigan, and was believed to hold the "granger vote" of that State in the hollow of his hand—glowed like one of his own pumpkins in an October sun. It was a mild countenance enough, with its bronze and its wrinkles,

and belonged to a man who, outside of politics, was as mellow and juicy as the fruit he cultivated. But on the former subject he was as amiable towards his opponents as an "able editor" discussing the merits of an "esteemed cotemporary."

"Well, well," he replied, flattered quite out of his embarrassment, "who 'd 'a' thought you 'd remembered so long? It must 'a' been eight—or was it nine—years ago!"

"Nine years, next September," said Brewster. "By the way, I must send you some illustrations of Japanese fruit culture; you 'll find them interesting if not useful;" and he made a memorandum.

"Much obleeged, I'm sure. As to that 'propriation——"

"O, was n't it enough! Well, we 'll double it one of these days, once we break down this national bank monopoly."

"Yes, that's the fust thing to be done," said Mr. Sampson. "Was readin' that last speech of your'n comin' 'long on the cars. It's jes' chain-lightnin'. Hain't been so warmed up these ten year. That Joslyn's needed a good hetchelin' this many a day. Ye sot him down *hard!*"

"Oh yes," said Brewster, "I was sent to the Senate to look after *him*, and I tried to carry out my part of the contract."

"Well, ye *did!* The ole rascal! Don't see why 't is the Lord 'lows such scoundrels to get into Congress. S'pose they sneak in, when they think He ain't lookin'. Joslyn and his party want to rush the



country to the devil by express train and sen' the bill in to us. They 're fuller o' cussedness than a pillar o' feathers, I b'leeve."

"Yes," assented Brewster, "they 'd change our form of government, in the twinkling of an eye, if our people should only shut *theirs* as long. We have to keep wide awake."

"That ye have," said Mr. Sampson, "and ye keep *them* wide awake, too, I notice. You show 'em up in their true colors."

"Thank you! Mr. Sampson, I only try to do my duty."

"I was jess tickled to death, where ye turned on him and said if he carried out his infernal schemes, he 'd be the fust to hang high'r'n Hamen. I swon, I b'leeve I'd like to see him strung up, even if I am a deakin. I don't see how you stan' it to sit there and hear 'em talk such treason; favorin' the bankers at the expense of the agricultooral classes, and tryin' every way they can think of to make it hard for poor folks to get along."

"It's as much as I can do to control myself, sometimes," said Brewster; "but we must keep cool, you know. Rashness might spoil everything."

"It's askin' a good deal o' human natur' not to want to shut 'em up for good 'n all."

"Yes," assented Brewster, solemnly, "they 're dangerous men. I tremble sometimes, when I think of what would happen if they should carry the election."

"I hope ye'll get in a lick at Joslyn, every time there's a chance. He's the boss rascal. Sometimes

after readin' his abuse of our folks, I feel 'z if he'd stay in bed a month after I'd got done with him," said this peaceful and law-abiding citizen.

"You were coming to see me, of course," said Major Brewster, getting tired of this.

"Well, yes, I had thought of it, but I s'pose you don't have much time to spare," said Sampson, modestly.

"Have all the time there is, as the saying goes. Is Mrs. Sampson with you?" he asked cordially.

"I left her over to Dilbury. She *comes* from about here, p'raps ye reck'lect."

"Yes,— yes— she was— a— a— Hurlbut."

At this Sampson beamed once more.

"Why didn't you bring her with you?" added Brewster, in such tones of regret that Sampson felt as if his neglect had hurt Brewster's hospitable feelings. "Miss Winifred would have been delighted to see her. Can't you send for her now?"

"Well, I dunno but I can."

"Of course you can! Bring her down to dinner tomorrow! She's one woman in a thousand for good sense."

Mr. Sampson smiled almost aloud, and after some further talk about the "chances" in Michigan, went away, resolving that Brewster should have every "granger vote" at his command.

This talent for remembering names and faces—forming so great an element of success in American politics—was Brewster's natural gift carefully cultivated, and never suffered to lie useless. His memory rarely

balked at any reasonable chasm of time or space across which he spurred it. Carroll once said he was as great a human curiosity as those colored waiters at the hotels who never blunder in handing the right hat to the guests coming out of the dining-room. "I'm afraid," he added, laughingly, "that if Brewster should ever be so unlucky, he would commit suicide, as one of the fellows with a hat-memory once did at Saratoga, for having, in a moment of temporary aberration, handed a soft broad-brim felt to the managing director of an English railway, who never in his life wore anything but a 'stove-pipe.'"

Brewster came out especially strong also, in his dealings with the agriculturists. He had spent his youth on a Vermont farm, from which, in detestation of the drudgery, he escaped at the earliest practicable day. As soon as his fortune permitted, however, he bought and operated a hundred acres at a large annual loss in money, but with much profit as a luxury and recreation. His general knowledge of agriculture was of great service to him on the "off years" of politics—his addresses at State fairs and cattle-shows being, next to the "hoss-trots," their most attractive feature.

The train drew up at the Roxbury station, and the Major, quickly alighting, and followed by his private secretary, made his way to the other side, where a dull-looking, modest barouche with a shining pair of grays attached, awaited his coming. An intelligent, sweet-tempered young face, with tender brown eyes and finely molded features, smiled at him a delighted welcome.

“You always telegraph at the very last moment, papa. I had scarcely time to get here,” said a low, well modulated voice, to which people, charmed with its sweetness, often listened for the mere pleasure of hearing it.

“I never know I’m coming until the very last moment,” he said, kissing her heartily and entering the carriage, which, after Danforth had ensconced himself on the front seat, went off at a rapid pace; the idle crowd watching it until it had crossed the open space, behind the station and disappeared around the corner.

“By the way, Winifred,” said her father, “I have invited a Michigan gentleman with his wife to dinner to-morrow. He is engaged in the honorable but not elegant pursuit of providing the Chicago markets with Early Crawfords; I can’t promise you a rare intellectual feast; but I should like to have you look especially to the dinner, and see that it leaves an impression which will last till next November, at least. Will you remember?”

Winifred had laid other plans for the following day, but at once renouncing them, replied, smiling, at the double significance of her words:

“It sha’n’t be forgotten.”

## CHAPTER V.

## THE MAJOR AT HOME.

ROXBURY, where Brewster began his career, and still supervised his business, had, within his own recollection grown from a small Connecticut village, scattered along the banks of a full and rapid stream, to a manufacturing city of 15,000 inhabitants, the enterprise of which had obliterated many of the old landmarks in the streets through which he drove to his home.

His handsomely groomed gray span and the unpretentious carriage turned, after a half-mile ride, into a roadway laid out across a smooth, inclined lawn, and halted at the steps of a red brick house with a modest tower. A broad veranda, surrounding three sides, long projecting windows on the western exposure, and large clear plate-glass lights, gave it a luxurious yet home-like aspect. It was divided by a hall running the length of the house; a long parlor and a smaller one on one side—a library, dining-room, and sitting-room on the other. On the library side was a wing, which he devoted to the transaction of business. The well-shorn lawn sloped toward the main road, while elms and locusts softened without obscuring the view of river and street.

In accordance with her promise, Winifred was at home the next day, and, on their arrival, did her best to make her father's guests feel so. The dinner-table, with its glacial linen and glistening service, was set in a cool dark dining-room, as if it might have been a caliph's feast in the depths of a grotto. In the middle of the polished inlaid floor lay a rug of Oriental lines and pattern. The walls were chastely tinted of palest bird's egg blue, with tracery of gilt. Richly carved chairs, covered with Russia leather, were placed around the table. On the doors of the side-board sculptured ducks and partridges shone rich in the dark wood. The moisture of the sultry air had converted the ice-cold tankard into a beaker of frosted silver. Round silver trays stood, like shields, in a row on the shelf above, and shone like mirrors under the few scattered rays of sunlight which seemed to seek, in this coolness, shelter from their own hot discomfort. Two or three landscapes in oil hung upon the walls—a buffalo hunt; deers, feeding on the lily pads in a mountain lake; and a busy scene of hay-makers gathering the hay, while a storm loomed dark in the west and already obscured the sun. This picture was regarded as special proof that the Major was a friend of the laboring classes and the leader of the toiling millions. He called Mr. Sampson's attention to it, and asked him if it did not remind him of "St. Joe" county.

But in the room and through the house there was a studied moderation, which seemed to stand guard

against the intrusion of any loud, unsubdued, and vulgar offspring of raw and sordid pride.

From the dining-room one caught, through a wide archway, glimpses of the library, of its tiers of open cases, and of the luxuriant mosaic of the books in many-hued muslin and creamy leather. Their owner was an enormous reader, with a memory like a phonograph's.

He was not a glutton, or an epicure, but lived rationally; he liked nourishing soups, and nice white bread, and well-chosen, well-cooked meats. He drank delicate and expensive wines, but he drank sparingly. He abstained from over-indulgence in tobacco and from low vices. He was too busy and too eager in his pursuit of great prizes for riotous excess. He knew too well the value of a clear head.

Opposite him at the table, sat his daughter; the delight of her father's eyes, the pride of her father's heart. Those who knew him only by his roughness and insolence, little dreamed of the well-spring of affection which flowed for her in the depths of his rocky nature. Her intelligent brown eyes looked softly out from under her long eyelashes. Her dark brown waving hair was rolled in great swaths about her well-shaped head which crowned a tall and graceful figure; and when her generally pale complexion grew rosy under excitement, or the cold of a winter's day, she was the handsome type of a bright and well-endowed American girl. But, being by no means robust, it was her father's constant care to protect her from all that would harass or expose her. Her mother having died when she was

two years old, he had devoted to her nurture and education his tenderest and most intelligent thought.

The only time this cast-iron man was ever known to blush was at the flattery of an old woman who said, "Winifred looks like her par." As a matter of fact, they looked, when together, like a scraggy cactus with one beautiful blossom, whose beauty, in contrast with the harshness and prickliness of the plant, was all the more striking. The poor blest her for her tender consideration of them, the rich for her amiable generosity, unspoiled by luxury and homage.

"There is nothing like farming, nothing in the world," said Brewster to Mr. Sampson, as they sat at dinner. "It is true independence. I'd give all I am worth, if my son would take an axe in his hand and clear up a farm as you did. It's a hundred times better than the best Government office going. If there's anything makes me melancholy, it is to see the young men throughout this land so anxious for an office and so ambitious for these empty prizes in politics."

"I have n't heard so much square sense to the acre since I left St. Joe," said Mr. Sampson.

"That's what I keep telling our boys," said Mrs. Sampson, simply, "but they turn 'round and say: 'Pooh, ma! you don't know what you are talking about. Do you suppose smart men like Mr. Brewster and Senator Joslyn don't know what's worth having? Why did n't *they* stay farmers, if it's as nice as it's cracked up to be?'"

Mr. Sampson, horrified at his wife's boldness, promised himself, almost for the first time in his life, to



call her to account. But Brewster only laughed, and said:

“That’s the way it looks to outsiders, of course; but if they could only see the thing from the inside they would agree with me.”

“It’s ’cordin’ to sukkumstances,” said Mr. Sampson, apologetically.

And Winifred came to the rescue of her father, by saying, with a certain refined heartiness that always conquered people:

“Mrs. Sampson does n’t look as if she were greatly troubled about *her* boys.”

“No, they’re very good boys,” she replied; “but father and I have always tried to make home attractive, and let them have their own way on the farm a good deal. They have horses and buggies, and we take some of the magazines and buy books. I says to father, years ago, ‘times are changing, and we must change with them.’”

“I should not think they *would* want to go away,” said Winifred, very kindly and sincerely.

“Yes, that’s the way,” said Brewster; “keep the boys on a farm, and if you have money, make it attractive for them. There’s that ‘Tally-ho’ coaching club in New York, driving six horses and blowing a brass bugle. They’re young men of wealth, culture and college education, who have nothing in the world to do, and do it every day. They’re the worst kind of tramps. They toil not, neither do they spin. If any of them were my boys, or if I had the power in New York, I would set that class of men to doing ex-

actly what they have shown themselves fit for—to drive a Broadway coach from six in the morning until nine in the evening, so they would have enough of playing coachman; or better yet, I would give them a turn at plowing, mowing and threshing.”

Mr. Sampson listened eagerly, drinking in every word, and resolving to report this speech at the next meeting of the “grange,” and have it published in the St. Joe “Fruit Basket.” It would make hundreds of votes for Brewster.

Dinner finished, they retired to the sitting-room, which, on one side, opened upon the veranda, on the other into the library. They were hardly seated before a card bearing a visitor’s name was brought in, and the Major, excusing himself, withdrew to the library, into which the visitor had been shown.

He carefully closed the door, as he supposed, but the wind blew it slightly ajar, which, sitting with his back to it, he did not notice. The talk between Winifred and Mrs. Sampson drifting into household matters, Sampson lost interest, and, being near the door, had his attention diverted to the voices in the library, so that almost before he knew it he found himself a steady and interested listener.

The Major, greeting his guest with familiar cordiality, asked him if he had been to dinner. On the score of never dining in the middle of the day, he declined the invitation.

“Try a little champagne, then,” said Brewster; “I had a Michigan granger to dinner, and they’re a little risky on the liquor question. I’ll join you in a glass now.”

“Thank you! I don’t want your champagne. If you’ve got some Bourbon handy, p’r’aps I can get away with a little,” he said with a chuckle. “I’m just over an attack of the ‘epizoot,’ and it may be that’s the very thing for me.”

“You ’re quite welcome,” said Brewster, ringing the bell; “but I can put *my* digestive apparatus to better use than burning it out with whiskey.”

“O, nonsense! D’ye suppose the Almighty would make whiskey and not make stomachs for it! However, I can’t stay long. I’m down to see you about those ‘Pinafore’ shares. They’ve had bad luck out there, I s’pose you know, and I’m a good deal mixed about it. Silver’s going to be skittish, especially if you fellows get your innings. You may have my check for a thousand for a choice of give or take, three days from date.”

“Well—well—well,” said Brewster, reflectively and confidentially, “we’ve stood by each other through all kinds of rough weather in the ‘Pinafore,’ and it’s quite unaccountable—your present attitude. I feel as uncertain as you do about the prospect, but that’s no reason why I should try to throw it on to *your* shoulders. I am disappointed in you. Robert, bring us some cigars,” he said, as the servant put the decanter on the table.

“I know, and I’m sorry,” said the other, “but I’m carrying too much sail.”

“O if it’s any accommodation,” said Brewster, good-naturedly, “I’ll take it off your hands. You’ve done *me* a good turn before now.”

“Thank you!” replied Joslyn; “I’ll hold on a little while longer; but if you hear of anybody that’ll buy, I’ll be pretty sure to sell. Another thing; Parsons won’t settle that claim without legal proceedings. I’m convinced of that. And I thought if we could bring a joint suit, it would save time and expense.”

There followed upon this a long conference, and then Joslyn, dismissing business, asked:

“Well, how are things?”

“O, lively, lively!” said Brewster. “Going to your usual place this summer?”

“Family’s going. I’ve got to stand Bandy’s antics all summer. They’ve made him secretary of the National Committee again, you know, and he’s always fawnin’ and pawin’ over you, and actin’ ’s if he wanted to sit in your lap, like the donkey in Æsop’s Fables.”

“He’s better than he used to be years ago, when he was my private secretary and clerk of my committee,” said Brewster. “But he was so useful and knew the ropes, I could n’t let him go.”

“That’s the dence of it,” said Senator Joslyn. “The infernal little fool knows, almost without looking, how every county in the Union’s gone the last twenty-five years. He’s d—— indispensable; that’s the worst of it. He can figger so all-fired close, you’ve got to stand him. Bet you a hat I’ll know your own State canvass better ’n you will, two weeks before election.”

“I never bet,” said Brewster, turning the subject. “Did I ever tell you how Bandy broke the bad news to his uncle?”

"Guess not," replied Joslyn, re-lighting his cigar.

"His uncle in Cincinnati had the heart disease, and so had his son, Bandy's cousin. The son died in Richmond, I believe, and Bandy was badly puzzled how to let the old man know, so that the shock would n't be fatal to him. After studying on it awhile, Bandy telegraphed to his uncle: 'Be calm! George is dead!'"

Joslyn laughed one of his own laughs. He took his fun as he did his liquor—never sipping it slowly, with a view to getting the full flavor of it and letting it titillate him with a languid trickle; he gulped it. His laugh was not so much a hearty laugh as it was a pulmonary and a bronchial laugh, exploding itself in great roars and tumults of gratification.

Winifred heard him, and, recognizing the laugh, exclaimed:

"Why, that's Senator Joslyn. He and father always have such jolly times together, joking and telling stories. They do so enjoy each other. I must ask him about Kitty and Mrs. Joslyn,—she's *such* a sweet woman and Kitty is as sensible and kind as can be. We've been friends for years. I wonder if they are going to Deer Park this summer."

Mr. Sampson, with staring eyes and half-open mouth, partially rose from his chair, exclaiming:

"Who— who— did you say?"

"Senator Joslyn," replied Winifred.

But Sampson said no more, for the visitor, about taking leave of Brewster, remarked:

"O, you're over-confident, as you always are."

We'll lay you out and put ice around you, and keep you 's long 's possible, so 's people sha'n't forget you ran for President."

And Joslyn laughed a laugh a horse might envy.

"He laughs best who laughs last," said Brewster.

"We'll put you in the nine-holes, anyhow," said Joslyn. "We're going to do a land office business this summer, let me tell you."

"Excuse me for not flattering you," replied Brewster; "but since old Zach went on to the retired list, there's nobody to take his place. *He* had a way of taking the right bower with the left that was hard for an honest man to beat."

"You'll be beat fair, or not at all," said his visitor, wiping his mouth, brushing the biscuit-crums from his lap, and rising to go. "By-the-bye, Kitty wanted me to give a message to Miss Winifred."

"Step into the parlor and I'll send her," said Brewster, entering the room and telling Winifred a gentleman wished to see her.

"O yes," she exclaimed gaily, "Senator Joslyn! I want to ask about Kitty and her mother," and excusing herself a moment went off.

Major Brewster knew instinctively that her words were doing mischief. A glance at Sampson's face and the library door told the whole story.

"Yes, Senator Joslyn," said Brewster, echoing Winifred, in a low tone to Sampson. "He's cunning; as I told you yesterday, you must watch every motion or they'll trip you up from behind. He came down here under pretense of talking about a law suit and

silver mine shares, but what he really wanted was to worm out my plans for the campaign. Luckily he likes stories, and I put him off by telling him or making him tell a lot of them."

Under the circumstances, this was the best Brewster could do, but it was emphatically a case where the best was none too good. A bigot in politics, Mr. Sampson was wholly sincere. Sitting near the fatal door, and hearing the visitor's name, as well as the evidence of the family intimacy, he began, like people during an earth-quake, to feel as if the foundation of things were breaking up. His pastor, the Rev. Mr. Partington, could not have more astounded him, had he risen of a Sunday to affirm that, after amusing himself with the composition of a cursing Psalm or two, David went off to joke and hob-nob with the Philistines whom he had denounced.

Brewster's vivid portraits of Joslyn in a long series of public speeches, had made a profound impression upon Sampson's imagination. He had come to regard him and his coterie as the incarnation of the evils from which only by perpetual and desperate vigilance the country was saved. The mention of his name always stirred Sampson's otherwise gentle heart to anger and bitterness. He had never seen Joslyn, and did not want to. Though in his presence the mild-mannered Sampson would have spoken with bated breath, and moved with bashful agitation, yet he often indulged his heated fancy in imaginary encounters with the renowned and wicked Senator, in which, even if no personal violence was done, he saw himself empty-

ing upon that bad man's head the vials of wrath which Brewster had filled to overflowing.

Scarcely twenty-four hours since, Brewster had pretended to agree that, for the sake of the country's peace and prosperity, the lawful hanging of Joslyn and his "crew" was, if not practicable, pre-eminently desirable; while just now he had given the miscreant a more cordial reception than he had bestowed upon himself. He had made him first a peace-offering of champagne, and then a burnt-offering of whisky and cigars. He had heard them enjoying stories at the expense of each other's party friends, and making jokes about the result of the presidential election, which in Sampson's eyes was the most critical the nation had ever entered upon, and an altogether solemn and tragic act of fifty millions of people. It was a sacrilege for men in their position to treat it with such levity. How could Brewster, standing thus on the brink of possible national ruin, joke with one of the men principally responsible for the deadly peril? offering to help him pecuniarily, and betraying close and confidential business relations with him? Moreover, their families were on most excellent terms. What right had the daughter of his party leader to be a fond and intimate friend of the daughter of the party leader who was trying to destroy the country? Was this the way to uphold the pure doctrines of the party? What was it but a kind of unequal yoking of unbelievers which the Bible forbade in religion, and which patriotism ought to forbid in politics. The idea of any of Joslyn's belongings—his kith or his kin—being sweet women



and kind hearted and sensible persons, was simply impossible; and only a defect in moral vision could discover such virtues in such people.

Sampson felt rather than thought these things, and being under the influence of his unusual and impressive surroundings, very naturally thought rather than uttered them.

Shortly after Brewster's explanation, he and Mrs. Sampson took their leave; but these revelations, mar- ring the bloom of earnestness on his political prejudices, made him a wiser but less enthusiastic partisan than he had ever been before.

Brewster's remarks about the advantages of agriculture and the education of boys, never appeared in the St. Joe "Fruit Basket," and the grangers of Michigan remained ignorant of his many virtues, which, but for this *contretemps*, they would have learned from an eye-witness. From that day on, Sampson allowed the campaign in his section to "languish."

Winifred had unintentionally fulfilled her promise beyond anything she could possibly have dreamed. Mr. Sampson never forgot this dinner.

## CHAPTER VI.

## AGENTS WANTED—APPLY WITHIN.

AFTER the representatives of the western agricultural interests had departed, her father, hastily scanning his daughter's diamonds, bracelets, and pearl necklace, as she sat in the library looking at an illustrated newspaper, said almost abruptly:

"Winifred, my dear, I wish you'd dress a little more plainly—for the present at least."

"Why, father!" she exclaimed, looking up surprised. "What has come over you? You're always delighted with my toilettes."

"You shall lose nothing by it," he answered.

She made no reply. She was fond of her elegance, and knew that it became her. She did not ask him the reason of his suggestion; perhaps she guessed it; perhaps imagined she would get only an evasive or satirical response. Then she thought of his constant kindness to her and that, from a father so uniformly indulgent, even an intrinsically unreasonable request was *not* unreasonable.

"I am not afraid of losing anything by it," she said, after a short pause; "and it's no great sacrifice after all; for it does n't matter so much what I wear up

here. I don't want to give up my ear-drops though; besides, it's not safe leaving them around."

"You can have some gold globes made for them," he said, rising. "It will be only until after election."

"Why not then?"

He did not answer directly, and she did not ask again. He muttered something about its being of no importance, then, and left the room for his office.

In passing through the dining-room he met his only son, a second edition of himself, except that he was short, round, bald, and only thirty years of age. Their mutual likeness provoked a mutual dis-likeness and an armed neutrality between them.

The young man, sitting down, rang the bell, and ordered the waiter to bring him "some dinner." He wished that, instead of leaning on the back of a chair and watching his movements, "the old man" would leave the room.

"Well, Tom," said his father at last, "when are you going to do something?"

"When I've finished my dinner."

"And what are you going to do then?"

"Play a game of billiards."

"I want your help this summer."

"How can I help *you*?" he exclaimed, in apparent astonishment.

"Prepare documents, keep me informed of Joslyn's movements, and take charge of a part of the correspondence. The boys in the office are overworked, and I do not want to take in any strangers at this late day. Then, too, I don't want these newspaper scrubs

talking about the luxury and idleness of my family. I want to have it said, 'Brewster practices what he preaches.'"

"Then let Brewster preach differently," sneered the young man.

"That's nonsense, and you know it. My request is quite reasonable," said his father.

"Well, if I'm a judge, it's preposterous," he answered. "What's the use of wasting time and money in this election flummery? You'll be licked any way. Why do you want to worry out the rest of your life in this political stew? I would n't give the value of a millionaire's will to be President. I want to enjoy life—not make one dem'd grind of it as you do."

His father was about to remonstrate further, but perhaps realizing the uselessness of it, or not having the time to spare, or recognizing in him some of his own "smartness," took his departure. The young man went calmly on with his dinner, muttering:

"The reason I am not afraid of him is because I'm him over again,—except that I like champagne and an Havana and a pretty waiter-girl, and he does n't—any more than I like his politics. There's no accounting for tastes. I wish I had his energy, though; I believe I'd take the stump for the other party. It would furnish the newspapers with some mighty interesting reading, and draw bigger crowds than he can. But what's the use of sweating to save the country, until you're fit for nothing but a coffin. It seems to me a country that needs so much saving is n't worth it. I never learned to save *anything*, except trouble, and I sha'n't begin now."

And lighting a cigar, he walked off, turning abruptly from the library, on seeing his father there, and making his way to his favorite billiard room down town.

The "old man's" face, as he paused at the library window and looked at his mill property, grew more cheerful.

The splendor of the gray stone building, six stories high, a fraction of a mile long, with a dome-surmounted tower in the center, recalled the shabby little wooden mill in which, on the same site, his enterprise began; and, after the manner of a prosperous man he rubbed his hands together.

The report of the Roxbury Manufacturing Company, of which he was chief owner and director, had declared its ordinary three per cent. quarterly dividend. For many years, "panic" or no "panic" "hard times" or otherwise, it had not failed to pay a profit of from ten to twenty-five per cent. annually; and, had contributed a large share to its owner's prosperity.

He had fairly earned it all; for that arduous work of which he was enormously capable, had gone into the improved and economical manufacture of the celebrated "army blue." Its superiority in color and texture was largely due to the Major's twelve and fourteen hours of daily labor, in earlier life; and his patience, industry, and ingenuity, had well rewarded him.

"By the Lord!" he soliloquized, "how few people can handle a million of dollars! though there's scarcely a donkey but thinks he can. To hear them, one

would suppose an eight-day puppy could play whist if you only dealt him trumps enough. They seem to think if a man's worth a million he spends it all on himself. They never imagine that he turns it over, enlarging his business and giving employment to more people. I started with ten thousand dollars, and employed a dozen hands; now I've a million invested, and hire a thousand. Yet there's scarcely one of them but think she could run the thing, or hand it over to the government and go to a caucus and elect a man who could run it, for one or two thousand dollars a year, and then divide the surplus among themselves. The days and nights I have spent cutting down here, lopping off there, studying chemistry, and experimenting with dyes and machinery! Yet they'd expect to hire all that for about the wages *they* earn."

He brought his soliloquy to an abrupt close, and wended his way to his office. On reaching it, he plunged at once into work, dictating letters and telegrams to Danforth, running over the accounts and memoranda, and signing the checks which the agent of his mill and two clerks were preparing for him.

His visit thither was already known both to the prominent citizens of Roxbury, and to the scores of people elsewhere who, every day, had occasion for an interview with him; but he improved a moment of comparative quiet to fall into a reverie, preparatory—pen in hand—to writing a letter.

"It can hardly be true that Carroll's coming out for the other side," he said. "If I could be only half as good as he thinks he is! His John-the-Baptist devo-

tion to Wharton, I suppose, will make him think any other man quite unworthy of his preaching. There's surely some way of quieting him! Can't be he's conscientious. Perhaps I could get him up here. It could be made known from Bangor to San Francisco in twenty-four hours, and that would compromise him at any rate. Perhaps——”

He thought a moment longer, and then began his letter. A shadow was suddenly cast upon his paper, and looking up, he saw Hans Kaiser, the principal brewer of Roxbury, fat, puffing, excited, wiping his round coppery-red face with a wad of handkerchief.

His lithographed token of Major Brewster's personal affection, which he took from the post-office that afternoon, would scarcely have puzzled him more had it come from Bismarck himself. Not clearly understanding it, he applied to Mr. Stratton, who happened to stand near.

“O yes,” said Mr. Stratton, whose estimate of Brewster was freely expressed in the talk with the politicians on their way to the convention; “that's from Major Brewster. He says he's heard you know all about these political questions, and he'd like to talk with you. He has n't time, he says, to come and see you, so you had better go and see *him*. Perhaps he'll give you a post-office.”

Kaiser started and, pushing his eager way to Brewster's presence, remarked, without further ceremony:

“I vonts der shpeak mit der Maitchur.”

The Major nodded permission, and continued his writing; he had a talent for doing two or three things at once.

“I kom der tog mit you, Maitchur. I get dis led-der by der bozd-mazder. Und dey doles me dot Maitchur Proozdur vonts der tog mit mir von dose polly-deeks. Ve vonts plendy of moneys; dot iss der fee-nanze quezjohn.”

“Do you speak English?” asked Major Brewster. “I cannot talk German.”

“Yah! sehr goot Eenglish; besser dan de Doitch. Ve vants beek moneys, so high as dot ;” measuring with his hand. “Dair’s anohder tings. Dey doles me dot Maitchur Proozdur gif me zumtings ; if I vurks hart, he gifs me der *bozd-ovviz*.”

“That gentleman over there will tell you all about that,” said the Major, pointing to Danforth. “He’s the man that gives those things to people.”

Kaiser looked contemptuously at Danforth. His “ledder” had come from “Proozdur,” and only with “Proozdur” would he deal.

“Nein. I not knows dot glerg. Ef Proozdur doles me he gif me tings, I gets him ; ef dot glerg doles me, dot ish no good.”

“Well, he’s the one,” said the Major. “I’m too busy. It’s just the same.”

“Nein. Der peer makes kein moneys, and I vont mein *bozd-ovviz*, already.”

“Talk with *him!*” said Brewster, with a gesture of command, that left Kaiser no choice.

So, turning with distrust, he walked slowly over to Danforth, who explained to him that it was not until after election that post-offices and other good things would, like “chromos,” be given “to every subscriber”



to the party platform, or at least to the "getter-up" of "clubs."

As Kaiser lumbered away, wondering why he could not get his pay in advance, a man, escorted by two others who introduced him to Brewster, entered the office. He was roughly dressed, and especially conspicuous for his flannel shirt. Shaking hands with the notorious labor agitator, the Major invited him into a small interior room, where a conference ensued. After his visitor had gone, Brewster, stepping to the marble basin in his closet, washed his hands with finely scented soap.

He was hardly at his task again when a figure, dressed in black from his gaiters to his crape-wound hat, shuffled toward him. Every part of his clothing shone with the dull gloss of farmer's satin. One would have said that by some mysterious skill he had polished equally every square inch of surface. His joints, like a prepared skeleton's, seemed hung on wires, and as he shamled along his toes cracked painfully. He was an aristocratic tramp, who, on the strength of an alleged letter from a church dignitary, had recently persuaded a rector's wife to clothe him in a complete outfit of her husband's cast-off garb. He stood in front of Brewster, pulling through alternate hands his dark, gray-streaked whiskers.

The Major, merely nodding at him, began writing "Colonel Brewster, I believe."

The Major did not decline his promotion, but said curtly:

"Yes sir, but I must refer you to that gentleman."

The intruder reluctantly retired, and asked Danforth:

“Can I have a private interview with you?”

“Yes.”

“When and where? if you please.”

“Now and here.”

The visitor, with some astonishment, glanced at the clerks.

“They are deaf; we select them from the asylum on purpose,” said Danforth, coolly.

Getting no further satisfaction, the man proceeded:

“I called to propose a method for liquidating the national debt, which shall enrich the public creditors without oppressing the people.”

“Every man with a plan for paying the national debt wants something; I suppose it’s supper, in your case,” said Danforth, handing him twenty-five cents.

“You greatly wrong me in hinting at these sordid motives,” replied his visitor, pocketing the quarter; “but I have a process for doubling the wealth of the country in six weeks.”

“I’ll talk with you about it after the election,” said Danforth, getting out of patience, for he was wasting time on a fellow who probably would not vote.

“Quite right; the President”—he said, half turning towards the Major—“ah! excuse my sensitive imagination! But my invention can be made to serve the cause of truth and justice *before* election. It’s paper and ink. I will, at your expense, print the names of those foes of our country, the candidates of the opposite party, and see that they are supplied with such ballots. Previously, however, I shall, with my invis-

ble ink, print on the same ballots the names of the champions of truth and justice—*your* party, you understand. The chemical reaction of my paper and ink is such, that the names of our country's foes will, after reposing an hour in the sacred darkness of the ballot-box, wholly disappear, and the names of the friends of truth and justice become visible."

He stopped for want of breath, and Danforth rising, said:

"That's just what we want; but we must talk of it more privately. Come this way!"

He followed Danforth to the other end of the office, thence to an outer room, through which they passed to a side entrance. Opening the door, Danforth politely motioned his visitor to go first, which he did. Whereupon the secretary shut the door, locked it, and returned to his work.

The man outside, smiling gently, tetered off to the post office, on the front steps of which stood a group of men earnestly talking.

The loose-jointed man, walking as if his clothes, and not his bones, held him together, came up to them just as "Grandfather" Cleland, with his rheumatic fore-finger, was emphasizing his words upon the elbow of his neighbor.

"There's mighty few politicull men know who to talk to," said Cleland; "but Brewster knows his man every time. You see he's sent me this here letter, and tells me he's as busy as a boy killing snakes, or he'd get me to help him straighten things out. D'ye ever see the beat on 't?"

“Did I ever see a row of spindles or a peck o’ peas?” said Frank Harmon, from beneath a tangle of whiskers and a shock of coarse, mahogany-hued hair, unfolding another copy of Brewster’s lithographed letter. “I’m the man he’s grieving hisself thin over, because he can’t see me.”

“The country’s chuck full o’ statesmen,” said Jaycox, a nephew of old Cleland’s, whose intelligence, even under the grime and stains of oil and dyes, announced itself in a look of thoughtfulness and common sense, and in the pleasant blue eyes that were gray, and the shrewd gray eyes that were blue; “and Major Brewster’s found ’em all out,” he continued, pulling out a third copy of the letter; “the fellow who has n’t the whole science of government about him, all folded up and handy’s a pocket-rule, must feel as lonesome as a cod-fish on the prairies.”

“He’s a smart politicull leader; that’s what I say,” remarked Cleland, with an air of having classified Brewster, and put him away for the use of future historians.

“He leads a party as a locomotive head-light leads a train,” said Jaycox; “it shows where the train’s a-going—whenever the train goes that way.”

“I do n’t b’leeve Brewster’d play such a trick as that,” said old Cleland. “Tenny rate, if he’ll only gin a poor feller a boost, I’ll gin *him* one. Land o’ mercy! how a mortgage *does stick*, once’t it gits a holt. You’d a think it had *growed* on.”

“He’ll help you,” said Harmon, from behind the hairy hedge which half covered his face. “You can

pay off your mortgage as easy as you can take off your coat, when he's President."

"That's what *I* think," said the old man. "I only want to git rid of that, for it pinches like a new shoe. I've had it on so many years now, you'd think it would git to fit me, like. On gen'ul princ'puls, I b'leeve in hard money. Arter I git that paid I'll set my face like a flint agin' enny more paper."

"By that time the fellow you *sell to* will think it's *his* turn," said Jaycox. "*He'll* want more money so as to stick some other chap, just as you do now; and if he has n't paid you cash, *you'll* be the chap. There'll be no end to it until the balloon bursts. I do n't believe in going up higher just for the sake of falling further."

"What *I've* to do," replied the old man, "is to look out for *myself*, and they must look out for themselves."

"Yes, do n't cross a bridge till you come to it," said Harmon.

"'T is n't for *my* interest to be paid in such money," said Jaycox.

"Not your interest!" cried Harmon, "and you a workingman! If they knew that over there," nodding toward Brewster's mill, "you'd be looking for a job."

"O, he do n't mean nothin'," said old Cleland, in nervous alarm. "He thinks juss we do; it's only his way o' puttin' it, that's all."

"It's mighty unlucky for him it sounds so different. It's my notion you can allers tell a duck's quack,

even though an old hen set on the eggs," said Harmon.

"Not always," said Jaycox. "Some folks, hearin' your voice and not your words, might take you for a rational creetur'."

"They can hear your voice, and your words, too, over there," said Harmon, nodding again at the mill.

"You're a sneak!" said Jaycox, "to be worming a man's opinion out of him. But, now I'm in for it, I'll say the truth that's in me. If Cleland's kind of money is a good thing to pay debts with, I don't want it. Those folks over there every month owe me seventy-five dollars, and if trash is the thing to pay debts with, it's not the kind I want."

"Well, my friend," said Harmon, turning to the man in black, "you want better times at any rate, don't you?—plenty of work at high wages?"

"O, I can get enough," said he, with an amused air, "if it's nothing more'n keepin' my jaws a-goin' like you. I'm offered wood to saw, and dirt to haul, almost everywhere, and I'm always willing to listen to 'em, even on holidays. I'll grind their scythes for 'em Christmas, or cut ice Fourth o' July. I'll do anything that's becomin' the pious son of a liquor-dealer, bounced from home for wanting family prayers every mornin'."

"Are you going to hear Stratton?" asked Harmon of Jaycox, as the group broke up.

"Yes, and you'd better go too. He talks sense."

"Don't give him away!" pleaded Cleland, taking Harmon aside, and nodding toward his nephew Jay-

cox; “you see, he gives me a lift now and then. He’s a good fellow—is Abner, but he do like to talk; there’s no use talkin’ ’bout that. But he gives me suthin’ every little while for his cousin, my darter-in-lor, an’ her lame boy, an’ it helps us along over the rough places.”

But Harmon would afford him no satisfaction.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE NET AND THE BIRD.

"HE 's one of our best men," said Superintendent Clegg, of the Roxbury Mill, to Brewster, three days after this talk among the operatives.

"He is too high-priced a man," replied the other. "You can probably get some one that will do his work for less. He has too much leisure for talking politics, and he doesn't talk the right sort, either."

"O, if he was a postmaster or a collector I would n't say a word," continued Clegg; "you expect *them* to talk straight, of course; but this is a matter of business, and I'm afraid the work will suffer."

"The Almighty has probably made more than one Jaycox. Besides, I intend to be consistent. Of course a government employe, who did n't know how to keep his thoughts to himself better than Jaycox does, would have to go, and—"

"But that 's the government, and this is business."

Brewster closed the discussion by breaking open a letter which Danforth handed him, and Clegg dropped the subject. Brewster would not have listened further, for the letter brought a tingle, even to his weather-beaten sensations. It was from a confidential friend, in reply to the one which Brewster wrote with so



many interruptions, and announced that he had persuaded Carroll, as a personal favor, to accept Major Brewster's invitation to make him a visit. He added, however, that Carroll's pride in Wharton's friendship and his own consistency, would render necessary a more than ordinary temptation to induce him to "work" for Brewster, or even to secure the approval of his silence.

"He is a rash prophet," hummed Brewster. "You can not tell till you have seen the play, whether or not you 'll sit it out."

Carroll's triumphs as a "stump speaker" forbade his being unduly underrated. He had a happy combination of requisite gifts—a full chest, a melodious voice, robust health, great endurance; wit and epigram at his tongue's end, together with a vein of poetry and humor with which he could paint a dashing portrait or boldly sketch a situation. He once practiced law, but having inherited a small estate from his father, found "lecturing" more profitable and agreeable. He was, both by inheritance and tradition, a party politician; but being comparatively of an independent and judicial temper, he had grown disgusted with the intense partisanship and groveling intrigues of current politics. Except in regard to financial questions, tradition and party discipline had, of course, forced him to keep his discontent wholly to himself. With a few other "malcontents," Carroll had hailed Wharton as a long-sought deliverer from the bondage which chafed them. Though Wharton's frankness and independence were by many regarded as sincere but fantastic, and

he was accused of lacking audacity and "magnetism," yet his avowed faith in honest elections, honest money, and non-partisanship in office, had, as they imagined, at last lit up, with the novel brilliancy of an electric light, the political fog in which they groped.

His sudden death narrowed the choice of such men in both parties to Brewster and his rival on the other "ticket." It perplexed Carroll sorely. While he shrank from joining his opponents, his duty of informing the mind and probing the conscience of the country on the questions concerning which he had strong convictions, seemed reasonably clear. Indeed, he found it difficult to keep silence. Wharton, he thought, would have said: "Follow your instincts—preserve all you can of your consistency! crook your path around insurmountable hills, but see that it bends the right way, and comes out at the right spot!"

Moreover, though Carroll was a disgusted party politician, he had been "a party man," and it was an odd sensation—the thought of cutting aloof from old associates and aiding, even indirectly, the election of a former opponent. It brought him that sense of discomfort which one feels in a foreign country where his smattering of the language barely enables him to make his way; but gains for him no welcomes or confidences in the hearts and homes of its people. They listen politely while he speaks, and shrug their shoulders behind his back.

Under these circumstances, Carroll learned that Brewster wanted to see him—"just to talk over matters," "very informally;" "he was not to feel com-

mitted in the least;" "of course his convictions would be respected;" and Brewster would be quite candid with him. Miss Brewster, too, would be very glad to renew the agreeable acquaintance she had already made in Washington.

Carroll went to Brewster's—to oblige his friend, as he said to himself; but really because he was not unwilling to be tempted. He was in that dubious state of virtue, which, under pretense of defying temptation, anticipates, as a reward for one's greater boldness in encountering it, the pleasure of finally yielding; as he who in battle runs bravely at the enemy in order to be captured. He said to himself that he only wanted to know Brewster's purpose, and belittled his own suspicions of his real motives. Besides, silence was perhaps best. Very likely he would be doing great harm in aiding his opponents; these affairs are so complicated.

To Carroll's surprise, Brewster did not introduce the subject. He talked, without apparent reservation, of his plans for the campaign and laughed heartily at his opponents, who, having for years availed themselves of the same means, now betrayed much virtuous indignation at the use of government officials in aid of a candidate's election. Carroll felt a little piqued at Brewster's implied contempt for his influence. There was neither virtue nor happiness in resistance when there was nothing to resist. His host was invariably cordial and attentive; and Winifred devoted herself to their guest's entertainment. There were dinners, picnics, parties, excursions; by the end of the week,

Carroll found that in her absence, time was drugged with the morphia of *ennui*. His previous acquaintance with her, had left a most pleasing impression, and he had more than once wished for the opportunity he now enjoyed.

One evening the two came out on the broad veranda, and, saying that he smoked more than was good for him, he supposed, he asked permission to light a cigar; then seating himself in a comfortable lounging-chair, he proceeded to enjoy what had been so bountifully vouchsafed him.

All his conditions and surroundings put him in the happiest mood. A luxurious dinner, a cigar of fine flavor, an unconscious digestion, a cool breath from the harbor, tempering to balminess the heat of the day, contributed to a self-satisfaction at once so pervasive, volatile and grateful, that he was quite unaware how happy he was. A scent of honeysuckles, the sunlight filtering through the leaves and revealing the delicate, almost imperceptible, warmth of color in Winifred's dark brown hair, her graceful attitude of leisure and repose in the luxurious curves of the chair she sat in, her cameo profile against the screen of woodbine at the end of the veranda, the flattering suggestion of a listening mood in the slight deflection toward him of her head and shoulders, her refined animation and sympathetic laugh, smothered his scruples and self-inquisition until they seemed like the grim and dreary storm that yesterday beset the ship he now saw gliding smoothly into the smiling harbor.

The orb of red gold visible to the last second, as it

sank below the dark line of waters, gilded with pink, crimson, and amethyst, the few stray clouds, not yet driven with the rest of the herd of solemn white ones, home to the eastern horizon, where they were now disappearing; the "wrinkled sea" beneath, shone like purple jasper; and the gathering gloom re-lit the twilight with an after-glow of opal and pale blue, transferring a shell-like luster to the white sails, which were sailing out into the darkness.

"Of course I have done something to deserve all this," said Carroll gracefully and eloquently, including, with a wave of his hand the luxury of his immediate environment and the splendid picture of earth and sky in the distance. "I'm not so sure which of my many virtues it is, though."

"Perhaps it is your humility," suggested Winifred, with a light laugh.

"Very likely; I had not thought of that."

"Which only shows how unconscious and natural it is."

"Second nature, if any, I presume. What a sunset it is," he went on. "I wonder why all, or nearly all, of our American statesmen have neglected our sunsets. Something surely might be done by way of contrasting them with the inferior foreign productions and advocating a protective tariff for their encouragement. An American poet has complimented the skies for furnishing us with a national ensign, and why should n't we develop this native industry until we are as proud of our clouds as we are of our iron and our crops?"

“Is that question addressed to me or the American orator’s audience?” she asked, laying down a bit of embroidery in her lap and looking off. “If you ask me, I shall refuse to commit myself. I used to be a good deal disturbed about the crops, though. Everybody talked as if something dreadful might happen to them; but there never did, and so I concluded not to waste my emotion, and ever after felt comfortable and happy.”

“Yes, I imagine it must have taken a great weight from your mind,” said Carroll, so cynical, from habit, that he fell into it even with an artless young woman.

“Now, you are laughing at me, Mr. Carroll. But I do not know why *my* worrying won’t do as much good as anybody’s.”

“There is something to be said in favor of that, but you should not worry at all.”

“No, I’ve often said so to myself, just as gentlemen say they ought not to smoke so much, and keep on doing it. But then I generally worry about trifles—the housekeeping, or father’s bad colds, and whether I can have the same dress-maker twice in succession; the very day I want her.”

“Yet it’s very flattering and comfortable to have *somebody* worrying about you. That’s one pleasure I have managed to miss, at least since I was a youngster and afforded my parents all the opportunities of that kind they cared for. If you *will persist* in the bad practice, I would like very much to be added to your list.”

“It wouldn’t be very complimentary,” she replied,

“after saying that I either worried about trifles or when it did no good.”

“But it would do *me* a great deal of good,” he said.

“I am afraid that’s the way with you luxurious men of the world; you’d like a new sensation at any cost to a woman. Besides, how can one feel greatly troubled for a prosperous and popular man.”

“Well, perhaps he may need it the most. He certainly *ought* to crave something higher than worldly success; don’t you think so?”

She did not answer; for, there suddenly appeared in the twilight a well-shaped young fellow, whose lounging air and gait contradicted his youthful elasticity and vigor of body. He was dressed in a grayish suit, and, as he bade Miss Winifred “good evening,” gracefully raised a light, narrow-brimmed hat, trimmed with blue ribbon, and seated himself with familiar demeanor, upon the upper step of the veranda.

“O, Dean, is it you! I thought you would have been at Orion Hall to-night—at your father’s meeting.”

Then she presented Mr. Dean Stratton to Mr. Carroll.

“No” replied the young man, “I’m already orthodox on the subject, and so I told the old gentleman that, if it was all the same to him, some man who needed his instruction might have my share of the room. Mr. Carroll, I suppose, will say that there may be two sides to this question.”

“I think,” said Carroll, “that most questions are like the elephant which the blind men undertook to describe. One who got hold of his leg, said an elephant was like a tree; the man who grasped his tail,

said he was like a rope; the fellow who felt of his ear said he was like a palm leaf, and the one whom the beast took in his trunk and chucked into a tank said he was a sea-serpent. I am not certain that that's an entirely accurate report of the occurrence, but it is near enough for the purpose."

The conversation drifted away to other topics. Carroll's growing admiration of Miss Winifred and his consequent jealousy soon detected in the manner of his two companions something which disquieted him a good deal. Dean's demeanor had a confidential flavor, with a half-apparent sense of possession and security; and Carroll imagined that he heard an added tenderness in her tones when she spoke to the young man.

Resenting ever so slight a hint of some one else's possible claim to her, he grew unhappy, and almost impatient of the politeness which forced him to sit chatting with them about different and indifferent subjects. Finally, disgusted with the interruptions he had suffered at so interesting a point in his talk with her, he joined Brewster in the library.

The latter looked up as if surprised at his entrance, and in reply Carroll said: "Miss Winifred has company—Mr. Dean Stratton—and as three make a crowd, I came away."

Brewster, frowning slightly, which, of course, was not lost upon Carroll, said: "Yes, a neighbor's boy—I might almost call him. He and Winifred were intimate friends before either of them could speak."

"Their learning to speak does not seem to have broken their friendship," said Carroll.



He was sitting in a strong light, where Brewster could see every change in expression and narrowly watch him. He made no reply, and Carroll added: "That is a very romantic sort of attachment; and your knowing the young man from his youth up, must relieve you from all anxiety."

Brewster again looked at him, as he answered:

"My knowing him well *might* work quite as much to his disadvantage as otherwise."

"Perhaps; but a feeling that is the outgrowth of years must have taken deep root in such a nature as hers."

"Winifred is too affectionate and obedient not to be greatly influenced by my preferences," said Brewster, "so far at least as they are reasonable."

"She being the judge of their reasonableness," said Carroll:

"Young Stratton is not capable of rendering me the slightest service," Brewster went on. "His father, who, you know, is on the other side, is a strong man; but the boy is a good deal of a dawdler."

Nothing further was said on the subject; indeed, there was no need or propriety in saying more; but after Carroll reached his room that night, he sat down by the window and communed with himself. All his better instincts forbade his yielding to the bribe that had just been offered him. He was not insincere; he could be ardent and impetuous. He could love a woman with great intensity and a man with honest loyalty. But the latest emotion, by whatsoever or whomsoever excited, generally triumphed over previous ones,

giving to his character a certain, or rather an uncertain, instability, and to his moods a flavor of fickleness. Winifred's loveliness had greatly taken possession of him, and, although he was not yet ready to barter or compromise convictions which would be perilously involved by these new relations to Brewster, he was ready to risk them in the hazards of a mental debate on the subject.

"It would pain Wharton, I suppose, if he knew," he said to himself, "but then, if he knows at all he knows the whole. I *can't* throw away this chance of winning her; to throw away all that such an alliance implies, is asking too much from any mortal man,—at least *I'm* not made of the stuff that can calmly resist it. What did I *come* here for? I might have known how it would end. I suppose I came *because* I knew—or hoped. I can no more get down to solid ground again than if I were Mahomet's coffin. That is the first hint the old man's given of his caring about my movements. Pshaw! the idea that he doesn't care. He would n't be such a fool. It's wretched business, this letting a fellow-creature put a muzzle on you; but by Jove, what would n't a man be, do, or suffer, for the sake of getting *her*? I'd be as dumb as the sphinx, or as noisy as that mill the rest of my life. What a charming creature at a dinner or a reception! A little more color, perhaps, but she'd soon get *that!* though just to have her at your own breakfast-table, would be all a reasonable man could ask."

Then, like a sting of conscience, the familiar lines smote him:

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“I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not honor more.”

“That fellow was n't dead in love with *her*,” he added, after a pause, “or he could not have thought so. Thunder, man! it's twelve o'clock, and you 're spooning here in the moonlight. Even her rustic swain who, it seems, was in love with her before he cut his teeth is snoring in bed by this time.”

And, so saying, Carroll retired.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE TEMPTATION.

On coming down stairs, next morning, Carroll found Brewster in the library, searching the congressional debates, and with him a guest, who had arrived by the early train; but who, judging from Brewster's apparent unconsciousness of his existence, should have found it agreeable to depart by the next one. Next to his white hair, black moustache and imperial, which were in pleasing contrast with a fresh complexion, his most conspicuous feature was his shoulders, whose height and breadth concealing his neck, suggested the symmetry of a snow-man, or of the old-fashioned gate-posts, surmounted by their globes at the entrance of the lawn; but his face, except for its vanity, would have been attractive, even in spite of strong marks of self-indulgence, and of an artificial pomposity inflated almost to the point of bursting. Brewster casually introducing him as "Mr. Perceval," handed Carroll the morning paper, and went on with his reading.

"Ah!" said Perceval; "very glad indeed, to make Mr. Carroll's acquaintance. We ought to know each other, for we are men of brains. *Flatter* myself, at least, that I'm worth knowing."

"No doubt about that," said Mr. Carroll, gravely.

"I have only been waiting for leisure, in order to know you. To know such a man requires the time and attention I have not yet been able to give to it."

Puzzled as to whether this was serious or satirical, Perceval relapsed into silence.

"Another clergyman in hot water," said Carroll, glancing at the news.

"Ah!" said Brewster, with a chuckle so delicately shaded as to be both dignified and effective. "Same old trouble, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Churches are about played out," broke in Perceval. "They're the worst humbugs going. But they've about given up trying to whitewash their rascals any more. They are all tarred with the same stick, in my opinion—a lot of hypocrites—everyone of them—always on the jump to cover up their rottenness."

"You speak as if you had a personal grievance?" said Brewster. "I never knew them to do you any harm—or any good."

"They say it hurts religion to turn against a brother and expose him," continued Perceval, not noticing Brewster's commentary. "That is, they're afraid their church'll go all to pieces. It must be bad all through, or they would n't be so skittish. 'Tis n't any of *their* business, they say, to turn against an erring brother. The world'll do it, quick enough, without any help from *them*. That's all nonsense in my opinion—and they stick to their Bible, tough stories and all, and try to believe it——"

"Perceval," interrupted Brewster, "'They say,'

too, that there are two kinds of fools in this world—fools, and d—— fools. I wish you'd choose once for all which kind you'll belong to, and stick to it; you confuse people, shifting about so."

Perceval, looking up as surprised as if he had run a steamboat upon a snag, gasped for more words, but Brewster's puncture reduced his bulky vanity, and making no answer, he shrank away somewhere.

"There is a fellow," said Brewster, after he had disappeared, "who is always talking to hear himself talk."

"I can't quite agree with you," said Carroll, "for it seems to me that if he but fairly heard himself once he would stop it."

"He is a relative," said Brewster, in a confidential tone, "and in my younger days, when I was more easily deceived than I flatter myself I am now; he won my confidence by pretending to a large influence with 'wire-pullers' and 'managers,' and retained theirs by pretending to be on confidential terms with me. I discovered the see-saw of imposition and threw him overboard; but his father, my mother's brother, was very good to me when I was a lad, and so I have always taken care of him."

By "taking care of him" Brewster meant that by inserting him into any vacant office he happened to "control," he had managed to make the public support his relative. In his earlier life Perceval was self-indulgent to excess, but age and grossness threatening to end his folly, he had in later years, exercised more prudence. Afraid to die, but not to lie, this immoral Falstaffian courage had so destroyed his trustworthi-

ness, that wherever he was well known his natural talent for passing himself off for more than he was worth, was no longer available. And so he had become a mere pensioner on Brewster's share of the public bounty. At the present time, and in order to keep him out of mischief, Brewster employed him at low wages to pick up various misinformation about men and affairs.

Carroll nodded a recognition of Brewster's public and vicarious benevolence toward his kinsman, and the major proceeded:

"He is always badly swollen with what seems to him valuable intelligence, and in as constant a state of collapse when exploded by a sharp thrust of common sense. He has a habit of looking over his shoulder as if some body lurked there listening to his thoughts for the purpose of anticipating him in their publication. He calls, in almost blood-curdling tones, for his letters, as if to impress the postmaster with the mysterious and probably dangerous state secrets contained in them; and when public questions are touched upon, he will wrap himself in a solemnity truly appalling."

At this moment the original of this caricature was heard on the veranda, addressing "cousin Winifred," as he bade her an effusive "good morning." Brewster, saying no more, glanced at the newspaper report of Israel Stratton's speech of the previous evening, in the course of which that gentleman had indulged in some caustic comments upon the eminent candidate's views and methods. Throwing it down, he said, with real or assumed indignation:

“I will have nothing more to do with him. He has been making a gross personal assault upon me. I shall give Winifred orders to discontinue her intimacy with the family.”

Carroll trembled; partly with the consciousness of the allurements which gently put one enticing hand upon him and with the other softly loosened his armor, and slyly unbuckled his sword, caressing his senses, and toying with his manhood thus enervated by the joy that filled him. He gave himself up to the enchantment, and in his exultation, cast all but his darling wishes to the winds.

This feeling was heightened by her entrance, fresh from an unbroken night's rest, and a short stroll upon the lawn. She was attired in a pale blue morning dress, and with the grace of apparent unconsciousness, was inserting a blush rose bud into the luxuriant folds of her hair, while a delicate cluster of mignonette bejewelled her spray-like scarf of lace. Perceval was rolling along by her side, and she seemed much relieved when Carroll's coming forward interrupted the commonplaces her cousin was droning into her ears.

As Carroll walked and chatted by her side on the way to the breakfast room, his questionings of the night before seemed to him like the distorted sights and sounds which the sleepless imagination creates in the darkness. He wondered now where they came from, and how they found room or welcome in his mind.

“I think you had better take a run of a week or two off the coast,” said Brewster to him. “I shall go to



the city this afternoon to be absent several days, but Miss Winifred can invite her aunt and cousins, and Tom will take charge of the expedition."

"Thank you!" replied Carroll, radiantly, as he thought of the pleasant intimacy of such an excursion. From day to day during the exhilarating and tireless ride, from night to night under the moon and stars, he would have her to talk to, to listen to, to watch silently, to be conscious of perpetually, both in the prolonged romance of the voyage and the novelty of its many incidents.

"I did not know you owned a yacht," he added.

"Not I," said Brewster. "I don't propose furnishing these newspaper men with a month's talk about my yacht. I know better than that. But my brother-in-law owns one which is at our disposal. For myself, I never go. I prefer the solid ground, whose worst pranks are an earthquake away off somewhere else, or a hole in the road, for which you can recover damages."

"I wish you'd put *me* in charge of the yacht, papa," said Winifred. "Tom's always wanting to go to the place where he pulled up a twenty-pound blue fish at one p. m., Thursday, Aug. 10, the summer of '70, or '74, or '75, or whichever it may be; and he will steer for it, or seem to, as if he had left a stone there for a landmark—if that's correct to say—and could see it as far as you can see Bunker Hill monument. Then he always remembers where he shot a peculiar kind of duck, on some afternoon of a certain month in a special year of grace; and insists on anchoring till the anni-

versary comes round, in the apparent belief that that particular species of fowl is addicted to the annual habits of Christmas or Fourth of July."

"And where would *you* go?" asked her father.

"I'd do as Tom and I used to in the carriage—shut our eyes as long as our patience held out and then open them to see where we were."

"You have unusual qualifications for a skipper," commented her father.

"She would make a good president," said Carroll, with frank cynicism.

Brewster laughed, but the look in his eyes, if Carroll had noticed, was not agreeable.

"O, I don't want to be skipper," said Winifred; "that implies responsibility, but I'd like to give general directions at the start that we are not to have any programme whatever, but to go where we like."

"O, no, if you'll excuse me, not even where we like," interposed Carroll, "because that implies purpose and forethought which in turn implies exertion, and that by so much impairs the bliss of perfect indolence."

"You are right," she said. "Papa shall do it for us. He is to give sealed orders to Tom, not to be opened until we are outside, and to be implicitly followed on penalty of court martial for mutiny."

"That's a good plan," said Perceval, "I would like that. You might intrust them to me, major, and I'll see that their secrecy is respected."

Perceval's intimation that he expected to be of the party naturally disgusted Carroll, while Winifred, too

kindhearted to say disagreeable things, even to Perceval, who, to put it mildly, she thought a dreadful bore, looked imploringly at her father.

The latter, however, in the furtherance of his own plans, had anticipated her.

"They will probably go half-way across the Atlantic before they are done with it," said he.

Perceval grew a little pale. He had thought only of a day's excursion within sight of land, where in case of anything's happening, he could be rescued or contrive to get ashore. He shrank from this prospect of ocean perils to the precious casket of important public information, labeled Augustus Perceval. He owed a duty to his fellow citizens not to endanger it, and in a self-sacrificing tone, replied:

"O, is that the programme? I am very sorry, but my engagements will not permit me to be gone so long as that."

"It is too bad," said Brewster, you would enjoy it so much."

"It's not polite to urge him," said Tom, who had just come down to breakfast. "He detests the sea, and if we have any such weather as we had the middle of July, 1869, and '73, most of you will wish you had n't come."

"It's impossible for me even to think of going," said Perceval, quite demoralized by these attacks.

"I'll send a message to Aunt Josephine and the girls immediately," said Winifred rising from the table, while the others strolled into the library.

"By the way," said Perceval, dropping into a chair

after handing them a light for their cigars, and drawing a sigh of contentment with the excellent breakfast he had just disposed of, "I had a talk with Congressman Bunkery, from the state of 'Injanner.' He spoke at Norwich last night. You know him I suppose." "O yes," said Carroll, "I've seen him in his native jungle."

"Well, do you know, he's a man, I should say, that can lay over most of our statesmen and give 'em odds. I said to him, 'Bunkery, my dear fellow, how is it you get such a powerful hold on these public questions. I wish I could do it.' 'O it's mighty easy, my dear boy,' said he. 'Study it out, study it out. These shylocks and gold-bugs pretend it's a work for a lifetime, but that's all humbug. It's because they don't want anybody else to look into it and expose em.'"

"Yes, I have talked with him," said Carroll, amused at Perceval's assumption of familiarity with this eminent western statesman, "and he told me how he did it. He said to me: "One evening after I got 'the boys' all tucked up snug and warm in their little post offices, I felt pretty well used up, as you can imagine. I was too tired for billiards and there was no theater worth going to, so I thought I'd just sit down and take a shy at this finance business they were talking so much about. I stepped up to Trottem's room—boarded in the same house with me, you know, and claimed to be posted—and I asked him for a book or two. I sort 'o looked through 'em and got all the ideas I could make any use of. It's easy enough, said Bunkery, if you only know how. I should think somebody

might write a little tract and call it 'Finance Before Bed-Time,' I'd guarantee it a big sale. There'd be three or four hundred congressmen to begin with, and as many more candidates.'"

In spite of the sober way in which Carroll thus burlesqued the politicians who (in 18—)affected to despise the importance of studying politics and finance, Perceval began to see that this visitor was ridiculing his admiration of his new idol.

"What are you talking about?" asked Brewster, abruptly, laying down his book.

"I was telling about Bunkery," said Perceval, a little abashed; "he's just from the west. It's delightful to hear him talk."

"I wish he'd fish on his own side of the stream," said Brewster; "you can't catch much with *his* bait down this way."

"Bunkery's the most sincere admirer of self-government I know of," said Carroll; "he does n't even believe that the verb should be governed by the nominative case; at least one would think he did n't, *to hear him talk.*"

"Well," retorted Perceval, excited and irritated, "I'm a strict party man, and *I* do n't believe in criticizing the fellows that pull with me, or in finding fault with my party, or making a parade of my virtue, by a great to-do about its badness. It's a fouling of one's own nest, in my opinion. I believe in my party; it's my religion, my church, and my Bible, and I swear by whatever it says. I go in for sticking to it, and standing by it, and by the men in it, What's the use of holding them up to ridicule? You

can 't keep a party together in that way. It only hurts the party—when these nice miss-nancyish fellows are allowed to turn up their delicate noses at the men who do all the dirty—I would say the work—and take all the hard knocks. Where 'll your party be? No sir; I say, if there 's any hard talking to be done about our folks, let the other fellows do it. They 'll do it fast enough. It 's not my business to go pokin' round for bad spots and calling on everybody to come and see 'em."

"Yes," said Carroll, amused at Perceval's zeal, "it 's almost as bad as it is for the churches."

"Well," said Perceval, after a long pause, "Bunkery said one thing last night that gave me an idea."

"I'm glad to hear it," said Brewster, "that is the most extraordinary thing I ever knew any one to say of him."

But Perceval, not relishing any further encounters, strolled off without repeating Bunkery's wisdom.

"I can 't be absent more than a week or ten days, if you please," said Carroll. "I must be laying out my work for the fall."

"If the question is not impertinent, what do you intend doing?" asked Brewster, carelessly.

"Not in the least," replied Carroll, with affected unconcern. "In truth, I do n't know. I think it would take the wisdom of Solomon *in re* the two women and the child to decide me."

"If I remember rightly, he proposed splitting the difference," answered Brewster. "That is a good way when you 're much in doubt."

Carroll made no reply but sat intently musing and his face, a tolerably frank one, betrayed his perplexity. Brewster's quick eye noticed it, and he said quietly:

"Abuse plaintiff's attorney!"

Carroll, uncomfortable at having his thoughts read so easily, pretended not to understand.

"Why," said Brewster, "attack their candidate!"

"Yes," replied Carroll, "that's always safe;"—"and not so embarrassing," he thought.

Demoralization was setting in rapidly. Brewster's domestic frankness, his confidential deference to Carroll's own ideas about the Western politician and his private confession of the humbug he publicly honored, flattered Carroll's vanity. He accepted, and was eager to accept this attitude as proof of Brewster's being at least only half as black as he was painted, and in case of his election, of his disappointing both friends and foes. He was eagerly looking for any signs of the virtues he deemed cardinal in a public man; and, had Brewster taken the trouble to array himself in the silk stockings, knee-breeches and cocked-hat of the Fathers of the Republic, Carroll, in his present temper, was almost capable of accepting him as *one* of them—redolent with their antique uprightness and haughty honesty.

But he was prevented from taking the final plunge by the free audience he was still disposed to give his conscience;—or perhaps it was his pride which clamored for a hearing. When he began to listen he was not a little startled at his memory which stood up in his miniature court and testified to his past career.

It recited his speech on the "silver craze" which he

had described as one of those "gusts of folly" which at times sweep away great masses of people—level heads among them, too. Many, he said, were innocent victims of this delusion, but there were not lacking those whose relish for dishonesty under some harmless phrase, is like the craving for alcohol under the name of "stomach bitters." Their love for the old silver dollar was very touching and rose in fervor as the value of the dollar fell. They baptized it, "the dollar of the fathers," and like magi, from the west, instead of the east, fell down and worshiped it. Gold, they said, was a false and craven deity, which left its worshipers in the lurch. *Their* deity could work miracles, the chief of which, according to Carroll, was to pay a hundred cents of debt with eighty cents of metal. The mint had been pouring out millions a year. Other civilized nations had ceased coining it. Let the Americans and Chinese keep at it! they said. Attempts had been made to return to a gold basis, but the old cry of contraction and the suffering it entailed had frightened time-serving congressmen from drying up the silver stream. It will drive gold from the country, and the paper money, redeemable in silver, will fall below par. Betting will take the place of commerce; the values of everything, or rather the prices of everything will advance—all but wages, as usual they will straggle in the rear. *That's* what you said, said memory, the witness.

"Yes," said Carroll, "that was putting it pretty strong."

And then, continued his memory, there are your



remarks on the revival of the paper money mania. You said that, vigorous and lusty, it will spring to life again. "See," its advocates will say,—that's the way you put it, echoed his memory,—“see what has come from the so-called depreciation of silver! Prices have advanced, and prosperity has flown in upon us as rich harvests follow the flood of the Nile. The working classes have not yet felt it, because the fields of speculation, near the source and first reached by the flood, absorbed all its benefits. *We* want a deluge which will irrigate the whole community. By skillful playing on these themes, you said, the American public will find itself plunged into another discussion as to whether half a loaf is better than no bread.

He was hopelessly committed against all schemes for issuing inflated paper and getting it into circulation; as well as against Brewster's methods, and machinery. Yet now, he proposed putting this behind him, and turning away from the duty to which his honest foresight and his talents assigned him. His objections to the opposition party did not release him from a sense of his moral obligations to his other principles. In his conscientious moods he had always felt that the duty of even a disgusted patriot was to see that right principles had a champion, leaving all other consequences to a power beyond his own. Notwithstanding this it appeared to him just now, an easy matter to keep silence when silence might buy so much. Feeling Brewster's presence unfavorable to the calm review which this crisis in his life called for, he went out for a solitary walk.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE STRUGGLE.

SOON after leaving Brewster's house, Carroll encountered two men in earnest conversation. On his coming up, they separated, and Mr. Stratton's ruddy face, with its snow-white drapery of hair and beard, was smiling on Carroll, while his hearty grasp gave him friendly greeting.

"You're at Brewster's, I understand. I should have been happy to have seen you, or to see you now, at my house."

"The days have slipped away," replied Carroll, "and I've intended every morning to leave on the evening train; and every night to be off in the morning."

"Brewster's carrying things with a high hand," continued Stratton. "There's Jaycox, one of his men, just left me: one of his best men too; who, besides knowing his business, is reflective and has unusual insight into affairs. He dares to speak his mind, and is not led away by these will-o'-the-wisps that cheat so many of his fellows. So Brewster trumps up something about his being too expensive a man, and kicks him out. The real reason is that the man's conscience won't let him choke down the truth

that's in him, and Brewster proposes to starve him. Excuse me for rattling on about a person whose hospitality you are enjoying, but I'm too indignant to keep still."

"Perhaps I can do something for the man," said Carroll.

"No, I think not. Brewster won't take him back—certainly not unless he promises to keep quiet."

"And won't he do that?" asked Carroll, eagerly.

"Do it? Why, it stirs all that's good in a man to hear him. He's in much distress. His wife, whom he loves and nurses with great tenderness, is absolutely dependent on his earning a considerable income, and as he stood there, just now, talking about his future, I saw the moisture in his eyes. He wanted me to lend him a small sum and take a mortgage on his house. I refused any security, and then *he* refused to borrow, except for his current expenses. He's heroic!"

"Yes," said Carroll, his eyes so intent upon the ground that he suddenly felt guilty of rudeness; but he had been quite engrossed both in listening and thinking.

Here was a man who could starve, but could not submit to a muzzle; who, even to buy his bread withal, would not sell his birthright or his conscience. There *was* such a reality then as heroism and moral courage; and some men believed in it more than they believed even in food and raiment, in the lust of the flesh and the eye, and in the pride of life. He, too, had always believed in it; but he had never before had to determine

how much he believed in it. All these things had been added unto him, to begin with, and he had not been obliged to seek the kingdom of heaven before he got them.

Apologizing for his abstracted manner to Mr. Stratton, who stood wondering what had become of his usual high and jovial spirits, and exchanging some commonplace remarks, he took his leave, and turned back to Brewster's house. He strode rapidly along with that free swing of his—apparently meaning to acquire a momentum which would carry him quite through the resisting atmosphere of enticement now environing him. He would make some excuse for instant departure, dismiss his dreams, and be a free man once more.

But he was not over the threshold when this fine temper began softening. He was greeted by the rural ease and hospitality of the half-open front door, bestowing a happy independence of the draw-bridges and port-cullises which life in a large city erects. Open, too, was the wide door-way of the parlor. He heard a sweet voice singing Burns' song "O! wert thou in the cauld blast," set to Mendelssohn's music. She had nearly finished, and he stopped a moment—

"The desert were a paradise,  
If thou wert there, if thou wert there."

Down the long room in the recess near the window where the grand piano stood, he saw the pale blue dress against the background of lace curtains, which the gentle breeze waved into alternate light and shadow, and the crown of warm brown hair in the hea-

ven's own light which surrounds fair women. All this refinement and beauty of life swept into rough oblivion the figure of the workingman. Its sturdy crudeness, its valiant but uncouth outlines, were out of place here; they jarred upon his taste, making him impatient with the admiration they had just raised within him.

"How warm it is growing!" she said, rising as he entered; "though I do n't dislike warm weather, I am longing to get out on the water. There's the freshness and the sense of knowing that you're going nowhere, and that it does n't make the slightest difference when you get there. I hope you like it as much as I do."

"Yes," he said; "though I had not quite decided I ought to go—"

"Of course you ought to go," said she, with an air of sincerity; and then, changing from her breezy confidence to gentle complaint, added: "Though to be sure that's not a very enthusiastic way of talking about an intended pleasure excursion."

This was all so charming that, instead of finishing his sentence, he was half ashamed of having begun it. He had drawn near and was leaning on the piano looking as if he wished this might go on forever; with no torment of choice and duty; only an uninterrupted delight really worth calling life. Winifred, noticing his hesitation, said anxiously:

"I hope there's no question of ought or ought not, in the case, for that would make me a kind of Rhine maiden tempting you—" (they had been talking of

the German legend the night before), "and that is far from what I would like to be; but I have no doubt," she added in a lighter mood, "you can well be trusted against myself."

A thousand emotions were stirred within him; though he himself lacked the fine edge which only the hardest metal can take, the strength of *her* conscience made him the more anxious to win her.

"O, no," he replied, "there's nothing to prevent my going," and so she turned and sat down to the piano again, saying, "Tom went down by train this morning, to get everything ready, and we can follow when we like."

Three hours afterward Jaycox was trudging up the path to his house carrying a basket laden with household supplies and delicate medicinal preparations for his wife. He felt depressed at the necessity of his borrowing, and at the solemn prospect of further idleness; but he grew calmer and stronger in resisting the thought of surrendering what seemed to most men his quixotic whims. The noise of wheels in the road attracted him, and turning, he caught a glimpse of a swiftly-rolling barouche; a pair of glossy, spirited gray horses; Miss Winifred; and by her side a gentleman of manly proportions and a bright, frank, still youthful face. In a few seconds they were out of sight on the cross-street which led to the railroad station.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE CONQUEST.

THE morning after the return of the yachting party Carroll said, "I must go."

"Ah!" said Major Brewster, who had also returned the night before, "we shall be sorry."

"Thank you, but I must begin my work."

"Every man knows his own business. So I never urge anybody to stay, after he says he must go. Of all bores your hospitable bore who undertakes to belittle the importance of your movements is the worst."

"I must prepare myself for the campaign," said Carroll. "I shall take your advice about attacking the other side. I intend making continuous appointments until election."

"That is a pretty long pull," replied Brewster.

"I'm quite equal to it," said Carroll; "I shall undertake to serve as faithfully—as if things had turned out differently two months ago, only under the peculiar circumstances, I must do it in my own way."

"Certainly," said Brewster approvingly; "you can shape your own course far better than I or any one else can do it for you."

Miss Winifred, protected from the cool morning breeze by a light, white knit shawl, was walking on the veranda. The week on the water had added a shade of healthful color to her delicate face, which with her dignified and graceful figure, her pretty way of stopping to greet the honeysuckles that, like Romeo, had clambered up to caress her, touched Carroll deeply, and mingled with his delight at seeing her, a pang at parting from her.

"I have come," he said, "to take what I wish I did not have to take—from you!"

"What is that?" she asked.

"My leave."

"I'm very sorry, indeed, Mr. Carroll; though I was afraid it was my advice," she added laughingly. "But you are not in earnest about going?"

"Yes," he said, "though I should be much more in earnest about staying, if it were possible."

"It's hardly complimentary, Mr. Carroll, to run away the very moment you touch dry land. It looks as if you had been a prisoner aboard the yacht."

"On the contrary, one feels quite free on the water, where business, public opinion, and conventionalities can't lay hands on you; on solid ground you are a slave again."

"Women feel those subtler kinds of oppression, but it seems to me if I were a man, I would not submit to them."

"O, men aren't half so free and independent as they pretend. Between you and me, though we boast a good deal, we are a set of impostors, and such skill-



ful and practical impostors that we often deceive *ourselves*."

"Do you think *that* requires much skill? Men are never free from vanity, at any rate."

"Well, we must be quite hopeless if we are not *sometimes* emancipated from that weakness."

"I would really like to know when;—in the millennium, or the next world, perhaps."

"When a woman like yourself, says honestly what she thinks of us."

"For one, I have n't vanity enough to believe it."

"Well," he said, holding out his hand, and retaining hers until she withdrew it; "I am *not* free, and I must go. I cannot tell you how much I am indebted for the pleasure of the last two weeks."

"Thank you! You are very good to say so. I hope you won't try, because we owe you so much more, we should be embarrassed for a reply."

She warded off his expressions of feeling so pleasantly, that he could not gain a foothold for his purpose. He was almost tempted to break through her delicate reserve and tell her of his love and his hopes, but her very sweetness and refinement warned him against any impetuosity likely to shock her. So, hoping for a better opportunity, and, for the sake of touching her hand, bidding her good-bye again, he stepped into the carriage and was driven away.

"How pleasant he is!" she thought, as he disappeared, and she entered the house. "What a dismal line of carriages!" she added, looking at the half-dozen dark heavy vehicles drawn up at the side of the house,

from which a score of men, in two separate squads, had alighted, and were already holding conference with her father.

The first was a deputation of the Northwest Labor League, with several foolscap sheets of confidence in their tried and trusted leader, as per resolution. This "filled" him "with pride;" he had ever been "on the side of down-trodden and tax-eaten labor," and it should have relief, etc., etc.

At this point his secretary announced the honorable Knights of Eastern Labor.

"Let them wait!" said the Major, impatiently; "don't you see I am engaged on important business with these honorable gentlemen from the West?" Whereupon the gentlemen of the Northwestern Labor League flattered themselves that they knew a workman's friend when they saw him.

The secretary went into the ante-room and informed the representative Knights of Eastern Labor that Major Brewster would be with them the very moment he could dismiss some visitors who, much to his regret, were detaining him. The words of the well-trained private secretary aroused in the breasts of the Eastern Labor Representatives, no slight contempt for the useless persons in the next room stupidly wasting the great man's time.

They were soon admitted to his presence, and in a brief space went away with the comfortable assurance that Brewster's party had made no mistake in the selection of a champion, and that his was the only establishment which even pretended to furnish the mar-

ket with a pure article of reform, put up in the original packages, with the genuine signature and trade-mark on the wrapper.

When a delegation from the spinners and other operatives of the Roxbury Company was announced, just before noon, the Major did not appear so anxious to welcome *these* representatives of "the horny-handed sons of toil," for he suspected they had come on different business.

Their leader was William Britton, a tall, massive fellow of dark, but, considering his indoor life, fresh complexion, with curling black hair, and sharp black eyes. The mental acuteness in his face was shaded by a look of craft, as if one artist should superimpose his own characteristic portraiture upon that of another. Legends were extant of his almost colossal strength—of his feats in stopping machinery by main force, and of holding men and bags of wool at arm's length—exaggerations, probably.

"The 'Rox' people want an advance of ten per cent. after the 15th," he said.

"Is that your discontent, or theirs?" asked Brewster, almost haughtily.

"Let *them* say!" he replied, nodding his head toward his comrades. One of them, a good deal in awe of his employer, said with an air of timidity:

"Things are going up, sir, and we can't make both ends meet at the end of the month."

"Sorry, sorry!" said Brewster, "but it will always be so, as long as we have banker's money, instead of workingman's money, and no reform in the Govern-

ment. You'll have nothing to complain of as soon as we have the power to help you. I am willing to raise wages the very moment I can get the right kind of money to do it with. I can not afford it now."

"We can't afford to wait," said Britton.

"But," Brewster continued, "in the present state of affairs, I'm scarcely getting anything out of it myself—nothing to speak of."

"The mill is paying twelve per cent. clear," broke in Britton.

"Oh! is it?" said the Major sarcastically. "I'm glad to hear it. And since you know so much about it, perhaps you will be so good as to tell where all the money has gone to. Perhaps it's so profitable you would like to take it and run it. I'll sell any day cheap for cash."

"Perhaps we *would*," muttered Britton, as he walked away with his companions. "and we will some day." And he slightly lifted his shoulders as if he were measuring his strength.

"I think it would be well to keep an eye on him," suggested Lawrence Danforth. "They tell me he's the son of an English socialist, and has enormous ideas of what he is to accomplish as the leader of the workmen. He causes a good deal of discontent among them, and has learned his trade, they say, only for the advantage it gives of influencing them. He is quite looked up to by them, and looks a good deal higher himself."

"He's not much to be feared," replied Brewster; "at any rate he is too useful just now for me to afford

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to quarrel with him. I only wanted him to understand that *I* would take none of his impertinence." So saying he rang his table gong.

"Robert, tell Miss Winifred I would like to see her a few minutes in the library!"

In a short time Robert reappeared. "Miss Winifred has gone for a walk, sir."

## CHAPTER XI.

## WINIFRED'S CANVASS.

DRESSED, according to her father's suggestion, in a pretty blue cambric, thread gloves, and a leghorn hat plainly trimmed, Winifred was tripping daintily along the elm and maple-lined street, when she saw Dean Stratton opposite. The young man stared at her new guise as if he failed to recognize her; then a broad smile and a quick movement across the road announced that he had solved the puzzle.

"Good morning! Sister Winifred," said he, holding out his hand half-confidentially; "do the rules of the convent allow a worldly young man like me to speak to you?"

He addressed her in a bantering mood, but his eyes looked lovingly into hers; though he had never spoken of love to her, she had, in the many years of their common growth, become very dear to him. Her maidenliness blushed at his glance, and she cast down her eyes until he could scarcely see them glistening through the fringe of her long eye-lashes, like the gleam of water under the overhanging foliage of the bank. Recovering herself, she said:

"I did not know you were one of these insipid

ladies' men that always know what people have on, and miss another person's ruffle or ribbon as they'd miss a button of their own."

"I see *every* change in you, Winifred," he replied, in tones that thrilled her. "But why *this* change?" he went on, more lightly; "you look pretty in it, of course. You could n't wear anything you would n't look pretty in; but this excessive sobriety—what is it, a penance or a vow?"

Winifred, instinctively averse even to hinting at the cause of the change in her toilet, mockingly replied:

"Really now, if you are getting to notice these frivolous things, I shall have done with you. I do n't want any man-milliners or dress-makers about, I assure you."

He laughed in turn, asking:

"May I walk with you?"

A look of pain came into her face and she said with effort:

"No, if you'll excuse me;" then relenting, she added, "at least only as far as the post-office."

"I am sorry to hear that our fathers are no longer friends," he said, "but of course that can't touch our friendship."

"Of course not," she replied, hesitating slightly. "It's only politics and will very soon pass away, but for the present, father feels so strongly on the subject that my walking with you much, would compromise him and me."

His face was gloomy as he replied:

“It is all nonsense. What have *we* to do with their rows?”

“Very little,” she said, “but he is my father, and I cannot even *seem* to go contrary to his interests. Don’t think hard of me, Dean!”

“I will never think hard of you, Winifred, but I think it’s very hard luck,” said the young man, raising his hat and bidding her good-bye.

On the platform in front of the post-office, stood a stalwart fellow of Dean’s own age. On seeing Stratton take leave of her, and perceiving their evident interest in each other, Britton muttered to himself:

“Wait a bit, you fine-haired monkey! There are others as good as you will have their turn some day. It would be the makin’ of such a pup to knock the stuffin’ out of him.”

Winifred’s kind look and the word of thanks she had once given Britton in the factory for opening the heavy outside door which the wind held fast, had roused daring hopes and bitter jealousy within him; even those who knew him, little dreamed of his ambitions.

Winifred, somewhat saddened by her thoughts, walked on. She felt assured that her father’s injunction against having anything more to do with the Strattons had special reference to her intimacy with Dean, which began so early in their toddling lives she could not remember its origin. She used to wait at the gate for him in the morning and return from school with him in the afternoon. The river, now a sullen stream stained and murky with the refuse dye-stuffs



from the factories, was then half brook, half torrent, through which he paddled, barefoot, while she, holding his hand, leaped across from stone to stone.

Saturday afternoons they roamed the woods in search of the trailing arbutus, violets, and spring beauties, or the bitter-sweet, the clematis, the golden-rod and fringed-gentian, "blue-eyed pet of blue-eyed lover." Her laugh was merry and free. She was by no means a prim little maiden in those days, yet always tender, and compliant even in her romps. She went with the boys to catch frogs, played "I spy" and "Hide-and-seek," or celebrated her cats' funerals, at which she was generally the only sincere mourner, Dean regarding them as a good joke and a burlesque of what was always too solemn and oppressive to him. Winifred's aunt who, until her marriage, took the mother's place in the household, frowned upon this wild life. But the father frowned in turn at the aunt.

"Let her romp as much as she likes," he said: "her mother was not strong, and she needs all the health she can store up."

But this came to an end when Dean, going to college and Winifred to boarding-school, felt the restraints which their wider experiences put upon the confidences of youth.

After passing the post office she went on to a little settlement of cottages at the other end of the street. One of them with its green blinds and a small portico of green lattice-work at the front door, was "grandfather" Cleland's. A path of white gravel, bordered with many colored flowers, ran from the white picket

gate to the door. An acre of ground attached was devoted largely to vegetables which the old gentleman said he cultivated, for the "home market" principally, meaning his own table. In the open window stood boxes and pots of flowers, and at the portico hung iron baskets of plants. The principal room was plainly furnished. A few books, including a leathern-covered bible, which the old man used for a razor-strop Sunday morning and nodded over in the afternoon, "Elements of Drawing" and a History of the Civil War lay on a set of corded shelves. There was an engraving or two on the walls, and a vilely colored print—though its value was priceless to young Mrs. Cleland—depicting in fire that was redder than the blood, with horses more fiery than the fire, and men thicker than the smoke, the battle at which her husband was, for his bravery, promoted to a second lieutenantcy. In one corner stood a sewing-machine, in another an artist's easel and a low pine-table belonging to her crippled son, who though approaching manhood, seemed with his dwarfed stature and crooked legs, to be waiting in protracted youth, for a form befitting his manly years. To this table he screwed the odd pieces of oak and black walnut which he used in learning to carve. The support of him and herself had always depended upon her earnings. Young Cleland, her husband, had just served his apprenticeship at clock-making when the war broke out. He was killed in the very last skirmish after nearly all the main bodies of the confederates had surrendered. The boy was yet unborn, when, on reading the telegram announcing her husband's death, she fell in a dead faint upon the floor.

She loved this boy passionately, loved him all the more because he had been defrauded of the strength and joy of boyhood. She took unalloyed pleasure in looking at his intelligent gray eyes, his well-shaped mouth, and his round forehead, on which his chestnut curls thickly clustered. She listened with wonder at what seemed to her, his quaint speeches; and her hard, ill-paid work was rewarded by his confiding affection and budding artistic talents. He was not nine years old, when with a pair of scissors and a sheet of brown paper he formed startlingly vivid figures of men and trees, and animals,—gymnasts, a funeral procession, a rearing horse, deer chased by the hounds, whose heads were sticking over the hill in hot pursuit.

Three or four years before, a clerkship in the Treasury Department at Washington, had been procured for his mother. She discharged its duties with fidelity and capacity; but was, without warning removed one day, because Congressman Pingree, of Ohio, wanted a reelection. One of his "men," on whom he had greatly relied to "work up" his district, suddenly "balked," as Pingree remarked, demanding assurances of something more substantial than Pingree had yet given him. So Mrs. Cleland had "to go" to make a place for Pingree's man's sister-in-law. The head of her bureau wrote her a letter of regret, testifying to her faithfulness and ability, and entirely disclaiming responsibility for a change alike unjust to her and injurious to the service. After her return to her home in Roxbury, some further efforts had been made in her behalf; but as yet vainly. On the expiration of

Congressman Pingree's term, her restoration to the place was hoped for, and in this expectancy, she had refrained from undertaking any work—indeed her years of routine official life had seriously unfitted her for other occupation—and by means of her sewing-machine she secured only a mere pittance.

It was with the greatest difficulty that old Cleland kept up the payments of interest on the place they began buying with the little money saved from the young lieutenant's pay. While prices were rising after the war, the old man had several chances to sell it, but, imagining always that he could do better, he was unwilling to let it go. The panic of 1873 dashed the poor weak man to pieces, and, from that time, he gave up hopes of ever ridding himself of his burden. He felt as if a growing tumor were destined, the rest of his days, to weigh him to the earth.

Winifred's mother had, during her young orphanage, taken a warm interest in Mrs. Cleland. She had sent her to school, and in the vacations given her a home. Winifred was too young to know her, but, subsequently apprised of this intimacy, renewed the acquaintance in Washington, and lately by occasional visits to the cottage.

Mrs. Cleland sat plying her machine, a large pile of blue "overalls" lying on the floor. Young Cleland, in his low wheeled-chair, with palette and brushes, was filling in a sketch he had just been making. The old man, tired of his hot morning's drudgery, had nodded off to sleep at the window, lopping in an armed rocking chair, whose hard wooden bottom was relieved

by a feather cushion, the slippery corpulence of which would have startled an unwonted sitter with the belief that a maternal fowl had already established a squatter sovereignty over the sedentary privileges of the chair. The wind gently fanned his gray hair. It being the last of the week, his face was covered with a thick, white stubble, which increased the wan look of fatigue and care, that did not slip off even in the oblivion of sleep.

After greeting Adelaide and her son, Winifred turned to the old man, who had waked up, and asked after his health.

"Tolable! tolable! only tolable, only tolable. Squeezed een-a-most ter *death* by the hard times: waitin' for the major's election; then we'll hev a little easin' up, I guess.

"I hope so," said Winifred; "I hear everybody saying so, and it frightens me. There may be some mistake and disappointment, and then how they will talk about him. I wish he were n't a politician."

"Robert always liked him," said Mrs. Cleland; "he thought he took care of his men. If women voted, I would vote for him, for Robert's and your mother's sake; but I do n't understand these questions."

"I do n't think that ever hinders men from voting," said the youth.

"Have you enough work?" asked Winifred, kindly, and her son replied:

"She's enough work, but such little pay. Why is it that hard work does n't bring more money? Grandpa works from morning till night, and she seems to

work from night till morning, for she 's at it when I go to sleep and when I wake up."

"'T would be easy 'nuff," said the old man, in piping-voice, "if 't wa 'n't that the house is shingled from the eaves to the ridge pole with a mortgage; but when it takes all I can rake and scrape just to save it from slippin' out o' my hands, and losin' nearly all I have put into it the last fifteen year! It 's hard, it 's mighty hard; an' that 's why *I 'm* in favor o' plenty o' money. After I 'm out of my *trouble*, I 'll go agin enny more."

"I do n't know much about these things, Winifred," said Mrs. Cleland, "but, if when he 's president your father can help us as he says he can, I look forward to it as if I were coming into a fortune; if he can 't, it will be a bitter disappointment, and it 's very cruel of him to pretend he can."

"Father *never* would do so cruel a thing," replied Winifred, "you don 't *know* how kind he is. *No* girl ever had a father like *him*. I can 't remember his speaking a harsh word to me. I am almost afraid to say I want anything—it seems like taking advantage of him. He hardly gives me a chance. He 's not capable of deceiving *anybody*; I 'm *sure*. Of course, in politics they say all kinds of hard things about him, but it 's because they do not know him as I do, or they never would."

The young girl was so aglow with her candid and unselfish enthusiasm that her father had not in all the ranks of those who, actuated by hopes of reward, were laboring for him, so effective a "canvasser."

"I always thought so," said Adelaide. "He was always kind to your mother, always pleasant and attentive."

"That's not the only thing," interrupted the old man, following the course of his thoughts instead of the conversation. "He's helped us—specially Adelaide; he's allus been kind to Adelaide; but he's lost his place; been talkin' too much, talkin' too much; some people are allus wantin' to talk; it never does a body any good, as I can make out."

"O, never mind that now, father," said Adelaide.

"I wonder if Arthur remembers how the brook and old mill and the old bridge looked when he was a boy?" asked Winifred, suddenly.

"Very well. I used to sketch it. I think I've got some of them now, though they are pretty rude."

"I wish you would paint it for me," she said, slipping the contents of her purse into Adelaide's hand, and whispering, "That is all I have with me, and it's only an installment. I would like it as a souvenir very much indeed," she added, aloud.

The tears came into the mother's eyes at this delicate expression of the young girl's sympathy, and at her recognition of her son's talents.

"You are your mother's daughter, Miss Winifred. She always seemed happier making other people happy than those she made so."

"I love to hear you say that. I'd like nothing so much in all the world as to be like her and leave so sweet a memory; with so many to speak of me gently and gratefully, as they all do even to this day. I will

come again soon," she added, with her charming smile, and kissing, with almost sisterly affection, the poor woman to whom the brief sunshine of her presence was so warm and reviving.

The old man, rising as she went out, dropped a letter he had forgotten to deliver to his daughter. Catching sight of the Washington postmark, Adelaide seized it and broke it open. It announced her reappointment to her old place, dating from the middle of the succeeding month. The heavy burden of anxiety that had for two long years rested heavily upon her seemed to fly up the chimney or out of the window. She burst into a little song of happiness, the color tinged her cheeks, she threw her arms almost ecstatically around her boy, and then kissed the old man's forehead.

"You shall have tools and models and teachers, my darling! You shall make your mother happy and proud of her boy! We will always live together, and I will lay by enough to give poor grandfather his home here as long as he——"

She stopped suddenly, her look of joy recoiling into her wonted anxiety. She thought, "Oh! oh! they'll be sure not to let me have it long!"



## CHAPTER XII.

## ON THE BRIDGE.

ON her way home, Winifred stopped a moment in the center of the bridge, to look over the parapet and up the stream. There had been since her childhood comparatively few changes in this neighborhood. The old grist-mill, still standing, and, for that matter, still "going," looked as if it were tumbling into the river. The moss-edged flume and the stringers atop, recalled Dean's falling into the mill race, while "bobbing for eels," one moonlight night, and her brother Tom's rescuing him. There were the three huge piles, shoring up the old mill next the bank, capped with the flour and the meal that sifted through the loose clapboards. Dean and Winifred used to call them the "deacons," because they reminded them of the three gray-haired church officials who sat in the same pew "Communion Sunday," and passed the symbols of that service.

The long poles, formerly stretching from one unhewn granite boulder to another, and forming the guards of the old bridge, were displaced by a parapet of masonry that adorned the handsome arched structure which now spanned the water. The little old

bridge lay along close to the surface of the stream, but its high-stepping successor leaped across at an aristocratic height. The convenient stones in the bed of the river had disappeared.

She stood there thinking of those old days, and the sweet peace and delight of them, the innocence of her affection for Dean, and the deeper but less tranquil emotion which was now stirred at sight and thought of him. It was the difference between the light and happy babbling of the old brook, and the sweeping current of the fuller flood that rolled beneath her.

At this moment her attention was attracted by the figure of a man who was coming toward her. With the vague hope of seeing her again, William Britton had hurried his dinner and gone out upon the street. In addition to the promptings of his self-esteem, and his confidence in his good looks, he was only consistent with his creed in believing that he was her equal and had a right to be treated as such. He stood on the steps of the post-office, awaiting her reappearance. As he descried her in the distance, he began stroking his moustache and adjusting his hat. As she came nearer he grew confused with his purpose, and his inability to devise means of carrying it out. Should he go boldly up and speak to her? She would resent it. Should he make an excuse by asking some trivial question? She would answer it and pass on, perhaps pass on without answering.

"I think I'll bow to her," he said to himself. It'll make her stare, maybe, but that won't hurt anybody.

I'm better looking than the whole batch o' swells she's used to."

At this moment she stopped, and Britton strolled toward her, affecting an ease he did not feel. He was just stepping on the bridge, and to her astonishment, acting as if he were about speaking to her, when a loud tumult arose among the crowd of operatives behind him, on their way to their work. They were looking intently up a side street which joined the main one near the bridge. Then around the corner, at frightful speed, plunged a pair of driverless horses, dragging with great leaps a farmer's heavy wagon. They wheeled upon the bridge. Winifred's hands slipped from the rounded coping of the parapet which she vainly tried to climb, and sinking helpless upon her knees, as if in supplication to the insane brutes, she shut her eyes to her dreadful fate, and whispered, "God take me!"

As in a dream or fog she saw a giant jump at the heads of the plunging horses. They sheered from him, and he caught one of their flying reins. It whirled him around, threw him down, and dragged him on the ground till it broke. It swerved the maddened brutes toward Winifred's side of the bridge. The horse nearest her madly leaped upon the parapet, falling astride of it, and launching out his heels furiously a few inches from her head.

"Get up, miss, get up!" cried Britton, running toward her.

She opened her eyes and vainly tried to rise. Was she paralyzed with fear?

The forward wheel of the heavily-loaded wagon resting upon her garments and just grazing her knee, pinned her helplessly to the floor.

Britton ran and lifted the enormous weight, straining every cord in his body, until he felt as if the ligatures were breaking.

"Get away from it, miss! as quick as you can," he muttered, for the muscular tension prevented his speaking loud.

She crawled away, and Britton lowered his burden to the ground. He held out his hand and lifted her up. She looked gratefully up in his face and smiled faintly as she rallied her strength and self-possession. Great beads of perspiration stood on his forehead, his powerful hands trembled with the strain to which he had been put.

"Are you hurt?" she asked, in timid sympathetic tones, which made him almost sorry he was not.

"No, miss, but I wonder you ain't."

By this time a crowd had gathered, and she shrank from the stares and questions of which the two were the center. She heard exclamations of pleasure and surprise at her wonderful escape, and of admiration and something like awe at Britton's strength. A great hubbub too was raised by the attempt of every eyewitness to testify to what he saw of the affair, which in his opinion, was the most important part of it.

She had to say again and again that she was unhurt; that she owed her life to "this—this—gentleman," she called him, though she was not in the habit of speaking of the operatives in those terms. In her

gratitude for her deliverance she felt as if he must be one.

"What is your name?" she asked, as she moved homeward. "My father will not forget you."

"Britton. I'm a spinner at the 'Rox.'" said he, half defiantly. "I would have saved the life of *any body*, much more *you*."

Winifred blushed deeply at the compliment boldly paid her in the hearing of a street crowd. However, she could not very well insist that a man should be qualified to risk his life for hers by first being delicate and well-bred. She had really not had time, when the horses came tearing down upon her, to select an entirely suitable rescuer.

"Father will not allow you to be forgotten," she repeated, bowing to him and walking off, he raising his hat politely to her.

Hearing that her father was at the mill, and anxious lest exaggerated rumors of her danger should reach him, she went there at once.

He stood in the vestibule talking with the superintendent about repairs. Near the door leading into the weaving-room a huge shaft, pulley, and belt communicated the power to the looms. As the women passed in and out their dresses often swept dangerously near the big wheel; why some of them had not been drawn in and dashed to pieces, was a perpetual miracle.

"Something ought to be done about that," said the superintendent. "There'll be an accident some day, and an awful row made over our negligence. It can't be covered just where it is. It ought to be moved ten feet to the right and boxed in."

"How much will it cost?" asked the major. "Two or three hundred dollars and the loss from stopping, though I suppose it might be partly done on Sunday. It's an awkward job. I'm 'fraid, we'll have to shift the shafting all through the room."

"Tell them to be careful! There is going to be a strike I think pretty soon. Then there'll be leisure."

Superintendent Clegg shook his head doubtfully, but the major said no more about it, and at this moment the operatives came pouring in. Just behind them, still pale and trembling, but glad to see that her father was not troubled about her, was Winifred. He greeted her, as he always did, with a smile.

"O, father!" she cried "I'm so glad you didn't hear. It was perfectly awful, but I was in danger less than half a minute, though it seemed like forever."

"What is it, dear? What do you mean? You in danger!" he exclaimed almost as anxious for her as if she were not safe and alive before him.

She told him what had happened and was warm and eager in her praise of Britton.

Her father frowned when his name was mentioned. He disliked him. He could not tell exactly why; perhaps because he was a rival friend and champion of the workingman's cause.

"I will reward him," said her father, smoothing her hair, which had become disordered.

While she was talking, the machinery had been set in motion. She stood directly in front of the big pulley now revolving with great speed. The draft through the mill raised and fluttered her dress, holding it tempt-

ingly out toward the belted monster, daring him to seize it, teasing him by lifting it almost within his grasp, and then dropping it again. Her father, absorbed in the story of her escape, did not at first notice this frightful coquetry, sporting with his daughter's life. Suddenly he grasped her and dragged her away. His feelings were a mixture of love, terror, and that anger which sometimes follows great fear, tempting the mother to chastise the infant she has just snatched from under the hoofs of a horse or from the brink of a well.

“Winifred! you reckless girl. Have you set out to see how badly you can frighten us! You were within an inch of being caught by that belting there! Shall I shut you up in the house?”

Then he was sorry; for she was badly shaken by her day's adventures. So he made her take his arm and they walked home to dinner. The same afternoon he ordered the place made absolutely safe without regard to cost or loss.

Dean Stratton was tortured by hearing of her danger and his inability to go and comfort her. He was even jealous of Britton's exploits and resented the praise of his strength which he had in common with oxen, and his good looks, which, with his black moustache, curling dark hair and heavy eyebrows, probably did not surpass those of Italian bandits. Combined with a flip-pant scorn and an unruly temper these endowed him with an attraction that fascinated chiefly by its suggestion of strong and reckless passions.

In the afternoon the major enclosed to Britton a

check for a hundred dollars with a well-written note of thanks. Most of the money was spent for a dinner with expensive wines to which he invited a score of his comrades, where they talked of the wrongs of the workingmen and the vices of the aristocrats.

“You ’ve got to bring ’em to terms,” said Frank Harmon. “Crowd ’em to their knees! Make ’em feel what we feel! Give ’em a turn at *our* rations and *our* work! There’s that beltin’—*that* shows how it works. I told the boss more’n once somebody ’d get their very innards tored inside out. My sister and my eldest gal went by it every day. But he only said, ‘Pooh! pooh!’ The old man would n’t hear to it. ‘Let people be careful!’ says he; but by —, the minnit that skim-milk, baby-faced young ’un came within a rod of it, everythin’ was tored up, a whole set of looms stopped, and the devil to pay gen’ully. That’s what fetches ’em! Give ’em a taste on’t themselves an’ they ’ll come to their milk, I tell you!”

Britton did not relish his comrade’s description of his employer’s pretty daughter, but was not disposed to quarrel with his views about capitalists and working-people.

In the middle of the week, the express brought a package directed to Miss Winifred Brewster. At the dinner-table she spread out a wide and elegant fan on which was painted, by a French artist, an exquisite marine view. Off a pleasant coast a graceful yacht under full sail was dashing along in the bright sunshine of a summer day. A brief note begged her acceptance, and hoped it would in a measure supply



the place of the delicious breezes that had wafted the giver such pleasure on that notable week. She could not repress her delight at the beauty and taste of the gift.

“Carroll is prompt,” said her father, slyly. “It’s less than three days since he went away. You must make suitable acknowledgment; though I suppose he might attach some significance to your acceptance of it.”

“I should be very sorry to have him,” she said, seriously, and without the faintest shade of coquetry. “You would not wish it, of course?”

“I? You know I have never uttered a syllable intended to influence you in such matters—but Mr. Carroll’s relations with me are important, and I should not like to have you disturb them. I would be glad to have you forward them, if”—he added, seeing a shadow flit across her face—“it were quite voluntary on your part.”

“I want to stay with you, father,” she exclaimed. “You can not do without me—or at least you are to think you can’t; and I’ll not open your eyes by going away. When Mr. Carroll sends messages and presents I want you to feel jealous, and think how lonely you would be if I were to leave you to the tender mercies of pious Mrs. Griggs, our housekeeper, and her ‘Daily Food.’ She would make you learn a verse of scripture every morning for breakfast.”

“It’s a bargain,” said her father; “You shall not be besieged or besought, if you do not like. We’ll never dissolve the partnership; business shall be con-

ducted at the old stand, under the firm of Brewster & Daughter—no other ‘families supplied at short notice.’”

He went on in a rollicking way quite unusual with him, until she forgot what further she had intended to say on the subject which, in fact, was the purpose of his almost boisterous hilarity.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## COUNTING THE VOTE.

WITH lights ablaze, Major Brewster stood in the parlor of the Monster Hotel, New York, which for several months had been the "headquarters" of the National Committee of his party. Up to twelve o'clock he had remained at his private house, whither the dispatches had been sent from the "headquarters;" but, growing impatient with this second-hand method of procuring information, he had, after midnight, been driven to the rooms of the committee.

The carpet of the hotel was so covered with "campaign documents"—copies of speeches and party "platforms"—and with scraps of writing-paper and envelopes, that its figure was nearly hidden under the mimic snow-storm. Three or four tables were littered with pens, ink-stands, pencils, telegraph-messages, and sheets of paper covered with figures. The grave, silent groups of men, and the irregular attitude of the chairs, gave the whole apartment an air of by-gone tumult. Through an atmosphere, more or less clouded with tobacco smoke, one could see in an adjoining room a table, covered with relics of cold meat and oysters, cups with stains of coffee, glasses with

heel-taps of champaign, broken biscuit, salad, and half-emptied dishes of fruit.

In the main room a tinge of wan daylight at length dimmed the flaring lamps, and cast a grayish hue upon the tired faces, suggestive of declining health, or advancing years. The hands of the clock pointed to a quarter of six. The silence was almost awesome, as each disappointed face looked solemnly into its neighbor's. Major Brewster brought this to a close by saying to the politicians, secretaries, and two newspaper reporters, lingering for the latest news.

"Well, gentlemen; all roads lead to Rome, and we have tried but one. Let's go to bed and start again to-morrow, or rather this afternoon."

So saying, with bright eye, and firm, clear voice, he dismissed them, and ordering himself to be called at midday, was sound asleep before the dawn had fairly streaked the eastern sky.

It was the dawn of the morning after the election. For twelve hours, half the North American continent had been the scene of a concentrated mental activity unequalled, perhaps, at any other time or place. Two hundred thousand men, more or less, had, between dark and sunrise, been finding out what eight millions had already done between sunrise and dark. During these vigils they counted, tallied, checked, copied, ran to and fro, sent, received, corrected, added, subtracted, percentaged, printed. Men on horseback, messengers in vehicles, had, by the light of the stars, ridden over lonely mountain roads, or along prairie tracks, bringing the "returns" from excommunicated towns to the

nearest telegraph stations. In a thousand telegraph offices, from dusk till dawn, the unresting instruments had, in endless repetition, clicked off the names of the candidates, and the million combinations of digits attached thereto. A regiment of editors, sodden with work and sleeplessness, ended a night of unusual toil by throwing paper, pencils, almanacs, blanks, newspaper-files, and memoranda thankfully down; while innumerable printers set the last type, and wended their way to long-coveted beds; the glow of the horizon flushing even their pale, leaden complexions, bleached by years of sunlessness and hot, bad air.

On this bright, crisp November morning, the sun, whose engagements elsewhere the night before forbade his staying to overlook the counting at the polls and perhaps prevent "mistakes," had made haste, as if anxious about the result, to return at break of day, and receive, in all the larger places, the loud, shrill welcome of those city chanticleers—the newsboys. He looked cheerfully in upon the breakfast tables and saw innumerable cups of coffee growing cold, and the temper of countless wives growing warm, as the husband, unheedful of both, sat absorbing the telegraphic columns of the morning paper. Its broad pages had broken out with the numerals of Arabia; for even Bunkery's ingenuity had failed to invent a native American system of figures, and the humiliation of resorting to foreign symbols was forced upon the unselfish patriot in common with the knavish "Shylock" and the avaricious "gold-bug."

The essence of all this marvelous complexity of

voluntary human agency working to a unity of purpose and result, was summed up in one official dispatch from Senator Joslyn, commander-in-chief of the other party. His experienced glance, sweeping the vast field which the telegraph had mapped out before him, announced that the returns from all the States showed an equal number of electoral votes for each candidate, and a consequent failure of choice by the people. This would throw the election into the House of Representatives, where, if his opponents counted the votes fairly, of which there was no assurance, Brewster would be defeated. Joslyn had, as he threatened, put Brewster in the "nineholes."

It was upon the receipt of this bulletin, that Brewster, bidding his friends good-morning, went to his sweet repose.

The same afternoon he set out for Roxbury, arriving in time for supper. Early in the morning he sent for Clegg, the superintendent, and putting aside all that gentleman's allusions to the election, said:

"What have you got for me? I've done with the past—at least for the present."

Clegg, after exhibiting numerous invoices, vouchers and drafts, handed him the check-book with several checks ready for his signature. After which he drew out two or three broken letters.

"Here are some complaints," said Clegg;—"all in the same line. They want to know what's the matter. They hope it'll be better after the election."

"What *is* the matter?" asked Brewster.

"The nnish isn't what it used to be. Paxton,

Brunswick and Company say we must be working up the sheep whole, or we 'd get the mutton tallow out: I suppose it's the oil. The scouring's bad and the fine-drawing is n't what it should be."

"Well, Clegg, it is pretty impudent in you to come to me with these things. It's your business to see to the work. Why don't you get help that will do it well?"

"I had a man—one of the best I know of—and you made me dismiss him. I'd like to take him back."

"Who is that?"

"Jaycox."

The major frowned.

"He did n't know enough to mind his own business."

"Well, now the thing's over, had n't we better get him back?" asked Clegg.

"Take him back!" cried the major. "No, not if I have to go to making cheese cloth. I don't care *that*, on *his* account, but it would demoralize the men."

"But——"

"'But!' 'but!'" echoed Brewster. "Get a man to attend to the business and *stop* these complaints! It is my belief you've been letting the thing run along in the hopes of putting Jaycox back. I will not have any more fooling, let me tell you."

There was a good deal of truth in this, for Jaycox was so trustworthy that he relieved Clegg of anxiety and trouble, and the superintendent had been trying to do with make-shifts and force Brewster to reinstate him.

"Jaycox called on me to-day," continued Clegg, "and he's a good deal broken down. His voice was husky, and he looked thin and pinched. Says he, 'Mr. Clegg, I'm starved out. I owe more'n I'm ashamed to say. I have n't been able to get any but odd jobs, and if I go away there's no one to take care of my sick wife and the children. If there's anything'll break a man down it's the thought o' the little one's crying for a bit to eat, and nothing to give 'em; or the wife's comfort and life depending on what you can't get for her. And so, seeing the fight's over, I came to say, if you'd take me back, I'd agree to make no trouble after this.'"

"And what did you tell him?" asked Brewster, sharply.

"I said I'm afraid we can't do anything for you, but I'll put your case before the major. He's not the man to overlook a thing of the kind."

"Quite right," said the major, opening his check book. "I will help him along, but I'll not take him back."

He had just finished writing out a check when a telegram was put in his hands. Laying down his pen, opening the dispatch, hastily reading it, muttering an exclamation, taking out his watch, and turning to Clegg, he said:

"Send my man to the station to drive back your horse and buggy; I must catch the 10:30 express."

Putting on his overcoat as he walked rapidly to the street where Clegg's horse stood, he jumped into the wagon and drove at full speed to the station, stepping



on the train after it was in motion. The same evening he was at his house in the city.

The whole country was in a state of intense excitement over the announcement that one small State casting three electoral votes was now in doubt. In two days it was so full of "visiting statesmen" that the original inhabitants were in danger of being crowded out. This State was curiously divided between its "hard money" and Southern sympathies; and although the first reports apparently threw it on the former side, news from the remoter districts was turning it over to Brewster.

Senator Joslyn was besieged from all quarters to know the meaning of this new phase of affairs.

"Possess your souls in patience!" was his only answer; "Joslyn has said that Brewster is defeated, and you never knew Joslyn to go back on his word."

Each side accused the other of intimidating or bribing the State officials in charge of the counting; at any rate the returns under various pretexts were being delayed until the approach of the day appointed for counting them.

The evening before this day, Major Brewster was sitting in the business room of his city house with Danforth, Perceval, politicians and newspaper men, when in came a cipher dispatch addressed to Danforth. In the presence of all the company, the major asked to see it, and knit his brows angrily at it.

"Read that aloud in plain English, Danforth?" he said, stamping his foot. "I will have none of this sneaking, underhand cipher business; I'm not afraid

to let daylight shine right through every square inch of *my* doings."

The reporters jotted down his words as he spoke. In a few minutes Danforth read the dispatch:

"I can buy the Board of State Canvassers for \$50,000 cash: Will you consent?"

(Signed), "BRINDLE COW."

"What do you think of *that*?" cried the major. "*Cattle!*—actually putting themselves up at auction. Sounds like a fable from *Æsop*. The other side has offered forty thousand! That is what *that* means. Joslyn has looked after that. I want you, gentlemen," he said, turning to the reporters, "to see my answer."

The next day the above telegram, together with the major's comments upon it, and the following reply, was published in all the newspapers:

"TO THOMAS STARKEY:—The sending of another dispatch like that just received will insure your immediate dismissal from my employment. I will not be so insulted. I want and *will have* every legal vote to which I am entitled. If anybody has anything to *sell*, let him apply to those who will *buy*, not to *me*."

Even the major's opponents were obliged to admit that, with all his faults, they never knew him to be caught in a corrupt act in politics.

After dictating the above reply, he said:

"The American people are fools to expose themselves to such dangers, and their candidate to such temptations. This whole system of electing a president ought to have been thrown overboard years ago."

His visitors soon after departing, Brewster and Danforth found themselves alone in the room. He mo-

tioned his secretary to a chair near him, and Danforth sat down in a respectful and expectant attitude. For more than ten years he had stood in the closest possible relations with his employer. Indeed, that term is too formal and cool to describe the intimacy, faithfulness, and affection existing between them. It was even closer and more confidential than that of father and son, at least of most fathers and sons, for it was one of entire independence on Danforth's part, and, as a natural consequence, of neither strained nor arbitrary authority on Brewster's. He was the depository of Brewster's plans, purposes, and ambitions, who had never had occasion to regret or withdraw any trust he had reposed in him. Danforth, in turn, perennially admired the resources and adroitness of the veteran politician; his readiness and versatility; his protean adaptation to the hundreds of situations and the myriads of people that often on the instant he had to encounter; his always interesting conversation, and the suggestiveness and tartness of his phraseology.

Danforth now looked at him curiously, to see what, if any, plan or purpose he still held in reserve; but Brewster, carelessly throwing his leg over the arm of the chair, seemed as little like a traditional leader or conspirator as it is possible to imagine.

Suddenly, however, changing his attitude, he leaned forward, and, in spite of the emptiness of the room, talked for a long time in a voice scarcely raised above a whisper. Once or twice he stopped, and both he and Danforth listened intently, but the mouse, as they finally adjudged the source of the noise to be, retired

from their deliberations and left them to further conference undisturbed.

But again Brewster stopped, and, rising, threw aside the wing of the screen.

“What are you doing here?” he thundered, gazing at a human mound heaped upon Lawrence’s table, and crowned with a thick grayish vegetation. In response to Brewster’s question there was neither speech nor motion.

“Perceval, get up!” said Brewster, shaking the huge shoulders. “Can ’t you choose a more comfortable bed than this? One would think he had been educated as a policeman,” he added, after a short pause, in which Perceval did not move.

Alarmed, he shook the sleeper again, who, rolling slowly from side to side, at last sat up, rubbing his eyes and blinking. Inspecting him closely, Brewster said, with some sharpness:

“Go to bed like a Christian! I do n’t think you take to vigils very gracefully.”

Perceval staggered sleepily out of the room, Brewster watching him keenly.

“I thought he went out half an hour ago.”

“So did I,” said Danforth. “He must have come in again. However, he was so dead asleep he could have heard nothing.”

“I am not so sure about that. He was altogether too sleepy, and he tried to gape so desperately.”

“You ’ll never know from his demeanor whether he heard anything or not,” said Danforth, “for he exhausts his portentous airs over such trifles that when

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he really has something to cackle over he can't do it justice."

"I must watch him. I can easily manage him, if it's worth while," and the conversation was prolonged far into the night.

The next day the country breathed free when the vote of the doubtful State was cast for Brewster's opponent.

"That settles it," everybody said. The "visitors," including Starkey—one of Brewster's secretaries and the author of the obnoxious dispatch—came home. The major welcomed him very heartily, and seemed to have forgotten as well as forgiven that deadly insult.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## AN UNACCOUNTABLE VOTE.

Brewster betrayed no disappointment, made no laments. His opponents, as one of their leading journals remarked, "rejoiced and were exceeding glad. The people had, with the hot iron of their wrath, branded upon him the stigma of defeat. It proved that no man with tainted reputation or self-advertised craving for office could be chosen president of the United States. He who, with any hope of success, aspired to this high honor, must stand in the center of a wider horizon than that measured by his own short-sighted selfishness and beneath a loftier sphere than that spanned by his morbid and unscrupulous anxiety to seize the prize;" which, considering how near Brewster came to getting it, and that the disrepute and the craving of this editor's own candidate, had not been hidden under a bushel exactly, was putting it rather strong.

When, in a duel with Dickinson, Andrew Jackson was hit, he concealed his hurt and killed his opponent, who, in consequence of Jackson's deliberately denying him that last consolation, died ignorant of this crowning triumph of his renowned marksmanship.

In like manner, Brewster allowed his opponents no chance for exultation or pity. Calm and cheerful, he took up the thread of his business life as if he were always only a manufacturer and merchant. But what a yawning chasm between the nomination and the presidency, which he had vainly tried to fill with a causeway of king's treasures! His foot was on the hither brink; he slipped, fell, probably never to rise again. Those who know not the fierce hunger of the politician's heart know not its desolation and despair when his years of cunning and pains-taking toil go down into hopeless ruin. To hide such vital-gnawing pain from the world required a courage and philosophy of which Brewster had apparently made himself so much a master, that even his enemies said, "He'd turn lightning, if it struck him."

But when the electoral colleges met to elect a president, on the first Wednesday of the following December, these enemies thought that he had turned lightning so that it struck *them*.

On the morning of that day Thaddeus O'Brien, elected governor of the new-born State of Idaho by Brewster's party, the previous year, was sitting in the room adjoining that in which the "hard money" electors met. A note from one of them, Wendell Hawkins, was sent in, begging him if he heard a row in the next room to come in, bringing his "army and navy" with him. The voices presently growing loud enough to justify his interpretation of "a row," the governor rushed in, pistol in pocket.

Tom Lunt, an elector and one of the principal mine-

owners in the State, was shaking his fist in Hawkins's face, exclaiming,

"You 're a —— —— traitor!"

"We won't stand any such nonsense if you're fooling, or any such villainy if you mean it," said Andy Mack, the other elector, land-surveyor, and engineer.

"What's all this?" asked the governor, coming forward.

"None of your business!" said Lunt, savagely, "when we want you we'll send for you. It's one of your rascally tricks."

"Don't get excited!" said Governor O'Brien, I have n't the slightest notion what it's all about. Hawkins, you seem to be the only level-headed man; suppose you tell."

Hawkins, who stood slowly stroking his long, black beard, said with deliberation.

"I have cast my vote, according to the dictates of my conscience, for Aaron B. Brewster, as President of the United States."

The governor halted with a shock of surprise, and then, on his realizing the tremendous consequence of the act, his face brightened with triumph.

"That is right!" he exclaimed, almost jauntily. "There's nothing more consoling to a man than to do what his conscience dictates."

"His conscience be ——. *My* conscience dictates to *me* to throw the cuss out of the window," said Andy Mack.

"Well," said the governor, taking out his pistol, "we all have our peculiar scruples. Mine happen



to be in favor of fair play. Mr. Hawkins has a constitutional right to vote, for any native-born citizen of the United States. He has my certificate of election and he will vote as he likes, or I'll know the reason why."

With many growls, threats, oaths, and hard names, the proper lists were made out, and signed by the electors. Whereupon Andy Mack started for the door. The governor was there first, with his back against it.

"Not yet," said he. "Mr. Hawkins goes first."

He let him out, shut the door, and resumed his position.

"We'll not have any interference with constitutional liberty in this State, as long as I am governor;—no mobs, no lynching. In an hour from now the door'll be opened and then if any harm comes to him we'll know whom to hold responsible."

So saying, the governor, taking a chair, advised the other two to do likewise and make themselves as comfortable as possible.

At the end of the hour, he opened the door and walked out. Lunt and Mack lost no time in revealing this extraordinary proceeding, and in less than fifteen minutes the main street of the town was filled with citizens hurrying to and fro, talking, swearing, and demanding to lay hands upon the apostate elector. But there were quite as many, anxious to baffle these enraged partisans, and to provoke them by their smiles and happiness at the sudden change in the political aspect.

There were cries of "Where is he?" "Hang him!"

“Kill the traitor!” “Throw him into the cañon!” The governor and his party stood ready to defend him; and, had he appeared, it would have been an easy matter to have begun, in that Idaho wilderness, a civil war which might have spread like a forest fire. They ran to Hawkins’ store. His clerks, pale with fear, knew nothing of him. They searched his hotel. He had not been there since breakfast. They explored the suburbs, watched the railroad station. Only two men remembered seeing him after the hour for the meeting of the electors. The woods, the mines and an old quarry were vainly ransacked. About sundown, Hawkins’s large maltese cat, Hezekiah, a renowned *habitué* of his store, was found sitting on its master’s coat and vest, on the brink of a narrow cañon three miles from town. Below, at a depth of four hundred feet, roared the whirling current of the river, lapping the steep, smooth walls with their yeasty waves, and then plunging madly over a ledge of rocks in a cataract of foam. No human being could leap into the flood and be swept over the fall with any hope of life. Even the recovery of his battered body would be an impossibility.

In an inside coat pocket was a manuscript which appeared next morning in the newspapers.

He claimed a legal and moral right to vote for any eligible citizen of the United States. It was originally intended that electors should do so; for, during the first fifty years the modern convention and its candidates were unknown. He had discharged his duties as a citizen, without fear or favor. He expected to suffer.

Men, true to their convictions, often did; but he would rather take the consequences of doing his duty than the responsibility of not doing it.

The Idaho *Crystal* said there were no evidences of corruption; the man seemed to be the victim of a morbid conscience, and a perverted idea of duty. He had fled, unable to endure the tempest of indignation which swept down upon him like a snow-storm on the mountain passes.

Now it was remembered that he had often praised the "battle-born greenback," and cursed the leniency of the government that allowed traitors to go unhung. But he was a "straight party man;" had always "voted the ticket," was "unflinching," "stalwart," and "loyal." What *more* could you ask?

Mr. Bunkery, in a speech of congratulation to his constituents in Injannerville, lauded Hawkins's conscience as one of which Luther himself might have been proud. His act, he said, was a revival of that antique heroism which founded the republic and invented the electoral system. It brought back those days of purity, etc. Though he died by his own act to escape outrage, Wendell Hawkins was a martyr to his conscience, and his murderers must pass sleepless nights if the ghost of their victim haunted their pillows and accused them of his taking off.

Many conscientious men who had voted for Brewster secretly disapproved the act, but not one in ten thousand had the boldness to say so. They were honest, pious, God-fearing men, scrupulous in business and truthful of speech. They taught their children not

to lie or cheat, for they sincerely scorned lying and cheating in private life. But in politics they were governed by another standard. The danger of ruin to the country from the success of the other party reconciled them to their own party's reaping the advantage of conduct which in their hearts they severely condemned. Therefore, they kept silence and awaited results.

On the other hand, Senator Joslyn declared it was the rottenest deed since Judas betrayed his master. Brewster, he said, was capable of acts for which his fellow-citizens had to blush—since he never blushed on his own account—but he did not believe that even he would avail himself of this treachery. Certainly, no man of the least self-respect would accept an office obtained in so foul a fashion.

Of course Senator Joslyn's party believed this, and sincerely believed it; but it is wonderful how much easier it was to believe it of the other party and its leader, than, under the same circumstances, it would have been to believe it of their own.

But Brewster dreamed of refusing as he would of refusing to live in a house because the builder had cheated the workmen.

“Why should n't I accept it?” he said. “It is the best service I can do my countrymen. It will prevent the dreaded struggle in the House of Representatives that will plunge us into unhealthful and paralyzing excitement. It will, I trust, put an end to the awkward electoral system. The American people owe a debt of gratitude to the departed Hawkins for showing them the stupidity of adhering to it after it has

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outlived its usefulness, and I should prove myself an unworthy successor of the early presidents, by declining an office to which I have been duly chosen in accordance with their own plan."

Brewster had in his composition many of the elements of "the strong man," and by many had been admired and supported because of the assurance they felt that, if he chose to regard himself elected, he would take the office without scruple or hesitation.

And the tamed and torpid nation, its indignation fatigued by repeated outrages from "returning boards" South, and "councils" and "canvassers" North, acquiesced in this latest method of *Mexicanizing* its politics.

## CHAPTER XV.

## REWARD OF MERIT.

WHEN Carroll yielded to Brewster's temptation he had, as we know, hoped not only for the great man's sanction to the dearest wish of his heart, but for a political recognition of his ability and fame—a seat in the Cabinet, perhaps—at least a foreign mission. At an early day, therefore, he reported himself at the house in Bonanza Square.

“I congratulate you on your remarkable luck,” said he, after an exchange of greetings.

“Some people call it luck,” said the President-elect.

“It was Frederick the Great's advice, wasn't it? to kill a Russian first, and knock him down afterwards. People begin to think that that is the only way you'll ever be disposed of.”

“Vigilance and hard work,” said Brewster, “that is all; it's the secret of most success. Capitalists are like children—easily scared and easily soothed. The very moment they succeeded in heading us off, they began talking about the short-lived mania and the total collapse of our movement. For my part I was quite willing to encourage that idea. It put them off their guard and gave us a chance. However, Satan

himself is more likely to behave in a handsome inauguration suit and a silk hat, and I may disappoint them yet."

"Yes," said Carroll, seizing on these words for the relief of his conscience; "with your intelligence and executive talent, you might make your administration illustrious. For," he added gingerly, "a man on *assuming* his responsibilities may take a very different view of his duty from the one he held when *soliciting* them."

"In plain English," said Brewster, "obtain an office under false pretenses and then betray his party."

"Hawkins did, and made you president," said Carroll, bluntly.

"That is true," said the other gravely; "but on the other hand, every man must be governed by his own ideas of duty. Hawkins's might, or might not, be mine."

"You'll be in a position to check excesses, at any rate," said Carroll, "and I was thinking that having been made president by a vote which disregarded party, you could afford to disobey the party law which turns out every officeholder and puts a new one in his place."

"That would be a very severe test to apply to the loyalty of my followers and friends," said Brewster, looking keenly at the young man. "They would curse me worse than if I went back on my principles."

"O," said Carroll, "I don't mean the principal offices—cabinet positions and the like, I mean the 'clean sweep' every one is expecting you to make.

Your opponents are already saying that it will be a great outrage if you turn the civil service topsy-turvy."

"Ah, indeed! that *will* be bad—to shock them. I've heard before now of women in low-necked dresses recoiling at an excess of immodest ankle. There's nothing for sharpening a politician's eye-sight," continued Brewster, offering his visitor a cigar, which he declined, "like thrusting him into the hold of the Ship of State and fastening down the hatches on him. When he gets used to the dark, he sees heaps of offensive things which when he was in command on deck, and the other fellows below, he never even dreamed of."

"There's a good deal in that," said Carroll "and yet the evils exist, whether you look or overlook."

"Well, to come down to practical matters," said Brewster brusquely, "what can I do for you?"

"Is Miss Winifred at home?" asked Carroll.

"I believe so," said her father, ringing the bell and ordering the servant to inquire.

She sent word that she would be down immediately.

Carroll had hardly seated himself in the drawing-room when she entered. The sincerity of her welcome both charmed and alarmed him. He was doubtful if she would have received with such free-spoken kindness one whom she recognized as a blossoming lover. The dashing orator, the easy man of the world had disappeared. Love had stripped him of these disguises, and he stood like a timid youth taking her offered hand.



It was just what he had longed for through all the busy months since the week on the yacht. When his conscience rebelled at the insults done it, it was this vision which consoled him. It charmed him in his disgust at the ineffectiveness of his efforts. Indeed, in his great successes previously, his oratory was never, in any sense, an effort. But in this summer's work, his intellect and his conscience had not been in tune. Half his powers were wasted in silencing the discord, until he was weary and sick with the task. Goading his reluctant spirit to its drudgery, and hating both himself and the irksome despotism of his half-heartedness, he barely droned through his perfunctory duty. Hence the audiences that gathered at the sight and sound of his name went away disappointed. He but rang the changes that had been dinned for a life-time into their ears, and afforded them little of either novelty or suggestiveness. It was generally conceded by all of Brewster's party managers, who had watched his pilgrimages, that Carroll was "a dead failure."

Even his delight at seeing her again, and this atmosphere, fragrant with luxury, with love, and her exclusive companionship, recalled the odious and melancholy summer. He remembered how at times the hot and noisy crowds and the blatant politicians would fade from sight; and in their place would come the sweet scene now realized, only to disgust him the more when he was face to face again with populace and politics. Now the ignorance and self-seeking had vanished into the far-off past; the bad air and the noise and the riot had gone quite out of the world.

From the conservatory came the sweet breath of flowers, and the little fountain in the midst of them tinkled an accompaniment to Winifred's gracious chatting.

They talked of Tom, the yacht, the passage of the summer, and then he said abruptly.

"I have quite forgotten to congratulate you on being such a rare woman."

His sudden compliment confused her a little and she looked inquiringly.

"Yes;—a president's daughter. They are rarer than presidents. They have scarcely been seen of late years. Perhaps they are becoming extinct."

"The *rara avis* ought to pipe a song of thanks to you; for there's no telling how much your speeches and hard work have done toward it."

"If she felt only a little grateful, I should be rewarded even for the hardest part, which was staying away so long as I have. Many a time, I have thought of all this pleasantness, of you, Miss Winifred, and have promised myself a holiday the very next week; but the time went by and every day seemed busier and more pressing than the one before. I don't think, however," he added quickly, "that you would have anything to thank me for, even if it could be proved that I made you a president's daughter. I cannot bear to think of you loaded down with cares and social duties. I don't like to think of so many having a right to your smiles and kind words."

"It was *very* good of you when you were so busy," she said, almost interrupting him, "to send me that

box of lilies; the perfume hung around it for a week. I made a little sketch of them."

She arose and brought from a wall-cabinet a water-color drawing of them: He looked at it with a lover's admiration.

"How much more it must be to your liking, to indulge your tastes of this sort, than to be—if you'll excuse my saying it—on exhibition."

"Why," she said gaily, "you make me feel almost like a great moral show in a tent, with a hand-organ, and a monstrous picture outside."

"Yes, it is a good deal like that. The White House answers the description very well."

"O, Mr. Carroll, I'd be glad to keep out of it—except on father's account,—at least I think I would. I'm not much dazzled by it."

"O, I was sure of that," he said, so radiantly that she regretted her speech on account of the construction she saw he had put upon it. "A woman like you naturally finds a private, quiet life far more to her tastes."

He looked ardently at her, and she cast an almost imploring glance at him, as if begging him not to go, or come, any further. Then she added gravely:

"Yes, but women have so little to say in the ordering of their lives. Mine is quite bound up with my father's."

She said this with an earnest emphasis, and clasped her hands together with a gesture of seriousness that boded no good to him. He felt, rather than perceived, that the tide of her feelings was against him.

“But he may release you. May I ask him? Will you let me ask him to release you, Miss Winifred?” he pleaded vehemently.

“I do not think he would. We made a compact—he and I—to stand by each other; always to make a home for one another; and he would need give me permission to break it.”

“Do not evade me, dear Miss Winifred,” begged Carroll, in a tone that touched her pity. “I love you; love you dearly; I love you with my whole heart. I have a right to know if you will listen to me. Will you not deal with me as frankly as I do with you?”

“It would only pain you,” she answered in a low voice, as if that might not wound him so deeply. “Please do not urge it!”

“Urge it! Miss Winifred! I can’t do anything *but* urge it. It is all I care for. I will not harrass you; I will not persecute you with my urgency; but I love you; I love you dearly; you are *all the world* to me. Won’t you accept my love and grant me yours?”

She cast down her eyes, saying nothing, but patting the carpet softly, nervously, with her foot. Her compassion kept back the denial that was on her lips. She looked, she prayed, for an interruption. But nothing or nobody intervened, and he sat inexorably waiting for an answer.

“O, Mr. Carroll, you make me say, what, for your sake, I would almost rather be dumb than say. I cannot grant you what you ask.”

“O, do not speak so resolutely,” he said, contradicting his urgency almost in the same breath, “wait! re-

flect! tell me to-morrow! next week; I have confused and troubled you; forgive my thoughtlessness! Pardon all to my love for you. If you only knew how much it is to me, you would not refuse me so sternly."

She raised her eyes to his a moment, clear, truthful, firm, and said in a tone against which, rather than words, he felt it useless to plead.

"Forgive me if I have ever said or done anything to make you think otherwise—to mislead you. I would not for all the world trifle with an honest love like yours; but I know nothing, I feel nothing, Mr. Carroll, that reflection can change or time ripen."

It sounded abrupt and cruel to her, though she tried her best to soften it; but on the whole it was best so. He had demanded her inmost thought and she gave it him.

He paused a moment, stunned by the blow he had both feared and invited.

"Perhaps if you knew me better," he went on; "if you could but have time to appreciate the love which your sweet presence and gentleness have stirred within me; if you could understand how entirely I would consecrate myself to your happiness; how noble a life I would henceforth live for your sake, you would see your way to return, perhaps, only a little, but still a little, of the love you have made me feel for you."

"O, do not add to what is all too painful, Mr. Carroll. I would gladly take, if I could, all the penalty for the mistake, the misunderstanding, the unfortunate construction—have I been heedless? I did not

mean to be. Forgive me! I pray you forgive me. I will be your life-long friend; I will promote your welfare in any way that lies in my power."

"O, there is but one way, only one way!" he exclaimed.

"I can give you no other answer—neither now, or hereafter," she said, with such compassionate tenderness that even her denial thrilled him.

Then, recalling his manhood, and humiliated at the outcome of her father's cunning and his own weakness, he arose, and, after saying: "Yes, let us be good friends," he bade her good-night.

He sought her father in his library, resolved to appeal to his promised intervention, if there were any use in that. He still hoped that she might not be so fixed in her resolve that her father's influence would fail to turn the scale in his favor.

Brewster noticed his agitation, and readily guessed the cause of it.

"You were kind enough to ask what you could do for me," said Carroll, in a steadier voice than he had supposed or feared he could command; "I would like to tell you, though perhaps I do not need to tell you—how much Miss Winifred has had to do with whatever service I have been able to render you."

"Ah, indeed!" said Brewster, with an air of surprise.

"Oh, yes, very much," said Carroll, warmly.

Brewster created an awkward silence by making no reply, and Carroll hesitatingly continued:

"I ask your influence with her, not as a reward for

any service I may have been to you, but because I know how precious she is to you, and that you have a right to be jealous of the man who asks such a favor."

Brewster was listening with a mixture of deference and indifference which chilled Carroll. He knew that no exact words had ratified the bargain between himself and Winifred's father; yet their mutual understanding was quite clear. Brewster had told him that Winifred would consult her father's wishes and that he had warned away a rival because he could make no use of him.

"I cannot be anxious about anything which will take her from me," said Brewster, coldly, after another pause, "but you are at liberty to speak to her."

"I understood you;—I thought you said," urged Carroll.

"I was provcked at the time by Stratton's criticism. I believe that election quarrels like election bets should be settled by the result. I shall leave her quite free in her choice; but you had better speak to her and quite satisfy yourself. If there's anything else I can do for you, let me know."

"I am not now concerned with that," said Carroll, "but I do not think you have redeemed your implied pledge to me about this—this—which is far more to me."

"I'm sorry I was tempted to any unwarranted speech," said Brewster, "but when one is excited he is liable to be misled by his tongue—or his ears," he added, significantly.

"I think *not*," replied Carroll, bidding him a curt

good-night and departing, inwardly enraged. He was chiefly angry at himself for the contemptible part he had been gulled into playing. If before this moment any one had portrayed such a simpleton and affixed his name to it, he would have resented it as a gross caricature. Now he could see only the shabby and ridiculous figure he presented. He was a mask behind which Brewster had spoken to the public, and which, when the play was done, he threw, with his other stage properties, indifferently aside. He was a torch-light, a cheap banner, a flimsy transparency which, after election, are destroyed like so much rubbish, or put away in the lumber rooms until wanted for the same purpose again.

He was not quite angry enough to imagine that the sweetest girl in all the world was a party to the scheme—she was too noble, too single-minded for that. No, Brewster had made use of her, as, to further his ends, he did of all instrumentalities within reach. Carroll very naturally concluded that he had had enough of him, and only awaited an opportunity to make that fact quite plain.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### "A NEW DEAL."

WHILE those who vote against a successful candidate for the presidency always imagine his inauguration the first step toward a paradise lost, his supporters think it a paradise regained. Brewster's party expected him to remove the flaming sword of fate which kept them from living in a pleasure-garden, without work; his opponents were equally sure that, after a taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, the nation would learn that men must still eat bread in the sweat of their brows. On such occasions, however, the chief paradise, and the first bread, and the first fruit, are the one hundred thousand federal offices, and the sweat is to get them.

What is known as "a new deal" now took place, and the excitement in political circles was intense. "A new deal" is a system of government not unknown to the people of Burmah, where a recent king began his reign by chopping off the heads of all his predecessors' relations. It was a favorite device during the civil wars in Rome, when the successful leader placed all his active enemies on a proscription list, and "created vacancies" in their households or their places

of business, by allowing any who met them to eject them with a sword and without the formality of a resignation.

Even those "queer French people," who are accused of many failures in self-government, have not been altogether backward in successfully working this part of the "machine." They have a church in Paris, called the Pantheon, where they operated it with entire satisfaction. One set came into the government, bundled the dead royalists out of their last resting-places, and put in the corpses of the Voltaires and Mirabeaus. Then the royalists got the upper hand and off came the epitaphs, and out went the bones of the sceptics and revolutionists. When the Bonapartes tumble off their thrones, their imperial "bees" and Napoleonic "N's" are dug out or picked off of all conspicuous public spots, and the avenues stripped of imperial names. Now the republic paints out the names of royalty, and once more the Empire posts its bills over its republican rivals. A witty woman has compared it to that scene in the farce, where Box throws Cox's bacon out of the window, and soon after Cox does the same by Box's mutton-chop.

Brewster, however, did not bother himself with dead men. He liked dealing with live ones much better. He rid himself of incumbent office-holders with the thoroughness of an oriental despot, the public looking on in languid amusement, like the Roman populace at the lions devouring Christians, sorry only when some "poor little lion, away off in the corner, did n't come in for his share."

This, it is to be remembered, happened in the year 18—, and its introduction as the chief end of government seems to have been due to Brewster. For, according to public documents of previous years, the doctrine that the United States Government had "the best civil service on the planet" was regularly included in the instruction given to the marines; and all the party "platforms" affirmed that the servants of the government should not be dismissed from office so long as they were honest and efficient. Unless this had been the common practice these parties would not have made it an annual profession of their faith. To suppose otherwise would be to suppose that they said things for effect and in order to "carry" the "doubtful" districts.

His opponents were naturally wroth with Brewster for disregarding their traditions and practice. *They* never appointed a man to office for party reasons. *They* never dismissed one solely to make room for some congressman's favorite, or a senator's "worker," or to reward a follower who had helped elect a president. *They* never looked upon office as conquerors used to look upon the gold and the silver, the wives and the concubines, the pictures and the statuary of those they conquered. *They* always regarded an office as a place for the best and most competent men, who would discharge its duties, as all other employés are expected to do, in the interests of their employers—of the whole people without distinction of party.

But Brewster, as some may have already suspected, did not care the snap of his finger for the opinion and

example of the "grand old party" which he had defeated by means no previous party or politician had so much as thought of. At least, it is to be presumed they had never thought of them, inasmuch as they had never resorted to them. *He* was an unscrupulous man. He hated the very goodness and conscientiousness of his predecessors. If he had so much as suspected them of governing without scandal or dismissing from office for personal misconduct only, it would have been enough to stir his depravity to the very depths of his sinful old soul. To spurn their virtues and spit upon their spotlessness was his meat and his drink. And so in order to wholly free *his* administration from the purity and unselfishness which had fairly saturated those preceding his, this bad man expelled from garret and cellar every atom of the uprightness which from year to year had been packed away there, and which he detested from the bottom of his wicked heart. In place of these good men he put in "minions" and "camp-followers" of his own, who, unlike those they displaced, wanted an office for the sake of its salary, or the influence of it, or to help their party, not simply to do their duty and serve their country. Even in those cities where a few officials had, for their own convenience, introduced some sort of test besides a man's ability to "run" the caucus and his control of the primaries, Brewster's new broom swept as clean as it did in other places where neglect and abuses undoubtedly needed the free use of his besom.

Carroll awaited Brewster's offer of a position, for

the purpose not of accepting, but of ostentatiously declining, a favor from an administration elected, as he meant to put it, in defiance of the popular vote, and tainted with moral, if not with legal, fraud.

But the days went by, and the gossip over probable appointments did not include his name. There was an equally provoking silence in respect to the principal custom-houses, until he became quite convinced that the shrewd president, perhaps suspecting Carroll's mood and mind, avoided affording him the opportunity of flinging the commission into the presidential face.

Brewster had, in fact, never intended rewarding him with anything he would have accepted. For, although he valued his oratory and the temporary influence of his reputation upon the "campaign," he had been disappointed in the results and had no use for him in "practical" politics. His moral support and his speeches before election, were, as he had imagined, well worth having, but after it, he was about as "available" as the ten commandments, or the sermon on the mount. He knew little or nothing about the management of the "machine." He was what is called "an amiable theorist," more interested in the merits of public questions than the "availability" of candidates, or the "running" of caucuses and conventions. His visionary qualities were eminently displayed in his sanguine belief that Wharton would receive the nomination, solely on the strength of his learning, his judicial temper, and his charitable non-partisanship, which among the "boys" were known

as "taffy" and "soothing-syrup"; whereas Wharton had not "a solid delegation" from any State, nor did he put a single "worker" into "the field." So far as they did not envy his abilities, Carroll was the laughing-stock of the politicians, and Brewster had no notion of exalting him to a conspicuous place.

Thoroughly disgusted, therefore, he took passage on a European steamer, resolved if he could not go abroad as an American vassal, to go as an American sovereign. Though "time is money," even congressional fiat is unequal to the creation of that universal currency, and President Brewster had already spent, beyond hope of reissue, more than two years of his official term, before our traveler returned.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## BUNKERY, THE STATESMAN.

MR. THOMAS BULLION BUNKERY was walking down the principal street of Injannerville, in the State of "Injanner," of which he was a representative in Congress. He was a man of impressive presence; though it was a presence of body rather than of mind; and was endowed with a red-blooded vigor which served him well in haranguing his fellow-citizens and raising the startling war-cries of his party. His lungs were rated as the strongest in the country, and his throat of the best Sax-horn variety. Towering like a huge chimney above his fellow Congressmen, he belched forth a volume of noise that seemed to roll away in a cloud and spread itself over the galleries and ceiling of the hall.

Lofty, massive, he strode on, conscious of admirers who nudged each other and of heads which turned and looked after him.

Such was the statesman, who, according to the testimony of Perceval and Carroll in their morning's talk about him at Major Brewster's, could master any branch of the science of government at a week's notice, and who now, on the eve of his second Congressional term, was engrossed in those tasks of states-

manship which exhaust the energies and tax the intellects of so many public men in the United States.

Entering the sober-fashioned, smoky-tinted Government building, he walked along the corridor; the post-office clerks behind the glass partition half-timidly, half-servilly glancing at him, knowing that in this land of freedom and equal rights, bread and butter, shelter and comfort for wives and babes depended on his nod.

If any doubted Bunkery's grandeur, it was because they were not daily readers of his "organ," the "Injanner Ledger," of which he was the principal stockholder. If its rivals were credible, its "paragraphs" consisted mainly of tributes to his greatness scissored from the country newspapers owned by Bunkery's postmasters. Its continued story was a biography of Bunkery, from his co-partnership in the country store of his native village down to date of publication. Instead of a "chromo" or a dictionary, its premium for the largest list of subscribers was a volume of his thrilling speeches upon the average depth of water in the catfish creeks of "Injanner," and the piteous outcry of commerce for their enlargement at the expense of the National Treasury.

They said, too, that with all his public merits, Bunkery had his private virtues, which, somehow, seldom, if ever, became public. Nevertheless, he was generous to a fault—if it were one of his own—and his charity—for human weakness—began at home. If it never got far abroad, it was because it found employment enough indoors. At the sight of distress he would



put his hand in his pocket and rattle his keys with a chink of benevolence that meant as much as other people's handing out a five dollar note, but he was always ready with a bill for the relief of misery at the expense of the Government.

As he proceeded down the street this morning, he was stopped every few minutes by some acquaintance or "camp-follower," for the purpose either of asking him for an office, or of reporting the temperature, direction of the wind, and other probabilities of party weather in Old Banner, Bismarck, or Steubensky counties.

Crossing the area in the rear of the Government building, he met, in the middle of this interior court, an acquaintance who took him by the hand.

This person was as tall as himself; but his swarthy leanness and long, straight black hair falling to his shoulders, his bristling moustaches, his walnut-shaped chin, and his parchment skin drawn tight over his clearly-marked jaw, were in striking contrast with Bunkery's own ruddiness and orange-colored whiskers.

The new-comer was "Colonel" Aiken, formerly of Texas, whose acquaintance Bunkery, on his way to represent his native country as Minister to France, had made aboard the ocean steamer. Though comparatively seedy now, he wore, when Bunkery first knew him, a glaring bosom pin, gorgeous sleeve-buttons and a watch-chain with jingling seals.

The Colonel was lavish with champagne and cigars, and prominent at "shuffle-board" and in "pool-selling" on the daily "run" of the steamer. He was the

retired editor and proprietor of the notorious "Bazook Banner," which at one time apparently threatened to be the occasion or provocation of another civil war. In the quickly-growing confidences of an ocean voyage, he imparted to Bunkery what he was pleased to call the secret of his success.

"Yes, sah!" said he, in a burst of chat one pleasant afternoon on deck: "Advertise! Advertise! Advertisin' 's the life of trade. I was always brought up to that, and I always believed in it. I go for advertisin' myself, and doin' it cheap. *Anybody* can spend a fortune advertisin'; the thing is to get it done for nothin'. You want to startle folks; give 'em a shock; make 'em look at you. There's all kinds o' ways—murder, scandal, and lecturin' afterwards; any of those things may stand you in handsomely for a while; but they ain't apt to have stayin' powah. You've got to bring out something new, else the public 'll get tired, an' go to the 'stablishment over the way. Aftah the wah, I says to myself: 'Kunnel, you've lost your niggahs and you've lost your cause; you've got to draw it strong, and be quick about it.'"

Until just before the war, the "Kunnel" had lived in a Northern State and never in all his life owned a slave. His "niggahs," therefore, were the equivalent of those castles in Spain which people have once owned and lost, and the severest labor to which those imaginary serfs ever had been put was in carrying out his scheme for advertising himself.

"Politics was rather hot," continued the "Kunnel," "so I jumped in and published the first numbah of the

'Bazook Banner.' I had n't many subscribers to start with; but I sent a copy to all the principal Nawthun papahs, and they printed my hurrah over the 'Capital Captured by the Southun brigadiers.' That was a ripper! I hud from it in three weeks, be gahd, sah. Hundreds of letters askin' for specimens, an' the papahs copyin' it right and left. Then I gave them a startler that made 'em feel like the Czar of Russia a-goin' to his dinner. 'Twas that red hot article, proposing to elect Jeff Davis President. Then came the screecher that said Andersonville was too comf'table for the hell-hounds sent thah; and I mixed them all up judiciously with advice to hang the bondholders and burn the bonds. At last, when the gem, the little beauty, appeared—that sweet little poem which called for the killing of Grant and a statchah to Wilkes Booth, an' I had stirred up a Congressman on the flo' of Congress to give me a first-class notice with a display head, and lots o' editahs subscribin' so as to get it regulah an' copy it to stir up the Nawthun folks with;—I had to buy a new press be gahd! and keep it runnin' night an' day. I stood a powah of abuse from everybody; sometimes I was a lunatic, sometimes an idiot; but I soaked away the greenbacks all the same, for I knew it would n't last. I sold out to a greeny, and it wound *him* up in about three months. I tried lecturin', but folks didn't seem to come where I was, and I give it up; an' now I'm goin' to have the good of it. So name your poison; for its a long time 'tween drinks on this infunnal old steamer."

This intimacy blossomed into a friendship that had

its roots in a common fondness for poker, and resulted in the "colonel's" taking a frequent hand with Bunkery, who thought of introducing the American game into the Paris *salons* and publishing a little treatise upon it for the benefit of a sister Republic not yet in possession of all the institutions of a free government.

The "colonel" was endowed with a spasmodic, surprising, but very agreeable, if not a very useful benevolence. Hearing the third officer of the ship complain of his poor pay, he ripped open a waist belt and put ten gold eagles into the hand of the astonished and delighted young man. In Paris, where his career resembled a mountain brook, one hour a torrent, the next, a boulder-paved gully, he gave \$500 to a fellow-countryman, whose relations with his landlord and shop-keepers had assumed so confidential a form that he was in fear of their forcibly detaining him for an indefinite period. At this rate the profits which the "colonel" had derived from his volcanic treatment of public questions, and which, in spite of his boastfulness, were only trifling, melted rapidly away, and he came home with Mr. Bunkery, considerably in debt, it was said, to that gentleman, for borrowed money, as well as for what, in consequence of the latter's superior accomplishments in the national game, he had managed to owe him. He was picking up a precarious living at Injannerville and encountered Bunkery as above described.

"I really must ask you to settle that little affair," said Bunkery; "it's been running a long time now."

"Settle it! would n't I *like* to settle it. On my

honah, as a gentleman, sah; but it takes money to settle things of that sort."

"Yes," said Bunkery, "I know it does, or at least I've always supposed it did. I'm glad you think so too."

"Well, I have n't got the money."

And the colonel expectorated in an emphatic and final fashion, as if the discussion were thereby closed.

"However," he went on after a short pause, "if you can put me in the way of getting anything, I'll agree to a percentage off, every week or month."

Bunker reflected a moment and then said: "Come with me!"

Crossing the area, they turned into a dark hall-way at one end of which a small sign protruded from the lintel of a door, on which one read in the dim light: "U. S. Pension Agency." Bunkery, entering and remarking to the agent, "I would like to do a little writing," the materials were forthcoming at once.

At the official's desk leaned, in the weak attitude of an invalid, a pale, crippled man, the cuff of whose left sleeve, void of an arm, was pinned to the breast of his coat. With his remaining hand he was tugging at some papers from an inside pocket.

Bunkery's comrade advanced so brusquely to the desk, as almost to upset the ill-balanced pensioner.

"Hullo," said the disabled man, hobbling about to recover his balance, "never knew the world to be so crowded before. There seems to be one too many of us."

"Are those remarks addressed to me," said "Colonel" Aiken.

“Well, I’d only got so far as to subscribe my name to ’em; I’ll address ’em to you now.”

“Do you know who I am, sah?” roared the “colonel.” “I’m Jefferson Aiken, fommahly Kunnel of the Texas Tigahs, and a Southun gentleman, be gahd, sah?”

“O, no, you can’t fool me in that way,” said the pensioner, “I’ve seen the real article and you’re bogus. You must show your certificate before I’ll take you for one.”

“Colonel” Aiken, thrusting his hand into his pocket, produced his certificate and pointed it at the pensioners head.

“Thah’s my papahs, blank your eyes,” he said, cocking his weapon. “I’ll put my certificate on your blanked hide, so plain you’ll have no call to ask for it again.”

“Stop that!” cried Bunkery advancing. “We don’t do business on that plan.”

“He’s a blanked lying scoundrel,” said the “colonel,” again raising his weapon, which Bunkery caught and took from him. “If I had you down to Bazook, I’d teach you to talk to a gentleman, be gahd!”

But the alleged colonel and ex-editor of the “Bazook Banner” postponed his lesson to a more convenient season; for the invalid soldier, balancing himself upon his one stout leg, with a swift movement of his remaining arm, brought, like a battle mace, his heavy brass-tipped cane down upon the “colonel’s” head, and felled him to the ground.

“I’ll teach *you* the war is not over yet with such a

blackguard;" he said, raising his weapon to strike again, if necessary. "I don't believe you were ever in the war at all. For those who stood up like men, and fought like men, and act like men *now*, I say always here's a friendly hand, but I'll stand nothing from these noisy, bomb-proof, after-claps that thunder away years after the lightning's struck. There's too many of 'em on both sides. *I'd try* 'em by drum-head court-martial every time, and shoot them on the spot,—and the right spot, too," he added, as Aiken rubbed his head.

The latter stunned alike by the blow and this sudden resentment, arose and, brushing the dust from his breeches, looked bewilderedly around. He felt in vain for his pistol. Then he glanced at the pen and ink-stand on the pension-agent's table, as much as to say: "I'll run him down with a column of hard names in the 'Bazook Banner,'" but having already been furred several months, the "Banner" was no longer waved.

So he suffered himself to be led off by Bunkery, who roared at him as he went:

"Stop it! Stop it right here! It's gone far enough. Don't you understand, you donkey," he continued as he marched him along, "that you're several degrees away from where you used to be. I'll have to buy you a map and show you the latitude of Injannerville. What did you want to lie for, and pretend you were a 'colonel,' when you know you never rose higher than a sutler. I don't see the use in your making yourself unnecessarily odious. Besides, you came from here

originally, and there's no use in your pretending to be a genuine Southerner. You overdo it, let me tell you."

"Advertizin's the life of trade. Keep yourself before the public! Sure's you sink, you're gone," said the "colonel."

"I don't propose having you do it at my expense."

"It'll be in the next edition of the papah, you'll see," replied the "colonel";—"just in time for the openin' of my cigar and sample store, to-morrow—if I open it. When it gets a little stale, sue the papah for libel. That'll give me another lift."

With this and other ennobling conversation, Bunkery and the "colonel," interrupted by a call at one or two retired and fashionable bar-rooms, had made the promenade of several blocks and come back again to the vicinity of the Government building.

At this point a lurch of the "colonel" nearly upset a boy in the act of shouting.

"Evening paper! All about the——"

But the lad, recoiling from the shock of the collision, did not finish his proclamation.

"D——it! Everybody's in my way," said the "colonel," clinging to Bunkery and diving for the boy whom he tried to set on end again "H'yar give us a papah! Thah git yer feet under yer, ye young possum."

The boy still holding the paper, was waiting for his pay; but the "colonel" though fumbling in his numerous pockets for it, brought nothing up.



"Thah was a nickle thah," he soliloquized, while Bunkery walked on. "What's this, now? No, that's my cloak-room check. Hullo, thah's a V!"

"Soon's you ken, mister," urged the boy. "Ther's my pop a-waitin' for me."

"Whah's yer pop?"

The boy pointed to the crippled man, Aiken's recent antagonist, coming out of the pension building.

"Is that yer pop, you whelp? Then take that; take that, you unlicked cub!" cried the "colonel," emphasizing his remarks with a thrust of his fist, "and tell your dad thah's Colonel Aiken's apologies."

Alarmed at his tone and words, Bunkery wheeled around to interfere in this second difficulty of his protégé's, exclaiming,

"Stop it, you idiot!"

But to his astonishment, instead of beating the boy, Aiken was thrusting the five dollar note into the youth's hand; then, clutching the newspaper, he resumed his march down the street, muttering—"can't apol'gize—don't know how; nevah did it sah, on the honah of a gentleman, nevah did it sah! Thah't is now: third edition. 'A Texas Cunnel gets more than he asks for.' M-m-m. Further particulars in our next edition."

"Thought you had n't any money," growled Bunkery: "I make it a rule not to be generous until after I have paid my debts."

"Every man does what he kin do the easiest," retorted the Colonel.

Bunkery resented the Colonel's reference to his tight-fistedness, but not choosing at this time to quarrel with him, asked:

“Are you ready to go to Washington?”

“To Washington!” exclaimed the other, turning his pockets inside out. “I’d look pretty going to Washington. I’d have to ride on the trucks or the rear platform. I could n’t get as fa’s the next station.”

“A h—l of a philanthropist you are,” said Bunkery, “I s’pose I’ll have to pay your fare; I have n’t got a pass for myself yet”; and, after making an appointment with the “colonel,” the Congressman sought the collector of customs.

“Look here, Bunkery!” was the greeting he received from a bluff and portly person with “battle-door” side-whiskers, and otherwise conspicuous for his perennial white neck-tie, and for a horse-shoe bosom-pin with whip rampant, denoting that, in addition to his being collector of customs, he was President of the Injanner Trotting Association. “Look here, Bunkery, you *must* do something for Cranage. He’s got a cracked hoof and can’t get ’round the track as he used to. First you knew he’ll be working for Byles.”

“I’ve done my best,” replied Bunkery; “but I can’t make a place for him. Brewster’s growing worse every day; acts once in a while like he were going to be pious and run the Government on the Sunday School plan.”

“Don’t know how that is,” said the collector; “but the situation’s making Cranage desperate. He’s a sister or niece or something he wants a place for, too; and Byles is fairly smothering him with promises.”

“Well, I can’t command a single place for her just now. I’ve been going for one these six months—a

Mrs. Cleland's in it, but she's a protégé of the Brewster family, and was one of the few of the old set left over. I'll do my best, but it's like trying to find room for an extra hole in a musquito-net."

There was every reason for Bunkery's doing his best; because Byles, a famous tobacconist, had decided that he was as much entitled to the seat in the United States Senate Bunkery longed for, as that eminent statesman himself; and Cranage, whose "doleful dumps" had just been so feelingly portrayed, enjoyed a large acquaintance, an organizing ability, and a personal influence among the fellow members of his religious sect, which were absolutely invaluable to ambitious candidates. Bunkery had, as he admitted, been unable to procure a position for him, and, on learning that Byles was tampering with him, felt a no common anxiety about it.

The door soon after opened, admitting a man with stooping shoulders and long arms, arrayed in semi-clerical costume, with a loose, black silk neck-tie about his throat, a long-bodied vest, and a general air of finding the burden of life a little heavier than he wanted to carry.

"Hah! Cranage," said Bunkery; "I've been looking for you."

"I'm glad you were lucky enough to find me," said Cranage, taking off his hat and rubbing his hand back and forth over his thin hair; "for I was looking for you, and it's allers my luck not to get what I'm looking for."

"I've been thinking about you," said Bunkery.

“Same here; *I’ve* been thinking how much I’ve done for you and the party, and how little you and the party have done for me. Spent money like water, let my business go all to pieces—two weeks at a time in a hoss an’ buggy all over the deestrick, talking up the doubtful fellers. I saw more ’n three hundred on ’em, an’ your majority was only 280. A hundred dollars at a clip that night, for the band and torch-lights to give you a reception, an’ next week at Richport the same—right out o’ my balance at the bank, and a note protested the nex’ day.”

“O, well it’s all right,” said Bunkery, “I’ve about fixed it now. I’ll have the papers sent you soon as I get down there. I hear Byles is talking up his affairs to you. Better stick to old friends; Byles can’t do anything for you.”

“Well, I dunno. He says he’s receiving hundreds of letters from all parts of the State urging him to be a candidate.”

“He’s *always* receiving hundreds of letters from all parts of the State,” said Bunkery. “He thinks a man writing him from some cross-roads represents the whole community. That’s flattering but ’t ain’t true, and he’ll be dreadfully disappointed. I shan’t, because I’m willing to take the chances, and ain’t so cock-sure as he is. You stick by your old friends, Cranage, and you’ll be all right.”

“I hope so,” said Cranage; “then there’s my step-darter.”

“O yes,” said Bunkery, quickly, “I’ve got a splendid place picked out for her. There’s a widow

---

woman in it now, but it'll be ready for her soon's your's is."

And Cranage's loyalty to Bunkery having been inspired and reinforced, the company went its several ways. Before reaching home, Bunkery, instead of patronizing a rival establishment whose wooden Indian was far bigger and handsomer, magnanimously stopped and bought a week's supply of Byles's "Honey-dew fine-cut," which at his rate of consumption was no mean token of a high-minded temper.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## ENLIGHTENING THE PUBLIC.

SUPPER was finished, and dusk was overshadowing the landscape, as Bunkery, sitting in his house and preparing a speech for the evening, saw some one hitching a cream-colored horse in front. Shortly after, the servant announced "Mrs. Hackett."

"Evenin', Mr. Bunkery," said she with the boldness, or rather with the matter-of-fact independence, of a woman accustomed to looking after her own affairs.

Raising his eyes, he saw a gaunt, upright figure, sallow of complexion, past middle life, with bony but executive hands, and a face pinched by her struggles to keep out of poverty rather than by poverty itself.

"P'r'aps yuh 've furgotten me," she continued—"widder Hackett; I live over to Pelham. I've raised some extra fine critters this las' two years. I wuz talkin' to Ianthy—Ianthy's my darter, yuh know, by Ashael Green, my fust husband; my second he'd children by his fust wife"——

"Yes, yes, madam, but my time is precious——"

"Well, Ianthy an' I we lied awake las' week, talkin' an' thinkin', an' thinkin' an' talkin'——"

“I ’m afraid I can ’t stay to hear any more, Madam,” said Mr. Bunkery.

“I was jest a comin’ to it, ef yuh wa’n’t in sech a fret. She woke me right up in the middle of the night with an awful dig in my ribs, an’ I sez, ‘Ianthy Green,’ sez I, ‘hev you got the nightmare, or what is it, wakin’ me with such a poke as that?’ an’ she sez, ‘I’ve got it, mah.’ ‘Then I wish you ’d keep it to yourself,’ sez I. ‘Ask Mr. Bunkery,’ sez she. ’T was as if an angel from heaven hed up and spoke; an’ I sez, ‘I ’ll’——”

· “But, Madam——”

“An’ so arter chores,” continued Mrs. Hackett, uninterruptedly, “I sez to Ianthy, ‘had Joshua or Cale better go?’ an’ she sez, ‘Josh; Cale is all beat out.’ Caleb’s the oldest, but we allers call him ‘Cale,’ for short.”

Bunkery had risen; but at this hint of the second husband’s sons by the first wife—and one of them with her—he was prudent enough, for the sake of these two voters, to hear her through. So he sat himself down to discover, if possible, the errand of this mother in Israel, with her Joshua and Caleb.

“When you want a thing,” she continued, “the way ’s ter cut right acrost lots an’ ast for it, an’ not be sloshin’ about a ten acre lot for what grows in one corner on ’t.”

“Anything I can do for you?” asked Mr. Bunkery, “pension money, is it? or a bill to collect?”

“Uhn, uhn!” a half-guttural, half-nasal sound meaning “no;” “I ’ten’ to all them things myself. But

Ianthy, she's bin kinder shet up at home all her life, an' she wants to see the world. She do n't hev a chance at any fellers she'll look at; not even buggy-ridin'; an' so I sez: 'Mr. Bunkery he'll git you an' offis down to Wash'n'ton.' She wants ter learn ter sing, an' p'r'aps play the pianny, an' we hain't got the money. You put her in an' offis with plenty o' pay an' little to do, an' she'll give her v'ice a lift that'll cl'ar a ten-rail fence."

"Has she a good voice?" asked Mr. Bunkery, cooling his impatient profanity by thinking of the old woman's two voters.

"Uhm, uhm!" she replied, a variation, with closed lips, of the negative grunt, above referred to, and meaning "yes." "Good v'ice! She oughter hev. Why, her gran'mother—she favors her gran'mother—when *she* was a gal, could call the cows from pastur' two mile off. What more could you ast of a v'ice than that?"

"Nothing, madame! I wouldn't think of asking anything more."

"Jerushy!" cried Mrs. Hackett, looking out of the window; "ef tharn't Josh, a-gnawin' the hide right off your shade trees. Well, the harm's all done now, that's one comfut."

"The devil take the woman!" thought Mr. Bunkery; "a whole quarter of an hour wasted for the votes of a pair of horses!" He was rising again when her next remark arrested him.

"Hain't my husband said nothin' to you about this? He was to. But you can't trust one on 'em. They



get to talkin' about suthin' else, an' fust thing yuh know, they're all in a ravel. Thar's my husband—I've known him this fifteen year—used to know his fust wife; he's the wust hand to ravel, Mr. Bunkery, yuh *ever* see. No matter where you take hold on him, he'll ravel all out; an' so I sez to myself, even ef he don't forgit it, he won't git it straight."

"Your husband!" exclaimed Mr. Bunkery, after several attempts to stop her, "I thought you was a widow—widow Hackett!"

His words acted like an electric battery. She threw her hands above her head, then crossed them on her breast, and rocked in convulsions back and forth upon her chair. Bunkery began inwardly to curse and to swear, lest he had an epileptic or hysterical woman on his hands. He was on the point of calling his wife, when his visitor startled him again with screams of laughter.

"Well! well! well! Ha! ha! ha! He! he! he! I never see the beat on't. I'd forgot all about it. Yuh see I was j'ined to my third, three days ago, an' I hed forgotten all about it, that is, about my name; I'm so used to the old one. I ain't Widder Hackett any longer. I'm Mrs. Cranage. O, I'm powerful weak with the laughin'."

"Mrs. Cranage! Did Cranage marry *you*?" exclaimed Bunkery.

"Did Cranage marry *me*?" echoed the late relict of the late Hackett, the laugh all out of her now. "Yuh bet your life he married me when he said he would. An' afore I said yes, he promised to git this thing for Ianthy, too."

“O, yes, he spoke to me about it,” said Mr. Bunkery, “and I satisfied him on that point.”

“Well, I want to be satisfied on that point,” said Mrs. Cranage. “Cranage can do what he likes with the Methodis’ vote, and I and Ianthy can do what we likes with Cranage.”

“O, certainly, Mrs. Cranage,” said Bunkery, anxious to make amends for his mistake. “I have picked out the place for your daughter. Good salary, short hours. She ’ll hear from it now in a very little while.”

“Well, we must, or Cranage will quit; I’ve made up my mind on *that* point; and when I do that, I’ll be durned if thar’s much of a show for anybodyelse’s mind, ’t any rate if he’s *married* to me, and Cranage will *tell* you so.”

“Byles has no chance, no chance at all. He can’t do anything for you,” said Mr. Bunkery. “Cranage wants to stick by old friends, let me tell you. Had n’t you better stop in town and see the procession?” continued Bunkery, at the same time opening the door. “It will be a very fine one—bands, torch-lights and speeches. I’m going to make a speech myself. There’s the marching, too; though I’m not so much impressed with it as I was when I was younger. Still, it’s necessary in this country, in order to set forth political principulls properly.”

“That’s a good deal my fix,” replied Mrs. Cranage.

“I do n’t run to hear a brass band as I did once,” continued Bunkery, in a confidential way.

“I do n’t go with you there, Mr. Bunkery,” replied

Mrs. Cranage. "I must say a good team o' wind instruments stirs me up pretty considerable. But I do n't git to go very often."

"Then you 'd better stop and hear them."

"What time does the meetin' take up?" she inquired.

"At eight o'clock;—in about half an hour," was the answer.

Leaving the house, the woman unhitched Joshua who, judging from his rich cream color, had, like his namesake, just come from a land overflowing with milk and honey, and drove slowly down the street, Joshua pricking up his yellow ears at the sound of the music. As the darkness deepened, the red glare reflected on the clouds, grew brighter, and suddenly, at the head of the sloping street, a river of fire, like a volcanic eruption, appeared, rolling and streaming down the road.

"How purty it is!" she said. "I wish Ianthy could see it. It's purtier 'n the Fourth o' July."

She was nearing the park where the bands were playing, and the crowds were already assembling to look at the procession and hear the music and speeches. Joshua began dancing and edging toward the sidewalk, while his mistress cried "Whoa!" and tugged and jerked, until she would have split his mouth up to his ears, had it not been toughened by years of feminine government in the wagon behind. As the procession occupied the width of the road, and prevented her further progress in that direction, she turned into a side street, hitched her horse and decided, as she said, "to see this thing out."

She joined the crowd on the sidewalks, gazing with open mouth at the transparencies, the torch-lights and the mottoes. Not understanding exactly what they meant, she thought them something wonderful.

“Down with the banker’s money!”

“Down with the bloodsuckers of society!”

“The people’s dollar for all the people!”

“Bonfires for the bondholder!”

“A free ballot box!”

There were caricatures, too, designed and executed by local artists with more prejudice than talent. The procession countermarched along the wide street forming a serpentine train of fire which swept in gleaming circles around Mr. Bunkery on the stand. From political opponents on the side-walks came cries of derision, answered by cheers from the procession. A stone or two thrown at a transparency was a more serious argument than any previously advanced, and provoked a logical rejoinder from a squad of torch-bearers that charged with their burning torches upon the group nearest the source of the projectile, severely scorching the faces and singeing the hair and beards of the spectators, who, however guilty of enjoying the “hard hit” at the procession, were personally innocent of the offense. But in carrying out broad and general political principles, it is obviously impossible to exercise nice discriminations in such matters, and individual hardship must console itself with its self-sacrifice to the public good.

The pageant was a long one, numbering by “actual count” as Bunkery’s “Ledger” announced next

morning, "197 more than the ridiculous caricature of a procession gotten up by our opponents last week, and which consisted chiefly of small boys who ought to have been in bed hours before." This arithmetical superiority was considered as not only decisive of the result of the vote-polling election day, but "an ample vindication, at his home where he is known and loved, of our much-slandered but estimable fellow-citizen."

Never having attended a political open air meeting and "being in for it," as she said to herself, Mrs. Cranage crowded toward the speaker determined on "getting her money's wuth."

He began by thanking them for this unexpected honor. It was the spontaneous uprising of the masses (a voice, "you've paid for 'em out 'o your own pocket"), who knew what they wanted and the right place to come for it. It was high time to cure the evils which afflicted the country. It was said that this Government could not create money. He was Yankee enough to want to know *why*. If there had been people alive during chaos, some old fogey would have said, you can't create light, and the next minute the poor fool would have been blinded by the dazzle of the light that *was* created. (Loud applause). It made him boil over with patriotic rage when he heard a man say, the *Government* of the United States, a government of *fifty* millions of people, couldn't create money, just such money, and just as much or little money as was wanted. A government that had crushed the greatest rebellion in the world, and which had put a million of men under arms—not create money! It

was a wild absurdity and a libel upon a free people. Every patriot ought to resent it. They point us to the experience of Europe, and to the experience of China. But this country was not Europe, thank God! (Loud and uproarious applause) and the Chinese don't rule us—not yet anyhow. *What have we got to do with abroad?* (Cheers and yells of delight.)

“They used to say in Europe and they say so now, that a country can't be governed without a king. Well, we've shown them that a country *can*. (Applause.) They said gold is king and silver his prime minister. Well, silver is king now, and we may depose even him yet. There was once a set of folks that said ‘cotton is king.’ Where are they now? (a voice—“in Congress”—laughter.) The fact is, the people is king in this country, an absolute monarch, a king that can do no wrong (applause), and it can make money out of nothing, or next to nothing. Laws good for other countries don't apply *here*. (Loud applause.) We don't obey laws that the despots make for the crushed masses in Europe.”

(A voice—“Can you make water run up hill in this country?” Cries of “Put him out!” “Kill him!” “He's a bloated aristocrat.”)

“No, don't put him out,” continued Bunkery, “let him stay and learn something! He needs to. He doesn't put *me* out, I assure you. Can you make water run up hill in this blood-bought land of liberty? he asks. I say, yes, sir. I say our fathers did not fight and bleed for nothing. I say our husbands, brothers, and sons did not lay down their lives in South-

ern swamps in vain. They fought to make this the most powerful country on the face of the earth. And they did—powerful enough to make water run up hill, if necessary—the grandest and most majestic government the sun ever shone on. And if any man wants to know *how* this glorious government can make water run up hill, I will tell him. I will enlighten his darkened intellect.” (Laughter. “Give it to him!”) “It can put a steam-engine and a force pump at the bottom of every hill and *pump it up*.”

(Loud yells and cheers. Shouts of “Good for you!” “Give it to the old scoundrel!” The tumult of applause lasted so long that Bunkery could only stand and bow and smile his acknowledgments. He was unable to proceed for some little time.)

At this moment, some mischievous opponent giving a false signal, the band burst out with “Nancy Lee.” Bunkery called for silence, but his voice, ordinarily superior to brazen instruments, could not overcome the blare of the brass and the din of the hide-beaten harmony; so that many of his audience, including Mrs. Cranage, thinking the ceremonies over, took their departure.

Ianthy, long of limb and swarthy of feature, was waiting for her mother, and on hearing the sound of the wheels came out of the house, asking,

“Did ye git him to git it for me, mah?”

“Umh, umh,” affirmed her mother; “a gallus place, too; big wages, nuthin’ to do. You kin hev all the buggy ridin’ you want.”

“By gum, that’s bully, mah! when kin I go?”

“O, nex’ week, I reckon. He did n’t say exac’ly.”

## CHAPTER XIX.

## FIGHTING MONOPOLIES.

A FEW mornings after, Bunkery, with his baggage packed for Washington, stopped at the entrance of the railroad station, and, making his way up the stairs in one of the towers that flanked the front of the edifice, marched through several sets of offices until he arrived at the room of Mr. Ransom, superintendent of the I. B. X. and Q. Trunk Railroad Co.

He found there a grim, sallow, slightly-built, positive-looking victim of dyspepsia, who was that morning suffering from an unusually severe attack of his daily tormenter. He had recently been appointed to his position, and the acquaintance between himself and Bunkery was only casual.

"Mr. Ransom, I believe," said Bunkery.

"Yes, sir."

"I am Thomas B. Bunkery."

"Are you?"

This did not look very promising, but Bunkery proceeded:

"I am just starting for Washington, and find it convenient to use a pass or two."

"Very likely. Everybody does. The pass system



has been so badly abused on this road, that when I came in I shut down on it."

"I don't wonder," said Bunkery, "you must be plagued to death with people applying for them. It's a very wholesome reform indeed. If agreeable, please make mine out for six months, as I shall be coming home once or twice during the session. I suppose I can get it extended beyond that time, if I wish it?"

But Mr. Ransom merely continued reading the indorsements on a file of vouchers, picking out a few for further examination.

"Business is lively," suggested Bunkery.

"Very much pressed indeed," replied Ransom.

"I'll call again in a few minutes if it will be more convenient."

"Very much more, very much more indeed," said Mr. Ransom.

"I shall take the nine-forty-five train, east," said Bunkery, opening the door to retire.

"Ah, that is a curious coincidence," replied the other, "I am to take the nine-forty, west."

"Then I'll take it now," said Bunkery coming back and closing the door.

"But it does not go for twenty minutes yet."

"What does not go for twenty minutes?" asked Mr. Bunkery.

"The nine-forty-five train."

"I'll take my pass now; you undoubtedly understand me," said Bunkery growing angry; "this is mere trifling."

"What entitles you to a pass, if you'll be so good?" asked Mr. Ransom.

“What entitles me?” echoed Bunkery, bewildered by the man’s insolence.

“Why should we give you a pass? What reason is there in it?”

“What reason? Do you know who I am, sir? Do you know I’ve been elected Mayor of Injannerville twice;—the second time by an increased majority, sir? That I have been—”

“O, yes, I know that, and a — sight more, I hope; but I *don’t* know why I should give you a pass.”

Bunkery was almost speechless, not so much with rage, though he was very angry, but with astonishment at this unexpected refusal of what he supposed would be as easy to get as a light for his cigar.

“Not give me a pass!” he cried, at length. “Why I never heard of such a thing. I’ve always had a pass.”

“If you can give me any good reason for giving you a pass, you shall have it,” said superintendent Ransom.

“I want it, that’s reason enough,” said Bunkery, his temper, that is his good temper, quite gone.

Mr. Ransom, taking his book of blank passes, filled one out, and, tearing it off, handed it to Bunkery.

The latter, glancing at it, grew red until the hue of his face blended with that of his whiskers, and the tide flooded his countenance to the very roots of his hair. Tearing the pass into fragments, he flung them into the superintendent’s face and, muttering, “the old scoundrel,” stalked out of the room.

The mutilated paper read: “Pass Mr. Thos. B. Bunkery from Injannerville to Washington and return.

Time, ninety days. Given on account of *charity*. Ransom, General Manager."

He made his way down stairs, almost blind with chagrin, and, after paying for his ticket, took the train, and an oath that he would sweep these grinding monopolists from the face of the earth. In truth, he employed most of his journey in thinking of the best method for curbing the insolence of soulless corporations.

The dyspeptic railroad superintendent had indeed, either ignorantly or consciously, insulted one of the most distinguished party leaders, and to deny him the prerogatives of his office was a piece of insolence not often perpetrated in the United States.

As it has been hinted, Bunkery had been crowned with diplomatic honors. He had "claims" to a high position under Brewster's administration, and his friends had undertaken to squeeze him by main force into the cabinet. Brewster resisted, remarking to himself:

"The Lord knows I have crooked sticks enough already. Hydraulic pressure can't put him into my cabinet."

According to the untrustworthy gossip that is always flying about in political circles, Bunkery first bought a German phrase-book, but after studying it a few minutes, took "French without a Master—A Complete Guide to the French Language between Daylight and Dark." He decided upon Paris, for, in the other case, he would have had to begin by learning the German alphabet; whereas the French people had,

as he said, put their lingo into a white man's letters. He improved his time and mind with patient study, until everybody admitted that he spoke French like a native—a native of the United States—that is to say. President Brewster had a sovereign contempt for foreigners, and sending Bunkery to Paris, and another statesman in a gray homespun suit to London, tickled him hugely.

In spite of Parisian attractions, Bunkery's time hung heavy in those happy hunting-grounds of the native American. He was more "at home" cutting out work for the "boys;" "setting up the pins" for somebody's appointment or nomination; and "working," either for himself or for somebody pledged in turn to "work" for *him*. For in 18—a great deal of this sort of thing seems to have been introduced into American politics. There was apparently no end to Brewster's bad influence.

Bunkery took special delight in his membership of the House of Representatives. He loved to hear his own voice rising above the din and tumult of three hundred others, and to influence legislation by his superior shouting. In Paris all his arts rusted for want of use; even his lordly gesture of tossing back his mane grew clumsy from want of practice. Could he, without exposure to arrest for a disturbance of the peace, have found a secluded spot at Versailles or Fontainebleau, it would have afforded him a little satisfaction to roar "Mr. Speaker" to the woods and the fountains, and "hurl back the falsehood in the teeth" of an echo. He enjoyed only a tantalizing pleasure in lis-

tening to the debates in the French Chamber of Deputies, as well as in the roaring, the riot, the calls to order, and the compliments which were exchanged among the members. On the whole, there was rather more of it than he was used to in Washington, so that at times it seemed something like a burlesque of what is called debate in the American capital. For the most part, however, his share as a mere spectator of the fray, instead of "drinking delight of battle with his peers," made him homesick and forlorn. More than once the cries and gestures, though the words were meaningless, excited him almost to the point of taking part in their "deliberations," as he did once at home, by standing on the top of his desk and shrieking, "Order! order! I call the strutting turkey-gobbler from Winnipeg to order!"

On these occasions he deeply regretted his ignorance of French; particularly when an orator of the Right awakened his party to huzzas and bravoos by a reply to a member on the Left. "He must have called him a 'court-jester' or a 'little fellow'" said Mr. Bunkery to himself. The assaulted member "hurled back" a "withering retort" which provoked the Left to bravoos and huzzas. "I reckon he called him a 'monkey,' or a 'fat man,'" thought Bunkery, knowing the effect of such brilliant satire at Washington; "nothing else would have stirred 'em up like that."

"What's all this row about?" he asked of an Englishman next him.

"Well, one little blackguard called the other an assassin, and the big one said the other cove was 'a Bismarck spy.'"

Then Bunkery grieved that he had not devoted at least another week to the study of French, so as to have entered more into the enjoyment of these "debates." He had an idea he might have got a "wrinkle" or two which would have added to his usefulness in Washington.

For, wearied of this provoking pantomime—this mere spirit-photograph of persons and scenes which he loved so well—he had already sent in his resignation and was on the eve of departing for his native land. On his return, he was elected "Congressman at large" from "Injanner;" though perhaps it might be difficult to say how *his* being at large distinguished him from some other members of his party.

Under these circumstances the contumely with which this railroad superintendent had responded to his reasonable request for a pass, harassed him sorely as he rode along. His very name—derived, on his mother's side, from Colonel Thomas Bullion, whose famous passion for metallic currency had, in successive veins, been mixed with so much alloy that it had disappeared altogether from Bunkery's circulation,—ought of itself to have protected him.

The first day of the session, Bunkery, smarting under his wrongs, introduced a bill forbidding any railroad company in the United States to charge passengers more than half a cent per mile, and another one providing that all grain-producers and their families should be furnished free transportation, according to the area of land under cultivation in their respective Congressional districts. This, he claimed, would be

both a premium on grain-raising, and a hint to the "railroad magnates" that they were but the servants of the people.

The president of the I. B. X. and Q., having had an inkling of the trouble which spurred Bunkery to this defense of the agricultural interests, called upon him, and, after handing him an annual pass, apologized for the conduct of his subordinate.

"I should n't think your road could afford to keep such a man," said Bunkery, deeming it unworthy of his dignity to seem as softened as he really was by the corporate graciousness thus shown him.

"A little testy, I admit, but he's too valuable a man to be dismissed for any trifling reason," said the president of the road.

"Excuse me! I don't call his offense trivial at all. If any of my men were to behave toward a member of Congress in that way, he would go out of his office as he would out of a gun."

"O, of course, in a government office it's different," said the railroad president, slightly; "One man will do about as well as another *there!* But in the railroad business, where there are great interests at stake, you cannot find a man that'll fill the bill, just by advertising for him in the papers."

"Well, I don't think the government business is so insignificant as you make out," said Bunkery, piqued at the tone of contempt which the other used in speaking of the civil service. "There's the affairs of fifty million people to be looked after, and anywhere from two to three hundred millions of money to be dis-

bursed and accounted for. That shows pretty well by the side of a railroad."

"O, yes, of course," said his visitor, with an innocent air; "but we could n't afford to hire or dismiss men for the same reason *you* do. *We* have to take them because they can do the work we want done, and we make sure of their doing it by keeping them in their places as long as they do it well. It would soon bankrupt a railroad company, if its employés knew they 'd all be dismissed every leap-year, unless they put in their time working up the stockholders to keep in the same president and board of directors. But the United States are rich, and can stand a good deal of that racket. However, I must bid you good day. We hope you 'll not press your bills too far."

Bunkery intimated that nothing further should be heard of them. Nevertheless, in order to remind his constituents of his vigilance for their welfare, and to maintain his popularity at home, he occasionally called them up, pushing neither to a vote, but preferring to hold them over the heads of the railroad companies, rather than cut himself off from all favors by fulfilling his threats. Besides, he was looking forward to measures, which, if successful, would, in his judgment, lift him quite out of reach of any man's contempt or insolence.



## CHAPTER XX.

## PERCEVAL'S DREAM.

EARLY one morning, about this time, Augustus Perceval called upon his relative, the President, whom, with the omnipresent Danforth, he found just rising from the breakfast-table.

Brewster was possessed of a strong family feeling that might have been affection, or that might have been clannish pride. Perhaps it was to this weak eccentricity, perhaps to some other motive, that his kinsman owed his place at the head of a bureau in one of the departments. The promotion had, to say the least, not reduced the cubic contents of Perceval's conceit. Combined with his dark suit, his black silk vest, and his gold chain attached to a silver watch and ornamenting his portly person, it gave him, more than ever, the mien of one of the pillars of the Constitution.

"Everybody keeps asking me," he remarked, taking a seat near the table, "if you are going to veto Bunkery's bills for the issue of more greenbacks and the increase of pensions, and I don't know what to tell them."

"Tell them you do not know," replied Brewster tersely.

"They say," continued Perceval, pulling out a newspaper, "that a president so anxious for a brilliant administration and who recommends steamship subsidies, Mississippi levees, and magnificent government railroad projects, must know that these schemes require money, and he is bound to do all he can to supply it."

"Newspapers never affect me," replied Brewster, "I edited one myself for a short time, and I know how they are made and all about the men who make them."

"A veto 'll split the party like a buzz-saw," continued Perceval, "and what's more, it 'll put me in a very embarrassing position, for I have denied the rumors right along."

"You must not talk so much," remarked Brewster. "A man who slops over, always stands in a puddle."

This hurt Perceval's feelings, but, having some further business to attend to, he proceeded:

"Bunkery is bothering the life out of me about his man, Cranage. It's Cranage from morning till night. Though he knows there's not room enough to stick in even a pin, he tells Cranage I've got plenty of places. His man Aiken is good for nothing, and he has somebody he wants to put in, in Mrs. Cleland's place."

"I cannot be bothered with it," said Brewster.

"Why not tell Cranage," suggested Danforth, "that, if Bunkery will consent, he shall have Aiken's place."

Perceval looked radiant.

"Capital! Capital! A capital idea!" he exclaimed.

"I was just on the point of thinking of it myself. I'll have *that* fixed before night."

After a short conference further, he went away in a most cheerful frame of mind, feeling equal to resisting or circumventing a wilderness of Congressmen.

Finishing his duties early, he strolled over to the House of Representatives to hear Bunkery make the closing speech in favor of the measure on which he had staked the reputation of his career. It was his bill for abolishing the national banks, and largely increasing the greenback issue.

When the chaplain of the House compared it to the original fiat of the Almighty in the creation of the world, and afterward when the bill was put on its final passage and sent to the President for his signature, it may easily be conceived that it was a proud day for Bunkery. Grandly tossing his mane and looking around the House with a glance of leonine triumph, he made his way to the street-car with an exultation he had rarely known before. "Where," he asked himself, in a semi-conscious soliloquy, "would this mighty current of success stop? What limit could any one set to the greatness and the power which had at last found expression in this statesman's measure?" He began thinking of the White House and its next possible occupant; considering some of the previous tenants, he was not perhaps without justification for his presumptuous romance.

Suddenly he stumbled across Mordecai, though his real name was Perceval, standing on the street corner.

The latter was on the point of saying, "splendid effort that of yours," but Bunkery burst out:

"I want to come to an understanding with you now and here; and I don't want any of your insolent messages telling me I can have one man put in, if I'll consent to have another put out. I intend to have Aiken kept there,"—

"O, I thought perhaps he had about paid up," retorted Perceval.

"I know perfectly well where the insolence comes from, too," continued Bunkery. "Sooner or later I intend to have a settlement with that man at the other end of the Avenue."

"That man at the other end of the Avenue, is going to veto your bill," said Perceval, with his enjoyable sense of imparting information enhanced in this case by the consciousness that it would be unwelcome.

Bunkery was momentarily stunned, then, recollecting the notorious untrustworthiness of his informant, refused to believe it.

"If he does he'll be blown so high that that young woman up yonder," he said, glancing at the Goddess of Liberty on the apex of the capitol, "will come down before he does,—and you may tell him so," he added, as he stepped upon the car.

In spite of the bold face he had put on, Perceval was a little startled at the outcome of this interview. He had intended accompanying the statesman to the hotel which both of them patronized with their presence, and which, although already dedicated by name to one of the Apostles, was, Perceval fancied, far more

distinguished by his casual sojourn within its saintly precincts than by its own apostolic honors.

But Perceval's chagrin was of a sort to be easily soothed by a good dinner, and he came out of the dining-room without a trace on mind or face of the mortification he had suffered at Mr. Bunkery's hands.

As he approached the desk in the office of the hotel and procured a tooth-pick from the little crystal barrel which held them, the proprietor on the other side beckoned him within.

"I'd like it, Mr. Perceval, if you'd settle your account. It has been running a long time now, and I want the money."

"But I have n't money enough for myself, so it's absurd to suppose that I have any for anybody else," replied Perceval jauntily, in hopes of having the affair settled by a joke.

"Jokes pay no bills," said the landlord with slight tartness. "I've not been in a hurry, but there's reason in all things, and I wish you'd attend to it."

"I'll attend to it to-morrow," said Perceval, walking to the telephone and ordering a messenger.

After dispatching a note to an acquaintance, who was directed to meet him later at a short distance from the hotel, he ascended to his room.

In a few moments he was joined by an assistant door-keeper of the Senate, the clerk of the Mississippi Improvement Committee, and two or three other more or less important parts of that mechanism called the Government, who proposed relieving, by a rubber or two of cards, their arduous discharge of the duties per-

taining to that section of the universe assigned to their care.

They were in the midst of their game, when Danforth came in with some papers for Perceval. After laying them down he opened the door to go out, but, getting interested in the game, closed it again and stood behind Perceval looking at the players.

"Yes" said Perceval, not perceiving him and continuing the remarks which his entrance had interrupted, "the old man was seriously thinking of clapping a veto on to the Bunkery bill. But I went up there and says I, Aaron, you're all wrong; you're making the greatest mistake of your life—in my opinion; if you've got very far along on that tack (I'll play it alone), you must get back on the right track, somehow. He thanked me and said he guessed he *was* rather hasty; that my advice was well put and worth thinking over; and he should probably follow it."

There was a subdued hush in the room, as if Perceval's familiarity with executive greatness had, for their benefit, tintured the atmosphere with a rarified solution of it; but a close observer would have been amused at Danforth's countenance.

"Right smart man, that Bunkery," said an applicant for an "Injanner" post-office, who had come in with the clerk of the Mississippi River Improvement Committee.

"Yes, he is," continued Perceval; "but he meets with his match now and then, in my opinion. He's been sending a man named Cranage to me with an open letter—"

"Yes, I've heard of him," said the embryonic postmaster of "Injanner;" "he's got a powerful hold on the Methodists, they say."

"Don't know about that," said Perceval; "don't allow any religion in my bureau. Well, this letter says I must find a place for Cranage; that I could just's well's not; that he, Bunkery, had been put off long enough, and he'd be heard from unless something was done. Most people would have been gravely by such a fix as that, but I saw through it in a flash. Bunkery already has a man named Aiken in one of the best places going (it's my deal), and so when this fellow comes again with his 'money-or-your-life' sort of a letter, I says: 'Tell Bunkery there's nothing would suit me better than doing him a favor, and to-morrow Aiken shall be bounced, and you shall have his place.' The fellow's eyes fairly danced in his head as he went off, but I sha'n't see any more of *him*—in my opinion. (Count us two.)"

Again there was a brief pause of admiration at the intellect capable of grappling with such difficulties.

"I tell you, gentlemen," added Perceval looking about him at his audience and patting his forehead with his finger, "God Almighty did n't give me these brains for *nothing*."

"What an old fraud you are, Perceval!" exclaimed Danforth, unable longer to contain himself. "When you talked about the veto, the old man said you were slopping over as usual, and *I* suggested that way of fixing Bunkery, because you said he was bothering the life out of you."

“O, perhaps that *was* the way,” said Perceval, looking up in astonishment.

“Of course, no one could expect you to remember all the trifling details of an affair like that,” said Danforth sneeringly, between whom and Perceval no love was ever lost.

“O, no,” replied Perceval, “I’m constantly making these little suggestions to the President and I don’t pretend to set as much store by them as do some others that are always around him.”

“Neither does he,” said Danforth retiring.

The game did not last long after this and Perceval’s guests retired with much less deference than they had shown on entering.

The match which, at this interesting séance, Danforth suddenly scratched, exposing the exceeding humbug of the mysteries Perceval attempted to exhibit, spoiled, at least with this audience, his business as a political medium.

Perceval left the hotel and walked up the famous avenue the length of a block, where he was joined by a shambling but decently dressed man who followed him a little in the rear.

Proceeding to the White House, he mounted the stairs, and, leaving his companion outside the door, stood in Brewster’s presence. He noticed that the President was reading Bunkery’s inflation bill and making memoranda as he read.

“I’d like to introduce a friend of mine who, has an invention for ——”

“I cannot see him now,” said Brewster.



“ Well, the fact is, I brought him along with me.”

He opened the door, and, in the loose-jointed man who shambled forward, the President recognized the inventor of the changeable inks; who had called on him at Roxbury.

“ Show him the door!” said Brewster.

Perceval, in a snubbed and humiliated manner, let him out, but came back and, in a few minutes, recovering himself, proceeded.

“ He’s an invention he’s let me into, without paying him a cent. I put a suit of clothes on him, but they’re awfully cheap. I calculated they’d only last just long enough to get the thing agoin’ and then I’ll shake him. It’ll be the makin’ of this administration, in my opinion. You’re going to be very unpopular in this veto business, but this’ll put you all right. It’s a process for increasing the wealth of the country at the expense of a few chemicals. I can use \$25,000 to advantage. He has two kinds of ink. One will fade in three months so’s you might as well look for the printing as for hair on a gun-barrel. The other takes three months to come out. With the first ink, you print on one side of a bill, ‘ this is one thousand dollars,’ and on the other side, with the other ink, you print, ‘ this is three thousand or ten thousand dollars.’ In three months, the thousand-dollar side will have gone to glory, and the other heave in sight like a new moon. You take your thousand dollar bill and just sit ’round till the three months are up and you’ll have from three to ten times as much as you started with. It’s a bigger thing than the discovery of America; it beats

striking oil as striking oil beat ordinary well-digging, in my opinion. You 'll be elected long 's you live, or can go across and board for nothing with those Kings. And then you can hand over the fellows that 'll hatch the three-pounders to your friends, don't you see? and give the small fry to the common folks. A man might as well be as blind as the fish in the Mammoth Cave not to see he can make this nation the richest in the world, in my opinion. It will be a grand lottery, only *everybody* 'll draw a prize," said Perceval, coming to a pause at last.

President Brewster, carefully wiping his pen and laying it down in front of him, wheeled his chair about and said without anger but with marked deliberation :

" You go around making both of us ridiculous. I am constantly hearing of your speeches, and in a day or two they get into the papers. I have always tried to do my best by you, because your father was kind to me when I was a boy ; but if you can't keep still, I will send you adrift, so as not to be responsible for your idiocies."

It is popularly believed that worms and treadmills will turn when stepped on. It is certain that some persons, notorious for the ease with which they can be snubbed and bullied, do, without warning, at last resent an excess of the tyranny and humiliation to which they have previously submitted with misleading meekness.

Much to Brewster's astonishment, Perceval, instead of collapsing as he had always done before, came forward.

"I am badly off," said he. "This fellow's scheme

seems all right, in my opinion, and if you'll give me a lift I'll let things go along as they are."

"And if I *don't*, what then?" asked Brewster puzzled. "It appears you are a spendthrift and want me to pay your debts. I have done little else since I can remember. As there has got to be an end to it sometime, I will end it now."

Perceval was frightened, but his fright made him desperate. By an exertion of what, in his case, was almost superhuman courage, he drew his chair close to Brewster's, and, for several minutes, talked without interruption in a low and mysterious tone. Finally, wondering just where the bolt would descend upon him, he stopped, drew back, and prepared himself for the worst.

"Well," said Brewster, in a mild and almost paternal tone, taking up his pen, "I have something more important on hand than listening to your queer dreams. It seems you remember them a good while."

"It was n't a dream," said Perceval.

"O, yes it was, Perceval—a *devilish* queer dream—a *devilish bad* one, too—a dream a man had better forget. What makes you want to remember it?"

"I can't help remembering it," said Perceval. "It was n't a dream at all, in my opinion. I thought you'd like to hear it. I thought other people would like to hear it."

"If you should tell it to other people they would think you were crazy; and would say why does not Brewster put that pet of his into a lunatic asylum?"

At the words "lunatic asylum," Perceval grew

pale. He had a large confidence in Brewster's resources and in his readiness to employ them. Brewster, perceiving this change in his demeanor, added:

"Of course, I do not want to go to extremes in curing you of the hallucinations, but it is a case which requires close looking after. I *might* have to put you in charge of those who make these things a special study. You see, you are the victim of two delusions. one about the paper money, the other about what you thought you heard that night when you were so sound asleep."

Perceval looked gloomy, but said nothing, and Brewster continued:

"I can arrange to settle those little embarrassments of yours, and if you'll not give way to these fits of talkativeness you are subject to, and will live more reputably, we'll make a man of you yet. You are too visionary. Perhaps you had better go off for awhile. How would you like New Orleans? I do not know anything better for a man in your disturbed condition of mind than a course of Louisiana politics. They have n't their equal for giving a man *practical* views."

"To New Orleans?" gasped Perceval. "Why I'd die of yellow fever in less than two weeks, in my opinion."

"Do not get excited, Perceval! You speak as if it would be a national calamity. What do you think of the Sandwich Islands, then? They are healthy enough. We send the broken-down workers to the Sandwich Islands, to recruit."

"I don't want to think of them at all," said Perce-

val. "There's the long week of railroading—seven times the risk of an ordinary journey; then the nasty sea voyage—it would be just my luck to be drowned, in my opinion."

"You *must* think of it, or something like it. You would be happier to die and have done with it, than to be all the time afraid to die. I guess we'll put you down for the Sandwich Islands, though if you had rather go to Montreal and freeze to death I am not particular."

"Well, the Sandwich Islands," said Perceval with a little shudder at the sea, or rather at the thought of the sea, for he had never trusted his precious self on anything more dangerous than a ferry-boat.

"Go home now, and sleep soundly!" said Brewster, as if talking to a chastised and subjugated child, "tomorrow you will undoubtedly awake with your head clear and all these illusions entirely gone."

And waving him away, he settled himself to his work again.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## A FATAL ILLNESS.

IN the early part of the following forenoon, the President was waited upon by a member of the House of Representatives from "Injanner," who was deeply interested in the success of Mr. Byles, Mr. Bunkery's rival for the Senatorship. He had evidently been walking fast, and, though his face was solemn, and he spoke in a low and sympathetic voice, he was eager and excited.

"I am sorry to hear of your affliction, Mr. President, and I would not have called at such a time did I not feel the imperative necessity of acting at once."

The President, bewildered by his words, looked at him in surprise.

"My affliction," he murmured.

"Yes, sir; the sudden and providential removal of your relative, Perceval."

The President muttered to himself, "He has been talking already; nothing but death will silence him." Then he said aloud: "I should hardly describe it as an affliction."

The gentleman stared, and thought, "If I felt so, I don't think I would admit it." Brewster's remark

so embarrassed him that he was at a loss for further words, and the President said :

“Please explain yourself!”

“Do you not know? Have you not heard that Mr. Perceval is dead? It was about the vacancy that I called to speak to you in the interest of my friend, Byles of Injanner.”

“Perceval dead—Augustus Perceval dead!” interrupted Brewster, in tones so loud, that Danforth hearing them, rose and came hurriedly forward. “When, did he die? Where? What was the matter?”

“Last night—or rather this morning, at his hotel. Some of the hotel people said so. When the porter went for the doctor in the middle of the night, he was not expected to live—the attack was so sudden.”

“I have not heard a word of it. I must see to it at once. Good morning!” said Brewster to the congressman, ending the interview; but as the latter moved away he said:

“Do not forget, Mr. President, the priority of my application.”

Brewster said nothing more, but turned to Lawrence, who was reading a telegram which had that moment arrived. His face expressed renewed astonishment as he handed it to Brewster. It was an application from a Philadelphia politician for the vacancy which, as he was informed from trustworthy sources in Washington, had just occurred by the death of Mr. Perceval.

The president and Danforth looked at each other. Their expression could not have been called so much a

look of joy as of relief. Brewster pressed his hand softly and confidentially upon Danforth's arm, as if that were a sufficient commentary upon this strange news. The danger of an explosion under his feet, by the reckless or malicious gossip of his addle-pated relative was gone. Every day during the whole of his term this possible result had been present with him—had been a source of constant discomfort and seriously impaired his satisfaction in his office.

His suspicion of Perceval's knowledge, which Perceval's daring confession, the night before, changed into a certainty, had, in the disposal of his uncomfortable relative, much perplexed him. But a wiser and higher power than his had taken the matter out of his hands, and he could now truly enjoy the fruits of his long struggle and toil. Surely there was a providence in human affairs after all. "It's a very unusual way of communicating news of that nature," he said after a moment's reflection. "The instinct for discovering dead men's shoes is the result of generations of training by our institutions. It is a distinct species of retriever. Though, I think," he added after another moment of thought, "we will wait and see if they have not been misled in this case. It is not often they get upon the wrong scent, but it is possible."

The keen night wind, which had suddenly arisen, struck the perspiring Perceval with a chill that, by as rapid walking as his portliness permitted, he tried to shake off. But in spite of his efforts his teeth chattered, as he took Brewster's advice and got quickly to bed.



He had been asleep two or three hours, when he awoke with sensations of burning and suffocation. His heart was pumping the hot blood at the rate of over a hundred strokes the minute. From head to foot he was on fire with fever. He felt that his last hour, of which all his life he had lived in mortal dread, had indeed come like a thief in the night. He was surprised at the amount of strength still left him, as, with swimming head and tottering limbs, he touched the electric knob that rang the office gong. He had to repeat the summons thrice before the waiter appeared, getting a chill each time that he arose.

"Come in!" he cried, in answer to the knock; but the door was locked, and he dared not rise again. Luckily the transom was open, and he shouted at the top of his voice:

"Is that you, Tom?"

"Yes, sah!"

"For God's sake, Tom, get a doctor here at once! I'm dying, Tom. Tell him to come quick or it will be too late!"

The frightened servant, anxious to divide the responsibility of so critical a case with some one more capable of dealing with it, bethought him of Mr. Bunkery, whose room was on an adjoining hall. Knocking loudly on that statesman's door and waking him from his dreams at the very climax in the delivery of his inaugural message, he called out:

"Fo' de Lawd, Mas' Bunkery, Mas' Perceval be a dyin' fo' suah."

“Dying? nonsense!” said Bunkery; “who told you so?”

“Mas’ Perceval done tole me hissself; he wants de doctah.”

“Why in —— don’t you get him one, then?”

“I tort maybe you ’d like to see dat he did n’t breve his las’ breff, while I was gwine fo’ de doctah.”

“I’ll go see him,” said Bunkery, stumbling gradually into a few of his most accessible garments. By that time he was wide awake, and stood tapping at Perceval’s door.

The latter, who, as his fever went raging through him, was growing worse and more excited, and filled with dread reluctance of moving, arose and unlocked the door.

“I hear you are sick,” said Bunkery.

“Very sick! desperately sick! Why doesn’t the doctor come? Every inch of me is a fire. I’m undergoing cremation before death. My pulse beats like a trip-hammer. I don’t feel ’s if I’d got fifteen minutes to live.”

Bunkery felt of his pulse and was a good deal alarmed at the heat and at the rapid blows of the surging blood on the vein of the wrist.

“Yes, you’re pretty sick,” said he, “but the doctor’ll be here soon, and then we’ll see what he says.”

“O, he can’t do any good, I’m afraid,” said the sick man; “I am too ill for that; I am dying; I know I am. I’ve read all about it, and it’s just the way people go off of a sudden.”

Bunkery’s knowledge of disease was not accurate

enough to warrant his denying Perceval's positive opinion, and he was almost frightened by his earnestness into believing all he said about it.

"Anything I can do for you?" he asked solemnly; "any last words or wishes?"

Perceval was so impressed with Bunkery's confirmation of his fears that he did not speak immediately, but finally replied:

"I've led a pretty bad life and I ain't fit to die. I've been a very wicked fellow in my time, and there are some things I ought to say which ought not to die with me."

"I s'pose a man likes to make a clean breast of it, when he gets into this fix," said Bunkery, chiefly because he did not know what *else* to say.

"I'd live a better life if I were to do it over again. I'd like to live and try it. O, I don't want to die. I can't die," he panted.

He rolled and tossed in the bed, frightening Bunkery, and making him wish that the doctor would come as much on his own account as on Perceval's.

"Do you think there's any chance?" asked Perceval, vehemently.

"Seems to me you're pretty sick," said Bunkery, trying vainly to think of something consolatory, "but I don't know anything about it, and perhaps I am mistaken;" a form of confession unusual with Bunkery.

And still the fever raged until, at times, it seemed to Perceval as if the very force of the throbs would lift the top of his head off. He gasped and begged for water and every moment grew more alarmed at the tremendous pounding in his chest.

“There’s something I s’pose I ought to say about Brewster’s affairs before I die.”

“Ah!” said Bunkery, all attention.

“Yes, I’m knowing to a good deal of what’s been going on. I s’pose I should die easier if I were to get *that* off my mind.”

“No doubt of it,” said Bunkery, “a man in your state ought to feel the solemnity of his duty.”

“Yes,” said Perceval, convinced by Bunkery’s manner that his case was critical, and influenced by his ruling passion to disburden himself of the secret he had painfully kept hidden so long, “Yes, I’ll tell you.”

And with many starts, and frights, and gaspings, he proceeded with his story until the doctor came in.

The latter went through the ritual common to such cases, prescribing treatment and remedies. Bunkery followed him into the hall, asking:

• “Is he very sick?”

• “Pretty sick—eaten too much, caught cold.”

• “In any danger?”

• “Not in the least, unless he’s imprudent.”

• “No danger of dying?”

• “Not a bit of it. There’ll be a change before morning. He’ll be all right in a day or two,” said the doctor smiling and departing.

Bunkery lingered in thought a moment, then, summoning the confidential clerk of his committee to come to Perceval’s room, he returned there himself.

“What does the doctor really think,” asked Perceval eagerly.

Bunkery shook his head ominously, which plunged Perceval into another spasm of fright.

"I knew it! I knew it!" exclaimed the patient. "Nobody can be as sick as I am and get well. How long—how long—did he think I could live?" he asked with some hesitation, as if he hardly dared face the answer.

"He said you'd live till morning," replied Bunkery.

"So soon! So soon!" cried Perceval. "I'd like to see Brewster; he's the only relative I've got here."

"All right," said Bunkery, "I'll drop him a note."

So saying, he sat down to the table and wrote a brief note to the President, telling him Perceval was taken suddenly ill and wanted to see him, but it was a sick man's whim and he would be all right in the morning, so he need not trouble himself to come. He thrust the note into his pocket, where he found it about a week afterward. The note completed, he continued writing, and brought to Perceval a page which he read over to him.

"What are you going to do with it?" asked Perceval in an assumed feeble voice, for he was already feeling some relief.

"O, it's well to have it in a shape to use. You want to sign your name to it in presence of a witness. I've made an affidavit of it. Here's my clerk; he's a notary public;" and, before Perceval fairly realized it, he had affixed his name to the paper.

"Perhaps you'll be better in the morning," said Bunkery, taking his departure.

Gradually comprehending what he had done, Per-

ceval was terribly excited by the thought of the possible use which might be made of the paper and the probable consequences to himself of Brewster's wrath.

But, luckily, this threw him into a perspiration, and wrought so favorable a turn in his attack, that he soon afterward dropped off to sleep, to wake so much better that the second day he was on his feet again. Leaving his credentials as minister to Honolulu to be sent after him, he lost no time in getting away from the capital.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## AN INTERESTING DISPATCH.

It was just a week after Perceval's repentance, and past ten o'clock at night, that President Brewster sat writing with customary vigor and industry. The door noiselessly opened and the signs of disturbance in the usually disciplined face and well modulated voice of Danforth, his private secretary, at once attracted his attention.

"What is it, Lawrence?" asked he.

"It is all out," said Lawrence in a low and serious tone, "it will be in the papers to-morrow."

"There must be something in the papers every day," said Brewster, with the nonchalant air he always assumed when much disturbed.

"It's gone all to pieces," said Lawrence. "The Judiciary Committee are in possession of the story."

Straightening himself in his chair, Brewster said calmly:

"Tell me about it."

"I ran up stairs at the telegraph office this evening to see Shaw—an old chum of mine, we were operators together at Cleveland—and I heard them rattling off a dispatch to the 'N. Y. Planet.' While talking with Shaw I quietly took off the dispatch."

Lawrence, producing a scrap of short-hand manuscript, proceeded to read to Brewster what purported to be the substance of information that Mr. Bunkery had laid before the committee. It was Perceval's affidavit that, having gone to write a note at Lawrence's table behind the screen in Brewster's office the night the cipher dispatch was received, he suddenly found himself overhearing portions of a conversation between Brewster and Danforth. The affidavit also repeated all of this conversation he was able to hear or remember; but Mr. Bunkery, for the time being, withheld this part of the evidence. Lawrence then recited the remainder of the "Planet" dispatch, as follows:

"After presenting his documents, Mr. Bunkery favored immediate action. The President, he understood, was about betraying his party, by defeating its great national measure. He 'had gone over to the other side.' 'He'll make you a Fourth of July oration on the first of January, if there's anything to be made out of it,' said Mr. Bunkery.

"'Won't it hurt the party?' said a cautious member from New York.

"'It can't hurt the party worse than *he's* hurting it,' said Mr. Bunkery. 'I've been trying this six months to get my man into the pension bureau, but Brewster won't budge. Then there's the postmaster at Injannerville—he's sold out to Byles, and I've been going for *him*;' but you'd think he'd been driven in with a pile-driver. The party in Injanner's all broken up with this fooling. I don't believe you could carry a single district to-day!'



“Other members present had some complaint of this sort to make, and it was agreed that so far from hurting the party, it will ‘brace it up.’ One member, just appointed by the governor from the seventh Wisconsin district, in place of Darth, deceased, and who is only an amateur politician, innocently inquired:

“‘How will it affect the country—especially business?’

“Some members frowned, others smiled, at this absurd speech, and Mr. Bunkery objected to going off on to side issues. ‘Let us stick to the main question,’ said he; so, after an agreement that the proceedings should for the present be kept secret, the committee adjourned.”

Lawrence, having finished his notes, looked up inquiringly at President Brewster. Drawing a long breath, indicative of the interest he had taken in the account, the latter replied, almost carelessly:

“Mighty interesting reading that! Enterprising paper—the ‘Planet.’ I wonder how much of it is true.”

“It comes pretty straight,” replied Danforth. “I stopped at Newspaper Row and saw Sidney. I told him frankly I knew all about his dispatch to the ‘Planet,’ and wanted him to tell me if it was authentic. At first he was not inclined to say anything; but he’s indebted to me for a good many favors, and he finally admitted that he had obtained his information directly from a member of the committee, but declined saying which one. ‘It was a secret session, you understand,’ said he, and laughed.

"I've been afraid it would come to this some time," added Lawrence, after a pause. "He ought to have been sent out of the country."

"I could not *get* him out of the country," replied Brewster; "and by giving him a good position, for which I've been abused and ridiculed, I tried to make it for his interest to keep his dreams and vagaries to himself. As it was, I had to threaten him before he would consent to put the ocean between us. Then he was taken ill, and, I presume, frightened into this wild talk. Sooner or later, it would have happened. Fools of his sort are like a bad piece of plumbing, that is sure to leak when the pressure is great enough. I have done my best to prevent the pressure, but in this instance, as luck would have it, it got beyond my control."

"I took Owen, the Associated Press man, to Bunkery," continued Lawrence, "and told Bunkery there were rumors of his having instigated the Judiciary Committee to considering the propriety of investigating the President. Bunkery put on his superbest airs and gave an extra toss to his hair and said it was idle gossip; the committee had taken no action. Thereupon Owen sent a dispatch denying the rumors. I thought this would break the force of Sidney's dispatch and give us time to breathe."

"Quite right! quite right!" said Brewster warmly, adding, "I feel more thankful than surprised, for I always have a large confidence in your doing the right thing at the right time, Lawrence."

Flushed with this praise and with a mixture of the

admiration and gratitude he always had for Brewster, the young secretary bade him good night. He had to admit to himself that the prospect looked somewhat dismal, but his faith in his chief's wits and resources was almost fanatical, and he trusted that they would be found equal to rescuing their proprietor from all embarrassments.

Brewster did not return to his work, but sat meditating for more than half an hour. Then he thrust the sheets of his manuscript into his portfolio, and, after writing and addressing a note, retired to his bedroom. In spite of his apparent calmness he had scarcely ever been so agitated, and he heard the matins of the birds before he closed his eyes.

Of physical fear he knew little. Battles, mobs, assassins, riots were only tempest and lightning—very disagreeable, but rarely harmful. But to be without a party majority, to be abandoned of partisans, was to be weak and miserable indeed. Having learned to swim with the corks and life-preservers of success, he was appalled at finding himself wallowing without them in a soundless sea. Whatever the legal weight of the case and evidence against him, the vote of guilty would probably command the party strength, with enough votes from the other side, to depose him. Once upon a time three senators dared to vote in deference to the law and the testimony, and were denounced as worse "traitors" than the President they refused to remove. By loudly joining in the outcry against them, Brewster had helped educate the people down to this doctrine, and now, like Robespierre,

faced the guillotine that had shed the blood of his victims. Before he went to sleep, however, he had determined upon his plan of action.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## A MERE NEWSPAPER SENSATION.

CONGRESSMAN BUNKERY was not a little surprised next morning at receiving a request to call on the President at his earliest convenience. Like many another politician he disliked coming to close quarters with Brewster, who had an ugly way of carrying on a personal conflict. The President bade him be seated, and without preliminaries said:

“I see by the paper that your name is prominently associated with a scheme of investigation, based chiefly on the report that I intended vetoing your bill, and on a cock-and-bull story imposed on you by a man in such a condition of mind and body as to be wholly unaccountable.”

Bunkery fidgeted, and said the rumor had been denied.

“O, of course,” said Brewster. “I knew it was only a newspaper sensation, gotten up by fellows whose pay depends on their furnishing their employers with saleable wares. The leader of the House of Representatives would not, of course, take any steps of the kind, without ascertaining the truth of such rumors. There is my answer to them!”

To Bunkery's astonishment the President showed him his currency bill with the presidential signature attached.

"I'm very glad to see it," stammered Bunkery, "I had heard the rumors, but did not credit them."

"That is false!" said Brewster to himself, adding aloud: "As to personal matters, I am the most obliging of men. I hear you're not satisfied with appointments in the Pension Bureau; it is only a misunderstanding. There is no reason in the world why satisfactory arrangements should n't be made. A larger force is required, and anything wanted by our people in Congress needs only to be spoken of, and it is at their service. Perceval is not always responsible for what he says, and besides, I have, as you know, already removed him. I'll put your man Cranage—that is the name I think—in his place at the head of the Bureau. He is competent, is he not?"

"O yes," said Bunkery, "he's one of our best workers."

"Failed in business two or three times, I understand," said Brewster sympathetically.

"Yes," said Bunkery, "and the last was a very bad one. He's been very unfortunate and deserves a great deal of sympathy and help. I do n't know of anybody more deserving of a good snug berth than Cranage."

"Some squeamish people might object to such claims for so responsible a position," said Brewster, "but in great national emergencies you cannot consult old maids' whims."

"Certainly not," said the Congressman, emphatically.

"There is your man Aiken, in whom I hear you take a great deal of interest. I suppose you'd consent to having him advanced? though they tell a story about him—very likely it is not true, but it ought to be looked into. They say he first appeared some time after his appointment and asked the way to the Pension Bureau. He said he had come to draw his pay. You had better speak to him, I think, and have him attend to business. People have prejudices about such matters, and we must consult them."

"He's not a man to be spoken to," said Bunkery. "He can chip the shell off the end of an egg with a pistol-ball! He says he's open to persuasion and conciliation, but you can't coerce him a d— cent's worth! However, I'll do my best!"

"Do so! As to the postmastership in Injanner-ville, we'll arrange that to suit you. If there is anything else that can be done to accommodate you or our friends in the Senate or House, let them know and let me know."

"Thank you!" said Congressman Bunkery, "I shall be very happy to give these assurances to our friends. There's nothing our people so much desire as a restoration of harmony within the party. They were feeling deeply grieved at even the mere rumor of a collision with the administration."

"I should have been very sorry," said Brewster. "Tell them to be more cautious about trusting rumors, but come to headquarters, as you did, and find

out for themselves! I suppose you will have to yield to popular clamor and set up an investigation."

"It has gone so far now," said Bunkery, "I suppose we must."

"Well," said Brewster, solemnly, "be sure you let no guilty man escape!"

With difficulty Bunkery refrained from smiling, but as Brewster never had the bad taste to laugh at his own jokes, the congressman was forced to respect the perfect gravity with which these time-honored words were repeated.

They bade each other good-day, and after the congressman had retired, Brewster, taking several pages of manuscript from his portfolio and reading them with apparent interest, threw them into the fire, saying, with a sigh, "There goes one of the most effective pieces of work I ever turned out."

On further reflection, Bunkery saw and was eager to undo his error in making public his interesting budget, instead of coming to direct terms with the President first.

The "Injanner" legislature was on the eve of a session, at which a United States senator was to be chosen, and, in order to win that prize, he was desperate to secure every advantage and employ every resource. Cranage's influence was of supreme importance, and Cranage's influence could be had only by giving Cranage an office; and Cranage's office hung upon Bunkery's success in checking the proposed investigation which, in a moment of haste, he had set going. He, therefore, girded himself to the task of countermining his own mine and circumventing his own strategy.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

## DETECTING THE GUILTY.

UPON the strength of the hints which Bunkery had thrown out, and which were published in the "New York Planet," the celebrated Bunkery committee for the investigation of "the Idaho fraud," was duly appointed and began its sessions.

To the surprise of everybody, Bunkery's burning zeal had cooled like hot sealing-wax. He not only refused to offer his own evidence, but he afforded nobody else an opportunity of offering any. The conjectures as to this change in his mood failed to explain it, and the whole investigation seemed on the point of breaking down, when suddenly Mr. Rodney—the postscript to whose letter, as we remember, once beguiled Brewster sadly, and who represented the minority of the committee—requested that Mr. Leonard Carroll be summoned as a witness.

"He's in Europe, and it will cost too much," objected Mr. Bunkery. "What is the nature of his testimony?"

"Call him and see!" said Rodney. "He is in New York. I will give you his address."

Much against his will Bunkery complied; and Car-

roll appeared, flushed with health and balmy in deportment. Without preface, he began his testimony:

“On my arrival in New York, about a month ago,” said he, “I read a dispatch from this city which pretended to hint at some revelations made by Mr. Augustus Perceval in regard to certain important information of which he claimed to be possessed, and which, it was said, had been laid before the judiciary committee. I was at once reminded of a letter which, on reaching this side a few days before, I had found in my trunk. It is addressed,” he said, taking it out of his pocket, “to one ‘James Ashton,’ and has on it the imprint of the United States Consulate at London.”

Then, handing it to Mr. Bunkery, he continued:

“The seal is still unbroken. I know nothing of its contents, but I have reason to believe they are of great interest and importance. The letter came accidentally into my possession, though by what exact means I can only conjecture. All I know about it can be briefly told. About four months ago, as I was stepping into my banker’s in London—Rosefield, Barton and Company, No. 10 Bartholomew Lane, opposite the Bank of England—I met an Englishman coming out. He was dressed in a baggy Tweed suit, had side-whiskers, hair parted in the middle, and an eye-glass screwed into his eye. His face seemed dimly familiar, and, in answer to my inquiries, Mr. Rosefield said he lived in Sussex; that Mr. Starkey, United States consul-general—formerly a confidential clerk of President Brewster—had introduced him. There had been a matter of several thousand pounds between the two

in a Liverpool grain speculation, said Mr. Rosefield. On their first visit to the bank, young Rosefield, the cashier, happened to encounter them on the stairs, just as Ashton was saying, 'The longest way 'round is the shortest way home; for my part I like the San Francisco route best.' Then they both laughed, while Starkey replied, 'An Englishman always gets badly mixed on American geography;' at which they laughed again.

"The next day," continued Carroll, "I called upon Mr. Starkey at the American Consulate, and after a few common-places, said suddenly:

"'By the way, I met a friend of yours the other day.'

"'Ah!' answered Mr. Starkey.

"'Yes, Ashton.'

"'Ashton, Ashton!' said Starkey, ruminating. 'I may have a bowing and scraping acquaintance with some one of that name. Where did you meet him?'" inquired Mr. Starkey.

"'At Rosefield's bank,' said I; 'I'm sorry to hear you lost heavily in your grain speculation. It is like all gambling. Better keep out of it.'

"Mr. Starkey turned slightly away, then, yawning, rose and backed up in front of the fire. 'My uncle in New York is a grain shipper,' he said, languidly. 'I did some routine business with one or two of his customers for *him* soon after I came over. But that was three years ago, and I have forgotten their names. United States consuls are forbidden by law to transact business, you know.'

“I left him,” Carroll went on, “wondering what it all meant. The familiarity of the Englishman’s face haunted me. I could not give up thinking about it and trying to identify it. Suddenly I thought I had recalled it, and cabled to New York for an illustrated paper of a particular date, which I subsequently received. Some time elapsed before I met Ashton again, and the meeting occurred at the bank. Mr. Rosefield introduced us, saying to me, ‘The gentleman you were speaking of.’

“Ashton started a little at this, but, recovering himself, sat down to write. Taking a chair near him, I made a close study of his face. I noticed particularly that the bluish tinge of a closely shaven beard ran high upon his cheek-bones, denoting a very heavy growth of whiskers. Then taking from my pocket the copy of the illustrated paper, I laid it down in front of Ashton just as he was signing a check. On the page in front of him he saw a cabinet-sized wood-cut portrait of a man with short-cropped or ‘sand-papered’ hair, and a long, heavy black beard. Underneath the portrait were these words: ‘Wendell Hawkins, the man who made Aaron B. Brewster President of the United States.’ Begging his pardon, I said that I thought there was a curious resemblance between him and the portrait. Ashton, picking it up, read the descriptive text accompanying the picture, and tossed it over to Rosefield, asking if *he* saw any likeness; for his part he could n’t. Then he had his check cashed and went away; whereupon I asked to see the check. Ashton’s signature looked like that of

‘Stephen Hopkins,’ the palsied signer of the Declaration of Independence. I showed it to Rosefield, who said: ‘The dickens! he must be getting shaky.’ Next morning Mr. Rosefield told me that Ashton had taken out a heavy letter of credit, and probably intended traveling on the continent.

“This,” continued Carroll, “is all I know of James Ashton. My surmise is that this letter contains”—

Here Bunkery objected and the committee voted, five to four, not to listen to the surmises of the witness; but allowed him to state his conjecture as to the way the letter came into his possession.

“The post-mark is dated the day of my call upon the consul-general, Mr. Starkey,” said Carroll, “and if, Ashton, were Hawkins, as I believe him to be, he would immediately have disappeared, as he did, on discovering my curiosity about him. I presume that through an oversight at the bank, the note was put with some letters of introduction which were consigned to my care and which I placed in my trunk without looking at them, until I took them out again on this side of the Atlantic.”

The minority of the committee called for the opening of the letter which Carroll had delivered up. Bunkery and the majority opposed it as a violation of the freedom of correspondence, and the subject was finally referred to the House of Representatives for instructions.

Then ensued a fierce debate, in which Bunkery took a loud and leading part. He opposed violating the sacredness of correspondence. James Ashton, he

said, was undoubtedly an Englishman, and the act would lead to grave international difficulties.

At one time Bunkery would roar defiance; at another, as gently as the sucking dove, or at least, what passed for that. He was perpetually alert and vigorous in his effort to block the proceedings and bring the whole affair to a close.

During the debate, he was frequently taunted with his inconsistency, but he replied that no sneers would hinder his doing justice or opposing injustice. He was now convinced that he had been deceived; in any event, he would not, even to gain a righteous end, be guilty of employing disreputable means like the breaking open of a letter.

But one day, after a prolonged conference with Danforth, his tone suddenly changed, and he proposed as an amendment to the resolution before the house, that the minority should, under protest, and provided they would take the whole responsibility, be allowed to open the letter. He said that the high official whose honor and integrity were supposed to be involved in the contents of the letter had requested that his friends should not oppose this suggestion. He was so conscious of his entire innocence, and so confident that no conspiracy or combination of circumstances could possibly compromise him, that he challenged his enemies to bring any evidence in the letter to light.

Thereupon, without further delay, the resolution was passed and, after three weeks of intermission, the Bunkery committee resumed its sessions.

It was an exciting moment when the now famous letter was placed in Mr. Rodney's hands.

The tearing of the envelope and the rustling of the contents could be heard in every part of the crowded room. The members of the committee, the reporters, and the spectators bent eagerly forward, watching each movement in the process.

Mr. Rodney unfolded the letter; gazed at it; looked bewildered; turned it over; looked at the back and then at the inside again.

*It was a blank sheet of paper.*

The majority of the committee laughed. Some of the spectators cheered, one of them in a paroxysm of triumph throwing his hat to the ceiling.

"The chairman of the committee has had this letter in his possession three weeks," said Rodney, "and this trick might have been played in three minutes." But Mr. Bunkery, who seemed as much astonished as anybody at the turn which the affair had taken, arose greatly excited and resented the imputation. "The probabilities are," he said, "that the gentleman on the other side have manufactured the alleged paper out of whole cloth."

"Paper is made out of rags not of whole cloth," said Rodney jocosely.

"I am in no mood for joking, sir," said Mr. Bunkery in the full volume of his bass-tones.

"Nor am I," replied Rodney, "at least for practical jokes like this."

Then suddenly he lit the gas and held the paper in front of the flame.

Not a mark appeared upon its virgin surface.

"No sympathetic ink there!" laughed Bunkery, at which the spectators cheered again.

"The blank paper may have had all the significance of a written one," said Rodney. "It may have been a pre-arranged signal and full of meaning."

"There is room for a thousand conjectures, but no proof," said Bunkery, who maintained that as a fundamental axiom of government a politician should never be suspected, unless the proof against him were adequate to his conviction of the crime of murder, before a jury; or unless he belonged to the other party.

Mr. Lawrence Danforth was the next witness.

He testified that, his health being greatly broken by the labors of the summer, he went to Idaho after the election, for rest and a change of air. After a long and harassing examination, and, in spite of hisadroitness and quickness of wit, Lawrence had to admit that, while there, he made the acquaintance of Wendell Hawkins, and that he found him not in sympathy with the doctrines of the party which elected him. He therefore suggested to Hawkins the propriety of his voting in accordance with his convictions.

"Did you offer him any pecuniary inducement?" asked Rodney.

"I might have said it would be for his advantage."

"What did you mean by that?"

"At this distance of time I cannot tell exactly."

"Did you offer him \$50,000 or any other sum?"

"I may have mentioned such a sum."

"Did you expect to pay it out of your own pocket?"



“No. If I offered him any money at all I had no idea where it was to come from.”

“You trusted in Providence, or in Elijah’s ravens, or to your finding it along the road, or under a tree,” blandly suggested Mr. Rodney.

Here Mr. Bunkery objected to anybody’s insulting a witness merely because he had it in his power to do so; it was unmanly.

“Did President Brewster know anything of your sublime and child-like faith in the fairies, or Aladdin’s wonderful lamp?” asked Rodney, heedless of Bunkery’s interruption.

“I do not understand your oriental metaphors,” said Lawrence.

“Then I’ll try the western dialect. Did President Brewster know of your hint to Hawkins that, by casting his vote for Brewster, he would strike ‘pay dirt’ as soon as he had staked out his claim?”

“No,” said Lawrence, emphatically. “Never! If I had dared mention it, he would have dismissed me in disgrace from his service.”

“Do you suppose when he sees your present testimony he will dismiss you from his service?”

Again Mr. Bunkery interposed. It was an improper question, and the committee by a vote of five to four declined to have the question answered, and Danforth retired.

Mr. Rodney had previously requested that Augustus Perceval be summoned, but the committee by a vote of five to four decided that his affidavit forwarded from San Francisco would be sufficient, and the document was accordingly read by Bunkery.

Perceval averred that, whereas, he had been quoted as having, on a certain occasion, made statements involving the integrity and honor of the President, he now affirmed that to the best of his present knowledge and belief his statements were untrue; that he was the victim of hallucinations due to great mental excitement which was caused by a sudden and severe illness; that his mind was wandering and he had no recollection of the preposterous assertions accredited to him.

At this Rodney and his friends laughed; whereupon Bunkery solemnly observed that only a deplorable lack of sensibility, he was going to say of common humanity, would find sport or mirth in the saddest calamity which could befall the human mind; and at this, Rodney and his "gang," as Bunkery in his anger called them, laughed again.

Brewster confided his own belief in his innocence to young Sidney, the correspondent of "The Planet," who "interviewed him for the purpose." If he ever did give anybody fifty thousand dollars, he made it plain in this interview, that he could deny as well as give. For he denied the whole of it.

He knew nothing of any schemes of the sort. Those engaged in them knew better than to approach *him*. His indignant refusal to sanction fraud by buying the State offered him a few days after the election, proved the kind of welcome he would have given to any corrupt proposal.

But even if the charge were true, he said, the public sensitiveness in regard to it was amusing. One would

imagine that public offices in this country had never been bartered before; that the practice of paying a man for putting you in this office, by putting him in that one, was a complete novelty. Even if the charge were true, what had he done? Instead of rewarding Hawkins, at the expense of the public, with the salary of a foreign mission worth twelve or fifteen thousand dollars a year, he had merely paid that sum to him out of his own pocket; and these people, now so indignant at this offense, would have submitted without a murmur to the other scandal. Why set up such moonshine distinctions between paying cash out of your own pocket, and paying it out of the public treasury? He hated these fine-spun moralists and detested their hypocrisy.

“It was defense enough,” he said, “merely to call attention to the ‘record’ of some of those loudest in this crusade against him. Who were they? Some of them were men who, in the days of the country’s agony, either stood contemptuously aside refusing to help her, or took up arms against her. Must a man who stood by the flag in those dark days intrust his reputation to rebels and rebel sympathizers? Are his patriotism and loyalty to count for nothing? When men are being murdered for their political opinions is it a time to divide party counsels, slander a public functionary, and scandalize his administration in this outrageous manner?”

“How shall we appear in the eyes of Europe?” he continued. “What encouragement this will give to the despots and monarchs of the old world! What a proclamation of our own disgrace to treat such foul

accusations and such disloyal accusers with any seriousness! If public servants are to be subjected to persecutions like this, honorable men will no longer seek office. He was alarmed at the rapid growth in this country of a libelous and reviling spirit. One would imagine the Government to be an absolute despotism tempered by slander. As for himself he was safe from these shafts of malice. He was protected by an armor of conscious innocence against these stings of spite and hate."

Bunkery's report, representing five of the committee, and by the other side briefly described as a "white-washing document," also treated with due severity the partisan malice which aspersed the purest characters. This upright executive was, at the worst, only the victim of excessive zeal displayed in his behalf, etc.

The minority report, representing four of the committee, said that the proof of fraud was overwhelming and the nation which permitted such a crime was past saving, etc.

The public by this time took little interest in the question. The next year was the year of the presidential election and, both parties being engaged in "skirmishing for position," these encounters were looked upon as picket-firing, not battles.

"A licentious press," as Brewster called it, suggested that Danforth's dismissal from the President's service would adorn with at least one practical result this absurd performance.

"After me is manners for him," replied Brewster sneeringly. "A curious notion of gratitude they

must have ! Here is a young fellow who, with the idea of doing me a service, exposed himself to an unpleasant deluge from the windows of their garrets; and now they insist that, instead of taking him in and drying him, I shall close my doors to him and drive him away. I learned, while I was in the army, to *stand by* my soldiers when they were getting it hot and heavy; not to abandon them." And so, being "under fire," Lawrence was allowed, if not ordered, to stay ensconced under the protection of the President.

Perceval, tired of exile, stayed in the Sandwich Islands long enough to take the returning steamer, but kept away from the capital until the investigation had closed. On his arrival he joined the lobby, but remained religiously at a distance from his distinguished relative "at the other end of the avenue."

Much to Mr. Bunkery's anxiety and disgust, he heard rumors that the President had resolved to appoint to the place he had demanded for Cranage, a thoroughly competent person. This unwillingness to fulfill his bargain was confirmed by the dismissal of "Colonel" Aiken on account of inefficiency and bad habits. Bunkery, eager for the senatorship, fell into a rage, the serious consequences whereof to one humble person in this history may be worth relating.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## A PROMISING ARTIST.

FROM the day that Winifred Brewster called upon her in Roxbury, Mrs. Cleland had kept her clerkship in Washington. She occupied a pretty cottage in the suburbs, which in spite of the precariousness of her position and income, she had been buying by installments.

All sensible employers desire their employés to thrust as many roots as possible into the soil; to have families dependent upon them and to be anchored to the solid ground by its ownership in fee simple; for, these are so many bonds and sureties of a steadfast and trustworthy discharge of duty.

Except in its military and naval branches, the government of the United States is not a sensible employer. Over the heads of its employés it hangs a sharp sword as by a single hair, which at any moment may be cut by a fate which no fidelity or industry of the employed can placate or withstand. For such is the beneficence of "the best government on which the sun ever shone," that the death or defeat of a president, senator, or congressman, or a change in the popular sentiment, may be the signal for an undoing of the

fortunes of those in the Government service, akin to that wrought by a plague or a famine.

Notwithstanding its imprudence, Mrs. Cleland had been tempted into partaking of the fruit which, by an unwritten law more potent than a statute, is forbidden to the servants of the Government, and in which they indulge at their peril. But prudence was overcome by her love of natural beauty; by her feminine tenderness for plants and flowers and their sweet dependence upon us; by the charm of their growth, their perfume and their color, with which they reward nurture and solicitude; more than all by her motherly and womanly longing for a home.

Through Winifred's mediation, moreover, she had been one of the few spared monuments of the tender mercies shown by a victorious party when a "new deal" calls for a "clean sweep." As the months went by, leaving her, in spite of the clamors of a throng, unmolested in her office, she had fallen into content and comfort, intensified by her hopeful joy in her son's artistic promise. For him she had already sacrificed many of those adornments and gayeties which both entice and befit pretty women, while her prospective self-denials in order to send him, the coming winter, to the Philadelphia art school were tinged only by her sadness at their next week's parting.

"Will my boy remember his mother now and then?" she asked, laying down the winter's hat she was trimming, one crisp sunny morning of late November. Then reluctantly putting on her shawl, she stood smoothing out his curly hair as he worked at his easel.

“How can I forget her?” he replied, looking up with as much gratitude as his artist’s interest in her face would permit; for he was sketching it in his picture,—“how can I forget her when I owe my very absence to her self-sacrifice;” then he impatiently added, “It makes me hot and desperate sometimes, thinking what a helpless clod I am.”

“No, no, dear boy, I’ll not hear that; think of what has been given, not of what has been denied you—the power to create beauty, to touch men’s hearts.”

“I’m glad to do that,” he broke in, “but mere smudging will quite as often touch their pockets, and I would like to reach *them*—at least by way of variety.”

“You will, you will do both” she answered earnestly. “It’s irksome and slow, but it will come. Perfection is made up of little things perfectly done. Good-bye, dear boy!” And, kissing him, she went out.

She passed along the streets with a satisfaction she had rarely known since the brief happiness of her early wedded life, and with a sense of the martyr’s delight women find in unreservedly offering themselves up for those they love. In spite of toil and plain attire, in spite of the ravages of a cough announcing the scourge she had inherited, Adelaide was still comely. The crisp air, her loving ambition, and the hectic tint adorned her with a delicate color, which, with the refinement of her face, attracted a not unfrequent glance as she walked almost gaily down the avenue. Nor was it the first time she had been the object of looks and remarks that, but for her loyalty to her husband’s memory, and her absorption in her boy’s career, might have alarmed or imperiled her.



Her heart beat quickly as she caught sight of a group staring into a broad-paned window in the middle of the next block. For the two days such groups had already gathered there, she had thrilled and tortured herself by stopping and listening to their talk. As she came near this morning, she resolved to pass on; then, to stop, look, but close her ears to all comments. She ended by joining them, eager to hear every word in regard to the object which attracted their attention.

It was an historical picture. An elderly man, long and ungainly, lay half-stretched upon the grass, under the trees which overshadowed the White House. He was looking patiently through his spectacles at some papers belonging to a wounded soldier, who, in shabby blue overcoat and with an arm in a blood-stained sling, sat near him, seeming to seek his aid in solving the puzzle of his papers. The soft sunlight filtered through the trees, flecking the grass, the papers, and the garments. At a short distance, a lad, apparently impatient with the delay of the tall man in front, was playing with a huge dog. Near by, and waiting for an interview with the elderly man, were a stout, well-known figure, in the uniform of a Major-general, and the almost equally famous face and contour of the Secretary of War.

The drawing in the picture was undeniably bad. The notorious awkwardness of the tall man on the ground was exaggerated by the artist's unskillfulness; the soldier was a little stiff, and the group in the background not well proportioned. Nevertheless there

was life and power in it. It told its simple story; it portrayed with directness and vigor the strongly-marked and eminent forms and faces in it. In the President's face was a look of gentleness, sadness, suffering and sympathy, perhaps also of the mournfulness and despair, to which he gave expression one day, when, bending under his burden and tormented by petty fault-finding, he exclaimed: "*I shall never be glad any more.*" There was in the face, too, the homely and simple benevolence which prompted him to throw himself by the side of the wounded soldier upon the grass, and help his perplexity over his discharge papers. There was both the beauty and the grandeur wrapped in the rough but hardy husk of frontier rudeness, which was known to immortality as Abraham Lincoln.

"The old thief that stole my niggahs," exclaimed a dark, lank man in a loud tone to the crowd that was gazing into the window.

And then "Colonel" Aiken looked about him with that mingled air of shrewdness and effrontery, whereby chanticleer in the cock of his head during the pause after his lustiest crow, estimates the effect of his eloquence upon his hearers.

"Rather than have you feel so bad about it, I'll pay you for them naow," said the proprietor of an unmistakable Yankee twang, displaying a silver quarter.

"How bad do you s'pose I feel about it, sah? Twenty-five cents' wuth! That's a Yankee's notion of a man's finer feelings. I feel bad enough for half a column, sah, at regular local rates; an editorial notice

and a display head 'A confederate brigadier demands his rights under the Old Flag with an Appropriation.' That would be the making of *me*;" and with a further remark about his projected high-toned restaurant to be opened next week, he reeled away.

Adelaide remained listening to the comments of the other spectators.

"If he stretches out that foot o' his, he'll make a rise in the Potomac," said a newspaper art-critic, squinting through his eye-glass; at which several giggled, and Mrs. Cleland grew hot with anger and chagrin.

"Dat's him honey, dat's him, suah's you 'h bon. I should a known him a mile from hyar. I seen him offen an' offen in dese yere streets. One mo'nin' I was a totin clams; I was sich a little gal I could n't keep de pail out ob de mud; 'twas afore dis yer 'fault pavement—an' sumbody kum along an' guv me a laff, pail an' all, at dat very corner dar. I was skeert; my! but was n't I skeert! I kicked, so I nearly kicked out ob his a'ms; foh suah! An' den you orter heerd him laff. 'Golly, mas,' sez I, 'I tot it was one o' dem critter soldiers a pickin' me up for to tote me down to secesh.' An' den he laff agin, not a big buck-laff, but a laff like de tuttles; ye know all about de v'ice ob de tuttles, honey? Dat was him; Mas' Linkum."

"Mas' Linkum!" exclaimed her companion in a tone of awe.

"Yes, Mas' Linkum! honey. I seed him wid dese yer eyes, an' I teched him wid dese yer han's; an arter

dat, I seen him offen an' offen. An' many's de night I've bressed him an' tanked de Lawd dat made him, 'an sent him, to free de cullud folks. But dey done gone kill him, honey; dey kum up behin' him an' kill him."

"I wished he'd a lived," said her companion, the younger of the two. "Say Phœb, don't you tink if he'd a lived, dey would n't robbed de poah cullud folks in de Freedman's Bank?"

This evidently touched the first speaker in a sensitive point, for straightening herself up and putting her hands upon her hips, she exclaimed—"Robbed dem! not *dey*! I'd 'a' had my money dis bressed minit, ten times as big, jess as dey done tole me; an' if dey'd stole dat dar money, he'd a made 'em wish de day ob judgment would kum and get froo wid 'em. He would n't a teched a har ob Jeff Davis nor any dose folks; he was too soff a critter in his heart, too soff in his heart for dat, honey; if he'd had *his* way, dem folks dat kum up behin' an' shot him, would n't 'a' been hung, I specs; he'd say 'go long dar now, ye poah white truck, ye didn't know nuffin what ye was a doin'; but I dunno what he would n't 'a' done to dem folks dat stole de money ob de poah cullud people, dat work for it on deir han's an' nees, like I did; an' didn't buy no toggery—'pears like 'twas fo' years an' years, while dey all laff at me an' say Phœb's a gittin mean jess like dem Yanks, foah de Lawd I's a shame to be walkin' 'de streets wid 'er. It's all gone, honey, now, an' I don't keer. I ain't a gwine to be sech a fool agen. I's a gwine to spen' my money when I gits it, an' not be foolin' roun' dem banks. Dey say dey 'll take ebry rag

off ob you suah's you guv'em a chance. Yes, dat's *him, suah*," she continued, looking again at the picture. "Foah de Lawd, I tink if I stans hyar long 'nuff he'll look up when he gits froo wid dat dar sojer, an' smile jess like he did dat bright, shiny mornin when I was a totin' de clams, an' he sez so kine an' sweet to de gem'l'm he was walkin' wid, I'ze afeard dey'll need many a lift from us, Gennul."

In her gratitude for this genuine tribute to her boy's picture, Adelaide would have liked to embrace this patroness of the arts. But her girth forbade; the fond mother's arms would scarcely have gone half-way round.

"There's genius there," said, after a long study, an intelligent, dignified gentleman. "It ought to be encouraged. I wish," he thought, "I had what I once wasted. I would give him a lift."

"Yes," said the bright and handsome woman on his arm. "They say it's a mere boy—the artist."

"He lacks practice," replied the gentleman.

Pleased with the general verdict, Mrs. Cleland went on her way, and, without further adventure, reached her desk. On it she found a letter from the head of the bureau—probably a note of directions about her work. She opened it and read:

Nov. 29, 18—

DEAR MADAM:— I am instructed to inform you that after the first prox. your services will no longer be required, and to thank you for your industry and faithfulness.

Yours truly,

H. CLAY WITBECK.

It grew dark about her, and, instinctively putting out her hand, she seized her chair or she would have

fallen. Summoning all her strength she bent over her desk and went mechanically on with her work. Slowly the hours dragged. She had but one purpose, one thought—after the business day was done to fly to Winifred. She alone could keep back the hungry politicians who, this woman felt, were crowding her to despair, perhaps to death. At last the hours came round. Putting on hat and shawl, and scarcely speaking to any one, she hurried through the procession of employés that poured out of the building. She passed a small cluster, one of whom was reading aloud the gossip of the evening paper. What did he say? Did she hear aright? Every word pierced her with a pang of terror.

“Miss Winifred Brewster, the President’s daughter, left last night on her way to Europe, where she will probably remain all winter, for the benefit of her health.”

Gone! gone for months! and in one day more her place, and her means of earning her daily bread would be taken from her.

In utter desperation, she staggered on. Where should she go? To whom could she appeal among the hoarse and eager throng of politicians, whose ambition and self-seeking rose before her like a pitiless wall of adamant, which she could not break, which she could not scale? To whom, among the myriads in the nation, her million-headed employer, whose very monstrosity made it blind and deaf to the prayer of one feeble woman? In her office she had had no opportunities for such acquaintance with the world as

would give her a foothold elsewhere; nor did she acquire there the skill and experience useful for other employments. She had no money. She had no friends. Her golden dream of the morning was dissolved into the hard, bare, brutal fact which with stony cruelty stared her in the face.

At this moment she saw approaching a gentleman whom she knew by name and sight, and whose connection with the Brewster family revived her hope. Summoning her mother's love, thrusting down her modest instinct which, like a faithful dog, tugged at her and held her back, she went up to him, and said:

"This is Mr. Perceval, I believe. I am Mrs. Cleland. I came from Roxbury. I have just been dismissed from my place. I am helpless and friendless. I was on my way to see Miss Winifred, who has stood by me so long. She has gone away. I suppose they knew it and took advantage of it. Can you not speak to her father and tell him the circumstances? I have scarcely seen him for years. He would hardly know me. He is so busy he could not probably give me an opportunity to tell him all. Winifred, I know, would never suffer it, but they scarcely waited for her to get out of town."

As Adelaide, almost breathless—now pale with fear, now flushed with excitement—poured out her supplication, Perceval began swelling like a pouter-pigeon, and at the first opportunity said, with his wonted pomposity:

"Ahem! yes, madam, certainly. The President will be only too glad to do anything I ask, in my opinion; provided the case is as you state it."

"It is—it is!" she cried.

"No doubt, madam, no doubt," he said grandly, laying his hand upon hers and slyly keeping it, while she was so intent upon his words that she did not even notice the affront. "It shall be attended to. I will investigate it immediately, in order to assure myself of all the points. That done, the President will abide by my advice, and I shall certainly advise in your favor, madam."

The tears came into her eyes; her bright color bloomed again; she looked so sweet, so charming, that Perceval was tempted to insult her with a kiss in the open street.

"Thank you! bless you, sir!" she said, fervently; "if you only knew all—what I look for, what I am working for. Will it be convenient for you to see at once? The time is short, and once out, it is harder to get back."

"These affairs must be conducted methodically, madam," said Perceval with extra magnificence, "I cannot let you know before to-night, in my opinion."

"To-night!" she echoed.

"Yes, it will take some time to get 'round."

"I did n't mean that. I was surprised that it would be so soon. Can I know to-night before I sleep?"

"Yes, ma'am, certainly."

"Will you send word—a messenger? I live at—"

"No, I'll not do that; I——"

He was about to add, "I'll come myself," but a new suggestion checked him.

"I can arrange it. Can you come down town as late as ten o'clock?"



“I’ve never been out so late as that. I would hardly dare——”

“Very well,” said Perceval, coldly.

“O, I will come, sir; I must come; I cannot sleep unless I know.”

“Then meet me at ten o’clock at the Chesapeake Restaurant—two blocks down the next street, to the left.”

She fell back from him, violently pulling her hand away. The hot blood ebbed and flowed from head to foot within her. Her cheek burned *now* as if he had smitten her with his open palm. Her womanly wrath, gathering its strength like the rage of a wounded animal, was about to descend upon him in scorn and abhorrence, when suddenly the consciousness of her situation burst upon her. She was severing the only thread that bound her to hope and life. She stopped. He watched her—saw her glistening eyes and flush of color, and waited in wantonness for her to speak. Did she, he wondered, in that swift moment, assailed by dread, tempted by hope, for the sake of food and raiment, for the sake of her own sustenance and her boy’s future, cast away all that makes life precious to woman? What strife and agony went on within her? What subjugation of her finer self to the caitiff wants of clay!

She dared not raise her eyes. She said, in a choking whisper, “I will be there,” and turning swiftly, fled in the opposite direction, leaving him amazed and flattered at the ease of his conquest.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE PRIVATE HOSPITAL.

PERCEVAL was waiting in one of the private rooms of the restaurant. A table, set for two persons, and two bottles of champagne on the ice, showed with what allurements he meant to reinforce those necessities of the poor woman, of which he had already tried to take a base advantage.

He arose and began adjusting his tie, while silently addressing himself in the glass. "Ha! you wicked fellow! They give right up old boy, when they find you're in earnest. But you musn't shock her at first. You're a bad boy, Gus Perceval, a very bad boy, I must say. A very bad young man now, ain't you?"

He caught himself smiling, and his reflections—in both senses of the word—were interrupted by a knock at the door. The clock was striking the hour as the waiter announced: "The person you spoke of, sir."

"Show her up!" said Perceval.

In a few seconds the waiter again opened the door and, motioning him to retire, Perceval with something of the rudeness of a Caffre bridegroom, rushed to welcome her. Delicacy, even in intrigue, was not one of his strong points.

But running against and nearly upsetting a deformed youth on crutches, he recoiled with amazement and disgust.

“What do *you* want?” asked Perceval, savagely.

“My mother is below, waiting the answer you promised.”

“O! that’s her limping whelp,” sneered the angry Perceval to himself. “Well, it’s a short answer,” he replied aloud. “Tell her I examined the case, and there’s no call for my interference, and I shall so advise the President.”

Arthur was a sensitive boy whose infirmity had denied him knowledge of the world, shielded him from contact with its roughness, and kept him a good deal in ignorance of its wickedness. But, shrinking almost like a woman from this coarse assault, he perceived in Perceval’s tone the lack of respect which he knew was due his mother. His love conquered his timidity and, with a certain dignity of resentment, he answered:

“She should not have demeaned herself by asking you. I’m sure no gentleman would have made her come to a public place like this. If we had not hoped you might prove better than we thought you, we would not have stirred a step.”

“You may both stir several steps and get out of this,” retorted Perceval; “I might have known what gratitude to expect.”

Adelaide had waited tremulous below. She had given apparent consent to Perceval’s proposal because at the same moment, she had conceived the device of

baffling his treachery by bringing Arthur to the rendezvous with her. But she had hoped, against hope, that Perceval might still set affairs in operation by which she might profit; even trusted, as Arthur told him, that he might not prove as evil as he seemed. So that her disappointment at his answer was serious, if not keen.

"There's the picture, mother," said Arthur, as they rode homeward, "that may have a customer soon."

"People are not spending money for pictures now, not here certainly; at least for that sort of picture," she answered with a bitterness not natural to her. Yet on reflection his suggestion cheered her.

The belated car, driven at high speed, was approaching the cross-street on which she lived and she had arisen to pull the bell.

"Get away there! Get away there!" cried the driver with an oath, applying his brake with such vigor as to throw her upon the seat just as the wheels were lifted from the track while passing over some soft and sickening obstruction, from which, as the cruel tires cut into it, came a groan of pain.

She and Arthur scrambled out. The driver, the conductor, and a pedestrian from the side-walk were stooping over some object lying on the track behind. There was a dark stain on the thin snow which had just fallen.

"He staggered on to me before I saw him," exclaimed the driver; "and when I hollered, instead of starting back he tumbled forward."

"He'll bleed to death," said the man from the side-walk.

Her woman's heart was all compassion. "Bring him to my house!" she cried; "two doors off. There's a doctor 'round the corner. Arthur, go call him, please."

They carried the limp body to her cottage, and she had the fainting man placed upon her bed.

"The doctor says he never goes out nights, unless he knows the persons," said Arthur, coming in.

"He's mighty particular," commented the stranger, the conductor having gone on with his car.

"I don't think there's another within several blocks," she said. "He might die before we could get another. If I should pay him in advance, don't you think he would come?"

"I presume so. But I would not risk much on *him*," he added, nodding towards the bed. "He's hardly worth saving."

"He is a human being," cried the womanly woman, as he lay panting and groaning. "I cannot see him suffer like that. Arthur," she continued, thrusting a five-dollar note—all she possessed in the world—into her son's hand, "take this, and tell the doctor if he has a spark of humanity in him that he'll come and save a man's life!"

The doctor wore his smoothness as the chamois does that of his skin—shaggy side out. Arthur had not at first clearly explained the facts, and, thinking it some drunken spree, he had declined to come. The offer of the money, which he refused, disarmed him, and he presented himself in a very few minutes.

"A bad case," he said, after an examination. "He has too much whiskey in him. However, I can tell better in the morning."

He proceeded to wash and dress the limb, which was badly crushed, Adelaide furnishing what she could from her scanty stores. She could see that the doctor was looking with suspicion or curiosity at the affair, as if trying to define the relations between herself and the man. The increasing embarrassment grew oppressive.

"Have you any idea who it is?" she asked, in order to apprise him of the situation.

"I never saw him before," said the doctor.

"Neither did I," she replied, so sincerely that he believed her.

"How came he here?"

"I was in the car. I had him brought here. What else could I do?"

"You're a good woman," said the doctor. "The conductor should have taken him to the hospital. I'll go and have some prescriptions put up, and come back and sit up with him. Appearances were against me at first, but I want you to understand you're not the only good Samaritan in this neighborhood."

It was long after midnight before the sufferings of the injured man allowed her to sleep. So she arose with a headache, and was half-sick from the excitement and disappointment of the previous day.

She went into the bed-room. The patient lay breathing heavily. His blood had dripped along the carpet from the front door, and stained the bed-clothes. The doctor, on the lounge, opened his eyes, got up, and felt of his patient's pulse.

"A little more favorable," said he. "If he can be

kept perfectly quiet a few days he may come out all right, and amputation not be necessary."

The loss of a limb always made Adelaide think pitifully of her own boy, and she said:

"Yes—yes. He shall not be disturbed."

"But it's more of a burden upon you than any one has a right to impose," he continued.

"If it will only save his life!" she answered, though with a sinking heart; not having the least idea whence the means for carrying the burden would come.

"I'll help you," said the doctor. "But only say the word, and he shall be taken to the hospital; though I'd rather not move him," he added, speaking to himself rather than to her.

"Let him stay!" she said firmly.

"Perhaps I can find out something about him. Let us look for his name!"

His handkerchief did not betray his secret, if it were one, and his garments faithfully hid it. His pocket-book contained a few cents of change, one or two "gambling chips" and a scrap or two of soiled and folded paper.

"Perhaps he is a dismissed Government clerk," said the doctor; "they are not apt to have many friends."

His innocent jest stung the distressed woman, but she said nothing.

"He'll probably lie in a stupor all day and will only require attention to his doses. I will get a nurse for to-night."

He returned to his office, and Adelaide prepared herself for her last day's work.

“Don’t despair, little mother !” exclaimed Arthur from a side room he used as a studio, within sight and hearing of the injured man. “Don’t give up. I dreamed last night I went by the art store and the picture was gone. Some one had bought it and taken it away.”

She smiled a little at his hopefulness, and said she liked superstitions of that sort. In spite of her incredulity, his words soothed her.

On nearing the art store, she was startled at missing the usual crowd in front. She could hardly realize at once that it meant the picture was not there. She stood still a moment.

It was not merely that this would bring an immediate relief of her necessities, but it opened up the splendid possibilities which for years had been her daily dream. Arthur, her Arthur, was recognized at last. The talent she had watched with such delight would be seen and known of all men. His name and fame would be on people’s lips and vivid far and near in print. Forgotten would be those sad defects of body ; critics would applaud ; admirers caress ; and wide opportunities be offered for study and improvement. Could he but have created pictures as glowing as his mother’s love painted for him, his genius would have won all the treasures of homage and renown which in this brief and delicious enchantment, she imagined were already gained.

“His dream has come true,” she whispered almost aloud. “It’s sold, it’s sold, I’m sure it’s sold.”

She laughed half hysterically. The joy seemed greater than she could bear.



“I was wicked last night ; too hasty ; too bitter and unforgiving. God forgive me and teach me to forgive them that trespass against me! Teach me to trust thee, O Heavenly Father!” she prayed, “only it’s so hard, it’s so hard at times.”

By the time her humble silent litany was done she had reached the window. It *was* empty ! She rushed into the store. She could not see it anywhere. The junior partner came slowly toward her.

“Have you sold it, sir ? Please tell me quick !”

One might have smiled at her want of commercial tact in betraying so great an eagerness to sell. The gentleman made no answer. He pointed toward a case of drawers next the wall. Against them stood an empty frame. Bewildered, she looked at him and then at the frame again.

“I don’t understand exactly. Didn’t they like the frame !”

“I’m very sorry madam,” he stammered, “but the truth is, the picture’s gone.”

“Gone ! gone !” she cried, half in ecstasy, half in alarm. “Who has taken it ? How much did they give ?”

“It was not stolen. I do not know who did it.”

She continued staring at him in utter perplexity and then burst out:

“Who did it ?—did it ? *My boy* did it. Dares any one say he did not do it.”

Her indignation and excitement brought on her harassing cough.

“In fact,” stammered the proprietor, after she was

quieter, "some one last night broke into the store, cut it out of its frame, and tore it into shreds. We found them on the floor. You would not care to see them. I am very sorry," he added with sincere sadness in his tones, looking at her agonized face and hearing a convulsive sob which she subdued into a convulsive laugh.

Six months, nine months of her boy's patient work destroyed, almost as by the flash of a sword! She a beggar, he robbed of his precious toil!

"Are you not responsible?" she asked almost sternly.

"Not at all Madam! We exhibited it only as a favor. In fact it annoyed us very much. There was always a crowd and sometimes harsh remarks. But we could not refuse you, and we would have sold it without commission if we could. There were two or three inquiries about it, and much interest manifested by some. To-day a gentleman was to have come in to talk about it, but I don't think, if you'll pardon me, that the execution was quite what it should have been. He can probably do much better the second time. Let him try again, we will effect a sale for him hereafter."

"Hereafter!" Meanwhile who would feed and clothe and shelter them? and what would she do with the poor wretch whom the storms of fate had, the night before, brought to her own forlorn and sinking craft?

She was dragging herself out of the store to her work once more, when suddenly she thought: "Why not see him yourself. He can do no more than refuse. Probably he will, perhaps he may not," and, inspired by this new hope, she set off at once.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE MISSING LINK.

HAVING sent in her card, she waited with a promiscuous crowd, representing nearly every part and class in the nation, a whole hour in the ante-room for an audience with President Brewster. Officials and congressmen passed freely in and out, and it was not until there was a lull in this procession that she was summoned.

Her limbs almost failed her, as she approached him. Even as a neighbor his aggressive temperament and stalwart presence always made her timid, and his present position only increased the tremor with which her anxious errand filled her.

"Well madam," said he, abruptly but kindly.

"I would like to have seen Miss Winifred, sir," said the trembling woman. "They are going to take my place from me."

"Who is?" asked Brewster.

"Mr. Perceval told you, I suppose."

"No, I have not seen him."

"I don't know all the ins and outs of it, sir. Mr. Bunkery wants it for some of his friends, and they've given me only two days' notice."

"Ah!" said Brewster, musingly.

"Can't you keep it for me! It's all I have," she cried. "The old man is so poor. My boy—Robert's boy—Robert was a good soldier, a brave soldier, one of your own men, Major Brewster—Mr. President.—They killed him, you know—he was acting under your orders. His boy is so promising, so talented, so gentle.—I've worked hard all his life to give him a chance, and they want my place for a person who has had no experience, and very little fitness."

Brewster could hardly help smiling at this argument.

"I've tried to help the old man at home, too, but expenses were greater here than I thought. I saved a little now and then, but the assessments came along, one after another; they ate it up as fast as I could put it by. Maine, Ohio, New York,—it seemed as if there'd never be an end. There never *is* an end, sir; it takes one's very hope of saving, and now *my all* is going. They say I do my work well. Nobody has any fault to find. I seldom lose a day. I gave up my vacation one year to do extra work. Can't you save it to me? You've only to speak the word, Mr. President. Don't let them take it from me; I shan't know where, in all this wide world, to turn, when that is gone. For Robert's sake, sir,—I will pay something—all I can afford to pay. Do not let them take the bread from a helpless woman and starve *his* boy!"

She clasped her hands in despair at the prospect of her misery. Her knees gave way, and she sank involuntarily to the floor, unconscious of the curious,

but sympathetic glances of the secretaries, and the stares of one or two persons who had opened the door and looked into the room.

Danforth, coming forward, helped her to her feet, gave her a glass of water, and seated her in a chair.

"Make yourself easy," said Brewster, after she was a little restored; "I will do what I can. I have many things to consider; but if it be possible, I will see that this goes no further."

He waved her away, and she silently withdrew, murmuring her unspeakable thanks for his few words of assurance, whose force and import she had, in her desperateness, greatly exaggerated. As she went out, she met Mr. Bunkery.

That gentleman began almost peremptorily :

"It's over a month, Mr. President, since a place was promised me for my friend Cranage, and his daughter. But I understand now that quite other arrangements have been made, or are to be shortly made. I had not expected anything of the kind, and do not comprehend the cause of the delay."

"I have been trying my best to make arrangements that will be agreeable and practical," replied Brewster, "and I have no doubt that you will be entirely satisfied with the result. As I hinted when we talked of it, there are serious objections to the fitness of your friend Cranage for the place. I have pretty much made up my mind about it; though, of course, you are at liberty to make any suggestions that will help to straighten out matters."

"Thank you!" said Mr. Bunkery, ironically, "but

if you could only persuade *Byles* to wait or to enter into these arrangements you speak of, it would greatly simplify things. Unfortunately he is n't a party to them, and is doing all in his power to weaken the administration in "Injanner." He does n't hesitate to speak contemptuously of you and your cabinet. Although I was once very solid myself with Cranage, *Byles* has been working him 'round. Cranage swings the Methodist vote and is n't to be fooled with. I can hold him, provided I can get a place for him and his daughter *now*; but it must be done at once or we'll lose him, for *Byles* is fighting for keeps. There's a very good berth for the daughter—a clerkship Mrs. Cleland's in; and it would let me out nicely. I would n't bother you with a little thing of this sort, only they say you're interested in her—of course, I don't mean anything by that—and that we'd have to look to you before the thing was fixed up."

"As a rule I never interfere with these petty affairs," replied Brewster, "but I am quite inclined to say that so far as your plans concern the lady you mention, she will not be disturbed."

"I understood that would be your position, Mr. President, and that's why I'm here. The lady does n't need the place and Cranage's young woman does. I understand she owns a house somewhere—either in Washington or wherever she lives, and does n't depend on her office for a living."

"You are mistaken," answered Brewster, "she's very poor; she has made only a small payment on her house. She has a crippled son and one or two other relatives to support."

"I understand, too," continued Bunkery, "that she's a little—a little—well, not quite what she ought to be. I've heard of her making appointments with gentlemen; if so, she ought to be removed."

"Sir, it is a slander and a calumny, whoever reports it;" replied Brewster. "I've known her from girlhood. She is a pure, good woman, and I want to hear no one assail her in that fashion."

"O! I don't accuse her," said Bunkery; "it was one of your own family said so. Personally, I know nothing against her."

Then there came a pause, and Bunkery fidgeted at some papers. Brewster turned from him and began reading the endorsements on a file of documents held by a rubber band. Finally Bunkery, drawing out an envelope, took from it a legal paper.

"I have something here, Mr. President, you would probably like to see."

"What is it?"

"It's an affidavit signed by Augustus Perceval, affirming that on a certain night, about three years since, he overheard a gentleman, by the name of Brewster, arranging with another, by the name of Danforth for a hunting expedition to the far west. The game was to be taken, dead or alive, even if it cost \$50,000."

Brewster turned around so sharply that his visitor involuntarily drew back a little, but his tone proved mild and satirical.

"It is not at all flattering on your part, Mr. Bunkery to treat me as one void of understanding. Do you

really think I am to be frightened by pointing a weapon at me which has been already fired off so loud that everybody heard it?"

"For the matter of that," said Bunkery, marveling at his own boldness, "it's these guns that people think ain't loaded which often do the most damage. However, my gun happens to be a double-barreled one, and I'll show you what's in the other barrel."

So saying, he drew forth another paper, which he laid upon the table, carefully keeping a firm hand like a paper-weight upon it. Brewster had made no further reply, but almost contemptuously began reading a page of memoranda which Danforth had placed before him.

Bunkery waited for his attention, and finally remarked:

"This is the missing link."

"If you have anything more to say on the subject which brought you here, I shall be pleased to hear it; but I have no time for comedy."

Bunkery hesitated again; his courage grew faint, but he thought of Byles, and the bitterness of his winning the prize he himself had longed for ever since, as a young man and only a supervisor of Swayne county, he had looked down from the gallery of the Senate and vowed "I will be there myself some day." This ever-present ambition nerved him once more, and he proceeded in a bolder tone than he had yet assumed:

"I will read this paper. It bears the letter-head of the United States Consulate at London. It is addressed 'My dear Ashton,' and goes on as follows:



A shrewd, intelligent American, Mr. Carroll, has run across your tracks and was here yesterday morning making inquiries about you and the grain speculation. He took me by surprise, but I did as well as I could. You must get out of this at once. The old man's orders were imperative on that point. There's been some imprudence somewhere. You have been draining him steadily of late; but first thing you know, you will be killing the goose that lays your golden eggs. So don't delay, for I am afraid Carroll already knows too much of the inside of the affair.

Yours, THOMAS STARKEY.

"You recollect, Mr. President," continued Bunkery, "that the theory was that a blank piece of paper had been substituted in the official envelope for the original letter. Perhaps that was true, or perhaps the original was preserved and a fac-simile consulate envelope prepared—not a very difficult affair in the vicinity of a printing office—and the blank paper placed inside. I am not prepared to say which method was adopted, but I *am* prepared to say that this is the original, and it would form a very interesting and essential part of the incompleated evidence. I had hoped that harmony would be restored within the party, and before going to extremities I hope so still."

Brewster continued his work. He of course could not afford to allow his preferences in regard to the head of a bureau and a female clerk to provoke the publication of further evidence in an affair which the public had by this time forsaken if not forgotten; but he was too shrewd and proud to retreat, showing any signs of a panic. So, as was his frequent fashion when he wished to be impressive, he did not look up from his task, but replied, in mild and indifferent tone:

“You have not begun to exhaust the possibilities of the case. Since, as you suggest, printing is so cheap, perhaps *this* envelope is not genuine, and *its* contents are fictitious, instead of the other.”

Bunkery was startled a little at the readiness of the man, and was about to reaffirm the genuineness of his documents, when Brewster continued:

“That bombshell of yours is filled with sawdust, sir. Our business, I think is finished.”

“Perhaps you are right, Mr. President, so far as the present moment is concerned. But, in case of re-nomination or a second term, the bomb might be found filled with powder.”

Brewster felt the force of this, better than Bunkery could tell him, but he only replied:

“I think we understand each other, sir.”

“I think so too, sir.”

Bunkery may, or may not, have heard of Lord Brougham’s remark that “the whole machinery” of the British Government “ends in simply bringing twelve good men into the jury box;” but Bunkery, and, for that matter, Brewster too, had a living faith that the whole machinery of the United States Government best fulfilled its purpose, when it got or kept his opponent’s “man” or woman “out,” and put his own “man” or woman “in.” So he took his departure, feeling a reasonable assurance that his morning’s “work” had succeeded in starting that ponderous engine to effect this sterling piece of statesmanship, stretching, in the process, a wretched woman upon the rack of penury.

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He was confirmed in this view by a speedy visit from Danforth, who gave him to understand that a surrender of the "bombshell," the "torpedo," and all other munitions of war in his possession, would be absolutely essential to the granting of his request. Bunkery, having a temperament which preferred present advantages at the expense of future results—a temperament quite necessary to a sincere believer in the magic potency of paper money—consented to the conditions.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## DOING PENANCE.

BEFORE she left her desk that evening, the following letter was handed Mrs. Cleland:

DEAR MADAM: The President requests me to say that, much to his regret, exigencies of the public service unforeseen this morning, oblige him to abandon the hope he then entertained of his ability to serve you. Please find enclosed a small token of his personal regard and his desire to aid you.

Very truly yours,

LAWRENCE DANFORTH.

The enclosure was a check for \$100. It was a brief reprieve, not a pardon, from the tyrant of a sordid party corruption which condemned her for the crime of blocking the path of a political baron, who, like many of his class in this "sweet land of liberty," and this dawn of the twentieth century, kept alive the essence of feudalism.

As she reached the little house which she had already made home-like and dear, she bestowed upon it a sad and tender glance in token of the speedy farewell she would soon have to pay it. Before turning the handle of the door she stopped, her heart sinking again, as it had many a time within the last two days.

She must tell her boy of her own calamity, and,

worse than all, the dreadful story of his picture's fate

With what anodyne of soothing speech or soft caress could she deaden the torture it was her part to inflict? How could she bear to see the joyless dusk of his bereavement creep over his dear face? How could she tell him that the treasure into which he had wrought a part of his young life, and which, in her impoverishment, he could not replace, was now but worthless litter.

As she stood thus in sore and troubled thought, the door opened and Arthur appeared.

"O, Mother!" he exclaimed with his startled face; "the queerest thing has happened. A few minutes ago I picked up this piece of canvass under the chair his clothes are on; in fact, I saw it before, sticking out of his coat-pocket. It is frayed at the edges and on it are painted the tops of trees, some grass, and a white handkerchief. What seems so funny to me is, that it looks as if it were a part of my picture. It almost gave me a shock at first, and then I laughed at the idea. I suppose it was because I've been wondering all day if they had sold 'The Friend in Need.' Why, what is the matter, little mother? You look white and faint. Poor, dear mother, you're worn out with fatigue and excitement. Lie down awhile!"

"It's nothing," she whispered. "Give me some water. I *am* a little faint. I did not have any lunch to-day."

The wretch who had played such havoc with her boy's achievement and her own fabric of joy was in her house, lying in her bed, partaking of her bounty,

a pensioner upon her pity ! She had fed him from her meagre larder, and passed a forlorn and restless night that he might sleep. Weak, helpless, perhaps dying though he were, she hated him with her whole heart—hated him all the more that under false pretenses, it almost seemed, he had defrauded her of her mercy, and by her very kindness laid further claims to her compassion now. The thought of another day, another night, an indefinite succession of nights and days with so cruel an enemy under her roof, was wholly intolerable. He must go, and go at once. She would not even see him again. It would tempt her to she knew not what scorn, what rancor, what railings, even though his ears were hopelessly closed to her rage, and all his senses, leaden with exhaustion and opiates, would heed neither reproach nor wrath. His presence, heaped upon the injury he had wrought, was an insult beyond words. The doctor must take the miscreant away, though it should change him to the clod, she wished he had become, before he wreaked his idiot malice upon the being who was the dearest of all the world to her.

And thus this harmless, pitiful heart had, by the wanton injustice of paltry politicians, and the blind stupidity of some wretched swashbuckler, been turned to a heart of stone, and its sweet human current poisoned with the venom of Jezebels and of Borgias.

Arthur, with mingled curiosity and anxiety, was waiting for her to speak.

“I’ll tell you about the picture by-and-by, dear boy,” she said, turning toward her little parlor. “I want to talk with the doctor. Is he in?”

"He said he would be back at five. It's very near that now."

"I'll rest a while, and do you run out for a breath of fresh air. You have been in all day."

"Yes, but it's not been so very dismal, after all. I've been sketching, as well as nursing, the patient. He is not very fascinating, though. Would you like to see it?"

She shook her head. Had it not been almost dark, he could have seen her look of aversion.

He took her advice and went out.

"He is no better," said the doctor, entering, "and I am afraid he will be much worse. He moans and tosses, and is growing weaker."

She was silent.

"It is an imposition on you," he continued, noticing this marked change in her mood. "I will send him to the hospital."

"Will that be dangerous?" she asked, after a brief pause, and with a strange, intense interest in his answer.

"In his present state, yes; his fever rages and I should fear the worst."

Another pause ensued.

"Suppose he had committed a terrible wrong upon you, would you give him shelter," she asked, after a long silence.

"I am a doctor of medicine, not of moral philosophy," he evasively replied, wondering at this unexpected interest in a man she had never seen before.

“Do you think it would be very dangerous?”

“I think it would be very dangerous.”

“It would probably—probably—kill him?” she continued, rising and walking, in great agitation, up and down the room.

“It would be almost certain to do so,” he said, more and more astonished.

“I want him taken away,” she cried, in a voice, so hard, so cold, so strident, that she scarcely recognized it as her own, and stood interlacing her fingers with insane nervousness.

Her tones affrighted her. The excitement of the moment, her previous exhaustion, the mental tumult of the day, had driven her wild, and the sentence she had just pronounced upon a fellow-being suddenly paralyzed her.

At her words, the doctor, who was standing in the little hall, while she stood in the door-way, put on his overcoat, took his hat, and was drawing on his gloves, with the purpose of sending for an ambulance. He was quite dumb-founded, but, having promised to be governed by her wishes, nothing remained but compliance.

She gazed at him with a steady stare and wanted to detain him, but found herself speechless.

The horror of the crime she had wished to commit had taken complete possession of her. The doctor's compliant attitude, like the spectral dagger at Macbeth's hand, startled her from the paroxysm of hate that had seized her. She saw herself standing on the edge of a gulf from whose depth and darkness she recoiled aghast.



“No, no,” she cried after night-mare struggles with her speechless bondage. “I did not mean it. I did not know what I was saying. God forgive my sinful heart! I was maddened by wrongs which, through no fault of mine, have been done me, and which were crushing me to dust. He shall *stay*. I will watch and nurse him. I have nothing else to do now—nothing in the world to do. I owe him his life, for I would have taken it. I do not know what evil spirit possessed me. I pretend to be a Christian woman, believing in the God of the widow and the fatherless, and yet so weak and so wicked that in all this bad city there is not one baser and wickeder than, for a brief moment, I was in my heart. I cannot tell you now, doctor; but all I have shall be his, and, if that be possible, I will nurse him back to life.”

Concealing his curiosity after the manner of his profession, the doctor bowed in silence, and, before he had taken off his outer garments again, she had gone to the sick man's room.

And there she remained for days, doing penance for the wrong she had committed against her own soul; listening to the ravings and the vulgar oaths which the sick man's mind, ungeared by delirium, prodigally reeled off; performing services that only love or religion makes possible to delicate and sensitive women; holding herself with strained and high-strung nerves to every duty and act necessary to save the life of one she loathed; and, until the doctor pronounced him out of danger, lulling her fevered conscience with ceaseless martyrdom.

Then, withholding the story of her desperate situation, she told the doctor the cause of her fierce enmity toward the patient which so suddenly flamed out that fatal afternoon. He listened without a word until she had finished.

"I do not blame you," he said, when she was done. "If you had told me then, I would have taken the responsibility and would have removed him."

"Then I am glad I did not tell you. It would have filled me with life-long remorse."

"Poor woman!" he thought, looking at the hollow eyes, the hectic flush, and noticing the frequent cough. "It would not have troubled you long."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## A HOUSE OF REFUGE.

THE patient was wan and weak; the swarthy parchment, which served the purposes of a complexion, was sallow and shriveled; the hands and limbs were scarcely outlines of the human figure. But he could sit in an easy chair—the best in the house—and, being on the high road to recovery, the doctor determined to send him away at once.

“See here, my man,” said the physician suddenly; “do you know who has been caring for you as only a woman cares for a brother that scarcely ever speaks a kind word to her, or for a drunken husband whose life she saves that he may curse or beat her when he gets strong again?”

“I didn’t know, be Gahd, doc.,” said the other in a subdued voice, for he was physically weak and morally tame.

“I’ll tell you, sir. She is the mother of the clever young fellow who painted the picture which you cut to pieces. And she knew you did it, too!”

The patient opened wide his eyes and rubbed his head, for during his illness, he had quite forgotten the incident. It evidently came back to him at last, for he said :

"Yes, I was right smart drunk that night, doc. 'Tain't a thing I'm 's proud of now, as I was then. But as fo' that yeah yahn, you 'ah telling me, doc., I don't b'leeve a word of it. No, no. No Yankee woman would ever have done that, suah. She'd a tunned me out o' her house at midnight in the cold, to let me die, and chuckled at me through the winduh."

"Yes, that's your idea of women; but the truth's very different, as it is from most of your ideas. She fed and nursed you, and brought you through. The world owes her a grudge for doing it, too. You owe her more than you can ever pay; far more than you'll ever try to pay."

The bewildered man could make nothing of this queer problem. Every side that he looked at was entirely new to him. His mind, as if in search for some familiar crevice affording him an insight into the preternatural contents of this experience, marched around and around the subject up to which the doctor had led him.

"Well, be Gahd! I nevah hud anything like *that!*" he said; adding, after a long pause of astonishment, "what a fool she was!"

"Now you are coming to your senses," commented the doctor.

"You see how it was, doc.—just ask that queer woman to step in here, and I'll tell you all about it."

The doctor did so, and Mrs. Cleland, at once curious and reluctant, entered and took a seat.

"I had taken too much, that's a fact, doc.," he said, addressing himself to the doctor rather than to the

woman whose benevolent eccentricity had almost led him into assigning her to a different order of beings, "I was marching a kind of lock-step along the street—at least it seemed 's though 't was locked and I 'd lost the key—when I saw the doah of the stoah open. 'Mighty kerless,' said I, 'and I 'll ketch the burglah, I reckon.' So I drop in and I see the pictchah; thinks I, I 'll jist fix *that*, and it 'll be the best thing in the free advertising line I ken git; and I needed advertising, if I needed anything. You heah me! Was n't it in the papahs next day?"

"I saw a paragraph, I think," said the doctor.

"Only a paragraph!" said "Colonel" Aiken, contemptuously; "'twas wuth a colum', and would have given the word 'go' to my cornah grocery. I 'll start her next week, anyhow. When I came out of the stoah, doc., I sort o' felt mean all ova, that 's a fact, though I had n't any notion what 'twas all about. Thinks I, I 'll lie down and sleep it off; then something seemed a-hurting me pretty bad, and next thing I knew I woke and saw you and this curious lady looking at me. Madam!" he said, with a serious and unwonted dignity, "I want to apologise; on my honah I do, madam! I owe you a great deal more than an apology, and if his luck won't keep dead against him, Jefferson Aiken will see that you ah paid, madam; be Gahd, *I will*. Excuse me, madam! That was a word from my native tongue which I learned in infancy, madam. They say when you ah a little out of your head, the language you learned when you were a child, even though you've forgotten it, will come back to you. In the meantime,

madam," he added, fumbling in his vest-pocket and handing her the few cents of change which constituted his entire fortune, and a memorandum of the odd dollars due him by a poker comrade as impecunious as himself; "you need it more than I do, madam," he added, almost plaintively, when she declined it, "and Jefferson Aiken is not accustomed to have the tokens of his regard refused in this fashion. All I have is yours, and more too, if you want it."

In spite of the grotesqueness of his attempts at repairing his mischief, the "colonel's" gratitude was quite sincere, and he arose to press upon her his dime or two and the worthless scrap of paper. In his weakness he fell, and she ran to raise him to his chair again. His helplessness appealed so keenly to her ever ready pity, that for the time she forgot her wrongs and his absurd effort to atone for them.

The doctor, in no wise sentimental, and having too many engagements on hand, had, after intimating to "Colonel" Aiken that this must be his last day, taken his leave.

"Thank you, madam," said the "colonel," after taking his seat. "I've never known much kindness, that's a fact, madam. My folks were or'nary folks, and used to kick me, and cuff me, and swear at me, a good deal. Maybe it hardened my heart a little; but though I'm an ugly customah and I want everybody to know it, and I like to have it put in the papahs that Cunnel Jefferson Aiken is an ugly customah, yet when it comes to a poor woman or an unhappy child, I feel as if there was never enough in my pockets for *them*;

and there *ain't* very apt to be, that 's a fact, madam."

And then the "colonel" with needless candor told the story of the misfortunes which, if you were to believe him, had dogged him all his life like a pack of hounds. It was his *luck* that dug the pitfalls into which he was constantly tumbling; it was his luck that kept him poor; deprived him of employment; and had at last driven him an outcast and a vagrant, into the streets. He had always tried to live an honest, upright, useful life, but his luck thwarted his highest purposes and brought to naught his hardest struggles.

Of course this went straight to the compassionate woman's heart and, for the time, obliterated the keenness of the injuries which she had suffered. She saw in him, as in herself, only a victim of a merciless and capricious fate which threw her, and him, and other poor weak creatures, into the arena of life, to be devoured by the wild beasts of poverty and hunger, in order to make holiday for the rich and the strong—the emperors of fortune and the favorites of Providence.

"And you were not there to steal?" she asked.

"No madam. I have my faults and I 'm willing the world shall know them, but I never yet was a thief."

"What possessed you then to enter the store and to—to—ruin my dear boy's picture?"

"The devil, madam, that 's a fact. I didn't break in. The devil left the door open. If I had known there was a poor widow and a fatherless boy, I would have cut my hand off, before I 'd hurt his pictchah; that 's a fact, I would indeed, madam. It 's always my luck, that 's all."

At this moment, the latch of the gate clinked and Mrs. Cleland who was sitting near the window looked out. Two strangers were entering the yard and advancing toward the front door. Alarmed at some possible new calamity to her or hers, she exclaimed:

“What can they want here!”

“Who is it?” asked the colonel.

“Two policemen,” she said, catching sight of his badge as one of them passed to the rear of the house and the other rang the bell, which she arose to answer.

In all her life she had never had occasion to come in contact with the custodian element of the social structure and, like most women, she had a natural terror of the official embodiment of law. As she opened the door her heart fluttered and she could scarcely speak.

“Good morning, ma’am!” said the policeman, pushing past her and taking possession of the parlor into which she tremblingly followed him, only to find it empty.

The “colonel” was gone!

“There’s a man in this house we want,” said he, losing no time in ceremony; “where is he?”

Perhaps it was her compassion, perhaps a remnant of the remorse for the leaven of crime seething in her breast that eventful afternoon, that prompted her to answer:

“I do not know.”

“Has there not been an injured man by the name of Aiken hid in this house for two weeks?”

She hesitated a second. She had never in all her



life told a deliberate lie. The officer noticed her delay and said sternly:

“You must answer!”

“He *was* here; but—but—he has gone.”

“Then I shall arrest *you* for harboring him and letting him escape,” he said, approaching with a hand extended toward her shoulder.

The room whirled around. The shame—the disgrace of it—marching through the streets and into the building which she had always associated with revolting degradation! shut in a cell! arraigned with the infamous and the vile! this horrible picture unrolled itself before her terror-goaded imagination.

She heard a slight noise in the bedroom. She had but to speak—but to look that way, and save herself from this last and greatest horror; and yet, with womanly fidelity, she shrank from betraying even an enemy who had found a refuge in her house.

Again the noise, as of a window. He was escaping, and even his betrayal might not save her, unless she spoke at once.

This time, the officer heard it also, and strode across the room to the bedroom door. Before he reached it, it was flung open, and a dark, pallid face, and a lean, almost decrepid body, greeted and halted him.

“I am the man you want, sah.”

“You’re right,” said the officer.

“Don’t lay your hands on that innocent woman, sah; she’s a saint, and it would well for you and me if there were more of them in this disgusting world. Have no fear about that lie you told, madam! It was as

white as your soul—whiter even than your face is now. It's forgiven already."

"I've been looking for you for some time," replied the officer, who was of a practical rather than an ethical turn of mind.

"And you came near not seeing me, as it was. I was half out of the window when I hüd what you said to her. 'Cunnel', says I, 'this won't do. No woman ever yet went to the lock-up on your account, and, be Gahd, its bad to begin with a woman like that. So I pulled myself back and I'll go along quietly. If my cussed luck ever lets up on me, madam, I'll have it advertised in the papers, and by applyin' to the subscribah you can hear of something to your advantage! Good-bye, madam, and don't forget that I owe you something besides an apology."

The "colonel," again bidding her farewell, was led off. A want of the slightest evidence that he had broken into the store ended in his speedy discharge, and he had the pleasure of seeing an account of it in the next morning's paper. His eccentric orbit never again crossed that of the woman who had nursed and sheltered him, for, in a few days, she departed for Roxbury as poor as when she left there more than three years before; returning with no prospect but destitution, no hope but the grave; meanwhile, in Mr. Bunkery's words, the government continued to be "run" independently of "business principulls."

## CHAPTER XXX.

## IN THE PRESENCE.

“A LETTER from Roxbury this morning,” said Lawrence Danforth to Brewster, about a year after these events. “Britton gave up work about nine months ago, and set up as a workingman’s leader and agitator. He gets a very comfortable income from the business of making speeches, organizing leagues, and inciting strikes. There is no doubt about his being a mischief-maker. That is what I made up my mind to that morning he came to ask for an increase of wages. Somebody lately overheard him saying that it was time for the workingmen to strike for offices as well as wages; that the offices belonged to the people, and the bulk of the people was made up of workingmen. He had saved your daughter’s life, he said, and you owed him a top-notch place, and he meant to have it. He was to come again this morning, you remember, sir.”

“He shall have it,” replied Brewster, somewhat inconsequently.

“His answer, I suppose you mean,” said Danforth.

“Yes,” said Brewster, proceeding to dictate a letter.

Promptly at the appointed hour, Britton appeared

in order to obtain the office that, in the name and behalf of the workingmen of the country, he had demanded a few days before.

He walked into Brewster's presence with a jauntiness and self-possession which, but for their evident use as a mask for his embarrassment, might have been very effective. His confusion, however, proceeded quite as much from the novelty of his situation as from any natural awe of the authority and power wielded by his former employer.

Theoretically, in this land of equality, there is no reason for feeling in the least abashed at a fellow-being who, by an accident as much the product of his own foresight as the wind or the weather of the month, may have become the President of the United States.

*Know* him! Why he lived next door, and walked to business in the morning with you, exchanging by no means brilliant observations upon the temperature, the paving-tax, or the debates in Congress! In early life his acquaintances may have spoken affectionately of him as a "mutton-head." He may have been a by-no-means renowned young army officer, or an obscure business man whose name was closely scrutinized at the bank, or a lively young editor, always holding out a friendly hand or putting it confidentially upon your shoulder. Even if you did not then personally know him, the stereoscope and the microscope of the newspaper reporter have since put you in full possession of the solid image of the man, his home, his family, and the minutest habits and structure of his life, inside and out; so that, by a fiction of the imagination,

he is, after all, but little more than Jones across the way or Robinson in the next block.

Actually, however, to the citizen of ordinary veneration, and a sense of the relation of things, the presence of the President of the United States is, if not imposing, at least not trivial or beggarly. You and I, of course, are above performing any sentimental salaams to "the Lord's Anointed." We have an expert knowledge of the poorness of the clay that is in him, and of the weaknesses which, from his conscience to his liver, he possesses in common with ourselves. Yet there are many of our fellow-citizens, less robust and clear-sighted, who feel, in his presence, a mild and involuntary sense of the powers with which the chief executive of fifty millions of people is endowed—powers more direct and enormous than those of the monarch of Great Britain, and; within constitutional limits, akin to those of emperors and czars.

However, little caring for emperors and czars, except as so many relics of barbarism and obstacles to human happiness, especially, the happiness of workmen's leaders, Britton was chiefly embarrassed by his unfamiliarity with the place and atmosphere.

The President bade him good morning with a deal of unexpected cordiality and did not even add to his embarrassment by waiting for him to introduce his errand.

"Your application for a position has been duly considered," he said. "Have you any place in view—any preference?"

"No sir," said Britton, with considerable hesitation,

now that he was called upon to put his vague demands into exact words.

"For what do you think yourself best qualified?" asked the President.

"I had n't thought of that particularly," said Britton, after a short pause. "The fact is, I did n't suppose anybody was asked about that," he innocently added. "I thought all you had to do was to show you had influence with voters; and I can show that; I'm chief of the Eastern Workingmen's League, and——"

"Yes," said the President, "that is very important, but it does not exert much influence in politics as yet. However, if that were otherwise, the 'prerogative of the Senate' stands in the way."

"What in——" began Britton, startled by this high-sounding phrase, and then, checking himself, added, "I don't think I ever heard of that before."

"Then I will tell you," said Brewster quite graciously. "Senator Perry, of Connecticut, controls nearly all of the offices which it would be possible to give you, and you will have to see him, and obtain his recommendation."

"I thought the President had control of them," said Britton, who saw that, inasmuch as he had no acquaintance with Senator Perry, his chances were fast slipping away from him.

"That is a popular error," said the President. "Most of them belong to the Senators or the Representatives. Do you know Senator Perry? No? Then I will give you a letter of introduction," and direct-

ing Lawrence to write him one and send to his address, the President turned to the next caller.

Furnished with a flattering note, which declared that the President was under obligations to the bearer, who was worthy of consideration, and that he would be pleased to have the senator recommend him to a position included in his senatorial patronage, Britton, without delay, set out for Senator Perry's house.

It was a brown stone dwelling, situated on one of those streets in Washington, which, perhaps, as a tribute to the intelligence of our national rulers, are consecrated to the letters of the alphabet.

He was shown into the front room of the basement, which was used as an office. Its furniture consisted of a half-dozen plain oak chairs, a green, leather-covered lounge, a steel engraving of Lincoln on one wall and of Grant on the other, and a square writing-table, on which a half-opened mail showed that the senator had been suddenly called away.

Britton, hastily glancing at it from his chair near by, noticed a sheet ornamented with the same letter-head and covered with the same handwriting as his own. It lay partially folded on the desk, as if, before fairly opening it, the senator had dropped it and gone off. Carefully listening, Britton, who had few scruples about such matters, softly turned down the fold, and, without taking the letter from the table, spread it out before him. To his astonishment he caught sight of his own name.

Startled by approaching footsteps, he awkwardly pushed it from the table, whence, fluttering and flying,

it fell at some distance upon the floor. He had only time to seize it,—not time to put it back upon the table,—before the door opened. Britton sank into the nearest chair as the senator came in, and, slightly nodding, took his seat at the table.

Rising and walking toward him, Britton thrust the open letter into his pocket and took out his own.

The senator, having opened it and run his eye hastily over it, began poking carelessly through his papers before him. But, being of an absent-minded and unmethodical habit, he soon gave up the search, saying with deliberation and long pauses while overhauling his mail:

“This is curious. Why doesn’t he give you a place himself and have done with it? There was a letter about this, I think. I had just begun reading it. I must have taken it upstairs, though I don’t recollect it.”

Then he patted his pockets, and from the inside of his coat took out a package of old letters, which he shuffled, but without result.

“Well, it’s no matter, I guess,” he said finally, taking up Britton’s letter again, which, after another hasty glance, he tossed back upon the table, adding carelessly:

“I have nothing at my disposal, and he knows it. When there is anything I will let you know. What is your address? It’s of no consequence, for your application is about fifty deep; but I’ll take it as a matter of form.”

Britton in a surly and disappointed tone gave it to



him. The indifferent air with which the senator had dismissed the affair, both vexed and surprised him. He found it difficult to conceive of such inability to comprehend the importance of the subject which he had the honor of presenting to the senator's attention, and was astounded at the stolid quickness with which he and his letter had been dismissed. This careless man surely did not know whom he was treating so contemptuously. The open letter which Brewster had given him was evidently not strong or full enough. The senator had become so calloused by the ceaseless importunities of insignificant persons, that he had treated *him* merely as one of the endless procession of political beggars and impostors which haunted his doors. Brewster's private letter, which unfortunately was now in Britton's pocket, undoubtedly supplied all these defects, and would have insured a favorable answer. It was so flattering and urgent, probably, that the President did not care to have the representative of the workingmen know how much he was respected and feared. He much regretted having touched it, and began devising some scheme for putting it into the senator's hand again, but he was outside of the house before he could invent a plan for undoing his mistake. Then he thought he would ring and tell the colored man who would open the door, that he had picked it up in the hall. No, he would go back, and with that excuse, hand it to the senator himself. But he might as well know what was in it first.

So drawing it from his pocket, he stood in the area,

under the front steps, and read Brewster's private opinion of him.

DEAR SIR: One Wm. Britton, from Roxbury, will shortly call upon you. He is one of these pestilential fellows who make a business of agitation, and he wants some sort of official recognition, which, for various reasons, the President is disposed to withhold. He is, however, not in a position to peremptorily decline the man's request, and will send him to you with a formal letter of introduction, which you are at liberty to treat *as* such.

Yours truly,

LAWRENCE DANFORTH.

Puzzled though he was, by the official and indirect language, Britton caught its purport easily enough, and in his rage tore the letter into such small fragments that the senator's steps and sidewalk looked as if, in the language of the weather bureau, they had been the victim of a "local snows." Once or twice, he swore aloud, attracting the attention of the passengers. His first impulse was to betake himself to the executive mansion and vent his wrath upon Brewster; but, even if he really contemplated the wild scheme, it was too late in the day to gain admission.

He raved all the more at this balking of his plans, because, owing to his ignorance of the "machine," he was at the end of his resources. He did not know that, like the spinning-machine with which he *was* familiar, the political "machine" has its laws and principles, in accordance with which it is operated; that only a long apprenticeship and service to it, can make one the master of it; and that those who have learned the trade of "running" it, object to sharing with outsiders the profits thereof, even as the spinners and weavers oppose the employment of those who do not

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belong to *their* unions, and do nothing to promote *their* welfare.

Britton, with ambition out of all proportion to his ability and experience, was filled with rancor by his failure as well as by his discovery of the contemptuous terms in which Brewster had described him in the letter that was intended to throw upon Senator Perry's shoulders the responsibility of refusing him. He had boasted so loudly, too, of his influence and its probable recognition from Brewster that he dreaded to go back to Roxbury. However, revenge still remained, and to some natures the gratification of this passion is scarcely less agreeable than the accomplishment of their plans.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## HOW WATER RAN UP HILL.

ON approaching Roxbury by the train one might at this time have easily mistaken a week-day for a holiday or a holy day. There was an oppressive and supernatural silence peculiar to manufacturing towns on days when the bells might well be nothing but painted images of themselves, when the clashing shuttles of the looms are dumb, and the spinning jennies no longer clatter and sing.

About the cottages and tenement-houses of the operatives as well as the saloons and the billiard halls, hung groups of men, talking, whittling, and jesting. Here and there they were engaged in wrestling or horse-play, or amusing themselves with practical jokes upon one another. In the streets one perceived that leisurely bustle of an idle crowd so different in its aspects from the bustle of a busy one.

Such, during the past year, had been the situation in Roxbury for weeks at a time, and in this feverish and boisterous state of affairs Britton had found both materials for his activity and stimulants for his ambition.

The increase of the currency was followed by its in-

evitable results. Prices began rising. Merchants and speculators attended to *that* part of the affair. Wages, as always, limped behind. The law acted with impartial indifference to all points of the compass;—North and South, East and West; among the operatives of Roxbury and the farmers on the prairie.

Even Mrs. Cranage, Bunkery's female disciple in the science of political economy, received additional enlightenment upon the subject, when, one morning after she had scalded the milk pans and set them out to dry, a stranger in a brightly varnished buggy drove into the yard.

"What 'll you take for all the stock you can spare, Mrs. Cranage?" he asked jumping out of his buggy.

Flattered at hearing an utter stranger call her by name, she replied in easy good nature:

"I dunno; how much 's t'wuth?"

"I 'm giving fifteen cents a pound," said he.

"Fifteen cents!" cried Mrs. Cranage, in the astonishment naturally arising from her neglect of prices current.

The stranger was sorry that he had not offered twelve.

"Yes," he said, "cash down."

"Wal, wal!" she muttered, "ef thet ain't the beat o' all creation."

"How many can you let me have?" asked the stranger.

"Wal, I allow I ken let yuh hev three critters."

"Very well, I 'll take them."

They were duly weighed and nearly four hundred and fifty dollars put into her hand.

"Laws-a-mas', what's a comin' to us!" she exclaimed, scarcely believing her senses as she sat smoothing out and folding the new, crisp, pretty bills, counting them over for the fourth or fifth time and wondering what she should do with it all.

"Mr. Bunkery knew fur keeps what he was talkin' about arter all," she soliloquized. "Thet's my ideer now of pretty good times. *Reel* good times ud be when critters is wuth twenty cents and caliker five cents. But caliker uz raither up las' time I uz over to Injannerville. P'raps its clumb down a peg. I'll drive Josh over this arternoon and put this in the bank, and then I'll stock up."

In order not to be tempted into extravagances, she went first to the bank and deposited nearly the whole of her money. The cashier did not stare, as she expected he would, at the size of her deposit, but entering the amount in her pass-book, handed it back to her without any signs of emotion. With twenty-five dollars she betook herself to Dunham's store resolved upon a long, delightful afternoon's rummage among the goods, and a taxing to the verge of rebellion the patience of the clerk, distinguished for his red eyes, paper collar, checked pantaloons, and alpaca coat.

"I want ten pounds of sugar," she said. "How much is it?"

"Fifty cents," replied the young man.

Her eyes danced with the pleasure which every woman feels at the consciousness of a good bargain. Her "reel good times" *had* come. Sugar only five cents a pound, "critters", fifteen.

"I 'm afeard he 's a blunderin'," she said to herself. "He looks stoopid."

"Be thet first-rate?" she asked, pointing to some packages of coffee.

"Prime, we're selling it fur a dollar."

"Coffee down too," she thought. "What's flour by the bar'l?" she continued.

"Fourteen dollars!" said he.

"You don't hear stret, I reckon; I said a bar'l, not a waggin' load."

"Fourteen dollars a bar'l, mum."

At that moment Mr. Dunham, the proprietor, entered. She did not stop even to return his civil "good afternoon," but cried out:

"Deeken, ye don't mean fur ter tell me to my face that flour's fourteen dollars a bar'l?"

The deacon, frowning at the clerk, asked:

"Who said t'wuz? That lunk-head over thar? Hey yuh ben a tellin' her flour's fourteen dollars a bar'l?"

"Yes, sir," said the young man.

"Yuh'll be the ruination on me. Did n't I read it out o' the paper this mornin' thet flour's *fifteen* dollars a bar'l. I'll gin yuh fifty cents to let me off, mum. Thet's what a green un like him costs a man."

"Fifteen dollars a bar'l!" she exclaimed; "Ef yuh wa'n't a pillar o' the church, I sh'uld say, deaken, yuh wuz a cheatin' a poor widder outer her eye teeth."

"Thar 't is, mum," said the proprietor, showing her the paper.

Putting on her glasses, she scrutinized it, as the re-

nowned college professor is said to have studied a Greek manuscript, in a vain endeavor to distinguish a comma from a fly-speck.

"Everythin's a kitin'," said the deacon; and Mrs. Cranage slowly began to understand the situation. It was not "critters" alone that were "up," everything was "up." The calico she expected to get for at least fifteen cents, was forty; the coffee was a dollar a pound, not a package, and everything else in proportion.

"Let 's see," she said, the tears almost coming into her eyes at her vexation, sense of loss, and general anxiety; "How much d' I owe yuh now?"

"Twenty-six, twenty," answered the clerk, after figuring the sum on a sheet of brown wrapping-paper. One would have said the poor woman imagined herself in a den of thieves, and was looking about for a way of escape.

"How 's thet?" she asked in desperation, and he gave her the items, which were as forlorn as the totals.

"Goodness, gracious, deaken! What are we comin' to, when yuh grind us down like thet?"

"I grind yuh down!" exclaimed Deacon Dunham, "when I don't know from one day t' another how much I shall be a payin' for goods? p'raps more hull-sale than I git now re-tail. Golly, mum! but you've *got* to put on the prices to keep in sight on 'em, or yuh 'll be histed higher 'n Gilderoy's kite."

Mrs. Cranage went home a wiser woman.

And following all this was the collapse and a repetition of the experience which nations always go through after periods of speculation and expansion.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

## GETTING EVEN.

It was the middle of the afternoon that Britton, alighting from the train at Roxbury, made his way down the street to his lodgings at a small hotel situated in an obscure and not particularly agreeable neighborhood, a short distance from the station.

After depositing his luggage he betook himself to Kaiser's beer-hall, now the most flourishing place of business in town and more than compensating its owner for the loss of his "bozd-ovvis."

The atmosphere of the room was thick with smoke, while stains of tobacco juice were dyeing the sawdust, new and pure that morning, into a by-no means pleasing imitation of tan-bark. The tables were covered with dominoes and puddles of beer. Kaiser stood with one hand constantly upon the ebony handle of his beer pump, while the thumb and finger of the other swept from the punctured brass drainer in front of him, six or eight glasses at once, plunged them into the sink behind the counter, and, after their bath, dexterously brought them under the faucet whence he filled them once more.

A look of curiosity and interest, though scarcely of

pleasure, greeted Britton from the score and odd of faces which looked up to him on his entering.

"Well Britton! what luck?" asked Jaycox who, shortly after Brewster's final refusal to take him into his employment, had, through Mr. Stratton's intervention, obtained a place elsewhere.

"Look 's if he 'uz going to go as a 'bas'dore to the Heathen Chinee," said Harmon from behind his hedge of tangled whiskers. "Got to eat pups with the washee-washees, Britton?"

The disappointed office-seeker scowled a little and said with a slight irritation.

"You 'd better ask me what I 'm going to drink; eatin 's gettin' too expensive."

"There 's some truth in *that*" said Jaycox; "when a man's spent his week's wages he's hardly enough left in his house to feed a cat, let alone his wife and children. Seem 's if every butcher and grocer in the city just slapped on the prices when they see you coming Saturday night. By the time we get what we're striking for now, prices 'll be just as much above wages as they were a month ago. I always said 'twould *be* so, though I don 't know that there 's much consolation in that."

"Tell us what come of it!" urged Harmon, returning to the subject of Britton's visit to the capital.

"You 'll see what 'll come of it, before you 're much older," said Britton, declining further explanation, except to add, "it's something that 'll help you all."

"I wish 'twould hurry up," said a faded, weak-voiced,

little man with a tippet of sandy whiskers under his chin. "I've been lookin' for it every mornin' this forty year, and hain't seen it yit."

"You'll see it," said Britton with the assured tone of an astronomer predicting an eclipse, "but the more we pull together the sooner it'll come."

There was something pathetic in the gleam of hope which illuminated the faces of some of these eager listeners. There were a few indolent and worthless fellows, in whose ideal society everybody but themselves was to do the work; but, for the most part, they were honest men whose most diligent thought and labor in adding up their gains, left them only a "naught" of cash for this week's column and a "ten" of care to carry to the next; and who, as the result of this arithmetic, were always put on the wrong side of that decimal point which divides the wealthy units from the needy fractions.

"In the meanwhile," continued Jaycox, "there's pale pinched faces, and thin lips, and eyes with tears in them. I know what I shall find in one house some morning—it'll be white and cold; just a mask of skin over the bones; a poor wan body under the coverlid, if there is one, and a deformed boy barely kept alive by his mother's love."

He spoke so solemnly that for a moment there was silence in the room, which, availing himself of the sympathy and curiosity these words excited, Britton broke by exclaiming:

"It's these capitalists,—always looking out for their own interests."

"Well, so far as I know, *everybody* looks out for his own interest," replied Jaycox.

"Somebody's got to look after mine, or I shall have to chuck my wife and young uns into the river," said Harmon in a matter-of-fact tone as if it were a method for solving such difficulties habitual with him. "It's all along uv us workin' to fatten sommun else. 'T would raise a rumpus, now would n't it, to fill up that iar eel-hole with 'em? Those eight corpusses would make more ov a racket than they gen'ly duz. Folks'd say 'here, suthin's wrong,' an' would begin to stomp about a bit, and give poor critters a lift; that would n't help the ole women and the little uns, with their ribs a showin' through like the lath where the plasterin' 's broke off, in the shanty we're in this week, tho' where we'll be next, onless 'tis in the eel-hole, I dunno. 'T would n't put any fat on *their* bones, would it?"

"Can't say 's 't would," said the faded little man.

"No," continued Harmon; "folks as was still high and dry might be better for 't; but 't would n't be any water on *our* wheel. So I ain't quite ready fur to put the old 'oman and the chicks to soak, just to help them 's ain't no wusser off'n I be. But there's a way of makin' folks ask about you without 's it costin' you a cent."

"What's that?" asked the faded little man.

But Harmon contented himself with shaking his head as if he were not yet quite ready to impart his portentous secret.

There was, however, a general murmur approving his plan of relief, whatever it might be; for to them

the relief seemed to be of far more importance than the method.

Britton at once perceived this mood, and nothing better suited his present purpose of avenging himself on Brewster.

“When they train men for a fight, I s’pose you know,” he said, rising, putting his foot upon his chair, and resting an elbow upon his knee, “they begin by dietin’ ’em—takin’ the flesh right off of ’em. That’s what your masters are doin’ for you, I see. You’re gettin’ thinner and thinner, every day.”

He drew out his words with bitter distinctness and smiled sarcastically.

“Thinner and thinner every day,” he repeated, “until you get down to the *fighting point*. Then they’ll send for the police or the soldiers and shoot you for wanting to put something into your empty stomachs and the empty stomachs of your wives and young uns. I s’pose you’ll slink away—those who haven’t bullets in their heads or their skulls cracked—and stick to the slavery in which they hold you. And yet standing right over there is a big mill that can turn out enough to support every man, woman, and child of you all. And why do n’t it? Because it has to build and warm the big house, and load the rich table, and soften the easy beds of half a dozen people, while *you* shiver in your shanties and eat your corn meal if your stomachs can stand it, or go without food if they can’t.”

These words, made still more bitter and emphatic by the hatred which inspired them and which lit up his

face, aroused the passions slumbering in the breasts of those who needed only a spark to explode the discontent which hunger and want had rendered savage and murderous within them.

"We'll stand by you," said Frank Harmon, the broad-chested, deep-voiced operative, big and hairy, with his round face and long upper jaw, against which he snapped his lower one with an almost animal ferocity.

"What can we *do*?" asked the faded little man, not exactly with timidity, but apparently for enlightenment.

"Do! Do!" echoed Britton. "Stand square on your feet and say, this earth is mine! I was born on it. I have an equal right with every other man to all that's on it. If they won't give it to you, *take it!*" Who is it tells you you shall have two or three dollars a day, while he takes twenty, or thirty, or fifty? He was born, and he will die, as naked as you."

"Be jabbers, the divil will ketch him, ainy how," said Irish Larry.

"I don't know nothing about that, and you don't," said Britton. "But that reminds me. They like to teach you that you're laying up something *here* which you can spend in *the next* world. We can't give you what belongs to you here, they say; we're very sorry—and Oh! awfully sorry they are, to be sure—but the law of supply and demand you know, forbids it. We'd like to repeal this law, but we can't. God Almighty made it, and he won't abolish it. But he'll square the account with you in the next world. You'll have

*your* innings *then*. If you 're good and won't make a fuss, *you'll* have a good time then. But I notice they 're mighty careful to take theirs *now*. They'd like to have *you* trust the Almighty, but *they* won't; I don't blame them. I don't myself, and I don't mean to. They 're too smart to wait. They like to take things—good things—as they come along, and for one, I'm going to do it too. Their Almighty, I notice, is the Almighty who, according to their tell, put you here, poor and hungry, and set you to work so they may lie idle; and you 're not to find fault, but if it grinds you, and starves you, and freezes you, you 're to go off to some hole and die, and not make them feel uncomfortable with your sufferings."

There was visible among some of them an evident shock at the impiety thus boldly uttered. They shrank away from him a little, as if they were frightened, for they were staggered at his audacious challenge of all that they had been taught to regard as sacred. Some remembered that the priests had warned them against such men as this Britton.

"An' don't you belave in God?" asked one of the more devout among them.

"I don't believe in anything that I can't see, feel, taste, touch, or smell," he replied. "I believe in this world. I believe in enjoying yourself while you have a chance. I don't know anything about another world. I believe it's an invention of these people who plunder us. They act just like folks that don't want to be bothered with their children. You 're too young, they say, to have this, or do that, as we do. When

you are grown up, you can have a good time. And so these folks put us off with these fables about how it is going to be hereafter. I believe in cash down. Let *them* wait for the fun."

"But they've got the cash, and we haven't," said the faded man.

"No, and you never will till you show 'em you're *going* to have it. If they won't give you your share, take theirs away from *them*. If their mills grind so you get the bran and they get the flour, make 'em build 'em so 's they'll grind even."

"That's the talk!" "That's the talk!" "We're in for that!" "Let's do it to-night!" cried several voices.

"No," said Britton, with a cunning look; "not to-night;—nor to-morrow night," he added, after a pause; "we want to be sure of success. We must make it warm for them everywhere at once."

"That's impossible," said the faded man.

"Nothing's impossible," said Britton—"except one end to a stick."

They laughed, and he added:

"They're like a bully at school when I was a lad. He'd thump a bit of taffy out of one little chap, snatch a raisin or two from summun else, pull some chesnuts out of another feller's pocket, an' by the time he got clear 'round he'd a better luncheon than anybody he'd stole it from, an' it hadn't cost him a penny, neither. Capital's the bully, and we're the boys a-fattenin' on him up."

"Then we'll thump back," said Harmon, grimly;



“an’ I don’t believe in everybody’s waitin’ for everybody else. You have a sprinkle right here; an’ afore it ’s through it ’ll be rainin’ hard everywhere.”

Britton made no reply, but beckoning to Harmon, walked out of the beer hall.

“Britton’s the first chap to be making trouble and the last to stand up to the rack when it comes to the pinch,” said Jaycox, after the two had gone. “If you ’re fools enough to let him stir you up as he’s trying to, you ’ll see him slide right out from under, and say he told you not to go so fast or so far.”

But this caution was coolly greeted, and with his uncle, Cleland, whom he brought along to hearten him up with beer, Jaycox went home.

As he parted with the old man, he said to him:

“Be sure and tell Adelaide that Miss Winifred Brewster came home from Europe this week, and I hear she’s not going to stay in Roxbury many days, but will be off for Washington.”

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## A LONG FRIENDSHIP ENDED.

WINIFRED, of course, had not been in Roxbury three hours before Dean Stratton made his appearance and was warmly welcomed.

"I am afraid you thought I was taking my time about calling on you," he said jestingly after their first greetings were over.

"Perhaps, rather, I was afraid you might take *my* time," she replied, smiling at him.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I came the moment I heard you had arrived. Business before pleasure, I said to myself, and set off at once."

"How do you tell them apart?" she asked with the delightful laugh which always recalled to him the sunny memories of their young days.

Dean blushed a little at this, perhaps unintentional, jest at his unenergetic prosecution of his profession.

"Well," said he rallying, "it is a pleasure to come and see you, and your business to entertain those who do so."

"I retired from that business a year ago."

"And you are going back to it at once."

"O, yes, I have had a year's vacation; and I am

anxious to see father again. I stopped only to make sure that everything was in order here."

"It seems dull enough, I take it, after three years of excitement," said Dean jealously.

"O yes," she answered, a trifle piqued but a good deal amused, at his tone, "excitement is absolutely necessary to a giddy girl like me, and these common-place country folks bore me intolerably after the brilliant people I have been accustomed to."

And thereupon she smiled at both his and her own absurdity.

"It is hard I know," he continued, "but you will have to put up with *me* here; there's really nothing better, I assure you."

"O, you will do very well *here*," said she; "of course it would bother me to dispose of you in Washington."

"I believe you really mean it," said Dean, with a pretended frown. "You would think me shabby and put me in a corner to entertain the Congressman's daughter from the Pottawatomie district, while you were flirting with some jack-a-napes in epanettes, or some ass with a lot of trinkets strung outside of him."

"I would be obliged to make it agreeable for my guests, certainly. The Pottawatomie girl would enjoy herself in *your* company, and the jack-a-napes, as you are pleased to call my charming acquaintance, would enjoy himself in *mine*."

"Well, he can't come here, I want him to understand that," said Dean, in his boyish, hearty manner of old. "I will make it very disagreeable for him."

"O, I have no doubt of it," she responded. "But

that will give me a refreshing variety, for I have met only charming and interesting people lately."

"You flatter me, Winny," he said, calling her by the familiar name of their youth. "I would not wonder if you were sorry I can't speak broken English."

"O yes, I am," she answered with a sober face, but eyes full of merriment. "It is so much more fascinating. If you could only bend it a little, even, it would be better than nothing. There is the secretary of the—I think I won't tell you which legation. I used to smatter politics and science to him just to hear him pronounce the hard words. It was a comedy of itself to hear him say devil-ope-ment. He was at dinner one day where old Senator Simondson happened to be present. People suspect the senator's literary education began pretty late in life. Well, my friend, the secretary, went away early, and after he had left, I overheard the senator say to his neighbor, 'Yes, raythur talkative; but don't you think he's jest a leetle off in his pro-noun-ciation?'"

And Winifred laughed at the recollection, Dean joining her with great heartiness.

"Seriously, Winny," he said, "I was a donkey to feel so; but I thought 'she's too proud to care for her old friends'—that week I was there and you had gone away after knowing I was to be there."

"No, Dean, you don't do yourself any injustice, calling yourself stupid names. The letter came the very day I left, and I was disappointed enough when I got it afterward and knew I had missed your visit.

But I was not at all strong, and father insisted on my going. You must think meanly of me, Dean, if you suppose that under *any* circumstances I could forget old friends."

"I owned up I was a donkey, to begin with," said Dean, penitently, "and I was; but you see it was a good while since I had seen you, and——"

He stopped, for he noticed that she looked hurt. As he watched her, pensive in the fire-light, her face softened and illuminated in the glow of the dancing flames, the memories of the many pleasures and the little griefs which their common childhood had known, his life-long care for her, and his tender interest in her, suddenly ripened into a burst of passionate yearning.

They were silent for a moment, and then, out of the fullness of his heart; he spoke:

"I can't think of anybody's caring for you, or of your wanting anybody to care for you except me, dear Winifred!"

She wanted to look up to him with the frank and affectionate face she had always been wont to show him; but this revelation, answering to one in her own heart, disarmed her of the protecting friendship and confidence whereby their intimate and unconstrained intercourse had hitherto been possible.

Her deepening blushes and her down-cast eyes that both hid and betrayed the fond glances she could not wholly restrain, filled him with unspeakable delight at these silent, sweet avowals of her heart.

"It seems as if I had always loved you, my darling," he said suddenly; "loved you all the more when

I was afraid you did not care for *me*, but had grown quite away from me. Winifred, darling, I have never loved any one but you. When you were away, when I have been away, the absence has always saddened me; the thought of seeing you again has always made my heart beat faster with the gladness. I want the right to care for you always as I did years ago, dear Winny; may I not have that right, dear, dear Winifred?"

She could not or did not speak; but she let her hand fall with tender unconsciousness into his. Sinking beside her, he drew her gently toward himself, whispering once more:

"Darling!"

She answered so softly that it was like the good-night twitter of a nestling bird. Folding her in his arms he sealed their long, long friendship with a fervent kiss of passion on the lips he had not touched, since they went frolicking to school together, many a year before.

And though he had little doubt of his welcome after that, he used to go very often, sometimes twice or thrice a day, probably to assure himself that in the meanwhile she had not forgotten him.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## SOCIAL EQUALITY.

THE day after Britton's return and his harangue at the beer hall, was Sunday, but only the greater number of people in the streets marked the difference in the aspect of Roxbury.

Britton and Harmon, after holding a conference, which they had adjourned from the previous evening, were sauntering down the street, when they met a dainty figure well set off in an artistically fitted dress, and stepping fastidiously over the damp spots where the morning sun had melted the frost-nipped earth.

At sight of Britton, Winifred recalled the scene on the bridge and the peril from which he had rescued her. She recognized him by a slight but gracious inclination of the head, to which he responded by raising his hat. His loutish companion, fancying that Britton meant it as an insolent mockery of the manners of her class, laughed loudly.

"What are you roaring at, you stupid?" asked Britton.

"To see you duckin' and uncoverin' like the priest before his gimcracks in the church over there. I leave all those monkey-shines to the big-bugs. You don't get me ketchin' a big cold in my head."

“Why, you donkey, don’t you see when I take off my hat to one of their pretty women it shows I know as much as they do about their tricks and their manners.”

“I don’t see it in that way; but if that’s the game you’re after,” said Harmon, leering and grinning, “you’re aimin’ high.”

“What I’m doing’s my business,” replied the other. “I’ve as much right to bow to her, or speak to her, as a fellow who cheats his fellow-creatures by lending money to ’em, or picks their pockets while they’re a-quarreling in law-suits.”

“Damn it, man! don’t put on airs with me! You would n’t dare speak to the gal! That glib tongue o’ yourn’d make about ez much racket ez that ere calf’s a-makin’ by a-wigglin’ of his tail, and your head’d feel like Kaiser’s beer now-a-days, with five cents’ worth o’ froth and two cents’ worth o’ body.”

“I’ll bet you the beer, I’ll speak to her next time I see her.”

The only answer was another roar and the acceptance of the bet. In order to carry out his bravado, Britton lingered in the vicinity of Brewster’s house until her return from church, when, to the unspeakable amazement of his companion, he audaciously crossed the street and joined her. To do him justice, his tall, muscular figure, well set off in coarse but fashionable clothing, a clean-shaven face and carefully-arranged moustache, gave him a varnished gentility that afforded him many striking advantages.

She was surprised at his accosting her; but her



semi-public life, bringing her into contact with "all sorts and conditions of men" and women, her good sense, and her quick sympathies put her at ease with everybody. Her dignity was unconscious, unsuspecting and not quickly offended. She put the best possible construction on people's motives, and was not easily disturbed by any disregard of social usages not ill meant. Aside, too, from her natural kind-heartedness, she felt that her obligations to him, not wholly discharged by her father's bank check, forbade her resenting anything short of downright rudeness.

Britton little knew, as he confessed to himself afterwards, "what a contract he had taken on his hands;" for, from the moment she bade him "good day," in a low, pleasant, but gently superior tone, his tongue and head treacherously put themselves at Harmon's service in fulfilling that prophet's prophecy.

She relieved the embarrassment by saying:

"It must be a pleasant change for you to get out into the open air on a beautiful day like this."

"Yes," he answered; which was all he could muster by way of reply.

"I should think the factory people would enjoy Sunday, and stand by it as their day."

He had talked about this, and was more familiar with it.

"They do," he said; "they believe in a rest day; not to go to church in, though;" he added after a pause. "We ought to have part of a Sunday, *every* day."

"Everybody ought to go to church," said Wini-

fred. "It is bad for people to get the notion they can do without it; even if they do not believe much in what they hear and see there, they will probably think of something better than their hard work and their money-getting."

"It's little that money-getting troubles *us*," said Britton, with something of his surly and revolutionary tone, that frightened her a little; "it's the *not* getting it."

"Everything seems going wrong," she said plaintively, to herself quite as much as to him; "I wish I knew what the trouble is."

"*We* know," said Britton, in the tone that alarmed her.

He was conscious this was not the usual style of conversation between young gentlemen and ladies, but, feeling more at home in it, he clung, in desperation, to it. She, for her part, was trying to devise a method of dismissing him without wounding his vanity.

"I suppose you are out for a stroll over the hills," she said.

"No; I don't care for the hills. I like to be with people."

"But when you have seen them all the week, it is a relief to get by one's self, is it not?"

He felt more at ease as he walked and talked, and some of his native boldness returned as he replied:

"If I could see people like you, during the week, it would n't be."

Her heart fluttered with tremor at his rude speech, but without noticing it, she replied quietly:

“I think it would be better for people who are shut up in the close factories to get all the open air possible. It is healthful.”

“I’m healthy enough,” he answered, with an awkward laugh, lifting his shoulders after his fashion of feeling of his strength, as if he were an engineer testing the pressure of the steam in the boiler.

“I mean the working people generally. I must stop here,” she said, opening the gate of a neighbor’s, bowing, and saying “good-day” to him, before he fairly realized that she had taken leave of him.

He walked on with a feeling of disappointment. He cursed something a good deal, but whether it was her, himself or the constitution of things, he could not tell exactly. He did not know it at the time, but now he saw that, throughout the entire walk, she had spoken of him and his class as something different from herself and hers. And he had admitted it as a matter of course, and all his theories about social equality had been dissipated to the winds in that few minutes’ walk. It showed itself in the tone, the mode of speech, the ease, the dignity, in contrast with his embarrassment and feeling of inferiority. He cursed the laws, whether native or artificial, that made it so; for he did not for a moment think there was anything personal in it. He was as good as she and all her belongings. But she, he argued, had been taught to look down on such as he, and it goaded him. Nor was he much relieved, when, on turning about and retracing his steps a few minutes after, he saw Dean Stratton—now as well established in the practice of

medicine, as could be expected of a young man who was to inherit a fortune—walking home with her. They were chatting and laughing, and went gliding along at their ease, in utter contrast with the embarrassed and almost gloomy march he had taken with her.

“There’s a fellow, now,” he growled, “who does n’t do an honest hour’s work, and never will. He’ll spend his days stuffing poison into people’s carcasses, as old Stevens stuffs dead owls and squirrels, with his arsenic, and things. And yet because the snob’s been learned to kill people when they’re not like to die naturally, *he’s* coddled and petted; but because I do something useful I’m kicked out.”

Had you told Britton that medical men had done their share in adding to the usefulness of the human race, by increasing the length of human life, and reducing the number of days lost in sickness, he, sharing an idea held even by persons more intelligent than himself, would have said, “You’re crazy;” for this idea assumes that only that work is really “useful” which produces coarse material products perceptible to touch and taste; while the higher cultivation of the faculties—through eye and ear, through art, literature, music—is unworthy of a “practical man’s” attention.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## MR. BUNKERY'S VICTORY.

"YOU look anxious and worried, dear," said Winifred to her lover, as they walked up the path to the house.

"Do I? Perhaps I am a little tired."

"Is that all? Are you sure?"

"O yes," he said, lightly, but she did not feel assured.

"Tell me what it is, dear! I have a right, now, to know all that concerns you."

"Well," he said, "I *am* anxious. I hear a great many rumors of coming disturbances. It's in the air; but perhaps that is all it will ever amount to."

"What is it? Where does it come from?"

"From the operatives; chiefly from the idle demagogues. There is a great deal of threatening talk; and a great deal of suffering; the misery is the powder, the talk is the match. Don't look frightened, my darling; it will not come immediately; perhaps not at all. If you were not going away so soon I would not have said a word."

"But *you will* be here."

"O, I shall not be molested. I am like the cat—

a harmless and necessary animal. In fact, I am rather popular amongst them. That is the way I come to hear these things. What little practice I have had is what I have given them free."

"What can be done? What can *I* do?" she asked. "I wish I knew. I am so sorry for them, Dean. They talk as if they were weary and heavy-laden, and I don't see why it is n't our duty, if we *are* Christians, to make their yoke as easy, and their burden as light as possible. Maybe I am self-righteous, but it *seems* to me that all that keeps me from doing anything for them is not knowing what *to* do. They don't want to be looked down upon nor talked to with an air of superiority, and I am afraid we all go at it in that way. Just before I saw you, I was talking with"—

"Excuse me for interrupting," said Dean, "but I may forget it unless I speak of it now; there *is* something you can do; indeed I am sure of it. I have just been to see a woman whose patience and heroism are a marvel to me. And yet I can't help her. She is perishing from disease, it is true, but starvation has already done its perfect work. I was thinking perhaps you could make her few remaining hours more comfortable."

'O, Dean, how dreadful! Tell me what I can do, and I will do it with all my heart and soul. I cannot believe it is too late. I cannot feel reconciled to that."

"Now I think of it," he went on, "I believe you or your family used to know her."

"Know her! who is it, dear? Tell me who it is!"

"Mrs. Cleland."

"Mrs. Cleland! Adelaide Cleland! Here in Roxbury! Starving here! How came she here? Why didn't I know? Why didn't she tell me? Why didn't somebody let me know?" cried Winifred in great distress. "I can't forgive myself," she added as the tears came into her eyes, and Dean tried vainly to check her self-reproaches. "I will do all I can—all that remains to be done," she added softly, as if in the presence of death.

Bidding Dean good-bye, and ordering the cook to prepare beef tea, while with her own hands she packed a basket of fruit, jellies, and wines, she had Rudolph drive her to old Cleland's house.

As she went up the little path to the white cottage she saw a strange face in the window, and, in response to her knock, a woman opened the newly-painted brown door.

"The nurse, probably," said Winifred to herself, forgetting that people dying of starvation do not employ nurses to soothe their last hours.

"How is Mrs. Cleland?"

"Well enough, for all I know," said the woman.

Winifred stared at her. There must be some mistake.

"Can I see her?" asked Winifred.

"For all I know," replied the woman dryly.

"Then I'll step in and you will tell her please, that Winifred Brewster would like to see her."

The woman still stood staring at her.

"There's no such person lives here," said she after a pause.

"Not live here! Where does she live? Has she gone away?"

"For all I know. Fact is," she consented to explain, "I didn't come to this town till yesterday, an' I don't know nobody. My son—he lives over to Malvern—and he bought the place of a man who had a mortgage on it; an' he paid too much for it, to my thinkin', but he wanted me to come over and settle the house for him."

"She's a sweet creetur, anyway," said the woman, as Winifred walked away, charmed by her manner and her low, kind voice.

"Perhaps Rudolph will know," thought Winifred; but Rudolph did not know. She saw Jaycox, sitting on his doorstep in his shirt-sleeves, smoking his pipe. As she tripped across the road he advanced to meet her. "Yes," he said, "I know. I've seen them sink slowly out of sight, and I've held out my hand to 'em, as you might say, but it was little I could do for 'em. I'm nearly exhausted myself. They've gone down in spite of anything. It makes my heart ache," he said, moving a little, as if that would relieve the pain. "They had to leave the cottage. The old man intended selling it, or, at least, clearing off the mortgage as soon as prices went up. He had several good offers, cash in hand, by people who wanted to put their property into solid land before the deluge came. He'd a-jumped at any one of them the year before, but, like a dozen other people I know, he said to himself, 'It's going higher, and I'll hold on.' And so he did; and kept holding on, until it was too late."



Winifred did not follow Jaycox very closely. She understood only that the old man, who expected to clear off his debt by paying for his place in depreciated paper, was tempted by the "high prices," as he called them — that is, by the quantity of poor money he could get for it — to wait until the chance was gone. He had repeated the mistake which he had made years before, when he first bought it at war prices, thinking its value would advance indefinitely. But it was never quite high enough to induce him to sell, and this was the end.

"Where do they live?" asked Winifred.

Jaycox pointed to a hovel twenty rods away, on a side street.

"Rudolph, drive down Maple street to the old shanty on the left! As quickly as you can!" she added, thinking ruefully of what she had not done for Adelaide.

She sprang out, and knocked nervously. The door seemed very little higher than her head; there was no knob, or fastening, or the appearance of any threshold. The holes in the floor had been covered with a few pieces of board, which were gradually being taken up to feed the feeble fire. Great gaps in the ceiling and walls, where the plaster had fallen off, added to the squalor and wretchedness of the hovel. A quilt across one corner of the room offered the only seclusion which Mrs. Cleland could command, since she needed the little warmth there was to be got from the one stove and the scant fuel. Abandoned rat holes were visible in the wainscot. There was not food enough

to attract the former occupants back to their haunts.

These details, or the instant in which they were noticed, seemed to her like a photograph of the interior. A feeble voice bade her enter. The feebleness was of the sort from which one never recovers. It was mere articulation in the pipes of the voice, no volume of air from the bellows in the chest.

Winifred stepped in quietly and went close to the fading picture of the soldier's widow. She sat in an old wooden rocking-chair, over which a tattered "comfortable" was thrown. The eyes looked out unnaturally large and dark, from a bluish, transparent face. Winifred had never seen any one so near the great change. She trembled even while she tried to be calm. She took the poor bones of the once hard-working right hand in hers, the tears streaming from her eyes. Besides the rocking-chair there was only one poor stool in the room. A rude wooden box stood near the widow's feet, and Winifred, sitting down, tried resolutely not to show how moved she was, but to be the comforter she came to be. One of the thin hands rested on her beautiful brown hair and the faint voice said:

"Don't! Winifred, don't! You will make yourself ill and nothing can make me better—here."

She spoke with calmness, and a great dignity wrapped her like a garment. The soul seemed already free within the worn-out shell. Resistance had ended.

"I had hoped to see you, Winifred. I had even thought of sending some word to you. But I knew you

were away for rest and health, and I would not trouble you. I hope you are better."

Winifred waived any question about herself, though she could not trust her voice to ask, had there been anything left to ask, of the sufferer before her. At last she said:

"What you must have suffered, poor Adelaide! How did it come about? I never heard or knew till half an hour ago."

A distressing cough shook the frame, sending a shiver through it, as the tempest sometimes shook the hovel. The spasm was so long and violent that Winifred began to fear it was the only answer that would ever come. But, apparently making no account of the interruption, the dying woman went on.

"Yes, I have suffered, but it has seldom been more than I have strength to bear, and it is over now. I rebelled at first, but I have learned to submit at last."

There had come that blessed benumbing, that reprieve of pain which often comes on the approach of death. Through hidden channels of mercy this tender anodyne had been administered to her.

Death was kind, and its blow, like the stroke of the lion's paw, stupified its victim into unconsciousness of suffering.

Winifred offered her some of the delicacies in her basket, and she went on, as her feebleness let her speak.

"Had any one told me that I should come here, to die; that father and Arthur would have to sleep there—"

The cough came again, and again she waited patiently for strength to go on.

—“ And that I should have to leave them here, I would have expected a fierce resistance and an agony of struggle; but I have not felt so; that is, not of late. I am still hoping for a little light on their future. Perhaps you have brought it, Winifred, and then I can go.”

“ I *have* brought it. I will bring it. I will do whatever you wish to help them. Trust me, though I have not deserved to be trusted. I ought to have seen; I ought to have known; but I will not fail again.”

The last spark of unrest seemed to go out, and, in spite of the cough, perfect peace fell upon her. Above it's painful noise, Winifred heard faint taps outside, and Arthur came in with a few sticks in his hands. His eyes were still bright; his face fresh with comparative health. His mother had starved herself to save him, but with such ingenious love, that, daily accustomed to her self-sacrifice, he was quite unconscious of it. He went out again, after putting the wood which, with long and painful toil, his feeble strokes had split, into the small, spiteful stove, that, unlike the church at Laodicea, was either cold or hot, and hastened the sick woman's disease by the alternate extremes of temperature.

“ No,” continued Adelaide, “ if I had foreseen it, I could not have endured it; but it came gradually. I hoped, hoped every day for work; but there was little I could do. What can any one, sitting at a desk for months or years, and taught a business that fits one for nothing else, find to do when she is suddenly deprived of it? I tried sewing, but the pay was so small.

Father sold the cow. Then the furniture went, piece by piece—all but Arthur's easel and his tools. Mr. Trafton gave us credit until pension day. When I went with the money, he said: 'I can't let you have credit any more. I lose on it every time.' The tears came into my eyes. He saw them and said: 'I know how it is, but if I did it for all, I am sorry for, it would ruin me.' I knew this was true, and I went away. But how *dark* it was, Winifred! I thought of my helpless boy looking up to me as I had looked at Mr. Trafton. I prayed that God would take us before that time; but He did not hear me, and I have prayed only for patience since."

Here the cough, like an impatient fiend, tormented her, and would not come out of her.

"My poor boy," she went on at last, "his loving eyes begged me for food, and he was shivering with the cold. One day he went to the closet where his father's uniform hung. I kept it since it came home with the ragged hole in the breast where—where—the bullet killed him—after it was all over, you know, and peace had come. Arthur looked at it. It was thick and warm. It seemed as if only looking at it made him feel more comfortable. He did not say anything, but glanced once or twice at me. I could not refuse what he asked, and I could not grant it—not at first. But one day I took it down and cut off the buttons. I ripped it, and recut it, and made it over, with the tears falling upon it. At last it was done, and my darling has not suffered in that way since. Father has helped all he could. I hoped that at some time

my boy's talents would be recognized. I could die happy if I thought he would have a chance."

"He will!—he shall!" said Winifred. "I will give him every opportunity. He shall have masters and schools, and a fair chance."

"Thank you, Winifred! I see your kind mother looking at me through your eyes. I will tell her how good a daughter she left behind her."

Winifred bowed her head reverently upon her hands, shedding tears of sympathy and self-reproach that she had not proved worthier of her mother in saving this stricken woman from a premature grave.

"Don't reproach yourself like that, dear Winifred! There are hundreds needing help as much as we. It is folly to hope that one person rather than another will be helped."

She had become so enfeebled that she spoke with great difficulty. Winifred sprang up and tenderly caressed her, holding her head upon her shoulder and smoothing her forehead. Then she took the thin white face in her hands and softly kissed her with great awe, as in the presence of one who was about to be welcomed where earthly rank and power and culture and fashion had no standing or recognition. Adelaide closed her eyes and sank back. Winifred poured a glass of wine and held it to the dying woman's lips. She drank a little, and gasped, trying to speak again. She beckoned toward the outer door. Winifred ran and called the boy. His mother, bending toward him, clasped him in her almost lifeless arms. She fell back once more, and Winifred thought

she had fainted; but the light never shone in her eyes again.

The old man came in with an armful of broken boughs. Gaunt and haggard, he stood in the doorway a moment, gazing at the scene. He knew what it meant. He had been expecting it at any moment for weeks. He, too, was failing in strength. He had told his daughter he wanted to go away somewhere and be at rest forever. He took the dead woman's hand affectionately in his and kissed her forehead.

"She was a good woman," said he with simple, hearty honesty.

The same day on which she was laid by the side of her husband, Mr. Bunkery's rival was sworn in as a member of the United States Senate. Mr. Bunkery's sacrifice of her happiness and life to the deity of the "machine" had been unacceptable and vain. In a less devout worshiper than Mr. Bunkery, his failure would have brought a harrowing scepticism as to the beneficence and omnipotence of his god. Even he may have temporarily doubted, and felt tempted to insult it or chop it to pieces. But his faith abounded, and he vowed, on the next occasion, if it were possible, to pile its altar still higher with victims, and to cry aloud and spare not, if haply it might hear and bless him.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

## JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

LATE in the evening of the day of the funeral, at which his daughter was so sincere a mourner, President Brewster was reading a foreign letter to an American newspaper, which, rather for his instruction than his entertainment, had been marked and laid before him.

It was an account of the exploits of his son, who, as a consular agent, was found, at a very early date, to hold strikingly original views upon the method of conducting a diplomatic mission; but, when, during a periodical drunken frolic, they culminated in his publicly unveiling the women on the streets of an oriental city, the scandal became no longer tolerable.

Brewster's embarrassment at conduct which he had always felt a comfortable assurance in regarding as peculiar to the heirs-apparent of effete despotisms, nettled him beyond his usual patience and good humor; but, on reading the following telegram from Clegg, at Roxbury, his irritation gave place to a far profounder emotion :

"Mill set on fire and totally destroyed. Mob attacked your house, but driven off. Winifred in critical condition. Dean Stratton badly, but not dangerously, hurt in defending her."



As if not quite comprehending it, he read it over again. Then, summoning Danforth, he was in a short time whirling homeward by special train. At daylight, he was reading in the morning papers full accounts of the catastrophe.

As the lightning's flash brings blackness even in the darkness, one blasting sentence blotted out the whole broad page of gloomy chronicle.

"The physician fears that Miss Brewster will not recover from the shock."

Tears, slowly gathering in the eyes of the imperious and insolent man, overflowed like springs from the heart of mountain rocks.

Not Jephthah, recalling, as his daughter came forth to meet him, the rash vow which he had vowed, could, in his victorious pride, have known bitterer anguish.

In the crowded and furious events which formed the glaring picture of his life, he saw only that beloved and delicate figure standing out from the riotous background, and, like a never-wearied sister-of-mercy, hovering upon the edge of his ceaseless battle.

He saw her on that somber afternoon when, from a new-made grave, he came back to the deserted house; folded to his heart the nestling hostage a mother's love had left him; and answered only with caresses the torturing questions of her childish awe. He saw her as she grew in daily value to him, and "every lovely organ of her life became appareled in more precious habit." He saw her as he took leave of her, scarcely a year before; when for her own rest and comfort he sentenced her to an exile, which, to her

meant buoyant pleasure, youthful joy, entertainment for her tastes, enrichment of her experience; but which, even in the midst of his struggle to keep what he had won, and to save from ruin himself and his fortunes, to him meant loneliness and bereavement; hunger to his one absorbing love; frost to the one delicate flower of his affection which, on the cold and sterile heights of his self-seeking, had bloomed so long.

Her existence and her love had been the sweet and tender theme running all through the warlike symphony of his career, tempering with its pure, clear melody the harshness and clangor of the drum and trumpet tumult wherein most of his life was spent.

Had he like Jephthah sacrificed to his greed of victory the treasure of his hearth and heart?

Now, distracted by anxiety until the tardy wheels of the flying train seemed staying instead of speeding his impatience to reach her; now, forgetting in his grievous revery the minutes and the miles which rushed almost concurrently by, he arrived at Roxbury.

His horses carried him at furious rate from the station to the house, plunged through the gateway and up the winding road.

Barely looking at the blackened and steaming ruins of his mill, the broken fence, the trampled lawn, the veranda bearing yet the marks of violence, he opened the door and entered his forlorn home. The special physician he had summoned by telegraph was already awaiting him in the library, and with him her father went at once to Winifred's darkened chamber.

A wise man has said that the things which are most

vital to a man's happiness are the events of his domestic life; and a still greater authority has declared that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth

The millionaire President of the great republic, knowing that wealth and honor were worthless there, humbly and reverently entered the room where, with wide-stretched eyes that saw nothing, lay his sweet, unconscious daughter.

It mattered little now, that even in the subdued light of this dainty maiden's bower, there came a radiance of rich, harmonious color, and gleams from glass and metal adornments on bracket, wall and dressing table; that even the bed, scarcely billowed by the slender form, was of precious amaranth wood, a wonder of delicacy and beauty. The room might have been dingy, barren, squalid, for all that her surroundings could do to relieve the blight which the wild terror of the night before had laid upon her.

The nurse, shaking herself out of her nap, arose and came forward. The father, bending gently over his daughter, called her name. His affection seemed to untwist his rough features into a hint of resemblance to his own youth, and to his daughter's face.

"Winnie."

The only response was a cold stare.

"Winifred," he plead, in tones fit to break a heart of stone.

She answered with a low moan, and a slow roll of the head from side to side.

The tears flowed down his face, and with a burst

of mingled love and anguish, he exclaimed, as if he had even now quite lost her in the rayless, pathless wilderness of death:

“Oh, she was very precious!”

With one sudden bound, she was on the floor, and apparently lifting a burden.

“Dean! Dean!” she cried; “speak to me! speak to me, my darling. They say it was my father’s fault, but don’t believe them, dear; do not believe them! Come, Dean, come! Dearest, *don’t* lie there! You’ll break my heart. You’ll break my heart if you do not speak to me. O, they have killed him,” she cried; “he has killed him, and I loved him so.”

She fell helpless along the floor, whence she was lifted to the bed again, and once more lay still, with fixed yet pleading eyes.

A great agony convulsed her father as he stood in the corner of the room, and a tearless sob escaped him.

The physician’s report afforded little encouragement. He ordered them to shear her pretty brown hair, and frankly told the poor father that he might as well go back to Washington and his work, for he could do nothing, nothing—for his daughter. It was a question of time, of tender nursing, and, after that, even of her reason. Her father watched for hours, but there was no change. Occasionally she moaned; occasionally started in terror. “They’re coming,” she cried, and rehearsed the tragedy of the previous night.

An urgent telegram summoned President Brewster to the capital. His bitterest enemy would have pitied him, so wide-shouldered, so vigorous in mind and

body — parting with his daughter; — an Atlas, who, though he fancied he could lift the world, could not lift the weight that was too heavy for the beloved life before him. He gently kissed her, and more than once tried to take his leave of her, so helpless there. Then, drawing his hand across his brow and eyes, with a motion which seemed to say, “No weakness,” he went, with head erect, out of the room.

A special train again shot through one sleeping town after another, that night. Poor, tired Barney Scully, busy coupling cars, said, bitterly, as it sped along :

“It’s the crame that belongs to such as them; the skim milk’s too good for us.”

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## PLAYING WITH FIRE.

THE sun was going down upon that mild December day as Arthur lingered, after the burial of his mother, to take leave of his only inheritance — the lot in which lay the remains of his parents — in the cemetery at Roxbury. The lot was situated next the fence, and enclosed by a thick hedge of *arbor-vitæ*. The other side of the fence ran a gravel road, that led into the country beyond.

He was on the point of departure, when he heard footsteps crunching the gravel outside; and, looking through the crannies of the hedge, he saw three or four men, loitering in step but eager in talk.

“I’m gettin’ tired of waitin’,” said a deep but impatient voice. “It’s all very well for him to say, wait. He hain’t no wife—not yet, anyhow,” he added, with a dismal grin, “nor young ’uns—leastwise he doesn’t own ’em. If he’d a dozen mouths eatin’ a hole in a bag o’ flour, *he* wouldn’t wait. I don’t care a split bobbin for the things he’s waitin’ for, anyhow. All I cares for is plenty o’ grub and plenty o’ time to eat it in, all the beer I kin get away with, and a go at fishin’ now and then.”

"He's too much a swell hisself for me," said another. "I hate 'em too much to have any sort o' dealin' with 'em, 'cept to hold their noses to the grindstone. They've held mine to it, ever sence I had one."

"I saw sutthin' a Sunday I never thought to a saw," said the other.

"Harmon's allers seein' things" said the piping voice of the faded little man. "He seed daylight 'fore he uz born, 'f you'll b'leeve him."

"An you ain't seen it yit, whether they b'leeve you or not," retorted Harmon.

"Come, take in your slack," said a third, "and let's have what you saw a Sunday."

"Well, I saw him sidle right up to Brewster's gal while she uz a walkin' along, and shoot that hat 'a his'n, an' by — fall into line, an' go waltzin' down street with her, 'z'if he'd been cut off the same piece."

"He's no good" said the other, "let's get to business! They're all ready for it. Just fire 'em up an' the rest on 'em'll come in."

"What time'll we begin?"

"What time'll Donavan be ready?"

"He'll get a dozen together at eight o'clock, an' it'll be a goin' by half-pas'."

"How's the watchman?"

"All right. He was growlin' bad t'other night. He says things is got so you can *light* a candle with a dollar bill easier'n you can buy one."

The group moved on and separated, and Arthur heard no more. Then leaving the only abiding-place

his father and mother could afford him, he went to the new home which Winifred had provided for him.

After supper he called by appointment upon her, and she outlined the plans which she had hurriedly formed for him. He thanked her very gratefully, and the hope and enthusiasm her proposed kindness excited, in a measure soothed his grief. As he was taking leave of her something prompted him to say:

“Do you know anybody named Donovan?”

“I do not, I am sure. Is he somebody in Roxbury?”

“O yes, he was talked about this afternoon in a very strange and alarming way,” he said, and then having told her what he had overheard, went away.

These echoes of Dean’s words set her trembling. She hoped she would see Dean that evening after he had returned from visiting a country patient.

Resolving to inform him or his father at the earliest possible moment, she sat down by the table and took up an open book that by chance was lying there. It was not to her mind and she was about laying it down again, when, by a coincidence which some call accident, some, omen, her eye fell upon a passage describing the treatment visited by the Paris mob upon the condemned prisoners of the French revolution. In spite of its repulsiveness, a certain fascination forced her to read it to the end:

“The doomed man is conducted into a howling sea at the outer gate, forth under an arch of wild sabers, axes, and pikes, and sinks hewn asunder. And another sinks, and another, and there forms a piled heap of corpses, and the kennels begin to run red. Fancy the yells of these men; their faces of sweat and blood; the crueller shrieks of these women—for there are women too; and a fellow mortal hurled, naked, into all!”



Shuddering, as though awaking from a horrid dream, she cast the book aside and took up another, in order to shut out the terrible vision. She started to her feet at the words of the breathless housekeeper.

“Winifred, Winifred, *the mill’s a-fire!*”

Winifred ran to the window of the library. The flames were bursting through the roof, the building ablaze from end to end. The lower floors had been saturated with petroleum before Donovan began a mad harangue to a dozen operatives, made reckless by the whiskey with which he had been plying them all the afternoon.

The rumors of pending trouble had, by their mysterious telegraphy, circulated among the vicious tramps, and for two or three days, hoping for plunder, they had been gathering in the neighborhood. As soon as the fire broke out, they began their depredations in the houses left vacant by the households that rushed off to see it. Going boldly into the saloons they helped themselves to liquor and were soon half mad with it, some of them dancing in a kind of frenzy about the burning mill.

“It’ll learn ’em to let up on the poor working-men.”  
“Sorry ole Brewster ain’t here to see.” “Wish he was in it.” “Wish it’d burn all winter—save buyin’ coal.” “It’ll be like the small-pox—mighty ketchin’.”

Though few would have dared commit the act—none perhaps, had they not been partly starved, and then made combustible with liquor, as the mill floors had been with kerosene,—the majority of them sympathized with it.

The fire-engine came, but was useless. Britton was ostentatiously playing a game of billiards. "The d—d fools!" he exclaimed, and took only a spectator's part in the proceedings.

Winifred gazed at the flames devouring the accumulations of many years of her father's labor. She wondered if it would ruin him.

The rising wind suddenly swept in gusts down the valley, blowing the fire toward the row of tenements and boarding-houses occupied by the operatives. She could see them bringing out the furniture from one; then another was in flames; and a third; soon the row was a mass of fire. In less than an hour hundreds of people were homeless.

She heard hoarse shouts. A small group broke from the mass like a piece of ice in a current, and floated off toward the house, the remainder, like the floe in the wake of a drift, turning slowly in the same direction.

They came pouring through the gate or jumped over and broke down the fence. At sight of their figures in relief against the light of the burning buildings, her face grew ashen. At one moment, her heart stopped beating; the next, it throbbed as if its pulsations were the whole of her existence. But there was in it the courage of her father's. He could meet mobs and subdue them. She would.

Now she could see their forms. The broad bands of light upon the lawn, whitened by the falling snow, were broken with fast-moving shadows. With their excited faces lit by the blaze, and their bodies immersed in deep shade, they seemed riding upon a cloud of darkness.

From them she had never had act or look of disrespect. She would ask them what they wanted, and, in her father's name promise them relief.

They came on, crushing the shrubs and tramping the snow into mud.

Now she could see their gaunt faces rising one above another; and, desperate with loss and their own daring, surging up to the veranda, drunken men and boys, and, scattered here and there, a woman.

"Come out o' there, or we'll fetch you out," some cried with oaths; and others, with oaths also, echoed it in maudlin voices.

"What right's he to a house, an' us not a roof to our heads?" screamed a woman.

"He 'greed to burn it his own self," said a former listener to one of the major's speeches.

As in a dream, Winifred opened the door, the light flooding her fair face and brown hair.

"Houly Vairgin!" exclaimed a voice, almost reverently, as if she were a saint in a shrine.

The cries ceased as she stood there, still and calm in the flickering blaze. Curiosity, alarm, excitement, rather than the mob spirit, moved the mass of them, and at the sight of her they stopped irresolute. But one of the bolder cried:

"You must git out o' that, miss; we've come on business."

So saying, and encouraged by a laugh, he with two others mounted the steps.

"Go back!" she cried, "you *have* no business here."

"Sof'ly now, miss," said the speaker, whose prop-

erty consisted of such portion of the soil as adhered to him after a walk in the dust or the mud; "we've los' everythin' by the fire, an' we've come for th' insurance. We sha'n't hurt nobody; not if they do n't show fight," he added, advancing toward her with a rascally grin.

If, peradventure, she might catch sight of a friendly face, she cast a beseeching glance at the crowd. Though she fancied that one or two responded with a look of sympathy, no one spoke or moved.

Then her courage gave way. She felt deserted, helpless, lost. She turned to fly to the shelter of the house, but a rough hand drew her to a loathsome embrace. Her brain reeled with horror. She uttered a piercing shriek. Her shell-like ears were torn and bleeding, whence the ruffian wrenched the diamond drops whose glistening in the fire-light attracted his greed. She was faint and sick with the pain.

Suddenly the three intruders were, like so many vermin, swept down the steps by the swing of a powerful arm, which, as her limbs gave way, she felt supporting her.

Glancing upward, at a face aglow with anger and passion, she saw William Britton.

At this moment another man, pressing through the crowd, rushed up and struck him a blow, exclaiming: "Take your hands from her, you ruffian!"

With a cry of joy, she recognized the new-comer; but, before she could speak, Britton withdrew his arm, and, lifting Dean Stratton above his head, dashed him violently upon the flagstone walk. The crowd shud-

dered at the sickening thud with which he struck the ground.

Winifred started forward, but fell apparently lifeless upon the floor, and Britton, bending over, raised her gently up.

In the meantime the ruffians, climbing up at the end of the veranda, had got between him and the door, and, encumbered with his burden, he knew it was useless to fight them. Taking her up like a child, he passed through the crowd on the lawn and safely reached the sidewalk.

Even in the midst of the tumult, his heart was full of passionate exultation over his possession of the President's daughter. Her silken hair, loosened in the struggle, softly swept his face. His arm clasped her to his breast. Her head lay in unconscious confidence upon his shoulder. He had never even touched such chaste loveliness before, and to be thus encircling it, to have it dependent upon him for shelter and protection, quite intoxicated him.

He stood still. Whither should he carry her? To take her to friends or neighbors would be surrendering her to the stronghold of society, from which he had captured her. Should he carry her to his lodgings? That would be only a temporary expedient. The night train was due. He might fly with her to the seclusion of a large city — a plan possible only in the disorder of the town. The thought of forcing her into marriage by compromising her maiden blamelessness whispered its baseness in his ear.

Whatever he did needed quickly doing; for the air

was keen, and she was destitute of head-dress and over-garments.

As he stood irresolute, a shadow came between him and the glow of the fire, and a voice said, sternly but calmly :

“Take Miss Winifred to my house ! My wife will care for her.”

Britton cast an angry glance at the speaker. This fellow was always interfering with him. Were he free, he would serve him as he had that Stratton.

“Mind your own business !” he replied, with an oath.

“Do you hear?” said Jaycox, unmoved by his wrath. “Has there not been enough of this? Do you want to add another crime to this bad night’s work?”

“None o’ your d—d preaching,” said Britton, turning on his heel.

Jaycox put out his hand.

“No more of this. I can get help. They’ve lost confidence in you, and it would be an easy matter to set them upon you. Come with me !”

He had taken off his coat and thrown it upon her.

Conscious of his failure, Britton, in a surly mood, followed Jaycox to his house. He laid her upon the lounge, and, while the other summoned his wife, stooped and kissed her, as she lay impassive and helpless.

“We must go and put a stop to this horrid business,” said Jaycox, coming in and glancing at the pale and apparently lifeless girl.

"It is none of my business," said Britton, in a surly tone.

"Your talk of Saturday is known all over town, and will be used in evidence against you. The best thing possible for you now, is to make amends by preventing this from going any further."

Britton, either seeing the force of this, or satisfied with the measure of ruin that had been already wrought, after a moment of hesitation, slowly arose and followed his companion out.

A large crowd, more curious to know what would happen next, than desirous of being responsible for anything more, was aimlessly wandering over Brewster's lawn.

Jaycox and Britton came up to a group of them, and the former said:

"We must stop this right here, at any cost, or all its wickedness will be laid to us and the workingmen's cause. We have our wrongs, and they shall be heard; but they never will be in the noise which these greater wrongs, done to others, are sure to make."

A dozen or more at once volunteered. They needed only a leader to marshal their hostility to outrages committed in their name. They were unfriendly to owners of property, but they were not criminals, nor utterly reckless.

Arming themselves with the palings of the broken fence, they entered the house. About twenty of the ruffianly mob—only one or two operatives among them—had been stripping it of all portable articles.

The leader, tall, ragged, uncombed, unclean; the

scar of a hatchet-cut on one side of his face balancing a streak of dirt on the other, was bedecking himself like a savage. About his huge person he had wound, like a scotch plaid, the gold-embroidered crimson piano cover. Into his thicket of hair he had stuck the peacock feathers of a dustbrush which he had plucked for the purpose. His long legs, like those of a Highlander in his kilt, protruded beneath a black velvet overskirt of Winifred's. The lace window curtains floated from his shoulders like a bridal veil. With unerring instinct the wine-cellar had been discovered, and this grotesque combination of Rob Roy and Sitting Bull had filled with champagne a handsome vase, and, with it under his arm, was capering about the room, singing "Little Brown Jug," and whacking now and then, the heads of his comrades with the hassocks and the sofa-pillows.

They had stuffed vases, clocks, statuettes, candelabras, and other knick-knacks into pillow cases, and had filled their pockets with the luxurious toys and trifles to be found in such a home.

Then began a hunt for the silver, and their leader had just proposed piling up the bedding, the pictures and the furniture in the center of the floor, and setting them on fire. This called out an energetic protest from two or three women who had come in, and who were opposed to the destruction of anything likely to prove exchangeable at the pawn-shop, or ornamental in the squalor of their homes.

Jaycox and his retinue entered just as this chieftain, in spite of feminine protests, had begun the preparation of his bonfire.



At sight of them he stopped his laughter, his grimaces and his capers, and put his hand upon a pistol in his side-pocket. It became tangled in his toggery, and, before he could free it, he lay prone upon the floor.

Britton, seizing two others, held them until one of his party brought him a stout picture-wire, with which he bound them, and which, cutting them at every motion, forced them to lie quiet. The rest, being natural cowards, jumped from the windows or ran out of the doors, stampeding the crowd outside. In a few minutes the disordered house, the trampled lawn, and the self-constituted police were the only traces of the riot.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## THE ENEMY CONQUERS.

ON Brewster's return to the capital, there was no trace, in face or demeanor, of the sorrow which had eaten into that iron temper. He was the great actor, coming from some struggle of real grief and passion in private life, to feign upon the stage fictitious tragedy, and portray the passions of dramatic phantoms. He had his part to play in that national drama, upon which the curtain never goes down, and in which, whether he be prepared for it or not; whether he can speak the speech which is set down for him or not; whether or not loss and pain torture him at every step and in every gesture, each member of the company that have their exits and their entrances in that stupendous play, must promptly appear in his appointed role and pronounce it as trippingly as may be upon the tongue.

And as the audience in the theatre knows not that he who, on the stage is racking and exhausting every resource to amuse or interest, may be enacting an actual tragedy within, to which this outward seeming is, for him, but dumb show and a dull mockery of his woe; so the multitude who daily came in contact with Brewster, parading still that all-sufficient and all-ab-

sorbing figure on the scene, caught no glimpse of the picture which was ever before his eyes—of that lonely bed-chamber and the beloved life that lay withering there.

The days went on, and no news of change, either for the better or the worse, came to relieve the suspense. He made flying visits to his home, but they only exaggerated his anxiety. Meanwhile a change, like the evening twilight, was creeping over him, which in distinguishing his demeanor of to-day from that of yesterday, no one noted; but suddenly, even as one should say "night has come," and all should recognize the fact, somebody said "he is getting queer," and many others echoed it.

He would sit for minutes dazed. Sometimes he greeted his acquaintances with much heartiness as if he had not seen them in months; but, with all his cordiality, feebly and half-consciously shaking their hands. He occasionally used the wrong word, as when he talked of the executive "deportment." He no longer walked boldly and solidly, but put one foot cautiously forward, as if he were not quite sure of his ground. Somebody else said he would never be the same man again.

On the receipt of certain foreign dispatches, he proved this to be a mistake. He was, once more, the vigorous, burly politician, and in favor of a foreign war. He had brought to the cabinet meeting the minutes of a message he proposed sending to Congress. His paper bristled with his usual insolence in bold Saxon speech. He urged, privately, the adoption of a war

policy to rescue the country from its discontent, heat its patriotism, stimulate its business, and destroy all sectional prejudices. He proposed the immediate seizure of Canada, the invasion of Mexico, and, before the affair was finished, the stealing of Cuba. He browbeat into silence one or two of his Cabinet, who timidly questioned the wisdom of the plan, and, assuming that they had unanimously assented, omitting, indeed, to ask their individual opinions, he dismissed the conference. In brief, as one of his Cabinet secretaries remarked, he was himself again.

The next morning, contrary to the punctual habits whereby he accomplished so much, he did not, at exactly half-past seven, appear in the breakfast-room. Danforth waited a few minutes, and then sent a servant to arouse him. The servant knocked at his bedroom door, and, returning, said: "He is not awake."

"His troubles are telling on him; he must be lying awake nights, to sleep so late," thought Danforth to himself.

Eight o'clock came, and he was still asleep. At half-past, fearing a rebuke for *not* awaking him, Danforth himself went to the room, and, on getting no response, turned the handle softly, and pushed open the door. The President had gone out.

"He may be taking a walk," said Danforth to himself, finishing his breakfast, "though he generally detests exercise before breakfast."

The President not appearing, he betook himself to the office. The gas-light was still burning. In order to have a quiet hour to himself, Brewster had arisen

before daylight, and was still in the midst of his writing; for he had just finished a sentence, and, pen in hand, was sitting upright in his chair, mentally framing his next thought in appropriate words. His secretary's intrusion, and his "Good morning! Mr. President," did not rouse him from the intense reflection he was giving to his message, urging upon Congress a declaration of war.

Lawrence, on approaching him, discovered the reason of his silence. Overcome by loss of sleep, and the fatigue of his early work, he had fallen into slumber as calm as an infant's. His face betrayed scarce a trace of the anxieties and passions that had swept across it, even as gales sweep across a mountain lake, and leave it placid beneath the smiling skies.

Hesitating to disturb this profound and apparently much-needed sleep, Danforth looked at him more closely. Then he put his hand gently upon the broad, full forehead. It was marble. He held a hand-glass to the mouth. No breath dimmed the surface. He was so fascinated by the finer look in the countenance, that he stood gazing at him with a kind of son-like pride in the powerful head and face which death had chastened and softened into antique sculpture. Even while he despised his methods and himself for being the tool of them, Danforth had truly loved the man for his long and fatherly kindness to him; and standing there, thinking of their unbroken years of pleasant intercourse, unmarred by serious reproof from one, or disobedience and neglect on the part of the other, he forgot all that he detested. He raised the

cold hand to his lips and deferentially kissed it, his eyes filling with tears as he realized that the end had come.

Fascinated by his conscious possession of a secret which, once published, would make the ears of all the world to tingle, he felt tempted to remain. Now he was its sole custodian. It was as if the confidence which the old man had always placed in him was maintained until this very latest moment, and to his exclusive knowledge of his chieftain's daring methods of startling mankind during his life, was committed this equally important tidings of his sudden death. When he should step to the door yonder, it would no longer be all his own; in less than an hour he would be sharing it with the whirling globe. It would be known in kings' palaces, and buzzed about in every market-place. Sneering slightly at the childish exultation which this imaginary importance had excited in him, and then, walking softly and sadly out of the room, he announced the President's death, and gave the orders which the occasion required.

The body of the dead President, with eight or ten car-loads of officials and acquaintances, arrived at Roxbury on the midnight train. For hours, patient thousands filled the streets leading to the railroad, and thousands more, motionless, and, if not wholly dumb like him they waited for, only murmuring their thoughts to one another, were swallowed up in the chasm of the dark, and packed so close into the open space about the station, that the police and the military found it difficult to open a path for the coffin and its escort.

For the first time, the still principal personage there could not make a way for himself amongst the populace.

A solemn dirge smote the midnight air, and with its wail, waked from their sleep, into troubled consciousness, those who were not in the streets—the children, the aged, and the sick. A choir of German singers chanted a funeral hymn as the slow-paced throng passed on to the town-hall, in the corridor of which, awaiting the morrow's services, the remains were placed; and then the plaintive song died away into a faint refrain which seemed to sob itself to sleep and silence in the congenial darkness.

Save for four sentinels in uniform, the ex-President lay alone, distinguishable only by that last, rude, ill-fitting garment which, even though it be of rosewood and of satin, feeds not the wearer's vanity, nor, if of pine and fustian, shames his pride. The dim lights above painted, with their inky shadows, deeper tints upon the rich black velvet of that somber tunic in which custom arrays the retinue of captives who are swept along in the ceaseless triumph of Death, the conquerer; while their feeble rays, unable to reach the groined roof of the hall, seemed with flickering fingers to beckon to the gloom that crouched behind the lofty arches, and to invite its mute and dusky presence to share their solemn vigils around the catafalque below.

Early with the morning sun came baskets and boxes of floral decorations,—crosses, crowns, stars, sickles, and wreaths, of camelias and Marshal Neil rosebuds; of

tuberoses, of wheaten sheaves, and of evergreens; while streamers of red, white, and blue, interwoven with rich crape, surrounded, surmounted, and overhung the coffin. Its velvet richness was heightened by the gleam of its silver ornaments. A glass plate partially covered it, through which the dead could be seen by the living, who, from sunrise until noon, marched by in unbroken procession.

Then, accompanied by the military guard of honor that in a hollow square had been drawn up about the bier, the ex-President was borne to the handsome stone Gothic church in whose erection he had liberally aided; into whose treasury he annually and punctually paid a generous pew-rent for the spread of the gospel; and two of whose illuminated windows he had contributed as memorials of his beloved wife and deceased brother. For Brewster had remembered his Creator in the days of his youth, before the evil days of business and politics had come to engross him in the creation of his own little world of wealth and influence, and in the later years, it is to be feared, had forgotten Him, so far, at least, as to think that He had forgotten Brewster, and was taking no note of his schemes and his conduct. "With pure heart and humble voice," Winifred, however, had worshiped there, and the coffin rested just opposite her pew. The pew was draped in black, and, by *her* absence rather than by his, spoke more eloquently of the desolation that had come upon that household than the preacher could possibly do, hard as he might strive.

The requiem was played, the funeral hymn was



sung, and the preacher, rising and reading a solemn litany which he had specially compiled from the Scriptures, began his discourse with a quotation from one of the prophets, making, as he did so, a slight change in the original text.

“The dead from beneath are stirred up for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth. All they shall speak and say unto thee. Art thou also become weak as we?—Art thou become like unto us?”

O, impudent, sly, and mighty Death! to play so sorry a trick upon the great and eminent man that now lies helpless before us; creeping silently up behind him, impolitely looking over his shoulder, and putting a full and final stop to his martial sentences which, at the expense of two combatting nations might have swollen the census of thy domain! have added a new province to thy realm! O, autocrat of an empire “whose population below the surface<sup>o</sup> of the earth far exceeds that of the nations above it.”

Dost thou take this revenge upon “smart men,” because they act as if thou existed not in all this universe? Dost thou tire of their insolence at last, and, with scarce a warning, set their ears to ringing and their heads to whirling, glaze their eyes, snap their thread of life, and lay them at thy feet—a mass of phosphates and of gases?

It would thus appear. For until Death smites them and hurries them beyond the bourne whence they have never yet been “smart” enough to return, do they abate a tittle of their pretensions, an atom of their ambition, or a note of their defiance to all the powers in the heavens above, or the earth beneath.

What a stare of surprise and bewilderment he must have cast about him, if he waked in a world where his education in this one proved to be quite worthless! Where he found that like an idle schoolboy he had been wasting his time in stupid pranks or useless study! Where none, except in the discharge of public duty, cares for an office! Where no one "hurrahs for the party" when its leaders misbehave; where no one supports an unworthy man, because he is a "worker;" where there is nothing to "manage" and no "boys" ready to "make it hot" for the other side!

If there be such a land, which few politicians believe, he will have to sit away down at the foot of the class and begin his new career by learning the very alphabet of morals.

"God would think twice before damning a person of your grace's rank," said the courtier to the French nobleman, and doubtless those of our politicians who believe in a God cannot imagine his ever humiliating *them* by casting contempt upon their accomplishments in the art of government. It is possible, indeed, that, on their arrival there, they contemplate suggesting some improvements in the divine administration itself.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

## THE END.

SUBSTANTIALLY this, but clothed in brave and eloquent speech, the preacher might, could, or should have said to the people gathered in that church. There were present there some of the most distinguished party leaders in the land—many of them striving for the success this dead man had striven for; and, admiring his success, were more envious of his victory than shocked at his means of winning it.

In the train, as they rode along, in the hotels, this day, and on their way to the church, his most eminent rivals or their representatives had already begun "figuring" for the succession. They whispered in public places, and talked in low tones in the corners, or in their bedrooms at the hotels. The general sense of relief which his departure occasioned to his numerous heirs-presumptive, but not yet apparent, was summed up in Mr. Bunkery's words:

"There'll be no second or third term nonsense to bother us, that's one comfort."

"The old man managed to bring things about pretty much as he calculated them," said Rodney; "but I think this affair was not down on the bills."

These discussions were temporarily interrupted by the opening of the funeral services.

Seldom before had an occasion so rare and so full of fruitful possibilities fallen to the prosperous lot of the Rev. Dr. Underwood.

His down-sittings and his up-risings, his going-out and his coming-in before the Lord, had been warmed and softened by the luxuries of a city pastorate, a rich congregation, and crowded and admiring audiences. In spite of these temptations, however, he had never faltered in rebuking the sins of the rich and the great, who lived in other climes and other times. He felt most keenly the iniquities of the Jews, of poor and humble sinners, of the heathen denied the privileges of the gospel. He did not spare even those of this age and country, who accumulate unrighteous wealth, and diffused throughout his congregation a comfortable abhorrence of the trespasses of California nabobs and Wall Street operators, who, as it happened, owned no pews in his sanctuary, and lacked the benefit of his teachings. He had his views, too, about the brutal statesmanship of Bismark, the tricky politics of Beaconsfield, and the stupid ambition of MacMahon; but the two chief perils he dreaded for his own country, were the influence of the Pope and the undermining of our institutions by slandering our public men; meaning by "our public men," the leaders of his party.

The Rev. Dr. Underwood had always felt an admiration for Brewster, and had by several years anticipated the National Convention in nominating him for the

presidency. When he himself was subsequently a candidate for the chaplaincy in the House, Brewster was his principal champion, and conspicuous in procuring him that situation; but it was probably total depravity which led Senator Joslyn to say that, whenever any of Brewster's bills were pending, Chaplain Underwood always besieged the throne of grace with additional fervor, praying the Almighty to open the eyes of His servants, that they might do justice and judgment, and so find favor in His sight; and that whenever those bills passed, the reverend gentleman returned heartfelt thanks that their minds had been enlightened, and wisdom given them from on high to decide aright.

In testifying his devotion to Brewster, Dr. Underwood was guilty of no hypocrisy. It was his misfortune, not his fault, that one of his spiritual eyes was defective and that when evil approached him on his blind side, he, from the very necessity of the case, could not perceive it. He was not a man to betray his Master for a paltry and sordid handful of silver. In order to touch him, the temptation needed to be disguised in wrappings of patriotism, of force of character, of success, of generosity, and half a dozen other envelopes of worth and virtue.

Such, very briefly, were the Rev. Dr. Underwood's qualifications for the office of orator and oracle at the ex-President's funeral.

"This fallen giant," he began by saying, "once moved erect amongst you. You have seen him in these streets, you have spoken with him in his home, and he with you, in yours. You

will carry hence that image of himself which Death has left you, and lay it by the side of his kindred. Though the nation was always bidding him come up higher until he reached the place of honor which it reserves for those deemed worthy of its omnipotent choice, yet he never forgot his home; and belonging, as he did, to this congregation, it is peculiarly fitting here to crown him with a wreath of remembrance."

It required skillful management on the part of those who had scarcely seen Brewster in church for twenty years, to control the feelings aroused by this tribute to his piety. This, with the sensation caused by the reference to Brewster as the choice of the people, excited an audible rustle all over the house.

"A life so crowded forbids me in the short time allotted, to do him justice, and to furnish that key to his character which his success calls for. It would require volumes to fully tell the bead-roll of his achievements. Happily in this presence it is needless. He has made a mark which will last forever. His foot-prints on the sands of time are not likely soon to be washed away by the waves of oblivion. Governor, Senator, President! What remained in that life so full of success but to be gathered like a shock of corn fully ripe.

"He was a zealous party man; some have even said that he was a partisan and he has been charged with violent and vindictive feeling toward his political opponents."

This mild suggestion that Brewster was by "some" suspected of partisanship, and that others went so far as to charge him with violence in the expression of his political feelings, might, but for the scene and occasion, have been mistaken for sarcasm; but the preacher gave no hint of it.

"He fought opinions which warred against his convictions, and raising the 'black flag' announced 'no quarter.' But this does not prove that he was malicious or vindictive toward misguided men."

There were those who could not help thinking it a doubtful compliment to compare Brewster to a pirate, and his political conflicts to piracy; but canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook, bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, loose the bands of Orion, or set metes and bounds to the funeral oration?

“Though he had no training but that afforded in the New England common school and academy, yet his faculty of mastering his own vigorous Saxon tongue; of making those around him understand what he said, and know what he meant; of handling all questions with his bare and sturdy hands; of talking with such simplicity that every adjective, every image, every mode of thought, perplexed nobody who heard him—this was his art; this was his power. He never chilled or blunted the force of his style by polishing it to pleasing periods of soft, smooth words.”

And those who heard or read the preacher's praise, and recalled the hard names which, in the course of his long and useful career, Brewster had lavished upon those differing from him, freely assented to this part of the eulogy. *They*, at least, never had any difficulty in understanding his “vigorous Saxon.”

“Of course there are scribes on the press and Pharisees in the parties, who ask and expect something like perfection in our public men, and who, when they find spots and blemishes in them, stand aloof and say with self-righteous scorn: ‘I am holier than thou.’ To these flabby and fastidious temperaments the rugged and shaggy manhood of this stalwart masterpiece was a perpetual irritation and offense. In their super-nice and fantastical microscopes, they overlook the sterling fiber of such a nature as his, and call him ‘an unmannerly knave for bringing his slovenly and unhandsome’ politics ‘betwixt the wind’ and their sham nobility. Consider this! that when greed has held out golden opportunity, and asked conscience and moral sense to be ‘dumb, and solicited the loan of great names to schemes which would put money in the purse, and that many came from the test smutched with the

finger-marks of dishonest schemes, this man was one of the few who never took a bribe, nor put his name upon Satan's pay-roll."

And some of the audience thought: "Dear me! Why should he? He was already worth a million of dollars!"

"This is no common occasion," he continued, "on which so mighty a pillar of state has fallen. It is a calamity not to be measured by ordinary events, and is as wide and as broad as the land itself. In his disinterested work for his country he knew not how to spare himself. When he was smitten, his every nerve was tense with patriotism, every throb of his heart beat full and strong for the land he loved so well. His country first, his party next, himself last,—this was the grand order and gradation of his loyalty. And though no assassin's bullet slew him in the flush of his greatness, yet who shall say that, giving himself without reserve to his country, he did not sacrifice life itself on the altar of his own patriotism? It was in the discharge of public duty that death found him, and took him from his work. But though he is gone, let not your hearts be troubled! God still lives, and he will raise up another leader for this afflicted people."

With these words he ceased speaking. And while each Senator, and Representative, and Governor, and ex-Governor present calmed his troubled heart, and mourned his sad loss, and wondered if Providence would raise *him* up to comfort the bereaved nation, and was "figuring" out the probabilities of such an interposition in its behalf, another hymn was sung, the coffin was borne to the hearse, and the long line of carriages began wending its way to the grave.

As Mr. Israel Stratton passed out of the door, he felt a slight pressure on his arm, and, looking around, saw Leonard Carroll.

"Come in *my* carriage," said the old gentleman,



piloting him through the fresh, heavy-falling snow to his coupé standing at a distant corner.

The procession formed slowly, as processions always do, and while awaiting their turn to fall into line, the two gentlemen sat talking.

“How death does sweep away all distinctions,” said Carroll; “it is a radical communist. It puts the good man on a level with the bad one. Once they are fairly in their coffins, you can not tell them apart.”

Mr. Stratton smiled briefly, and said: “Yes, there’s a good deal more to be got out of the public obituary than is generally supposed. I kept thinking how our clerical friend was disproving the definition of gratitude—a lively sense of favors yet to come.”

“Perhaps he has faith that our old friend Brewster is to have as much influence elsewhere as he did here,” replied Carroll; “however, I feel a certain consolation for the loss of such statesmen, in the thought that they are slowly, and at their appointed time, passing away; though I suppose the race itself won’t die out.”

“Not immediately,” said Mr. Stratton; “they are ‘battle-born,’ as the saying is—war-begotten, and will last awhile longer. They belong to a past age. They drive the party coach and crack the party whip, but one day they will wake up to find their vehicles out of date, more scientific methods of government locomotion in vogue, and their occupation gone.”

“But I see no signs of a new party or the disappearance of the old parties,” said Carroll.

“We want no new parties,” said Mr. Stratton, emphatically, “the old ones supply every need. I believe

in parties, and, to some extent, in the party machinery. Parties are fire and water, bitter enemies, but making the steam which keeps the nation moving. The mass of people *must* belong to parties; they *will* belong to parties, and go wherever they are led. What we need, and what we are to have, is a body of independent voters, owing nothing to either party, and, except as they govern with moderation or with violence, fairly or corruptly, caring nothing *for* them. These voters will be a strong, unobtrusive, judicial body, that the party in power will be perfectly sure to hear from, whenever it perverts the government into lottery prizes for a few of its lucky ticket-holders, or becomes extravagant, or neglectful, or obnoxious to men who think a wise and honest government superior to a party triumph. They will free their minds of cant, and refuse to believe this government so much a failure that either half of its voting millions is bent on its destruction."

"I believe," said Carroll; "there is growing up just such a body of men who are thinking of these things and are crystalizing more and more every year."

"No doubt of it, no doubt of it at all," said Mr. Stratton; "what is the use of getting disgusted, unless something practical comes of it? We are going to be a strong, wise nation, before we consent to expire. I believe in the country and its future. I am an old man, and old men are apt to be over-impressed with the comparative virtue of the days when *they* had the direction of affairs; but I see improvement; especially in this disposition on the part of a large class of men

to make their influence felt in politics, without weakening themselves by asking or granting any favors. Like all sovereigns, the sovereign people needs guidance, and the men I speak of are destined to become the power behind the throne, greater than the throne itself. They, and they only, will introduce permanent reforms. This revolt will call for eloquence, enthusiasm and courage, though—that will not be afraid of sneers and abuse from party men who will die hard. You can not, without a desperate struggle, take away from a large body of men their means of livelihood, whether it be an established church, or an established system of seeking and holding office. It will need the best intellect of the country, the wit, the oratory, the keenness, the common sense, of our best men. For instance,” said Mr. Stratton, looking slyly at Carroll; “if the same talent which points out so acutely the Mistakes of the Patriarchs could be got to point out *our* mistakes, which are probably quite as serious as those the patriarchs made,—”

“O I must beg of you,” said Carroll, stammering and laughing a little, “that is hardly fair. That was a youthful folly. I have outgrown that sort of thing, I hope. Besides,” he added, by way of further apology, “it was really very profitable.”

“All I mean is,” said Mr. Stratton, “that there is enough intellect, in the pulpit and out of it, to provide us with an entire new code of political morals, and to make it impossible for men like him at the head of this procession to furnish such a text for such a sermon.”

They were now passing Brewster's house, with the ruins of the mill on the right. A long silence ensued.

"Poor girl!" said Carroll, with a pang of remembrance; "do you know she always seemed to me a changeling. As *his* daughter, I could never fairly account for her."

"O, she was genuine in every sense of the word," said Mr. Stratton, softly; "I hope," he added, in kind, paternal tones, "she will yet be as near as she is dear to me."

"How is she?" asked Carroll, slowly, after another silence, and an inner struggle which Mr. Stratton had unconsciously incited.

"Better."

"Does she know—this last?"

"Yes, she guessed it. The strange thing is that the shock seemed to revive her mental powers; she has improved since, but she is not here; it was not deemed prudent."

The storm did not abate. Low, heavy gray clouds went sweeping majestically by, as if they too had been summoned from afar to share in these ceremonies. They, too, brought offerings for bedecking his bier and grave. With nature's lavishness they cast their white blossoms, not only upon the dead but upon the living, upon the hearse and the carriages, upon the spectators and the mourners. They scattered them as gently upon the stone pave and the granite factories as upon the heavy black plumes on the hearse, where with chaste witchery they transformed the swarth feathers as of the

death-croaking raven, waving above him, to the plumage of the death-singing swan. They bestrewed these delicate tributes upon the bearskin caps of the soldiery, changing into symbols of peace, those swaggering but harmless ornaments of war. From their hoarded treasures of the snow, they threw swirling garlands upon cornice, spire, and tower, until the whole city was shrouded in that white omnipresence. With more than loyal bounty they laid along the way, where, for the last time, this deposed and prostrate ruler was to pass, a soft carpet upon which the horses stepped with the silence of sculptured steeds, and the wheels turned with the noiselessness of mimic vehicles.

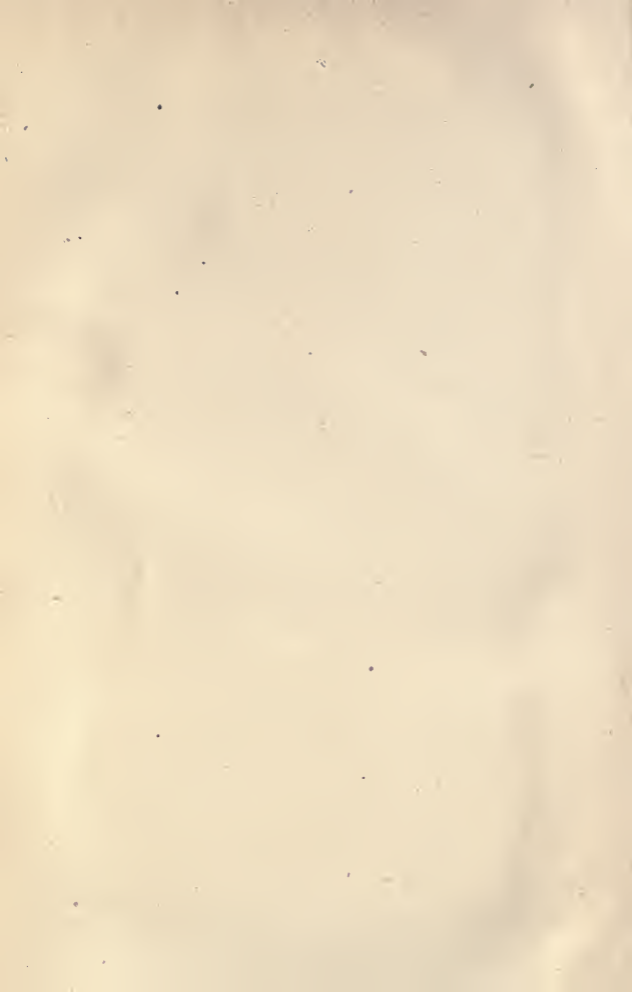
In the calm, soft twilight which the snow had conjured from the murky clouds, common things were changed into something rich and strange. The black cloths of the hearse-horses were embroidered with down; plebeian jades, caparisoned with the big, soft flakes, were changed into milk-white barbs of noblest breed, and the coarse garments of their drivers into costly liveries of fur. The sides of the carriages gleamed with deeper ebony in contrast with the sheeted crystals, with which, as in delicate mosaic, they were interlaid; and even the umbrellas and street lanterns, fluffy with the softness, were held aloft like gigantic lilies and camelias, in honor of his name and presence.

The bells from the church towers, hidden by the storm, gave tongue, as from choirs invisible, to supernatural requiems. In the atmosphere dense with the feathery shower, neither end of the funeral train was visible to the spectator. In deepest silence, broken only

by the dirges of the bands, this endless column, emerging from the unseen and the unknown in the distance, passed silently again into the veil of clouds and snow, which wrapped it in garments of gray oblivion, and withdrew it gently from eye and ear into the unseen and unknown beyond. It was a drama in miniature of the abounding and eager life,—that “noise between two silences,”—whose shard was carried in the whitened hearse.

Its peace and calm were a benediction upon the dead, and a sermon of diviner meaning than that which, with its blare of indiscriminate praise, had fallen upon dulled consciences in the church. It cast its ermine upon the shoulders of injustice, in token that he who wore it would, in this world, work injustice no more forever; and upon his grave, and upon that of the lowly woman, freshly heaped up near it, and upon the congregation of the dead that had ceased to suffer wrong or do it, it lay like a broad white mantle of charity, covering a multitude of sins.

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