A Fair Face; or, Out in the World.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL.

CHAPTER I.

UNDER THE STORM.

It was an ugly night. It had been raining fiercely all day, and now the roads were ankle deep in mud, the trees dripping, and Mill Creek—bank full—rolled its yellow flood noisily to the Ohio.

Dark as was the night, however—black as was the sky, and miry as were the roads, there was a woman abroad, under the fury of a terrible equinoctial storm—a storm, the like of which had not been seen for many a day before.

She was a slight, girlish creature, dressed in plain, unpretending black, her head covered by a sort of cloak, which also served the purpose—in a partial way, at least—of a wrapping; and her small feet were covered with cloth galates, which, soaking as they were, afforded but a sorry protection.

The darkness was too deep to permit of her face being seen, but when the lightning blazed out, as it did now and then, it revealed the fact that she was drenched to the skin, and was only able to stagger forward.
"Oh! if I could reach Cincinnati," she said, clinging her hands and looking up at the skyly sky. "Oh, God in your mercy, have pity and help me!" she added, while the cold rain fell upon her upturned face like human tears.

There was a rumble of carriage-wheels, and then a pair of lights gleamed away ahead, along the road, and the girl knew they were on the front of a vehicle.

"I will stop them and ask to be taken to the city!" she exclaimed, at once, but the next moment she took the path and drove her carriage to rattle by. It was a stylish affair. The horses were steaming and the driver soaking, but from within came peals of laughter and the sound of lively conversation.

The woman pushed back the tattered sleeves of black hair from her face, and gazed after the rattling vehicles. Finally it died away, and she sat down on a curb like guarding stars, and then the girl, shaking her head, said, sadly:

"No, I dare not speak to such as these; they are above me, and I cannot sympathize with them.

She shrioved as with awe, as she declared this, and wrung her hands fiercely as if she would rub a stain of some sort from them. She sat there for a while, and then trudged onward more rapidly than before.

Her speed soon gave out, however, and then she talked more to herself than to the mud.

The winds sighed; the rain fell with an even patter; and Mill Creek roared its hoarse song in the deep blackness to the right of the roadway.

A half-mile further, and the girl stopped and listened to the mad waters.

"What if I end it all here?" she exclaimed, speaking to herself. Fresh streams would stifle my cries and end my misery; and then, too, there would be no trace left.

She started from the path in the direction of the creek; walked a few paces; paused; then turning, she fled in the storm, and cityward, again crying half aloud:

"I cannot do that; I'm not brave enough for that.

On she sped, as if fleeing from the demon of fear, who whispered to her of rows and oblivion in a luring way that almost won her over to suicide; but she resisted; love for life was still strong within that youthful breast; and, sinful as she felt herself to be, she dared not face the judgment seat.

"No, I must live on," she muttered; "I must live for someone."

She clenched her fists tightly again, as she said this, and held her breath hard.

The rain full faster; the darkness grew as black as midnight, and the forks were very wild and tittered; still she struggled heroically forward, until the lights gleaming from the old Mill Creek House twinkled through the mist and rain like glowing stars.

"Thank God!" she exclaimed, and then she tottered, grasped at a hedge surrounding a Näheolg-and, face downward, on the cold, hard, wet road.

The wind lifted up her cloak and the rain dropped steadily down upon her, as if it could sicken her of the soil of travel, and of the stain of sin as well.

CHAPTER II

AN EVENT

There had been a grand ball; and the beauty of Cincinnati, set in precious gems and glittering salutes, filled the air as it does the streets of the Queen City, leaning on arms covered with gesticulate brocades. There were showers of course upon foreheaded feet and hands—lavender and purest white, scarcely soiled after the revels of the evening.

The night was too leisure to permit of wandering in the most distant distances, and so there were plenty of ebony vehicles on hand to carry the precious cargo of merrymakers home-westward.

The last to leave the brilliantly-illuminated entrance was a fair young girl, and a large, well-formed man.

She was in the mood in the extreme of fashion, wore patent-leather boots, a soft mauve-colored necklace, and white satin waistcoat, with pantaloons and coat of deep black. Her eyes were as brilliant as the sapphire of wavy hair, in which there was an abundance, was light, wavy and silken.

He was very stylish, and very handsome too. An elegant equipage drove up as they made their appearance in the doorway, and soon the couple were rattling down Eighth street. Near the corner of the house stood a splendid residence, the driver drew the reins, and leaping down from his perch, opened the door of the carriage.

The handsome gentleman gave the young lady his hand; led her up the steps, and stood by her side until the door was opened to admit her. Then he pressed her hand warmly, and said:

"I hope you have had a pleasant time, Mrs. Grace."

"Oh, very! Thank you, Mr. Watterston; I'm sure I owe my enjoyment entirely to the excellent care you have taken of me."

"Don't mention it, my dear," answered Mrs. Alward. Believe me, I'm always ready to serve you."

He kissed her on the cheek as he said this, and then, without waiting for an answer, ran down the steps, and leaped in among the cushions once more.

"Where will you go, Mr. Chauncey?" asked the driver, pulling back the head of the window.

"Go where you suppose I want to go at this hour of the night, you blockhead."

"I didn't know, sir; but I thought, maybe, you wanted to see Nellie or the other girl before you went to bed."

"Michael Rand, don't you know me better than that?" came the reply. "When I visit Miss Alward I never go to either a gambling-house or to—"

"Oh, very well, sir," was the answer, and then Michael Rand clambered up to his seat, and giving the spirited team full rein, the carriage went rattling over the cobble-stones, toward the west in a scene of various lights, and laden garments peeped a foot, so small and child-like in proportions, that it might have belonged to a girl of twelve instead of a well-developed woman of twenty, as it did.

"Johnson, tell the madam at once," said Rand; "the girl is very fine, and women generally know what is good for women.

The porter heard the order, but did not move; he was lost in admiration of the beautiful stranger's face.

"Are you a-going, Johnson?"

"Yes, sir!"

The old servant straightened himself up, and, sighing, turned to go on his errand. But, there was a last hesitation in his point know—Mrs. Watterston stood in the doorway. She was a handsome woman still, although past fifty; and, shut into the room, and daintily cut, had a tempting, pretty pout in them, and one could see, although her eyes were closed, that they were large, and that they must be dark, too, since the lashes lay like black silk fringe on either cheek. Masses of blackish hair were coifed, like the turban of an Oriental beauty, about her, and shaped head, and, with garments peeped a foot, so small and child-like in proportions, that it might have belonged to a girl of twelve instead of a well-developed woman of twenty, as it di."

"Johnson, tell the madam at once," said Rand; "the girl is very fine, and women generally know what is good for women."

The porter looked up, surprised, and, blushing crimson, replied:

"Yes, ma'am."

"And where is he?"

"Go for old Glasser, ma'am."

"The doctor?"

"Yes, ma'am, the doctor."

"So she can't knit her brow, and laying her hand on Rand's arm, said, solemnly and slowly:

"Michael Rand, did you ever see this girl before?"

The coachman looked up, surprised, and, blushing crimson, replied:

"No, ma'am, never."

"So Chauncey did not know her?"

"I think no, ma'am. He wouldn't have ever known she was in the road only for ma'am. I seen her from the box..."

In response to Michael's ring, a stiff-starched porter opened the half-door and cautiously peeped out.

"Who's there?" he asked, in a slow, drawling voice. "Is it you, Michael Rand?"

"Cret, it's me—Michael Rand—and more than me, too.

By this time the couchman had lifted the unconscious tenant of the carriage in his stout arms, and was making his way toward the stupid porter.

"Why, bless me! that's a woman," exclaimed the porter.

"I should say it was," answered Michael, shoving the porter aside, and stepping into the hall with his burden. Is there a good fire in the sitting-room, ma'am?"

"A very good fire, sir. But, where is Master Chauncey?"

"I am the doctor for the house—old Glasser. Is the madam awake, yet?"

"Yes, she is waiting for you two to come home."

"This time the sitting-room had been reached, and Michael Rand placed his burden on an old-fashioned lounge, and bid Johnson turn on the light."

He hurriedly did as he was requested, flooding the apartment with a soft radiance, and illuminating the face of the unconscious occupant of the carriage.

"Why, Rand, my boy, she's a perfect beauty!" exclaimed the porter, lifting his eyes and hands at once in admiration—"a perfect beauty!"

The old stupid servant was right. She was beautiful. Her face was rounded, and had a peculiar bloom in it, but distinctly cut, had a tempting, pretty pout in them, and one could see, although her eyes were closed, that they were large, and that they must be dark, too, since the lashes lay like black silk fringe on either cheek. Masses of blackish hair were coifed, like the turban of an Oriental beauty, about her, and shaped head, and, with garments peeped a foot, so small and child-like in proportions, that it might have belonged to a girl of twelve instead of a well-developed woman of twenty, as it did.

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CHAPTER III.

FASH TO FASH.

The little French time-piece on the heavy marble mantel was ringing sharply three o'clock, when the fussy old physician in, tapping his silver snuff-box in a self-satisfied manner, and looking up at the clock as if it were the only thing he cared for.

"Well," said Mrs. Watterston, looking up.

"Yes, she's all right—getting along amazingly fine. She will have to be kept very quiet, though.

"She is not out of danger yet, then?"

"No; not out of danger, but I think..."

"Well," said Mrs. Watterston, looking up.

The imperative manner of the questioner caused the old doctor to raise his eyebrows in surprise, and, although very slowly, in reply, and without lowering his voice,

"Is it a bad thing, I think."

"It's a bad thing for her, then. There is no room in the house for creating like her."

"Mrs. Watterston was rich and proud, and Dr. Glaser did not think it necessary for him to reply to the bitter words that fell upon his ear with a pitiless voice, and so he only took a pinch of snuff and nodded at the fire.

"When do you think she will be ready to move?" asked the old woman, after a moment's silence.

"Well, in ten days."

"Not before that?"

"Not without risk."

"It's too bad she should have lain down at our door. Surely, she could have made to the Mill Creek Hotel."

"It was very unfortunate," was all the little doctor said.

There was another pause; then the woman looked up and said:

"Doctor, you must not let her die here. It would never do, you know; and you must never consider any circumstances, speak of her being here."

"Very well," was the reply.

"As soon as she is able enough to move," continued Mr. Glaser, "she must be taken up to the Infirmary. You know this would create unpleasant scenes, were it to get abroad, among our society."

The doctor nodded.

"Not that I would be cruel or un-Chris-
tianlike, but, you see a person's enemies will talk."

"Doctor, the young lady is worse," interrupted Sarah, the cook, putting her head in at the doorway. "You had better come right away."

The doctor looked at Mrs. Watterston, as if to say, "by your leave, madam," and then turned and left the room. When he had been gone, Mrs. Watterston called the servant to her side.

"Sarah, you must promise never to speak of this girl being in the house. It would be terrible were it to get out, you know."

"Yes, ma'am, it would."

"Then you will not speak to Ellen and Jana, and tell them it is my wish that nothing be said of this."

"I will, ma'am. They'll do what you ax 'em, ma'am."

"Let me see that they do and I will not forget them in return."

Within the half-hour all the servants had been duly cautioned, and Chauney, who I returned from the stables with Rand, sat planning with his aristocratic mother how the presence of Elinor Gregg could best be kept from the public.

"She cannot be moved now. Glaser says it would endanger her life," ventured Mrs. Wat-
terston.

"The dilemma is ugly enough, to be sure; but, as soon as she is able, she must be taken to the Infirmary. That's the best and only thing that strikes me as feasible," returned Chauney.

"Yes, you are right, my son. But, how did it come that you brought her here in the first place?"

"Why, it's all chargeable on that stupid fellow Rand; and, the thought I never dreamed of anything like that being the matter, or I should have driven into town with her."

"I wish you had done so," and Mrs. Wat-
terston bit her thin upper lip with vexation.

"Here we have a pretty condition of things to be expecting Lucy home from school every day.

A shadow flitted across Chauney Watter-
sen's face at the mention of Lucy's return, and after a momentary pause he said:

"When do you expect sister Lucy?"

"Well, almost at any hour she is likely to come."

"She has fixed upon no day yet?"

"No; but Kate Allen left Pleasant Grove on Tuesday last, and she says Lucy was packing up then to come home."

Chauney was about to make a remark when he was interrupted by the entrance of Dr. Glas-
er.

"My dear Madam," said the dimitive man of physic, "the affair is over, and mother and child are doing well. It's a girl." "It matters very little to what sex the little unfortunate belongs," answered Mrs. Watterston, coldly; then added: "I suppose you will come over in the morning again?"

"Oh, yes, I gave her a soothing opiate. She will sleep until morning now." "Well, doctor," put in Chauney, "this has been a larger concern than I thought. But, no matter; you shall be well paid."

"I—I know that, sir," replied the little doc-
tor, as if upbraiding himself.

"But it's very kind of you folks here to take a poor waif like her in and care for her so tenderly; it's very kind indeed."

"It would not be right to allow a human creature to die in the street," replied the young man.

"Besides, the girl may be of good fami-
ly, you know. Judging from the manner in which you spoke of her, Mr. Haydon, I think you was right."

Mrs. Watterston looked quickly up, and dart-
ed a furtive, but searching glance at her son).

He was very calm, and evidently uncon-
cerned.

"She does look to be a nice sort of a person," said Dr. Glaser, in reply to Chauney's words.

"A very nice sort of a person."

The doctor took out his snuff, indulged in a pinch, and tapping the box with his red knuckles, repeated—"a very nice sort of a person, indeed."

"We will expect you again, in the morning, doctor," said Mrs. Watterston, rising and mov-
ing forward the door.

Glaser took the hint, and, buttoning his coat up tightly under his puffy, bedimmed chin, strutted out into the darkness and storm.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MIRRORS.

When the sunlight stole in through the heavy lace drapery, and danced in bright, fantastic patches on the rich carpet which covered the floor of the chamber, in which Elinor Gregg lay, it found her flushed and excited. She scarce could realize where she was, on opening her eyes for the first time; everything seemed so light and gaudy, and grand, so endless and unlimiting. Her brain was as thick and plain, roomy farm-house where she had been born, and which she had left the day before, on the expectation of never seeing either it or its inmates again.

It only needed a glance around the room, and a shy, coy peep at the little form that nestled up closely to her, to make her realize the depth into which she had fallen. Then came the pain, the woe, the heartache—the remorse.
A FAIR FACE.

"Oh! why—why did I ever listen to his promises? Why did I put so much faith in that man? I was loving her, yet crying her heart out, for the hot tears started into her eyes, and her heart throbbed as if it would break. "And you," she continued, "turning and looking and laughing at the instant by her side; for you are destined—misery, shame, and disgrace. Oh, my God! have pity on us twain! have pity, and take us home to your arms; I am not strong enough to live such a life as must be ours!"

She clasped her thin hands together, tightly, until the blue veins of her arms stood out, and raised her dark, luminous eyes heavenward, and her cheeks became pale. She turned her face away with her mind in a moment. She was not in a mood to see visitors. He advanced to the bedside until he saw that she was awake, then he held his hands in his lap, and drew the curtains closer together.

"The movements, so cat-like, the glittering of the gold of her eyes, and the lengthening of her neck, as she turned the small, many-hued glamour of the room, around the girl's face, and lifting her head upon her elbow, spoke the gait of Coachney Watterson."

She was not a slave to them, but he prevented that by covering her mouth with his hand.

"You're a fool," he said. "Don't you know me by that arm?"

"Yes, I know you, Coachney Watterson—know you well! Wouldn't Heaven I did not know you before, did I?"

"But, now, don't go on in that way. If you do, it will make matters worse."

"How much worse could I be?" she demanded, her eyes flashing, and her face growing whiter than the pillows among which she lay.

"A good deal worse," he replied. "I am prepared to do you justice if you have a little sense, or you will see that I am the most miserable living creature that ever was."

"No! I was picked up from the roadway and carried here when I fell; from sheer exhaustion. Only when I met Coachney Watterson, you have cruelly wronged me!"

"Hush!—sh! Don't start to cry now. Listen to me. You are in my mother's house."

She believed him now, and, raising herself up until her face almost touched the face that bent over her, she asked:

"And does she know that I am, and—oh! she covered her face now—and what I am?"

"She knows you are a mother and not a wife, but she does not know that I am that child's father."

"But she will know it; the secret cannot be long kept, and, unless you redeem the promise made to me, I'll blacken you before the world! I am your child's father; lost to society, to home and friends; and I will not bear the brand alone. You, Coachney Watterson—you will have to bear this yourself, and I know who will be guided wholly by him. So forgiving is a loving woman!"

"Then to-night I'll come for you." He stooped down, kissed her, and stole out of the room on tip-toe.

Elinor Watterson listened until his footsteps died away; then she raised up her hands and thanked God for the ray of light she thought she saw glimmering through the gloom.

CHAPTER V.

MASTER AND MAN.

When Coachney Watterson left Elinor Watterson he went immediately to the stables and bid Rand saddle his favorite, Nye.

"Bound for the city, sir?" asked Rand, as he led the beautiful sorrel into the yard.

"Yes, why?" he replied.

"Back to-day?"

"I suppose so."

"Will Miss Watterson wait up for you?"

"No; I have a night- décoy. Good-by, Rand."

He waved the short riding-whip at the driver; he took off his hat to Mrs. Watterson, who was peering through the open window, and, coming down the shady avenue, was lost to sight.

"As soon as he reached the open roadway he buried his spurs into the sides of his horse, and the animal sprang forward at a gallop. A half hour at a bell-mell pace and he turned into Rand's stable. Then he met the man that stood on the avenue. The street was so thronged with vehicles and passengers that Coachney was forced to permit his panting steed to walk slowly under the quiet street lamp of Fifth avenue. Then he dashed on again up to Vine, where he alighted and gave his horse in charge of a negro boy called Walter.

"I'm going in here, Gilbert."

He placed in the black palm a piece of silver and disappeared in the grumpy doorway of a tall, block-looking, shutterless house of three stories which stood on the west side of the street.

The stairs he ascended were besmeared with rubbish, and they creaked under his heavy footfalls, so that they were unwilling to bear the additional weight.

On reaching the landing at the head of the first flight of stairs Coachney stopped, whistled twice and then waited.

The door before which he stood rattled, as if in answer, and then it swung open and a tall, gaunt, red-whiskered man stood in the entrance.

"It's you, is it—eh!? were his first words as he met Coachney. "Didn't expect to see you turn up to-night."

"I suppose not," replied Coachney, pushing past the man into the room.

"No, you don't look well. In your appearance daily," said the red-whiskered man, closing the door with a bang that made all the windows rattle. "This can't jest the sort of a man we need in your business. You wouldn't like to mix in and claim to be respectable, is it?"

Coachney turned and looked into the fellow's eyes savagely.

"Ned Blaisley, I don't want any of your jocerin'. Do you understand that?"

"I think I do," replied the man, "but you keep me too, me when I say that you must not fool with me."

"Meant no offense, sir," and Blaisley bowed.

Now, look here, Ned: I don't want any of your muck politeness. I owe you nothing!"

"Not a red."

"I have paid you for everything you ever did for me!"

"Like a gentleman."

"Well, then, we are at quite. If I don't choose to associate with your hard in public, that's my business."

"Altogether your business," with a shake of the head.

"I hardly know what to make of this fellow, thought Coachney. "But, I need him, and so must put up with his impudence."

"Perhaps you don't mean me, Mr. Watterson?" said Blaisley, deferentially. "You will find it more comfortable there."

"Is there any one in?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right. I want to speak to you on a matter of business," said Coachney, following the furtive form of Blaisley through the hazy, uncertain light that was in the front room.

Always ready to talk business," said the latter, and opened a small door which led into an inner room. "Come in, Mr. Watterson. Hold up; I'll strike a light."

The door to the master's study, which swung from the center of the ceiling, was left, Coachney looked curiously about him.

The apartment was small, but handsomely furnished. The walls were of green brocatelle, and on a large center-table stood dice-boxes, two packs of cards, and a silver faro-box.

"Room a little untidy," said Blaisley, waving Coachney to a seat. "The boys were playing until four this morning. Had an interesting game." Pinched little negro cove for five hundred ducats, last night.

"Indeed?" said Watterson. "The bank was in here?"

"Always is there's no disguised professionals around. But say, what do you want me to do?"
"Are you sure there is no one about?" asked Chauncey, looking cautiously around.

"Not a soul," was the reply.

"Well, then, I have a job for you.

What kind of a job? No threat-cutting or anything of that kind, eh?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"I'm glad of that, for I see it's unpleasant to have anything to do with corners."

Blaisy laughed as he spoke, and Chauncey turned upon him with eyes gleaming and face crimsoned.

"None of your wit, Blaisy. I'm not in the mood for humor."

"I was only a joking," answered Blaisy; "you used to think there was a joke in any gay—"

"And I can do so yet; but, as I have said already, I have no business. Can you help me to carry a girl from Walnut Grove to the house down by the Ohio?"

"Girl willing?"

"Purely business."

"Servant girl or visitor?"

"A visitor."

"Then we'll have to be gentle with her."

"As gentle as a child."

"All right. What's the rake?"

"Two hundred dollars when she is safely in the cabin."

"That's liberal enough."

"But there's a baby in the case."

"Yes?"

"Yes: a child of a few days old, only."

"Ain't you afraid of the little thing catching itself?"

"And if it does, so much the better!"

Chauncey leaned over the table and hoarsely whispered these words, which his dark companion, who was smoking a clay pipe, as much as to say, "I understand."

The two men talked the matter over, made all the arrangements, and after taking a glass of spirits together, shook each other cordially by the hand and parted.

"At eleven to-night," were Chauncey's last words, as he left.

"At eleven," echoed Blaisy, without stirring.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOY MINISTRIES.

When Chauncey Watterson left the crib, as the infirmary was called, the eyes of the boys who frequented it, mounted his steed and rode to the home of Grace Alward.

She was "at home," to Mr. Watterson, at all times. Before the eyes of the curious young, recognized Chauncey that morning, he ushered him into the reception-room at once.

She had been there directly, he said, and, making a profound salaam, disappeared.

Chauncey appeared very much at home in that elegant reception-room. He leaned back in the soft depths of a plush velvet chair and surveyed with a careless glance the magnificent appointments.

The face upon the windows was heavy and costly; the carpet of the richest texture and most elaborate pattern; while, most important, the furniture was all imported, he thought; it was so entirely unlike any thing he had ever seen in America before.

And as he sat there, and caught his form, again and again reflected in the tall pier mirrors, he thought how very shabby was the home of Elinor Gregg, and how impossible it was for him to marry a poor farmer's daughter.

"No, no, I could never sacrifice myself in that way," he thought, rising and walking to one of the windows.

The street was bright with summer sunlight, and bright with summer-colored clouds, that swept up the opposite sidewalk listening to a pair of ragged boys playing "Home, Sweet Home," on a pair of dirty-looking violins.

The sad, sweet music touched the children's hearts, and, although they had been romping before the arrival of the musicians, not a word was spoken until the last notes died away. The little ministrals did not pass around the hats as usual when they had finished playing; they saw there was no use in doing that, and, putting their instruments carefully away in diminutive green bags, they were about to start down the street when their attention was attracted by Chauncey Watterson tapping on the window behind which he stood.

The oldest of the two—a bright, dark-eyed boy of eight or thereabouts—was the first to notice the call.

"Romney, we're called by that 'ere gentleman in the window."

The child addressed was a pale, sickly little fellow. He never spoke a word in reply but followed his brother across the street silently.

"Play that tune," Chauncey said, as he presented the silver dime. The eldest picked up the coin, that had rolled away, opened the instrument and passed it to his brother.

"Here, Romney," he said, "take charge."

The little fellow took the money, placed it in a little box which he had strapped over his neck, and then the musical mendicants broke out into a plaintive Italian air, singing in a spirited manner the words in English.

While they were singing, Grace Alward stole into the room on tiptoe, and tapped Chauncey playfully upon the shoulder.

He turned, and gazed down into her beautiful blue eyes, over the ripples of her golden hair, and, bending low, kissed her cheek.

"Is this your concert?" she said, laughingly.

"Yes, I'm an impresario for the first time," he answered, taking her hands in one of his, and leading her away from the window.

They sat down on a soft sofa in the fullest corner of the room, and were soon engrossed in discussing the ball of the previous evening.

The young musicians played four or five airs unaccompanied; then packed their violins away, and strolled down the street in quest of custom.

"Romney, trade is a lusty dull to-day, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"What do you say if we count our earn'ins'?

"Well, I don't care," said Romney, taking the bag from about his neck. "Where will we go?"

"Van?"

"Why, here on these steps, repeated Van."

The little fellow glanced up. They were standing in front of a large Gothic church, with a white organ-pipe and tower, and the doorway was arched over with two hundred feet, surmounted at last by a glittering finger, which little Romney thought was touching the sky.

"Don't let's stay here, Van," he said, turning to the big boy. "That spirit's a-comin' down on our heads."

"No, it ain't," replied Van, laughing; "I used to think it was a-comin' over, too, but it's just the clouds as is a-goin' that other weather, ain't it?"

Little Romney opened his large dark eyes and blushed neither shyly, and, without speaking of the surprise that was in him, he followed Van up the steps to the organ, and emptied his money bag on the cold floor-step.

They counted it over very carefully. There were a good many brass pennies, three five-cent pieces which shilling silver dimes.

"That was a lucky haul, Romney, old boy," said Van, lifting up the dimes and rattling it on the snow.

"Yes," Romney meekly answered; "very good."

"I'll buy you tea, anyway," said Van, "an' we'll have a mess when we go home.""Woo!"

"Yeah, answered Van. "But it's cold here now.

Van shook his head decidedly and said: "Tell you what we'll do, Romney?"

"Woo!"

"We'll go down Broadway to the levee. The mail-boat for Louisville will be goin' out 'bout this time. What ye say?"

The pale, fragile little Romney said simply, "Woo!"

"Well, and, with a sigh, he picked up his little violin and the lads trudged down the street together and were soon lost in the crowd and bustle.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OLD HOUSE BY THE RIVER.

On the night succeeding Eli Gregg's arrival at Walnut Grove she sat up in bed, nervously awaiting the coming of Chauncey Watterson. The house was very still. The clock on the wall seemed to be ticking drowsily, as if the pendulum was weary of its monotonous labors, while, without, the night-wind moaned dreamily, and the twigs outside there was a light footfall in the corridor; then the door-knob turned, and Chauncey Watterson, his person enveloped in a hush, stole into the parlor.

"Are you ready to go?" he asked, his voice trembling with excitement.

"I know, I'm afraid, Chauncey, this is going to kill me."

"And you won't, then?"

"I did not say that, she said, "I am willing to go, but my ability to do so was what I spoke of."

"Here," he said, taking up a huge robe which during the day he had been putting on. "I'll wrap this about you. It will keep the air from you until you reach the carriage."

"But the baby, Chauncey,—what about the baby?"

"I have a friend here who will carry her, dearest."

Saying this, he took Elinor up in his arms, and set her over from the closet.

She was not heavy—she thought her extremely light, and when he had passed the half-door could see the stars, he started up a long and steep street, the run across the lawn to the roadway, where he placed her in a close carriage, already half-filled with blankets and pillows.

"Where are you going, Baisy?" he asked, looking around in the darkness.

"Here I am, sir," replied the individual named, "and I've got the young kid, too. Where shall I put it?"

"Give it to me."

The man did as requested, and Chauncey took the little one tenderly in his arms and placed it on its mother's lap.

"How do you feel, dear?" he asked, putting his hand on Elinor's forehead. There was no response, and Chauncey explained, in alarm:

"My God, Baisy, I am afraid the girl is dead."

"You don't say so," replied Baisy. "If she is, we are in a box, that's all."

"Briskly," she said, and Chauncey, "No, my dear, she has only fainted. Have you a drop of liquor about you?"

"Always carry it," returned Baisy, producing a small flask which he handed to Chauncey.

"Here."

"Now, Baisy, get up and drive as rapidly as you can, and I'll look after these folks."

He had stopped into the carriage, and Baisy mounted the box, and soon the vehicle was dashing along the lonely road at a fearful rate.

An hour of rapid driving and the foot of Fifth street was reached.

At the time of which we write it was not an over-populated street then, and, indeed, may be said to have been outside the city altogether. There were no lamp-posts west of John street, and the ferry-boat bridge to Covington, unless we call a shift that ranged night and day and occasional trips across the Ohio by that name, seemed to belong where Fifth street now terminates, the carriage stopped, and Baisy scrambled down from the box and put his head in at the window.

"Will I go forward and so how things are?" asked Baisy.

"Yes, you had better; but hurry up. The girl has fainted again."

Baisy closed the door softly, and walked rapidly along the bank of the river until he caught sight of a light glimmering through the darkness and fog.
Then he returned to the carriage, remounted his perch, and drove toward the rickety old frame from which the light gleaned. It had once been a suburban residence; but that must have been many years before, for the paint had dried into the weather-boarding, and the shutters hung all awry and creaked dismally as the night wind crept by and fro. 'There had formerly been a flower-garden, and a stretch of lawn sweeping down to the margin of the rushing brook below; now there were only scrubs, and roots, and brambles, through which ran a path, like a yellow ribbon, to the water's edge.

Through this old garden, Chauncy carried Elinor, and presently the party was followed closely by Ned Blaisley, with the baby in his arms.

A carpeted hall was reached and Blaisley shouted:

"Meg, show us a light—show us a light, will you?"

There was a noise as if made by the opening and closing of a creaking door, and then, on the stairs, appeared an old crone of sixty or thereabouts, with an inclined lamp in her hand.

"Hold the light up so as a fellow can see his finger before him," shouted Blaisley.

The woman did as directed, and Chauncy started down the bare stairs with his burden still in his arms.

"This way, please," said the old woman, cropping up the stair and pulling open the door which led into a rather neat chamber, where a large drift-wood fire roared and crackled.

"I've got things as comfortable as I could on such a night," continued the old hag, as she saw Chauncy glance around the room.

"You've done very well," replied Chauncy, laying the half-moon-faced Elinor upon the bed.

"This girl, however, needs attention, as does the baby there. Some hot drinks, I think, would be well enough, and—"

But the old woman, with Tudor understands her business," interrupted the old woman, "an' she'll fix 'em all up in a few minutes."

While, then, you are doing so, said Blaisley and I will walk into the next room and settle a bit of private business.

"Very well. Just make yourselves at home, gentlemen," said the old crone, as she hobbl'd about the room, preparing a drink for Elinor.

The two men withdrew to an adjoining apartment, the doors of which were app'ly upon the floor, nor curtains on the windows, and was, indeed, all in a very cheerful, dress-up lookin' room.

"This is Meg's ante-room," said Blaisley, laughingly.

"It ain't fitted up very like a royal habitation, and yet, the old witch claims to be one of the English aristocracy's fool," replied Chauncy, leaning against the ruff mantelpiece and looking into the fire.

"She's handy," put in Blaisley, "devilish handy. Fact is, Cincinnati couldn't do very well without her, and you ought to be very much obliged to her for helping you in this affair.

"Don't I pay her?" and Chauncy turned angrily upon his companion. "Besides, she is in position, and I don't feel as safe as I'd like to, on a good deal.

"Well, now, I don't think you've any cause to fear," replied Blaisley, drawing his words. "I've always taken care of the nurses here, and given her some precious good advice, and, maybe, by doing this, saves the gals some.

"Blaisley, what do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing."

"Yes, you do."

"I mean just what you think this here gal is an ugly thing on your hands. You are rich and respectable; she is poor, and may have been honest before you met her. It won't do to mess up the name of the man, and Meg will save you from going to extremes, you see."

The two men looked into each other's face, and Chauncy would have liked to have been able to throttle his gigantic companion, but he was not able, and so he stifled his wrath as best he could, and simply said:

"Blaisley, here's your money, handing him a well-filled Wallet; "and now we are quits—eh?"

"Until you need me again, I suppose."

"It's a bargain."

"Yes, it's a bargain."

The two men shook hands, and, just at that moment, Meg hobbled into the room, and was now, and so is the little one," she said, rubbing her yellow, wrinkled hands together. "They're sleeping in each other's arms, as nicely as a pair of pigeons."

"I'll not disturb them," said Chauncy.

"Tell Elinor when she awakes, that I will be here to see her to-morrow night."

"Yes, sir, to-morrow night."

"Here is some money for you."

The yellow palm was outstretched in a minute, and Chauncy was standing there, mos't apprehensive with eager expectancy as she clutched the roll of money Chauncy gave to her.

"You must take good care of her."

"Yes, sir; you can depend upon me for that."

"Let her want for nothing. Remember, I'll pay for everything."

"That's the way I likes to hear men talk," croaked the hag. "Good-night, gentlemen."

The two men passed into the dark hall and were gone, before the old crone appeared at the head of the stairs, holding her lamp over her gray head.

"You can come in," Meg said."

"Thank you, yes, Meg," said Blaisley.

"That will do."

The old woman bid the two men good-night once more, and then turned away to count the money she had just received.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Little Invalid.

Night was falling silently and dark upon the city when Van and Romney Taggart turned toward his steps homeward. They were very tired, and little Romney complained that his elbow ached.

"We've played so much to-day," replied Van, buttoning up his coat under his chin; "but, then, we've done well, you see, and ma will be awful glad to see us."

"Yes," Romney returned; "but, oh, Van, I'm so cold. My feet met got wet on the boat."

Van was scarce two years older than his brother, but to have seen him stoop down and tie his handkerchief around Romney's throat, one would have supposed he was ten, at the very least.

"You ain't strong, Romney," he said, and you know how ma tells ye never to get your feet wet."

"Yes, I know," was all Romney said; then the lads walked on again.

At the corner of Main street and the Public Lending VV, halted, and said:

"I'll go in here, Romney, and buy ma some things—not tea and raisins."

"Well," and Romney sat down on the curbstones to await his brother's return. Presently he came back laden down with packages.

"You'll have to carry my fiddle, Romney; I'm so loaded down," said Van, handing over his instrument.

Romney claimed at his brother's purchase, and said, in a dry, old-fashioned way:

"Got a good many things, didn't ye?"

"Yes; but we'll eat 'em all, soon enough."

Then the two brothers stood again, and again, stop ping at length before a row of grimy-looking tenements which faced the river, and which were then, as now, the offices of some old bank, or credit institution, by the rather plebeian appellation of "Ray Row."

Turning into one of these, the children ascended its stairs, and the dusty shoes against the offending person. There was a small room, oralc, upon which she had evidently been at work.

"Ah, my boys," she said, throwing down her work, and kissing them; "how glad am you've come. It's almost dark, and I was beginning to grow very uneasy."

"We've been all over," said Van; "made pretty well, too."

"You're the best of boys," she said, kissing them again. "Mamma would starve to death only for her little men."

"Romney my child," she exclaimed, you look very pale and ill. What's the matter with you, dear?"

"I don't feel well at the mail-boat," replied the boy; the tears gathering in his eyes.

"And you feel bad and sick, eh? The woman's voice trembled as she spoke.

"No, ma," Romney answered; down his head an instant and tried to speak, but, falling, he reached out his arms and folding them around the knees of the wooden table, fell into tears.

"Oh, my precious!" she exclaimed, crying upon his head, while poor Van stood by the fire and cried, too.

Little Romney was very sick, and Mrs. Taggart bethed him well in mustard-water, and tucked him away in the blankets.

"You will be well to-morrow," said ma, "and if you are not, mamma will send for the doctor, and he will make you well."

"Can the doctor make me well?" asked Romney, blushing to his eyes with wonder.

"Yes, my son."

"But, you said once—" he stopped.

"What it was God who made us sick, and made us well too, when we would be good."

"Yes, I said so, darling," replied the poor mother; "and, oh, Romney, don't you use drugs and the knowledge God gave him to cure us when He don't want us to die?"

"But, God wants us to die sometimes, don't He?" asked Romney.

"Yes, my son; when He wants us for heaven He calls us."

The little fellow paused, and looked up through tears into his mother's face.

"Do you think He wants me?" he asked, at length.

"Now, Romney."

"Oh, I hope not, my child! Your poor widowed mother and Van would be very lonely without you.

She could not speak more; her tears were choking her; and Van, who had crept up to the bedside, nestled close to her, and buried his tender lips in her white cheek.

The next morning, Romney Taggart was much worse—so bad, in fact, that his mother could do nothing but nurse him, and for the remainder of his short life, she stood by him, even if her flight would be on the streets alone. But, he might just as well have remained at home. He could not sing; he had never been so ugly. Yet, besides, Romney had been the alto, and he had never tried a solo before. He could not even play; he thought the violin sounded low and strange, and he was forever jumblin' one tune with another. At noon, he gave up altogether, and went home without a penny.

"I couldn't do nothing without Romney," he said to his mother; and then they both cried the afternoon away.

CHAPTER IX.

Brother and Sister.

When Elinor's absence was discovered, on the morning following the storm, there was considerable excitement at Walnut Grove. Mrs. Waterson called the household together promptly, and, when the pets and some curiosity, doubts and shamed of herself, had risked her life by running off in the night-time. Now that she has gone, however, let her coming, as was to have been, give her a black funeral. But, the dear girl had been a guide and comfort of me. If I ever hear this disgraceful subject alluded to in this house, I will be very angry hear her.

It sounded very much like a prepared declaration, but all the servants promised silence and the affair was over.

That same afternoon, Lucy Waterson returned from school. She was a slight, pretty girl, simple enough to look at, but keen and2

She had scarce been half an hour at the
Grove, when Chauncey invited her out for a stroll.

This is very brotherly, Chauncey, I must confess, she said, laughing; "if you were not my brother I would imagine you were up for a flirtation," she added.

"Well, I want to tell you something."

"Indeed?"

"A regular secret!" Her face was all dimples.

"Yes, a regular secret. Can you keep one?"

"Well, I'm not sure of that. You know what Lantern says about women keeping secrets."

Now, Lucy, I don't want any of your school-girl antics, nor, for that matter, any of your school-girl quotations either. He spoke impishly, and Lucy looked and saw the tension was gathering.

"What, what?" she exclaimed. "You are not going to quarrel with me already, are you?"

"No, Lucy," he answered, coloring crimson; "but you girls have such a fashion of cutting up foolish pranks just at the time a man wants to talk sense.

"Then you are angry."

"No, I'm not."

"Then, come; where shall we go?"

"I know just the place; down to the creek."

They walked along in the bright afternoon sunshine, her bright blue chintz robe fluttering in the breeze, and her brown hair, which rippled down upon her shoulders all aglitter, like waves of dancing gold.

When they had reached a retired spot, where they could see the creek flashing in the sunlight, and hear the soft music of its flow, they sat down upon the trunk of a fallen tree, and talking.

"Now, my affectionate brother, your amiable sister is all attention."

He did not speak for an instant; then he said, rather absently, "Lucy, I have a notion to get married."

She raised her brown eyes quickly to her brother's face, and, after a glance at its solemn aspect, said:

"Well, and who is to be the lucky one—eh?"

"Can't you guess?" he said.

"Guess! Well, maybe I can. Let me see: Elinor Gregg, I suppose?"

Had some strong man dashed his fist full in Chauncey's face, he would not have started more suddenly, nor would he have been more excited than he was at the mention of that girl's name. Lucy noticed this, too, and, without any expression on her face, she hurriedly turned his eyes away from her and caressed his lips, scornfully; she could not, for the life of her, understand the meaning of his words.

"Why is it preposterous?" she demanded.

"Elinor Gregg is a nice, handsome girl, and—"

"Lucy, you don't know what you are talking about," he interrupted. "The girl's a beggar!"

"Oh, no, she is not a beggar, Chauncey! Tis true, she is only a poor farmer's daughter; but, Chauncey, a girl—in fact, stood head and shoulders over every girl at Pleasant Grove.

That may be true enough, but my wife must be of good family, Lucy, you wouldn't have me marry a nobody, would you?"

"You seemed very attentive to her the three months you were in Shubylvania, Xenia," repeated Lucy.

"If and if you thought her so very much inferior to you, why then, you ought not to have visited her at all."

"You are a tongue of your own, my little sister," he said, sharply, and then, changing his tone and manner, and smiling as he spoke, he said, "Lucy, I have a sister—"

I will confess that I was smitten by her charms, and only that I subsequently discovered how unmerciful she was of honest man's good and admiration, I believe I would have married her."

"Unworthy," repeated Lucy. "Elinor Gregg unworthy! There must surely be some mistake here."

"I wish there was," he replied. "Over a year ago, I discovered that, on her leaving school, she formed the acquaintance of a rough farmer, who did not hear the best sort of a character, and, night before last, Rand and his pals fixed upon the house which he occupies in the vicinity."

Lucy Watterson clasped her hands in utter astonishment, and pleaded her brother searchingly in the eyes, as he proceeded:

"While Rand carried her here, I went for a doctor; and it was not until I returned that I knew the worst, which was Elinor Gregg."

"Go on," said Lucy, almost breathless.

"Where is she now?"

"That's the question which I have to tell you. The night she came here she gave birth to a child, and the next night she fled the house."

"Since what time?"

"Since when she has neither been seen nor heard from by any person connected with our house."

"Have you left no clue—no trace?"

"None whatever."

"And the baby?"

"She took with her."

"This sounds like a romance," said Lucy.

"Poor Elinor Gregg, and I always thought she was such a nice girl."

"So did everybody. Chauncey. I would have almost staked my life on her honesty. But, you see, it is hard to judge some people."

"Very hard," said Lucy, with her eyes fixed upon the ground; "but I'd mamma know that Elinor was your old favorite?"

"No; but I was not to tell her. You know mother is so queer, and she might think that, possibly, I had something to do with Elinor's sin."

"And you mean to keep this a secret?"

"Yes."

"Well, I presume you are right," said Lucy, after a pause, but, Chauncey, who are you going to marry?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Oh, I'm tired guessing! Please tell me."

"There is a man—Mr. Francis—who has shown some acquaintance further. The young lady is named Grace Alward."

"Grace Alward! Pretty, charming Grace Alward!"

Lucy was all enthusiasm now. Her eyes sparkled, her cheeks glowed, and she clapped her hands in rapture.

"Yes, Grace," repeated Chauncey; "and I'm very glad my little sister thinks so highly of her brother's choice.

I'm perfectly delighted with the idea of having Grace for a sister. Besides, Chauncey, I think marriage will settle down you some, and I know you have been a little wild."

"I confess you have been a little wild—"

"But not now, you have grown up, even in the life of my marriage."

And the wedding is the taking place to which questioned Lucy. "I hope it will be soon, for I can't bear waiting."

"In some unknown time; the precise day has not been fixed," was the answer.

"Why, Chauncey, that is eight mortal weeks."

"And what are eight weeks? A mere pittance of time."

There was a light, bounding football upon the grass behind them; then a rippling, silver girlish laugh, and then Grace Alward placed a hand upon Lucy Watterson's shoulder.

"Welcome, school-girl! When did you escape from the dormitory?"

The two girls greeted each other warmly, just as girls would do, for an instant were blended, their eyes met, and the trio started for the house again.

"How did you know we were here?" asked Chauncey.

"Your mother told me, and so I ran away from me to find you."

"You will stay at the Grove all night, then," said Lucy, expectantly. "It will be too late to go home after tea; besides, I want to talk to you. I have a fund of information for you."

"Yes, Grace would remain, and ere the two girls went to sleep that night, they had talked over the past and present, and dreamed of the bright future that was to dawn for both."

CHAPTER X.

OUT IN THE WORLD.

During the first fortnight of Elinor Gregg's residence in the old house by the river, Chauncey had only visited it after dark, and every evening, for he was too well known in the city to make his visits to such a questionabile locality publicly and in daylight. He was the very person and kind of man who would make a sort of considerate deference he always paid to her, which would have pleased some women so, had they been aware of the truth, and not searching for anything more. But not so with Elinor Gregg. Morning, noon and night her mind was occupied with dimpled thoughts of her drearful position, and Chauncey never visited her that she did not question him concerning their prospective marriage.

You cannot know, Chauncey, what terrible thoughts come to me sometimes," she said one night, sitting by the fire, propped up with pillows, and looking very pale and pretty.

He took one arm of her chair, as if he was going into the fire in a dreamy, abstracted way when she spoke, but her words were so solemn, and there had been something like silence before, that he started and colored slightly.

"Well, that's all your own fault," he said.

"My fault!" she bit her lower lip, and looked up, astonished, as the explanation escaped her.

"Yes, your own fault," he reiterated. He had not tried to make us as safe as possible; have you expressed a desire that I have not granted at once—have you asked for anything money could purchase that I have not purchased for you? Elinor, I think you are treating me unkindly—positively unkindly."

She did not reply at once; she was amazed—so much amazed, indeed, that she could not do anything but stare up at that man, whose brow was like a thunder-tree now, and whose eyes glittered with the light of a terrible menace.

"Well, why don't you speak?" he asked, at length. "You sit there and stare at one as if you hadn't your wits.

Her dark eyes grew luminous, and her scarlet lips became almost as pale as her cheeks. "I have lost my wife," she said, at length, perceiving her on this path, she rapidly replied. Long after, I have lost that which is worse than reason—my faith in you."

He shrugged his shoulders and scowled again.

"You must not try to frighten me with ugly looks," she continued. "I have passed the point where scowling affronts; I stand upon the brink of a horrible abyss; I feel the rock on which I stand—and which I once thought so firm—crumbling into sand beneath my feet; then why should I fear the glance of an eye, or the curl of a lip? Chauncey Watterson, I believe I'm growing mad."

"So do I," he said. "You talk like a fool."

She raised up to the time when he replied, "but from this hour I shall be wise."

"Indeed?" he said; "wisdom is always Welcoming."

"Yes, but my wisdom came too late, I fear Chauncey Watterson, I wish to ask you one more question."

"Go on; but, pray you, let it not be too simple."

"This is no time for levity, sir," she explained, fiercely. "I have spoken to you directly, and give to that innocent child sleeping there a name?"

He glanced over at the bed where the little rosy-cheeked sleeper lay murmuring, "To be candid with you, Elinor, I think we had better come to an understanding at once. You are a girl, and I have had three or four, and when last I was married a coarse, vulgar countryman, and settled myself down to the drudgery of farm work. You are too handsome, too polished, too intelligent, to appreciate such an en-
FAIR FACE.

fiance, and you will one day bless me for saving you from social slavery as would unquestionably have been your lot.”

She riveted her eyes upon him as he spoke, and her head bent away from the window to wild beatings. “Go on,” she said, when he paused; “go on!”

I have determined to do the clever thing by my own head, folding his hands behind him, and speaking in a matter-of-fact way that chilled Elinor Gregg through and through. “I will say it, child, that you have not have you educated either as an artist or an actress, whichever profession you find most congenial and best calculated to give you a place in the world. You shall never want for money; I will settle one thousand dollars a year upon you.”

It was very weak, but she stood up now, stolid and rigid as marble, and her graceful, rounded figure, draped in flowing muslin, looked very classic and beautiful, even to that man who had grown tired of her. She tried to speak, but something hard in her throat was suffocating her. Staggering to the window, she threw up the sash, and the moonlight fell upon her like a mellow flood, making her look whiter, more spirituelle than before.

The man was frightened. He thought she saw him through the open window, and starting forward, he caught her by the wrist.

She shook his hand off, and, lifting herself up upon her toes, and heaving the slender waist up, for which she actually was, she said, with more bitterness in her voice than can be described: “You are very kind, sir—very, very kind; but you come from a world to which I am not to save my soul from the horrors of eternity. I am not so low as to sell myself, whatever I gave!”

“Oh, come; be reasonable; talk sense,” he said.

“Very well, then, I’ll talk sense,” was the reply.

“From this night, Chauncey Waterston, we are mortal foes. You are a base scoundrel, who took advantage of a poor, unphilosophic girl, and who, in your prospect of a high position, no doubt, your taste for conquest, I presume. But your victory will only be a transient one; the time will come, Chauncey Waterston, when you will beg me to forgive you.”

“Is idle raving,” he interrupted, “both unbecoming and inopportune.”

“And you are the man to judge of what is becoming?” She was sneering at him now—“you, who live only to deceive and blight. But, remember this”—he exclaimed; “you act like a she-dragon. I did not come here to be bullied in this way, and I beg of you to restrain your temper for an instant and I’ll leave the house. You can then run at will. Old Meg, I suppose, has a taste for high tragedy and boisterous declaration. Thank Heaven, I have not.”

He took his hat and overcoat from the table as he spoke, and walked to the door. “Good-by. I’ll come and see you again when you’re in a better humor.”

“You will never see me here again,” replied Elinor.

As you wish,” he answered, and went. Soon after, Elinor was sitting under her mowy gown, and her eyes, dark and brilliant, fixed upon the spot where Chauncey Waterston had stood.

“No,” she muttered; “you will never see me again here. Perhaps you will never see me again, anywhere.” Then she thought of how she could be reached in kind and ended the idea; and, bursting into tears, she fell upon her knees, exclaiming; “Oh, that this should be the end of all—this should be that this should come to an end; Oh, that I could wash away the past with those tears,” she said, finally, rising to her feet; “but I can’t do that—the sin is indelible.”

She sat down by the fire for a long time, and sobbed and muttered to herself. Then she got up again, and went to the window.

She knew it was very late; the moon was sinking behind the Kentucky hills in a brownish mist, and no sound could be heard save the sound of the dark, blackish river. Covington was gloomy and silent. Newport was hid away in the gloom of the night.

Whatever Elinor Gregg was thinking about she did not speak for fully ten minutes; then, with lips trembling, and a sudden resolution in her face, she approached the bedside. The infant she thought sleeping was trying to cram its fists into a perfect rosebud of a mouth, and as she leaned over her, the child as if it knew her, and smiled sweetly.

Elinor’s face flushed; her lips relaxed their rigidity, and she hurriedly met her face close to the baby’s, and sobbed once more.

“Poor, poor baby!” she exclaimed. “God help you, and God help me.”

The baby smiled. Elinor picked it up and nursed it by the fire until its blue eyes—so like Chauncey’s—closed again.

Then she arose, and, carefully in a soft satin wrap, placed around its neck a locket set with emeralds, and bare-headed as she was, started down the stairs. They creaked under her, although she walked so lightly, and she could hear old Meg turning uneasily on her bed down-stairs.

Passing an instant only, she stole, like a shadow of fear, down the carpeted hall, softly unlatched the door, and stepped out into the moonlight, and hurried toward the river; then she hurried on from the street.

The streets were entirely deserted; not even a policeman was visible, and the tall black fingers of the grim monster giants dumb under the spell of some hideous gnome.

At last she reached “Bat Row.” It was dark, too, save in one of the upper stories, where a light flickered and threw a feeble ray into the street.

Elinor paused and gazed upward. A woman, with a sweet, sympathetic face, came to the window and threw out a bottle of drugs.

“I wonder what’s wrong there,” thought Elinor. “Somebody sick, I suppose.”

The supposition was quite natural, for it was three o’clock in the morning.

“Oh, if they don’t take care of her, they will give her to one somebody sick,” she thought.

Saying this, she walked firmly across the street; pushed open the battered hallow-door; crept up over so many flights of dirty stairs until she saw a beam of light streaming from under a door; then she kissed her burden passionately, hid it gently down, and, cat-like, groped her way back to the street.

Two minutes later she was out of the town, talking about fast steamboats. To escape these she shrunk into a doorway, and then turned the first corner and ran headlong toward the broad river.

CHAPTER XI

Dying.

LITTLE ROMNEY TAGGART was very sick—very sick—every day became worse, until, at last, the old doctor, who was supposed to know a wonderful amount more than he really did, shook his head sadly, and said, not at all in a professional, but in a very feeling way:

“Poor boy, there is no hope.”

Yes, there was no hope; and it was the verdict, too, that wretched Sarah Taggart had been waiting for so long. But, when it came, it was a shock; a shock; a shock of sensibility; and when little manly Van came home that evening, with his fiddle and pen, his mother called him out on the landing, and said:

“Oh, my poor boy, we will soon be all alone in the world.”

The child looked up, and while his lips trembled, he asked:

“Is—is Romney dying, ma?”

“Yes, Van, Romney is going. The doctor told me so myself.”

“Then he won’t get well all?” His eyes were swimming in tears as he put the query, and when he cried more, the boy burst into bitter tears, and tried to comfort her. Falling in this, he cried, too; and when they both went back to the kitchen, they did not stay moments after, their eyes were red and their hearts heavy with the weight of unshed tears.

Little Romney was awake, and he noticed the redness of Van’s face at once.

“Mamma, Van?” he asked.

“Did anybody hurt you?”

“No, Rom; I just felt bad, an’ I couldn’t help it, lassie.”

The wee invalid’s face was sharp and pointed, and his eyes and wits seemed to have sharpened, too, by the fell hand of disease, for his face was a tangle of expression.

“You’re cryin’’bout me, Van. I know you is.”

He only buried his face deeper in the bedclothes, and Romney, taking this for an admission, continued:

“You mustn’t cry for me, Van. You can get over it, strong boy; you’re a little fellow, a’llers is a sort of drawback, you know, any-

“I don’t want no other boy—so I don’t,” explained Van, fiercely; “an’ I ain’t goin’ to have no other.

“One boy never can make nice music,” said Romney, after a pause, “an’ if I was you, Van, I’d get another boy.”

“Don’t talk that way, Romney, darling,” said Mrs. Taggart, trying to conceal her emotion. “Just remember, you are making your poor little brother cry.”

“Well, I won’t talk any more, ma,” answer-

ed the boy, and then turned his back upon the one little wasted hand carelessly on his brother’s head.

Neither Van nor his mother slept that night. The boy was repeatedly in tears for close eyes for a few moments at a time, and was always awake when the hour for taking his medicine came. Toward the close of the next day, he began to sink rapidly; his face as umed a pinched appearance; his nose became very sharp and pointed, indeed; and he made up, every inch of his arms, for a longer period than five minutes.

Strange enough, he was eager to talk, al- though very weak, twice a day. He had shown him considerable effort, and gained him some, too. His mother saw this, and she said, gently:

“Romney, darling, you are talking too much.”

He opened his large, bright eyes wide, and looked up into her face before he spoke. Then he said, in a grave, quiet way:

“It hurts me to talk, but I want to say so many things to you and Van, because you know me.”

He stopped suddenly, and turned his gaze yearningly upon his brother, sitting at the foot of the bed.

“Because what? questioned Mrs. Taggart.

“Because I won’t be here to-morrow night to talk with you, an’ I—I—”

“O, yes, you will be here to-morrow night, my son, and many a night after to-morrow. You don’t know what you are speaking about.”

“Yes, I do know,” he said. “I know I can’t see you as well as I did awhile ago; and I feel so very weak, and tired-like, and I know I can’t rest, even for a very, very long while.”

His voice died away into a whisper, and he mentioned his mother to lift him up off the bed.

She did so; holding his head against her heart, and devouring his face with her eyes.

“You’re a poor, unhappy boy,” she said, pitifully.

“Don’t you know me—don’t you know your poor mam?”

His lips moved, and his eyes grew so large that they seemed to leap from their sockets, and, after a moment’s silence, he managed to say, very faintly:

“O, you’re my ma.”

She kissed the parched lips, and exclaimed:

“Yes, indeed, I’m your ma, my precious! Don’t you forget it?”

“Van! Van!” came like a distant echo from little Romney’s lips, and he stretched out his hand. It was grasped by his brother. The invalid was still a moment. Then he seemed to
A FAIR FACE.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FINDING OF RAT BOW.

ROMNEY TAGGART was buried at Spring Grove. They made his grave in a part of the burying-ground where the lots were cheap, and where there were no unkept graves or monuments.

Mrs. Taggart would like to have had the body interred on the summit of a little knoll close to the chapel, but such lots were very expensive at Spring Grove, and so she had to content herself with the spot her slender means could purchase.

"It'll be a nice 'nuff place one of these days," said the old lady, when they were away. "And if ye don't think a dollar too dear, I wouldn't min' planting some sprigs of flowers there!"

Well, I did not think it dear at all, and the money was paid promptly. The next day there was a coating of emerald turf on Romney's grave, and a little rosebush served the double purpose of a distinguishing mark and an ornament.

Van Taggart and his poor, heart-sick mother felt very keenly when they sat down that evening to their cheerless supper. They had often eat their meals alone during Little Romney's illness, but they had never felt its absence so sharply. When Mrs. Taggart noticed that through sheer force of habit she had placed three plates on the table, and that Van was looking at the third one with tears in his eyes, her heart was broken, but she bravely slipped it away again and bent over the black crocking stove a long while.

After they had swallowed a few mouthfuls, Mrs. Taggart broke the silence by remarking, what a nice place Mill Creek Valley was, and Van, seeming to know that his mother was striving to keep her eye occupied, answered, that it was a very beautiful place; then each stared into the face of the other, and Mrs. Taggart finally covered hers with her hands and fell into a deep silence. Her heart might have supposed from what had been said that she was crying about the beauty of Mill Creek Valley; but she was not, and Van was crying because there was no need of a third plate, and, in all probability, never would be again.

She sat by the fire and wept for many weary hours, and Emilly Van crept over and laid her curiously in his mother's lap and slept uneasily, for a long time.

When the city clocks tolled three Mrs. Taggart awoke the boy and bid him prepare for bed.

While he was praying in one corner, she proceeded to take a pile of dry clothes, now growing some of them out of the window, and putting some carefully away in a small closet.

"Tis me, ma," said Van, rising from his knees.

She stopped down, kissed him tenderly, and was about to kneel down herself, when a faint cry startled her.

"What is that?" she asked, looking at Van, and tremulously. She was a very timid woman.

"I don't know," replied the boy; "it sounds like a baby, don't it?"

"Very like," was the response; "but it's at our door, I'm sure.

"I'll go and look," he said; and he did.

In an instant he returned with Elinor Gregg's child in his arms.

"Oh, see," he exclaimed, "God has sent us this baby in place of little Romney!"

It was a child of many months, but very fair and strong. Of the bedside and played an old, plaintive air that occasionally sounded very much like a wall, until his mother started him by crying out:

"Oh, Van! Van! Your poor little brother is dying.

She spoke the truth. As the mournful strain ceased, so did the bedlamentary journey of little Romney Taggart end.

CHAPTER XIII.

REMORSE.

CHAUNCY WATTSERSON was very much distressed when he learned of Elinor's sudden disappearance. This distress was heightened a fortnight after when he read in the newspapers that a woman answering Elinor's description in every particular had been found floating in the Ohio, below the city. The body had been taken to Lawrenceburg for internment, but the news reaching the ears of poor old Adam Gregg, he had the remains of his daughter taken ten days after death, and placed in a graveyard, close beside the church in which Elinor Gregg had often worshipped when a child.

Chauncy was in a happy state when he heard that his loved one had been educated in a wicked school, and his training smelt his natural good traits with a coating of falsehood and worldliness, but, beneath this slime, there was a man's heart—a little willful and stubborn, but tender, too.

The knowledge that he had driven Elinor to suicide preyed upon his mind night and day. He could not think of any thing else, and more and more wearied his mind. In one corner of his friends twitted him on becoming melancholy because of his approaching marriage with Grace Harlow.

Even the latter noticed how gloomy and abstracted he was growing, and one day, when they were alone in the sumptuous reception-room of the Alward mansion, she said:—

"Chauncy, I fear you are not going to make a good husband at all!"

He broke up, astonished, and asked:

"Why, Grace?"

She pouted, as spoiled beauties are apt to do when men vex them, and said:

"You are so gloomy at times, and I believe these times are increasing and last longer than they used to do. With our wedding day so near at hand, we should have more smiles."

"Tell me if you please in that," he replied, pulling a rose-bud to pieces, "but I have had some business troubles, and I can not control my moodsness at all times."

"Then tell me the cause of your trouble," she said, with a pretty, girlish animation, "and I will either dispitate it altogether or help you to get rid of it."

He shook his head and answered:—

"No, it is bad enough for me to suffer, but you shall not suffer."

A very sober light came into her face, and her eyes, which had been full of sunshine an instant before, now sought the carpet, full of thought.

"You are not angry, Grace!" he asked, pleadingly.

"I am," she replied, hiding her face with the end of her shawl.

"And why are you angry?"

"Because you don't consider me fit to become your wife."

"But I do," he said, surprised.

"Well, then, why don't you tell me what troubles you so? I'm sure I could keep your secret, and if you spoke to me, or told me what is troubling you, I would be dangerous to intrude me with it, why, then, I'm not the woman you should marry."

This was spoken in a grave, serious tone, that surprised Chauncy Wattserson a good deal, and for the first time in his life he realized that Grace Alward was not merely a bright, silly, pleasant girl whom he could deceive very easily and on whom reason would be wasted. He saw, now, that he would have to employ different tactics, and so he said:

"Gracie, my own, you are right, and I will tell you everything."

Her face lighted up again, and she put up her lips, and kissed the boy, then answered:

"You see I have been very wild," he began, "and have done a good many things which you would doubtless be very glad.

"But you won't do any more—will you?" she interrupted.

"God helping me, I hope not," he replied, solemnly, "but I have spent a great deal of money and am in debt some."

"I will lend you money to pay," she said, eagerly.

He took up his hand:

"Oh, no, Grace, I'm not so bad as that. I have plenty to pay my debts, and a slight margin of sixty or seventy thousand left."

"But you have to pay the other."

"I don't know," answered the boy; "it sounds like a baby, don't it?"

"Very like," was the response; "but it's at our door, I'm sure.

"I'll go and look," he said; and he did.

In an instant he returned with Elinor Gregg's child in his arms.
The trees were weeping tears of blood upon the long, faded and tattered grass, which almost obscured the graves, and the setting sun was turning laurel hung upon the flowers into purest sparkling crystalline. Two boys, playing hide and seek among the tomstones, stopped their play as they saw the old sexton rise from his chair and sit down and looked curiously about him, they gave up their frolic, and stole away to their home.

The old sexton, however, coming out of the church, noticed the stranger, and bowed politely to him. "Yes, sir, I can show you the spot."

"Would you be kind enough to do so?"

Robert Alward, Grace's only cousin, while close behind, looking exceedingly handsome, came Chauncey Watterson, and clung to his arm, with a smile on his lips.

Every person thought the happy pair hand some, and every eye followed them as they swept up the middle aisle to the chancel rail ing where they stood.

So engaged was the attention of the vast audience, that no one noticed the dark figure which stole into the church quietly after them, and sat quietly down within the sound of the minister's calm, even voice.

The marriage service of the Episcopal church, so solemn, so grave, so sincere, occurred almost twenty minutes, and the twain were declared man and wife. The old minister knew the bride very intimately, and instead of delivering the sermon at once, he proceeded to admonish the young couple to remember the vows they had just registered; to lead an honestly, and seen a down: each other's failings kindly, and, if God should please to bless their union with children, to see that they were raised within the pale of the church.

Saying this, he prayed God to bless them both, and then followed the surpliced acolytes into the vestry.

The bridal party stopped to receive many congratulations; and then, a little tired and worried with excitement, walked the aisle towards the door.

Just as they reached the vestibule the dark figure stood directly in their path, her face concealed by the folds of a black mourning veil.

Chauncey put out his hand and touched her on the shoulder.

"Pleasant side," he said.

She lifted up the veil and gazed into his eyes.

"It's started wildly back; it was the face of the dead—it was the face of Elinor Gregg! Before he could speak, she disappeared in the snow-drifts which covered the streets, and he, realizing the true cause of her misery, hurried after her. She fell in a heap, at the feet of his new-made wife.

A scene of wild confusion followed; Grace, of all the party, recognized her husband's loneliness, and this possibly needed her to bend over him, and whisper:

"Don't fear, Chauncey dearest; that bad woman is gone!"

"Gone! gone!" he muttered, staring wildly up into Grace's face, and then cowering back the next instant as he met her honest gaze, like a man in the wrong.

"Why, what is wrong?" asked Luci, excitedly, bending over her brother.

"Nothing, much unkindness from the spot three weeks ago, to the surprise of everybody, a tall, stately marble monument lifted its form from out the grass of Elinor's grave, and on a tablet in the center the sexton shaded his eyes and read:

"Sacred to the Memory of

Elinor Gregg,
Aged 19 years.

Chapter XIV.

A wedding and a scar.

The Alward mansion was brilliantly illuminated, and the large parlors and reception rooms bristled with gay guests, who, after a preliminary visit at the wedding ceremony and festivities which were to celebrate the marriage of Grace and Chauncey, were eager to participate in the wedding ceremony and festivities which were to celebrate the marriage of Grace and Chauncey.

They were not to be married at home, but at St. Peter's Episcopal chapel, to which a number of persons, for whom there was no room at Grace's own home, had been invited. Eight o'clock the chapel was crowded, and everybody was on the tip of expectancy.

The bride was led into the church, seated by the hand-voiced organ, and then all eyes were directed toward the doors which opened into the vestibule.

A moment more, and they were flung back by the kidded and perfumed sexton, and in came Lucy Watterson, who was the bridesmaid of the occasion, leaning on the arm of Chauncey. Amid all this gaiety and happiness, was suffering keenly. The woman whom he had supposed sleeping under six feet of earth, in Deltville graveyard, had stood before him and glared into his eyes like a horrid specter in the first few moments of his married life—there, amid the laughing throng where a spirit, good or evil, would never have shown itself. Sensing that he was himself that it was the shade of Elinor; then he would be willing to testify it was her in the flesh, and anon he would drive away all these lies by a mere alarum and the hand of the minister upon whom his fancy at that moment clothed with the features of the dead. This appeared altogether the most reasonable thing to do; and, before the carriage whizzed them off to the midnight train which was to bear them to St. Louis, he had quite satisfied himself that it was really the case.

At St. Louis the train left the rail, and going aboard a magnificent Western steamer, the St. Paul, settled down to enjoy the sweets of love and travel.

Chauncey Watterson did not love his young wife with that force, devouring passion which he had given to Elinor Gregg; but there was less of the impetuous element in the affection he gave to Grace, there was more respect, and melancholy deeper, greater.

Grace was so different from Elinor. While the latter was regal, queenly, proud, the former was graceful, supple, yielding—all ripple and curve, and she was hard to make her husband happy, that there was scarce an hour in which he did not bless her for some little deed of saccharine kindness which filled her with pleasure. Like a true woman she refrained from mentioning the affair at the chapel door, but Chauncey felt her silence on the subject building up a mysterious bond between them, and he longed to talk the matter over and explain the circumstances satisfactorily to her.

Although it was rapidly approaching Christmas, and there had already been some winterish weather, the sun shone warmly through the day, and at night the moon looked down at its bright, round face in the clear, rolling tide of the Upper Mississippi.

Chauncey and Grace spent many hours in the pilothouse—a favorite resort for tourists on Western waters—and, one night, when there were none but themselves and the old bronzed pilot, the latter said:

"Do ye see those lights ther' ahead?"

"Yes, very distinctly," replied Chauncey.

"Well, that there's Kaskaskia; the first town in Illinois on the river after ye leave Missouri behind.

The young couple looked forward between the black smoke-stacks and Grace said, after a moment:

"Why, pilot, those lights appear a great deal bigger than this boat, don't they?"

"Yes, I should say so," was the response; "that 'ere town is built on a side of a mighty high ill."
"Better to overturn society, ma'am, if so-ciety can't stand against wickedness; but, ma'am, you'll pardon me when I say that I don't think it will be necessary to have two wives as is to have one wife and another woman, as ought to be a wife, too."

She nestled close to his breast, and he kissed and blessed her.

"You, yes, indeed, my guardian angel," he said, and then he fancied she was content, and he happy.

**Chapter XV.**

**Miss Romney Taggart.**

When Miss Romney Taggart had reached her sixth year, she was acknowledged on all sides to have the prettiest face among all the little girls in the neighborhood; and so, they used to speak of her beauty in the most flattering terms.

When the hurricane, which had reached the hurricane-deck, had ceased, she said:

"I expected you to tell me," she answered, promptly, "but your reticence led me to suppose you did not wish the matter discussed."

"And so you avoided it—oh!"

"Yes.

"It was very kind—very good in you, Grace; but, you have a right to know, and I'm going to tell you."

"I am a good, kind husband, and I'll re-pare your acquaintance by discretion and silence, if you desire it."

"Well, then," he began, "I led a fast life prior to our courtship, and, like many young men of means, I became intimate with a woman whose beauty far outweighed her virtues."

Grace expected just such a revelation, but made haste to say: "I heard what had come of you was not a little, and she shrunk away from her husband and covered her face with her hands.

"Yes; he acknowledged that; and then she listened in silence to his eloquent defense. This he wound up by saying:"

"Eight months prior to our marriage, I noticed this girl that I was going to unite with a pure, honest girl, and that, in consequence, I would have never seen again—that, in short, I intended to turn over a new leaf, and lead a different sort of life from what I had been doing."

"And what did she say?" asked Grace, now deeply interested.

"You would never be happy with anyone but her, and that she would meet you and tell you everything—and, finally, you would appear for a divorce; and, indeed, make all the other gloomy prophecies, which I can't remember just now."

"And you fear this woman?"

"I did fear that she would separate us," he said.

The young wife folded her arms tight against her husband, and said, in a determined manner:

"No; her power to harm or separate us is gone. She has been your evil genius; I will be your rider."

He said: "Let us hope you will live long."

"I'll take you to your little daughter."

This admonition had the desired effect, and during the first day of Romney Taggart's public duties, he was quite quiet and demure. The truth is, she was overawed by the crowds which collected about them everywhere they stopped; and by the grandeur of the houses, and the elegance of the ladies who occasionally paused to admire the wee musician, and listen to her rich, sweet voice, ever they dropped the penny which she had not yet received any valence.

Day by day, however, she grew familiar with the round, and with the fashionable people, and although always a trifle shy in the streets, she learned to know all about the个项目, and enough to win for her the admiration of every one who stopped for an instant to listen to the Honorable Miss Romney as they strolled along.

In every way through which he passed, and Romney was eight, and Van almost seventeen. He felt his years keenly, and, being a spirited fellow, was glad to have a chance to employ them, and desired to change it for something more digni-fied and remunerative.

In these three years he had improved himself considerably. Instead of retiring early, as Romney always did, he usually remained up until midnight to read and study, and now he had progressed far enough to talk to Romney in charge, and he did. She was a trifle slow to learn at first, had a fixed aversion to certain letters in the alphabet, and after con- quering those, took an active delight in digl- ing big words.

Mrs. Taggart by means of bribes in the形状, of the money she had cor- rected her through the Second Reader, and this at-tained, Romney took to study with a zest, and promised, ere long, to leave Van behind.

"Mother was very well pleased with her improvement, and her improvement gave him great joy. But he did not like to see her in the streets any more, and one night he started his mother by say-ing:

"Mother, after this week Romney shouldn't go on the street any more. I've made my mind up on that."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Taggart, "but what will the girl do?"

"I don't know," was the reply. "Nothing, I guess."

"Nothing! But we are poor, you know, and"

"I don't care," interrupted the boy; "it isn't no place for a little girl; and I'm getting ashamed of myself."

"Yes, me. It don't look well, nohow, for a big, bully boy like me to go around playing a fiddie in the streets—it looks too much like what my mamma lived. Don't you think so?"

No, Mrs. Taggart did not think so; but she would gladly have exchange his present occupation for something more congenial and better suited to his talents.

"Well, then, I'm going to change it mighty soon," he said, determinedly. "I'm going to be a man.

The matter was dropped then, and the next day Van and Romney were on the tramp as before.

It was a bright, lovely day in early spring, and the streets were thronged with strollers and people of leisure, who seemed quite willing to hear good music, and satisfied to pay well for it, too. As usual, the laborers of the day were supplemented or brought to a close by a tour around the steamboat landing.

Romney was walking down the streets between the foot of Vine street and Broadway in those days, and what with the shouting of mates; the sing- ing of railway whistles; the rumbling of wagon's; the lumbering of drays; the screaming of steam whistles, and the clanging of bells, there was enough noise to deafen every ear in the vicinity. But all this tummi, there was left still a desire for music of a different type, for more dulcet strains, and Van and Romney's five or six old songs, the one's or the other's, all failed to equal the tunes that occasionally passed by admire the wee musi-
served her from the shore for some time, and see what she looks like inside." Romney was so used to obeying him that she gave him her hand at once, and he led her out of the gangway, and up the stairs into the cabin.

It was a charming sight to the two children; the smooth deck, the cabin roof above, the clear, open sea ahead; the landscape wonders on the state-room doors; while all the mirrors in the ladies' cabin reflected back all these splendors, and seemed to enhance them a hundredfold. "Oh ain't it nice!" exclaimed Romney, clapping her hands. "Oh, ain't it so nice?"

Van thought it was very beautiful, but he was not so enthusiastic as his companion, who stood, with mouth and eyes wide agape, drinking in the enchantment about her. "I wonder where we go," she said, again, but before Van could answer, Chauncey Watterson tapped him on the shoulder, and said:

"The ladies would be pleased to have you and your sister play something for them. Will you do it?"

"Yes, sir," replied Van, and the young musician walked back to where Grace Watterson sat amid a crowd of gayly-attired ladies and gentlemen.

The children bowed awkwardly to their audience, and then began to play a soft, beautiful Italian air, full of tenderness and feeling.

Those who were chatting and laughing when the impromptu entertainment began ceased their frivolity when the sad voice of the music seemed to sweep away all in the grandeur and ripeness of perfection, and there were tears in many eyes, including those of Grace Watterson, when the strains died away, like a mellow echo, at last.

Many bright silver pieces rewarded the effort, and while Van gathered them, Grace led Romney to the ladies' tier—to the piano, unasked if she could play.

"No, ma'am," replied the girl; "we've no piano at home, you see."

The answer was so blunt, unaffected, and childlike, that Grace dropped down upon her knees, and, although childless herself, drew the pretty little girl to her bosom and kissed her on brow and cheek—never dreaming that the child she held so tightly in her arms belonged to Van Taggart and Chauncey Watterson, her husband.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Boy's Sacrifice.

The bell rung its farewell note; the shrill whistle screamed out its warning, and those who had seen the ship sailing from the very edge of the voyage scrambled down the plank to the wharf. But, so occupied were Romney and Van with the attentions being showered upon them by the passengers, that they took no notice of all this, and played and sung until they passed at length from sight of the gentlemen.

Then Van felt the overwhelming lift of the wave and realized that once at the vessel was pushing into the stream. He grasped his little foster-sister by the hand and seated her exclamingly:

"Come on, Romney; let's go off—come on!"

The children made their way as fast as they could through the thronged cabin, and down the winding stairs in front of the fire-doors. When at length they stood upon the lower deck, Magnolia was already twenty feet from the wharf. She was swinging out into the stream, stern first, and her bow was grasping the surface of the water. "Let's jump on the Alma," exclaimed Van, taking in the situation at a glance; and the next moment he had leaped.

"Romney! Romney!" cried Romney, who was unable to reach the deck unassisted, he saw that a crowd of deck hands, who were pulling in the hawser, had shoved her back, and now there was a gap of thirty feet between the two boats.

"VAN! VAN!" cried Romney, wringing her hands in the greatest alarm. "Oh, Van, come for me—come for me!"

Her cries were drowned in the confusion of getting the steamer under weigh, and when she saw the ship begin to move, she felt as if the ball of her heart had been torn from her, and she burst into a violent fit of weeping, and strained her eyes shoreward.

Van had the courage to stand by his Van, even through her tears, standing against one of the fenders of the Alma, waving his hat at her.

Crash! crash! went the machinery; then the master whirled the vessel within a hundred feet of the wharf.

"Oh ain't it nice!" exclaimed Romney, clapping her hands. "Oh, ain't it so nice?"

Van thought it was very beautiful, but he was not so enthusiastic as his companion, who stood, with mouth and eyes wide agape, drinking in the enchantment about her. "I wonder where we go," she said, again, but before Van could answer, Chauncey Watterson tapped him on the shoulder, and said:

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Van Taggart was a boy of modest, rather in tears, and told her, as best he could, how he had lost little Romney forever.

Mrs. Taggart cried very hard at first, and then she always did, took a second and more cheerful view of the matter.

"She will come back on the boat, Van," she said; "the captain will be sure and bring her back to him."

Van was doubtful of this for a time, but finally began to think it possible, and now the third day had passed he found himself searching the columns of the Enquirer for news of the Magnolia.

At last he commenced to trace her return in the river dispatches. Now she stopped at Evansville for leaf gold; again he heard of her coming through the canal at Louisville, and the tenth day then came and passed, but the Times noted her arrival at Madison.

There was only one hundred miles between Van and Romney now, and he could do nothing but wander along the wharf and look eagerly for every new arrival.

It was close to sunset of the tenth day, when Van descried the stately Magnolia rounding the point below the City Gas Works. He found some difficulty now in keeping out of the water—he had such a wild, boyish desire to swim out and meet Romney before the crowd of hackmen and runners could swarm into the cabin, and be among the passengers, which he felt would be—at least on his side—tender and tearful.

But, however delicious a private interview would have been, to the father's delight, the risk was altogether too great, and so he contented himself with standing at the very brink of the steamer, and every time he gave his cap at the approaching steamer.

When there were but fifty yards between the Magnolia and the shore, the boy, in his inordinate glee and looking like an angel, tripped out on the guards—and recognizing Van at once, began shouting to him, giving her a wave upon, too, by way of a salute.

It would be a vain task to describe the meeting of Romney and Van. They both shouted and laughed, and teared each other partly because of their joy, and partly because that tears came easy, and words were hard to get out.
A FAIR FACE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LOWEST FORM OF EAVATION.

The next day Romney Taggart left Rat Row forever, and took up her residence at Bolton Place.

She had gone, Van’s courage gave way completely, and he laid all night in his little attic bed and moaned out his sorrow and anguish. When he had cried himself almost dry, he got up, dressed, and said: “I’m going to hunt something to do now.”

“And you will not play any more?”

“No, I’ll never play any more in the streets, anywhere.”

During the remainder of the week he sought escape in a great many things, in a despair of finding anything suited to his talents, when he chanced to hea of a concert-troupe manager—who was then stopping at Stuyvesant House—and who was anxious to engage a couple of musicians.

Van brushed his old clothes up and called on the manager. Although the manager led him with a chilly indifference, Van knew he would think better of his performance than he did of his appearance, and he was right.

He was sent to the shop, and back came with a small order, and finally engaged him to go with him.

“Your salary will be small at first, but I will give you chances to sing, and a good deal more,” he said, and the arrangements were made.

As the troops left the city on Sunday night, and Van was Solomon and a king, he went off to Rat Row to find the time to prepare for his departure, but he busied himself and got his meager wardrobe together as best he could.

Late on Saturday evening he walked to Bolton Place to bid Romney good-bye.

“You will not forget me, Romney, will you?” he asked, “when I am far away, and you are rich and happy.”

“No; I will never forget you, Van,” she answered, “and I would like, oh, so much, to go with you.”

“You mustn’t think of that,” he said. “I’ve got a chance now, and I intend to be rich myself some day, and come back for you, if you are only a good girl and wait for me.”

“Yes, I’ll wait, Van, and I’ll be such a good girl.”

They parted then, and the next day Van Taggart and his mother went out to the first little Romney’s grave and cried upon it for an hour, and that night—for the first time in her life—Mrs. Taggart slept alone in Rat Row.

She was dreadfully lonely and miserable, but ere the close of the second week after the funeral Van had sent her money in, from him, and a railroad ticket to New York. The troops were going to remain there for the summer, and the boy thought it best to be advisable for his mother to go on and join him.

After disposing of her effects at auction, she went out to Bolton Place and said farewell to Romney, and there was a “To Let” swinging in the air at Rat Row, and the denizens of that despicable neighborhood were busy speculating on the sudden rise of the stranger.

Singularly enough, the third day after Mrs. Taggart’s evacuation of the premises, a carriage dashed up in front of the battered gate, and a stranger was driven in, looking very much as Elinor Gregg used to look, only somewhat more faded and older—leaned on an arm that was required to lift up his head, and brought up to his left ear, and had an adopted child.

“Lov’ bless you, ma’am, her son is gone off with a show, an’ the woman—Mrs. Taggart—finally gave up.”

This was the reply, spoken in a rough voice, by a very rough, coarse-looking woman.

“Did she say where she was going?” asked the stranger lazily.

“No, ma’am, but I thinks she kinder hinted New York.”

“New York?” repeated the stranger, hitting her lip in vexation, and then, without speaking another word, stepped into the polished ebony vehicle again, and was whirled away through the town and the streets of the direction of the Little Miami railroad depot.
When Romney had been at Bolton Place a month or two she became very contented, and, as she was a natural, pined less for her old life, and began to love Grace and Chauncey very dearly.

They were good to her; she felt it, too, and when they agreed to send her off to boarding-school, she protested against the plan, and almost conquered them.

However, when September came about, Chauncey insisted on going to Pleasant Hill for the fall and winter term, at least, and off she went.

She enjoyed her much, and one day she was sitting talking to Chauncey about her when she said:

"Did I ever show you the necklace the girl had on when Mrs. Taggart found her on the door-step?"

He answered that she never had, and Grace went on to explain that the emeralds Elinor had placed around her baby's neck, so many years before.

Chauncey Watterston felt himself growing faint and sick, when the green jewels met his gaze, and when Grace pressed the spring and held up Elinor's picture before his eyes, he gasped for breath and fell stiff, cold and unconscious, with a dull, heavy thud upon the floor.

When he came to his senses again, he complained of weakness, but her wife was not to be thus easily disposed of, and she said calmly, but earnestly:

"There is a terrible mystery here, and I must know it."

He tried to baffle her; but it was no use, and so he told her everything—a new version of what she already knew related to her on the Mississippi—and, while he spoke, she sat with her hands in her lap, and gazed at him with her cold, shining eyes.

"You have been a bad—a bad, wicked man," she said, at length.

He only moaned in answer, and covered his face with his hands.

Then she knelt down by his side and whispered her forgiveness.

The moon was streaming through an open window into the apartment, and when he looked up into her face, his was white as chiselled marble, but full of agony and remorse.

CHAPTER XIX.
THE RETURN OF LOVE.

Eight years have passed, and Romney Taggart is sixteen. If her childhood promised beauty, her young womanhood more than realized it.

She was indeed lovely. Skin white, transparent, soft, with a peachy bloom in either cheek, such as no artist could paint, and few poets describe, and large, dewy, blue as summer skies, and drapes of golden hair, spun as fine as flax. A form, graceful as the Nile's, and a majesty of men royal as a queen.

She is highly accomplished, too; can sing sweeter than ever, draw passably, and play divinely.

Even her manner has altered, and those who enjoyed the privilege of her society at Bolton Place, either envied or praised her—no, in either case she was complimented and flattered.

The world appeared to her—as it does to most girls of sixteen—as a great football which she was permitted to kick about at will through a field of enchantment and conquest.

She had not wholly forgotten her old life; but, eight years to a girl of sixteen appears short little of a century, and between Rat Row and Bolton Place, those eight years rolled by.

The landscape, the woods and fields which partially obscured what was beyond.

But, even through the mist, she could still discern very plainly the many, courageous faces that of Van Taggart, and the docile, motherly woman who had nurled her so tenderly in the long ago.

She had never seen Van but twice in all those years, but she received letters every few months from him full of love and glad tidings.

He was getting on in the world quite rapidly; had quit the stage, and had become a partner in a large musical instrument manufactory near Philadelphia.

The last letter Romney had received from him, he said he was very anxious to see his little sister, and maybe he would do so in a few weeks.

She brought this letter to Chauncey, whose special pet she was, and, clapping her hands gleefully, said:

"Oh, Mr. Watterston! just think! Van is coming to see us in a few weeks! Won't we have a nice time?"

There was none of the girl's enthusiasm in his voice as he answered:

"We will be glad to see Van, but I am rather grieved that he should come at this time, when I am so busily engaged about the theatre."

"But, Van don't make any difference—he is one of us," said the girl, biting her lip, and with just the shadow of a pout in her face.

He looked up, and after a moment's silence said:

"My child, you have arrived at an age when you should be able to appreciate the world at its true value."

He stopped, but, as she did not venture a remark, he continued:

"You are rich—very rich; the heiress of Bolton Place, and you should be very careful that you are not led into an alliance beneath you."

The girl had never thought of Van in any other relationship than that of a brother, and now, that the possibility of him becoming anything more than a stranger seemed at hand, she felt herself gradually and confused. She managed, however, to stagger out:

"I know very well what I am now, but I have not forgotten what I have been—a poor, deserted outcast, penniless and friendless. Van Taggart was good to me in those early days. He was kind to me from the very first; he made Epworth a place of happiness; he was my guide and support."

"You spoke like a woman, keenly alive to her honor, and in love."

"You need not speak that way," replied Chauncey; "there is not the slightest reason for it. I like Van Taggart; feel grateful to him, too, for his kindliness to you, and during the last seven years have helped him along in the world by advancing large loans on very moderate security. He is a young man of great position, proud ambition, and that is to see you married to Percy Shelby, the son of one of the leading men of Kentucky. He is coming here in a few days, and I expect you to give him a cordial welcome."

The girl blushed, begged to be excused, and ran off to her own room to cry and think and dream.

The next day Percy Shelby came to Bolton Place. He was a stylish-looking young gentleman, fond of handsome horses and fast horses, and made himself exceedingly agreeable to Romney.

But, after Van, Chauncey had told her of his intentions, she felt very different and un- comfortable with him, and finally, on the sixth day of his visit, he bade her good-by without having ascended, in any way, to either love or marriage.

It was a bright May afternoon when he galloped away, and Romney stood on the colonnade, with Grace and Chauncey, until he disappeared from sight. Then Grace complained of being chilly, and leaving on her husband's arm, she entered into the drawing-room, while Romney wandered down among the shrubbery, on the brow of the hill, and peered into the quiet valley below. How she stood there she could not tell, but when her gaze was sat with the charms of hill and vale, she turned her steps homeward.

There she walked far, she heard a quick, springy step behind her, and then she glanced around and stood face to face with Van Taggart—a tall, handsome man of twenty-five.

With a glad cry of welcome, she leaped into his arms, and he, smoothing back the soft silk- en gold from her forehead, kissed lips, brow and cheek, as he nestled closer to his breast and wept for joy.

"I have come back to claim you," he said, after a while. "I have a good start, and I think I can keep it up."

Romney thought of what Chauncey had said concerning Percy Shelby, and hung down her head.

He noticed this at once, and said:

"We have been brother and sister so long, that, perhaps, you can not think we can be anything else. If, however, you don't love me with a stronger love than that—" he dropped her hand now—"why, it can't be helped, that's all.

You did love him with a stronger love, and she told him so, and then he asked her to be his wife. Her answer must have been satisfactory, for his eyes danced, and his tongue roused her praise as if it never would stop.

"Romney did not tell Van what Chauncey had said. It would have wounded him to the quick, and he was so proud that she thought it altogether better policy to keep the matter to herself, for if she could see him as she did, she would have been cordial.

Grace and Romney retired at ten o'clock, and, ere the latter stole off to her own chamber, she told Grace every word of what had passed between Van and her, and also of what Chauncey had said to her concerning Percy Shelby.

"In a word, a good, kind Grace sympathized with Romney, and promised to reconcile her husband to her marriage with Van. In this, as in other things, she kept her word, and when Chauncey came up from the reception-room, an hour later, she broached the matter at once.

He attempted to argue the case with her, and schooled as he was in casuistry, he could not resist the logic of Grace, who, finding this to be so, threw down the gauntlets bravely, and said:

"This nobility of blood is all stuff and nonsense, and this nobility of dollars is worse than foolishness; it is wicked. It is an inducement to man to commit crime in order to gain money, where money is all potent, for it brings all sorts of nobility, and gold has the power to gild vices which, without its glitter, would repel and disgust."

"But one's family pride?" he interrupted.

She shook her head solemnly, and, looking him straight in the eyes:

"Romney Watterston's family pride has already cost you sufficient suffering; have you a desire for more?"

Her words came to his heart, and, remembering Elinor Gregg, and all those subsequent years of remorse, he said:

"It shall be as you wish. You can tell Romney I consent."

Grace did tell Romney early in the morning, and immediately after breakfast the latter communicated the glad intelligence to Van. As he was about to telephone to Capel Street, Romney "—you can come down here and spend the summer with us."

And in September I'll come out here and claim you; that is a bargain!"

It must have been, for, instead of answering her she put up her scarlet lips, and kissed her hand.

CHAPTER XX.
AFTER MANY YEARS.

A few nights after the events narrated in our previous chapters Romney was walking in the woods at Bolton Place.

Van had departed for his home in the east but a few hours before, and now she was dreaming and thinking, as girls will dream and think, of one they love.

There was no moon, but the stars shone and the lights of Bolton House winked brightly at her.

Romney was a brave girl; her early train-
The waves began to beat against the sides of the boat, with a noisy thud, and now the rush of the wind could be heard, and the straw-color in the sky grew brighter, lighting up the sail. The day was long, and giving to Grace a ghostly pallor. The sail partially screened Chauncey's face from the glare, but it was pale as death with fear. Over the stern, where the thing sentient, the boat skimmed over the waves, its prow directed at the lights of the Atlantic Islanders.

It was a race now between the boat and the storm, and it would have been hard to tell, in the first ten minutes of the contest, which would win. A match race—the stakes were life or death.

The roar of the coming tempest caused the sametners on the beach to scamper to their closets, and when the fall of Chauncey's Watson's boat could be seen distinctly through the blackness, there was only one woman on all that great curving shore to welcome it. She stood with her hand upon a boat, and peered eagerly into the gloom.

Now she shaded her vision with her hand, and the wind caught up her whiteness of silken hair and it fluttered like a white wing behind. Here was a regal figure, and the simple Swiss dress, still more lovely, may be, in her form, and outlined its statuesque beauty.

With a rush and a roar, like the crack of doom, the storm struck the little boat, and shook it as a man would shake a caged护肤品, drenching them to the skin. The mast strained and bent forward, and the sail, which Chauncey was doing his best to reef, flew into shreds, and dropped upon the tiny vessel almost under the white-capped breakers.

At this moment, the white woman on the beach sprang at the boat, and pushed her boat out, pulling away at the cars with a dash of an expert.

"I will save her," she muttered, "to show him that I can really do it."

She was too late, however. Ere she reached the boat it parted, and Grace, with the strength of desperation, clung to a portion of the sail, while Chauncey, stunned by the falling mast, grasped it firmly, and called out to Grace:

"Darling, hold fast for your life; there is some one coming to our aid." Then he became unconscious, through pain, and the next moment was swept up on the beach.

Grace was not strong enough to make a struggle with the winds and waves, and, just as the white woman reached her, she let her hold go, and sank beneath the angry waters.

The wave lifted, and cast her up clean, then cast her, and sent her running back instants. Then, casting her eyes heavenward, she leaped into the water. Her robe floated for a second, and then she disappeared into the seething depths.

Two hours after—when the storm had spent its force—the crowd collected on the beach, saw something white gleaming in the waters, and, before any one could stir, the bodies of Grace Watson and Elinor Gregg, locked tightly in each other's arms, were washed up on the beach.

Of all that throng Chauncey Watson alone understood the nature of that tragedy, and in the face of the cold moonlight falling upon himself and the dead, he prayed for God to pardon and call him home at once.

"Let us go out on, at length," we are already far out, and I'm afraid we are going to have a little blow before long," Grace glanced upward, and for the first time, noting the thousand stars, taking in the mass of dark, ominous clouds, were trailing their ebony robe low down over the waters, and that, away off to the south, the sky was rapidly assuming an ugly straw-color.

"Yes, Chauncey, let us get in as soon as possible," answered Grace, wrapping hershawl about her shoulders, turning quietly down, her eyes fixed steadily upon the distant horizon.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TEMPEST.

It was a sultry June night at Cape May, and the beach was thronged with visitors endeavoring to catch whatever little breeze floated in from the wilderness of waters, which stretched so far away to the south and west. The moon had been shining very brightly, but, by eight o'clock, a warm south wind sprung up, and the ruggedy, black clouds over its golden disk. Notwithstanding this obscured the moon's glare, there was a sort of twilight light, and those who had come out on the beach were one of the most delightful nights they had ever experienced there.

Van Taggart, in a calm, was sprawling among the pebbles, close to the water's edge, talking of the past and building bright phantasies for the future, while Grace and Chauncey were under a huge round bowlder and looked far out to sea.

What Grace was thinking about I can not say, but Chauncey was wondering if ever he would stand upon that familiar face with Elinor Gregg, again. He knew now she was not dead, and he knew, too, that the great marble pile in Delville graveyard was little else than a beautiful mockery—and he wondered, sitting there with the cool wash of the waves in his ears, if the moonlight was falling upon the monument at that instant, or was hidden in the gloom of night.

While he sat there in silence a merry laugh sounded—a laugh that was very familiar to his ear, none more so. I thought it was only the music of his imagination.

The white sail of a boat drifted by, within a few hundred feet. Van Taggart, looking at that familiar laugh died away, when the sail dipped out of view.

"Let us go out on the water," said Grace, all at once, and rising.

"Van," said she, "where are Van and, Romney, I wonder?"

"Oh, never mind them now. I prefer to sail along with you, to-night," said Grace.

He was disturbed by her speech, and they went in quest of a boat.

They found one readily enough, and a half hour after they were skimming over the dark water in a little gray boat, gleaming above their heads like the pinion of some aquatic bird.

They talked of their old courting days; of the pleasures they had known together; and still they sailed on and on, until the land appeared only like a black line behind them.

"Our boat," she said, "is almost home; we are already far out, and I'm afraid we are going to have a little blow before long."

Grace glanced upward, and for the first time, noting the thousand stars, taking in the mass of dark, ominous clouds, were trailing their ebony robe low down over the waters, and that, away off to the south, the sky was rapidly assuming an ugly straw-color.

"Yes, Chauncey, let us get in as soon as possible," answered Grace, wrapping her shawl about her shoulders, turning quietly down, her eyes fixed steadily upon the distant horizon.
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