

An American Story of Real Life

By Timothy Shay Arthur, 1855

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CHAPTER 1

“Are you going to Mr. Martin’s grand party tomorrow evening, Harry?” asked one young man of another, as they lounged in the bar-room of the Mansion House.

“Of course I am. Will you be there?”

“O, yes. I never miss being present on such occasions. But say, Harry, are you serious in that matter about pretty Bell?”

“Am I? What a question for you to ask! Certainly I am.”

“Do you think you can get around the old man, her father?”

“I can try. My family is as good as his. So you see we are even there. But I don’t think much about him, now. I must first get the right side of Bell.”

“How do you expect to manage that?”

“By talking sentiment, paying her the most flattering attentions possible, and being her most humble servant on all occasions.”

“She will have a splendid fortune.”

“There is no mistake about that!”

“How large do you think?”

“I have ascertained, pretty certainly, that old Martin is worth about nine hundred thousand dollars. He has two children. They will divide at his death over three hundred thousand dollars a piece, after the widow’s one-third has been taken out. And she, of course, is not going to live forever.”

“Of course not. And *you* would come in, if you had the daughter, for half of that sum also.”

“Exactly. Now isn’t there a glorious prospect before me?”

“There is, really. A golden opportunity, like this, must not pass, unimproved.”

“Nor will it.”

“How do you stand with Bell?”

“Pretty fair, I think. Last week I was at a party with her, and broke the ice. She is young, you know, and as *frank* and *innocent* as a child. I really felt my heart warm toward her.”

“Indeed! That was a phenomenon!” said the friend laughing.

“Wasn’t it! But don’t be alarmed. I’m not going to fall in love with her until I find the coast clear.”

“Don’t, if you please, or I shall be compelled to cut your acquaintance.”

“Never fear. A young man of my habits can’t afford to fall in love, unless he is sure of success.”

“And certain of gaining a fortune!”

“Of course. That was pre-supposed.”

“Are you going to buy that splendid pair of horses, belonging to Porter, which you drove out yesterday?”

“I wish to do so.”

“He asks twelve hundred dollars for them, I believe.”

“Yes. But I think would not refuse a thousand if laid down before him.”

“Why don’t you take them, Harry? They are worth all of that.”

“We sounded my old man about it. But he doesn’t look hopeful.”

“What a bore! I wonder if either of us will ever get our fingers upon some of our dads’ cash, to spend it as we please?”

“I hope so, one of these days. Won’t I put it in *circulation*, then!” snapping his fingers, and winking with a knowing look.

“What an annoyance it is,” said the companion of the one called Harry, “to have rich old fathers like ours, to tantalize us with the idea of wealth in prospective—while they give us but the mere trifle of two or three thousand a year to spend.”

“It is indeed! But what do you think? My old man told me, yesterday, that he thought it high time that I was beginning to *do something*.”

“Do something!”

“Yes.”

“What did he mean by that?”

“Open an office for the practice of law, I suppose. You know that, to please him, I studied law for a year or two—squeezed through an examination, and entered as a member of the Philadelphia bar.”

“Yes, I remember now; ha! ha! And he wanted you to put up your shingle, and come into association with the filth and off-scouring of this righteous city—pickpockets, thieves, blackguards, etc.”

“Yes, that was it.”

“But you had no notion of such a thing?”

“Not I! Why do I want to practice law, or do anything else! Hasn’t the old man plenty of money? Aren’t I born a gentleman? Let the *common herd* work, say I!”

“Ditto. Only about every tenth man that is born, as someone has said, can afford to do nothing. Thank fortune! I am one of the ten!”

“So is this child. It’s no use for the old man to talk to me. I’m not going to open an office and stick up my name, to be reduced in public estimation to a mere quibbling lawyer.”

“But wouldn’t it be policy for you to do so?”

“How?”

“To make fair weather with old Martin.”

“How would my opening an office make fair weather with him?”

“He is a merchant?”

“Yes.”

“And by industry and enterprise has quadrupled the fortune left him by his father.”

“So I have heard it said.”

“From persevering in industrious habits himself, he has, doubtless, come to have a high estimation of *industry* in others.”

“There may be something in that?”

“Naturally, then, he would be inclined to think favorably of a young man, pursuing, with apparent industry, some business or profession, while he would look unfavorably upon one whom he would call a *mere idler*.”

“I see the force of what you say; and wonder that the idea never presented itself to my mind. But don’t you think the fact of my being known as only a young lawyer, would lessen my estimation in the eyes of Bell?”

“I don’t know. Perhaps it might.”

“I fear so. She’s a young romantic thing, and the idea of a common worker—for all these lawyers and merchants, and the like, are as much workers as mere mechanics—might give her a prejudice against me.”

“There is force in that view.”

“And suppose some foreign earl, or count were to come along and take a notion to her—what chance would a mere lawyer have? None at all. O, no! I must still keep up *the gentleman*, until I’ve got her hooked—and then for scheming it over the old codger, her father!”

“I believe you are right, Harry. But come, let’s have a drink, and then for a ride out to Howell’s.”

The two young sprigs of American aristocracy, then turned to the bar, and each took a strong glass of brandy punch, preparatory to their ride into the country. Fifteen minutes afterward, they were dashing up Chestnut Street behind a pair of beautiful horses, owned by the friend of Harry, or *Henry Ware*—with feelings of contempt for the spiritless pedestrians who plodded along the sidewalks.

The reader needs no further description of their *characters*, than what they have themselves given, to be able to understand them fully. Both were sons of wealthy merchants, wrongly educated. The systematic labor by which their parents had risen into wealth and station in society—they despised as something degrading. *Idle pleasure* seemed to them the only worthy object of pursuit. Everything else was beneath the station and dignity of *true gentlemen*. Spendthrifts—the liberal supplies of money furnished them with a false liberality by their fathers, were altogether insufficient to meet their growing and extravagant wants. Hence, the means of obtaining more inexhaustible and independent supplies, soon formed part of their thoughts.

They had become *men*, and, as men, were annoyed by what they esteemed the *niggardly parental offerings*. To such, marriage presents the only way to obtain the large amount of money called for by *extravagant habits* and *unsatisfied desires*. And to thoughts of marriage, their minds, especially that of Henry Ware, turned; and he was about entering, as has been seen, with no small degree of tact and earnestness, upon the business he had laid out as necessary to be done—it is said, necessary to be done, for only in a business light did young Ware view the matter. If he had been in possession of as much money as he wanted—he would have thought of a wife about the *last* thing. With such an *encumbrance*, he would have been very far from burdening himself.

CHAPTER 2.

“How does that look, Fanny?” asked Bell Martin, turning her happy face toward her sister, and directing attention to a beautiful head-dress that a modest-looking, plainly attired girl, about her own age, had been arranging for her.

“Very pretty indeed, sister; Mary is always tasty in her devices and arrangements.”

“Isn’t she? We must try and find you a nice husband, Mary.”

Mary smiled quietly, but made no reply. Her station did not permit her to return jests—and knowing this, she never attempted to do so. But still, she had her own thoughts, as well as they.”

“I think that white rose is a little too much concealed, Mary, don’t you?” remarked Bell, after having surveyed herself for some time in the mirror.

“Perhaps it is,” replied Mary, lifting her hand to re-adjust the flower.

“But stop, Mary,” interposed the light-hearted girl, taking hold of her hand before she had touched the rose. “That ‘perhaps’ was rather coldly said. You don’t really think the flower too much hidden—do you?”

“No, I do not, or else I would have brought it out more.”

“Then I won’t have it touched, for I never opposed my taste to yours yet, that you were not in the right,” Bell replied, laughing.

“You are very particular this evening, sister,” remarked Fanny.

“Am I? Well I have my reason for it.”

“Ah! What is it?”

“I’m going to captivate young Harry Ware.”

“Indeed!”

“Yes. I intend carrying the citadel of his heart by storm.”

“Take care that you do not lose your own in the contest!”

“Oh, never fear but that I’ll keep fast hold of mine, at least till I see something to gain by a surrender.”

“Harry is certainly a very captivating young man. Don’t you think so, Mary?”

Directly appealed to, although in a laughing mood, Mary replied with the frankness of a sincere heart,

“I have not had an opportunity of observing him very closely; but the little I have seen of him, has not biased me a great deal in his favor.”

“Hasn’t it, indeed! Miss Demure?”

“It has not, Bell; but no doubt I can judge a flower for a young lady of your position in society, much better than I can a lover.”

“Perhaps so. But why don’t you like Harry Ware, Mary?”

“Did I say that I did not like him?”

“No. But you said you were not biased in his favor.”

“That is true.”

“Then why are you not biased in his favor?”

“I am sure I don’t know. But I feel as if I wouldn’t like to see you as the wife of Mr. Ware.”

The voice of the maiden trembled slightly as she said this, and her tones had in them something of tenderness; for she loved Bell Martin and her sister—although standing to them only in the relation of one that served—almost as purely as if they were of her own kindred.

“His wife, Mary! How strangely you talk! No one said anything about becoming his wife. O, dear! That’s another matter, altogether.”

“It’s the next thing that follows the winning and losing of hearts, though, I believe,” replied Mary, the color on her cheek deepening.

“Is it, Mary?” Oh! How the girl talks! And see how she is blushing, Fanny! As I have now I come to think of it, I do believe she has lost her heart already. I thought *Mr. Lane*, Pa’s head clerk, came here pretty often of late.”

This speech had the effect to make poor Mary’s face as red as scarlet.

“There! See that! See that, Fanny! Just look at her face! Now, who would have suspected our modest, quiet Mary?”

“The next thing that follows the losing and winning of hearts, is marriage, I believe, aren’t it, Mary?” said Fanny, with mock seriousness.

“O, of course it is. How soon is the wedding to take place? It shall be in this very house, for you are a good girl, Mary, and we all love you,” Bell added, half laughing, half serious.

The momentary confusion that this unexpected sally wrought in the mind of Mary, soon subsided, and she said, in her quiet way—

“You have anticipated what I would have told you tomorrow.”

“So it’s all true, Mary!” ejaculated Bell, almost springing upon the floor with delight. Then turning quickly, and grasping the hand of the young girl, she said, in a serious voice—

“None will rejoice more than Fanny and myself at your good fortune, Mary. Mr. Lane, I have always heard spoken of by Pa in the highest terms, and I am sure he will make you a good husband. But we shall be very sorry to lose you. Indeed, I do not know what we will do when you are gone!”

“You can still feel kindly toward me. I ask but that return for the deep interest my heart does, and always must take in you,” Mary said, looking up into the face of the sisters, her eyes ready to gush with tears. “We have been together as little children, sharing each other’s pleasures. The same tender care that was over you—has been over me. And notwithstanding, as we sprang up toward womanhood, our relations to each other became necessarily changed, I have not loved you less. Forgive me for saying, that I have loved you as sisters—I could not help it.”

The tears that had trembled beneath her dark lashes, now rolled over the maiden’s cheek.

“We will love you as a sister!” was the instant response of the affectionate Bell, drawing her arm around the waist of Mary. Our stations in life are different. We cannot mingle in society together. But that need not—that cannot disturb the sisterly regard we must feel for you. You are worthy of it all, Mary.”

A deep silence followed—a silence in which tender emotions were welling up from each gentle and affectionate bosom. As they had never felt it before, did Bell and Fanny feel the delight of being loved fervently by a pure and honest heart—even though it beat in the bosom of one all unknown to, and all unappreciated by, the world.

“But come, Bell,” said Fanny, breaking in upon that deep pause, “time presses.”

“So it does. But I will soon be ready. Here, Mary, arrange this scarf for me, if you please. There, that will do. And now don’t you think thank I look charming?”

“Very, only a little—pardon me—*overdressed*.”

“That’s according to *your* taste, Mary.”

“Of course. My taste inclines to the *simple*.”

“It’s a very *pure* taste, I know, but hardly gives attractions enough for one in my station. Young ladies who move in our circle, you know, dress with a *rich display*, sometimes.”

“I know they do. But they *hide*, it seems to me, instead of *bringing out*, their loveliness.”

“Perhaps they do. Still, to quote a homely adage— ‘Fine feathers make fine birds.’”

Mary shook her head, and smiled a reproof, as she said—

“It’s no use for me to argue with you, Bell, for while you give up your point, virtually, in argument—you stick to it in practice.”

“No, Mary, I don’t think it is. I can admire the *beauty of simplicity* in others—you for instance—but I like a little finery for myself. But hark! there’s the bell. Our company are beginning to come, and we must be down to receive them.”

Among the first who came, were Henry Ware and his two sisters, with whom Bell and Fanny were on terms of intimacy. The young man, as has been seen, had resolved on making a conquest; he, therefore, had dressed himself with studied care, so as to bring out into good effect, his really attractive person.

There was something in the tone of his voice and the expression of his face, when he saluted Bell, already biased in his favor, that made her heart quicken its pulsations, and send the blood in warmer currents to her cheek. Henry Ware did not fail to observe the slight glow that mantled her young and innocent face, nor the pleasure that sparkled in her eye. They strengthened his hope of success.

“She is mine, in spite of the devil!” was the elegant and manly expression of his thoughts, whispered to himself, as he turned from her to address her sister.

Whenever, without attraction particular observation, he could get by her side during the evening, he was sure to be there; and all his conversation was skillfully managed, so as to excite in her mind, tender emotions.

Attached to Mr. Martin’s elegant residence, was a large garden, richly adorned with plants of the rarest kinds. It was laid off in beautifully arranged walks, with arbors and alcoves, statuary and every tasteful device that could please the eye. Always, during an evening entertainment in pleasant weather, it was brilliantly illuminated with variegated lamps, ingeniously arranged into elegant and striking figures.

Into this, a portion of the company might always be found, strolling about, thus dividing the allurements of the social circle, with the calmer and more elevating delights of nature.

“Come, Bell, suppose we take a little walk in the garden—the air of these rooms is becoming oppressive,” said Ware to the gentle girl who leaned upon his arm. “We have danced and sang, and mingled pleasantly in the mirthful circle here for some two hours. A change to the *quiet scene* outside, will be very pleasant.”

“It certainly will,” replied Bell, making an involuntary movement toward the door.

The two then retired from the brilliantly lighted saloon and mirthful company, and entered the garden. The air was mild, and balmy from the perfume rising from a thousand odoriferous flowers. The moon and stars looked down from a sky of unusual brilliancy, and shed their soft light, like a veil of silver over all things.

“Beautiful! beautiful!” ejaculated Bell, as she perceived and felt the loveliness of the scene.

“It is, indeed, very beautiful!” replied her companion, uttering a sentiment he scarcely felt. His mind was too selfishly interested in securing the affections of the maiden, to care anything about a lovely moonlight scene, except so far as it might tend to aid in the accomplishment of his purpose. He could, therefore, perceive the beauty of external nature, but not feel it.

Slowly, they took their way down one of the most retired alleys of the garden. Bell, whose feelings the scene around had almost instantly softened into tenderness, leaned with an air of affectionate confidence upon the arm of Ware, and listened to his *artful* and *insinuating* words, that, while they spoke not of his own thoughts and feelings, were fraught with just the sentiments calculate to awaken the heart of one so young, and by nature so affectionate, as the innocent maiden by his side.

“Let us rest here for awhile, and enjoy the calm delight of this lovely season,” the young man said, after having strayed through the garden for some ten to fifteen minutes, pausing as he did so, before an arbor thickly shaded by a vine, upon which the yet unripe clusters hung in luxuriant profusion.

“How much I enjoy a scene like this,” he remarked, after they were seated, thus alone. “It has in it something so purifying and elevating to the spirit. Something that lifts us above the base ideas and groveling affections of this sordid world. It is under the influence of an hour like this, that we feel ourselves to be immortal.”

“Do you remember the lines of ‘*On a Star*’?” asked Bell, after a brief silence.

“I do not.”

“That brilliant star, yonder, has recalled the touching effusion to my mind.”

“Can you repeat the lines to which you allude?”

“O yes. For I have thought of them hundreds of times!”

“Then recite them, Bell.”

The maiden complied, and recited, in a low voice, full of pathos, the following lines:

“Beautiful star, that are wandering through
The midnight ocean’s waves of blue!
I have watched since your first pale ray
Rose on the farewell of summer’s day.
From your first sweet shine in the twilight hour.
To your present blaze of beauty and power!
Would I could read my destiny,
Lovely and glorious star, in thee!
Yet why should I wish?—I know too well
What your tablet of light would tell!
What, O, what, could I read there
But the depths of love’s despair—
Blighted feelings, like leaves that fall
The first from April’s coronal—
Hopes, like meteors, that shine and depart
An early grave and a broken heart!”

“A beautiful beginning, but a sad ending, Bell. Why should such poetry be a favorite with you? But that brilliant star, overhead, if the star of your destiny, would reveal a brighter page.”

“I hope so. Still, I have always loved those lines, and have repeated them over, almost involuntarily, a hundred times, until my feelings have become imbued with their sadness. Heaven grant that they be not prophetic of wrecked hopes and a broken heart for me.”

Bell spoke with emotion—for, suddenly, there came over her heart a *chilling fear*, that seemed like a prophetic warning.

“How strange that you should speak thus!” said her companion, in surprise. “You, than whom no one has a brighter prospect—you, every footstep of whose way has, thus far, been upon flowers.”

“It is strange that I should feel thus. But it is only when I repeat those verses, that a *shadow* falls upon my heart.”

“Then I would never repeat them again; for they mock you with *idle fears*.”

“I believe they do,” replied Bell, rallying herself with an effort.

“How exquisitely falls that music upon the ear, softened by distance,” remarked Ware, after another pause. “It comes like the swelling and subsiding tones of the wind-touched harp.”

“Music never came to me with such sweetness before,” said the maiden, in innocence and simplicity. “It seems as if I could listen to it forever.”

“I feel the same subdued and tender impressions,” replied the young man, in a low, soft tone.

“But come,” he added, after a brief silence, “we will be missed.”

“True—true! I had forgotten, under the sweet influence of the hour, that others are to be thought of and regarded.”

The two then returned, slowly, arm in arm entered the house, and rejoined the mirthful groups within.

It was past two o’clock, when the last visitor departed. Mary, who had superintended the arrangements of the party, after all were gone and a few directions had been given to the servants, went up to the room of Bell and Fanny to assist in undressing them. She found the former seated by a window in a musing attitude, looking out upon the brilliant sky.

“Come, Mary, you must attend to me first, for Bell is way up among the stars, and won’t be down again for half an hour.”

Mary smiled at this pleasant sally, but Bell did not seem to hear it.

“There, Mary, you can go to star-gazing with Bell if you choose—I’m going to court a few pleasant dreams!” she added, springing lightly into bed. In a few minutes she was fast asleep.

Mary turned, and stood looking for some moments at Bell, who was still lost in deep abstraction. Then going up to her, she laid her hand gently on her arm, and said—

“Shall I assist you to undress?”

“If you please, Mary,” replied Bell, looking up with a deep sigh, and then submitting to Mary’s hands in silence. Her rich attire was soon changed for garments of snowy whiteness, and in these she again took her place by the window, and lifted her young face once more to the sky that was sparkling in beauty and brightness.

As Mary turned to leave the chamber, she felt a strong reluctance to do so. For a few moments she hesitated, and then going back, she said in a respectful tone—

“You do not seem like yourself tonight, Bell.”

The maiden roused herself again at this, and after looking into Mary’s face for an instant or two, said—

“Come, and sit down here, Mary.”

Mary complied in silence.

“I am not myself tonight. In that you say truly. But what ails me, I cannot tell; I have never felt the influence of a scene like this as I do now. It seems as if I could sit and gaze forever upon the sky and its myriads of beautiful stars. Let me repeat to you some verses of that exquisite poetess. They describe this hour and this scene most beautifully.

“Look up,
Toward the beautiful heaven! the fair moon
Is shining timidly, like a young queen,
Who fears to claim her full authority;
The stars shine in her presence; o’er the sky
A few light clouds are wandering, like the fear
That even happy love must know the air
Is full of perfume and most musical.
Although no other sounds are on the gale
Than the soft falling of the mountain rill
Or the waving of the leaves.”

“Is that not appropriate and beautiful?”

“Very. But it is too late now to be gazing at the moon and stars, and repeating poetry, Bell. Come, get into bed and go to sleep. A good night’s repose will calm down your over excited feelings. Come! or I shall really think that in the effort to captivate the heart of Henry Ware—you have lost your own!”

Thus rallied, Bell came more to herself, and after having been urged again by Mary, retired to her bed. It was long, however, before she sank into slumber, and that was full of the dreams of a maiden’s first, pure, ardent love for one she fondly invests with a thousand perfections.

CHAPTER 3.

“Ah! Good morning, Harry! Good morning!”

“Good morning, Tom. I’m glad to see you! How are you, my boy? How are you?” grasping the hand that was extended, and shaking it long and heartily.

“Really, Harry, you seem to be on the mountaintop this morning.”

“And so I am. Confound it, old fellow! I’m sure of success!”

“So I would suspect, after seeing the peculiar manner in which *Bell* leaned on your arm, last night.”

“You observed it, then, did you?”

“O, of course.”

“And I felt it, Tom—which was a thousand times better! She’s mine as sure as fate! knew that I would prove irresistible, if I only laid myself out for it. I’m not the commonest looking fellow that walks Chestnut Street—am I?”

“No, not by a dozen. But, say, Harry, did you talk love to her?”

“O, no! only poetry and sentiment. Last night I spent most of the time in reading her *character*, which I found I could do as readily as I can read a book.”

“Well, how were you pleased with it?”

“Admirably, of course!”

“She’ll make just the *wife* you want!”

“The *what*?”

“The *wife*.”

“Ha! I’m not looking out for a wife.”

“For what, then?”

“You’re simple, Tom! For a *fortune*, of course. Have you so soon forgotten our conversation of yesterday? As to the *wife* part, no doubt that will be well enough. Still, I’m a little afraid.”

“Of what?”

“Afraid that she will love me *too* well.”

“Love you too well?”

“Yes! There rests my only fear. But that’s her problem—not mine.”

“I don’t see any particular objection to her loving you as hard as she pleases.”

“You’re dull this morning, Tom. I would like a wife, if I must have one—an *inevitable necessity*, I believe, since my old man is so close with his purse-strings—who would mind her own business, and let me mind mine. She might have her own life if she chose, and dash it in any kind of style that pleased her. Of course, I would want the same privilege. Now, from what I can see of *Bell*, she’s not exactly that kind of a person. She would want her husband *tied to her apron strings* all the while. Would want to be kissed twenty times a day, and all that silly nonsense. Or else there would be a constant succession of April showers. Do you understand now?”

“Clearly! But that’s a *risk* you will have to run. A *consequence* that must be endured, if it can’t be helped. Money will cover a multitude of sins and imperfections.”

“You’re right, Tom! and if she chooses to indulge in all that sentimental kind of nonsense, she must take the consequence. For certain it is, I can’t stomach it—and will not. I’ll leave her in freedom to come in when she pleases, go out when she pleases, and do what she pleases; and, as I want nothing but what is fair, shall take the same privilege myself.”

“Precisely! You seem to be pretty sure of her, however?”

“So I am. I, made an impression last night, that is not going to be effaced.”

“But suppose the old man win not consent?”

“Did you never hear of a *runaway match*, Tom?”

“O, yes,” laughingly.

“Then you’ll hear of another, in that case. Do you understand?”

“Perfectly! You are a rare fellow, Harry.”

“Aren’t I! Still, I must avoid that last necessity, if possible. It might stand in the way of my fingering the old fellow’s cash as soon as I wish.”

“You’d better be looking out for an *office* then, hadn’t you?”

“Yes, I suppose I had. Confound the necessity! What fools some of these old codgers are! A man is nothing in their eyes, unless he is a worker. Pah!”

“What a figure you will cut, sitting with solemn importance in your office, surrounded with books, and a tin sign on your window—*Henry Ware, Attorney at Law* Ha! ha! ha?”

“Do hush, Tom! or I shall get sick!”

"It'll have to be done, though. I wonder who will be your first client?"

"Some loafer, up for assault and battery, I suppose."

"As likely as not. But come, I have an engagement at twelve, and it is almost that time now."

"Let us drink first," replied Harry, and turning to the bar-keeper—for they had met, as usual, in a *tavern*—ordered some brandy. The two *worthies* then drank success to Harry's enterprise, and parted.

It was, probably, an hour after, that young Ware entered his father's counting-room, and after glancing over the newspapers, sought an opportunity to converse with the old gentleman.

"I've been thinking a good deal about what you suggested a few days ago, father," he said, with a serious air.

"Well, to what conclusion have you come?" was the reply, in a grave tone.

"That you are right. A young man of my age ought not to be spending his *time* so idly as I am now doing."

"You have concluded to open an *office*, then?"

"I have. And if you will furnish me with the necessary books, I will put myself down to business at once."

"That is right, Henry," said Mr. Ware, in a cheerful tone, his face suddenly brightening. "Your repugnance to any kind of business, has been to me a source of great anxiety. *Idle pleasure-taking*, let me assure you, Henry, is the poorest possible way in which to seek for real happiness. In that path it never has, and never will be found."

"I believe you are right," replied the son, with hypocritical gravity. "I am sure, that mere pleasure-taking, as you term it, has never given true satisfaction to the mind."

"And never will, rest assured, if you pursue that course. Most truly do I rejoice to find a better perception of things dawning upon your mind. If you will only enter upon your profession with application, energy, and industry—you must rise into eminence, for you have, naturally, a mind that is active, and comprehensive in its grasp. Or, if you would prefer entering into business with me, the way is open and a quicker road to independence, before you. Here is capital and every facility that may be needed."

"I think I should prefer *law*," replied the son, after musing for an instant or two. "It offers a better field for the exercise of my talents."

"So it does. Let it be law, then. I am satisfied. As soon as you meet with an office to suit you, let me know, and I will have it fitted up handsomely. In the mean time, furnish me with a list of such books as you want, and they shall be ready."

"I will hand you a list tomorrow," replied Henry.

After half an hour's further conference, which ended in the transference of a check to the young man for two hundred dollars, he left the counting room. A few hours after, he met his crony, Tom, or *Thomas Handy*.

"Well, Tom, I've talked to the old man about that law office," was his salutation.

"You are quick on the trigger? How was he pleased?"

"Tickled to death, of course! He thinks that I will be second to none at the bar, if I only devote myself to the profession with untiring zeal and industry."

"Indeed! That's flattering!"

"Untiring zeal and industry! Oh, dear! That would be a catastrophe, as old *What-do-you-call-him* says."

"He thought you were in solemn earnest, then?"

"Of course. And gave me some capital and good advice; though, for the soul of me, I can't recollect a word of it now."

"No consequence."

"But I will tell you what I do recollect"

"Well!"

"How I came over him too nicely for a couple of hundred."

"Indeed!"

"It's a fact. I talked, and talked, until I got him in a capital good humor, and then came down upon him for a check. He was completely cornered, and could not say no. So here's the hundred I borrowed from you last week, and much obliged to you. The other hundred will pay off a small debt or two, and leave me a little spending money. My *stock* was getting rather low."

While Henry Ware was thus, in cold, unprincipled heartlessness, laying his plans for securing the hand of a pure-minded, intelligent, affectionate girl—Bell's heart was trembling with love's first and tenderest emotions. The expression of his face, as he looked into hers, the tones of his voice, if not the words he had uttered—all told her that he had awakened an interest in his feelings; and even in many a remembered word, could she trace a meaning that plainly spoke of love. She was, of course, in a dreamy, abstracted mood.

Mr. Martin, whose ardent affection for his children, made him observant of them, had noticed on the preceding evening, that young Ware was over attentive to Bell. He was not pleased to see this, for he understood the young man's *character* pretty thoroughly. He did not suppose these attentions had anything serious in them. Still, a fear that such might be the case, was naturally awakened. Once during the evening he had missed them for some time, and was just on the eve of strolling out into the garden to see if they were lingering there, when they came in, and separating from each other,

mingled generally with the company. He could not but notice, however, that Bell's eye wandered too frequently toward the young man, with a look of interest. This troubled him for the moment—but he soon dismissed it as an idle fear.

Several times during the next day, as opportunity for observation presented itself, he could not but observe that Bell had a look of *quiet abstraction* which was unusual to her. This recalled to his mind the preceding evening, and the feeling of uneasiness that was then experienced returned.

"Have you noticed Bell particularly today?" he inquired of her mother, as they sat alone that evening.

"I have not. Why do you ask?"

"It seems to me that she is not altogether in as good spirits as usual."

"Now that you mention it, I do remember that she has appeared rather dull. Perhaps it is from fatigue. You know she danced a good deal last night, and that it was late before any of us got to bed."

"Very true. But still, I have thought that there might possibly be another reason."

"What other reason could there be?"

"Didn't you observe that young *Ware* was over attentive to her last night?"

"Young *Henry Ware*?"

"Yes."

"No, I did not."

"Well, he was a good deal more so, than pleased me."

"Henry Ware! Why, he's not out of his teens yet, is he?"

"Yes he is, and thinks himself to be of no little degree of importance. I never was much prepossessed in his favor, however, though I esteem his father very highly, as a man of *sterling principles*. Pity that his son did not more resemble him."

"I would not like Henry Ware to become attached to Bell. He is not the man that pleases my fancy."

"Nor mine either. Indeed, I would esteem it a *calamity* to our family, for one of my daughters to have her affections called out by a young man who possesses no more claims to good character than he."

"And yet what are we to do?" said the mother, in a serious tone, "We cannot deny him our house, nor can we refuse to let Bell attend parties where we know he will be present."

"All too true," replied Mr. Martin. "Our families are on terms of intimacy, and his father is one of my oldest and firmest friends. Still, regard for old Mr. Ware ought not to be a sufficient reason why I should *sacrifice my daughter to his worthless son*."

"That is very true. And yet no real danger may exist. The young man may never have had a serious thought of marriage—or a single regard, beyond that of mere friendship for Bell."

"That may be—but I fear it is otherwise. They were together a great deal last evening, and today Bell is evidently changed, and more pensive and thoughtful than usual."

"You really alarm me!" replied Mrs. Martin, in a voice of concern.

"There is cause of serious alarm; and that is why I have spoken on the subject," rejoined her husband. "Now is the point of time in our daughters' histories, when a false step may wreck their hopes forever. How many, alas! how many sweet girls have we seen in the last twenty years, with hearts as pure and innocent, and hopes as brilliant as those of our own dear children, thrown down from the pinnacle of happiness, to hopeless misery, by marriage. You remember Anne Milford—one of the gentlest and loveliest of her gender; how her affections were won by a man who has not only dragged her down, down, down, into abject poverty—but who never could and never did return a tenth of the deep love she lavished upon him. I met her in the street today. Her pale, sad face, with its dreamy expression, made my heart ache."

"But even if young Ware should have made an impression on Bell's mind—and even if it were to end in marriage, which Heaven forbid! she can never be reduced to poverty, as poor Anne has been."

"There is no guaranty for that, in such a man as the son of Mr. Ware."

"Why not?"

"He will never *earn* a dollar, unless driven to it by *necessity*; and even then, the little that he would make, would be of no account."

"But both his father and you are rich."

"Riches, says the good Book, take to themselves wings and fly away, Fanny."

"True, but—"

"Your observation and my own," said Mr. Martin, interrupting his wife, "prove that the wealth, which is accumulated by a man in this country, rarely reaches his grand-children. In four cases out of five, it is all gone in a few years after his death—*squandered* by *improvident children*, who, never having earned a dollar—have no idea of the value of money. Henry Ware is just the man to *squander*, with a rapidity four-fold greater than his father ever accumulated. I will pass away in a brief period, and so will that excellent old man, his father; and then, if Bell should be his wife, it will take only a few years to bring them down to poverty and obscurity. It makes my heart sick, Fanny, to think of it. I would a hundred

times rather see her the wife of Mr. Lane, than of that young spendthrift. He, though poor now, is a man of *principle*, and has habits of attention to business. He must rise in the world—while Ware will as certainly sink. In this country, all men, sooner or later, find their *level*. True *merit*, united with *persevering industry*, must rise into positions of influence and wealth—while *idleness* and *extravagance* must as inevitably sink into obscurity and dependence.

“Of course. Bell could not fancy him.”

“No, nor he, Bell, I suppose. They do not now stand upon the same level; and where there is not true equality—there cannot be a true reciprocal affection. But do you know that *Mr. Lane* has taken a fancy to our Mary?”

“Yes, I learned it for the first time this morning.”

“And it delighted you, of course?”

“It did. Mary is one of the best of girls, and I have always felt strongly attached to her. To know that she is going to do so well, gives me a sincere pleasure—though I shall be sorry indeed to lose her.”

“Mr. Lane mentioned it to me today, and I said, ‘take her with all my heart! I believe you are worthy of each other.’ How glad I shall feel if I can only say the same, when the hands of my *daughters* are asked. But young ladies, occupying their position in society, are surrounded with *dangers* on every hand, and it is little less than a miracle if they escape. *Idle fortune-hunters* are ever on the alert with insidious arts, to ensnare their naive affections, and are, alas! too often successful.”

“May such a one never be successful in winning the love of either of my children!”

“Amen!” was the heartfelt response of Mr. Martin.

CHAPTER 4.

It was about a week after the conversations recorded in the last chapter occurred, that a party was given by Mr. and Mrs. Ware. The *Martins* were present. The father of Bell had his eye upon her with a careful interest. His fears were soon awakened anew, for Henry got by her side early in the evening, and held his place there with a steadiness that Mr. Martin felt augured no good. As for Bell, she was in the finest spirits imaginable.

“How is *Henry* doing now?” asked Mr. Martin of Mr. Ware, as the two sat conversing familiarly.

“I am glad to say that there has been, what I esteem, a great change in him of late,” replied the father, with a pleased manner.

“Ah, indeed! I am really gratified to hear it.”

“You are aware, that he has, all along, evinced no inclination to settle himself down to any business?”

“Yes, I have observed as much.”

“I believe he has seen his folly, for he has taken an office with a determination to do something.”

“He studied law, I believe?”

“Yes—and passed an excellent examination, more than a year ago.”

“Truly, what you say is gratifying. Like too many of the sons of our wealthy men, Henry, I suppose, has not been able to see the necessity of applying himself to any business.”

“That has been his error.”

“And a very *fatal* one it is, Mr. Ware. Until our young men feel that there is just the same necessity for *them* to enter into and attend to business with persevering industry, as there was for their fathers—there will be no guaranty for their retaining the positions to which they have been elevated. Young men of humble origin and no financial resources, will gradually rise up and take the places which they have proved unworthy to fill.”

“So I have told Henry many and many a time. But, until now, he has never felt the *force* of what I said.”

“You must feel greatly encouraged for him?”

“No one can tell how much. He is my only son—to see him running a round of *idleness*, and, I might say, *dissipation*—has pained me more than I can tell. But he has suddenly paused, and reflected. I know not *why*—I do not ask why. The fact is all that concerns me.”

“You have confidence in the permanency of his good resolutions?”

“I do not permit myself to doubt, Mr. Martin. I look only to the happy results that must follow the change, and look with feelings of pride as well as pleasure. He is a young man of fine mind, and must soon begin to take a place in his profession that will flatter his pride, and spur him onward to higher attainments. This is my calculation—and I believe I am right.”

“Most earnestly do I hope that this may be the result.”

How far the anticipations of the father were in the way of being realized, the reader will be able to judge by the following conversation, which took place at Harry’s new office, with his particular friend and associate, Tom Handy. One of the appendages to this office was an upper room, neatly furnished. In this the two young men were seated, their feet upon a table, on which were glasses and wine in coolers, filling the room with clouds of smoke from two cigars.

“This opening an *office* is not such a bad idea, after all, is it, Tom?” said young Ware, with a knowing leer, as he slowly drew his cigar from his mouth, and then watched the wreaths of smoke, that he leisurely puffed out, curling up toward the ceiling and gradually dissolving in air.

“No, indeed—it’s a capital one,” replied his crony, lazily taking his cigar from his teeth, and allowing the smoke, in turn, to float in thick clouds about his head. “No doubt your old man thinks you now deeply immersed in the mysteries of legal reports, or some such interesting employment. Or, perhaps he is at this very time imagining that you are engaged with a client, who, conscious of your superior legal knowledge, has chosen you to represent him in some cause of vast importance—”

“And delighting himself, in imagination, with the sensation my maiden speech will produce!”

“Suppose a case were really offered you?”

“I would *decline* it, of course. I’m not going to make a fool of myself in that courtroom, I know. What do I know of law?”

“Not much, I would imagine.”

“About as much as a dog does of Latin!”

“And that is as much as you ever intend to know?”

“Precisely. I have but one case on hand, and that’s the only one I ever intend to have. As far as that is concerned, I believe I am fully ready to maintain my position against any opponent who may present himself.”

“What case is that, pray?”

“My case in the *court of love*.”

“True. I had forgotten.”

“It required an office, you know, to give me importance, and thus ensure success. When that suit is gained, good-bye to law office and library! They may float in the Schuylkill River for anything I care.”

“Everything went off to a charm last night, I believe?”

“O yes, so far as Bell was concerned. But I can’t say that I liked the way old Martin and his wife eyed me, every now and then. They’re a little *suspicious*, I believe, of my design.”

“You’ll have to fight shy for awhile.”

“Yes, I will; at least until I can get into the old folks good graces.”

“How will you manage that!”

“I’ve been *scheming* over a plan all the morning.”

“Well, have you hit upon anything?”

“Yes—and I think it will do.”

“What is it?”

“You know my way to this office, from home, is right by old Martin’s counting-room?”

“Yes.”

“I’m going to get a *green briefcase* made, of pretty liberal capacity, and carry it backward and forward in my hand, once or twice a day, with an air of *great business importance*.”

“You must manage, occasionally, to let the end of a document, plentifully supplied with red tape and big seals, protrude from it, as if you had thrust in your papers hurriedly.”

“That’s a capital suggestion, Tom, and I shall be sure to adopt it. Don’t you think it will have a good effect?”

“It can do no harm, at least.”

“So I think—and may do good. As for Bell, she’s safe. I could see that she was dull, except when with me, last night—and then she was as lively as a cricket.”

“I noticed that, too—and I noticed more.”

“What was that?”

“That she was a sweet, interesting girl—and decidedly the prettiest one in the room.”

“Do you think so?”

“I really do. It would be no sin for you to love her in downright earnest, Harry.”

“So I thought last night. But I can’t do that. I would soon get sick of it, and it would only spoil her, into the bargain.”

“Fanny looked a very picture of loveliness, also.”

“I didn’t take much notice of her.”

“I did then.”

“Suppose you spruce up to her, Tom? She will have wealth, of course, equal to Bell.”

“So I thought. But I can’t marry yet, unless *compelled* to do so, which I’m afraid will be the case—as my old man seems inclined to cut off, instead of increasing, supplies.”

“Indeed! That’s too bad. How has it happened?”

“He says that he does not feel willing to support me in what he calls, *idleness*, any longer—and that if I will not go into his store and go to work, he will turn me loose upon the world, to shift for myself.”

“The old rascal! But pardon me, Tom! I could not but feel *indignant* at such downright *unnatural* conduct.”

“No offence, Harry. Though I must say, you indulged in great plainness of speech.”

“What are you going to do?”

“Heaven alone knows, for I don’t.”

“You do not intend going into the store, of course?”

“Hardly.”

“You’d better speak quick for *Fanny*, before somebody else steps in. I would like to have you for a brother-in-law, above all things.”

“Thank you, Harry! But I must take a little time to consider the matter. The truth is, I don’t want a *wife*—if I can keep *free*. But, if I must take one, I see no particular objection to Fan.”

Henry Ware was in earnest in reference to the green briefcase, which he procured and regularly carried to and fro, between his office and home, at least once every day. Two or three books were of course thrown into it—and, acting upon his friend Tom’s suggestion, he now and then managed to let the end of a thick roll of paper, tied with red tape, peep carelessly out. The effect of this upon the mind of Mr. Martin, he had truly calculated.

The old gentleman, who now had good reason for observing him, did not fail to notice the regularity with which Henry went by on his way to his office, and particularly was his eye caught by the green, well-filled briefcase. All this caused him to regard the young man less unfavorably.

“Who came in just now?” he asked of his wife one evening about two weeks after Harry had begun to carry his green briefcase. “Someone rang the bell.”

“It’s Henry Ware and his sisters, I believe.”

“Henry Ware!”

“Yes.”

“He was here with his sisters one evening last week, was he not?”

“Yes.”

“Next week, I suppose, he will come alone.”

“Do you really think he is seriously inclined toward Bell?” the mother asked.

“I’m afraid so, Fanny; and what is more, I’m afraid that Bell is becoming seriously inclined toward him. Several times I have mentioned his name on purpose, to see its effect upon her, and the color has instantly risen to her cheek.”

“I have noticed the same thing myself,” replied the mother with much concern, in her voice. “What is to be done if she should really love him, and he should make an offer for her hand?”

“We shall, in that case, have to let them marry, I suppose, and take their chance,” remarked the father in rather a gloomy tone.

“Surely not! It would be *cruel* in us to let such a *sacrifice* take place.”

“But we could not help it, Fanny. When a young thing like Bell once gets fairly in love, no *reason* can reach her. All opposition by us must be finally overcome. My observation convinces me, that the best way is to *let matters take their course*, and then try and make the best of everything.”

“I cannot, indeed I cannot think of consenting to such a marriage, which must inevitably end in heart breaking misery to our child!” said the mother, the tears starting to her eyes.

“It will not be so bad as that. I begin to hope,” replied Mr. Martin, encouragingly. “You know what Mr. Ware told me about the *change* that had taken place in his son?”

“But I have *no confidence* in it.”

“Nor had I, at first. But I really now think that the young man may be in earnest. He passes my store regularly every day to his office, and is no doubt already getting into business, for, of late, he has his briefcase of books and papers with him every morning and afternoon, and begins to have quite a thoughtful air. He has *mind* enough, and if he only turn himself industriously to the profession he has chosen, he must rise, inevitably, to distinction. Perhaps the *chord of ambition* may have already been touched. If so, he is safe.”

The mother did not fall so readily into this idea. Still, it relieved her mind a good deal; and both, from that time, began to look upon the young man with more favorable eyes.

CHAPTER 5.

One day, about three months subsequent to the time in which occurred the incidents just related, Henry Ware called upon Mr. Martin at his counting-room. After passing a few common-place remarks, the young man said, with a serious air—

“I would like to have a little private conversation with you, Mr. Martin.”

“Certainly, Henry,” replied Mr. Martin, though not in a very encouraging tone. “We shall be uninterrupted here, as all my clerks are engaged at present in the store, and will be so for some time.”

“You know, sir,” began the young man after a few moments’ hesitation, “that I have visited your daughter Bell, pretty often of late.”

“I have observed as much,” was the cold response.

“In doing so,” resumed Ware, “I have been influenced, by an admiration and a regard for her that have fast ripened into affection. In a word, sir, my errand here today is to ask of you her hand in marriage.”

“You ask of me, Henry, that which I cannot lightly give,” readied Mr. Martin, with a still graver look and tone. “A father who loves his children as I love mine, must be fully satisfied that they will be *happy*, before he can consent to their marriage.”

“I would have much mistaken the character of Mr. Martin, if he were to act otherwise,” the young man said, with a perfectly unembarrassed manner. “No father ought to give his consent to the marriage of his child, without being fully satisfied as to the *character* of the man who proposes for her hand. I do not, therefore, expect you to accept of my proposal at once. But your manner leads me to infer, that in your mind, there are *objections* to me. Am I right?”

Ware was perfectly cool and self-possessed.

“You are right in your inference,” was Mr. Martin’s answer. “You know, Henry, that, like your father, I am a man of business views and habits. One who has been, mainly, the architect of his own fortune; and one who values in others the same qualities and habits that have made him successful in life. These, he has not perceived in you—or, at least only, in very feeble activity. The man who, with my consent, marries either Fanny or Bell, must be a man of *energy, industry, and sound views and principles*. These will bear him up under all circumstances. These will preserve him amid temptations. These will be a guaranty for my daughters’ happiness.”

“I fully appreciate what you say, Mr. Martin,” returned Ware. “Your own success in life, and that of my father, are strong illustrations of the truth of those *practical principles* which you have adopted. Principles which, of late, have been presented to my mind as altogether worthy of adoption. I know that I have been a thoughtless young man, fond of company and pleasure. I know that there was a time when I laughed at *sober industry*, and those *manly exertions* which elevate individuals into positions of honor and usefulness—as something for the vulgar. But I have seen the folly and weakness of such views, and have entered, seriously, upon the business of life, with a steady, and I hope, vigorous determination to succeed. You are aware, sir, I presume, that I opened an office for the practice of law some months ago. Since that time, I have devoted myself with diligence to the profession I have chosen.”

“It gives me great pleasure, Henry, to hear you express views that are so sound, and far more pleasure to hear you declare that you have adopted them as *rules of life*,” replied Mr. Martin in a more encouraging tone. “Still, the change in your course of life is of such recent occurrence, that you cannot blame me for fearing that difficulties, unforeseen by yourself in the new path you have so properly chosen, may prevent you persevering in it.”

“Is there any other objection to *me*?” Henry Ware asked, in a serious tone.

“None other, Henry,” was Mr. Martin’s prompt reply. “You are the son of one of my oldest and most esteemed friends. Your father and myself grew up together as boys, and entered upon business at the same time. Thus far, we have been fast friends, and, I trust, will remain so through life. No objection can, therefore, possibly exist in reference to this matter, but what pertains to yourself, personally. If I can be satisfied that you will make Bell happy—that you will cherish her and care for her as I have cherished and cared for her, I will say, take her with my whole heart.”

“How am I to satisfy you of this, Mr. Martin?”

“I can only be satisfied by such an assurance of the permanency of your present course of life, as will leave my mind free from all doubt upon the subject. In the mean time, I will not restrict you in your visits to Bell. A few weeks’ observation and deliberation I shall take, before I make up my mind. When that is done, my decision will be final. And I can only say, that it will be to me a source of real pleasure, if I can make it in your favor.”

“I will cheerfully await your decision, Mr. Martin,” young Ware said. “And I thank you for the frankness with which you have dealt with me. If you do not find me worthy to claim the hand of your daughter, reject my suit. But do not judge of me by the *past*. Let me be estimated by what I *am*, not by what I *was*.”

“My mind will no doubt incline in your favor,” replied Mr. Martin. “And I more than suspect that, at home, I shall find many reasons for encouraging your suit. Be that as it may, however, I shall endeavor to decide the matter soon, and in doing so, be governed by a regard for the happiness of my child.”

The young man, after a few further words, arose, and went away. For nearly an hour after, old Mr. Martin remained seated, in deep thought.

In a few minutes from the time Ware left the store of Mr. Martin, he entered his own office, and ascended to the upper room, before mentioned. There he found, as he had expected, his very particular friend, Thomas Handy, who was lounging in an easy chair, and filling the room with tobacco smoke.

"Halloo! Back already!" was that individual's salutation as Ware entered, rising up with a quick movement, and a look of interest as he spoke.

"Yes, I'm a prompt man, you know."

"Did you get around the old fellow?"

"O, yes."

"Indeed! Has he consented?"

"No—of course not. I didn't expect that. But I've got him safely enough, or I'm very much mistaken."

"How did he take your proposition?"

"Coldly enough at first. But I saw his weak side, and so dropped in a little *ingenious flattery*. Then I made him believe that I was going to be one of the most industrious, exemplary young men in the whole city—a very pattern of plodding, dollar and cent dullness. That green briefcase, with the documents peeping out of it occasionally, has touched the old codger's heart, I can see plainly enough."

"Did you ask for Bell, outright?"

"O, yes. I thought it best to come to the point at once."

"What did he say?"

"He put me off for a month or so, to give him time to consider."

"A month or so?"

"Yes, confound it! I shall have to walk a straight line until my knees grow stiff. If in that time anything should go wrong, or I should, unfortunately, be betrayed into any little indiscretion while under the influence of a bottle of wine, the whole jig will be up."

"You will have to be prudent, Harry," replied his friend, gravely.

"Indeed, I will. I've taken almost as much trouble now as the jade is worth, and could hardly be tempted to act such a *farce* over again, were the present enterprise to prove a failure. To be compelled to stick up my name as a miserable lawyer, and go, regularly, day after day, to my office; and what is worse, lug a green briefcase about the street, with a mock business air, is going it a little too strong for a *gentleman*."

"It is rather hard, I confess, but two months will soon slip by."

"Yes. And during the time, I must endeavor to enjoy myself as much as possible, and thus rob it of a portion of irksomeness."

"We haven't been to *Pandora's* together for some time," remarked Handy, after a pause in the conversation.

"No. It's too expensive sometimes—especially as the money doesn't come quite as easy as formerly," was the reply of Ware.

"It seems to me, Harry, that you and I ought to have wit and skill enough to prevent that."

"I've often thought as much myself. But they're keen hands at turning a card there."

"So are all these professional men. The only thing is for us to be just as keen as they are, and I believe we can be. The fact is, I find that I am gaining skill and nerve every day. Last night I came away from *Twitter's* worth a hundred dollars more than I was when I went to the rooms."

"You did?"

"Yes, I did. But I had to work for it, and no mistake."

"Your hand is improving."

"Very much. And so is yours."

"Yes, I believe it is." Then, after a pause—

"You propose going to *Pandora's* tonight?"

"Yes."

"How much can you raise, Tom?"

"About two hundred dollars."

"That's more than I can, by one hundred and ninety."

"So low as that?" in a tone of surprise.

"It's a fact. My old man, you know, isn't too liberal in his supplies."

"Nor mine either. But I thought this office, the green briefcase, and all that, had *mollified* him considerably."

"So it has. Still, he makes me ask him, every time I want a dollar—and that is not so very pleasant, you know."

"Of course not, but no matter—my purse is yours. We can take a hundred dollars apiece, and go to *Pandora's* to night."

“And come away without a hundred pennies in our pockets, I suppose.”

“That doesn’t follow, by any means, Harry. Rather say we will come away with a cool thousand a-piece.”

“Very pleasant to contemplate, but difficult to realize,” was Ware’s reply.

“Though difficult, it is yet possible to realize all that, and more. For my part, my mind is fully made up to do something for my self in this way. If I don’t, I shall, like you, be driven to marry some silly girl, or else be forced into some kind of business, than stoop to which, I would almost as well drown myself.”

“And you seriously think that something may be done in this line?”

“Certainly I do. Didn’t I win a hundred dollars last night?”

“So you have said. But might not that have been the result of accident?”

“It might have been—but it was not. I had as keen a fellow to deal with, as is to be found in a hundred. He did his best, but I was wide awake all the time. Practice makes perfect, you know, and I have been practicing for the last three or four months, pretty steadily.”

“I don’t know, but that it would be well for me to improve myself in this way, too. There’s no telling what may turn up, after I secure Bell.”

“That is true enough, Harry.”

“Of course, I don’t intend keeping this shop open a day. For three or four months I shall manage to have forty good excuses for not attending to business. At first, you know, we will have to travel for a few weeks; then I shall want to spend some time in New York, and so on to the end of the chapter. But the mark will have to be toed at last. I shall have to take a deliberate stand, and make a plain avowal of my determination not to have a stone laid upon my back, and be crushed down and kept down, to the level of a mere worker. When that comes—and come it must, Tom—there is no telling what two hardheaded old fellows, like Bell’s father and mine, may attempt. But they’ll find their match, or I’m mistaken. They’ll discover that I’m a boy that is hard to beat. The first movement will, no doubt, be to cut off supplies. Of course, I must prepare for such an event. I must, if possible hit upon some expedient for keeping up supplies.”

“Of course you must. And that which propose, is the only honorable expedient. And, besides, you can manage it with the utmost secrecy. You can go night after night to Twitter’s, or Pandora’s—and old Martin will be none the wiser. No secrets leak out of those places.”

“We will go tonight, as you propose Tom,” was Ware’s prompt reply.

That night, at about nine o’ clock, the young men met according to arrangement, and proceeded together to a house in the upper part of Chestnut Street, which, in external appearance, bore all the indications of a private dwelling. They rang the bell, and were regularly admitted by a servant. First, they entered, with an air of freedom and self-possession, the parlors below, which were brilliantly lighted, exhibiting a rich display of furniture, costly mirrors and pictures, with frames of the richest manufacture. Here were to be found all the newspapers, and the choicest periodicals of the day. A few individuals were to be seen, reading, or lounging upon the sofas.

The two young men lingered here but a few moments, and then ascended to a room ranging along the back buildings of the house, which was fitted up as a bar, with great elegance. Here was exhibited in tempting array everything that could please the taste of the epicure, or delight the thirsty seekers for wines or mixed liquors; while smiling attendants stood ready to answer with promptness, any demand. All this was free—provided by the *generous munificence* of the rich proprietors of the establishment.

“We must take a strong drink to make our nerves steady,” remarked Handy to Ware, as the two entered the bar-room door.

“Of course.” was the brief answer.

A stiff glass of the liquor named by Handy was taken in silence by the young men, and then they turned away, and ascending two or three steps, entered the large room that fronted the street, which was brilliantly illuminated. From without, the windows, although presenting the appearance of being lightly draped, gave no sign of the busy life within. The passer-by, if he lifted his gaze to the building, concluded, if he thought of the matter at all, that few, if any, were its inhabitants—for all was as dark and silent as desolation.

In this room were arranged many small tables, at several of which people were engaged at play. Two or three were walking backward and forward, evidently absorbed in thought; and one was seated alone, his head drooping upon his breast, and but a portion of his features visible. For a moment or two, Ware let his eye rest upon the last mentioned individual, and observed that his lips were separated, and that his teeth were closely shut, and in a slight oblique position, as if he were just about grinding them together. His hand, too, was clenched, and had a perceptible nervous twitching.

“That poor devil has been fleeced, I suppose,” whispered Handy, with a contemptuous smile, and toss of the head.

“Yes, I suppose so—and now sits here making a fool of himself,” was Ware’s heartless reply. “But come,” he added, “let’s go to the upper room in the rear building. This is too near the street. I can’t bear the noise of the carriages—nor to hear the sound of voices on the pavement It doesn’t seem private enough.”

“My own feelings,” rejoined Handy.

The two young men accordingly withdrew, and ascended to the room which Ware had indicated. It was much longer than the one they had just left, running the whole length of an extensive back building. The floor was covered with rich Brussels carpeting, the windows were hung with costly curtains, and the walls glittered with mirrors which reflected light from three splendid chandeliers. Here, as below, were ranges of tables, some occupied by individuals with cards, and others vacant. As Ware and Handy came in, they were approached by a man of the blandest manners, and the most polished address. He supposed the young gentlemen desired to amuse themselves—there were tables with cards, and other means of passing an agreeable hour. The young gentlemen thanked him with a manner as polite and courteous as his own; and acting upon his hint, took possession of a table.

“Rather dull work for two,” this very considerate and gentlemanly personage remarked, with his pleasant smile, passing near them a few minutes afterwards.

“Rather,” was Handy’s response. “Won’t you sit down with us?”

“No objection, if agreeable,” was the prompt reply, as he drew up a chair.

“Still rather dull work,” he said, after a short time, leaning back and throwing an eye around the room. “I wonder if we can’t find somebody else that would like to take a hand? We are not now evenly balanced. There comes a man who looks as if he wanted to be either winning or losing something. Look here, friend!” addressing the individual to whom he had alluded, “don’t you want to take a hand?”

“No objection,” was the reply,

“Come along, then. I need a partner; and one with a clear, cool head, too; for one of my young friends here, at least, I know to be a sharp hand, and I more than guess that the other is not much behind him.”

The stranger sat down with the rest, and the four were soon deeply buried in the game at once commenced. Ten dollars a round was the stake, and for a time the games all ran in favor of Handy and Ware. A proposition to double the stakes had just been made by Handy, when the individual whom they had noticed below, as sitting apart, absorbed in some intensely painful struggle of mind, entered the room, and came and stood beside the table at which they were seated. As he did so, Ware looked up, and observed that his face wore a fierce, malignant, determined expression. He had hardly time to notice this, when the intruder said—addressing the individual who had spoken to them so blandly, on their entering the room—in low, emphatic tones while his eye flashed, and his face grew dark with suppressed anger—

“You are a *cheating scoundrel!* Here, to your teeth, in the presence of these young gentlemen, I brand you as a miserable, cheating scoundrel!”

The change that instantly passed upon the face of the individual addressed, was fearful to look upon. The bland, open countenance became in a moment rigid, and almost fierce—while his eyes, before so mild in expression, were now dilated, and seemed to throw out coruscations of fiendish hate. For an instant only he paused, and then springing to his feet, he dashed both fists into the face of the person who had insulted him, before the latter had time to defend himself. Quick as thought, however, the other regained his feet, a large knife already gleaming in his hand, and made a headlong plunge toward the assailant.

That individual dexterously avoided the blow aimed at his heart, which was made with such a desperate energy, that its failure caused the stranger to fall forward upon one of the tables. Before he could recover himself, the other was upon him, bearing him down, while his hand made two or three quick plunges, striking his sides as he did so with some sharp instrument, that glistened each time it was raised in the light.

Desperate were the struggles now made by the stranger to throw off his antagonist, but the gambler held him down by bearing his whole weight upon him, every now and then stabbing him in the side! With a fierce energy, accompanying each blow with some hellish imprecation. All this passed before anyone had time to interfere. But a crowd gathered round, one catching the hand that held the deadly weapon, and another dragging him off of the wounded man, from whose side the blood already gushed in copious streams. Instantly upon being thus released, the latter turned and dashed his knife into the abdomen of the gambler. As he did so, his arm fell nerveless by his side and he sank upon the floor, a ghastly corpse!

CHAPTER 6.

“That was a horrible affair, last night,” Handy said to Ware, on their meeting next morning.

“Horrible, indeed! I was never so shocked in my life.”

“So it was Mr. Pandora, then, with whom we were playing. He head man of that splendid establishment.”

“How do you know?”

“Havn’t you seen the newspapers this morning?”

“I have seen one or two, but none of them contained any allusion to that affair.”

“Here is one, then, which has the full particulars. And rather too full to please me.”

“How so?”

“Just listen to this,” drawing a newspaper from his pocket, and reading:

“Desperate Rencounter at Pandora’s Splendid Establishment in Chestnut Street, and Death of one of the parties.—

Last night at about ten o’clock, as Pandora, the principal proprietor of the gambling rooms in Chestnut Street to which we have alluded in the caption of this article, was engaged at play with a couple of young bloods of this city, whose names are in our possession, an individual came up and insulted him, when a fight ensued, which terminated in the death of the latter, who received several severe stabs in the side, one or two of these penetrating his heart.

In return, he dealt Pandora a fearful wound in the abdomen, which, it is thought, will terminate fatally. We have not yet learned the name of the deceased. We understand that many young men of respectable standing in society were found in this establishment by those who rushed in from the street as soon as the fatal affray became known. One, in particular, was noticed there, the son of a wealthy merchant, who is engaged to one of the sweetest maidens us the city—a rich heiress. Poor girl! Though now the envy of thousands, if she should become his wife, we fear that the time will come when she, in turn, will envy the lot of even the most lowly and obscure, in whose habitation rests the sunshine of peace.”

“Too bad! too bad!” ejaculated Henry Ware, pacing the room backward and forward with hurried steps. “Confound these meddling newspaper editors! What has *our* being there, to do with the murder that was committed? Just nothing at all! But, to make an interesting paragraph—we must be lugged in, and others into the bargain! And he says, moreover, that he has our names—and I suppose, will publish them tomorrow.”

“If he does, I will cut off his ears!”

“Better cut his head off before he does it. Why, I wouldn’t have it known, publicly, that I was there for the world.”

“You might at once bid good-bye to Bell Martin, and her father’s money, if that were to happen.”

“And that it will happen, I fear there is little doubt.”

“Why so?”

“Does not this meddling scoundrel say that he has our names?”

“Well?”

“Of course, now that he has published that fact, he will be called upon by the Attorney General to give the names, that we may be summoned as witnesses for the prosecution, in the trial that will ensue, should Pandora survive his wound, which Heaven forbid!”

“True! true!” Handy said, with a troubled look.

“If it comes to that, it will be a death-blow to my prospects. The fact of my having been in a gambling-house, and engaged in playing with Pandora, which will appear from my own testimony on oath, will at once foil all my hopes.”

Handy did not reply to this for some time, but sat deeply absorbed in thought. At length he said—

“Everything looks dark enough in your case, Harry, I must confess. But I think there is one hope.”

“What is that?”

“That you may be able to secure Bell’s hand before the that comes on. In the mean time, you must make fair weather, if possible, with the Attorney General, and get him to keep your name from transpiring as one of the witnesses, until the last moment.”

“Thank you, Tom, for that hope. I see there is still light ahead. But this vagabond editor—what shall we do with him? Suppose he were to publish our names?”

“He must not do that. I will see him today, and endeavor to secure his silence.”

“Do so, if possible. But what if old Martin’s eye has caught this unfortunate paragraph? His suspicions will be almost certainly aroused.”

“You must allay them.”

“How?”

“Do not ask me. Surely you are possessed of enough cool impudence for that. Visit there as formerly—and with as frank and easy an air. If the affray last evening is introduced before you have time to allude to it, converse about it freely. Do you take the idea?”

“Perfectly—and shall act it out fully.

CHAPTER 7.

“Bell, did you see this?” asked Mary, coming into Bell’s chamber, and handing her the morning paper, with her finger on the paragraph which had disturbed young Ware’s peace of mind so seriously.

“No—what is it?” replied the maiden, taking the paper and glancing over the article pointed out to her.

“That is a dreadful affair, truly, Mary,” said Bell, as she finished reading the paragraph, in a voice of more than scarcely ordinary concern. “I wonder who the young man is, alluded to as about to marry some beautiful heiress? I hope, at least for her sake, that this notice may meet her eye, and that she may have resolution to cast him off forever.”

“Most earnestly do I hope so,” was Mary’s answer, made in a fervent tone.

“You seem unusually *serious* about the matter, Mary,” Bell now said, looking up with an expression of surprise. “Have you any idea to whom allusion is made?”

Mary hesitated a few minutes and then replied—

“I have my suspicions.”

“Then where do they rest?”

“Pardon me, Bell. Perhaps it is the earnest love I feel for you which makes me suspicious. But I cannot help thinking that *you* are the maiden alluded to!”

“Me, Mary!” ejaculated Bell, in instant and profound astonishment. “In the name of wonder! what has put *that* into your head?”

“I know not where the suggestion came from, Bell,” said Mary, calmly and seriously. “But the instant I read that notice, the thought flashed upon my mind with startling vividness.”

“It is not a true thought, Mary.”

“I sincerely hope not. Time, however, I trust, will tell whether it is true or false.”

“You are not prepossessed in Henry Ware’s favor, Mary. That accounts for this suspicion.”

“I certainly am not prepossessed in his favor,” replied Mary, “and never have been. You know that I have said this from the first.”

“But upon what *ground* rests your prejudice against him?”

“I am afraid that he can never *love* you, Bell, as you should be loved,” replied Mary, in a voice that was low, and trembled with feeling.

“Certain am I, Mary that he loves me deeply, and tenderly. Why do you doubt it?”

“To me he does not seem *capable* of loving anything half so well as *himself*. Pardon my freedom of speech on a subject of such a delicate nature. As I have said before, it is nothing but my love for you, that causes me to speak so plainly.”

“You do not see him as I see him, Mary, nor hear the peculiar tones of his voice as I hear them.”

“I know that. But my observation of him causes me to doubt his sincerity. I do not see him often, but when I do, I observe him with the closest scrutiny; and that tells me that he is *insincere*—that he is *acting a part*.”

“Something has blinded your mind in regard to him, Mary, so that you cannot judge him fairly.”

“I think not, Bell. Until within a couple of months ago, his life has been one constant round of *selfish pleasure-taking*. He has kept mirthful, wild company, and been the gayest and wildest of all.”

“How do you know that, Mary?”

“I have heard *your father* say so.”

“But has he not changed? Did not my father say that likewise?”

“He did.”

“Does not that, then, satisfy you?”

“Far from it. Men change not thus, so suddenly, without a sufficient *motive*.”

“And what, do you think, is his motive?”

“To gain the hand of Bell Martin!”

“And if to gain her hand,” said the maiden, while her cheek deepened its color, and her eyes sparkled, “he would forego all these, don’t you think that to keep that *hand*, and the *heart* that goes with it—he would not still forego them?”

To this triumphant appeal on the part of Bell, Mary made no reply; though it did not satisfy her mind, far more acute in its *perceptions of character*, than the maiden’s with whom she was conversing. The reader’s knowledge of the facts in the case, will, of course, approve her judgment. Men do not thus suddenly change a course of life in which they have taken delight, without some *strong influencing motive*. And it would be well for the happiness of many a fond, confiding girl, if she would lay this axiom up in her heart.

Let every young woman beware of the suitor, especially if she has in possession or prospect, a fortune, who suddenly reforms or changes his course of life, upon making advances toward her. Previous habits, when the stronger motive of securing her hand is withdrawn, will, in nine cases out of ten, return and become as strong and as active as ever. Then will come the *bitterness* which nothing can allay. Then will come *neglect*, perhaps *unkindness*, and, it may be, *cruelty*. Who

would not pause and reflect? Who would not hesitate, and ponder well the chances, before running such a risk? A neglected wife! Oh! who would be that heart-broken thing? And, worse than all, how often do early habits of dissipation become confirmed? Then comes severer anguish than even springs from neglect alone. Poverty—wretchedness—and the untold pangs of a drunkard’s wife are the attendants of these! Again we say, let the maiden know well the character of the man she marries—and the more elevated her station in life, the more guarded let her be. The greater the *villain*—the higher his aim.

“Did you see the account of that affray last night, Henry?” asked Mr. Martin, suddenly, on the evening following the event alluded to, eyeing the young man closely as he did so.

Henry Ware was sitting upon the sofa beside Bell, at the time the question was asked.

“I did,” was his prompt reply, turning around toward Mr. Martin, and looking him steadily in the face. “It seems to have been rather a desperate affair.”

“It certainly does. I wonder who the young man can be, to whom allusion is made in the paper of this morning?”

“I really do not know; although I have my suspicions,” was the cool reply of Ware, still looking at Mr. Martin, with an expression of unconcern upon his face.

“Upon whom do they rest, Henry?”

“I don’t know that it is exactly fair to mention such suspicions; but of course they will be sacred here. It has occurred to me that the individual there alluded to is James Lawson. You know that he is engaged to Miss Eberly.”

“Can it be possible!” said Mr. Martin, in surprise.

“Both possible and probable,” resumed Ware. “I know that he has been in the habit of visiting that establishment for some time past. It is only a week since I remonstrated with him about it, and tried to show him that it was a *certain road to ruin*.”

“You surprise and pain me very much, Henry. I had a very different opinion of James Lawson.

“Few suspect him of being wedded to the *vice of gambling*. But it is, alas! too true. Of the handsome fortune left him by his father, I doubt if there is anything over a meager remnant, left.”

“It is really dreadful to think about,” said Mrs. Martin, “What a sad prospect for Caroline Eberly!”

“This affair,” remarked Ware, coolly, “may lead to such an exposure of him, as will open her eyes; and for her sake, I earnestly hope that it may be so.”

Thus did this young but accomplished *villain*, to draw suspicion from himself, assail the character of an innocent young man! Mr. Martin, on whose mind the most painful doubts had rested ever since the morning, was now fully satisfied that his suddenly awakened fears had done injustice to Henry Ware. His manner and the expression of his face were to him full of innocence. He even regretted having made an effort to obtain the names of the individuals mentioned in the notice of the affray, by going to the newspaper office, where the editor declined answering his question. He was not, of course, aware that Thomas Handy had been there half an hour before him, and informed said editor that if he divulged the names of the people to whom he had alluded, he would have his ears cut off, and, perhaps, his life taken!

CHAPTER 8.

“Good morning, Mr. Blackstone,” said Henry Ware, entering the office of the Attorney General, about three weeks after the fatal affray. “So you’ve got me down for that unpleasant affair?”

“To what do you allude, Mr. Ware?” the Attorney General asked, gravely.

“To the affair which happened at Chestnut Street, some two or three weeks ago.”

“Do you refer to the murder of Cooper by Pandora?”

“Yes. To that murder, or manslaughter, or homicide, which ever you feel disposed to call it. But, as I was saying, you have got me down for one of the witnesses?”

“Oh yes. Now I remember; and a very important witness you are. You were present at the beginning, through the progress, and at the termination, of the affray; and, of course, your testimony will decide the matter. You were playing with Pandora at the time Cooper came up to the table at which he was sitting, I understand. Was that so?”

“I am sorry to say that I was,” Ware replied, his tone changing a good deal, in spite of a determined effort not to let the deep concern he felt become too visible.

“That is important,” returned Mr. Blackstone, with a thoughtful air. “I hope,” he added, in a few moments after, “that you will keep the whole scene fresh in your memory, so as to describe it accurately.”

“But can you not, possibly, dispense with my testimony?” Ware asked. “There were many others present, who can fully attest all the facts in the case.”

“We have failed to learn any of their names, except that of Thomas Handy, who has been summoned to appear as well as yourself.”

“Why will not *his* evidence be conclusive in the matter?”

“Because, as you well know, corroborating testimony is always desirable.”

“How soon will the case come up?”

“At the next term, which commences in about two months.”

The young man’s countenance fell, and he seemed troubled at this information. A brief silence followed, and then he said, while his voice slightly trembled—

“I have reasons, Mr. Blackstone, of a very important nature, for not wishing to appear in this case.”

“I am sorry for it Mr. Ware; and regret the absolute necessity for calling you.”

“Do not say absolute necessity, Mr. Blackstone,” Ware rejoined, while his manner became agitated. “I cannot, I *must* not appear!”

“What detriment can it be to you simply to relate what you saw? You were no actor in the case.”

“But I could not have seen what passed in that establishment, if I had not, unfortunately, been there. It is the fact of my *presence* there that I do not wish known.”

“I am sorry for the existing necessity,” replied the Attorney General; “but cannot accede to your desire. The evidence which you can give, is of too much importance to the State to be waived.”

The manner of Ware became still more agitated at this.

“You know not, Mr. Blackstone,” he said, in an earnest and almost supplicating tone, “how much depends upon the concealment of the fact that I was present at that unfortunate affray. If it should become known, it will mar all my expectations in life.”

“I regret exceedingly to hear you say so,” the Attorney General simply remarked at this; and then the young man went on—

“The fact is, Mr. Blackstone, to make you fully sensible of my situation, in the hope that an appreciation of it may induce you to consider me more than you are now inclined to do, I will mention, that I have recently made proposals to old Mr. Martin, for the hand of his youngest daughter, and that I am now awaiting a decision. I have no doubt of its being in my favor. But should this fact get out before the consummation of the marriage, the engagement will inevitably be broken off. I was a fool to go to that miserable place anyhow; and would not have done so, had it not been for the persuasion of a friend, for I have no taste for such amusements.”

“I certainly feel for your situation very much,” said Mr. Blackstone. And he only spoke what he felt; for he really believed the concluding portion of the young man’s statement—not having had much knowledge of his previous character and habits of life.

“It is a very peculiar and very critical one, indeed,” was Ware’s reply. And I do hope you will, as it is in your power, duly consider the delicate position in which I am placed.”

“But it is not in my power to do so, Mr. Ware.”

“How, can that be? Is it not upon *your summons* that all witnesses appear?”

“Very true. But in this act I cannot be governed by any considerations, except those which regard *justice*.”

“Still, justice may be attained as fully by my non-appearance, as by my appearance.”

“I do not think so.”

“But surely the testimony of Mr. Handy will be conclusive.”

“It may not be in the minds of all the jurors. But if in your testimony and Handy’s, there is a corroborating agreement on some important point, then doubt will be set aside. You see, therefore, that it is impossible for me, as much as I feel for you in so unpleasant a position, to accede to your wishes. Were it in my power, I would do so cheerfully; but, as I have before said, it is not in my power. I cannot let any *personal consideration* interfere to endanger the cause of justice.”

“Do not say that in this resolution, you are fixed, Mr. Blackstone,” returned Ware, appealingly.

“I certainly do say so, and emphatically,” was the firm reply. “My office is a responsible one; and in the discharge of its duties, I allow no personal considerations.”

There was now a long silence, deeply troubled on the part of the young man.

“And you think the trial will come up at the next term?” he at length asked in an anxious tone.

“Oh yes. It is already entered for the next Court.”

Perceiving by the manner of the Attorney General, that it was useless to urge him farther, Henry Ware retired, with a feeling of deeper and more painful anxiety than he had yet experienced. He had fondly believed that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, where there was another witness who could testify as fully and as clearly as himself to all the facts which had occurred, there would be no great difficulty in his getting relieved from the duty of a witness; but this hope, the Attorney General had dashed to the ground.

And he now saw himself standing, as it were, on the brink of utter ruin, as he esteemed it. For if he failed under these circumstances, to secure the hand of Bell Martin, the fact would become so notorious, that all hope of securing any other *prize* of equal value, would be cut off. It would, likewise, involve such an exposure, as to utterly destroy his father’s newly awakened confidence, and cause him further to curtail supplies of money. This would necessarily separate them so far as to make it very doubtful whether the old gentleman, at his death, would trust much of his property in the hands of one in whose *habits* and *principles*, there was so little to approve.

“What is to be done now?” he asked, thoughtfully, as he seated himself in his office. “If this comes out before Bell is mine, the whole jig is up. And what then? Why, the old man will be so incensed, that, in all probability, he will tell me to go and shift for myself. And a pretty figure I would make at that kind of work. What could I do? Gamble, I suppose, and nothing else—and not much headway would I make at that, it strikes me. But if I could only get fairly spliced to Bell, I would have two strings to my bow. My old dad, and hers too, would then think twice before cutting loose from me. And, besides, I would have *two deep pockets* to thrust my hand in, and both together, it strikes me, ought to keep me in spending money. Let me see—this trial will come up in two months. Can’t I push the wedding through in that time? I must try, for everything depends upon it. Certainly, old Martin has had full time to consider, and decide upon my offer! And I think he has decided favorably, for his manner grows more and more encouraging and familiar every time I meet him. I’ll see him this very day and press for an answer; and if that should be favorable, will next urge an immediate marriage. It is my only course.”

Acting upon this decision. Ware sought and obtained a private interview with Mr. Martin on that afternoon.

“You must excuse me, Mr. Martin,” he said, after alluding to the object of his visit, “for my so early asking a decision. Young folks, you know, are restless under uncertainties—and, especially, under an uncertainty of this nature, you cannot wonder that I should feel anxious. I trust, therefore, that you have taken pains to satisfy yourself as to my ability to render your daughter happy, and are now prepared to give me a final answer.”

The old man sat thoughtful for some moments, after Ware had ceased speaking. All that he had seen or heard, since his proposal for the hand of Bell, had caused him to think more and more favorably of the young man’s suit. And yet he did not feel *satisfied*. Whenever he thought of resigning his daughter to Ware, it was with feelings of *unconquerable reluctance*. The man he would choose for his child, if the full choice were his, would be one in whom *correct principles* had been early implanted, and had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength. Such was not the case with Ware. With him, correct principles were of but a hot-bed growth; and, therefore, he could feel no well-grounded confidence in them. Still, he would condemn this kind of judgment, on the argument that the young man had evidently seen his error, and was now thoroughly reforming himself. That, with maturer years, a youthful love of exciting pleasures and loose company had subsided, never again to exercise any controlling influence over him.

“In one week I will give you a decisive answer, Henry,” Mr. Martin at length replied.

“Even a week seems a great while to prolong this kind of suspense, Mr. Martin. I have already waited with as much as I could exercise, for many weeks.”

“But there need be no *hurry* about the matter, Henry. You are both young, and won’t expect to be married for a year to come.”

This remark made the young man’s spirits sink at once. If not married within a year, very certain was he, that he would never be married at all to Bell Martin. But he would not trust himself to reply. The first thing was to gain the father’s consent to marry her at all.

“I must wait a week, you say?” he remarked after a brief silence.

“In a week, I will be prepared to decide upon your proposition.”

“It will be a *month* to me,” said Ware, as he arose to depart.

CHAPTER 9.

“Is it all settled, Harry?”

“The old man couldn’t but give his consent, though it came reluctantly. And then he gave me some advice.”

“Good advice, no doubt. What was it like?”

“That’s more than I can tell.”

“Went into one ear and out of the other, eh?”

“Not even that. It didn’t find its way into either ear. I wanted his daughter, and not his advice.”

“So far so good. But the next question is, how soon will he consent to let you marry her?”

“Next year!” in a tone of bitter irony.

“Never, you had better say.”

“It will be never, if not within a year, that is certain.”

“That confounded trial will be here in less than two months.”

“And in less than two months all my hopes will be scattered before the wind, if I cannot manage to secure Bell’s hand within that period.”

“Is there any possible hope of doing so?”

“I’m afraid not. But I must try. While there’s life, there is hope, Tom, as the doctors say. So far I have managed to throw dust in the old people’s eyes, and get their consent to marry Bell. I must now do my best to accomplish another end, fully as important as the first.”

“How will you go about it?”

“I have been racking my brains over that for the past week, in anticipation of the acceptance of my suit, and can thus far, think of but one way.”

“What is that?”

“To get my old man in favor of an immediate marriage, and then set him to work on Martin.”

“Do you think you can bring him over to your side?”

“I can only try.”

“But are you expectant?”

“I am. He knows I’ve been a pretty wild boy in my time, and is now tickled to death at the idea of my *reformation*. If I can only manage to get the notion into his head, that there is still some danger of my getting back into the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, until the protecting arms of a *wife* are thrown around me—he is safe on my side of the question.”

“But how will you manage that? It would hardly do for you to say such a thing.”

“Of course not. But I have a like-minded friend who has often served me before, and I am going to make a requisition on him for this especial business.”

“Indeed! And who might that friend be?”

“He might be one Thomas Handy, alias, Tom Handy—a chap of notable parts—and, moreover is the said Tom Handy!”

“Exactly.”

“And of course Tom Handy is still as ready to serve his friend as ever?”

“My hand for that. But how am I to manage this for you?”

“You must fall in with the old man.”

“He doesn’t like me very tenderly, you must remember.”

“I am fully aware of that fact. But I have been wearing down his prejudice for the past week with might and main.”

“You have?”

“O, yes. Whenever I could manage to get something to say about Thomas Handy, I lugged your honorable self in, head and shoulders.”

“He didn’t like my company, I presume?”

“It did disturb him at first. But I surprised him with the pleasing information that there had occurred in you a most beneficial change of late.”

“O, dear! ha! ha! ha! Hush, Harry, or you’ll kill me!”

“Mainly brought about, I informed him, by my influence and example. That you had been a wild boy in your time, there was no denying. But having *sowed your wild oats*, you were now setting seriously and earnestly about the business of life.”

“He didn’t believe you?”

“He did—every word! It would have done your heart good to see how pleased he was. ‘*You see, Harry,*’ he said, ‘*how much depends on every individual. We do not stand alone. Every act whether good or evil, carries its beneficial or*

injurious effect into society, and there reproduces itself, often in innumerable forms. Let this truth, my dear son, sink deep into your heart. And for the sake of others, if not for your own, let every act bear with it a healthful influence. ' Now what do you think of that?'"

"He'd make a first-rate preacher, wouldn't he?"

"So I thought."

"And he is prepossessed in my favor!"

"O, decidedly. Now I want you to fall in with him as soon as possible, for no time is to be lost, and do the right thing by me. I heed not tell you in what way. That, of course, you understand."

"Perfectly."

"When do you think you can see him?"

"I don't know. I must fall in with him by accident, of course. Let me consider. At what time does he go to the store after dinner?"

"About four o'clock."

"Takes wine pretty freely at the table?"

"Yes."

"And is always in a good humor afterwards?"

"Generally so."

"I'll meet him, then, *by accident* on some corner between your house and the store, and walk down the street with him. As we go along, I will do my prettiest to interest him; so that when we pause at the store door, he'll say, '*Come! won't you walk in, Thomas?*' Of course I will go in. How do you like that style of doing the thing?"

"Admirably!"

"But is he alone much in his counting-room?"

"Yes, especially in the afternoon. There is a cosy little office just back of the main counting room, in which is a large arm-chair, that has generally some attractions for him after a hearty dinner. He will, in all probability, invite you in there. If he does, you will have a fair chance at him."

And I'll do my prettiest." I will trust you for that, Tom. You are true blue, when you undertake to perform a friendly act."

About four o'clock on the next day, Thomas Handy met old Mr. Ware, "by accident," a short distance from his store. Earlier in the day, Henry had artfully introduced his friend in conversation, and by the relation of some imagined circumstances, and the repetition of some imagined fine sentiments attributed to him, very much interested his father in the young man. He was, in consequence, prepared to give him a pleasant word and a bland smile, which Handy appropriated very coolly and very naturally. Then, as he was going the same way, a pleasant conversation sprung up, which was just at a point of interest when they arrived at Mr. Ware's store, that made him feel inclined to invite the young man to walk in. Of course, Thomas Handy made no excuse. In a few moments after, he was snugly seated in the cosy little office of which Henry had told him, with Mr. Ware as snugly fixed in his great armchair.

"Well, Thomas," remarked the old gentleman, after he had got fairly settled, looking at Handy with quite a complacent, benevolent expression on his countenance, "it must be as great a pleasure to your father, as it is to me, to know that you young men are beginning to see with different eyes, and to act from different views."

"Indeed, sir, it is," was the prompt, cool, heartless reply. "My father seems like another man. But you can, no doubt, enter into his feelings more fully than I can."

"Very truly said. None but a father can possibly realize, fully, a father's feelings under such circumstances. For my part, I can say, that the change which has become apparent in Harry, has taken a *mountain* from my heart."

"No doubt of it, sir! No doubt of it!" was Handy's fervent response. "For the change in Harry has been great indeed."

"Indeed it has."

"And I most earnestly trust that he will *abide* by it."

"Abide by it? He must abide by it, Thomas! I cannot think of his going back again. It would almost kill me. O, if he only knew the world of misery I have suffered in consequence of his past life—he would die rather than think of returning to his previous habits!"

There was a tremulousness and a pathos in the old man's voice, that even reached, in some degree, the ice-bound feelings of the young man with whom he was conversing. But the effect was neither deep nor permanent. The *selfish end* he had in view, quickly dispersed even these small touches of nature.

"The influence of bad habits, confirmed by long indulgence, are not thrown off in a day, Mr. Ware," he replied, in a serious tone. "Both Henry and myself will have to struggle manfully before we have fully conquered. And struggle we will. In this effort we need all the kind consideration and aid that we can receive from those upon whom we have any claims."

"And surely you have both, Thomas."

"We have, so far as our condition can be appreciated. But you, who have never felt the force of such bad habits as we have contracted, can no more fully sympathize with us, than we can fully sympathize with you. Do you understand me?"

"I do. But why do you speak thus?"

"I have been led, almost involuntarily, to say what I have, Mr. Ware, from—from—"

"From what, Thomas? Speak out plainly."

The young man hesitated for a few moments, as if deliberating some question in his mind, and then said, in a serious tone—

"I had no thought of saying what I am now almost compelled to say, seeing that I have excited, unintentionally, a concern in your mind. You must not, of course, intimate to Harry, even remotely, that I have said what I am now about saying."

"O, no, of course not, Thomas."

"You know, then, I presume, that he has been addressing Bell Martin?"

"Yes."

"I learned from him yesterday that her father had consented to the marriage."

"So I heard last evening."

"But he thinks it time enough for them to get married in a year from now."

"Well?"

"Do you know that the first effort Henry made to reform his course of life, was after his affections had become fixed upon Bell?"

"I do not know it, for a certainty."

"It is true. We are intimate friends, and I know it to be true. He loves her fondly and passionately—and is, of course, very much disappointed at the stand which her father has taken. A year is a long time to wait."

"It is a good while—but it will soon pass."

To him it will not. The hours, and days, and weeks, will drag wearily and heavily. To speak frankly and seriously, Mr. Ware, I fear for its effect upon him. You know his ardent temperament, and how little used he has been to self-denial."

"You speak seriously, Thomas."

"It is because I feel serious in this matter. I am much attached to Harry, and whatever deeply concerns him, concerns me."

"In what way do you fear that it will affect him injuriously?"

"Indeed, sir, I can hardly tell myself. But I have a vague fear that I cannot shake off—a dim, troubled idea that has haunted me ever since I saw his strong manifestation of disappointment. For relief of mind, *he may fall back in some weak moment*, upon old and exciting pleasures, and then his danger would be great, very great. I tremble to think of it."

"You certainly alarm me, Thomas."

"I do not wish, Mr. Ware, to disturb your mind, and would not do so, did I not feel so deep an interest in your son. An *ounce of prevention*, you know, is worth a *pound of cure*. It is in the hope that through your influence, all danger may be put far away, that I now speak to you as I do."

"Thank you kindly, Thomas. I feel the force of your generous interest. But if that is all, we need not disturb our minds. They might just as well be married now, as well as a year hence."

"So I think. There can be no reason for waiting."

"None at all. I will see Mr. Martin, and have that matter settled at once."

"You have indeed, sir, taken a load from my mind," said Handy, earnestly and sincerely. Then, after a brief pause for reflection, he added:

"Urge Mr. Martin to permit the marriage to take place at a very early period, I shall never feel that Henry is perfectly safe, until this new relation is formed. Then, all danger will be passed."

"It shall take place soon, I pledge myself for that," replied Mr. Ware. "I understand Bell's father as well as he understands himself, and I know how to manage him. Trust me, sir; they shall be married as early as they wish."

Thus much gained. Handy soon after arose, and bade Mr. Ware good day.

CHAPTER 10.

One morning, a week after the interview mentioned in the concluding portion of the last chapter, our two young men met, as usual, at the office of Henry Ware, which was still retained, and all the *appearances* of studious attention to business kept up.

"You look grave, Harry," remarked his friend, as he came in.

"I look no graver than I feel."

"What has turned up now? Are we never to be done with these cross purposes?"

"I'm afraid not. It seems as if the old Harry himself had turned against us. If it had not been for that cursed affair in Chestnut Street, all would have gone on finely. But that, I see very plainly, is going to mar the whole plot."

"Old Martin has given his consent to an early marriage."

"So he has. But—"

"But what?"

"Bell, confound her! She can't get ready for two months to come!"

"The devil she can't!"

"Isn't it too bad!" And Ware paced the floor of his office with hurried steps, his countenance expressive of anger and disappointment. "Can't get ready for two months! Confound it! Why, I could get ready in two days, and so could she, if it were not for some *romantic notion* she has probably got into her head. They're *all a set of silly fools* anyhow!"

"You'll soon take the *romance* out of her, if you ever get a chance!"

"Won't I? She'll not have much left, six months after we're married, if that event ever takes place."

"Not for two months, you say?"

"No."

"Too bad! Too bad! But can't you change her resolution!"

"No. I tried last evening, as far as I could. But it was no use. She says that she cannot *possibly* be ready before the middle of May."

"That trial will come up on the first."

"So Blackstone says."

"What then is to be done?"

"That is a question easy to ask, but difficult to answer. I see no chance of escape from the dilemma."

"I can tell you of one way which occurs to me at this moment."

"Name it, then, for Heaven's sake!"

"Absent yourself from the city on the day the case is called. It will then have to go on without you, or be postponed, so that you will have time to get married before it again comes up."

"The very thing!" ejaculated Ware, striking his fist with his open hand, his whole countenance brightening up. "It's the very thing, Tom! And I'll do it."

"There will then only remain one danger."

"What is that?"

"Your name will be called as a witness. Should anyone there, who knows Bell's father, inform him of the fact, the jig will be up for you as effectually as if you had made your appearance."

"True, true," and the countenance of Ware again fell.

"And the danger would be greatly increased, were the names of the witnesses published, which will in all probability be the case."

"Still it is the only course that promises anything."

"It is; and therefore the only course you can take."

"Do you intend remaining, Tom?"

"I haven't made up my mind yet."

"You had better be absent also."

"Why do you think so?"

"As we are the two principal witnesses on the part of the prosecution, our absence will make it absolutely necessary to postpone the trial to another term. If that can be done, I am safe."

"That is true again. I will leave town."

"Now I begin to see a little daylight ahead," remarked Ware in a more cheerful tone. "We'll outwit Mr. Attorney General, in spite of his teeth."

"Mr. Ware, I believe," said an individual, entering at the moment.

"My name," was the half haughty reply, for the individual who addressed him, had not, to his eye, the appearance of a gentleman.

“You are required to appear and give bail to the amount of four thousand dollars as a witness in the case of the State vs. Pandora,” was the monotonous response of the visitor, who added in a moment afterwards, “The bail is required by twelve o’clock noon,” and then withdrew.

Neither of the young men spoke for nearly five minutes after the officer retired. At length Ware said, in a low but firm tone:

“It’s all over, Tom! The *fates* are against me. I might as well give up at once. But it is hard, devilish hard! after all the *trouble* I have taken, thus to have the cup dashed to the earth, at the moment it is about to touch my lips!”

“It is hard, Harry. But you must bear it like a man. Something yet may turn up in your favor.”

“I have ceased to look for it. The effort to get bail will, no doubt, lead to a full exposure of the whole matter.”

“Things look cloudy enough. I do not see any way of *escape*.”

“There is none, I presume,” Ware gloomily replied. “Anyhow, I shall prepare myself for the worst.”

CHAPTER 11.

It was just eleven o'clock when Henry Ware received the notice requiring him to give bail, as mentioned in the last chapter, and at twelve that day, bail had to be produced. The unexpected aspect which this difficulty, already well near insurmountable, had assumed, made the young man feel like giving up all further efforts at attempting a concealment of his visit to Pandora's establishment.

After a long silence, in which his own mind, and that of his friend, were searching, but in vain, for some new expedient, Handy asked, in rather a desponding tone,

"Can you think of nothing, Harry?"

"Nothing," was the brief, gloomy response. "Who will pay your bail?"

"Can't you?"

"Of course I would not be received, in consequence of being a witness myself. Nor am I at all sure that a similar notice to yours will not be served on me before the next hour."

"I see the difficulty."

"But you must have bail."

"I know that too well. And yet, I can think of no one except my old man. But it will never do to make application in that quarter."

"Can't you humbug him into it in some way?"

"How?"

"I don't know exactly how. But still, may it not be done? Can't you invent a plausible story that will mislead him in regard to the real facts in the case, and so get him to stand by you?"

"That might be done, though I do not exactly see how."

"Has he given any attention to the case?"

"Not much, I believe. When the affair occurred, it was a kind of three days' wonder with him, as with others. Since then, I presume, he has scarcely thought of it."

"Suppose, then, you trump up some story about your knowledge of an old quarrel between Pandora, and that you have been summoned to testify in regard to that? Don't you think that you might fool him in some such style as that?"

"That's it again!" ejaculated Ware, starting to his feet, and beginning to walk about his office with a quick step, while the dark shadow that had rested upon his face, was quickly dispersed by an exulting smile.

"You are certainly great at *inventions*. But for you, I never could have got along even half so far as I now am, in this most perplexing affair."

"You think it can be done without difficulty?"

"O yes. He'll believe any *well-told tale* just now. Still, I dread to approach him on the subject, for fear that something in my countenance or tone of voice may betray me. There is so much at stake, and I feel so deeply on the subject, that I am beginning to lose the calm assurance that has thus far stood me such good service."

"How would it do for me to go to him?"

"I am sure I do not know. He would very naturally wish to know why I did not see him myself."

"Of course he would. But I can manage him well enough in regard to that. The last interview I had with the *old codger* gave me a clue to his character. I read him like a book, then, and know him now from A. to Z."

"If you are perfectly willing to go, Tom, I shall be glad enough to have you do so, and am satisfied to trust the matter to your sound judgment. But time presses. I must be at the Court House in less than an hour—or there will be *the devil to pay*."

Ten minutes after, young Handy entered the store of Mr. Ware, with a manner perfectly calm and assured, while there sat upon his countenance, an expression of concern, not deep, but clearly defined, and not to be mistaken.

"Ah, good morning, Thomas. I am pleased to see you," said Mr. Ware, encouragingly. "Walk back into the counting-room."

Handy followed the old gentleman into his Counting-room, the door of which Mr. Ware closed after him, purposely, in order that their conversation might be private. The coming in of Handy made him think of his son, and he felt desirous of conversing more in regard to him, with one who was on such intimate terms with, and seemed to take so deep an interest in him.

"Well, Thomas," he said, in a cheerful tone, after they were seated, "what news is stirring in your way?"

"Nothing of consequence, except—" and then he hesitated and looked a little grave.

"Except *what*, Thomas?" asked Mr. Ware, exhibiting some little concern of manner.

"To be plain, honest and frank with you at once, Mr. Ware, a course that I always like to pursue—I have come in this morning to see you about an *annoying circumstance* that has occurred to Henry."

"To Henry?" said the old man, with anxiety. "What of him, Thomas?"

“Oh! it’s nothing at which to be alarmed. In fact, it is nothing but a little matter of *annoyance* to him.”

“Speak out plainly and to the point, my young friend,” Mr. Ware now said, in a firm, decided tone.

“It is, in fact,” resumed Handy, “only one of the results of former imprudent associations. Our *sins* often visit us with *penalties*, after our earnest repentance, and repudiation of them.”

“Speak plainly, Mr. Handy.”

“I will, sir. It is now nearly a year since Henry and myself were induced, among other indiscretions, to visit *Pandora’s gambling rooms*, and engage in play. Three months’ experience, however, completely cured us of our folly. During that time both Henry and myself became acquainted with Pandora, and also with several regular visitors at his establishment. Among these, was an evil, quarrelsome individual. One night a dispute arose between him and Pandora, when a brief *rencontre* ensued, in which he was severely beaten. Henry and myself were both present, and saw the whole affair. Ever since that time, it appears, that this individual held a grudge against Pandora, and has, I am told, frequently insulted him with the intention of drawing him into another fight. A few weeks ago, as you will remember, he quarreled with Pandora, and was killed. Now, someone has informed Blackstone, the Attorney General, that we we’re present at the former affray, and he has summoned us both to appear as witnesses in the case. But what he wants us to prove, is more than I can figure out.”

“Is that all?” said Mr. Ware, breathing more freely.

“That is the whole merit of the case, but it is not all that troubles Henry’s mind.”

“What does trouble his mind?”

“The fact that he has been required to give bail for his attendance as a witness.”

“Why has that course been pursued?” asked Mr. Ware, gravely.

“I must explain a little to make that matter clear to you. When Henry first learned that the Court required his attendance, he went to the State’s Attorney, in the hope that he could induce him to leave his name off, stating to him, frankly, that his presence in such a place was at a time when he had allowed himself to be led away into irregular habits, by injudicious associations, and that he had very particular reasons for wishing this fact not to see the light, as he feared that it would now lead to a false judgment in regard to him in quarters where it was of the utmost consequence that he should be thought of favorably. But Mr. Blackstone could not be induced to waive his evidence. At a subsequent interview, when he had fixed in his own mind about the first of May as the day of his marriage, he mentioned to Mr. Blackstone that he expected to be unavoidably absent from the city, at the time the case would be called. To prevent this, he has been required to furnish bail.”

“Why did he not himself mention this to me, Thomas?” asked Mr. Ware.

“I urged him very much to do so,” was the cool reply. “But he said that he was so much troubled and mortified in regard to it, that he felt sure, that, in making it known to you, he would be liable to misapprehension, and be judged more severely than he deserved. I do really feel sorry for him—he takes the whole thing so hard. And it does seem hard when a young man is trying his best to do right, that the *consequences of old indiscretions* should visit him, and threaten disgrace and injury.”

“What amount of bail is required?” asked the old gentleman, in a thoughtful tone, after Handy had ceased speaking.

“Four thousand dollars.”

“Four thousand dollars!”

“Yes a most exorbitant bail. And it is the fact of such a large security having been required, that troubles Henry so much, though I tell him that it does not reflect upon him, but upon the party who stands the prosecution.”

“Certainly it does not reflect upon him. It only shows that his evidence is considered of great importance, and that a strong barrier is to be put in the way of his absenting himself at the time of the trial. Of course I must pay his bail, and it might as well be done at once. Will you go with me to the Court-room?”

“O, certainly, sir! Certainly!” was Handy’s ready and pleased response, as he rose from his chair. In a few moments after, he left the store, and, in company with old Mr. Ware, took his way to the State House.

CHAPTER 12.

“I have passed safely another dangerous strait, with rocks and reefs on every side,” said Ware to his friend, the next day, as they sat conferring in regard to some future course of action. “With such a pilot as your very excellent self at the helm, I begin to feel as if I shall yet gain the desired haven.”

“*The devil is good to his own*, you know, Harry. We must put our trust in him, and I doubt not but that he will be true to the end.”

“So I begin to feel. Still, doubt and uncertainty hang darkly over the future.”

“So did it yesterday, in regard to bail. Yet, when the effort was once made, how the difficulty vanished, like smoke!”

“But the Attorney General is not to be beguiled quite so easily as my old man. I’m sadly afraid that nothing can be made out of him that he will go on his own course, steadily, in spite of all we may do or say.”

“That is to be feared. Still, past success is to me a pledge that we shall overcome every difficulty.”

With this feeling, our young men saw day after day go by, and week after week, until the thirtieth day of April came, and yet no change had occurred in the aspect of a single dark feature of Ware’s prospects. On the first of May opened a term of the Criminal Court, when, in all probability, the case of the State vs. Pandora would be called. It was about nine o’clock in the evening, that Ware, with an anxious and troubled countenance, called at the residence of Mr. Blackstone, and asked an interview, which was accorded to him.

“I have come, Mr. Blackstone,” he said, with a good deal of embarrassment in his manner, yet in a tone of earnestness, arising almost to entreaty, “to see if I cannot, in some way, prevail on you to pass me over in your call for witnesses in the case of which I have before spoken to you.”

“It is impossible, Mr. Ware. You cannot be set aside,” was the firm reply of the Attorney General. “Your evidence is of the first importance.”

“But Mr. Handy will prove everything that I can. He saw the whole affair.”

“I have before explained to you, Mr. Ware,” said the Attorney General, “precisely my view of the importance of your evidence, and also my view in regard to my own position as prosecuting Attorney for the State. Since then, I have seen no reason for changing my opinion, and must, therefore, adhere to my original design of calling you upon the stand.”

To this, Ware did not reply for some moments, when he said with bitterness—

“From the moment I appear upon that stand, Mr. Blackstone, I may date the utter ruin of my hopes—for it will throw over my *character* a shade of suspicion, which no explanations, if, indeed, I shall be allowed the privilege of making any, can remove. The twentieth of this month “is the day fixed for my marriage with Bell Martin, and if this thing transpires before that day, her father will, I am fully persuaded, come forward with a positive prohibition.”

“On the twentieth did you say?” asked the Attorney.

“Yes, on the twentieth.”

Then there was a long pause, which was at length broken by Mr. Blackstone, who said—

“Come and see me tomorrow evening, Mr. Ware. In the mean time, I will give this matter all the thought I possibly can.”

With this assurance, the young man withdrew.

“Here is a matter in which I feel somewhat at a loss how to act,” mused the attorney, after he was alone. “If the marriage of this young man is to take place as early as the twentieth, I can easily keep the case back until that affair is all settled to his satisfaction. But will it be *right* for me to do so? That is the question. May not justice to all parties, and more especially to Miss Martin and her family, require that this trial should be permitted to come on in the natural order of things? If it makes any developments in regard to young Ware that are discreditable to him, it is far better that they should know it *before* his marriage than afterwards. And, more than that, it is, to my mind, very questionable, indeed, whether I have any *right*, from private or individual considerations, to interfere, even in the slightest degree, with the regular and orderly progress and succession of public business. Certainly such an act would be of very doubtful character, and I cannot think that I would be right in *deviating from my official duties* from a regard to any individual’s feelings, prospects or interests.”

Such were the views which a good deal of reflection had measurably confirmed in the mind of Mr. Blackstone, when Henry Ware called in to see him on the next evening.

“Has any way occurred to you, in which it will be in your power to screen me in the coming trial?” asked the young man, with a look and a tone of concern, as soon as he was seated.

“But one way has occurred. Yet I do not feel at liberty to adopt it,” replied Mr. Blackstone.

“Why not?”

“Because it would be a *private interference* with the orderly course of public business. And that, it seems to me, no Judicial functionary has a right to make.”

“To what do you allude?”

“As your marriage is to take place on the twentieth, it would be a very easy matter to let other cases, which come after this one on the docket, precede it, so that you need not make your appearance here until after that date.”

“The very thing that I intended suggesting to you this evening. Surely, that can be done without compromising, in any sense, either justice or principle.”

“Not as I view the subject.”

“How so?”

“I do not know. Mr. Ware, that you will appreciate my views, especially at this time. However, I will give them. As a public officer, I ought not to regard any man’s private relations in society, so much as to make them supersede or halt the regular operations of justice. Yours is a case in point. You wish me to put off a certain trial, in which you are to appear as witness, beyond a specified date—in order that the disgrace, or whatever you may call it, which will result from your so appearing, may not have the effect of preventing your marriage with an heiress. Now, it is clear to my mind, that with *your private affairs*, I have nothing to do. My business is to prosecute offences against the State, according to the legal forms.”

“But my dear sir,” broke in Ware, “what possible detriment can the State suffer, by the postponement of a prosecution for a few days? Are not postponements affairs of constant occurrence?”

“True. But they are all governed by *legal* considerations. As for instance, the alleged absence of an important witness, or other incapacities on the part of either the prosecution or defense, to meet the questions at issue. But your case is one that has relation to *private matters*, and those alone, and cannot be admitted as a reason for postponement.”

“I cannot, Mr. Blackstone, agree with the distinction you make.”

“I did not suppose that you could, Mr. Ware, for the simple reason that it has reference to a matter which deeply concerns you, personally. As regards myself, I stand on different ground, and can look at the subject in a very different aspect. I view it abstracted from all personal interest, as a matter of *simple right*.”

“Surely you cannot call it right, to blast, without provocation, without any adequate reason for doing so—the prospects of a man who never injured you.”

“Mr. Ware,” said the attorney, in a firm and decided tone, while he looked him steadily and somewhat sternly in the face, “when I accepted my present office, it was with the solemn determination to be influenced by no man, personally, while engaged in the discharge of its duties. Were you my brother, sir, I would act as I am now doing. And, let me say to you, that the more I reflect upon this matter, the more deep is my conviction that I ought not to deviate from the course I have declared, in this case above all which have ever come under my notice. If you were in improper company, that was, I presume, the result of loose habits and a love for improper associates. In the course of events, this fact has come out, or is about to come out, just as you are preparing to marry a young and innocent maiden. Its exposure, you fear, will cause a dissolution of your engagement. If I understand you right, you are *deceiving* both the maiden and her parents in regard to your *real character*, which, if known, would cause them to reject you at once. And shall I, as a lover of justice, as a good citizen, as a father—protect you in my official capacity? No, sir! I would resign my office before I would betray the sacred trust placed in my hands!”

“You do me injustice,” urged the young man. “I am not in association with gamblers, as you infer. In a thoughtless moment, I was induced, by a friend, to go into Pandora’s rooms, and while there, consent to play a game or two with my friend and a stranger, which stranger proved to be Pandoras himself. Fifteen minutes only, had elapsed before the quarrel took place. Thus, you see, that an undeserved odium will attach to my name from this *one indiscreet act*.”

“You must *take the consequences of your own conduct*, Mr. Ware. If your statement can be substantiated to Miss Martin’s parents—no difficulty, I presume, will occur.”

“You will not, then, stay proceedings in the case?”

“No, sir; not a day!”

“When do you think it will be reached?”

“In two or three days, at the farthest.”

With this decisive information, Ware arose, and bowing to Mr. Blackstone, in silence, withdrew.

The next morning brought the two young men together, whose sayings and doings have occupied, thus far, so much of the reader’s attention.

“Did you see Blackstone, last evening?” asked Handy, as they met.

Yes, and had my labor, for my pains.”

“Wouldn’t he put off the trial?”

“No—not a day!”

“Was he positive?”

“Yes. He said that he wouldn’t put it off if his own brother stood in my place.”

“Of course not! But who believes him? Not I.”

“It seems as if the very *fates* were against me,” said Ware, in a gloomy tone.

“Don’t despair. I think I’ve hit the right thing at last.”

“How? What is it? Speak out, and let me hear at once.” This was said in a quick, excited tone.

“Hear, and judge for yourself. I went last night to see Pandora, against whom, you know, this prosecution is got up. After sounding him pretty thoroughly, I found that, for a *consideration*—you know he goes in for that, and, what is more, is as keen now as he was before the axe of justice hung suspended over his head—that, for a *consideration*, he would cause his lawyer to have the trial put off on a plea of not being ready, until after the twentieth.”

CHAPTER 13. The TWO BRIDES

“Are you sure of that!” asked Ware eagerly, his whole expression and manner changing.

“O yes. He can be bought over to do anything. And this is a matter that will cost him neither risk nor labor.”

“Will he take a *promise* to pay?”

“O yes. He will consider it a *debt of honor*, you know.”

“Precisely. Go then, Tom, see him at once, and make sure of him at any price. When the arrangement is completed, just let me know the amount, and I will fork over my due bill in a little less than no time at all. It’s all safe now, I can see. Hurrah!”

“H-u-s-h, Harry! don’t go into theatrics,” was the reply of Tom Handy, as he turned to the door, on his prompt errand to the gambler.

On the evening of the twentieth of May—an interview of touching interest occurred in one of the chambers of Mr. Martin’s elegant mansion—an interview never forgotten by the two who alone were its participants. Those two were *Bell Martin* and the gentle, pure-minded, affectionate *Mary*, before introduced to the reader. Both were to become brides on that evening; but under what different external circumstances. A large and brilliant company had already begun to assemble in honor of the one; while the other was waiting the arrival of her humble lover, to convey her, alone with himself, in Mr. Martin’s family carriage, to the minister’s, from whence she was to be taken to a small house, which Mr. Lane had furnished neatly and modestly, and there to be introduced as its mistress. One was arrayed in rich and attractive garments, and adorned with a profusion of jewels—while the other had on a simple dress of pure white, and, as an ornament, a single rose, half concealed beneath the folds of her glossy hair. The one instantly attracted the eye, and awoke a sentiment of admiration; while the *unobtrusive innocence* and *native gracefulness* of the other, touched the heart with a feeling of tenderness and interest.

The imagination of Bell was full of undefined but pleasing images, and her eyes bright and sparkling. Mary had, on the contrary, a thoughtful, sad and subdued look, while her eyes swam in moisture, and the tears seemed ready at every moment to spring forth upon her cheek. The tender interest which was felt for Bell by the latter, would not permit anyone else to array her for the bridal occasion, even though her own marriage was to take place on the same evening. She felt it to be her last sad privilege to render this service, at the period when their paths, which had long run side by side through pleasant and flowery scenes, were about diverging; and thus feeling, she claimed the privilege.

The scene of busy preparation at last over, with the degree of interest which had prevented a free interchange of affectionate parting words between the two maidens, they now stood looking at each other with feelings of warmer affection than had ever yet swelled their bosoms—but the love of the humble maiden was deeper and tenderer than that of her companion.

“Dear Bell!” she said, laying her light hand gently upon her, and looking with a tearful smile in her face—“you must forgive the freedom with which I address you, for at this moment you seem so dear to me, as if you were my own sister—that I must speak as I feel. Will you sometimes think of me, Bell? I leave the only home and the only friends I have ever known; and even though I shall go to one who loves me tenderly, and who has my heart’s first, best, purest affections, yet I shall often think of you, and sigh for the home and friends of my early and happy years.”

“Think of you, Mary! Dear Mary! *Sister* Mary, I should rather say,” Bell replied, in a voice of earnest affection, as she drew her arm around the gentle maiden. “How can I ever forget the self-sacrificing companion of my childhood and maturer years? You have come to me, to all of us, Mary, a true and faithful heart. This we have ever felt, and for it, we have ever loved you. But now, as we are about separating, I feel for you a purer and deeper love. You are as my sister.”

“For you,” replied Mary, “I have long felt a like tender regard, and now, that a new, important and momentous change is about taking place in our histories, that feeling toward you assumes a hue of sadness that I cannot remove.”

“Why should it be sad, Mary? I am happy—and before me is a brilliant prospect. Rather should the feeling be mine for you, thus rending all the pleasant ties of early years—thus leaving the bosom of that family in which you have been loved and cherished, to stand up alone in the world beside one, who, no matter how tenderly he may love you, cannot fill every place in a woman’s heart.”

“All that I feel. Bell,” was Mary’s reply, made in a tone which had recovered its calmness. “But I shall be happy, perfectly happy, according to the measure of my *anticipations*. You, I fear, will not.”

“What reason have you for so fearing, Mary?”

“I have no brilliant expectations—you have. Rarely, I believe, so says the world’s eventful history, are such expectations *realized*. If not in your case, then will come unhappiness. I have thought of this often and often, when I have heard your expressions of delight in anticipation of coming joy, and often have felt like checking them by a word. Tonight I cannot help doing so. O, then, remember, dear Bell! that the *surest way to happiness*—is to *expect little from mere external things*. These are ever changing and passing away. And, above all, let me urge you not to look for *unalloyed pleasures* in your married life. There will be—there must be in the very nature of things—uncongenialities between your

husband and yourself, and if I have formed of man's character, a true idea—the wife will have much to learn in the way of *submission*. This lesson will be harder for you than for me.”

“Why harder, Mary?”

“For this reason. Both Mr. Lane and myself have, thus far in life, moved in subordinate positions, and have been in the daily habit of submitting our wills to others—of *preferring others to ourselves*. Less, then, will be required of me in the way of submission to his will, and what is required, will cheerfully be given. But your case is different. Neither Mr. Ware nor yourself know much about this yielding to others. He will, as a man, from the confirmed habit of having his own way in almost everything, expect you to yield early, every point of difference to him. This you will find a hard lesson, indeed, to learn; and it will, unless you *guard* and *deny* yourself very much—be the fruitful source of much unhappiness.”

“Why do you talk so strangely to me, at this time, Mary?” asked Bell, in a half-offended tone.

“Because I love you,” was the quick reply of Mary, as she leaned her head upon the shoulder of Bell, and gave way to tears. The tone and words of the latter had wounded her feelings.

“Forgive me, Mary,” said Bell, after a few moments, “for the unkind manner in which I spoke. Your words seemed like a reflection upon *Henry*—and that, with my present feelings toward him, I cannot bear.”

“Mary, you are waited for,” said a servant, opening the chamber door.

“Say that I will be ready in a few moments,” replied Mary, and then the servant withdrew.

“And so the time has come, at last, for our parting,” was the remark of Bell, in a tender and subdued voice, after they were again alone. “I shall miss you every day, and every hour, Mary—and so will everyone in this house. What you have just said, comes back upon me now, and it may be too true. If so, your way, humble and unseen though it is—will be a *happier* one than mine.”

“With a sincere heart, fervently do I pray. Bell, that no *shadow* may ever fall upon you—that your path may be amid sunshine and flowers. But, should this not be the case—should it so happen, in the mysterious permission of Divine Providence, that, in some future time, your *pillow* become a *thorny* one—that even a single sorrow presses upon your heart—let it be my privilege to speak to you, if I can do no more, words of comfort—to pillow your head upon my bosom. If no other heart remains true to its first love for you, mine will still pour out its *treasures of affection*, and be blessed in giving.”

Silently, and with full hearts, did the two maidens then fold each other in their arms. When, at last, this earnest embrace was over, tears were on the cheeks of both. Then came a long, fond gaze into each other's eyes, and an earnest grasping of the hands.

“Farewell, Bell!”

“Farewell, Mary”—were uttered with choking voices. In the next minute Bell stood alone in her chamber, and Mary's hand was in that of her lover.

CHAPTER 14.

We must now *pass over the events of the next five years*, and introduce our characters at the end of that period. It is unnecessary to tell the reader, that the marriage of Bell Martin has been an unhappy one. Scarcely a week elapsed, before some act or word from her husband had chilled the warm current of joyous affection that was gushing out toward him. How could it be otherwise? She, young, innocent and confiding, with her woman's heart full of tenderness and truth—and he, all uninfluenced by a feeling or a principle which was not *purely selfish*. The coldness with which he received, from the very first, her acts of exuberant fondness, which were but the natural expressions of the love she felt for him, soon taught her one of the hardest lessons a young wife has to learn; and many months had not passed away before this lesson, if forgotten in a moment of warmer feelings, was enforced by words.

It is not often that the young wife, even when regarded with the deepest and purest affection—finds that affection *manifested* toward her in what her heart recognizes as its true expression. Nor does she ever, or, at least, but rarely indeed, meet that warm reciprocation in word and act, for which her heart yearns. This is the natural consequence of differences in mental makeup between male and female. But where the affection that exists is a genuine one—the husband gradually learns to manifest more in word and act, the love he feels, and the wife to perceive far more in a look or word, or tone, or action—than she did in the first months, or years of wedded life. But, alas! Where, as in the case of Bell, not the first pure emotion of love, has even stirred the icy surface of a husband's feelings—how sad must be the condition of a wife!

The *coldness* which soon manifested itself in her case, was followed by *neglect*, and a seeming, as it was a real, *indifference* toward her. This came earlier, from the fact, that the revelations on the trial of Pandora, the gambler, destroyed Mr. Martin's confidence in Ware—though it did not weaken Bell's affection for her husband. Indeed, she took Henry's own version of the matter as the true one, which version made him an *innocent victim* of circumstances.

Following these revelations, came the open and avowed determination of the young man not to *bind himself down* to the plodding duties of a *petty lawyer*, as he expressed it; accompanied by requests for liberal sums of money, which were refused. Finding that Henry had, in a most heartless and cruel manner, deceived them, and that he was now disposed to act out his *real*, but, for a few months, *concealed* character—both his own father and the father of Bell, felt called upon to restrict him in the use of money, to the end that he might feel compelled to apply himself to his profession.

But this *result* did not follow. He was too deeply and thoroughly *corrupted*, and had, in his friend Thomas Handy, too ready a *prompter to evil*. Money he wanted—and money he must have. Through the influence of Bell with her mother, and by taking from her hands, freely given it is true, nearly every dollar which she received for her own use—he obtained small supplies. These furnished the *means* of resort to the only way of filling his purse that he could think of—the *gaming table*. Of course, he was, for some time, a constant loser in the main—temporary and *permitted* success—being followed, surely, by the entire loss of his little capital, and, very frequently, by his becoming involved in *debts of honor*—to pay which, gave him no little trouble.

For five years, had he persevered in his evil courses, growing all the while more and more *indifferent*, or *openly unkind* toward his wife. Having no further cause for the concealment of *his real character and feelings*, he took little pains to appear what he was not, or to regulate his conduct by the *rule of appearances*. As neither his father nor the father of Bell would support the young couple in an establishment of their own, and for the very best of reasons—Ware continued to reside with his wife at the house of Mr. Martin. But even this constant mingling with her family, failed to influence his conduct toward her. Rarely did he accompany her abroad, and never did he pretend to deny himself anything for her sake, or seem to feel drawn toward home, even though *two pleasant children* had come to light it up with their sweet smiles, and to fill it with the music of their happy voices. Rarely did he come in before one, two, and sometimes three, in the morning, and then, frequently, in a state of partial *intoxication*. Added to this, he had grown, of late, abstracted and sullen in his manner, rarely joining in any conversation with the family, and, sometimes, not coming home for two or three days at a time, and then much under the *influence of liquor*.

One day, about the period indicated in the opening of this chapter. Lane, the chief clerk of Mr. Martin, who had been engaged in settling the Bank account for the previous three months, came up to him, holding five checks in his hand, each for a thousand dollars, and said—

“Mr. Martin, I find a difference in our accounts with the Bank, of just five thousand dollars—and here are five cancelled checks, of one thousand dollars each, for which I find no corresponding dates or numbers in our check-book. What can this mean?”

Mr. Martin took the checks from the hand of his clerk, and, after examining them attentively for a moment or two, said with a look of alarm—

“These are *forgeries*, Mr. Lane!”

“So I feared,” was the clerk's reply, in a voice of concern.

A silence of some moments ensued, when Mr. Martin asked—

“Do your suspicions fall upon anyone?”

“They do not. The discovery of this discrepancy between the two accounts, and the fact of your pronouncing the checks to be forgeries, are so recent, that I have not had time to think beyond the mere circumstance that a forgery has been committed.”

“Do not, then, allude, in any way to the fact; I will inform the Bank, and leave its officers to take their own measures, as the loss will fall upon the institution.”

It was about eleven o’clock on the next day, that Mr. Martin was sent for, in great haste, by the runner of the Bank in which his account was kept. He repaired at once to the banking house, and was shown into the private room of the Cashier.

“For what purpose am I summoned?” he asked, a feeling of alarm coming over him as he looked steadily into the officer’s face, and saw that it wore a painful expression.

“We have already detected the *forger* of your check!” the Cashier said.

“And *secured* him?”

“Yes.”

“Who is he?”

“Sorry, indeed, am I to say, Mr. Martin—that it is your own son-in-law!”

“Henry Ware!” ejaculated the merchant, his face blanched to an ashy paleness.

“It is, alas! too true, Mr. Martin. The unhappy young man is now in the custody of an officer of the police.”

At this news, Mr. Martin sunk into a chair, and shading his face with his hand, sat for some time before his agitated feelings were sufficiently calmed to allow his thoughts to come into distinct forms. At length he said—

“And so the matter is already in the hands of the police?”

“Yes, sir. A check was presented for five thousand dollars, which the teller at once detected as a forgery. The young man was detained, and an officer sent for.”

“I am sorry for this,” replied Mr. Martin, with a troubled countenance. “Why did you not first send for me.”

“That course would have been pursued, had I known the young man at the moment of his detection. The fact that it was the son of old Mr. Ware, and the husband of your daughter—came to my knowledge too late.”

“Where is he now?”

“He was taken to the Mayor’s office a few minutes before you came in.”

“Has Mr. Ware been informed of the facts?”

“Not through me.”

Mr. Martin waited to hear no more, but hurried away to the Mayor’s office, where he found the young man undergoing an examination. The testimony of the teller was clear as to the fact of his having presented the check pronounced a forgery, and the Mayor was only waiting the arrival of Mr. Martin, for whom an officer had been despatched, to have the check pronounced genuine or spurious. Reluctantly he was compelled to say that the check had been forged. An order for Ware’s commitment to prison, to await his trial at the Quarter Sessions, followed next in order. To prevent this, Mr. Martin entered into a recognizance in the sum of ten thousand dollars, for his appearance at Court.

This done, the old man turned away sternly, without letting his eyes rest upon the unhappy young man. From the Mayor’s office, he went to his store. After informing Mr. Lane of the painful discovery that had been made, he bent his steps homeward, with a troubled and heavy heart. On entering the family sitting-room, he found no one in but Bell, and one of his little grandchildren, a beautiful boy, who was playing about in happy unconsciousness of the *guilt* of one parent, and the *wretchedness* of the other.

“Where is your mother, Bell?” he asked with an expression of countenance which made the blood feel cold about the heart of his child.

“She has gone out,” was the reply, while his daughter looked earnestly and inquiringly into his face. Then followed a long silence, during which Mr. Martin was debating the question whether he should at once, and plainly, unfold to his child the conduct of her husband—or leave her to discover it in some other way.

The manner of her father convinced Bell that something was wrong, and her thoughts turned instinctively to her husband. His long continued silence, at length became so distressing, filling her mind as it did with vague and terrible fears—that she could bear it no longer.

“Father,” she said, in a tone of forced calmness, “something is the matter, I know. If it concerns me, do not keep me in suspense! I can bear painful news from your lips, better than from another’s.”

“To you, my dear, suffering child,” replied the old man, in a voice that trembled, coming to her side as he spoke, “the news I have to tell, will be painful indeed.”

“Does it concern Henry?” asked Bell, eagerly and quickly, looking up into her father’s face with pale and quivering lips.

“It does concern that wretched young man, Bell.”

“O, father! Speak out plainly! How does it concern him?”

“He has been detected in the crime of forgery!”

“Father! it cannot be—it is not true!” exclaimed Bell, starting suddenly to her feet, an indignant expression glancing across her face.

“Would to Heaven that it were not so, my child!—But it is, indeed, too true.”

“Where—where is he, father?”

“I do not know, and but for your sake, I would say that I did not care. He was arrested this morning, and carried before the Mayor, where the crime was fully proved. I was present, and paid his bail to prevent his being taken to prison.”

“Upon *whom* was the forgery committed?” asked Bell, in a firm tone, while her face was deadly pale.

“That is of no consequence, Bell.”

“But I wish to know, father.”

“You know enough, already, my child; more, I fear, than your poor afflicted heart can bear.”

“Was it on *you*?” persevered the daughter.

“Bell!”

“Say, father! Was it upon *you*?”

“It *was*, my child,” replied the old man, after a moment’s hesitation. “But that does not change, in any way, the features of the case.”

The half-expected, but dreaded reply of her father, smote heavily upon Bell’s heart.

“Oh, how could he have done that! How could he have done that!” she murmured, in a low, indistinct tone, dropping her head upon her bosom. In a few moments the tears came gushing forth, while her whole body was convulsed with violent sobs. Her little boy, seeing the distress of his mother, ran to her side in alarm, and climbing up into her lap, threw his arms around her neck, and while his tears mingled with hers, begged her, in lisping accents, not to cry!

“Try and bear it as well as you can, my dear child,” said Mr. Martin, after the violence of Bell’s emotion had subsided in a degree.

“But, father, this is hard to bear.”

“I know it Bell. But what we are *compelled* to bear, should be made as light as possible. Your husband has, from the first, shown himself not only to be an *unprincipled* man, but has treated you with a *coldness* and *cruelty*, that it seems to me ought long ago, to have utterly estranged your affections from him. It ought, then not to be hard to bear a *permanent separation* from him. To be to him—as if he were not.”

“Father! Do not talk so about my husband, and the father of my dear little ones! I cannot bear it. If *I* am willing to endure all this coldness and estrangement, you ought not to complain. But why do you talk of a permanent separation?” And the face of the young wife grew paler still.

“Are you not aware, Bell, that the *crime of forgery* is punishable by long years of solitary confinement in the penitentiary? This must be your husband’s inevitable fate, if his case should come to trial, which I presume will never take place.”

“How can that be prevented?”

“By his going away, and leaving me to forfeit the ten thousand dollars bail.”

To this Bell made no reply, but sat in a musing, dreamy attitude, forgetful of all around her. The *cup of her misery* seemed full.

As for old Mr. Martin, his mind was agitated by many conflicting thoughts and painful emotions. Family pride was, with him, a strong feeling. The unfortunate marriage of his daughter, besides its other painful concomitants, deeply wounded this feeling, and had caused him to cherish much *bitterness* toward Henry Ware. Now this pride was destined to receive a more powerful blow, in the *publicity* of the fact that the husband of his daughter had proved a forger!

Hurriedly, yet involuntarily, did both father and daughter, each almost entirely forgetful of the other’s presence, review the past five or six years. Alas! how had they mocked all the *bright promise* of earlier days. Could there have been a *more utter shipwreck* of a young heart’s best affections? Could the father’s tender hopes for his child, have been more deeply and incurably blighted?

As for the latter, the more he thought about the conduct of his daughter’s husband—the more his *anger* was aroused against him. The final conclusion of his mind was, that Henry Ware would never again cross the threshold of his house, nor Bell, if he could prevent it, ever see him again!

“No good can come out of it,” he argued to himself, “and much harm in the necessary disturbance of my poor child’s mind. Besides, he has not only violated every honorable principle in his fellowship and connection with my family, but stands, now, in the position of a *criminal*, who has deliberately broken the laws of his country. No, no. He shall never enter this house again!”

CHAPTER 15.

Nearly a mile away from the fashionable neighborhood, in which the elegant mansion of Mr. Martin attracted every eye, stood a neat little dwelling, simple on the outside, and modestly arranged within. Here lived Mr. Lane and Mary, his pure-minded, loving wife. Two dear little ones made up the number of their household treasures—sweet, innocent children, who bore in their young countenances, the miniature image of their mother's face. Blessed indeed were they in the marriage union! Every passing day but endeared them more and more to each other, for almost every day developed in the *character* of each, some new *moral beauty perceptible* to the other.

In regard to external circumstances, they had no cause for complaint. The liberal salary which Mr. Martin paid to one in whom he had such good cause for reposing almost unlimited confidence, was a full five hundred dollars each year more than was required to meet all expenses incident to household economy. Already had he been able to purchase the pleasant little dwelling into which his dear ones were gathered, and now he was depositing the surplus of his salary in a savings bank, in view of accumulating a small capital with which, at some future time, to enter into business.

The discovery of Ware as the forger of Mr. Martin's checks pained him very deeply—not so much on the young man's account, for he had never regarded him in any other light than that of a cold-hearted, unprincipled villain, capable of this or any other act which would serve his selfish purposes; but for the sake of Mr. Martin, and especially for poor Bell, did he feel pained exceedingly.

"Mary," he said, on coming home at dinner time, "I have bad news to tell you. Henry Ware has been arrested for forgery, and the fact fully proved."

"Poor Bell!" exclaimed Mary, striking her hands suddenly together. "Poor Bell! It will kill her!"

"It may go hard now, Mary; but it will be better for her in the end."

"How so?"

"They will be *permanently separated*. He will have to go away from here before his trial comes on, and leave Mr. Martin to pay ten thousand dollars bail, which he was foolish enough to involve himself in—or be sentenced for four or five years imprisonment in the Penitentiary."

"If he goes away, as you say, cannot he return after the trial is over?"

"O no. The crime is one against the State, and nothing will do but the legal penalty. He can never return, if he goes away, without being subject to a revival of the prosecution. As I said before, I have no doubt but that it will be far better for her never to see him again."

"But you must remember that he is her husband, and the father of her children. That he called out the first ardent feelings of a young and affectionate heart; feelings that even *cruel neglect and wrong* have not been able to subdue. You must remember that she still looks up to and rests upon him as her husband."

"How can she thus rest, Mary, when there is not in his character a single healthy moral principle? I confess that I do not understand it. She I know, to be innocent and pure-minded. How, then, can she cling to one so *utterly unprincipled* as Henry Ware?"

"He is her husband!" was Mary's emphatic reply.

"Still I do not understand it."

"The reason is plain."

"What is it?"

"You have not a *woman's heart*."

"True, Mary, and that may explain it. But I will not say that it does."

"How long will it be before the trial comes?" asked Mary, after a thoughtful pause.

"About a month, I think."

"A month? Until that time, he can, of course, remain in Philadelphia."

"Yes, if he chooses to do so."

"I wish, for the sake of Bell, that the trial would come on in a week."

"Why so!"

"Because in that case, she would the sooner be separated from him."

"My own impression is that she will never see him again."

"Why?"

"I cannot believe that Mr. Martin will permit Ware to enter his house. He was terribly incensed against him."

"That will not prevent Bell from seeing him. She loves him too well, even though he has broken her heart. If he is not allowed to come into her father's house, she will go to his father's, or any where else, for the purpose of meeting him. I wish she could give him up; but I fear that she cannot."

"She will have to give him up soon, Mary."

"I know it. But she will not do it until the last moment. Of that I am sure."

“Cannot *you* influence her in the matter?”

“Not so far as to prevent her meeting him. And, indeed, I could not urge her upon this subject. He is her husband, and she loves him deeply. Why should she not be permitted the *sad pleasure of a few stolen interviews with him*, before they are parted, perhaps forever?”

“Would it not be well for you to go over and see her this afternoon?”

“O, yes. I made up my mind to go as soon as I learned the painful news. Since *Fanny’s* marriage and removal to New York, there has been no one but myself to whom she has felt free to tell all her feelings, and thus find relief in their expression.”

It was about four o’clock, on the same afternoon, that a gentle tap at Bell’s chamber door aroused her from a state of gloomy abstraction. Her low, half-reluctant “come in,” was answered by the entrance of Mary. They were in each other’s arms in a moment, the tears gushing from the eyes of both. For many minutes, they were together in silence. At last, the feelings of each became subdued.

“O Mary! is not this dreadful!” said Bell at length, the tears flowing afresh.

“It is indeed dreadful, Bell,” replied Mary, as soon as she could command her voice. “And, as much as my heart yearns for the ability, I know not how to offer you words of comfort.”

“That is in the power of no one, Mary! For me there is nothing left, but *stern endurance*. Oh, Mary! To think that Henry should have been so mad, so wicked, as to commit such a crime! I could have borne all his *neglect* of me, and still lived on, cherishing, as I have done, the hope that a day would come when all the attractions which won him away from me, would lose their power over him, and then he would be to me all that I could desire. That then, he would discover how deeply and fondly I had loved him, through neglect and unkindness, and be constrained to give me back his heart in return. But alas! alas! All these long and ardently cherished hopes, have been scattered, in a moment, to the winds! He has been guilty of crime, and must flee, like a hunted criminal—or, remaining, receive the stern sentence of the law for his crimes.”

“Have you seen him since morning?” asked Mary, after a pause.

“No, Mary. And what is more, father says he shall never enter this house again. I cannot blame him, but I feel it to be very hard. He is my husband still, and I cannot give him up.”

“But is it not better that you should not see him again, Bell? The interview would only have the effect to wound still deeper, your already crushed feelings.”

“I *must* see him, Mary, and I *will* see him,” replied Bell with a sudden energy. “Can you suppose, for a moment, that I would let him go away, never again to return—to be an *outcast* in the world, a pursued and *hunted* man—and not give him a wife’s parting blessing? No, no Mary! I must and will see him, and that many times before we part, perhaps, forever.”

“Do not act too broadly against your father’s desire, Bell,” urged Mary.

“He is my husband!” was the firm reply; “and now, when all turn from him—shall his wife give him up? No, Mary! That would be a sin against nature. I cannot and I will not give him up!”

The manner of Bell showed that she was resolute in her determination, and therefore Mary did not urge her further upon a subject so painful to both.

CHAPTER 16.

When old Mr. Ware received the painful and mortifying news of his son's crime—he became deeply incensed, and when he met him, upbraided him with his conduct in bitter terms.

"You are no longer my son! I disown you from this moment!" he said in angry tones. "My son could not be guilty of baseness and crime!"

"Blame *yourself* alone, as I do," was the young man's brief, but stern reply.

"What do you mean Henry?" asked the father, still in a voice of anger.

"I mean, simply, that in consequence of your refusal to supply me with the money required to make such an appearance as a young man in my station in society had a right to make—I was driven to the gambling-table, where *debts of honor* accumulated against me to such an extent, that I could wipe them out no other way than by forgery. Mr. Martin, like yourself, has played toward me a *niggardly part*, and upon his purse, I first commenced operations. In doing so, I merely took what he *should* long since have given. I do not consider my offence a *criminal one*."

This mode of reasoning excited Mr. Ware still more, especially as there was an *air of insolence* and harshness about his son, that ill became one in his peculiar circumstances. A keen retort trembled on his tongue, but he suppressed it, and turning away quickly, left the young man to his own reflections. These were not of a very pleasant nature, for he was yet undetermined, fully, in regard to future action. To *leave the city* would be, of course, his first movement, unless prevented from so doing. But where to hide himself away from the law's searching glances, he knew not, nor how he should cut off entirely from every resource but his own exertions, as he expected to be, now that both Mr. Martin and his father were so incensed against him, maintain himself even in an humble position.

On the next morning the newspapers teemed with various accounts of the forgery—and with many allusions to the families of both Mr. Ware and Mr. Martin. Some few hesitated not to assert that the young man would, of course, escape the legal penalty of his crime, seeing that his father and father-in-law were rich men. These things were deeply galling to both families, and to all who stood in any way connected with them.

Painfully mortified at the position in which the discovery of his conduct had placed him, Henry Ware shrank away in his father's house, from an exposure of himself to the public eye. The only one there who seemed to feel for him, was his mother. She could not frown upon her child, now that every tongue spoke against him. Much as she abhorred his conduct, she could not resist the *pleadings of maternal love* for her child.

She had been with him alone for nearly an hour, on the morning following the discovery of his mad act, and her conversation and manifestation of deep affection, wounded and bruised as it was, had softened his feelings a good deal, when a letter, addressed to him, was handed in. He broke the seal hurriedly, and read, not unmoved, the following touching epistle from his wife:

"My Dear Husband, Since the dreadful news of yesterday morning, I have been waiting with a fluttering heart to see you, or to hear from you. Now, I am told by my father, that you are no more to enter these walls, and that I am never again to hold communication with you. But this, no human being has power to say, but yourself. Are you not my husband? my husband whom I have loved with a depth and devotedness that tongue cannot tell? And shall I not cling to you until the last? Cling to you with a closer and more self-renouncing love, as all others turn from you? Yes! If I offend all the world, I will still love my husband! Love him through evil report and good report. Thus far, Henry, I have loved you under *coldness* and *neglect*—pardon my allusion to the past—loved you, when the *allurements of the world* won you away from your wife, and made the smile on her lip seem all unattractive. Now, the *world* turns from you—but your wife still remains true in her affection, as the needle to the pole. Will you not now love her for her unwavering devotion? O, Henry! If you knew how my poor heart yearns for pleasant words, and tender looks—you would no longer withhold them. Where are you? I send this to your father's, in the hope that it may reach your hand. Should it do so, send me word where you are, and, oh! how eagerly will I fly to you! Yours, in life and death, BELL."

After reading this letter, Ware sat for a moment in thoughtful silence, and then handed it to his mother. After glancing hurriedly through it, she returned it with the remark, "Henry, among all your faults, not the least has been your conduct toward your wife. Bell has not deserved the coldness and neglect with which you have treated her."

"Perhaps not," was the half impatient reply. "But that cannot now be helped. As it is, I do not see that any good can grow out of our meeting. I must soon leave this, never again to return; and so the quicker she can *forget* me, the better."

"Do not talk in that way, Henry," said Mrs. Ware, interrupting her son. "You cannot, and you must not, deny poor Bell the *melancholy pleasure* of seeing you. Reply to this note at once, and say that you are here. Address her kindly and even tenderly, for tender words will be sweet to her heart just now; and surely, you can give those, if nothing else."

About an hour after, as Bell sat alone with her two children, a note came from her husband. It ran thus:

"My Dear Bell, Your affectionate note has touched my feelings a good deal, and made me conscious of how deeply I have *wounded* a heart whose every pulsation has been true to me. I am now at my father's house, where I shall remain for

a short time, previous to my final departure from this city. Here I can no longer remain in safety . Come and see me.
Yours, HENRY.”

Without an intimation to anyone of her design, Bell instantly repaired to the house of Mr. Ware. Here she held a long interview with her husband, in which more expressions of tenderness fell from his lips, than had greeted her ears since the first few months of their married life hurried pleasantly and rapidly away. It mattered not how *sincere* they were on his part. To her spirit, they were like cool, refreshing dews to the dry and thirsty ground. Dearer than ever, did he seem to her, and more painful than at first, was the idea of a separation.

It was between two and three o'clock in the afternoon when Bell returned. While standing at the door, waiting for the servant to open it, her *father* came up.

“Where have you been, Bell?” he asked, looking her gravely in the face, as soon as they had entered the hall.

“I have been to Mr. Ware’s,” she replied, in a hesitating voice, while her cheek colored, and her eyes fell upon the floor.

“To Mr. Ware’s! and at this time! Why did you go *there*, Bell?”

“It is scarcely necessary for me to tell the reason, father. I went, of course, to see Henry.”

“And after what I said to you this morning’!” rejoined Mr. Martin, in an excited tone.

“Father, he is my husband, and my heart will cling to him until it is broken!” was the daughter’s reply. Then bursting into tears, she glided away, and sought the sanctuary of her own chamber.

“Infatuated girl!” ejaculated Mr. Martin. But his words did not reach her ear.

In despite of argument, remonstrance, persuasion, and every other means resorted to for the purpose of influencing her, Bell repaired regularly to the house of Mr. Ware, and spent hours of each day with her husband. From him, she learned *his plans* in regard to the future. Under the assumed name of *Johnson*, he would repair to New Orleans, and upon a capital of two or three thousand dollars, which his father had promised him at parting, he stated to her that he intended to enter into some business, and try, if possible, to reform himself. As soon as he got a little ahead there, he purposed going to *Cuba*, as a place of *permanent residence*. There he would be free from the threatening penalties of the law, he had so madly violated. The ten thousand dollars for which Mr. Martin would be held liable, were to be paid over by his father when the day of trial came, and it was found that the recognizance had been forfeited.

In all these plans, eagerly as her ear listened for it, there was nothing said about *her* being sent for to join him.

“How soon do you think that you will get fairly into business in New Orleans?” she asked, about a week before the day fixed for his departure.

“In a few months after my arrival there, I hope.”

“Shall I come out to you then?”

The voice of Bell trembled as she asked this question, and the tears filled her eyes.

“Leave your comfortable home, surrounded with luxury and elegance—and join me, an outcast, in a strange city? That idea never crossed my mind, Bell.”

“But it has mine, a hundred and a hundred times,” replied his wife. “Whenever you go—I am ready to follow, and fully prepared to share your lot, be it what it may.”

To this, Ware did not reply for some minutes. Then he said—

“For a time. Bell, I think you had better remain here. I know not what may befall me. It may happen that all my efforts will prove unsuccessful, and that I may find myself far away from home and friends, in sickness and destitution. If such should be the case, I can write freely to you, and through you at least obtain some small *relief*! If success should, however, crown my efforts—then you can readily join me. In fact, I could come up, as far as Baltimore, and meet you there.”

To this arrangement, Bell consented. Two weeks previous to the day of trial, Ware took leave of the few friends who were in the *secret* of his plans, and left Philadelphia. To his mothers and sisters, the parting was painful in the extreme. It was to them as if death were about to separate him from them—yes, worse than death, for it was *dishonor* and *crime*, and the separation was to be *permanent*. Old Mr. Ware assumed a stern aspect, but as he took the hand of his son for the final time, and looked upon his face for the last time perhaps, his feelings gave way.

“God bless you, Harry!” he said in a choking voice, and then turned away hastily to hide his feelings. He might never see the face of his son again—his only son, upon whom he had so often looked in hope and pride, now parting from him, perhaps, forever, and with a *stain upon his character* which nothing could wipe out.

As for Bell, that parting hour was the bitterest of her life. And yet she, of all whom he had left behind him, was the only one that had the feeblest hope of ever again seeing his face. But, fond creature, she dreamed not of the *cold-hearted selfishness* with which he laid his real plans for the future, in regard to her. As to going into business in New Orleans, there was some truth in that; but it was the *business of gambling and cheating*! Fortune, he expected to go often against him, and of course, he would need fresh supplies of money. With Bell and his mother, he determined to keep up a regular correspondence, deceiving them throughout in regard to what he was doing, and as to the real motives of action which governed him.

He knew that he could readily deceive them, and through this deception, he had little doubt but that he could often obtain money. If in this way he could not still manage to drain the purses of his father and Mr. Martin, it was his determination to induce Bell to join him, under the belief that her father, who was deeply attached to his daughter, as he well knew—would transmit *liberal sums* to her in order to keep her, as she had been all her life, above the need of anything that money could procure. Thus, with a degree of *cruel selfishness*, hardly paralleled—did this *wretched young man* lay his plans of future action.

CHAPTER 17.

It was about three years from the time that Henry Ware, exiled by crime from his home and friends, left Philadelphia—that two men sat conversing in a private room of an obscure *tavern* in what was called “Natchez-Under-the-Hill.” Both were evidently young, or, at least, in the earliest prime and freshness of manhood—yet strong lines had already deepened on their foreheads, and every lineament of their countenances bore vividly, the marks of evil and selfish passions long indulged. A skin deeply bronzed, and large black whiskers, meeting under their chins, gave effect to the singularly bold and ferocious aspect of their faces. They sat opposite to each other, at a small square table, upon which were glasses and a decanter, containing nearly a quart of brandy. Each was resting his elbows on the table, and his chin upon his hands, and each was looking the other intently in the face, while they conversed.

“What then, in the devil’s name, is to be done?” one of them asked, in a quick, excited tone, after listening to something which the other had said.

“We must leave here, of course.”

“Of course. But can we get away safely? That’s the question.”

“I think so.”

“How?”

“We must assume a *disguise*.”

“Of what kind?”

To this, the companion replied by taking from his pocket a small package, which he carefully opened, and exhibited two pairs of green spectacles.

“We must shave off our whiskers, and mount a pair of spectacles,” said he with a grin that fell sadly short of a smile, for which it was intended.

“And, in that disguise, return to New Orleans.”

“Yes.”

“But, will we be safe there—if this fellow should take it into his head to die? His connections are rich, and will make great efforts to have us arrested.”

“Let me get once into New Orleans, and I’ll defy them,” replied the companion.

Just at this moment, the door was opened by a coarse, ill-dressed fellow, who entered familiarly, and walking up to the table where the two men sat, each regarding him with a frown, said,

“There are a couple of chaps downstairs, asking for Mr. Johnson and Mr. Smith.”

“They are *not in*, Mike,” one of the men replied.

“Okay. But I’m pretty sure, from their looks, that they will not take my word for it.”

“Indeed!” And the face of the individual thus speaking, turned somewhat pale.

“My name is *Hartly*. Will you remember that, Mike?” said Johnson, or Henry Ware, which was truly his name.

“O yes, sir.”

“And mine is *Haines*. Don’t forget that, Mike,” added Smith, or Tom Handy, Ware’s inseparable companion in evil, who had been, really, as much implicated as himself in the forgeries for which both were now self-banished from home and friends.

“I won’t forget,” replied Mike. “But names are nothing, you know, to these men, who are not going to leave the house until they know who are in it, or I’m mistaken.”

“Keep ’em on the wrong scent for some ten or fifteen minutes, will you, Mike?”

“O, yes. Trust me for that.” And the barkeeper, and *doer-of-all-things-in-general* about the establishment, made his bow, and departed.

As soon as he had withdrawn, the door was locked after him, and the two young men proceeded, hurriedly, first to shave off their whiskers, and then to change their external garments for others that had not been worn by them during their brief professional visit to Natchez. Green spectacles and caps gave the finishing touch to their *metamorphoses*.

“Well, Hartly, do you think you would know me, if we were to meet in the street?” asked Handy, or Haines, as he had newly styled himself turning, to ward his friend.

“I would certainly never suspect that it was you. But how do I look?”

“Like Mr. Hartly, and no one else. Can I say more?”

“And you, like Mr. Haines. Well, I think we may venture to pass the gentlemen who are so kindly waiting for us below.”

“I think so. There, do you hear that bell again?”

“Yes. It is the *Gulnare*’s. She has been ringing for the last five hours, and I suppose will get off now in the course of an hour more. Shall we get on *board* of her?”

“Most certainly! The quicker we can get away from here, the better!”

Everything being carefully packed away in their trunks, the two companions descended, with a careless, indifferent air, to the bar-room, where Mike was busily attending to his customers. As they entered, they were eyed searchingly from head to foot, by two men, whose appearance told plainly enough their business. This scrutiny continued until *Mike* said—

“Good morning, Mr. Hartly! What will you have? Good morning, Mr. Haines!”

“A little brandy and water,” was the reply.

Neither the appearance nor names of the two men corresponding, in any degree, with the descriptions of the individuals, which the *officers*—for such they were—had been directed to arrest for an assault, with intent to kill the son of a wealthy citizen of Natchez, who had come into collision with them at a gambling table—these personages withdrew, in a few moments, their attention from the real objects of their search.

As *Handy* bent over the counter to pay for the brandy they had taken, he pronounced, in a low tone, to Mike, the word, “Gulnare.”

“O, yes,” responded Mike, perfectly comprehending his meaning. And the two walked deliberately away, and repaired to the boat upon which they designed taking passage for New Orleans. In the course of half an hour, Mike appeared with their baggage, and for the very important assistance he had rendered Ware and Handy, received a ten dollar bill, which he pocketed with a grateful smile, and bowing, hurriedly departed.

With fear and trembling did the young men wait for nearly three hours, for the boat to move off, the bell ringing about every quarter of an hour, giving all the town, and the officers of police in particular, notice—so it seemed to them—that they were on board. Six times, during that period, did they have to endure the excruciating anxiety consequent upon as many visits from the *officers* who had put them in such bodily fear at the tavern. And for the last half hour, they were compelled tremblingly to endure their constant presence.

Finally, as everything must have an end, their *suspense* ended. The last prolonged vibrations from the bell echoed along the hills, and died away into silence, as the boat was loosed from her moorings, and fell gently down the stream. Not however, until the engine commenced its vigorous revolutions, and the boat, yielding to its power, shot away from the landing, and the city began to look dim in the distance—did our young men feel at ease. Then they began to breathe more freely.

Truly did they find that, “The way of transgressors is hard.” Both were of wealthy families, and had their habits been correct and their pursuits honorable, they might have occupied good positions in society, with the possession of the most ample means for supplying all their desires. And still more, have had quiet consciences, and lived in the enjoyment of the most enlarged social pleasures. But they chose to transgress both moral and civil laws—and the penalty was visited upon them in perpetual pain of mind. Their evil pursuits, though accompanied with a kind of insane delight, were ever followed by a fear of consequences; or reluctant, and, at times, involuntary self-upbraidings.

The excitement of escape, for so they both esteemed it, being over, neither Ware nor Handy felt much inclined to enter into conversation, but sat silent and thoughtful, musing over past disappointments, or busy with plans for future operations. The reader need scarcely be told that they were *gamblers by profession*.

Toward evening. Ware took up a newspaper and read until dark. Then he went out upon the decks, and commenced pacing backward and forward with a quick step, which evinced more than ordinary excitement of mind. Handy joined him. But few words had passed between them, when the latter said—

“Is it not very strange that your mother does not write to you now, Harry?”

“I have thought so. But the *mystery* is solved.”

“In what way?”

“I see, by a Philadelphia newspaper, which I was looking over in the cabin, that the old man has gone by the board.”

“How? Not dead, I hope?”

“No, not quite that. But he might as well be, for he has become a *bankrupt*.”

“That’s bad, really.”

“Yes, bad for us, for while there was anything to be had, I could drain a little out of his purse; but that is over now. “There is *no getting blood out of a turnip*, you know.”

“It has been some time since you heard from Bell.”

“Yes. And when I did get a letter from her, there was not much in it. Only a paltry hundred dollar-bill.”

“Her father suspects the use she makes of the money she gets from him.”

“So she flints. But I suppose she hasn’t managed it carefully enough. These women never know how to do anything rightly,” was her husband’s unfeeling remark.

“We are beginning to be pretty hard run. *Luck* seems all going against us,” rejoined Handy, after a pause. “Something must be done to raise the wind, or we shall be driven to the wall at last.”

“I’m afraid it will come to the last resort I have before mentioned,” Ware replied.

“What is that?”

“Sending for Bell.”

“Will that do any good? Won’t she, in fact, prove a useless encumbrance?”

“She will be *encumbrance* enough, no doubt. But we must take the evil with the good. That old rascal, her father, loves her too well to let her be anywhere without a liberal supply of all the means necessary to her external comfort. If we get her out here, money must, and will follow her.”

“Are you *sure* of that?”

“Most certain. I know old Martin too well to doubt it.”

“Will she leave her children, and come to you?”

“Yes, with half an invitation. Almost every letter I receive from her is filled with hints or open requests for me to as her to come”

“We can but try the experiment. But suppose it fails. What will you do with Bell?”

“What would *you* do with her?”

“She is your wife.”

“I know. But suppose she were your wife?”

“I would put her in the way of getting back again to her children in double quick time.”

“But suppose she wouldn’t go?”

“Then I would leave her to stay or go, as she liked, while I journeyed elsewhere.”

“My own views, precisely,” was the *heartless response* of Ware.

That evening, and a portion of the next day, were passed by the two young men in the business of studying the characters, and ascertaining, as far as possible, the length of the purses of the different passengers on board the *Gulnare*. These settled to their satisfaction, as far as it was possible for them to settle such matters—the next thing was to introduce *cards* in a way that would create no suspicion as to their real design. This was done on the second evening, and several hours spent in play, during which the loss and gain were but trifling.

On the next morning, after breakfast, cards were again resumed, and rather more skill displayed than on the evening previous. Still, our young men found themselves well matched, and the tide of success, if at all in their favor, scarcely perceptible.

Among the passengers was a young man entrusted with a large sum of money, which was to be paid over to a mercantile house at New Orleans on his arrival there. Being a good player, he prided himself on his skill at cards, much flattered at his success while engaged with Ware, who, finding himself losing steadily at almost every game, was roused to more energetic efforts. Nearly the whole of the third day had been spent in playing, and as night drew on, both Ware and Handy found themselves, instead of winners, almost entirely stripped of their slender stock of money.

After supper, they held a long conference together out upon the decks, and then went to the bar and drank pretty freely. As they entered the cabin again, the young man who had been so successful during that and the preceding day, met them at the door, and said to Ware—

“Well, stranger, what do you say to another match?”

“Ready,” was the brief reply, and then the two sat down, while Handy threw himself into a careless position near the young man, so that he could, if he chose, read his hand at a glance, without much danger of detection.

The first stake was ten dollars. As the cards fell one after the other upon the table, the game showed evidently in favor of the gambler, and terminated on his side.

“Double the stake!” was the brief remark of the young man, as he threw down a twenty dollar bill.

The gambler matched it in silence. This game like the first, resulted in favor of Ware.

“Double again!” said the loser, laying down forty dollars.

“Double it is!” responded Ware, mechanically, suiting the action to the words.

The stranger played now with care and deliberation. But his skill was in vain. The stakes were soon appropriated by his opponent.

“Double!” fell from his lips in a firm tone, as this result followed his more earnest effort to win.

“Double, of course,” was answered with an air of confidence.

Many of the passengers, who had looked on at first carelessly, now began to note the contest with a livelier interest, gathering around the table and watching each card that was played, and calculating the result of every game, which regularly terminated as the first had done. Each time the stakes were doubled, until, finally, they rose to twenty thousand dollars on each side! A breathless interest pervaded the little group of spectators eagerly watching the result of the game that was to assign to one party or the other, the large sum so madly risked by the infatuated young man. As before, the cards came up in favor of Ware.

“Double,” was the hoarse response to this, and again the contest was renewed. Forty thousand dollars on each side, now gave to both a strong incentive to note well each card before it left the hand. Among the spectators of this exciting scene, none seemed so little concerned as the companion of Ware, who stood obliquely opposite, and occasionally cast toward him a look of indifference.

A few minutes of breathless interest passed, and the game terminated as before. The face of the loser grew pale, but he rallied himself instantly, drew forth a package of money, and throwing it upon the table, said in a firm voice—

“Double!”

Half whispered expressions of surprise passed through the little group at this, and one of them moved off quietly and left the cabin. In about a minute he returned with the Captain, who took his place among the spectators, and silently awaited the result of the game. It was played on both sides with great care and deliberation, but there were odds against the young man, with which it was folly to contend. When the last card was thrown upon the table, it showed the game to have terminated as the rest!

Following this, was an instantaneous gesture of despair, and a motion to leave the table by the loser, when his eye caught a most unexpected movement in the Captain of the steamboat, who had sprung forward, and grasped in both hands, the heavy stakes, amounting to about one hundred and sixty thousand dollars. As he did this, Handy jumped across the table, and, uttering a most bitter curse, seized the Captain by the throat. A general scene of confusion followed, which ended in the passengers all taking sides with the Captain against Ware and Handy, who made attempts to use both *knives* and *pistols*, but were prevented.

Several of the deck hands were then called in, and the two men secured. Following this, came a jury of passengers, called by the captain, to inquire into the whole proceeding that had ended so disastrously to the foolish young man, who had been induced to risk money which was not his own. Two individuals testified, positively, that they had observed *Handy*, or Haines, as he had booked himself, make *signs* of various kinds to his companion, during the progress of every game—and that his position was not only such as to give him a sight of the young man’s hand, but that he had, after every deal, been seen stealthily glancing towards his cards.

Fully satisfied as to their guilt, the Captain restored to the young man the heavy sum he had lost, with a word of advice as to future operations. He then went out, and remained about five minutes. When he came in, he was followed by four stout men—deck hands.

“There they are,” he said, pointing to Ware and Handy, who were seated in the cabin with their arms pinioned behind them. “Let them be put on shore at once.”

“Not at night, Captain?” one of the passengers said.

“Yes, sir; at night. I never allow a *gambling swindler* to remain on board the *Gulnare* more than ten minutes, after I have found him out, day or night. The boat is now running as near to the shore as possible. Come, move quick, my gentlemen!”

Two stout fellows, at each side, left little room for resistance. In a few minutes, the *companions in evil* were hurried over the side of the boat, and rowed quickly to the shore. There they were left, with their baggage. It was nearly the hour of midnight—the sky heavily overcast with clouds, and they perfectly unacquainted with the country around them, or its relation to known places. As the boat, which had conveyed them to the shore, shot back to the steamer, and she moved off and became soon lost to view, they shrunk closer together—while a sudden *fear* passed over them with an icy shudder.

They had stood irresolute for nearly five minutes, when a low *growl*, and a slight movement in the underbrush, caused the hair of each to rise! Two bright eye-balls were next seen glistening within a few feet of them. Handy’s presence of mind prompted him to draw a pistol and fire. A loud *howl of pain* followed the report, answered by a dozen responses in various directions near and more remote, which told the fearful tale that they were *surrounded by wolves!*

“We must kindle a fire as quickly as possible!” whispered Handy, in a hoarse voice, and following the word by the action, poured a little powder into his pistol and pressed in loosely some paper. Then he drew a whole newspaper from his pocket and fired the pistol into it. In a moment or two, it was in a blaze. Leaves, small twigs, and pieces of dry wood were added to this, and soon a bright fire was lighting up the dark and gloomy forest, but rendering darker and denser, the black obscurity beyond the small circle of their vision. By feeding this fire all night, they kept themselves safe from prowling wild beasts. Morning at last broke, and soon after they were taken off by another steamboat, and conveyed to the place for which they had at first set out. During the remainder of the voyage, they felt little inclined to look at a *card*, much less to handle one.

On arriving at New Orleans, they found an account in the newspapers, of the affray hinted at as having occurred at Natchez, with themselves described as the principal actors in it, and a *reward* for their apprehension. The young man, who had been stabbed by Handy, had since died. Their assumed disguise, it was now rendered necessary to retain, and they also felt it prudent to forsake old haunts, and seek new ones. The unexpected termination of affairs on board the *Gulnare* had chagrined and disappointed them severely—more especially, as it left them almost penniless.

On the second day of their return, Ware received a letter from his wife. It ran thus:

“My Dear Husband—Do not think that I am to blame, because this letter contains no money. Father not only suspects the fact of my having been in the habit of sending you supplies of cash, but has made himself so certain of it, in some way, that he no longer entrusts me with any—telling me, when I ask for money, to go and purchase what I want, and have the bills sent to him. I have delayed writing for some time, in the hope that I might be able to get something for you, but I

have delayed in vain. But you say that *your business begins to prosper*, and that you are much encouraged in looking ahead. How glad I am of this—and for two reasons. One is, because you will not need, and therefore not feel, in a very short time, the withdrawal of the little assistance I have been able to render you; and the other is, because I see reason to promise myself a speedy restoration to your arms.

“O, Henry, you do not know how earnestly I desire to see your face. You fill all my waking thoughts, and my dreams at night. Why do you not say, ‘come’? How quickly, if that word were uttered, would I leave all, and fly to you! Leave all!—Alas! how can I leave my dear little ones? My heart grows faint when I think of it. But why should I hesitate? I shall leave them surrounded by every circumstance that can minister to their happiness; and they will soon forget their mother. The greater pain will be mine, not theirs. My desire to linger with them, is a *selfish* one. Duty calls me to my husband’s side. Deeply do I feel this. Let me come, then, Henry! Do write to me, and say ‘come!’ Ever yours, Bell.”

CHAPTER 18.

About one month from the day Bell wrote to her husband, she received the following answer:

“Dear Bell—Your last letter has been received, and I at once respond to your desire and say, ‘*Come!*’ Since I wrote to you, my business has improved a little, and I feel encouraged to hope for success. I cannot, however, leave New Orleans for the purpose of meeting you at Baltimore, or any intermediate place. You will have to come alone. Can you venture to do so? I think you may. Go to Baltimore, and there take passage for Wheeling. At that place, you can go on board of some boat bound for Louisville, from whence you will come directly here by the same mode of conveyance. Write me from Louisville, a day or two before you leave there, and mention the *boat* in which you intend taking passage, so that I can meet you on your arrival. I feel very anxious to see you. Many happy days, I trust, are in store for us. In the hope of soon looking upon your dear face, I now say farewell. Come quickly! Truly and affectionately yours, Henry.”

Bell read this letter over and over again, lingering upon each passage in which she could find a tender allusion to herself, and treasuring up the words as precious. While still holding it in her hand, two little children came bounding playfully into the room, and ran up to her side. One, the eldest, was a bright boy, over whom six summers had passed pleasantly; the other was a girl, with mild, pleasant eyes, and a sweet young face, on which smiles played as often as ripples over the yielding surface of a quiet lake. As they stood by her, looking up into her countenance, their eyes sparkling with *filial confidence and affection*—the thought of leaving them made her waver in her purpose.

“Why not take them with me?” she asked herself, almost involuntarily.

“No—no—no!” was the instant reply to this. “I have no right to remove them from a happy home, for one all untried, and which may prove, even to me, a place of privation and wretchedness. No—no—no! Here they must and shall remain. And *I* must go alone. Duty and affection call me, and I cannot disregard the summons, nor linger in dread of the violent pangs that must attend my separation from these dearly beloved and treasured ones.”

Stooping down, and kissing each of her children with fervent tenderness, and dropping, in spite of herself, a tear upon each fair young cheek—she bade them return to their play, when they bounded off, as light and mirthful as birds in the pleasant sunshine.

“Happy creatures!” she murmured, as they vanished from her presence. “Once I was like you—Heaven grant that you may never be like me!”

For nearly an hour after the children had gone out, did Bell sit, in deep and anxious thought. At the end of that period she arose, with a hurried movement, as if the decision on a long debated course of action had been made, and putting oh her bonnet and shawl, left the house without mentioning to anyone her intention of going out. In half an hour, she entered the house of Mary Lane.

“I am very glad to see you, Bell,” was Mary’s affectionate greeting, kissing, as she spoke, the cheek of her afflicted friend. For years, their fellowship had been as equals and friends—or, rather, as *sisters*, who loved each other tenderly.

“I have an especial favor to ask of you, Mary,” said Bell, after she was seated. “A favor such as I have never asked of you before, and shall never ask again. If in your power, you must not refuse it, Mary.”

“I can refuse you nothing, Bell. Speak your request freely,” was Mary’s reply.

An embarrassing pause of a moment or two followed, and then Bell said—

“Of late, my father has refused to let me have any money to use myself. If I ask for it, he tells me to go and buy whatever I want, and have the bills sent to him.”

“You know the reason of this, Bell, and cannot blame him.”

“I do not blame him, Mary; nor can I expect him under all the circumstances, to act differently. But what I wish to say is this. I want, and must have, one hundred dollars. If I ask him for it, he will, I know, refuse me, under the belief that I wish to send it to my husband. Now, Mary, can I get this sum from you?”

For the first time in her life, Mary felt embarrassed by a request from Bell. She had the money, and she knew that Bell was aware that she had then in the house, in gold, double the sum asked, which had been given to her at various times by her husband. Not that she valued the money more than she regarded Bell’s necessity. But she did not feel that it would be *right* for her to give it for the use of a man like Henry Ware, to whom she very naturally concluded, that Bell wished to send the money she asked. While the struggle between a sense of duty and her desire to meet Bell’s wishes was going on in her mind, Bell sat looking her steadily in the face.

“And so you are not willing to grant my earnest request?” she said, breaking in upon Mary’s silent indecision of mind.

“I will grant you anything in my power, which it is *right* that I should grant,” replied Mary. “But this I cannot do, unless you assure me that you will not send the money to Mr. Ware.”

“That such a disposition will *not* be made of it, I can most solemnly assure you. I want the money for my own use.”

“Then you shall have it for sure,” was the cheerful, smiling reply of Mary.

In a little while she left the room, and returned in a few minutes with ten gold eagles which she placed in the hands of Bell, saying, as she did so,

“Take them in welcome. But from much more gladly would I give them—if they had the power to restore to you the happy heart that once beat in your bosom.”

“That, they can never do—nor can any other earthly means. Still the sum you have so generously placed in my hands, Mary, will, I trust, do a great deal toward accomplishing that which you and I so much desire,” said Bell, in a tone somewhat cheerful.

“What do you mean, Bell?” asked Mary, in surprise.

“Can I trust you with a secret?”

“You have never had cause to think otherwise.”

“True. But mine is a secret which I do not know that even you would feel bound to keep.”

There was something in the words, manner, and expression of Bell, which inspired Mary with a feeling of *sudden alarm*. For a moment or two, the thought that her mind was wandering, startled her feelings with a sudden shock. But the steady eye and calm countenance of Bell, soon dispelled the impression.

“Do not,” she said, as her thoughts rallied, and she became assured that Bell contemplated some act of which all would disapprove, “let me entreat you, act in any important matter, without full consultation with your friends.”

“Why should I consult friends, Mary, when I have resolved to do a thing which no one, not even you, will approve?”

“O, Bell! Surely you do not intend taking any important step with such injudicious rashness.”

“I have fully made up my mind to do the thing to which I have alluded,” was the firm response.

“What is it, Bell?” asked Mary, imploringly.

“I will tell you—but upon one condition.”

“What is that?”

“Secrecy!”

“Not knowing what you intend, I would not like to bind myself to secrecy.”

“Then I cannot tell you.”

“Do not act with such deliberate rashness, Bell,” urged Mary, drawing her arm tenderly about her neck, and looking her earnestly in the face, her own eyes suffused with tears.

“I have calmly counted the cost, Mary.”

“Will you not confide in me?”

“Not unless you pledge yourself to secrecy.”

“Then, as there is no other course, I pledge myself!”

“I am glad you have done so, Mary,” said Bell, in a steady voice, “for I desire most earnestly to open my heart to you, as the only one who can now truly feel for me. I have made up my mind to join Mr. Ware in New Orleans. He has—”

“Join Mr. Ware in New Orleans!” ejaculated Mary, starting back in surprise and alarm, her face growing pale. “Bell, your mind is wandering!”

“I am perfectly sane, Mary,” replied Bell with a feeble smile, “and have calmly and rationally weighed the whole matter. My husband is in business in New Orleans, and has written me many kind and affectionate letters, and now asks me to join him there.”

“And your children?”

“I shall leave them where they are, at least for the present. I would not think it right to take them away from the comfortable home they now have.”

“You do not contemplate going at once?”

“Yes—I shall start in a day or two. There are but few preparations necessary for me to make.”

“Who will accompany you?”

“I shall go *alone*.”

“Alone! Surely, Bell, you cannot be in your right mind!”

“Perhaps not!” was the low, mournful response, made after a pause. “Would it be any wonder, if I were to lose my senses?”

“Then why act so *rashly*, Bell? Why deliberately do a thing that you know all your friends will disapprove! Trouble has obscured your mind, so that you are hardly capable of rightly deciding such a question as is now presented to you. Hesitate, then—and let those in whom you can confide, determine the matter for you. Do not your father and mother love you? Have they not ever sought your happiness with wise and careful solicitude? Still repose confidence in them. Go to them, and tell them your earnest desire to join your husband, and, if such really is your resolution, tell them, that if they will not give their consent for you to do so, you will have to go without their consent. Then you will secure protection from your father, and put it in his power, if you should go, to shield you from suffering and privation while among strangers.”

“I do not expect suffering and privation. My husband has greatly changed, and is now in a good business.”

“So he *tells* you.”

“Mary,” replied Bell, in a changed and somewhat *offended* tone. “I am not prepared to hear any question of my absent husband’s sincerity and truth. I am the party most concerned, and I am perfectly willing to confide in him!”

“But, granting that. Bell, you cannot be safe from all contingencies. How much better that your father’s care should still be over you.”

“As I said before, Mary, I have fully counted the cost, and am prepared for the worst. I cannot be more wretched with my husband, than I am away from him. My father will never give his consent for me to leave Philadelphia, and therefore I wish, above all things, to shun the pain of an interview with him and my mother. Do not, then, let me beg of you, urge me further on this subject! I have fully settled the matter in my own mind, and, therefore, nothing that you can possibly say, will have any influence with me.”

“I must allude to *your children*, Bell,” urged the anxious Mary. “How can you leave dear Henry and Fanny?”

“Do not speak of them, Mary! Do not speak of them!” replied Bell, quickly, and in a low, husky whisper. “I have counted that cost, too. You urge me in vain.”

As she said this, Bell arose and moved toward the door, but paused, with an irresolute air, as she placed her hand upon it, looking, as she did so, toward Mary with an expression of deep tenderness, while her eyes grew dim. She remained thus for a moment or two, and then returning to where Mary still stood, she threw her arms suddenly around her neck, and let her head droop upon her bosom. A gush of tears, and a fit of wild, uncontrollable sobbing, followed. It was many minutes before this subsided. When she at last grew calm, Bell drew her arms around the friend and companion of her childhood and the earnest sympathizer in the sorrows of her maturer years—and held her in a long, strained embrace. At last she looked up, with a feeble smile, murmured “God bless you, Mary!” kissed her lips, cheeks and forehead, earnestly, and then turning away, hurriedly left the house.

As for Mary, her heart was burdened with a double weight. Grief for the rash step which Bell was about to take, and regret that she had, unwittingly, furnished her with the means of taking that step. And to make it worse, was the *pledge of secrecy* which had been *extorted* from her, and which she was unable to decide whether she should violate or keep.

“It was late in the evening before her husband returned, to whom she at once related the substance of her interview with Bell.

“It will never do to let her put her determination into practice!” was Mr. Lane’s prompt remark.

“But I am pledged to secrecy!”

“Under all the circumstances, Mary, you should not consider your promise as binding.”

“I wish I could think so. Most gladly would I avail myself of any just plea for breaking it.”

“It will fall upon me, I suppose, to relieve you from all doubt and responsibility in this matter,” said Mr. Lane, after some moments of inaction.

“How so?”

“I feel it to be my duty to inform Mr. Martin of Bell’s intention, as soon as he comes to the store, tomorrow morning. Have you any *objection* to my doing so?”

“None in the world,” was Mary’s reply.

But Mr. Lane’s good resolution was put into practice too late. Before Mr. Martin came down to the store the next morning, Bell had been missed, and, on looking into her room, a letter was found upon her table, announcing to her father and mother, the distressing news that she had left them to follow her husband. Before they had time to recover from this shock, or to determine what course to pursue, a letter from Fanny’s husband, in New York, brought the melancholy tidings of her dangerous illness, and a request that her father, mother and sister would come on immediately if they hoped to see her alive. Whether to go in pursuit of Bell, or to repair to New York, was a question which agitated Mr. Martin’s mind only for a short time, when he determined on the latter course, resolving, however, that as soon as he could return, to proceed at once to New Orleans, and bring his daughter home!

On his arrival, with Mrs. Martin, in New York, he found that Fanny was *lingering on the brink of the grave*. Five days did they hover around her bed, but all their anxious hopes were in vain. She passed away at the end of that period—to be no more seen on earth.

On returning to Philadelphia, other matters of serious import demanded the attention of Mr. Martin, who was, in consequence, prevented from proceeding at once to the South for Bell, as he had determined.

CHAPTER 19.

When Bell parted from Mary, it was with the resolution fixed in her mind, to put her determination to leave Philadelphia, into execution on the following morning. It had occurred to her, that Mary would inform her husband of her intended journey, and that he would feel himself bound to communicate the fact to her father. And it was to prevent this availing anything toward detaining her, that she resolved not to put off her departure for a single day. This was the reason why, in parting from Mary, whose face she might never see again, she exhibited so much emotion.

After leaving the house of Mary, she hurried home, and set about making preparations for her journey. The departure of the steamboat at the early hour of six a.m., afforded a good opportunity for her to get away unseen by any of the family, provided she was unencumbered with baggage. But it would be necessary for her to take as many of her clothes as possible; and to do so, at least one large trunk would be required. But how this was to be removed from the house, presented itself as a serious difficulty. Sometimes she thought it best to tie up a few articles of wearing apparel into a compact bundle, such as she could easily take in her hand. But a little reflection convinced her that this would not answer. It was very desirable, she felt, to be able to pass along without attracting particular attention—and as she would have, necessarily, to put up frequently at public houses, the fact of her having no trunk, would be looked upon with more or less *suspicion*, and might subject her to unpleasant incidents. And besides this, it would be impossible for her to carry, in this way, a sufficient quantity of clothing. The trunk must be taken—that she fully determined. But how it was to be conveyed away from the house, in the morning, without being seen by someone—was more than she could tell.

Necessity, under all circumstances, is the *mother of invention*. So it proved in the case of Bell. While pondering over the difficulty that had presented itself, she at last thought of the gate attached to the large yard and garden belonging to the house, and of the many places for the temporary concealment of a trunk which the alcoves in the garden afforded. Soon after this occurred to her, she had her plan of proceeding matured—which was this. After the servants and all had retired for the night, she would get a large *empty* trunk, and carry it out into the garden near the gate, which opened, on to a small back street. Then she would take her clothes down in bundles, moving with a noiseless tread, and pack into the trunk as many of them as it would hold. All this was accomplished in the most perfect silence and secrecy, and the well-filled trunk left concealed near the gate. Her plan was to steal out into the garden as soon as it was daylight, and passing from the gate, procure a porter, and have her trunk removed, before anyone would be stirring in the house.

When all these preliminary arrangements were completed. Bell retired to her bed, after having penned a hurried note to her father and mother, but not to sleep. By her side, lay her two children, about to be *forsaken* by their mother. Into their innocent faces, beautified by calm and holy sleep, she would look often, and for many minutes at a time, bending over them, and almost holding her breath, lest they should be awakened, and only removing from her position to prevent the warm tears that were dimming her eyes from falling upon their glowing cheeks. At times, the *mother's* love ruled so strongly in her mind, that it seemed as if it would be impossible for her to part with them. Then she would picture to her imagination their disappointment at not seeing her as usual when they awoke in the morning; their grief at being told that she had gone away from them, no more to return—and the drooping of their young hearts, as day after day went by, and the voice they had loved so from infancy, and the smile that had been the sunlight of their spirits, no more greeted them. This was her sorest trial, and it had the effect more than once to cause her to hesitate. But other thoughts and other affections soon came back with a power that could not be controlled.

Toward daylight, she sank into a state of half unconsciousness, which was neither wakefulness nor sleep. From this, a horrible phantasy of the imagination startled her, and she awoke, uttering a stifled scream. As her scattered thoughts returned, and she was enabled to realize the truth of her condition, she perceived that the day was beginning to dawn. Now had come the hour of severe trial—the most painful she had ever felt in her life—for it involved deliberate action on her part, which would be condemned by all; and more than that—the severing and lacerating of the most tender and sacred bonds!

Hastily rising, and endeavoring to force back the thoughts and affections which pleaded eagerly with her to pause, she proceeded in the completion of her few last sad arrangements for parting, perhaps forever, from her children and parents, and all the associations which a whole life-time had endeared to her. These completed, she threw a cloak over her shoulders, drew a bonnet on her head, and taking a small bundle in her hand, made a movement to leave the room, without a last look at her children. This she was endeavoring, purposely to avoid, for she felt herself unequal to the trial. But the mother's heart was strong within her bosom. She could not thus leave them. A powerful arm seemed restraining her. There was a *pause*—a hesitating moment—and then she slowly turned and went to the bed on which her children lay, still hushed in gentle sleep. Pushing back her bonnet, she bent down over them, resting her arm upon the pillow that supported both their heads, and her own head upon her hand, where she remained for many minutes, gazing sadly and tenderly into their faces, unable to tear herself away.

The sound of *footsteps* along the passage aroused her from this state of irresolution, or rather paralyzation of mind, to a consciousness of the *danger* that threatened to defeat her cautiously laid plans. This enabled her to break the spell that

bound her to the spot where lay the dear treasures of an almost broken heart. Closing her eyes, in order to shut out for a moment, their images from her mind—she arose from her position on the bed, and stepped quickly to the door, where she stood listening to the sound that had awakened her fears, until it died away in a distant part of the house. Fearful of trusting herself to look again at her children, though her heart pleaded earnestly for one more glance, she opened her chamber door, stepped out softly, and then hurried along the passages and down the stairs with a noiseless tread, until she reached the door leading into the yard. This she found locked, indicating that no one had yet gone from the house in that direction. Opening this door in silence, and softly closing it after her, she glided quickly away from the house, entering an alley thickly shaded with vines, so as to be concealed from the observation of anyone who might have chanced to be looking from a window.

Her trunk was found where she had left it the night before. Passing from the gate, and entering the street upon which it opened, she was not long in finding a man who agreed to carry her baggage to the steamboat. With him she returned, and succeeded in getting her trunk off, unseen by any member of her father's family. A hurried walk brought her to the landing. It was about half an hour before the time for starting, and the passengers were beginning to arrive. The sight of so many people, old and young, male and female, rapidly assembling, awoke in her mind a new source of uneasiness. She dreaded to lift her eyes to each newly arriving face, lest it should reveal one perfectly familiar. Nor were her fears, on this score, in vain. Before the boat started, two or three ladies with whom she was on terms of social intimacy, came on board, and took their places in the cabin near where she was sitting. This caused her to shrink away in order to avoid observation, while she drew the folds of a thick veil closer to her face. She was not fully successful in her efforts to avoid observation, as she perceived by the frequent glances of inquiry and interest which were cast toward her.

Once, during the passage down the Delaware, she noticed a lady who was a very intimate and beloved friend, after gazing upon her for some time, rise from her seat and come toward her. For a moment or two, her heart paused in its labored pulsations.

But the lady either changed her mind, or had not intended addressing her, for she passed by, seemingly on an errand to another part of the cabin. This warned her to shun observation still more, which she did by taking a volume from one of the berths, and bending down low over it, as if deeply absorbed in its contents. But how far away from the unseen pages of that book, whose very title was as unread by her, were her thoughts and affections! These were not going eagerly before, but returning back toward the *dear little ones she had forsaken*. How vividly was each gentle face pictured before her! Not calmly reposing in sleep, as when last she looked upon them, but bathed in grief for her loss!

Each passing minute, as the boat was borne farther and farther away from her children, her spirit was drawn nearer, while her heart yearned over them with an interest that was intensely painful. It was with difficulty that she could refrain from uttering aloud—

"My children! my children! Treasures of my heart! How can I give you up?"

Words of lamentation, that were repeated over and over again, in silence and in bitterness of spirit.

But onward, steadily and rapidly, progressed the boat which bore her away, increasing, each moment, the distance between herself and her *forsaken home*—and making sadder, and oppressing with intense pain, the heart already too heavily burdened.

There was nothing in the excitement of the journey—nothing in the hurried changes from boat to land carriage, and from land carriage to boat again, which could win her mind, even for a moment, away from its sad *visions of home*.

In Baltimore, under the assumed name of Johnson, she took lodgings at the City Hotel, where she spent the night—a night, the first ever passed away from her children—a night never after forgotten. Need a mother be told why it was to her one of bitter agony? Only a mother's *heart* can realize a mother's *sufferings*, thus separated from her children! On the following morning, she left Baltimore for Wheeling, in the fast line, and traveled night and day until she reached the banks of the Ohio. At Wheeling, she took passage on board of a steamboat for Louisville, as directed by her husband. Four days, spent in reaching the last named place, seemed to her like four weeks—so eager was she to get to the end of her entire journey, and once more look upon the face that had been hid from her for *three long weary years*.

From Louisville, she wrote a hasty letter to her husband, and two days after she had despatched it, she started for New Orleans. Seven days more passed lingeringly away, before her long and fatiguing journey was completed. It was midnight when the heavy rumbling and jarring of the machinery ceased, and the shrill, nerve-chilling shriek of the escaping steam told that the boat had arrived at the *Crescent City*. Hurriedly rising from her berth, Mrs. Ware dressed herself with all possible speed, expecting each moment to hear her name called. But the servant passed in and out, conveying a message to this lady and to that; but no inquiry came for *her*. "Surely he must be here!" she said to herself. But it seemed that it was not so. For time passed steadily away, and passenger after passenger left the boat, but no voice asked for her. At last the cold, sad, grey light of the morning began to break, and Mrs. Ware went out upon the decks, and strained her eyes through the yet undispersed mists of the night, to see if she could not recognize her husband among the few forms dimly seen upon the shore. But she looked in vain. Slowly and almost imperceptibly, was the morning twilight dispersed, revealing at each moment more and more distinctly the strange appearances, forms and faces of a strange city. The few

slowly moving figures which first met her eye, passing to and fro in the misty air like wandering spirits, had given place to a crowd of human beings, some surveying with idle curiosity, the newly arrived steamer—others hurrying on board with expectant faces, eager to meet some looked-for friend, wife, sister or brother—while others went steadily by, scarcely casting a glance at the stately vessel.

Among all these did Bell search, with anxious eyes, for her husband. Sometimes her heart would bound and flutter, as afar off, some new form became revealed, the bearing of which seemed so like her husband, that she could hardly help striking her hands together, and exclaiming aloud, "*It is he!*" But as that form drew nearer and nearer, its resemblance to her husband gradually faded, until her eyes turned disappointed away from a face all unfamiliar. Thus did the anxious wife stand leaning over the decks, eager and expectant for nearly *three hours*, when she was obliged from faintness, to retire to the cabin, and seek a berth, where she lay for nearly two hours longer, in momentary expectation of hearing the sound of her husband's voice.

At last, through the kind suggestions and directions of the female servant attached to the boat, Bell concluded to go to a *respectable hotel*, marking on the books of the steamboat, opposite to the entry of her name, the house to which she had gone, so that her husband could find her when he learned the arrival of the boat.

As soon as she had made this change, she asked the servant in attendance at her room at the hotel, to bring her a recent newspaper. Over this she looked eagerly, hoping, yet fearing to hope, that her eye might fall upon something that would give her a clue by which to find her husband. Almost the first thing that attracted her notice, was the list of *advertised letters*. In this, she unexpectedly found one for *herself*. Ringing hurriedly for a servant, she despatched, as soon as her summons was answered, a messenger for the letter. It was fully half an hour before it was brought, during which time she paced the floor of her chamber in a state of painful excitement. Hastily breaking the seal, as soon as the servant who had brought the letter had left the room, she read with difficulty, for her hand shook so that she could scarcely distinguish a letter, the following note:

"My dear Bell—Unexpectedly, an entire change has taken place in my circumstances, and I have been obliged to leave New Orleans for Galveston, in Texas, before your arrival. Considerations of personal safety have prompted me to take this hasty step. I need not allude to the painful and mortifying cause. Take the steam-boat, and come here without delay. I shall expect you by every new arrival, until I see your long-absent but dear face. Do not delay a moment. Here I shall remain, free from molestation, and here be able to prosecute without fear, an honest calling. Ever yours, Henry."

The hand of Mrs. Ware trembled so violently, that the letter fell to the floor the moment she had finished reading the last word. O, what a heart-sickening disappointment did its contents prove to her! From the momentary expectation of seeing him, to come into the sudden consciousness that her husband was still hundreds of miles away, and that many days must elapse before her eyes would rest upon him—was a painful shock to her feelings. For a time she felt weak, sick and irresolute. Then her thoughts began to rally, and she turned once more to the newspaper from which she had gained news of the letter, to see if a boat was up for Galveston. One was advertised to go on the next day. Her resolution was at once taken to avail herself of the opportunity. The rest of the day passed wearily, and the night was spent in restless, feverish, anxious looking for the morning, with occasional brief periods of unrefreshing sleep.

Morning at last came. At an early hour she was on board of the steamboat, where she had to remain until nearly night before starting, tortured with eager impatience to be on her way.

CHAPTER 20.

After a passage of many weary days, Mrs. Ware arrived at *Galveston*, her last dollar expended, and her heart trembling with fear lest some new disappointment awaited her. Happily, her fears in this respect were vain. Her husband met her at the boat. The moment her eyes rested on him, changed in appearance as he was, and even to her, sadly changed for the worse—she forgot the circumstances by which she was surrounded, the people present, and all things relating to the time and place, and flung herself, with wild expression of delight, into his arms.

To him, such a *public exhibition of affection* was anything but agreeable, and he restrained and checked her instantly with something so *icy cold* in his manner, that poor Bell's heart felt sick as it had often, alas! too often felt before—when repelled in like manner. Still, there were expressions of pleasure, strong expressions, at seeing her, and instant kind inquiries as to how she had been, and how she had fared on her long journey. Then came a hurried removal to one of the hotels, where she was received into a very comfortable room, which, by special favor, her husband had obtained, in expectation of her arrival.

"Dear—dear Henry!" she said, as soon as they were alone, leaning her head upon his shoulders, and bursting into tears—"I cannot tell you how constantly, for three long years, my heart has longed to see your face—to hear your voice—to move once more by your side. Thank Heaven, we are again united!"

"Never, I trust, to part again," was the reply, in an *assumed* tone of tenderness.

"Never—never!" murmured Bell. "For myself, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!"

"How did you leave our dear little ones, Bell?" her husband asked, after a few moments.

"Well. But oh! what a trial. I wonder that my heart did not break in the struggle of separation! Truly, mine is a hard lot!" And the tears gushed forth afresh. "But may we not hope one day to have them with us, dear husband?"

"That time may come, Bell. But it cannot come speedily," was the reply. "Your father could never be induced to give them up. And it will, perhaps, never be in our power to *demand* them. But let us not burden this hour with thoughts so painful and oppressive."

Then, after a few moments, he asked—

"Tell me, Bell, all about your getting away from Philadelphia, and the particulars of your long journey?"

In accordance with this request, Mrs. Ware gave her husband an account of her preparations for coming away, her departure, and a history of what occurred to her during the period that elapsed from the time she left Philadelphia, until her arrival at Galveston. Beginning with the borrowing of one hundred dollars from Mary, and ending with an account of the expenditure of her last penny. In the *ending* of this story, her husband felt the strongest—indeed, it might be said, the *only* interest. Deeply was he *disappointed* to find that Bell was upon his hands, penniless, and not at all encouraged from her accounts of her father's state of mind, in regard to receiving anything liberal from him, if, indeed, a single dollar were to be obtained from that quarter.

"And so you have got her out at last," said his friend Handy to him, a few hours after, as they met in the bar-room.

"Yes, and a bad bargain, I am afraid, it will turn out in the end," was the half *angry* reply.

"Why so?"

"She came off with only a hundred dollars, and had to *borrow* that. It took every cent to pay her expenses here."

"The devil! I expected that she would bring with her at least five hundred or a thousand dollars."

"So did I. But, instead of that, she has brought only herself, which could have very well dispensed with."

"Her father will send her money as a matter of course, as soon as he learns that she is here."

"I am not by any means *certain* of that. From what I can gather, he was very angry when he discovered that Bell sent me money, and threatened her with his permanent displeasure, if she continued to write to me."

"You must try and *wheedle him out of some funds* through her."

"That I am afraid, will be hard to do."

"I am not so certain. Make her believe that you are in business here, and that by the aid of a little more *capital*, you could do very well. Represent yourself as *thoroughly reformed*, and *deeply penitent for past sins and iniquities*, and as being exceedingly anxious to maintain in society, an honest and honorable position. All this, with amplifications, she can detail to her father, winding off with a request for a remittance to aid you in this praiseworthy effort at reformation. That will do the business for us, I'm thinking."

"I cannot say that I feel very optimistic in regard to the result," replied Ware; "still something must be done, for business is dull, and *luck* is against an empty pocket."

Acting upon this suggestion of Handy, which was but a repetition of the substance of former suggestions, prospective of his wife's arrival—Ware made plausible representations to Bell in regard to his position, to business, his changed views, and his anxious desire to take a fair and respectable station in the community, and of his great need of *money* to enable him to prosecute his business with success. Entering into all he said, with a deep and lively interest, Bell at once volunteered to write to her father, asking him for money, which, under the new aspect of affairs, she was expectant would

be promptly sent. Accordingly, she wrote at once, appealing to him with all the *pathos* and eloquence that her heart, warm in what she was doing, could express.

Then came the *days of suspense*. The looking, and anxious waiting for a reply. Weeks, and even months passed on, and yet this suspense was unbroken. No answer came. During the first part of this period, her husband treated her with every kindness and attention. But his manner grew *cold* as time elapsed, and no word was received from home. Again and again she wrote, but with no better success.

One afternoon, five months from the day she arrived in Galveston, her husband and his inseparable companion were seated in the *bar-room* of one of the principal hotels of the place, glancing over newspapers. Among these, were many old papers from New York, Philadelphia, and other cities on the sea board.

“Did you see this? suddenly asked Handy in a tone of surprise, pushing the paper he had in his hand across the table to Ware, and putting his fingers upon a paragraph. “Old Martin has failed in business!”

“O no, it cannot be!” was the quick reply.

“It is too true. Read that!”

Ware read the paragraph pointed out. It was, as Handy had said, too true. Mr. Martin had indeed failed. The truth was, the bankruptcy of his old friend, Mr. Ware, had very seriously affected him. Other losses, following in quick succession, so crippled his energies, and cut off his resources, that he had at last to yield to the pressure of uncontrollable circumstances, and sink down from his position of a merchant-prince, into a state little above mere poverty.

It was about the same time that her husband made this discovery, that Bell was running her eye over a group of papers, likewise from other cities. Many of them were old, bearing date some five or six months prior. Suddenly she startled, as a *familiar name* met her eye, and then bent eagerly down to read the unexpected paragraph. It was the announcement of her sister *Fanny’s death*, which took place in New York a few days after her departure from home. It was with difficulty, that she could control an almost irresistible impulse to utter a cry of anguish, as the paper dropped upon the floor, so sudden and terrible was the shock to her feelings. For a long time she sat in a kind of stupor, unable fully to realize the dreadful truth. Then came a distinct and acute consciousness of the sad affliction, accompanied with thoughts of her parents, and children, and home, and touches of regret for having *forsaken* all for one who had already proved himself to have *little true affection* for the wife he had so often *deceived*, and had now lured away thousands of miles from her friends, with *selfish* and *mercenary* ends, already too apparent, even to her.

After the feelings of Mrs. Ware had calmed down, in a degree, she began to desire her husband’s return, that she might communicate the sad news to him, and find in *his sympathy*, some relief to her distressed feelings. Yet even in this desire was mingled a consciousness that from him, little comfort would flow; for he had, of late, grown too apparently *indifferent* toward her, and too *careless of her comfort*—often remaining away until after midnight, and frequently not coming in until morning.

The afternoon passed heavily away—evening came, and hour after hour rolled by, until midnight, and still poor Mrs. Ware was waiting and watching for her husband—but waiting and watching in vain. After midnight, she threw herself upon the bed, and fell into a troubled sleep, full of distressing dreams—from which she awoke at day dawn, and found herself still alone. And alone she remained all through the day, her husband neither returning nor sending to inform her of the reason. On the following morning, Mr. Ware not having yet made his appearance, she had a visit from the landlord of the hotel where she had been since her arrival at Galveston.

“Do you know where your husband is, madam?” he asked, abruptly, and yet not in a rude or unkind manner.

“Indeed, sir, I do not,” replied Mrs. Ware, the tears starting to her eyes, and seeming ready at each moment to leap forth.

“When did you last seen him?”

“I have not seen him since the morning of the day before yesterday.”

“And never will again, in these parts, I’m thinking,” was the rough, straight-forward remark of the landlord, not rude, nor meant to be unkind.

“O, sir! what do you mean?” ejaculated poor Bell, endeavoring to rise, but utterly unable to do so.

“I mean just what I say, madam. I only know how to speak the truth—and that, in a plain, straightforward manner. Your husband, I am told, left here, yesterday morning, with a companion, for Mexico. He has not acted, since he has been here, in a way just to please the people, and finding that it would not be *safe* to stay much longer—he has quietly taken himself off. Now, my advice to you is, to get home to your friends as quickly as possible, for it will be folly to hope for his return. He is not only *heavily indebted* to me for his own and your boarding, but owes a great many others, and will not be allowed to come back to this place. And now, while I am on this subject, I might as well say what you ought to know, and that is, that he only induced you to come out here, in the hope that *large sums of money* would be sent to you by your father.”

“It is false, sir!” exclaimed Bell, rising to her feet with sudden energy, her eyes dilating and flashing, as she looked the landlord steadily and angrily in the face.

“I wish from my heart, for your sake, that all I have said were false,” replied the landlord, in a softened tone. “But it is, believe me, madam, too true, as I know to my cost, and you will know to your sorrow.”

“O, can it be true?” said poor Bell, after a pause, clasping her hands tightly across her forehead. Then, as the conviction came stealing over her mind, that it was indeed the truth which the straight-forward landlord had uttered, she looked up in his face and said in a broken voice:

“Then, sir, what can I, what shall I do?”

“Go home to your friends as quickly as possible.”

“But I have no means of getting home.”

“Then write to them at once to send you the means. You are welcome to remain here until you get a remittance from them, as much as I have been deceived and wronged by your husband.”

As Mrs. Ware uttered her almost inarticulate thanks, the landlord bowed and left her alone in her chamber—a prey to most harrowing reflections. As soon, however, as she could compose her thoughts, she sat down and wrote to her mother, imploring her to send her instantly, the means of returning home.

Month after month passed away, but there came no word from her husband, nor any letter from home. Again and again she wrote, but all her letters remained *unanswered*. Grateful for the kindness and consideration of the landlord and the different members of his family, Mrs. Ware, after the time had passed by in which she had hoped to hear from her father, began to feel that it was her duty to try and render them, if possible, some service. This thought was the form of acknowledgment to herself, of the heart-sickening fear that her father and mother had cast her off. Any more distinct acknowledgment of this fear, would have been more than she could have borne. Accordingly, she proposed to instruct the landlord’s two daughters in music, as some *compensation* for the burden of her support.

This proposition was accepted, and in the occupation of mind which it afforded, proved to her a great relief from afflicting thoughts. There being no music teacher then in the town, and many young ladies being extremely desirous to learn—Mrs. Ware received several applications to give lessons, so soon as it was known that she was engaged in so doing at the hotel. For a time, she declined acceding to these propositions, all her feelings shrinking away from such an exposure of herself. But as month after month continued to pass, and no tidings came from home, her intense longings to get back to her children, made her determine to make the teaching of music a means of procuring sufficient money to pay her passage to Philadelphia. As soon as this was determined upon, she let it be known, and was at once engaged to give lessons in several families.

This brought her, for the first time in nearly twelve months, once more within the precincts of the private domestic circle—once more among mothers and their children. How vividly did it bring back the memories of home and the dear little ones she had left behind her—moving her often to tears that no effort on her part could restrain. In more than one family where she gave lessons, a strong interest was felt in her; but delicacy prevented the kind inquiries that were often ready to be made. All felt drawn toward her, for all saw and felt that she had indeed seen better days—but none ventured to inquire the *particulars* of her history.

Six months more had passed wearily away, and Mrs. Ware’s gradually accumulating fund had nearly reached the sum required to pay her way to Philadelphia, when nature, too long and too painfully tried, suddenly, and from an unlooked for shock, gave way—and she sunk down under the influence of a raging fever. For weeks she hung lingering on the brink of the grave, but finally her system began to rally and she slowly recovered, but did not regain her former strength. Her nervous system was much shattered, and her spirits almost entirely gone. Few were aware of the cause of her severe illness. It was this. A Houston paper had fallen in her way; and there she read the summary execution of two men, under *lynch-law*, by hanging. Full particulars were given. They had been detected in cheating at cards, when a quarrel ensued, and a young man who had been engaged with them, was killed. The incensed populace at once wrecked their vengeance on the gamblers. Their names were given as Johnson, alias Ware, and Haines, alias Handy.

A long history of their previous lives was appended, relating minutely the particulars of the forgery in Philadelphia, the scene on the Mississippi, with many other things new and startling to the already too deeply afflicted wife. In closing the narrative, it was added that he had induced his wife to leave her home and join him a few months before in Galveston, where he had heartlessly forsaken her in a strange place, among strangers, and penniless; “though,” finally added the account, “we cannot sanction the summary proceedings in this case, yet we do sincerely rejoice that we have been freed, even in this way, of two of the most unprincipled scoundrels that ever disgraced this part of the country!”

When Mrs. Ware arose from the severe illness occasioned by this dreadful news, her spirits were gone, as has been stated, and her nervous system sadly shattered. The kindness of the hotel keeper and his family had enabled her to retain unbroken her little treasure, amounting to between sixty and seventy dollars, and with this, as soon as she was able to start, she took passage for New Orleans. She arrived safely there, after a quick voyage, and on the day following went on board of a boat that was going to Louisville. Two tedious weeks were consumed in reaching the falls of the Ohio. Hence she proceeded, without waiting a single day, to Wheeling. But alas! when she arrived at Wheeling, she found herself with but four dollars, and the fare to Baltimore alone was fourteen, exclusive of the expense of meals.

CHAPTER 21.

One evening, about two months from the day on which Mrs. Ware arrived at Wheeling, there sat, converging, in the handsomely furnished parlors of a house in Baltimore, a man and his wife, still youthful in appearance, but with a sober expression resting on their countenances. They had, evidently, known care and anxiety, but from the fact that no harsh lines marred the quiet tone of their faces, it was evident that their cares had been for others, more than for themselves. The man held an open letter in his hand, the contents of which formed the subject of conversation.

“There can be little doubt,” remarked the wife, “that Bell’s husband is the person to whom allusion is made. If she is still living, which I fear is not the case, she was, doubtless in company with him in Texas, when he met his awful fate.”

“What more can be done?” said Mrs. Lane (The reader has, of course, already recognized *Mary* and her husband.) “We must not give her up.”

“No, not until she is found, living or dead. If moved by no other consideration, I cannot break the solemn promise I made to old Mr. Martin, but an hour before his overburdened spirit took from earth, its everlasting departure. Nor the repeated assurance to Bell’s mother, before she, too, followed quickly her husband’s footsteps.”

“It is now nearly *two years* since Bell went away,” said Mrs. Lane, after a thoughtful silence. “Two years! How like a painful dream, do the events of that brief period come back upon the memory!”

“Painful, indeed to me. But, I can well believe, far more painful to you, Mary,” her husband replied. “How utterly has the family of Mr. Martin been broken up, and well near extinguished.”

“*Strange and mysterious* are the ways of Providence,” Mary remarked, in a mournful tone.

“To me, there is nothing like *mystery* connected with the sad vicissitudes which have taken place in Mr. Martin’s family. Most of them, I can readily trace to a clearly apparent cause—and that cause—the marriage of Bell.

“That it would cause Mr. Martin to lose his property, I began to fear soon after the marriage. The wicked manner in which Ware had deceived both his own and Mr. Martin’s family, and the consequent unhappiness of Bell, so unsettled his mind, that he no longer gave that calm, earnest attention to business which had heretofore characterized him. Frequent losses were the consequence, which now always irritated, and made him less fitted for new transactions. The intimacy between him and old Mr. Ware likewise partook of a different character. Their business was more mingled—while neither of them was so well fitted for making good operations as before. At the time of Mr. Ware’s failure, Mr. Martin was responsible for him to a heavy amount. The payment of this, crippled him very much. Then occurred the double shock of *Bell’s secret departure* from home, and *Fanny’s sudden death*. And following, in quick succession, came a crisis in his business, which ended in utter bankruptcy. He survived this last shock, you know, only four weeks. Can you not now see how the marriage of Bell has led to all the sad results that followed?”

“Hark! Was not that a groan?” said Mrs. Lane. “There! Did you hear it again? It seemed to come from under our window.”

Mr. Lane paused to listen, when the sound came again, distinct and mournful. He then arose, and proceeded to the door to ascertain the cause.

The reader has discovered enough in the conversation which passed between Mary Lane and her husband, to enable him to connect pretty distinctly, the whole chain of events in the history, now drawing to a close. Lane is partner in a large commission house, in Baltimore. As the rich merchant went rapidly down, the obscure, but honest, intelligent clerk—was slowly rising. The two children left by Bell, have been taken into Mary’s fold and affections, and are loved equally with her own.

On the same evening, in the passage of which the scene and conversations above recorded, took place, poor Bell arrived in the city. She had walked nearly half the distance from Wheeling to Baltimore, riding the other half of the way through the kind indulgence of a humane wagoner. Two months had been consumed in the journey—six weeks of which time she lay at the house of a farmer, who had picked her up, fainting, on the road.

Arrived at Baltimore, her clothes soiled and worn, without one cent to buy a mouthful of food, and ill from fatigue and loss of rest, she descended from the wagon, and turned away, with weak and trembling limbs, to go, she knew not where. Thoughts of home, and parents, and children, roused her up for a few moments—but her spirit quickly sank, while her limbs trembled more and more as she walked slowly along. At last she grew so faint that she had to pause and lean against something for support. Then she gradually sank down upon the pavement, overcome with a feeling of deathly sickness, and soon became insensible.

How long she remained in that condition, she knew not. When consciousness again returned, a great change had taken place. She was lying upon a bed, in a handsomely furnished chamber, and as she turned her eyes slowly around, some few objects looked strangely familiar to her. In attempting to move, she felt very weak, but had no sensation of pain or sickness. No one appeared to be in the room, and she lay for many minutes endeavoring in vain to settle the question whether she were really awake, or dreaming.

“Where am I?” she at length murmured, half audibly.

The sound of her voice startled a female, before hidden by the curtains of the bed, who sprung forward, and stood for a moment looking into her face.

“Mary! dear Mary! is it indeed you? or is this but a mocking dream?” ejaculated Bell, rising up quickly, and falling forward into Mary’s arms.

“You are Bell I—my long lost, long mourned, dear sister Bell! And I am Mary!” whispered Mrs. Lane, as she drew Bell to her heart, in a long embrace.

“And my children! O, Mary, where are they?”

Mary did not reply to this, but left the bed and stepped quickly out of the room. When she returned with Bell’s two children, so little changed to the mother’s eye, that she almost sprang from the bed the moment their bright young faces came in sight. How tenderly—how wildly did Mrs. Ware clasp to her bosom, these near treasures, once more restored to her!

We care not to pain the reader with an account of her grief on learning the death of her parents. Let that sleep with her subsequent history, which only contains this much of interest to the reader, that she found with Mary and her husband, a permanent and peaceful home.

THE END.