

The Gilded Age, Part 7. eBook

The Gilded Age, Part 7. by Mark Twain

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CHAPTER LV.

Henry Brierly took the stand. Requested by the District Attorney to tell the jury all he knew about the killing, he narrated the circumstances substantially as the reader already knows them.

He accompanied Miss Hawkins to New York at her request, supposing she was coming in relation to a bill then pending in Congress, to secure the attendance of absent members. Her note to him was here shown. She appeared to be very much excited at the Washington station. After she had asked the conductor several questions, he heard her say, "He can't escape." Witness asked her "Who?" and she replied "Nobody." Did not see her during the night. They traveled in a sleeping car. In the morning she appeared not to have slept, said she had a headache. In crossing the ferry she asked him about the shipping in sight; he pointed out where the Cunarders lay when in port. They took a cup of coffee that morning at a restaurant. She said she was anxious to reach the Southern Hotel where Mr. Simons, one of the absent members, was staying, before he went out. She was entirely self-possessed, and beyond unusual excitement did not act unnaturally. After she had fired twice at Col. Selby, she turned the pistol towards her own breast, and witness snatched it from her. She had seen a great deal with Selby in Washington, appeared to be infatuated with him.

(Cross-examined by Mr. Braham.) "Mist-er.....er Brierly!" (Mr. Braham had in perfection this lawyer's trick of annoying a witness, by drawling out the "Mister," as if unable to recall the name, until the witness is sufficiently aggravated, and then suddenly, with a rising inflection, flinging his name at him with startling unexpectedness.) "Mist-er.....er Brierly! What is your occupation?"

"Civil Engineer, sir."

"Ah, civil engineer, (with a glance at the jury). Following that occupation with Miss Hawkins?" (Smiles by the jury).

"No, sir," said Harry, reddening.

"How long have you known the prisoner?"

"Two years, sir. I made her acquaintance in Hawkeye, Missouri."

"M.....m...m. Mist-er.....er Brierly! Were you not a lover of Miss

Hawkins?”

Objected to. “I submit, your Honor, that I have the right to establish the relation of this unwilling witness to the prisoner.” Admitted.

“Well, sir,” said Harry hesitatingly, “we were friends.”

“You act like a friend!” (sarcastically.) The jury were beginning to hate this neatly dressed young sprig. “Mister.....er....Brierly! Didn’t Miss Hawkins refuse you?”

Harry blushed and stammered and looked at the judge. “You must answer, sir,” said His Honor.

“She—she—didn’t accept me.”

“No. I should think not. Brierly do you dare tell the jury that you had not an interest in the removal of your rival, Col. Selby?” roared Mr. Braham in a voice of thunder.



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"Nothing like this, sir, nothing like this," protested the witness.

"That's all, sir," said Mr. Braham severely.

"One word," said the District Attorney. "Had you the least suspicion of the prisoner's intention, up to the moment of the shooting?"

"Not the least," answered Harry earnestly.

"Of course not, of course-not," nodded Mr. Braham to the jury.

The prosecution then put upon the stand the other witnesses of the shooting at the hotel, and the clerk and the attending physicians. The fact of the homicide was clearly established. Nothing new was elicited, except from the clerk, in reply to a question by Mr. Braham, the fact that when the prisoner enquired for Col. Selby she appeared excited and there was a wild look in her eyes.

The dying deposition of Col. Selby was then produced. It set forth Laura's threats, but there was a significant addition to it, which the newspaper report did not have. It seemed that after the deposition was taken as reported, the Colonel was told for the first time by his physicians that his wounds were mortal. He appeared to be in great mental agony and fear; and said he had not finished his deposition. He added, with great difficulty and long pauses these words. "I—have —not—told—all. I must tell—put—it —down—I—wronged—her. Years —ago—I—can't see—O—God—I—deserved——" That was all. He fainted and did not revive again.

The Washington railway conductor testified that the prisoner had asked him if a gentleman and his family went out on the evening train, describing the persons he had since learned were Col. Selby and family.

Susan Cullum, colored servant at Senator Dilworthy's, was sworn. Knew Col. Selby. Had seen him come to the house often, and be alone in the parlor with Miss Hawkins. He came the day but one before he was shot. She let him in. He appeared flustered like. She heard talking in the parlor, I peared like it was quarrelin'. Was afeared sumfin' was wrong: Just put her ear to—the—keyhole of the back parlor-door. Heard a man's voice, "I—can't—I can't, Good God," quite beggin' like. Heard—young Miss' voice, "Take your choice, then. If you 'bandon me, you knows what to 'spect." Then he rushes outen the house, I goes in—and I says, "Missis did you ring?" She was a standin' like a tiger, her eyes flashin'. I come right out.

This was the substance of Susan's testimony, which was not shaken in the least by severe cross-examination. In reply to Mr. Braham's question, if the prisoner did not look insane, Susan said, "Lord; no, sir, just mad as a hawnet."



Washington Hawkins was sworn. The pistol, identified by the officer as the one used in the homicide, was produced Washington admitted that it was his. She had asked him for it one morning, saying she thought she had heard burglars the night before. Admitted that he never had heard burglars in the house. Had anything unusual happened just before that.



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Nothing that he remembered. Did he accompany her to a reception at Mrs. Shoonmaker's a day or two before? Yes. What occurred? Little by little it was dragged out of the witness that Laura had behaved strangely there, appeared to be sick, and he had taken her home. Upon being pushed he admitted that she had afterwards confessed that she saw Selby there. And Washington volunteered the statement that Selby, was a black-hearted villain.

The District Attorney said, with some annoyance; "There—there! That will do."

The defence declined to examine Mr. Hawkins at present. The case for the prosecution was closed. Of the murder there could not be the least doubt, or that the prisoner followed the deceased to New York with a murderous intent: On the evidence the jury must convict, and might do so without leaving their seats. This was the condition of the case two days after the jury had been selected. A week had passed since the trial opened; and a Sunday had intervened.

The public who read the reports of the evidence saw no chance for the prisoner's escape. The crowd of spectators who had watched the trial were moved with the most profound sympathy for Laura.

Mr. Braham opened the case for the defence. His manner was subdued, and he spoke in so low a voice that it was only by reason of perfect silence in the court room that he could be heard. He spoke very distinctly, however, and if his nationality could be discovered in his speech it was only in a certain richness and breadth of tone.

He began by saying that he trembled at the responsibility he had undertaken; and he should, altogether despair, if he did not see before him a jury of twelve men of rare intelligence, whose acute minds would unravel all the sophistries of the prosecution, men with a sense, of honor, which would revolt at the remorseless persecution of this hunted woman by the state, men with hearts to feel for the wrongs of which she was the victim. Far be it from him to cast any suspicion upon the motives of the able, eloquent and ingenious lawyers of the state; they act officially; their business is to convict. It is our business, gentlemen, to see that justice is done.

"It is my duty, gentlemen, to untold to you one of the most affecting dramas in all, the history of misfortune. I shall have to show you a life, the sport of fate and circumstances, hurried along through shifting storm and sun, bright with trusting innocence and anon black with heartless villainy, a career which moves on in love and desertion and anguish, always hovered over by the dark spectre of *insanity*—an insanity hereditary and induced by mental torture,—until it ends, if end it must in your verdict, by one of those fearful accidents, which are inscrutable to men and of which God alone knows the secret.



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“Gentlemen, I, shall ask you to go with me away from this court room and its minions of the law, away from the scene of this tragedy, to a distant, I wish I could say a happier day. The story I have to tell is of a lovely little girl, with sunny hair and laughing eyes, traveling with her parents, evidently people of wealth and refinement, upon a Mississippi steamboat. There is an explosion, one of those terrible catastrophes which leave the imprint of an unsettled mind upon the survivors. Hundreds of mangled remains are sent into eternity. When the wreck is cleared away this sweet little girl is found among the panic stricken survivors in the midst of a scene of horror enough to turn the steadiest brain. Her parents have disappeared. Search even for their bodies is in vain. The bewildered, stricken child—who can say what changes the fearful event wrought in her tender brain—clings to the first person who shows her sympathy. It is Mrs. Hawkins, this good lady who is still her loving friend. Laura is adopted into the Hawkins family. Perhaps she forgets in time that she is not their child. She is an orphan. No, gentlemen, I will not deceive you, she is not an orphan. Worse than that. There comes another day of agony. She knows that her father lives. Who is he, where is he? Alas, I cannot tell you. Through the scenes of this painful history he flits here and there a lunatic! If he, seeks his daughter, it is the purposeless search of a lunatic, as one who wanders bereft of reason, crying where is my child? Laura seeks her father. In vain just as she is about to find him, again and again—he disappears, he is gone, he vanishes.

“But this is only the prologue to the tragedy. Bear with me while I relate it. (Mr. Braham takes out a handkerchief, unfolds it slowly; crushes it in his nervous hand, and throws it on the table). Laura grew up in her humble southern home, a beautiful creature, the joy, of the house, the pride of the neighborhood, the loveliest flower in all the sunny south. She might yet have been happy; she was happy. But the destroyer came into this paradise. He plucked the sweetest bud that grew there, and having enjoyed its odor, trampled it in the mire beneath his feet. George Selby, the deceased, a handsome, accomplished Confederate Colonel, was this human fiend. He deceived her with a mock marriage; after some months he brutally, abandoned her, and spurned her as if she were a contemptible thing; all the time he had a wife in New Orleans. Laura was crushed. For weeks, as I shall show you by the testimony of her adopted mother and brother, she hovered over death in delirium. Gentlemen, did she ever emerge from this delirium? I shall show you that when she recovered her health, her mind was changed, she was not what she had been. You can judge yourselves whether the tottering reason ever recovered its throne.

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“Years pass. She is in Washington, apparently the happy favorite of a brilliant society. Her family have become enormously rich by one of those sudden turns, in fortune that the inhabitants of America are familiar with—the discovery of immense mineral wealth in some wild lands owned by them. She is engaged in a vast philanthropic scheme for the benefit of the poor, by the use of this wealth. But, alas, even here and now, the same, relentless fate pursued her. The villain Selby appears again upon the scene, as if on purpose to complete the ruin of her life. He appeared to taunt her with her dishonor, he threatened exposure if she did not become again the mistress of his passion. Gentlemen, do you wonder if this woman, thus pursued, lost her reason, was beside herself with fear, and that her wrongs preyed upon her mind until she was no longer responsible for her acts? I turn away my head as one who would not willingly look even upon the just vengeance of Heaven. (Mr. Braham paused as if overcome by his emotions. Mrs. Hawkins and Washington were in tears, as were many of the spectators also. The jury looked scared.)

“Gentlemen, in this condition of affairs it needed but a spark—I do not say a suggestion, I do not say a hint—from this butterfly Brierly; this rejected rival, to cause the explosion. I make no charges, but if this woman was in her right mind when she fled from Washington and reached this city in company—with Brierly, then I do not know what insanity is.”

When Mr. Braham sat down, he felt that he had the jury with him. A burst of applause followed, which the officer promptly, suppressed. Laura, with tears in her eyes, turned a grateful look upon her counsel. All the women among the spectators saw the tears and wept also. They thought as they also looked at Mr. Braham; how handsome he is!

Mrs. Hawkins took the stand. She was somewhat confused to be the target of so many, eyes, but her honest and good face at once told in Laura’s favor.

“Mrs. Hawkins,” said Mr. Braham, “will you’ be kind enough to state the circumstances of your finding Laura?”

“I object,” said Mr. McFlinn; rising to his feet. “This has nothing whatever to do with the case, your honor. I am surprised at it, even after the extraordinary speech of my learned friend.”

“How do you propose to connect it, Mr. Braham?” asked the judge.

“If it please the court,” said Mr. Braham, rising impressively, “your Honor has permitted the prosecution, and I have submitted without a word; to go into the most extraordinary testimony to establish a motive. Are we to be shut out from showing that the motive attributed to us could not by reason of certain mental conditions exist? I purpose, may, it please your Honor, to show the cause and the origin of an aberration of mind, to follow

it up, with other like evidence, connecting it with the very moment of the homicide, showing a condition of the intellect, of the prisoner that precludes responsibility.”



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“The State must insist upon its objections,” said the District Attorney. “The purpose evidently is to open the door to a mass of irrelevant testimony, the object of which is to produce an effect upon the jury your Honor well understands.”

“Perhaps,” suggested the judge, “the court ought to hear the testimony, and exclude it afterwards, if it is irrelevant.”

“Will your honor hear argument on that!”

“Certainly.”

And argument his honor did hear, or pretend to, for two whole days, from all the counsel in turn, in the course of which the lawyers read contradictory decisions enough to perfectly establish both sides, from volume after volume, whole libraries in fact, until no mortal man could say what the rules were. The question of insanity in all its legal aspects was of course drawn into the discussion, and its application affirmed and denied. The case was felt to turn upon the admission or rejection of this evidence. It was a sort of test trial of strength between the lawyers. At the end the judge decided to admit the testimony, as the judge usually does in such cases, after a sufficient waste of time in what are called arguments.

Mrs. Hawkins was allowed to go on.

CHAPTER LVI.

Mrs. Hawkins slowly and conscientiously, as if every detail of her family history was important, told the story of the steamboat explosion, of the finding and adoption of Laura. Silas, that its Mr. Hawkins, and she always loved Laura, as if she had been their own, child.

She then narrated the circumstances of Laura’s supposed marriage, her abandonment and long illness, in a manner that touched all hearts. Laura had been a different woman since then.

Cross-examined. At the time of first finding Laura on the steamboat, did she notice that Laura’s mind was at all deranged? She couldn’t say that she did. After the recovery of Laura from her long illness, did Mrs. Hawkins think there, were any signs of insanity about her? Witness confessed that she did not think of it then.

Re-Direct examination. “But she was different after that?”

“O, yes, sir.”



Washington Hawkins corroborated his mother's testimony as to Laura's connection with Col. Selby. He was at Harding during the time of her living there with him. After Col. Selby's desertion she was almost dead, never appeared to know anything rightly for weeks. He added that he never saw such a scoundrel as Selby. (Checked by District attorney.) Had he noticed any change in, Laura after her illness? Oh, yes. Whenever, any allusion was made that might recall Selby to mind, she looked awful—as if she could kill him.

"You mean," said Mr. Braham, "that there was an unnatural, insane gleam in her eyes?"

"Yes, certainly," said Washington in confusion.

All this was objected to by the district attorney, but it was got before the jury, and Mr. Braham did not care how much it was ruled out after that.

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“Beriah Sellers was the next witness called. The Colonel made his way to the stand with majestic, yet bland deliberation. Having taken the oath and kissed the Bible with a smack intended to show his great respect for that book, he bowed to his Honor with dignity, to the jury with familiarity, and then turned to the lawyers and stood in an attitude of superior attention.

“Mr. Sellers, I believe?” began Mr. Braham.

“Beriah Sellers, Missouri,” was the courteous acknowledgment that the lawyer was correct.

“Mr. Sellers; you know the parties here, you are a friend of the family?”

“Know them all, from infancy, sir. It was me, sir, that induced Silas Hawkins, Judge Hawkins, to come to Missouri, and make his fortune. It was by my advice and in company with me, sir, that he went into the operation of—”

“Yes, yes. Mr. Sellers, did you know a Major Lackland?”

“Knew him, well, sir, knew him and honored him, sir. He was one of the most remarkable men of our country, sir. A member of congress. He was often at my mansion sir, for weeks. He used to say to me, ‘Col. Sellers, if you would go into politics, if I had you for a colleague, we should show Calhoun and Webster that the brain of the country didn’t lie east of the Alleghanies. But I said—”

“Yes, yes. I believe Major Lackland is not living, Colonel?”

There was an almost imperceptible sense of pleasure betrayed in the Colonel’s face at this prompt acknowledgment of his title.

“Bless you, no. Died years ago, a miserable death, sir, a ruined man, a poor sot. He was suspected of selling his vote in Congress, and probably he did; the disgrace killed’ him, he was an outcast, sir, loathed by himself and by his constituents. And I think; sir”——

The Judge. “You will confine yourself, Col. Sellers to the questions of the counsel.”

“Of course, your honor. This,” continued the Colonel in confidential explanation, “was twenty years ago. I shouldn’t have thought of referring to such a trifling circumstance now. If I remember rightly, sir”—

A bundle of letters was here handed to the witness.

“Do you recognize, that hand-writing?”



“As if it was my own, sir. It’s Major Lackland’s. I was knowing to these letters when Judge Hawkins received them. [The Colonel’s memory was a little at fault here. Mr. Hawkins had never gone into detail’s with him on this subject.] He used to show them to me, and say, ‘Col, Sellers you’ve a mind to untangle this sort of thing.’ Lord, how everything comes back to me. Laura was a little thing then. ‘The Judge and I were just laying our plans to buy the Pilot Knob, and—”

“Colonel, one moment. Your Honor, we put these letters in evidence.”

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The letters were a portion of the correspondence of Major Lackland with Silas Hawkins; parts of them were missing and important letters were referred to that were not here. They related, as the reader knows, to Laura's father. Lackland had come upon the track of a man who was searching for a lost child in a Mississippi steamboat explosion years before. The man was lame in one leg, and appeared to be flitting from place to place. It seemed that Major Lackland got so close track of him that he was able to describe his personal appearance and learn his name. But the letter containing these particulars was lost. Once he heard of him at a hotel in Washington; but the man departed, leaving an empty trunk, the day before the major went there. There was something very mysterious in all his movements.

Col. Sellers, continuing his testimony, said that he saw this lost letter, but could not now recall the name. Search for the supposed father had been continued by Lackland, Hawkins and himself for several years, but Laura was not informed of it till after the death of Hawkins, for fear of raising false hopes in her mind.

Here the Distract Attorney arose and said,

"Your Honor, I must positively object to letting the witness wander off into all these irrelevant details."

Mr. Braham. "I submit your honor, that we cannot be interrupted in this manner we have suffered the state to have full swing. Now here is a witness, who has known the prisoner from infancy, and is competent to testify upon the one point vital to her safety. Evidently he is a gentleman of character, and his knowledge of the case cannot be shut out without increasing the aspect of persecution which the State's attitude towards the prisoner already has assumed."

The wrangle continued, waxing hotter and hotter. The Colonel seeing the attention of the counsel and Court entirely withdrawn from him, thought he perceived here his opportunity, turning and beaming upon the jury, he began simply to talk, but as the grandeur of his position grew upon him —talk broadened unconsciously into an oratorical vein.

"You see how she was situated, gentlemen; poor child, it might have broken her, heart to let her mind get to running on such a thing as that. You see, from what we could make out her father was lame in the left leg and had a deep scar on his left forehead. And so ever since the day she found out she had another father, she never could, run across a lame stranger without being taken all over with a shiver, and almost fainting where she, stood. And the next minute she would go right after that man. Once she stumbled on a stranger with a game leg; and she was the most grateful thing in this world—but it was the wrong leg, and it was days and days before she could leave her bed. Once she found a man with a scar on his forehead and she was just going to throw herself into his arms,` but he stepped out

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just then, and there wasn't anything the matter with his legs. Time and time again, gentlemen of the jury, has this poor suffering orphan flung herself on her knees with all her heart's gratitude in her eyes before some scarred and crippled veteran, but always, always to be disappointed, always to be plunged into new despair—if his legs were right his scar was wrong, if his scar was right his legs were wrong. Never could find a man that would fill the bill. Gentlemen of the jury; you have hearts, you have feelings, you have warm human sympathies; you can feel for this poor suffering child. Gentlemen of the jury, if I had time, if I had the opportunity, if I might be permitted to go on and tell you the thousands and thousands and thousands of mutilated strangers this poor girl has started out of cover, and hunted from city to city, from state to state, from continent to continent, till she has run them down and found they wan't the ones; I know your hearts —”

By this time the Colonel had become so warmed up, that his voice, had reached a pitch above that of the contending counsel; the lawyers suddenly stopped, and they and the Judge turned towards the Colonel and remained for several seconds too surprised at this novel exhibition to speak. In this interval of silence, an appreciation of the situation gradually stole over the audience, and an explosion of laughter followed, in which even the Court and the bar could hardly keep from joining.

Sheriff. “Order in the Court.”

The Judge. “The witness will confine his remarks to answers to questions.”

The Colonel turned courteously to the Judge and said,

“Certainly, your Honor—certainly. I am not well acquainted with the forms of procedure in the courts of New York, but in the West, sir, in the West—”

The Judge. “There, there, that will do, that will do!

“You see, your Honor, there were no questions asked me, and I thought I would take advantage of the lull in the proceedings to explain to the jury a very significant train of —”

The Judge. “That will *do* sir! Proceed Mr. Braham.”

“Col. Sellers, have you any reason to suppose that this man is still living?”

“Every reason, sir, every reason.

“State why”



“I have never heard of his death, sir. It has never come to my knowledge. In fact, sir, as I once said to Governor—”

“Will you state to the jury what has been the effect of the knowledge of this wandering and evidently unsettled being, supposed to be her father, upon the mind of Miss Hawkins for so many years!”

Question objected to. Question ruled out.

Cross-examined. “Major Sellers, what is your occupation?”

The Colonel looked about him loftily, as if casting in his mind what would be the proper occupation of a person of such multifarious interests and then said with dignity:



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“A gentleman, sir. My father used to always say, sir”—

“Capt. Sellers, did you; ever see this man, this supposed father?”

“No, Sir. But upon one occasion, old Senator Thompson said to me, its my opinion, Colonel Sellers”—

“Did you ever see any body who had seen him?”

“No, sir: It was reported around at one time, that”—

“That is all.”

The defense then sent a day in the examination of medical experts in insanity who testified, on the evidence heard, that sufficient causes had occurred to produce an insane mind in the prisoner. Numerous cases were cited to sustain this opinion. There was such a thing as momentary insanity, in which the person, otherwise rational to all appearances, was for the time actually bereft of reason, and not responsible for his acts. The causes of this momentary possession could often be found in the person's life. [It afterwards came out that the chief expert for the defense, was paid a thousand dollars for looking into the case.]

The prosecution consumed another day in the examination of experts refuting the notion of insanity. These causes might have produced insanity, but there was no evidence that they have produced it in this case, or that the prisoner was not at the time of the commission of the crime in full possession of her ordinary faculties.

The trial had now lasted two weeks. It required four days now for the lawyers to “sum up.” These arguments of the counsel were very important to their friends, and greatly enhanced their reputation at the bar but they have small interest to us. Mr. Braham in his closing speech surpassed himself; his effort is still remembered as the greatest in the criminal annals of New York.

Mr. Braham re-drew for the jury the picture, of Laura's early life; he dwelt long upon that painful episode of the pretended marriage and the desertion. Col. Selby, he said, belonged, gentlemen; to what is called the “upper classes:” It is the privilege of the “upper classes” to prey upon the sons and daughters of the people. The Hawkins family, though allied to the best blood of the South, were at the time in humble circumstances. He commented upon her parentage. Perhaps her agonized father, in his intervals of sanity, was still searching for his lost daughter. Would he one day hear that she had died a felon's death? Society had pursued her, fate had pursued her, and in a moment of delirium she had turned and defied fate and society. He dwelt upon the admission of base wrong in Col. Selby's dying statement. He drew a vivid, picture of the villain at last overtaken by the vengeance of Heaven. Would the jury say that this

retributive justice, inflicted by an outraged, and deluded woman, rendered irrational by the most cruel wrongs, was in the nature of a foul, premeditated murder? “Gentlemen; it is enough for me to look upon the life of this most beautiful and accomplished

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of her sex, blasted by the heartless villainy of man, without seeing, at the-end of it; the horrible spectacle of a gibbet. Gentlemen, we are all human, we have all sinned, we all have need of mercy. But I do not ask mercy of you who are the guardians of society and of the poor waifs, its sometimes wronged victims; I ask only that justice which you and I shall need in that last, dreadful hour, when death will be robbed of half its terrors if we can reflect that we have never wronged a human being. Gentlemen, the life of this lovely and once happy girl, this now stricken woman, is in your hands.”

The jury were risibly affected. Half the court room was in tears. If a vote of both spectators and jury could have been taken then, the verdict would have been, “let her go, she has suffered enough.”

But the district attorney had the closing argument. Calmly and without malice or excitement he reviewed the testimony. As the cold facts were unrolled, fear settled upon the listeners. There was no escape from the murder or its premeditation. Laura’s character as a lobbyist in Washington which had been made to appear incidentally in the evidence was also against her: the whole body of the testimony of the defense was shown to be irrelevant, introduced only to excite sympathy, and not giving a color of probability to the absurd supposition of insanity. The attorney then dwelt upon, the insecurity of life in the city, and the growing immunity with which women committed murders. Mr. McFlinn made a very able speech; convincing the reason without touching the feelings.

The Judge in his charge reviewed the, testimony with great show of impartiality. He ended by saying that the verdict must be acquittal or murder in the first, degree. If you find that the prisoner committed a homicide, in possession of her reason and with premeditation, your verdict will be accordingly. If you find she was not in her right mind, that she was the victim of insanity, hereditary or momentary, as it has been explained, your verdict will take that into account.

As the Judge finished his charge, the spectators anxiously watched the faces of the jury. It was not a remunerative study. In the court room the general feeling was in favor of Laura, but whether this feeling extended to the jury, their stolid faces did not reveal. The public outside hoped for a conviction, as it always does; it wanted an example; the newspapers trusted the jury would have the courage to do its duty. When Laura was convicted, then the public would turn around and abuse the governor if he did; not pardon her.

The jury went out. Mr. Braham preserved his serene confidence, but Laura’s friends were dispirited. Washington and Col. Sellers had been obliged to go to Washington, and they had departed under the unspoken fear the verdict would be unfavorable, a

disagreement was the best they could hope for, and money was needed. The necessity of the passage of the University bill was now imperative.



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The Court waited, for, some time, but the jury gave no signs of coming in. Mr. Braham said it was extraordinary. The Court then took a recess for a couple of hours. Upon again coming in, word was brought that the jury had not yet agreed.

But the, jury, had a question. The point upon which, they wanted instruction was this. They wanted to know if Col. Sellers was related to the Hawkins family. The court then adjourned till morning.

Mr. Braham, who was in something of a pet, remarked to Mr. O'Toole that they must have been deceived, that juryman with the broken nose could read!

CHAPTER LVII.

The momentous day was at hand—a day that promised to make or mar the fortunes of Hawkins family for all time. Washington Hawkins and Col. Sellers were both up early, for neither of them could sleep. Congress was expiring, and was passing bill after bill as if they were gasps and each likely to be its last. The University was on file for its third reading this day, and to-morrow Washington would be a millionaire and Sellers no longer, impecunious but this day, also, or at farthest the next, the jury in Laura's Case would come to a decision of some kind or other—they would find her guilty, Washington secretly feared, and then the care and the trouble would all come back again, and these would be wearing months of besieging judges for new trials; on this day, also, the re-election of Mr. Dilworthy to the Senate would take place. So Washington's mind was in a state of turmoil; there were more interests at stake than it could handle with serenity. He exulted when he thought of his millions; he was filled with dread when he thought of Laura. But Sellers was excited and happy. He said:

“Everything is going right, everything's going perfectly right. Pretty soon the telegrams will begin to rattle in, and then you'll see, my boy. Let the jury do what they please; what difference is it going to make? To-morrow we can send a million to New York and set the lawyers at work on the judges; bless your heart they will go before judge after judge and exhort and beseech and pray and shed tears. They always do; and they always win, too. And they will win this time. They will get a writ of habeas corpus, and a stay of proceedings, and a supersedeas, and a new trial and a nolle prosequi, and there you are! That's the routine, and it's no trick at all to a New York lawyer. That's the regular routine —everything's red tape and routine in the law, you see; it's all Greek to you, of course, but to a man who is acquainted with those things it's mere—I'll explain it to you sometime. Everything's going to glide right along easy and comfortable now. You'll see, Washington, you'll see how it will be. And then, let me think Dilwortby will be elected to-day, and by day, after to-morrow night he will be in New York ready to put in his shovel—and you haven't lived

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in Washington all this time not to know that the people who walk right by a Senator whose term is up without hardly seeing him will be down at the deepo to say 'Welcome back and God bless you; Senator, I'm glad to see you, sir!' when he comes along back re-elected, you know. Well, you see, his influence was naturally running low when he left here, but now he has got a new six-years' start, and his suggestions will simply just weigh a couple of tons a-piece day after tomorrow. Lord bless you he could rattle through that habeas corpus and supersedeas and all those things for Laura all by himself if he wanted to, when he gets back."

"I hadn't thought of that," said Washington, brightening, but it is so. A newly-elected Senator is a power, I know that."

"Yes indeed he is.—Why it, is just human nature. Look at me. When we first came here, I was Mr. Sellers, and Major Sellers, Captain Sellers, but nobody could ever get it right, somehow; but the minute our bill went, through the House, I was Col. Sellers every time. And nobody could do enough for me, and whatever I said was wonderful, Sir, it was always wonderful; I never seemed to say any flat things at all. It was Colonel, won't you come and dine with us; and Colonel why don't we ever see you at our house; and the Colonel says this; and the Colonel says that; and we know such-and-such is so-and-so because my husband heard Col. Sellers say so. Don't you see? Well, the Senate adjourned and left our bill high, and dry, and I'll be hanged if I warn't Old Sellers from that day, till our bill passed the House again last week. Now I'm the Colonel again; and if I were to eat all the dinners I am invited to, I reckon I'd wear my teeth down level with my gums in a couple of weeks."

"Well I do wonder what you will be to-morrow; Colonel, after the President signs the bill!"

"General, sir?—General, without a doubt. Yes, sir, tomorrow it will be General, let me congratulate you, sir; General, you've done a great work, sir;—you've done a great work for the nigger; Gentlemen allow me the honor to introduce my friend General Sellers, the humane friend of the nigger. Lord bless me; you'll see the newspapers say, General Sellers and servants arrived in the city last night and is stopping at the Fifth Avenue; and General Sellers has accepted a reception and banquet by the Cosmopolitan Club; you'll see the General's opinions quoted, too —and what the General has to say about the propriety of a new trial and a habeas corpus for the unfortunate Miss Hawkins will not be without weight in influential quarters, I can tell you."

"And I want to be the first to shake your faithful old hand and salute you with your new honors, and I want to do it now—General!" said Washington, suiting the action to the word, and accompanying it with all the meaning that a cordial grasp and eloquent eyes could give it.

The Colonel was touched; he was pleased and proud, too; his face answered for that.



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Not very long after breakfast the telegrams began to arrive. The first was from Braham, and ran thus:

“We feel certain that the verdict will be rendered to-day. Be it good or bad, let it find us ready to make the next move instantly, whatever it may be:”

“That’s the right talk,” said Sellers. “That Braham’s a wonderful man. He was the only man there that really understood me; he told me so himself, afterwards.”

The next telegram was from Mr. Dilworthy:

“I have not only brought over the Great Invincible, but through him a dozen more of the opposition. Shall be re-elected to-day by an overwhelming majority.”

“Good again!” said the Colonel. “That man’s talent for organization is something marvelous. He wanted me to go out there and engineer that thing, but I said, No, Dilworthy, I must be on hand here,—both on Laura’s account and the bill’s—but you’ve no trifling genius for organization yourself, said I—and I was right. You go ahead, said I—you can fix it—and so he has. But I claim no credit for that—if I stiffened up his backbone a little, I simply put him in the way to make his fight—didn’t undertake it myself. He has captured Noble—. I consider that a splendid piece of diplomacy—Splendid, Sir!”

By and by came another dispatch from New York:

“Jury still out. Laura calm and firm as a statue. The report that the jury have brought her in guilty is false and premature.”

“Premature!” gasped Washington, turning white. “Then they all expect that sort of a verdict, when it comes in.”

And so did he; but he had not had courage enough to put it into words. He had been preparing himself for the worst, but after all his preparation the bare suggestion of the possibility of such a verdict struck him cold as death.

The friends grew impatient, now; the telegrams did not come fast enough: even the lightning could not keep up with their anxieties. They walked the floor talking disjointedly and listening for the door-bell. Telegram after telegram came. Still no result. By and by there was one which contained a single line:

“Court now coming in after brief recess to hear verdict. Jury ready.”

“Oh, I wish they would finish!” said Washington. “This suspense is killing me by inches!”



Then came another telegram:

“Another hitch somewhere. Jury want a little more time and further instructions.”

“Well, well, well, this is trying,” said the Colonel. And after a pause, “No dispatch from Dilworthy for two hours, now. Even a dispatch from him would be better than nothing, just to vary this thing.”

They waited twenty minutes. It seemed twenty hours.

“Come!” said Washington. “I can’t wait for the telegraph boy to come all the way up here. Let’s go down to Newspaper Row—meet him on the way.”

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While they were passing along the Avenue, they saw someone putting up a great display-sheet on the bulletin board of a newspaper office, and an eager crowd of men was collecting about the place. Washington and the Colonel ran to the spot and read this:

“Tremendous Sensation! Startling news from Saint’s Rest! On first ballot for U. S. Senator, when voting was about to begin, Mr. Noble rose in his place and drew forth a package, walked forward and laid it on the Speaker’s desk, saying, ‘This contains \$7,000 in bank bills and was given me by Senator Dilworthy in his bed-chamber at midnight last night to buy —my vote for him—I wish the Speaker to count the money and retain it to pay the expense of prosecuting this infamous traitor for bribery. The whole legislature was stricken speechless with dismay and astonishment. Noble further said that there were fifty members present with money in their pockets, placed there by Dilworthy to buy their votes. Amidst unparalleled excitement the ballot was now taken, and J. W. Smith elected U. S. Senator; Dilworthy receiving not one vote! Noble promises damaging exposures concerning Dilworthy and certain measures of his now pending in Congress.

“Good heavens and earth!” exclaimed the Colonel.

“To the Capitol!” said Washington. “Fly!”

And they did fly. Long before they got there the newsboys were running ahead of them with Extras, hot from the press, announcing the astounding news.

Arrived in the gallery of the Senate, the friends saw a curious spectacle very Senator held an Extra in his hand and looked as interested as if it contained news of the destruction of the earth. Not a single member was paying the least attention to the business of the hour.

The Secretary, in a loud voice, was just beginning to read the title of a bill:

“House-Bill—No. 4,231,—An-Act-to-Found-and-Incorporate-the Knobs-Industrial-University!—Read-first-and-second-time-considered-in-committee-of-the-whole-ordered-engrossed and-passed-to-third-reading-and-final passage!”

The President—“Third reading of the bill!”

The two friends shook in their shoes. Senators threw down their extras and snatched a word or two with each other in whispers. Then the gavel rapped to command silence while the names were called on the ayes and nays. Washington grew paler and paler, weaker and weaker while the lagging list progressed; and when it was finished, his head



fell helplessly forward on his arms. The fight was fought, the long struggle was over, and he was a pauper. Not a man had voted for the bill!

Col. Sellers was bewildered and well nigh paralyzed, himself. But no man could long consider his own troubles in the presence of such suffering as Washington's. He got him up and supported him—almost carried him indeed—out of the building and into a carriage. All the way home Washington lay with his face against the Colonel's shoulder and merely groaned and wept. The Colonel tried as well as he could under the dreary circumstances to hearten him a little, but it was of no use. Washington was past all hope of cheer, now. He only said:



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“Oh, it is all over—it is all over for good, Colonel. We must beg our bread, now. We never can get up again. It was our last chance, and it is gone. They will hang Laura! My God they will hang her! Nothing can save the poor girl now. Oh, I wish with all my soul they would hang me instead!”

Arrived at home, Washington fell into a chair and buried his face in his hands and gave full way to his misery. The Colonel did not know where to turn nor what to do. The servant maid knocked at the door and passed in a telegram, saying it had come while they were gone.

The Colonel tore it open and read with the voice of a man-of-war’s broadside:

“Verdict of jury, not guilty and Laura is free!”

CHAPTER LVIII.

The court room was packed on the morning on which the verdict of the jury was expected, as it had been every day of the trial, and by the same spectators, who had followed its progress with such intense interest.

There is a delicious moment of excitement which the frequenter of trials well knows, and which he would not miss for the world. It is that instant when the foreman of the jury stands up to give the verdict, and before he has opened his fateful lips.

The court assembled and waited. It was an obstinate jury.

It even had another question—this intelligent jury—to ask the judge this morning.

The question was this: “Were the doctors clear that the deceased had no disease which might soon have carried him off, if he had not been shot?” There was evidently one jury man who didn’t want to waste life, and was willing to stake a general average, as the jury always does in a civil case, deciding not according to the evidence but reaching the verdict by some occult mental process.

During the delay the spectators exhibited unexampled patience, finding amusement and relief in the slightest movements of the court, the prisoner and the lawyers. Mr. Braham divided with Laura the attention of the house. Bets were made by the Sheriff’s deputies on the verdict, with large odds in favor of a disagreement.

It was afternoon when it was announced that the jury was coming in. The reporters took their places and were all attention; the judge and lawyers were in their seats; the crowd swayed and pushed in eager expectancy, as the jury walked in and stood up in silence.

Judge. “Gentlemen, have you agreed upon your verdict?”



Foreman. "We have."

Judge. "What is it?"

Foreman. "*Not guilty.*"

A shout went up from the entire room and a tumult of cheering which the court in vain attempted to quell. For a few moments all order was lost. The spectators crowded within the bar and surrounded Laura who, calmer than anyone else, was supporting her aged mother, who had almost fainted from excess of joy.



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And now occurred one of those beautiful incidents which no fiction-writer would dare to imagine, a scene of touching pathos, creditable to our fallen humanity. In the eyes of the women of the audience Mr. Braham was the hero of the occasion; he had saved the life of the prisoner; and besides he was such a handsome man. The women could not restrain their long pent-up emotions. They threw themselves upon Mr. Braham in a transport of gratitude; they kissed him again and again, the young as well as the advanced in years, the married as well as the ardent single women; they improved the opportunity with a touching self-sacrifice; in the words of a newspaper of the day they "lavished him with kisses."

It was something sweet to do; and it would be sweet for a woman to remember in after years, that she had kissed Braham! Mr. Braham himself received these fond assaults with the gallantry of his nation, enduring the ugly, and heartily paying back beauty in its own coin.

This beautiful scene is still known in New York as "the kissing of Braham."

When the tumult of congratulation had a little spent itself, and order was restored, Judge O'Shaunnessy said that it now became his duty to provide for the proper custody and treatment of the acquitted. The verdict of the jury having left no doubt that the woman was of an unsound mind, with a kind of insanity dangerous to the safety of the community, she could not be permitted to go at large. "In accordance with the directions of the law in such cases," said the Judge, "and in obedience to the dictates of a wise humanity, I hereby commit Laura Hawkins to the care of the Superintendent of the State Hospital for Insane Criminals, to be held in confinement until the State Commissioners on Insanity shall order her discharge. Mr. Sheriff, you will attend at once to the execution of this decree."

Laura was overwhelmed and terror-stricken. She had expected to walk forth in freedom in a few moments. The revulsion was terrible. Her mother appeared like one shaken with an ague fit. Laura insane! And about to be locked up with madmen! She had never contemplated this. Mr. Graham said he should move at once for a writ of 'habeas corpus'.

But the judge could not do less than his duty, the law must have its way. As in the stupor of a sudden calamity, and not fully comprehending it, Mrs. Hawkins saw Laura led away by the officer.

With little space for thought she was, rapidly driven to the railway station, and conveyed to the Hospital for Lunatic Criminals. It was only when she was within this vast and grim abode of madness that she realized the horror of her situation. It was only when she was received by the kind physician and read pity in his eyes, and saw his look of hopeless incredulity when she attempted to tell him that she was not insane; it was only when she passed through the ward to which she was consigned and saw the horrible

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creatures, the victims of a double calamity, whose dreadful faces she was hereafter to see daily, and was locked into the small, bare room that was to be her home, that all her fortitude forsook her. She sank upon the bed, as soon as she was left alone—she had been searched by the matron—and tried to think. But her brain was in a whirl. She recalled Braham's speech, she recalled the testimony regarding her lunacy. She wondered if she were not mad; she felt that she soon should be among these loathsome creatures. Better almost to have died, than to slowly go mad in this confinement.

—We beg the reader's pardon. This is not history, which has just been written. It is really what would have occurred if this were a novel. If this were a work of fiction, we should not dare to dispose of Laura otherwise. True art and any attention to dramatic proprieties required it. The novelist who would turn loose upon society an insane murderess could not escape condemnation. Besides, the safety of society, the decencies of criminal procedure, what we call our modern civilization, all would demand that Laura should be disposed of in the manner we have described. Foreigners, who read this sad story, will be unable to understand any other termination of it.

But this is history and not fiction. There is no such law or custom as that to which his Honor is supposed to have referred; Judge O'Shaunnessy would not probably pay any attention to it if there were. There is no Hospital for Insane Criminals; there is no State commission of lunacy. What actually occurred when the tumult in the court room had subsided the sagacious reader will now learn.

Laura left the court room, accompanied by her mother and other friends, amid the congratulations of those assembled, and was cheered as she entered a carriage, and drove away. How sweet was the sunlight, how exhilarating the sense of freedom! Were not these following cheers the expression of popular approval and affection? Was she not the heroine of the hour?

It was with a feeling of triumph that Laura reached her hotel, a scornful feeling of victory over society with its own weapons.

Mrs. Hawkins shared not at all in this feeling; she was broken with the disgrace and the long anxiety.

"Thank God, Laura," she said, "it is over. Now we will go away from this hateful city. Let us go home at once."

"Mother," replied Laura, speaking with some tenderness, "I cannot go with you. There, don't cry, I cannot go back to that life."



Mrs. Hawkins was sobbing. This was more cruel than anything else, for she had a dim notion of what it would be to leave Laura to herself.

“No, mother, you have been everything to me. You know how dearly I love you. But I cannot go back.”

A boy brought in a telegraphic despatch. Laura took it and read:

“The bill is lost. Dilworthy ruined. (Signed) *Washington.*”



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For a moment the words swam before her eyes. The next her eyes flashed fire as she handed the dispatch to her mother and bitterly said,

“The world is against me. Well, let it be, let it. I am against it.”

“This is a cruel disappointment,” said Mrs. Hawkins, to whom one grief more or less did not much matter now, “to you and, Washington; but we must humbly bear it.”

“Bear it;” replied Laura scornfully, “I’ve all my life borne it, and fate has thwarted me at every step.”

A servant came to the door to say that there was a gentleman below who wished to speak with Miss Hawkins. “J. Adolphe Griller” was the name Laura read on the card. “I do not know such a person. He probably comes from Washington. Send him up.”

Mr. Griller entered. He was a small man, slovenly in dress, his tone confidential, his manner wholly void of animation, all his features below the forehead protruding—particularly the apple of his throat—hair without a kink in it, a hand with no grip, a meek, hang-dog countenance. a falsehood done in flesh and blood; for while every visible sign about him proclaimed him a poor, witless, useless weakling, the truth was that he had the brains to plan great enterprises and the pluck to carry them through. That was his reputation, and it was a deserved one. He softly said:

“I called to see you on business, Miss Hawkins. You have my card?”

Laura bowed.

Mr. Griller continued to purr, as softly as before.

“I will proceed to business. I am a business man. I am a lecture-agent, Miss Hawkins, and as soon as I saw that you were acquitted, it occurred to me that an early interview would be mutually beneficial.”

“I don’t understand you, sir,” said Laura coldly.

“No? You see, Miss Hawkins, this is your opportunity. If you will enter the lecture field under good auspices, you will carry everything before you.”

“But, sir, I never lectured, I haven’t any lecture, I don’t know anything about it.”

“Ah, madam, that makes no difference—no real difference. It is not necessary to be able to lecture in order to go into the lecture tour. If one’s name is celebrated all over the land, especially, and, if she is also beautiful, she is certain to draw large audiences.”



“But what should I lecture about?” asked Laura, beginning in spite of herself to be a little interested as well as amused.

“Oh, why; woman—something about woman, I should say; the marriage relation, woman’s fate, anything of that sort. Call it *The Revelations of a Woman’s Life*; now, there’s a good title. I wouldn’t want any better title than that. I’m prepared to make you an offer, Miss Hawkins, a liberal offer,—twelve thousand dollars for thirty nights.”

Laura thought. She hesitated. Why not? It would give her employment, money. She must do something.



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“I will think of it, and let you know soon. But still, there is very little likelihood that I— however, we will not discuss it further now.”

“Remember, that the sooner we get to work the better, Miss Hawkins, public curiosity is so fickle. Good day, madam.”

The close of the trial released Mr. Harry Brierly and left him free to depart upon his long talked of Pacific-coast mission. He was very mysterious about it, even to Philip.

“It’s confidential, old boy,” he said, “a little scheme we have hatched up. I don’t mind telling you that it’s a good deal bigger thing than that in Missouri, and a sure thing. I wouldn’t take a half a million just for my share. And it will open something for you, Phil. You will hear from me.”

Philip did hear, from Harry a few months afterward. Everything promised splendidly, but there was a little delay. Could Phil let him have a hundred, say, for ninety days?

Philip himself hastened to Philadelphia, and, as soon as the spring opened, to the mine at Ilium, and began transforming the loan he had received from Squire Montague into laborers’ wages. He was haunted with many anxieties; in the first place, Ruth was overtaxing her strength in her hospital labors, and Philip felt as if he must move heaven and earth to save her from such toil and suffering. His increased pecuniary obligation oppressed him. It seemed to him also that he had been one cause of the misfortune to the Bolton family, and that he was dragging into loss and ruin everybody who associated with him. He worked on day after day and week after week, with a feverish anxiety.

It would be wicked, thought Philip, and impious, to pray for luck; he felt that perhaps he ought not to ask a blessing upon the sort of labor that was only a venture; but yet in that daily petition, which this very faulty and not very consistent young Christian gentleman put up, he prayed earnestly enough for Ruth and for the Boltons and for those whom he loved and who trusted in him, and that his life might not be a misfortune to them and a failure to himself.

Since this young fellow went out into the world from his New England home, he had done some things that he would rather his mother should not know, things maybe that he would shrink from telling Ruth. At a certain green age young gentlemen are sometimes afraid of being called milksops, and Philip’s associates had not always been the most select, such as these historians would have chosen for him, or whom at a later, period he would have chosen for himself. It seemed inexplicable, for instance, that his life should have been thrown so much with his college acquaintance, Henry Brierly.

Yet, this was true of Philip, that in whatever company he had been he had never been ashamed to stand up for the principles he learned from his mother, and neither raillery



nor looks of wonder turned him from that daily habit had learned at his mother's knees. —Even flippant Harry respected this, and perhaps it was one of the reasons why Harry and all who knew Philip trusted him implicitly. And yet it must be confessed that Philip did not convey the impression to the world of a very serious young man, or of a man who might not rather easily fall into temptation. One looking for a real hero would have to go elsewhere.



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The parting between Laura and her mother was exceedingly painful to both. It was as if two friends parted on a wide plain, the one to journey towards the setting and the other towards the rising sun, each comprehending that every, step henceforth must separate their lives, wider and wider.

CHAPTER LIX.

When Mr. Noble's bombshell fell, in Senator Dilworthy's camp, the statesman was disconcerted for a moment. For a moment; that was all. The next moment he was calmly up and doing. From the centre of our country to its circumference, nothing was talked of but Mr. Noble's terrible revelation, and the people were furious. Mind, they were not furious because bribery was uncommon in our public life, but merely because here was another case. Perhaps it did not occur to the nation of good and worthy people that while they continued to sit comfortably at home and leave the true source of our political power (the "primaries,") in the hands of saloon-keepers, dog-fanciers and hod-carriers, they could go on expecting "another" case of this kind, and even dozens and hundreds of them, and never be disappointed. However, they may have thought that to sit at home and grumble would some day right the evil.

Yes, the nation was excited, but Senator Dilworthy was calm—what was left of him after the explosion of the shell. Calm, and up and doing. What did he do first? What would you do first, after you had tomahawked your mother at the breakfast table for putting too much sugar in your coffee? You would "ask for a suspension of public opinion." That is what Senator Dilworthy did. It is the custom. He got the usual amount of suspension. Far and wide he was called a thief, a briber, a promoter of steamship subsidies, railway swindles, robberies of the government in all possible forms and fashions. Newspapers and everybody else called him a pious hypocrite, a sleek, oily fraud, a reptile who manipulated temperance movements, prayer meetings, Sunday schools, public charities, missionary enterprises, all for his private benefit. And as these charges were backed up by what seemed to be good and sufficient, evidence, they were believed with national unanimity.

Then Mr. Dilworthy made another move. He moved instantly to Washington and "demanded an investigation." Even this could not pass without, comment. Many papers used language to this effect:

"Senator Dilworthy's remains have demanded an investigation. This sounds fine and bold and innocent; but when we reflect that they demand it at the hands of the Senate of the United States, it simply becomes matter for derision. One might as well set the gentlemen detained in the public prisons to trying each other. This investigation is likely to be like all other Senatorial investigations—amusing but not useful. Query. Why does the Senate still stick to this pompous word, 'Investigation?' One does not blindfold one's self in order to investigate an object."

Mr. Dilworthy appeared in his place in the Senate and offered a resolution appointing a committee to investigate his case. It carried, of course, and the committee was appointed. Straightway the newspapers said:

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“Under the guise of appointing a committee to investigate the late Mr. Dilworthy, the Senate yesterday appointed a committee to investigate his accuser, Mr. Noble. This is the exact spirit and meaning of the resolution, and the committee cannot try anybody but Mr. Noble without overstepping its authority. That Dilworthy had the effrontery to offer such a resolution will surprise no one, and that the Senate could entertain it without blushing and pass it without shame will surprise no one. We are now reminded of a note which we have received from the notorious burglar Murphy, in which he finds fault with a statement of ours to the effect that he had served one term in the penitentiary and also one in the U. S. Senate. He says, ‘The latter statement is untrue and does me great injustice.’ After an unconscious sarcasm like that, further comment is unnecessary.”

And yet the Senate was roused by the Dilworthy trouble. Many speeches were made. One Senator (who was accused in the public prints of selling his chances of re-election to his opponent for \$50,000 and had not yet denied the charge) said that, “the presence in the Capital of such a creature as this man Noble, to testify against a brother member of their body, was an insult to the Senate.”

Another Senator said, “Let the investigation go on and let it make an example of this man Noble; let it teach him and men like him that they could not attack the reputation of a United States-Senator with impunity.”

Another said he was glad the investigation was to be had, for it was high time that the Senate should crush some cur like this man Noble, and thus show his kind that it was able and resolved to uphold its ancient dignity.

A by-stander laughed, at this finely delivered peroration; and said:

“Why, this is the Senator who franked his, baggage home through the mails last week-registered, at that. However, perhaps he was merely engaged in ‘upholding the ancient dignity of the Senate,’—then.”

“No, the modern dignity of it,” said another by-stander. “It don’t resemble its ancient dignity but it fits its modern style like a glove.”

There being no law against making offensive remarks about U. S. Senators, this conversation, and others like it, continued without let or hindrance. But our business is with the investigating committee.

Mr. Noble appeared before the Committee of the Senate; and testified to the following effect:



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He said that he was a member of the State legislature of the Happy-Land-of-Canaan; that on the --- day of ----- he assembled himself together at the city of Saint's Rest, the capital of the State, along with his brother legislators; that he was known to be a political enemy of Mr. Dilworthy and bitterly opposed to his re-election; that Mr. Dilworthy came to Saint's Rest and reported to be buying pledges of votes with money; that the said Dilworthy sent for him to come to his room in the hotel at night, and he went; was introduced to Mr. Dilworthy; called two or three times afterward at Dilworthy's request—usually after midnight; Mr. Dilworthy urged him to vote for him Noble declined; Dilworthy argued; said he was bound to be elected, and could then ruin him (Noble) if he voted no; said he had every railway and every public office and stronghold of political power in the State under his thumb, and could set up or pull down any man he chose; gave instances showing where and how he had used this power; if Noble would vote for him he would make him a Representative in Congress; Noble still declined to vote, and said he did not believe Dilworthy was going to be elected; Dilworthy showed a list of men who would vote for him—a majority of the legislature; gave further proofs of his power by telling Noble everything the opposing party had done or said in secret caucus; claimed that his spies reported everything to him, and that—

Here a member of the Committee objected that this evidence was irrelevant and also in opposition to the spirit of the Committee's instructions, because if these things reflected upon any one it was upon Mr. Dilworthy. The chairman said, let the person proceed with his statement—the Committee could exclude evidence that did not bear upon the case.

Mr. Noble continued. He said that his party would cast him out if he voted for Mr. Dilworthy; Dilworthy said that that would inure to his benefit because he would then be a recognized friend of his (Dilworthy's) and he could consistently exalt him politically and make his fortune; Noble said he was poor, and it was hard to tempt him so; Dilworthy said he would fix that; he said, "Tell, me what you want, and say you will vote for me;" Noble could not say; Dilworthy said "I will give you \$5,000."

A Committee man said, impatiently, that this stuff was all outside the case, and valuable time was being wasted; this was all, a plain reflection upon a brother Senator. The Chairman said it was the quickest way to proceed, and the evidence need have no weight.

Mr. Noble continued. He said he told Dilworthy that \$5,000 was not much to pay for a man's honor, character and everything that was worth having; Dilworthy said he was surprised; he considered \$5,000 a fortune—for some men; asked what Noble's figure

was; Noble said he could not think \$10,000 too little; Dilworthy said it was a great deal too much; he would not do it for any other man, but he

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had conceived a liking for Noble, and where he liked a man his heart yearned to help him; he was aware that Noble was poor, and had a family to support, and that he bore an unblemished reputation at home; for such a man and such a man's influence he could do much, and feel that to help such a man would be an act that would have its reward; the struggles of the poor always touched him; he believed that Noble would make a good use of this money and that it would cheer many a sad heart and needy home; he would give the, \$10,000; all he desired in return was that when the balloting began, Noble should cast his vote for him and should explain to the legislature that upon looking into the charges against Mr. Dilworthy of bribery, corruption, and forwarding stealing measures in Congress he had found them to be base calumnies upon a man whose motives were pure and whose character was stainless; he then took from his pocket \$2,000 in bank bills and handed them to Noble, and got another package containing \$5,000 out of his trunk and gave to him also. He——

A Committee man jumped up, and said:

“At last, Mr. Chairman, this shameless person has arrived at the point. This is sufficient and conclusive. By his own confession he has received a bribe, and did it deliberately.

“This is a grave offense, and cannot be passed over in silence, sir. By the terms of our instructions we can now proceed to mete out to him such punishment as is meet for one who has maliciously brought disrespect upon a Senator of the United States. We have no need to hear the rest of his evidence.”

The Chairman said it would be better and more regular to proceed with the investigation according to the usual forms. A note would be made of Mr. Noble's admission.

Mr. Noble continued. He said that it was now far past midnight; that he took his leave and went straight to certain legislators, told them everything, made them count the money, and also told them of the exposure he would make in joint convention; he made that exposure, as all the world knew. The rest of the \$10,000 was to be paid the day after Dilworthy was elected.

Senator Dilworthy was now asked to take the stand and tell what he knew about the man Noble. The Senator wiped his mouth with his handkerchief, adjusted his white cravat, and said that but for the fact that public morality required an example, for the warning of future Nobles, he would beg that in Christian charity this poor misguided creature might be forgiven and set free. He said that it was but too evident that this person had approached him in the hope of obtaining a bribe; he had intruded himself time and again, and always with moving stories of his poverty. Mr. Dilworthy said that his heart had bled for him—insomuch that he had several times been on the point of

trying to get some one to do something for him. Some instinct had told him from the beginning that this was a bad man, an evil-minded man, but his inexperience

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of such had blinded him to his real motives, and hence he had never dreamed that his object was to undermine the purity of a United States Senator. He regretted that it was plain, now, that such was the man's object and that punishment could not with safety to the Senate's honor be withheld. He grieved to say that one of those mysterious dispensations of an inscrutable Providence which are decreed from time to time by His wisdom and for His righteous, purposes, had given this conspirator's tale a color of plausibility,—but this would soon disappear under the clear light of truth which would now be thrown upon the case.

It so happened, (said the Senator,) that about the time in question, a poor young friend of mine, living in a distant town of my State, wished to establish a bank; he asked me to lend him the necessary money; I said I had no, money just then, but would try to borrow it. The day before the election a friend said to me that my election expenses must be very large specially my hotel bills, and offered to lend me some money. Remembering my young, friend, I said I would like a few thousands now, and a few more by and by; whereupon he gave me two packages of bills said to contain \$2,000 and \$5,000 respectively; I did not open the packages or count the money; I did not give any note or receipt for the same; I made no memorandum of the transaction, and neither did my friend. That night this evil man Noble came troubling me again: I could not rid myself of him, though my time was very precious. He mentioned my young friend and said he was very anxious to have the \$7000 now to begin his banking operations with, and could wait a while for the rest. Noble wished to get the money and take it to him. I finally gave him the two packages of bills; I took no note or receipt from him, and made no memorandum of the matter. I no more look for duplicity and deception in another man than I would look for it in myself. I never thought of this man again until I was overwhelmed the next day by learning what a shameful use he had made of the confidence I had reposed in him and the money I had entrusted to his care. This is all, gentlemen. To the absolute truth of every detail of my statement I solemnly swear, and I call Him to witness who is the Truth and the loving Father of all whose lips abhor false speaking; I pledge my honor as a Senator, that I have spoken but the truth. May God forgive this wicked man as I do.

Mr. Noble—“Senator Dilworthy, your bank account shows that up to that day, and even on that very day, you conducted all your financial business through the medium of checks instead of bills, and so kept careful record of every moneyed transaction. Why did you deal in bank bills on this particular occasion?”

The Chairman—“The gentleman will please to remember that the Committee is conducting this investigation.”

Mr. Noble—“Then will the Committee ask the question?”



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The Chairman—"The Committee will—when it desires to know."

Mr. Noble—"Which will not be daring this century perhaps."

The Chairman—"Another remark like that, sir, will procure you the attentions of the Sergeant-at-arms."

Mr. Noble—"D—n the Sergeant-at-arms, and the Committee too!"

Several Committeemen—"Mr. Chairman, this is Contempt!"

Mr. Noble—"Contempt of whom?"

"Of the Committee! Of the Senate of the United States!"

Mr. Noble—"Then I am become the acknowledged representative of a nation. You know as well as I do that the whole nation hold as much as three-fifths of the United States Senate in entire contempt.—Three-fifths of you are Dilworthys."

The Sergeant-at-arms very soon put a quietus upon the observations of the representative of the nation, and convinced him that he was not, in the over-free atmosphere of his Happy-Land-of-Canaan:

The statement of Senator Dilworthy naturally carried conviction to the minds of the committee.—It was close, logical, unanswerable; it bore many internal evidences of its truth. For instance, it is customary in all countries for business men to loan large sums of money in bank bills instead of checks. It is customary for the lender to make no memorandum of the transaction. It is customary, for the borrower to receive the money without making a memorandum of it, or giving a note or a receipt for it's use—the borrower is not likely to die or forget about it. It is customary to lend nearly anybody money to start a bank with especially if you have not the money to lend him and have to borrow it for the purpose. It is customary to carry large sums of money in bank bills about your person or in your trunk. It is customary to hand a large sum in bank bills to a man you have just been introduced to (if he asks you to do it,) to be conveyed to a distant town and delivered to another party. It is not customary to make a memorandum of this transaction; it is not customary for the conveyor to give a note or a receipt for the money; it is not customary to require that he shall get a note or a receipt from the man he is to convey it to in the distant town. It would be at least singular in you to say to the proposed conveyor, "You might be robbed; I will deposit the money in a bank and send a check for it to my friend through the mail."

Very well. It being plain that Senator Dilworthy's statement was rigidly true, and this fact being strengthened by his adding to it the support of "his honor as a Senator," the Committee rendered a verdict of "Not proven that a bribe had been offered and accepted." This in a manner exonerated Noble and let him escape.



The Committee made its report to the Senate, and that body proceeded to consider its acceptance. One Senator indeed, several Senators—objected that the Committee had failed of its duty; they had proved this man Noble guilty of nothing, they had meted out no punishment to him; if the report were accepted, he would go forth free and scathless, glorying in his crime, and it would be a tacit admission that any blackguard could insult the Senate of the United States and conspire against the sacred reputation of its members with impunity; the Senate owed it to the upholding of its ancient dignity to make an example of this man Noble—he should be crushed.

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An elderly Senator got up and took another view of the case. This was a Senator of the worn-out and obsolete pattern; a man still lingering among the cobwebs of the past, and behind the spirit of the age. He said that there seemed to be a curious misunderstanding of the case. Gentlemen seemed exceedingly anxious to preserve and maintain the honor and dignity of the Senate.

Was this to be done by trying an obscure adventurer for attempting to trap a Senator into bribing him? Or would not the truer way be to find out whether the Senator was capable of being entrapped into so shameless an act, and then try him? Why, of course. Now the whole idea of the Senate seemed to be to shield the Senator and turn inquiry away from him. The true way to uphold the honor of the Senate was to have none but honorable men in its body. If this Senator had yielded to temptation and had offered a bribe, he was a soiled man and ought to be instantly expelled; therefore he wanted the Senator tried, and not in the usual namby-pamby way, but in good earnest. He wanted to know the truth of this matter. For himself, he believed that the guilt of Senator Dilworthy was established beyond the shadow of a doubt; and he considered that in trifling with his case and shirking it the Senate was doing a shameful and cowardly thing—a thing which suggested that in its willingness to sit longer in the company of such a man, it was acknowledging that it was itself of a kind with him and was therefore not dishonored by his presence. He desired that a rigid examination be made into Senator Dilworthy's case, and that it be continued clear into the approaching extra session if need be. There was no dodging this thing with the lame excuse of want of time.

In reply, an honorable Senator said that he thought it would be as well to drop the matter and accept the Committee's report. He said with some jocularly that the more one agitated this thing, the worse it was for the agitator. He was not able to deny that he believed Senator Dilworthy to be guilty—but what then? Was it such an extraordinary case? For his part, even allowing the Senator to be guilty, he did not think his continued presence during the few remaining days of the Session would contaminate the Senate to a dreadful degree. [This humorous sally was received with smiling admiration—notwithstanding it was not wholly new, having originated with the Massachusetts General in the House a day or two before, upon the occasion of the proposed expulsion of a member for selling his vote for money.]

The Senate recognized the fact that it could not be contaminated by sitting a few days longer with Senator Dilworthy, and so it accepted the committee's report and dropped the unimportant matter.

Mr. Dilworthy occupied his seat to the last hour of the session. He said that his people had reposed a trust in him, and it was not for him to desert them. He would remain at his post till he perished, if need be.

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His voice was lifted up and his vote cast for the last time, in support of an ingenious measure contrived by the General from Massachusetts whereby the President's salary was proposed to be doubled and every Congressman paid several thousand dollars extra for work previously done, under an accepted contract, and already paid for once and receipted for.

Senator Dilworthy was offered a grand ovation by his friends at home, who said that their affection for him and their confidence in him were in no wise impaired by the persecutions that had pursued him, and that he was still good enough for them.

—[The \$7,000 left by Mr. Noble with his state legislature was placed in safe keeping to await the claim of the legitimate owner. Senator Dilworthy made one little effort through his protege the embryo banker to recover it, but there being no notes of hand or, other memoranda to support the claim, it failed. The moral of which is, that when one loans money to start a bank with, one ought to take the party's written acknowledgment of the fact.]

CHAPTER LX.

For some days Laura had been a free woman once more. During this time, she had experienced—first, two or three days of triumph, excitement, congratulations, a sort of sunburst of gladness, after a long night of gloom and anxiety; then two or three days of calming down, by degrees—a receding of tides, a quieting of the storm—wash to a murmurous surf-beat, a diminishing of devastating winds to a refrain that bore the spirit of a truce—days given to solitude, rest, self-communion, and the reasoning of herself into a realization of the fact that she was actually done with bolts and bars, prison, horrors and impending, death; then came a day whose hours filed slowly by her, each laden with some remnant, some remaining fragment of the dreadful time so lately ended—a day which, closing at last, left the past a fading shore behind her and turned her eyes toward the broad sea of the future. So speedily do we put the dead away and come back to our place in the ranks to march in the pilgrimage of life again.

And now the sun rose once more and ushered in the first day of what Laura comprehended and accepted as a new life.

The past had sunk below the horizon, and existed no more for her; she was done with it for all time. She was gazing out over the trackless expanses of the future, now, with troubled eyes. Life must be begun again—at eight and twenty years of age. And where to begin? The page was blank, and waiting for its first record; so this was indeed a momentous day.

Her thoughts drifted back, stage by stage, over her career. As far as the long highway receded over the plain of her life, it was lined with the gilded and pillared splendors of



her ambition all crumbled to ruin and ivy-grown; every milestone marked a disaster; there was no green spot remaining anywhere in memory of a hope that had found its fruition; the unresponsive earth had uttered no voice of flowers in testimony that one who was blest had gone that road.



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Her life had been a failure. That was plain, she said. No more of that. She would now look the future in the face; she would mark her course upon the chart of life, and follow it; follow it without swerving, through rocks and shoals, through storm and calm, to a haven of rest and peace or shipwreck. Let the end be what it might, she would mark her course now —to-day—and follow it.

On her table lay six or seven notes. They were from lovers; from some of the prominent names in the land; men whose devotion had survived even the grisly revealments of her character which the courts had uncurtained; men who knew her now, just as she was, and yet pleaded as for their lives for the dear privilege of calling the murderess wife.

As she read these passionate, these worshiping, these supplicating missives, the woman in her nature confessed itself; a strong yearning came upon her to lay her head upon a loyal breast and find rest from the conflict of life, solace for her griefs, the healing of love for her bruised heart.

With her forehead resting upon her hand, she sat thinking, thinking, while the unheeded moments winged their flight. It was one of those mornings in early spring when nature seems just stirring to a half consciousness out of a long, exhausting lethargy; when the first faint balmy airs go wandering about, whispering the secret of the coming change; when the abused brown grass, newly relieved of snow, seems considering whether it can be worth the trouble and worry of contriving its green raiment again only to fight the inevitable fight with the implacable winter and be vanquished and buried once more; when the sun shines out and a few birds venture forth and lift up a forgotten song; when a strange stillness and suspense pervades the waiting air. It is a time when one's spirit is subdued and sad, one knows not why; when the past seems a storm-swept desolation, life a vanity and a burden, and the future but a way to death. It is a time when one is filled with vague longings; when one dreams of flight to peaceful islands in the remote solitudes of the sea, or folds his hands and says, What is the use of struggling, and toiling and worrying any more? let us give it all up.

It was into such a mood as this that Laura had drifted from the musings which the letters of her lovers had called up. Now she lifted her head and noted with surprise how the day had wasted. She thrust the letters aside, rose up and went and stood at the window. But she was soon thinking again, and was only gazing into vacancy.

By and by she turned; her countenance had cleared; the dreamy look was gone out of her face, all indecision had vanished; the poise of her head and the firm set of her lips told that her resolution was formed. She moved toward the table with all the old dignity in her carriage, and all the old pride in her mien. She took up each letter in its turn, touched a match to it and watched it slowly consume to ashes. Then she said:



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“I have landed upon a foreign shore, and burned my ships behind me. These letters were the last thing that held me in sympathy with any remnant or belonging of the old life. Henceforth that life and all that appertains to it are as dead to me and as far removed from me as if I were become a denizen of another world.”

She said that love was not for her—the time that it could have satisfied her heart was gone by and could not return; the opportunity was lost, nothing could restore it. She said there could be no love without respect, and she would only despise a man who could content himself with a thing like her. Love, she said, was a woman’s first necessity: love being forfeited; there was but one thing left that could give a passing zest to a wasted life, and that was fame, admiration, the applause of the multitude.

And so her resolution was taken. She would turn to that final resort of the disappointed of her sex, the lecture platform. She would array herself in fine attire, she would adorn herself with jewels, and stand in her isolated magnificence before massed, audiences and enchant them with her eloquence and amaze them with her unapproachable beauty. She would move from city to city like a queen of romance, leaving marveling multitudes behind her and impatient multitudes awaiting her coming. Her life, during one hour of each day, upon the platform, would be a rapturous intoxication—and when the curtain fell; and the lights were out, and the people gone, to nestle in their homes and forget her, she would find in sleep oblivion of her homelessness, if she could, if not she would brave out the night in solitude and wait for the next day’s hour of ecstasy.

So, to take up life and begin again was no great evil. She saw her way. She would be brave and strong; she would make the best of, what was left for her among the possibilities.

She sent for the lecture agent, and matters were soon arranged.

Straightway, all the papers were filled with her name, and all the dead walls flamed with it. The papers called down imprecations upon her head; they reviled her without stint; they wondered if all sense of decency was dead in this shameless murderess, this brazen lobbyist, this heartless seducer of the affections of weak and misguided men; they implored the people, for the sake of their pure wives, their sinless daughters, for the sake of decency, for the sake of public morals, to give this wretched creature such a rebuke as should be an all-sufficient evidence to her and to such as her, that there was a limit where the flaunting of their foul acts and opinions before the world must stop; certain of them, with a higher art, and to her a finer cruelty, a sharper torture, uttered no abuse, but always spoke of her in terms of mocking eulogy and ironical admiration. Everybody talked about the new wonder, canvassed the theme of her proposed discourse, and marveled how she would handle it.

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Laura's few friends wrote to her or came and talked with her, and pleaded with her to retire while it was yet time, and not attempt to face the gathering storm. But it was fruitless. She was stung to the quick by the comments of the newspapers; her spirit was roused, her ambition was towering, now. She was more determined than ever. She would show these people what a hunted and persecuted woman could do.

The eventful night came. Laura arrived before the great lecture hall in a close carriage within five minutes of the time set for the lecture to begin. When she stepped out of the vehicle her heart beat fast and her eyes flashed with exultation: the whole street was packed with people, and she could hardly force her way to the hall! She reached the ante-room, threw off her wraps and placed herself before the dressing-glass. She turned herself this way and that—everything was satisfactory, her attire was perfect. She smoothed her hair, rearranged a jewel here and there, and all the while her heart sang within her, and her face was radiant. She had not been so happy for ages and ages, it seemed to her. Oh, no, she had never been so overwhelmingly grateful and happy in her whole life before. The lecture agent appeared at the door. She waved him away and said:

“Do not disturb me. I want no introduction. And do not fear for me; the moment the hands point to eight I will step upon the platform.”

He disappeared. She held her watch before her. She was so impatient that the second-hand seemed whole tedious minutes dragging its way around the circle. At last the supreme moment came, and with head erect and the bearing of an empress she swept through the door and stood upon the stage. Her eyes fell upon only a vast, brilliant emptiness—there were not forty people in the house! There were only a handful of coarse men and ten or twelve still coarser women, lolling upon the benches and scattered about singly and in couples.

Her pulses stood still, her limbs quaked, the gladness went out of her face. There was a moment of silence, and then a brutal laugh and an explosion of cat-calls and hisses saluted her from the audience. The clamor grew stronger and louder, and insulting speeches were shouted at her. A half-intoxicated man rose up and threw something, which missed her but bespattered a chair at her side, and this evoked an outburst of laughter and boisterous admiration. She was bewildered, her strength was forsaking her. She reeled away from the platform, reached the ante-room, and dropped helpless upon a sofa. The lecture agent ran in, with a hurried question upon his lips; but she put forth her hands, and with the tears raining from her eyes, said:

“Oh, do not speak! Take me away—please take me away, out of this dreadful place! Oh, this is like all my life—failure, disappointment, misery—always misery, always failure. What have I done, to be so pursued! Take me away, I beg of you, I implore you!”

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Upon the pavement she was hustled by the mob, the surging masses roared her name and accompanied it with every species of insulting epithet; they thronged after the carriage, hooting, jeering, cursing, and even assailing the vehicle with missiles. A stone crushed through a blind, wounding Laura's forehead, and so stunning her that she hardly knew what further transpired during her flight.

It was long before her faculties were wholly restored, and then she found herself lying on the floor by a sofa in her own sitting-room, and alone. So she supposed she must have sat down upon the sofa and afterward fallen. She raised herself up, with difficulty, for the air was chilly and her limbs were stiff. She turned up the gas and sought the glass. She hardly knew herself, so worn and old she looked, and so marred with blood were her features. The night was far spent, and a dead stillness reigned. She sat down by her table, leaned her elbows upon it and put her face in her hands.

Her thoughts wandered back over her old life again and her tears flowed unrestrained. Her pride was humbled, her spirit was broken. Her memory found but one resting place; it lingered about her young girlhood with a caressing regret; it dwelt upon it as the one brief interval of her life that bore no curse. She saw herself again in the budding grace of her twelve years, decked in her dainty pride of ribbons, consorting with the bees and the butterflies, believing in fairies, holding confidential converse with the flowers, busying herself all day long with airy trifles that were as weighty to her as the affairs that tax the brains of diplomats and emperors. She was without sin, then, and unacquainted with grief; the world was full of sunshine and her heart was full of music. From that—to this!

"If I could only die!" she said. "If I could only go back, and be as I was then, for one hour—and hold my father's hand in mine again, and see all the household about me, as in that old innocent time—and then die! My God, I am humbled, my pride is all gone, my stubborn heart repents —have pity!"

When the spring morning dawned, the form still sat there, the elbows resting upon the table and the face upon the hands. All day long the figure sat there, the sunshine enriching its costly raiment and flashing from its jewels; twilight came, and presently the stars, but still the figure remained; the moon found it there still, and framed the picture with the shadow of the window sash, and flooded, it with mellow light; by and by the darkness swallowed it up, and later the gray dawn revealed it again; the new day grew toward its prime, and still the forlorn presence was undisturbed.

But now the keepers of the house had become uneasy; their periodical knockings still finding no response, they burst open the door.

The jury of inquest found that death had resulted from heart disease, and was instant and painless. That was all. Merely heart disease.



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CHAPTER LXI.

Clay Hawkins, years gone by, had yielded, after many a struggle, to the migratory and speculative instinct of our age and our people, and had wandered further and further westward upon trading ventures. Settling finally in Melbourne, Australia, he ceased to roam, became a steady-going substantial merchant, and prospered greatly. His life lay beyond the theatre of this tale.

His remittances had supported the Hawkins family, entirely, from the time of his father's death until latterly when Laura by her efforts in Washington had been able to assist in this work. Clay was away on a long absence in some of the eastward islands when Laura's troubles began, trying (and almost in vain,) to arrange certain interests which had become disordered through a dishonest agent, and consequently he knew nothing of the murder till he returned and read his letters and papers. His natural impulse was to hurry to the States and save his sister if possible, for he loved her with a deep and abiding affection. His business was so crippled now, and so deranged, that to leave it would be ruin; therefore he sold out at a sacrifice that left him considerably reduced in worldly possessions, and began his voyage to San Francisco. Arrived there, he perceived by the newspapers that the trial was near its close. At Salt Lake later telegrams told him of the acquittal, and his gratitude was boundless—so boundless, indeed, that sleep was driven from his eyes by the pleasurable excitement almost as effectually as preceding weeks of anxiety had done it. He shaped his course straight for Hawkeye, now, and his meeting with his mother and the rest of the household was joyful—albeit he had been away so long that he seemed almost a stranger in his own home.

But the greetings and congratulations were hardly finished when all the journals in the land clamored the news of Laura's miserable death. Mrs. Hawkins was prostrated by this last blow, and it was well that Clay was at her side to stay her with comforting words and take upon himself the ordering of the household with its burden of labors and cares.

Washington Hawkins had scarcely more than entered upon that decade which carries one to the full blossom of manhood which we term the beginning: of middle age, and yet a brief sojourn at the capital of the nation had made him old. His hair was already turning gray when the late session of Congress began its sittings; it grew grayer still, and rapidly, after the memorable day that saw Laura proclaimed a murderess; it waxed grayer and still grayer during the lagging suspense that succeeded it and after the crash which ruined his last hope—the failure of his bill in the Senate and the destruction of its champion, Dilworthy. A few days later, when he stood uncovered while the last prayer was pronounced over Laura's grave, his hair was whiter and his face hardly less old than the venerable minister's whose words were sounding in his ears.



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A week after this, he was sitting in a double-bedded room in a cheap boarding house in Washington, with Col. Sellers. The two had been living together lately, and this mutual cavern of theirs the Colonel sometimes referred to as their “premises” and sometimes as their “apartments”—more particularly when conversing with persons outside. A canvas-covered modern trunk, marked “G. W. H.” stood on end by the door, strapped and ready for a journey; on it lay a small morocco satchel, also marked “G. W. H.” There was another trunk close by—a worn, and scarred, and ancient hair relic, with “B. S.” wrought in brass nails on its top; on it lay a pair of saddle-bags that probably knew more about the last century than they could tell. Washington got up and walked the floor a while in a restless sort of way, and finally was about to sit down on the hair trunk.

“Stop, don’t sit down on that!” exclaimed the Colonel: “There, now that’s all right—the chair’s better. I couldn’t get another trunk like that—not another like it in America, I reckon.”

“I am afraid not,” said Washington, with a faint attempt at a smile.

“No indeed; the man is dead that made that trunk and that saddle-bags.”

“Are his great-grand-children still living?” said Washington, with levity only in the words, not in the tone.

“Well, I don’t know—I hadn’t thought of that—but anyway they can’t make trunks and saddle-bags like that, if they are—no man can,” said the Colonel with honest simplicity. “Wife didn’t like to see me going off with that trunk—she said it was nearly certain to be stolen.”

“Why?”

“Why? Why, aren’t trunks always being stolen?”

“Well, yes—some kinds of trunks are.”

“Very well, then; this is some kind of a trunk—and an almighty rare kind, too.”

“Yes, I believe it is.”

“Well, then, why shouldn’t a man want to steal it if he got a chance?”

“Indeed I don’t know.—Why should he?”

“Washington, I never heard anybody talk like you. Suppose you were a thief, and that trunk was lying around and nobody watching—wouldn’t you steal it? Come, now, answer fair—wouldn’t you steal it?”



“Well, now, since you corner me, I would take it,—but I wouldn’t consider it stealing.

“You wouldn’t! Well, that beats me. Now what would you call stealing?”

“Why, taking property is stealing.”

“Property! Now what a way to talk that is: What do you suppose that trunk is worth?”

“Is it in good repair?”

“Perfect. Hair rubbed off a little, but the main structure is perfectly sound.”

“Does it leak anywhere?”

“Leak? Do you want to carry water in it? What do you mean by does it leak?”

“Why—a—do the clothes fall out of it when it is—when it is stationary?”

“Confound it, Washington, you are trying to make fun of me. I don’t know what has got into you to-day; you act mighty curious. What is the matter with you?”



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“Well, I’ll tell you, old friend. I am almost happy. I am, indeed. It wasn’t Clay’s telegram that hurried me up so and got me ready to start with you. It was a letter from Louise.”

“Good! What is it? What does she say?”

“She says come home—her father has consented, at last.”

“My boy, I want to congratulate you; I want to shake you by the hand! It’s a long turn that has no lane at the end of it, as the proverb says, or somehow that way. You’ll be happy yet, and Beriah Sellers will be there to see, thank God!”

“I believe it. General Boswell is pretty nearly a poor man, now. The railroad that was going to build up Hawkeye made short work of him, along with the rest. He isn’t so opposed to a son-in-law without a fortune, now.”

“Without a fortune, indeed! Why that Tennessee Land—”

“Never mind the Tennessee Land, Colonel. I am done with that, forever and forever—”

“Why no! You can’t mean to say—”

“My father, away back yonder, years ago, bought it for a blessing for his children, and—”

“Indeed he did! Si Hawkins said to me—”

“It proved a curse to him as long as he lived, and never a curse like it was inflicted upon any man’s heirs—”

“I’m bound to say there’s more or less truth—”

“It began to curse me when I was a baby, and it has cursed every hour of my life to this day—”

“Lord, lord, but it’s so! Time and again my wife—”

“I depended on it all through my boyhood and never tried to do an honest stroke of work for my living—”

“Right again—but then you—”

“I have chased it years and years as children chase butterflies. We might all have been prosperous, now; we might all have been happy, all these heart-breaking years, if we had accepted our poverty at first and gone contentedly to work and built up our own wealth by our own toil and sweat—”

“It’s so, it’s so; bless my soul, how often I’ve told Si Hawkins—”



“Instead of that, we have suffered more than the damned themselves suffer! I loved my father, and I honor his memory and recognize his good intentions; but I grieve for his mistaken ideas of conferring happiness upon his children. I am going to begin my life over again, and begin it and end it with good solid work! I’ll leave my children no Tennessee Land!”

“Spoken like a man, sir, spoken like a man! Your hand, again my boy! And always remember that when a word of advice from Beriah Sellers can help, it is at your service. I’m going to begin again, too!”

“Indeed!”

“Yes, sir. I’ve seen enough to show me where my mistake was. The law is what I was born for. I shall begin the study of the law. Heavens and earth, but that Brabant’s a wonderful man—a wonderful man sir! Such a head! And such a way with him! But I could see that he was jealous of me. The little licks I got in in the course of my argument before the jury—”

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“Your argument! Why, you were a witness.”

“Oh, yes, to the popular eye, to the popular eye—but I knew when I was dropping information and when I was letting drive at the court with an insidious argument. But the court knew it, bless you, and weakened every time! And Brabant knew it. I just reminded him of it in a quiet way, and its final result, and he said in a whisper, ‘You did it, Colonel, you did it, sir—but keep it mum for my sake; and I’ll tell you what you do,’ says he, ‘you go into the law, Col. Sellers—go into the law, sir; that’s your native element!’ And into the law the subscriber is going. There’s worlds of money in it!—whole worlds of money! Practice first in Hawkeye, then in Jefferson, then in St. Louis, then in New York! In the metropolis of the western world! Climb, and climb, and climb—and wind up on the Supreme bench. Beriah Sellers, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, sir! A made man for all time and eternity! That’s the way I block it out, sir—and it’s as clear as day—clear as the rosy-morn!”

Washington had heard little of this. The first reference to Laura’s trial had brought the old dejection to his face again, and he stood gazing out of the window at nothing, lost in reverie.

There was a knock—the postman handed in a letter. It was from Obedstown. East Tennessee, and was for Washington. He opened it. There was a note saying that enclosed he would please find a bill for the current year’s taxes on the 75,000 acres of Tennessee Land belonging to the estate of Silas Hawkins, deceased, and added that the money must be paid within sixty days or the land would be sold at public auction for the taxes, as provided by law. The bill was for \$180—something more than twice the market value of the land, perhaps.

Washington hesitated. Doubts flitted through his mind. The old instinct came upon him to cling to the land just a little longer and give it one more chance. He walked the floor feverishly, his mind tortured by indecision. Presently he stopped, took out his pocket book and counted his money. Two hundred and thirty dollars—it was all he had in the world.

“One hundred and eighty from two hundred and thirty,” he said to himself. “Fifty left It is enough to get me home Shall I do it, or shall I not? I wish I had somebody to decide for me.”

The pocket book lay open in his hand, with Louise’s small letter in view. His eye fell upon that, and it decided him.

“It shall go for taxes,” he said, “and never tempt me or mine any more!”

He opened the window and stood there tearing the tax bill to bits and watching the breeze waft them away, till all were gone.



“The spell is broken, the life-long curse is ended!” he said. “Let us go.”

The baggage wagon had arrived; five minutes later the two friends were mounted upon their luggage in it, and rattling off toward the station, the Colonel endeavoring to sing “Homeward Bound,” a song whose words he knew, but whose tune, as he rendered it, was a trial to auditors.



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CHAPTER LXII

Philip Sterling's circumstances were becoming straightened. The prospect was gloomy. His long siege of unproductive labor was beginning to tell upon his spirits; but what told still more upon them was the undeniable fact that the promise of ultimate success diminished every day, now. That is to say, the tunnel had reached a point in the hill which was considerably beyond where the coal vein should pass (according to all his calculations) if there were a coal vein there; and so, every foot that the tunnel now progressed seemed to carry it further away from the object of the search.

Sometimes he ventured to hope that he had made a mistake in estimating the direction which the vein should naturally take after crossing the valley and entering the hill. Upon such occasions he would go into the nearest mine on the vein he was hunting for, and once more get the bearings of the deposit and mark out its probable course; but the result was the same every time; his tunnel had manifestly pierced beyond the natural point of junction; and then his, spirits fell a little lower. His men had already lost faith, and he often overheard them saying it was perfectly plain that there was no coal in the hill.

Foremen and laborers from neighboring mines, and no end of experienced loafers from the village, visited the tunnel from time to time, and their verdicts were always the same and always disheartening—"No coal in that hill." Now and then Philip would sit down and think it all over and wonder what the mystery meant; then he would go into the tunnel and ask the men if there were no signs yet? None—always "none."

He would bring out a piece of rock and examine it, and say to himself, "It is limestone—it has crinoids and corals in it—the rock is right" Then he would throw it down with a sigh, and say, "But that is nothing; where coal is, limestone with these fossils in it is pretty certain to lie against its foot casing; but it does not necessarily follow that where this peculiar rock is coal must lie above it or beyond it; this sign is not sufficient."

The thought usually followed:—"There is one infallible sign—if I could only strike that!"

Three or four times in as many weeks he said to himself, "Am I a visionary? I must be a visionary; everybody is in these days; everybody chases butterflies: everybody seeks sudden fortune and will not lay one up by slow toil. This is not right, I will discharge the men and go at some honest work. There is no coal here. What a fool I have been; I will give it up."

But he never could do it. A half hour of profound thinking always followed; and at the end of it he was sure to get up and straighten himself and say: "There is coal there; I will not give it up; and coal or no coal I will drive the tunnel clear through the hill; I will not surrender while I am alive."



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He never thought of asking Mr. Montague for more money. He said there was now but one chance of finding coal against nine hundred and ninety nine that he would not find it, and so it would be wrong in him to make the request and foolish in Mr. Montague to grant it.

He had been working three shifts of men. Finally, the settling of a weekly account exhausted his means. He could not afford to run in debt, and therefore he gave the men their discharge. They came into his cabin presently, where he sat with his elbows on his knees and his chin in his hands—the picture of discouragement and their spokesman said:

“Mr. Sterling, when Tim was down a week with his fall you kept him on half-wages and it was a mighty help to his family; whenever any of us was in trouble you’ve done what you could to help us out; you’ve acted fair and square with us every time, and I reckon we are men and know a man when we see him. We haven’t got any faith in that hill, but we have a respect for a man that’s got the pluck that you’ve showed; you’ve fought a good fight, with everybody agin you and if we had grub to go on, I’m d—d if we wouldn’t stand by you till the cows come home! That is what the boys say. Now we want to put in one parting blast for luck. We want to work three days more; if we don’t find anything, we won’t bring in no bill against you. That is what we’ve come to say.”

Philip was touched. If he had had money enough to buy three days’ “grub” he would have accepted the generous offer, but as it was, he could not consent to be less magnanimous than the men, and so he declined in a manly speech; shook hands all around and resumed his solitary communings. The men went back to the tunnel and “put in a parting blast for luck” anyhow. They did a full day’s work and then took their leave. They called at his cabin and gave him good-bye, but were not able to tell him their day’s effort had given things a mere promising look.

The next day Philip sold all the tools but two or three sets; he also sold one of the now deserted cabins as old, lumber, together with its domestic wares; and made up his mind that he would buy, provisions with the trifle of money thus gained and continue his work alone. About the middle of the after noon he put on his roughest clothes and went to the tunnel. He lit a candle and groped his way in. Presently he heard the sound of a pick or a drill, and wondered, what it meant. A spark of light now appeared in the far end of the tunnel, and when he arrived there he found the man Tim at work. Tim said:

“I’m to have a job in the Golden Brier mine by and by—in a week or ten days—and I’m going to work here till then. A man might as well be at some thing, and besides I consider that I owe you what you paid me when I was laid up.”

Philip said, Oh, no, he didn’t owe anything; but Tim persisted, and then Philip said he had a little provision now, and would share. So for several days Philip held the drill and Tim did the striking. At first Philip was impatient to see the result of every blast, and was



always back and peering among the smoke the moment after the explosion. But there was never any encouraging result; and therefore he finally lost almost all interest, and hardly troubled himself to inspect results at all. He simply labored on, stubbornly and with little hope.

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Tim staid with him till the last moment, and then took up his job at the Golden Brier, apparently as depressed by the continued barrenness of their mutual labors as Philip was himself. After that, Philip fought his battle alone, day after day, and slow work it was; he could scarcely see that he made any progress.

Late one afternoon he finished drilling a hole which he had been at work at for more than two hours; he swabbed it out, and poured in the powder and inserted the fuse; then filled up the rest of the hole with dirt and small fragments of stone; tamped it down firmly, touched his candle to the fuse, and ran. By and by the dull report came, and he was about to walk back mechanically and see what was accomplished; but he halted; presently turned on his heel and thought, rather than said:

“No, this is useless, this is absurd. If I found anything it would only be one of those little aggravating seams of coal which doesn’t mean anything, and—”

By this time he was walking out of the tunnel. His thought ran on:

“I am conquered I am out of provisions, out of money. I have got to give it up All this hard work lost! But I am not conquered! I will go and work for money, and come back and have another fight with fate. Ah me, it may be years, it may, be years.”

Arrived at the mouth of the tunnel, he threw his coat upon the ground, sat down on, a stone, and his eye sought the westering sun and dwelt upon the charming landscape which stretched its woody ridges, wave upon wave, to the golden horizon.

Something was taking place at his feet which did not attract his attention.

His reverie continued, and its burden grew more and more gloomy. Presently he rose up and, cast a look far away toward the valley, and his thoughts took a new direction:

“There it is! How good it looks! But down there is not up here. Well, I will go home and pack up—there is nothing else to do”

He moved off moodily toward his cabin. He had gone some distance before he thought of his coat; then he was about to turn back, but he smiled at the thought, and continued his journey—such a coat as that could be of little use in a civilized land; a little further on, he remembered that there were some papers of value in one of the pockets of the relic, and then with a penitent ejaculation he turned back picked up the coat and put it on.

He made a dozen steps, and then stopped very suddenly. He stood still a moment, as one who is trying to believe something and cannot. He put a hand up over his shoulder and felt his back, and a great thrill shot through him. He grasped the skirt of the coat impulsively and another thrill followed. He snatched the coat from his back, glanced at



it, threw it from him and flew back to the tunnel. He sought the spot where the coat had lain—he had to look close, for the light was waning—then to make sure, he put his hand to the ground and a little stream of water swept against his fingers:



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“Thank God, I’ve struck it at last!”

He lit a candle and ran into the tunnel; he picked up a piece of rubbish cast out by the last blast, and said:

“This clayey stuff is what I’ve longed for—I know what is behind it.”

He swung his pick with hearty good will till long after the darkness had gathered upon the earth, and when he trudged home at length he knew he had a coal vein and that it was seven feet thick from wall to wall.

He found a yellow envelope lying on his rickety table, and recognized that it was of a family sacred to the transmission of telegrams.

He opened it, read it, crushed it in his hand and threw it down. It simply said:

“Ruth is very ill.”

CHAPTER LXIII.

It was evening when Philip took the cars at the Ilium station. The news of, his success had preceded him, and while he waited for the train, he was the center of a group of eager questioners, who asked him a hundred things about the mine, and magnified his good fortune. There was no mistake this time.

Philip, in luck, had become suddenly a person of consideration, whose speech was freighted with meaning, whose looks were all significant. The words of the proprietor of a rich coal mine have a golden sound, and his common sayings are repeated as if they were solid wisdom.

Philip wished to be alone; his good fortune at this moment seemed an empty mockery, one of those sarcasms of fate, such as that which spreads a dainty banquet for the man who has no appetite. He had longed for success principally for Ruth’s sake; and perhaps now, at this very moment of his triumph, she was dying.

“Shust what I said, Mister Sederling,” the landlord of the Ilium hotel kept repeating. “I doid Jake Schmidt he find him dere shust so sure as noting.”

“You ought to have taken a share, Mr. Dusenheimer,” said Philip.

“Yaas, I know. But d’old woman, she say ‘You sticks to your pisiness. So I sticks to ‘em. Und I makes noting. Dat Mister Prierly, he don’t never come back here no more, ain’t it?”



“Why?” asked Philip.

“Vell, dere is so many peers, and so many oder dhrinks, I got 'em all set down, ven he coomes back.”

It was a long night for Philip, and a restless one. At any other time the swing of the cars would have lulled him to sleep, and the rattle and clank of wheels and rails, the roar of the whirling iron would have only been cheerful reminders of swift and safe travel. Now they were voices of warning and taunting; and instead of going rapidly the train seemed to crawl at a snail's pace. And it not only crawled, but it frequently stopped; and when it stopped it stood dead still and there was an ominous silence. Was anything the matter, he wondered. Only a station probably. Perhaps, he thought, a telegraphic station. And then he listened eagerly. Would the conductor open the door and ask for Philip Sterling, and hand him a fatal dispatch?



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How long they seemed to wait. And then slowly beginning to move, they were off again, shaking, pounding, screaming through the night. He drew his curtain from time to time and looked out. There was the lurid sky line of the wooded range along the base of which they were crawling. There was the Susquehannah, gleaming in the moon-light. There was a stretch of level valley with silent farm houses, the occupants all at rest, without trouble, without anxiety. There was a church, a graveyard, a mill, a village; and now, without pause or fear, the train had mounted a trestle-work high in air and was creeping along the top of it while a swift torrent foamed a hundred feet below.

What would the morning bring? Even while he was flying to her, her gentle spirit might have gone on another flight, whither he could not follow her. He was full of foreboding. He fell at length into a restless doze. There was a noise in his ears as of a rushing torrent when a stream is swollen by a freshet in the spring. It was like the breaking up of life; he was struggling in the consciousness of coming death: when Ruth stood by his side, clothed in white, with a face like that of an angel, radiant, smiling, pointing to the sky, and saying, "Come." He awoke with a cry—the train was roaring through a bridge, and it shot out into daylight.

When morning came the train was industriously toiling along through the fat lands of Lancaster, with its broad farms of corn and wheat, its mean houses of stone, its vast barns and granaries, built as if, for storing the riches of Heliogabalus. Then came the smiling fields of Chester, with their English green, and soon the county of Philadelphia itself, and the increasing signs of the approach to a great city. Long trains of coal cars, laden and unladen, stood upon sidings; the tracks of other roads were crossed; the smoke of other locomotives was seen on parallel lines; factories multiplied; streets appeared; the noise of a busy city began to fill the air;—and with a slower and slower clank on the connecting rails and interlacing switches the train rolled into the station and stood still.

It was a hot August morning. The broad streets glowed in the sun, and the white-shuttered houses stared at the hot thoroughfares like closed bakers' ovens set along the highway. Philip was oppressed with the heavy air; the sweltering city lay as in a swoon. Taking a street car, he rode away to the northern part of the city, the newer portion, formerly the district of Spring Garden, for in this the Boltons now lived, in a small brick house, befitting their altered fortunes.

He could scarcely restrain his impatience when he came in sight of the house. The window shutters were not "bowed"; thank God, for that. Ruth was still living, then. He ran up the steps and rang. Mrs. Bolton met him at the door.

"Thee is very welcome, Philip."

"And Ruth?"



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“She is very ill, but quieter than, she has been, and the fever is a little abating. The most dangerous time will be when the fever leaves her. The doctor fears she will not have strength enough to rally from it. Yes, thee can see her.”

Mrs. Bolton led the way to the little chamber where Ruth lay. “Oh,” said her mother, “if she were only in her cool and spacious room in our old home. She says that seems like heaven.”

Mr. Bolton sat by Ruth’s bedside, and he rose and silently pressed Philip’s hand. The room had but one window; that was wide open to admit the air, but the air that came in was hot and lifeless. Upon the table stood a vase of flowers. Ruth’s eyes were closed; her cheeks were flushed with fever, and she moved her head restlessly as if in pain.

“Ruth,” said her mother, bending over her, “Philip is here.”

Ruth’s eyes unclosed, there was a gleam of recognition in them, there was an attempt at a smile upon her face, and she tried to raise her thin hand, as Philip touched her forehead with his lips; and he heard her murmur,

“Dear Phil.”

There was nothing to be done but to watch and wait for the cruel fever to burn itself out. Dr. Longstreet told Philip that the fever had undoubtedly been contracted in the hospital, but it was not malignant, and would be little dangerous if Ruth were not so worn down with work, or if she had a less delicate constitution.

“It is only her indomitable will that has kept her up for weeks. And if that should leave her now, there will be no hope. You can do more for her now, sir, than I can?”

“How?” asked Philip eagerly.

“Your presence, more than anything else, will inspire her with the desire to live.”

When the fever turned, Ruth was in a very critical condition. For two days her life was like the fluttering of a lighted candle in the wind. Philip was constantly by her side, and she seemed to be conscious of his presence, and to cling to him, as one borne away by a swift stream clings to a stretched-out hand from the shore. If he was absent a moment her restless eyes sought something they were disappointed not to find.

Philip so yearned to bring her back to life, he willed it so strongly and passionately, that his will appeared to affect hers and she seemed slowly to draw life from his.

After two days of this struggle with the grasping enemy, it was evident to Dr. Longstreet that Ruth’s will was beginning to issue its orders to her body with some force, and that strength was slowly coming back. In another day there was a decided improvement.



As Philip sat holding her weak hand and watching the least sign of resolution in her face, Ruth was able to whisper,

“I so want to live, for you, Phil!”

“You will; darling, you must,” said Philip in a tone of faith and courage that carried a thrill of determination—of command—along all her nerves.



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Slowly Philip drew her back to life. Slowly she came back, as one willing but well nigh helpless. It was new for Ruth to feel this dependence on another's nature, to consciously draw strength of will from the will of another. It was a new but a dear joy, to be lifted up and carried back into the happy world, which was now all aglow with the light of love; to be lifted and carried by the one she loved more than her own life.

"Sweetheart," she said to Philip, "I would not have cared to come back but for thy love."

"Not for thy profession?"

"Oh, thee may be glad enough of that some day, when thy coal bed is dug out and thee and father are in the air again."

When Ruth was able to ride she was taken into the country, for the pure air was necessary to her speedy recovery. The family went with her. Philip could not be spared from her side, and Mr. Bolton had gone up to Ilium to look into that wonderful coal mine and to make arrangements for developing it, and bringing its wealth to market. Philip had insisted on re-conveying the Ilium property to Mr. Bolton, retaining only the share originally contemplated for himself, and Mr. Bolton, therefore, once more found himself engaged in business and a person of some consequence in Third street. The mine turned out even better than was at first hoped, and would, if judiciously managed, be a fortune to them all. This also seemed to be the opinion of Mr. Bigler, who heard of it as soon as anybody, and, with the impudence of his class called upon Mr. Bolton for a little aid in a patent car-wheel he had bought an interest in. That rascal, Small, he said, had swindled him out of all he had.

Mr. Bolton told him he was very sorry, and recommended him to sue Small.

Mr. Small also came with a similar story about Mr. Bigler; and Mr. Bolton had the grace to give him like advice. And he added, "If you and Bigler will procure the indictment of each other, you may have the satisfaction of putting each other in the penitentiary for the forgery of my acceptances."

Bigler and Small did not quarrel however. They both attacked Mr. Bolton behind his back as a swindler, and circulated the story that he had made a fortune by failing.

In the pure air of the highlands, amid the golden glories of ripening September, Ruth rapidly came back to health. How beautiful the world is to an invalid, whose senses are all clarified, who has been so near the world of spirits that she is sensitive to the finest influences, and whose frame responds with a thrill to the subtlest ministrations of soothing nature. Mere life is a luxury, and the color of the grass, of the flowers, of the sky, the wind in the trees, the outlines of the horizon, the forms of clouds, all give a pleasure as exquisite as the sweetest music to the ear famishing for it. The world was

all new and fresh to Ruth, as if it had just been created for her, and love filled it, till her heart was overflowing with happiness.



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It was golden September also at Fallkill. And Alice sat by the open window in her room at home, looking out upon the meadows where the laborers were cutting the second crop of clover. The fragrance of it floated to her nostrils. Perhaps she did not mind it. She was thinking. She had just been writing to Ruth, and on the table before her was a yellow piece of paper with a faded four-leaved clover pinned on it—only a memory now. In her letter to Ruth she had poured out her heartiest blessings upon them both, with her dear love forever and forever.

“Thank God,” she said, “they will never know”

They never would know. And the world never knows how many women there are like Alice, whose sweet but lonely lives of self-sacrifice, gentle, faithful, loving souls, bless it continually.

“She is a dear girl,” said Philip, when Ruth showed him the letter.

“Yes, Phil, and we can spare a great deal of love for her, our own lives are so full.”

APPENDIX.

Perhaps some apology to the reader is necessary in view of our failure to find Laura’s father. We supposed, from the ease with which lost persons are found in novels, that it would not be difficult. But it was; indeed, it was impossible; and therefore the portions of the narrative containing the record of the search have been stricken out. Not because they were not interesting—for they were; but inasmuch as the man was not found, after all, it did not seem wise to harass and excite the reader to no purpose.

THE AUTHORS