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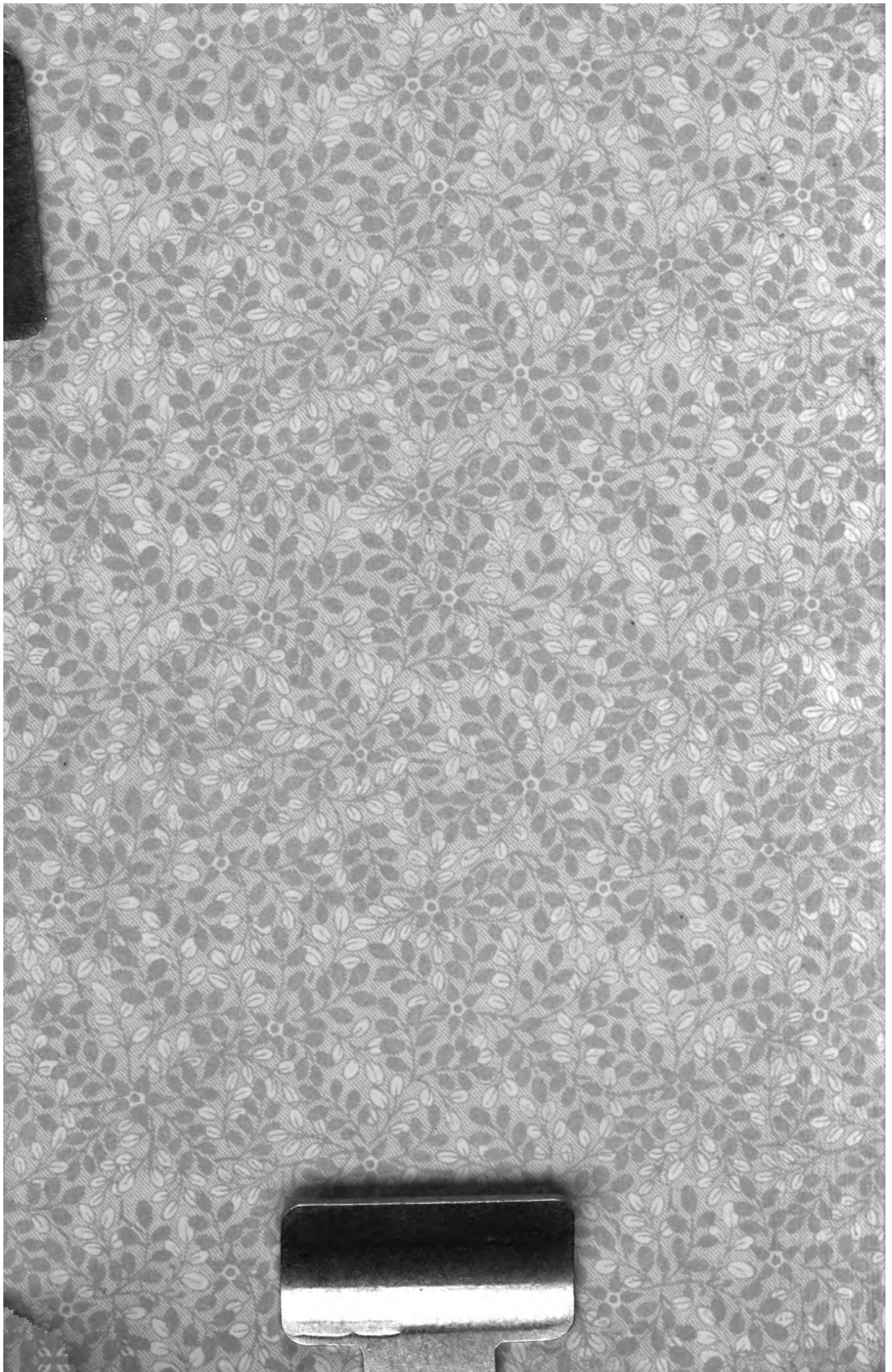
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# Eve

Sabine

Baring-Gould











# E V E

A Novel

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
'JOHN HERRING' 'MEHALAH' &c.



IN TWO VOLUMES

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# E V E.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### FATHER AND SON.

BARBARA was mistaken. Jasper had gone to Buckfastleigh, gone openly to his father's house, in the belief that his father was dying. He knocked at the blotched and scaled door under the dilapidated portico, but received no answer. He tried the door. It was locked and barred. Then he went round to the back, noting how untidy the garden was, how out of repair was the house; and in the yard of the kitchen he found the deaf housekeeper. His first question, shouted into her ear, naturally was an inquiry after his father. He learned to his surprise that the old man was not ill, but was then in the factory. Thinking that his question had been misunderstood, he entered the house, went into his father's study, then up to his bed-



room, and through the dirty window-panes saw the old man leaving the mill on his way back to the house.

What, then, had Watt meant by sending him to the old home on false tidings? The boy was indeed mischievous, but this was more than common mischief. He must have sent him on a fool's errand for some purpose of his own. That the boy wanted to hear news of his father was possible, but not probable. The only other alternative Jasper could suggest to explain Watt's conduct was the disquieting one that he wanted to be rid of Jasper from Morwell for some purpose of his own. What could that purpose be?

Jasper's blood coursed hot through his veins. He was angry. He was a forbearing man, ready always to find an excuse for a transgressor, but this was a transgression too malicious to be easily forgiven. Jasper determined, now that he was at home, to see his father, and then to return to the Jordans as quickly as he could. He had ridden his own horse, that horse must have a night's rest, but to-morrow he would return.

He was thus musing when Mr. Babb came in.

'You here!' said the old man. 'What has brought you to Buckfastleigh again? Want

money, of course.' Then snappishly, 'You shan't get it.'

'I am come,' said his son, 'because I had received information that you were ill. Have you been unwell, father?'

'I—no! I'm never ill. No such luck for you. If I were ill and helpless, you might take the management, you think. If I were dead, that would be nuts to you.'

'My father, you wrong me. I left you because I would no longer live this wretched life, and because I hate your unforgiving temper.'

'Unforgiving!' sneered the old manufacturer. 'Martin was a thief, and he deserved his fate. Is not Brutus applauded because he condemned his own son? Is not David held to be weak because he bade Joab spare Absalom?'

'We will not squeeze old crushed apples. No juice will run from them,' replied Jasper. 'The thing was done, and might have been forgiven. I would not have returned now had I not been told that you were dying.'

'Who told you that lie?'

'Walter.'

'He! He was ever a liar, a mocker, a blasphemer! How was he to know? I thank heaven he has not shown his jackanapes visage

here since he left. I dying! I never was sounder. I am better in health and spirits since I am quit of my sons. They vexed my righteous soul every day with their ungodly deeds. So you supposed I was dying, and came here to see what meat could be picked off your father's bones?'

Jasper remembered Watt's sneer. It was clear whence the boy had gathered his mean views of men's motives.

'I'll trouble you to return whence you came,' said Ezekiel Babb. 'No blessing has rested on me since I brought the strange blood into the house. Now that all of you are gone—you, Eve number one, and Eve number two, Martin and Walter—I am well. The Son of Peace has returned to this house; I can read my Bible and do my accounts in quiet, without fears of what new bit of mischief or devilry my children have been up to, without any more squeaking of fiddles and singing of profane songs all over the house. Come now!'—the old man raised his bushy brows and flashed a cunning, menacing glance at his son—'come now! if you had found me dead—in Abraham's bosom—what would you have done? I know what Walter would have done: he would have capered up and down all over the house, fiddling like a devil, like a devil as he

is.' He looked at Jasper again, inquisitively. 'Well, what would you have done?—fiddled too?'

'My father, as you desire to know, I will tell you. I would at once have realised what I could, and have cleared off the debt to Mr. Jordan.'

'Well, you may do that when the day comes,' said the old manufacturer, shrugging his shoulders. 'It is nothing to me what you do with the mill and the house and the land after I am'—he turned up his eyes to the dirty ceiling—'where the wicked cease from fiddling and no thieves break in and steal. I am not going to pay the money twice over. My obligation ended when the money went out of this house. I did more than I was required. I chastised my own son for taking it. What was seven years on Dartmoor? A flea-bite. Under the old law the rebellious son was stoned till he died. I suppose, now, you are hungry. Call the old crab; kick her, pinch her, till she understands, and let her give you something to eat. There are some scraps, I know, of veal-pie and cold potatoes. I think, by the way, the veal-pie is done. Don't forget to ask a blessing before you fall-to on the cold potatoes.' Then he rubbed his forehead and said, 'Stay, I'll go and rouse the old toad myself;

you stay here. You are the best of my children. All the rest were a bad lot—too much of the strange blood in them.’

Whilst Mr. Babb is rousing his old house-keeper to produce some food, we will say a few words of the past history of the Babb family.

Eve the first, Mr. Babb’s wife, had led a miserable life. She did not run away from him: she remained and poured forth the fiery love of her heart upon her children, especially on her eldest, a daughter, Eve, to whom she talked of her old life—its freedom, its happiness, its attractions. She died of a broken spirit on the birth of her third son, Walter. Then Eve, the eldest, a beautiful girl, unable to endure the bad temper of her father, the depressing atmosphere of the house, and the cares of housekeeping imposed on her, ran away after a travelling band of actors.

Jasper, the eldest son, grew up to be grave and resigned. He was of use in the house, managing it as far as he was allowed, and helping his father in many ways. But the old man, who had grumbled at and insulted his wife whilst she was alive, could not keep his tongue from the subject that still rankled in his heart. This occasioned quarrels; the boy took his mother’s side, and refused to hear his father’s gibes at her memory. He was passionately attached to



his next brother Martin. The mother had brought a warm, loving spirit into the family, and Jasper had inherited much of it. He stood as a screen between his brother and father, warding off from the former many a blow and angry reprimand. He did Martin's school tasks for him; he excused his faults; he admired him for his beauty, his spirit, his bearing, his lively talk. There was no lad, in his opinion, who could equal Martin; Watt was right when he said that Jasper had contributed to his ruin by humouring him, but Jasper humoured him because he loved him, and pitied him for the uncongeniality of his home. Martin displayed a talent for music, and there was an old musician at Ashburton, the organist of the parish church, who developed and cultivated his talent, and taught him both to play and sing. Jasper had also an instinctive love of music, and he also learned the violin and surpassed his brother, who had not the patience to master the first difficulties, and who preferred to sing.

The father, perhaps, saw in Martin a recrudescence of the old proclivities of his mother; he tried hard to interfere with his visits to the musician, and only made Martin more set on his studies with him. But the most implacable, incessant state of war was that which raged

between the old father and his youngest son, Walter, or Watt as his brothers called him. This boy had no reverence in him. He scouted the authority of his father and of Jasper. He scoffed at everything the old man held sacred. He absolutely refused to go to the Baptist Chapel frequented by his father, he stopped his ears and made grimaces at his brothers and the servants during family worship, and the devotions were not unfrequently concluded with a rush of the old man at his youngest son and the administration of resounding clouts on the ears.

At last a quarrel broke out between them of so fierce a nature that Watt was expelled the house. Then Martin left to follow Watt, who had joined a travelling dramatic company. After a year, however, Martin returned, very thin and woe-begone, and tried to accommodate himself to home-life once more. But it was not possible ; he had tasted of the sort of life that suited him—one rambling, desultory, artistic. He robbed his father's bureau and ran away.

Then it was that he was taken, and in the same week sent to the assizes, and condemned to seven years' penal labour in the convict establishment at Prince's Town. Thence he had escaped, assisted by Jasper and Watt,

whilst the former was on his way to Morwell with the remnant of the money recovered from Martin.

The rest is known to the reader.

Whilst Jasper ate the mean meal provided for him, his father watched him.

‘So,’ said the old man, and the twinkle was in his cunning eyes, ‘so you have hired yourself to Mr. Ignatius Jordan at Morwell as his steward?’

‘Yes, father. I remain there as pledge to him that he shall be repaid, and I am doing there all I can to put the estate into good order. It has been shockingly neglected.’

‘Who for?’ asked Mr. Babb.

‘I do not understand.’

‘For whom are you thus working?’

‘For Mr. Jordan, as you said!’

The manufacturer chuckled.

‘Jasper,’ said he, ‘some men look on a pool and see nothing but water. I put my head in, open my eyes, and see what is at the bottom. That girl did not come here for nothing. I put my head under water and opened my eyes.’

‘Well?’ said Jasper, with an effort controlling his irritation.

‘Well! I saw it all under the surface. I saw you. She came here because she was curious to see the factory and the house, and to know



if all was as good as you had bragged about. I gave her a curt dismissal; I do not want a daughter-in-law thrusting her feet into my shoes till I cast them off for ever.'

Jasper started to his feet and upset his chair. He was very angry. 'You utterly wrong her,' he said. 'You open your eyes in mud, and see only dirt. Miss Jordan came here out of kindness towards me, whom she dislikes and despises in her heart.'

Mr. Babb chuckled.

'Well, I won't say that you have not acted wisely. Morwell will go to that girl, and it is a pretty property.'

'I beg your pardon, you are wrong. It is left to the second—Eve.'

'So, so! It goes to Eve! That is why the elder girl came here, to see if she could fit herself into Owlacombe.'

Jasper's face burnt, and the muscles of his head and neck quivered, but he said nothing. He dared not trust himself to speak. He had all his life practised self-control but he never needed it more than at this moment.

'I see it all,' pursued the old man, his crafty face contracting with a grin; 'Mr. Jordan thought to provide for both his daughters. Buckfast mill and Owlacombe for the elder, Morwell for the younger—ha, ha! The elder to

take you so as to get this pretty place. And she came to look at it and see if it suited her. Well! It is a pretty place—only,' he giggled, 'it ain't vacant and to be had just yet.'

Jasper took his hat; his face was red as blood, and his dark eyes flashed.

'Don't go,' said the old manufacturer; 'you did not see their little trap and walked into it, eh? One word of warning I must give you. Don't run after the younger; Eve is your niece.'

'Father!'

'Ah! that surprises you, does it? It is true. Eve's mother was your sister. Did Mr Jordan never tell you that?'

'Never!'

'It is true. Sit down again to the cold potatoes. You shall know all, but first ask a blessing.'

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## HUSH-MONEY.

‘YES,’ said Mr. Babb, settling himself on a chair; then finding he had sat on the tails of his coat, he rose, held a tail in each hand, and re-seated himself between them; ‘yes.’

‘Do you mean seriously to tell me that Mr. Jordan’s second wife was my sister?’

‘Well—in a way. That is, I don’t mean your sister in a way, but his wife in a way.’

‘I have heard nothing of this; what do you mean?’

‘I mean that he did not marry her.’

Jasper Babb’s face darkened. ‘I have been in his house and spoken to him, and not known that! What became of my sister?’

The old man fidgeted on his chair. It was not comfortable. ‘I’m sure I don’t know,’ he said.

‘Did she die?’

‘No,’ said Mr. Babb, ‘she ran off with a play-actor.’

‘Well—and after that?’

‘After what? After the play-actor? I do not know, I have not heard of her since. I don’t want to. Was not that enough?’

‘And Mr. Jordan—does he know nothing?’

‘I cannot tell. If you are curious to know you can ask.’

‘This is very extraordinary. Why did not Mr. Jordan tell me the relationship? He knew who I was.’

The old man laughed, and Jasper shuddered at his laugh, there was something so base and brutal in it.

‘He was not so proud of how he behaved to Eve as to care to boast of the connection. You might not have liked it, might have fizzed and gone pop.’

Jasper’s brow was on fire, his eyebrows met, and a sombre sparkle was in his eye.

‘You have made no effort to trace her?’

Mr. Babb shrugged his shoulders.

‘Tell me,’ said Jasper, leaning his elbow on the table, and putting his hand over his eyes to screen them from the light, and allow him to watch his father’s face—‘tell me everything, as you undertook. Tell me how my poor sister came to Morwell, and how she left it.’

‘There is not much to tell,’ answered the father; ‘you know that she ran away from home after her mother’s death; you were then nine or ten years old. She hated work, and lusted after the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. After a while I heard where she was, that she was ill, and had been taken into Morwell House to be nursed, and that there she remained after her recovery.’

‘Strange,’ mused Jasper; ‘she fell ill and was taken to Morwell, and I—it was the same. Things repeat themselves; the world moves in a circle.’

‘Everything repeats itself. As in Eve’s case the sickness led up to marriage, or something like it, so will it be in your case. This is what Mr. Jordan and Eve did: they went into the little old chapel, and took each other’s hands before the altar, and swore fidelity to each other; that was all. Mr. Jordan is a Catholic, and would not have the knot tied by a church parson, and Eve would not confess to her name, she had that sense of decency left in her. They satisfied their consciences, but it was no legal marriage. I believe he would have done what was right, but she was perverse, and refused to give her name, and say both who she was and whence she came.’

‘Go on,’ said Jasper.

‘Well, then, about a year after this I heard where she was, and I went after her to Morwell, but I did not go openly—I had no wish to encounter Mr. Jordan. I tried to persuade Eve to return with me to Buckfastleigh. Who can lay to my charge that I am not a forgiving father? Have I not given you cold potato, and would have furnished you with veal pie if the old woman had not finished the scraps? I saw Eve, and I told her my mind pretty freely, both about her running away and about her connection with Jordan. I will say this for her—she professed to be sorry for what she had done, and desired my forgiveness. That, I said, I would give her on one condition only, that she forsook her husband and child, and came back to keep house for me. I could not bring her to a decision, so I appointed her a day, and said I would take her final answer on that. But I was hindered going; I forget just now what it was, but I couldn’t go that day.’

‘Well, father, what happened?’

‘As I could not keep my appointment—I remember now how it was, I was laid up with a grip of lumbago at Tavistock—I sent one of the actors there, from whom I had heard about her, with a message. I had the lumbago in my back that badly that I was bent double. When



I was able to go, on the morrow, it was too late; she was gone.'

'Gone! Whither?'

'Gone off with the play-actor,' answered Mr. Babb, grimly. 'It runs in the blood.'

'You are sure of this?'

'Mr. Jordan told me so.'

'Did you not pursue her?'

'To what end? I had done my duty. I had tried my utmost to recover my daughter, and when for the second time she played me false, I wiped off the dust of my feet as a testimony against her.'

'She left her child?'

'Yes, she deserted her child as well as her husband—that is to say, Mr. Ignatius Jordan. She deserted the house that had sheltered her, to run after a homeless, bespangled, bepainted play-actor. I know all about it. The life at Morwell was too dull for her, it was duller there than at Buckfastleigh. Here she could see something of the world; she could watch the factory hands coming to their work and leaving it; but there she was as much out of the world as if she were in Lundy Isle. She had a hankering after the glitter and paint of this empty world.'

'I cannot believe this. I cannot believe that she would desert the man who befriended her, and forsake her child.'

‘ You say that because you did not know her. You know Martin ; would he not do it ? You know Watt ; has he any scruples and strong domestic affections ? She was like them ; had in her veins the same boiling, giddy, wanton blood.’

Jasper knew but too well that Martin and Watt were unscrupulous, and followed pleasure regardless of the calls of duty. He had been too young when his sister left home to know anything of her character. It was possible that she had the same light and careless temperament as Martin.

‘ A horse that shies once will shy again,’ said the old man. ‘ Eve ran away from home once, and she ran away from the second home. If she did not run away from home a third time it probably was that she had none to desert.’

‘ And Mr. Jordan knows nothing of her ? ’

‘ He lives too far from the stream of life to see the broken dead things that drift down it.’

Jasper considered. The flush of anger had faded from his brow ; an expression of great sadness had succeeded. His hand was over his brow, but he was no longer intent on his father’s face ; his eyes rested on the table.

‘ I must find out something about my sister.’



It is too horrible to think of our sister, our only sister, as a lost, sunk, degraded thing.'

He thought of Mr. Jordan, of his strange manner, his abstracted look, his capricious temper. He did not believe that the master of Morwell was in his sound senses. He seemed to be a man whose mind had preyed on some great sorrow till all nerve had gone out of it. What was that sorrow? Once Barbara had said to him, in excuse for some violence and rudeness in her father's conduct, that he had never got over the loss of Eve's mother.

'Mr. Jordan was not easy about his treatment of my daughter,' said old Babb. 'From what little I saw of him seventeen years ago I take him to be a weak-spirited man. He was in a sad take-on then at the loss of Eve, and having a baby thrown on his hands unweaned. He offered me the money I wanted to buy those fields for stretching the cloth. You may be sure when a man presses money on you, and is indifferent to interest, that he wants you to forgive him something. He desired me to look over his conduct to my daughter, and drop all inquiries. I dare say they had had words, and then she was ready in her passion to run away with the first vagabond who offered.'

Then Jasper removed his hand from his face, and laid one on the other upon the table.

His face was now pale, and the muscles set. His eyes looked steadily and sternly at the mean old man, who averted his eyes from those of his son.

‘What is this? You took a bribe, father, to let the affair remain unsifted! For the sake of a few acres of meadow you sacrificed your child!’

‘Fiddlesticks-ends,’ said the manufacturer. ‘I sacrificed nothing. What could I do? If I ran after Eve and found her in some harlequin and columbine booth, could I force her to return? She had made her bed, and must lie on it. What could I gain by stirring in the matter? Let sleeping dogs lie.’

‘Father,’ said Jasper, very gravely, ‘the fact remains that you took money that looks to me very much like a bribe to shut your eyes.’

‘Pshaw! pshaw! I had made up my mind. I was full of anger against Eve. I would not have taken her into my house had I met her. Fine scandals I should have had with her there! Better let her run and disappear in the mud, than come muddy into my parlour and besmirch all the furniture and me with it, and perhaps damage the business. These children of mine have eaten sour grapes, and the parent’s teeth are set on edge. It all comes’—the old man brought his fist down on the table—‘of my accursed folly in bringing strange blood into

the house, and now the chastisement is on me. Are you come back to live with me, Jasper? Will you help me again in the mill?’

‘Never again, father, never,’ answered the young man, standing up. ‘Never, after what I have just heard. I shall do what I can to find my poor sister, Eve Jordan’s mother. It is a duty—a duty your neglect has left to me; a duty hard to take up after it has been laid aside for seventeen years; a duty betrayed for a sum of money.’

‘Pshaw!’ The old man put his hands in his pockets, and walked about the room. He was shrunk with age; his eagle profile was without beauty or dignity.

Jasper followed him with his eye, reproachfully, sorrowfully.

‘Father,’ he said, ‘it seems to me as if that money was hush-money, and that you, by taking it, had brought the blood of your child on your own head.’

‘Blood! Fiddlesticks! Blood! There is no blood in the case. If she chose to run, how was I to stop her? Blood, indeed! Red raddle!’

## CHAPTER XXX.

## BETRAYAL.

BARBARA came out on the platform of rock. Eve stood before her trembling, with downcast eyes, conscious of having done wrong, and of being put in a position from which it was difficult to escape.

Barbara had walked fast. She was hot and excited, and her temper was roused. She loved Eve dearly, but Eve tried her.

‘Eve,’ she said sharply, ‘what is the meaning of this? Who has been here with you?’

The young girl hung her head.

‘What is the meaning of this?’ she repeated, and her tone of voice showed her irritation. Barbara had a temper.

Eve murmured an inarticulate reply.

‘What is it? I cannot understand. Jane came tearing home with a rhodomontade about a boy jumping down on her from a tree, and I saw him just now at the gate making faces at

me. He put his fingers into his mouth, hooted like an owl, and dived into the bushes. What is the meaning of this?’

Eve burst into tears, and hid her face on her sister’s neck.

‘Come, come,’ said Barbara, somewhat mollified, ‘I must be told all. Your giddiness is leading you into a hobble. Who was that on the rock with you? I caught a glimpse of a man as I passed the Scotch fir, and I thought the voice I heard was that of Jasper.’

The girl still cried, cried out of confusion, because she did not know how to answer her sister. She must not tell the truth; the secret had been confided to her. Poor Martin’s safety must not be jeopardised by her. Barbara was so hot, impetuous, and frank, that she might let out about him, and so he might be arrested. What was she to say and do?

‘Come back with me,’ said Barbara, drawing her sister’s hand through her arm. ‘Now, then, Eve, there must be no secrets with me. You have no mother; I stand to you in the place of mother and sister in one. Was that Jasper?’

Eve’s hand quivered on her sister’s arm; in a faint voice she answered, ‘Yes, Barbara.’ Had Miss Jordan looked round she would have

seen her sister's face crimson with shame. But Barbara turned her eyes away to the far-off pearly range of Cornish mountains, sighed, and said nothing.

The two girls walked together through the wood without speaking till they came to the gate, and there they entered the atmosphere of honeysuckle fragrance.

'Perhaps that boy thought he would scare me as he scared Jane,' said Barbara. 'He was mistaken. Who was he?'

'Jasper's brother,' answered Eve in a low tone. She was full of sorrow and humiliation at having told Barbara an untruth, her poor little soul was tossed with conflicting emotions, and Barbara felt her emotion through the little hand resting on her arm. Eve had joined her hands, so that as she walked she was completely linked to her dear elder sister.

Presently Eve said timidly, 'Bab, darling, it was not Mr. Jasper.'

'Who was the man then?'

'I cannot, I must not, tell.'

'That will do,' said Barbara decidedly; 'say no more about it, Eve; I know that you met Jasper Babb and no one else.'

'Well,' whispered Eve, 'don't be cross with me. I did not know he was there. I had no idea.'



‘It *was* Mr. Babb?’ asked Barbara, suddenly turning and looking steadily at her.

Here was an opportunity offered a poor, weak creature. Eve trembled, and after a moment’s vacillation fell into the pitfall unconsciously dug for her by her sister. ‘It was Mr. Babb, dear Barbara.’

Miss Jordan said no more, her bosom was heaving. Perhaps she could not speak. She was angry, troubled, distracted; angry at the gross imposition practised by Jasper in pretending to leave the place, whilst lurking about it to hold secret meetings with her sister; troubled she was because she feared that Eve had connived at his proceedings, and had lost her heart to him—troubled also because she could not tell to what this would lead; distracted she was, because she did not know what steps to take. Before she reached home she had made up her mind, and on reaching Morwell she acted on it with promptitude, leaving Eve to go to her room or stay below as suited her best.

She went direct to her father. He was sitting up, looking worse and distressed; his pale forehead was beaded with perspiration; his shaking hand clutched the table, then relaxed its hold, then clutched again.

‘Are you feeling worse, papa?’

‘No,’ he answered, without looking at her, but with his dazed eyes directed through the window. ‘No—only for black thoughts. They come flying to me. If you stand at evening under a great rock, as soon as the sun sets you see from all quarters the ravens flying towards it, uttering doleful cries, and they enter into the clefts and disappear for the night. The whole rock all night is alive with ravens. So is it with me. As my day declines the sorrows and black thoughts come back to lodge in me, and torment me with their clawing and pecking and croaking. There is no driving them away. They come back.’

‘Dear papa,’ said Barbara, ‘I am afraid I must add to them. I have something very unpleasant to communicate.’

‘I suppose,’ said Mr. Jordan peevishly, ‘you are out of coffee, or the lemons are mouldy, or the sheets have been torn on the thorn hedge. These matters do not trouble me.’ He signed with his finger. ‘They are like black spots in the air, but instead of floating they fly, and they all fly one way—towards me.’

‘Father, I am afraid for Eve!’

‘What?’ His face was full of terror. ‘What of her? What is there to fear? Is she ill?’

‘It is, dearest papa, as I foresaw. She has



set her heart on Mr. Jasper, and she meets him secretly. He asked leave of you yesterday to go home to Buckfastleigh; but he has not gone there. He has not left this neighbourhood. He is secreting himself somewhere, and this evening he met darling Eve on the Raven Rock, when he knew you were here ill, and I was in the house with you.'

'I cannot believe it,' said Mr. Jordan, with every token of distress, wiping his wet brow with his thin hands, clasping his hands, plucking at his waistcoat, biting his quivering lips.

'It is true, dearest papa. Eve took Jane with her as far as the gate, and there an ugly boy, who, Eve tells me, is Jasper's brother, scared the girl away. I hurried off to the Rock as soon as told of this, and I saw through an opening of the trees someone with Eve, and heard a voice like that of Mr. Jasper. When I charged Eve with having met him, she could not deny it.'

'What does he want? Why did he ask to leave?'

'I can put but one interpretation on his conduct. I have for some time suspected a growing attachment between him and Eve. I suppose he knows that you never would consent——'

'Never, never!' He clenched his hands,

raised them over his head, uttered a cry, and dropped them.

‘Do be careful, dear papa,’ said Barbara. ‘You forget your wound; you must not raise your right arm.’

‘It cannot be! It cannot be! Never, never!’ He was intensely moved, and paid no heed to his daughter’s caution. She caught his right hand, held it between her own firmly, and kissed it. ‘My God!’ cried the unhappy man. ‘Spare me this! It cannot be! The black spots come thick as rain.’ He waved his left hand as though warding off something. ‘Not as rain—as bullets.’

‘No, papa, as you say, it never, never can be.’

‘Never!’ he said eagerly, his wild eyes kindling with a lambent terror. ‘There stands between them a barrier that must cut them off the one from the other for ever. But of that you know nothing.’

‘It is so,’ said Barbara; ‘there does stand an impassable barrier between them. I know more than you suppose, dear papa. Knowing what I do I have wondered at your permitting his presence in this house.’

‘You know?’ He looked at her, and pressed his brow. ‘And Eve, does she know?’

‘She knows nothing,’ answered Barbara;

‘I alone—that is, you and I together—alone know all about him. I found out when he first came here, and was ill.’

‘From anything he said?’

‘No—I found a bundle of his clothes.’

‘I do not understand.’

‘It came about this way. There was a roll on the saddle of his horse, and when I came to undo it, that I might put it away, I found that it was a convict suit.’ Mr. Jordan stared. ‘Yes!’ continued Barbara, speaking quickly, anxious to get the miserable tale told. ‘Yes, papa, I found the garments which betrayed him. When he came to himself I showed them to him, and asked if they were his. Afterwards I heard all the particulars: how he had robbed his own father of the money laid by to repay you an old loan, how his father had prosecuted him, and how he had been sent to prison; how also he had escaped from prison. It was as he was flying to the Tamar to cross it, and get as far as he could from pursuit, that he met with his accident, and remained here.’

‘Merciful heaven!’ exclaimed Mr. Jordan; ‘you knew all this, and never told me!’

‘I told no one,’ answered Barbara, ‘because I promised him that I would not betray him, and even now I would have said nothing about it but that you tell me that you know it as

well as I. No,' she added, after having drawn a long breath, 'no, not even after all the provocation he has given would I betray him.'

Mr. Jordan looked as one dazed.

'Where then are these clothes—this convict suit?'

'In the garret. I hid them there.'

'Let me see them. I cannot yet understand.'

Barbara left the room, and shortly returned with the bundle. She unfolded it, and spread the garments before her father. He rubbed his eyes, pressed his knuckles against his temples, and stared at them with astonishment.

'So, then, it was he—Jasper Babb—who stole Eve's money?'

'Yes, papa.'

'And he was taken and locked up for doing so—where?'

'In Prince's Town prison.'

'And he escaped?'

'Yes, papa. As I was on my way to Ashburton, I passed through Prince's Town, and thus heard of it.'

'Barbara! why did you keep this secret from me? If I had known it, I would have run and taken the news myself to the police and the warders, and have had him recaptured whilst he was ill in bed, unable to escape.'

It was now Barbara's turn to express surprise.

'But, dear papa, what do you mean? You have told me yourself that you knew all about Mr. Jasper.'

'I knew nothing of this. My God! How thick the black spots are, and how big and pointed!'

'Papa dear, what do you mean? You assured me you knew everything.'

'I knew nothing of this. I had not the least suspicion.'

'But, papa'—Barbara was sick with terror—'you told me that this stood as a bar between him and Eve?'

'No—Barbara. I said that there was a barrier, but not this. Of this I was ignorant.'

The room swam round with Barbara. She uttered a faint cry, and put the back of her clenched hands against her mouth to choke another rising cry. 'I have betrayed him! My God! My God! What have I done?'



## CHAPTER XXXI.

## CALLED TO ACCOUNT.

‘Go,’ said Mr. Jordan, ‘bring Eve to me.’

Barbara obeyed mechanically. She had betrayed Jasper. Her father would not spare him. The granite walls of Prince’s Town prison rose before her, in the midst of a waste as bald as any in Greenland or Siberia. She called her sister, bade her go into her father’s room, and then, standing in the hall, placed her elbows on the window ledge, and rested her brow and eyes in her palms. She was consigning Jasper back to that miserable jail. She was incensed against him. She knew that he was unworthy of her regard, that he had forfeited all right to her consideration, and yet—she pitied him. She could not bring herself to believe that he was utterly bad; to send him again to prison was to ensure his complete ruin.

‘Eve,’ said Mr. Jordan, when his youngest

daughter came timidly into the room, 'tell me, whom did you meet on the Raven Rock?'

The girl hung her head and made no reply. She stood as a culprit before a judge, conscious that his case is hopeless.

'Eve,' he said again, 'I insist on knowing. Whom did you meet?'

She tried to speak, but something rose in her throat and choked her. She raised her eyes timidly to her father, who had never, hitherto, spoken an angry word to her. Tears and entreaty were in her eyes, but the room was dark, night had fallen, and he could not see her face.

'Eve, tell me, was it Babb?'

She burst into a storm of sobs, and threw herself on her knees. 'O papa! sweetest, dearest papa! Do not ask me! I must not tell. I promised him not to say. It is as much as his life is worth. He says he never will be taken alive. If it were known that he was here the police would be after him. Papa dear!' she clasped and fondled, and kissed his hand, she bathed it in her tears, 'do not be angry with me. I can bear anything but that. I do love you so, dear, precious papa!'

'My darling,' he replied, 'I am not angry. I am troubled. I am on a rock and hold you

in my arms, and the black sea is rising—I can feel it. Leave me alone, I am not myself.’

An hour later Barbara came in.

‘What, papa—without a light?’

‘Yes—it is dark everywhere, within as without. The black spots have run one into another and filled me. It will be better soon. When Jasper Babb shows his face again, he shall be given up.’

‘O papa, let him escape this time. All we now want is to get him away from this place, away from Eve.’

‘All we now want!’ repeated Mr. Jordan. ‘Let the man off who has beggared Eve!’

‘Papa, Eve will be well provided for.’

‘He has robbed her.’

‘But, dear papa, consider. He has been your guest. He has worked for you, he has eaten at your table, partaken of your salt. When you were hurt, he carried you to your bed. He has been a devoted servant to you.’

‘We are quits,’ said Mr. Jordan. ‘He was nursed when he was ill. That makes up for all the good he has done me. Then there is that other account which can never be made up.’

‘I am sure, papa, he repents.’

‘And tries to snatch away Eve, as he has snatched away her fortune?’

‘Papa, there I think he may be excused.’

Consider how beautiful Eve is. It is quite impossible for a man to see her and not love her. I do not myself know what love is, but I have read about it, and I have fancied to myself what it is—a kind of madness that comes on one, and obscures the judgment. I do not believe that Mr. Jasper had any thought of Eve at first, but little by little she won him. You know, papa, how she has run after him, like a kitten; and so she has stolen his heart out of his breast before he knew what she was about. Then, after that, everything—honour, duty went. I dare say it is very hard for one who loves to think calmly and act conscientiously! Would you like the lights brought in, papa?’

He shook his head.

‘You must not remain up longer than you can bear,’ she said. She took a seat on a stool, and leaned her head on her hand, her elbow resting on her knee. ‘Papa, whilst I have been waiting in the hall, I have turned the whole matter over and over in my mind. Papa, I suppose that Eve’s mother was very, very beautiful?’

He sighed in the dark and put his hands together. The pale twilight through the window shone on them; they were white and ghost-like.

‘Papa dear, I suppose that you saw her when she was ill every day, and got to love her. I dare say you struggled against the feeling, but your heart was too strong for your head and carried your resolutions away, just as I have seen a flood on the Tamar against the dam at Abbotsweat; it has burst through all obstructions, and in a moment every trace of the dam has disappeared. You were under the same roof with her. Then there came a great ache here’—she touched her heart—‘allowing you no rest. Well, dear papa, I think it must have been so with Mr. Babb. He saw our dear sweet Eve daily, and love for her swelled in his heart; he formed the strongest resolutions, and platted them with the toughest considerations, and stamped and wedged them in with vigorous effort, but all was of no avail—the flood rose and burst over it and carried all away.’

Mr. Jordan was touched by the allusion to his dead or lost wife, but not in the manner Barbara intended.

‘I have heard,’ continued Barbara, ‘that Eve’s mother was brought to this house very ill, and that you cared for her till she was recovered. Was it in this room? Was it in this bed?’

She heard a low moan, and saw the white hands raised in deprecation, or in prayer.

‘Then you sat here and watched her; and



when she was in fever you suffered ; when her breath came so faint that you thought she was dying, your very soul stood on tiptoe, agonised. When her eyes opened with reason in them, your heart leaped. When she slept, you sat here with your eyes on her face and could not withdraw them. Perhaps you took her hand in the night, when she was vexed with horrible dreams, and the pulse of your heart sent its waves against her hot, tossing, troubled heart, and little by little cooled that fire, and brought peace to that unrest. Papa, I dare say that somehow thus it came about that Eve got interested in Mr. Jasper and grew to love him. I often let her take my place when he was ill. You must excuse dearest Eve. It was my fault. I should have been more cautious. But I thought nothing of it then. I knew nothing of how love is sown, and throws up its leaves, and spreads and fills the whole heart with a tangle of roots.'

In this last half-hour Barbara had drawn nearer to her father than in all her previous life. For once she had entered into his thoughts, roused old recollections, both sweet and bitter—inexpressibly sweet, unutterably bitter—and his heart was full of tears.

'Was Eve's mother as beautiful as our darling?'

‘O yes, Barbara!’ His voice shook, and he raised his white hands to cover his eyes. ‘Even more beautiful.’

‘And you loved her with all your heart?’

‘I have never ceased to love her. It is that, Barbara, which’—he put his hands to his head, and she understood him—which disturbed his brain.

‘But,’ he said, suddenly as waking from a dream, ‘Barbara, how do you know all this? Who told you?’

She did not answer him, but she rose, knelt on the stool, put her arms round his neck, and kissed him. Her cheeks were wet.

‘You are crying, Barbara.’

‘I am thinking of your sorrows, dear papa.’

She was still kneeling on one knee, with her arms round her father. ‘Poor papa! I want to know really what became of Eve’s mother.’

The door was thrown open.

‘Yes; that is what I have come to ask,’ said Jasper, entering the room, holding a wax candle in each hand. He had intercepted the maid, Jane, with the candles, taken them from her, and as she opened the door entered, to hear Barbara’s question. The girl turned, dropped one arm, but clung with the other to her father, who had just placed one of his hands on her head. Her eyes, from having been so long

in the dark, were very large. She was pale, and her cheeks glistened with tears.

She was too astonished to recover herself at once, dazzled by the strong light; she could not see Jasper, but she knew his voice.

He put the candlesticks—they were of silver—on the table, shut the door behind him, and standing before Mr. Jordan with bowed head, his earnest eyes fixed on the old man's face, he said again, 'Yes, that is what I have come to ask. Where is Eve's mother?'

No one spoke. Barbara recovered herself first; she rose from the stool, and stepped between her father and the steward.

'It is not you,' she said, 'who have a right to ask questions. It is we who have to call you to account.'

'For what, Miss Jordan?' He spoke to her with deference—a certain tone of reverence which never left him when addressing her.

'You must give an account of yourself,' she said.

'I am just returned from Buckfastleigh,' he answered.

'And, pray, how is your father who was dying?' she asked, with a curl of her lip and a quiver of contempt in her voice.

'He is well,' replied Jasper. 'I was de-

ceived about his sickness. He has not been ill. I was sent on a fool's errand.'

'Then,' said Mr. Jordan, who had recovered himself, 'what about the money?'

'The recovery of that is as distant as ever, but also as certain.'

'Mr. Jasper Babb,' exclaimed Ignatius Jordan, 'you have not been to Buckfastleigh at all. You have not seen your father; you have deceived me with——'

Barbara hastily interrupted him, saying with beating heart, and with colour rising to her pale cheeks, 'I pray you, I pray you, say no more. We know very well that you have not left this neighbourhood.'

'I do not understand you, Miss Jordan. I am but just returned. My horse is not yet unsaddled.'

'Not another word,' exclaimed the girl, with pain in her voice. 'Not another word if you wish us to retain a particle of regard for you. I have pitied you, I have excused you, but if you *lie*—I have said the word, I cannot withdraw it—I give you up.' Fire was in her heart, tears in her throat.

'I will speak,' said Jasper. 'I value your regard, Miss Jordan, above everything that the world contains. I cannot tamely lose that. There has been a misapprehension. How it has

arisen I do not know, but arisen it has, and dissipated it shall be. It is true, as I said, that I was deceived about my father's condition, wilfully, maliciously deceived. I rode yesterday to Buckfastleigh, and have but just returned. If my father had been dying you would not have seen me here so soon.'

'We cannot listen to this. We cannot endure this,' cried Barbara. 'Will you madden me, after all that has been done for you? It is cruel, cruel!' Then, unable to control the flood of tears that rose to her eyes, she left the room and the glare of candles.

Jasper approached Mr. Jordan. He had not lost his self-restraint. 'I do not comprehend this charge of falsehood brought against me. I can bring you a token that I have seen my father, a token you will not dispute. He has told me who your second wife was. She was my sister. Will you do me the justice to say that you believe me?'

'Yes,' answered the old man, faintly.

'May I recall Miss Jordan? I cannot endure that she should suppose me false.'

'If you will.'

'One word more. Do you wish our kinship to be known to her, or is it to be kept a secret, at least for a while?'

'Do not tell her.'



Then Jasper went out into the hall. Barbara was there, in the window, looking out into the dusk through the dull old glass of the lattice.

‘Miss Jordan,’ said he, ‘I have ventured to ask you to return to your father, and receive his assurance that I spoke the truth.’

‘But,’ exclaimed Barbara, turning roughly upon him, ‘you were on the Raven Rock with my sister at sunset, and had your brother planted at the gate to watch against intruders.’

‘My brother?’

‘Yes, a boy.’

‘I do not understand you.’

‘It is true. I saw him, I saw you. Eve confessed it. What do you say to that?’

Jasper bit his thumb.

Barbara laughed bitterly.

‘I know why you pretended to go away—because a policeman was here on Sunday, and you were afraid. Take care! I have betrayed you. Your secret is known. You are not safe here.’

‘Miss Jordan,’ said the young man quietly, ‘you are mistaken. I did not meet your sister. I would not deceive you for all the world contains. I warn you that Miss Eve is menaced, and I was sent out of the way lest I should be here to protect her.’

Barbara gave a little contemptuous gasp.

‘I cannot listen to you any longer,’ she said angrily. ‘Take my warning. Leave this place. It is no longer safe. I tell you—I, yes, I have betrayed you.’

‘I will not go,’ said Jasper, ‘I dare not. I have the interest of your family too near my heart to leave.’

‘You will not go!’ exclaimed Barbara, trembling with anger and scorn. ‘I neither believe you, nor trust you. I’—she set her teeth and said through them, with her heart in her mouth—‘Jasper, I *hate* you!’

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## WANDERING LIGHTS.

No sooner was Mr. Jordan left alone than his face became ghastly, and his eyes were fixed with terror, as though he saw before him some object of infinite horror. He put his quivering thin hands on the elbows of his arm-chair and let himself slide to his knees, then he raised his hollow eyes to heaven, and clasped his hands and wrung them ; his lips moved, but no vocal prayers issued from them. He lifted his hands above his head, uttered a cry and fell forward on his face upon the oak floor. Near his hand was his stick with which he rapped against the wall or on the floor when he needed assistance. He laid hold of this, and tried to raise himself, but faintness came over him, and he fell again and lost all consciousness.

When he recovered sufficiently to see what and who were about him, he found that he had been lifted on to his bed by Jasper and Barbara, and that Jane was in the room. His motion

with his hands, his strain to raise himself, had disturbed the bandages and reopened his wound, which was again bleeding, and indeed had soaked through his clothes and stained the floor.

He said nothing, but his eyes watched and followed Jasper with a mixture of hatred and fear in them.

‘He irritates me,’ he whispered to his daughter; ‘send him out. I cannot endure to see him.’

Then Barbara made an excuse for dismissing Jasper.

When he was gone, Mr. Jordan’s anxiety instead of being allayed was increased. He touched his daughter, and drew her ear to him, and whispered, ‘Where is he now? What is he doing?’

‘I do not know, papa. He is probably in his room.’

‘Go and see.’

‘Papa dear, I cannot do that. Do you want him?’

‘Do *I* want him? No, Barbara, but I do not choose that he shall escape. Go and look if there is a light in his window.’

She was about to send Jane, when her father impatiently insisted on her going herself. Wondering at his caprice she obeyed.

No sooner was the door closed behind her,

than the old man signed Jane Welsh to come near him.

‘Jane,’ he said in a whisper, ‘I want you to do something for me. No one must know about it. You have a sweetheart, I’ve heard, the policeman, Joseph Woodman, at Tavistock.’

The girl pulled at the ends of her apron, and looking down, said, ‘Lawk! How folks do talk!’

‘Is it true, Jane?’

‘Well, sir, I won’t deny us have been keeping company, and on Sunday went to a love-feast together.’

‘That is well,’ said Mr. Jordan earnestly, with his wild eyes gleaming. ‘Quick, before my daughter comes. Stand nearer. No one must hear. Would you do Joseph a good turn and get him a sergeantry?’

‘O please, sir!’

‘Then run as fast as you can to Tavistock.’

‘Please, sir, I durstn’t. It be night and it’s whisht<sup>1</sup> over the moor.’

‘Then leave it, and I will send someone else, and you will lose your lover.’

‘What do you want me to do, sir? I wouldn’t have that neither.’

‘Then run to Tavistock, and tell Joseph Woodman to communicate at once with the

<sup>1</sup> Whisht = uncanny



warders of the Prince's Town jail, and bid him bring sufficient men with him, and come here, and I will deliver into their hands a runaway convict, a man who broke out of jail not long ago.'

'Please, sir, where is he? Lawk, sir! What if he were on the moor as I went over it?'

'Never mind where he is. I will produce him at the right moment. Above all—Jane—remember this, not a word of what I have said to Mr. Jasper or to Miss Barbara. Go secretly, and go at once. Hush! Here she comes.'

Barbara entered. 'A light is in his window,' she said. Then her father laughed, and shut his hands.

'So,' he muttered, 'so I shall snap him.'

When her father was composed, and seemed inclined to sleep, Barbara left his room, and went out of the house. She needed to be by herself. Her bosom heaved. She had so much to think of, so many troubles had come upon her, the future was dark, the present uncertain.

If she were in the house she would not be able to enjoy that quiet for which she craved, in which to compose the tumult of her heart and arrange her ideas. There she was sure to be disturbed: a maid would ask for a duster, or another bunch of candles; the cook would send to announce that the chimney of the

kitchen was out of order, the soot or mortar was falling down it; the laundry-maid would ask for soap; Eve would want to be amused. Every other minute she would have some distracting though trifling matter forced on her. She must be alone. Her heart yearned for it. She would not go to the Rock, the association with it was painful. It was other with the moor, Morwell Down, open to every air, without a tree behind which an imp might lurk and hoot and make mows.

Accordingly, without saying a word to anyone, Barbara stole along the lane to the moor.

That was a sweet summer night. The moon was not yet risen, the stars were in the sky, not many, for the heaven was not dark, but suffused with lost sunlight. To the east lay the range of Dartmoor mountains, rugged and grey; to the west, peaked and black against silver, the Cornish tors. But all these heights on this night were scintillating with golden moving spots of fire. The time had come for what is locally called 'swaling,' that is, firing the whinbrakes. In places half a hill side was flaked with red flame, then it flared yellow, then died away. Clouds of smoke, tinged with fire reflection from below, rolled away before the wind. When the conflagration reached a

dense and tall tree-like mass of gorse the flame rose in a column or wavered like a golden tongue. Then, when the material was exhausted and no contiguous brake continued the fire, the conflagration ended, and left only a patch of dull glowing scarlet embers.

Barbara leaned against the last stone hedge which divided moor from field, and looked at the moving lights without thinking of the beauty and wildness of the spectacle. She was steeped in her own thoughts, and was never at any time keenly alive to the beautiful and the fantastic.

She thought of Jasper. She had lost all faith in him. He was false and deceitful. What could she believe about that meeting on the Raven Rock? He might have convinced her father that he was not there. He could not convince her. What was to be done? Would her father betray the man? He was ill now and could do nothing. Why was Jasper so obstinate as to refuse to leave? Why? Because he was infatuated with Eve.

On that very dawn it was that Jasper had been thrown and nearly killed. If only he had been killed outright! Why had she nursed him so carefully? Far better to have left him on the moor to die. How dare he aspire to Eve? The touch of his hand carried

a taint. Her brain was dark, yet, like that landscape, full of wandering sparks of fire. She could not think clearly. She could not feel composedly. Those moving, wavering fires, now rushing up in sheaves of flame, now falling into a sullen glow, burnt on the sides of solid mountains, but her fiery thoughts, that sent a blaze into her cheek and eye, and then died into a slow heat, moved over tossing billows of emotion. She put her hand to her head as if by grasping it she could bring her thoughts to a standstill; she pressed her hands against her bosom, as if by so doing she could fix her emotions. The stars in the serene sky burned steadily, ever of one brightness. Below, these wandering fires flared, glowed, and went out. Was it not a picture of the contrast between life on earth and life in the settled celestial habitations? Barbara was not a girl with much fancy, but some such a thought came into her mind, and might have taken form had not she at the moment seen a dark figure issue from the lane.

‘Who goes there?’ she called imperiously.

The figure stopped, and after a moment answered: ‘Oh, Miss! you have a-given me a turn. It be me, Jane.’

‘And pray,’ said Barbara, ‘what brings you here at night? Whither are you going?’

The girl hesitated, and groped in her mind for an excuse. Then she said: 'I want, miss, to go to Tavistock.'

'To Tavistock! It is too late. Go home to bed.'

'I must go, Miss Barbara. I'm sure I don't want to. I'm scared of my life, but the master have sent me, and what can I do? He've a-told me to go to Joseph Woodman.'

'It is impossible, at this time. It must not be.'

'But, Miss, I promised I'd go, and sure enough I don't half like it, over these downs at night, and nobody knows what one may meet. I wouldn't be caught by the Whish Hounds and Black Coppystone, not for'—the girl's imagination was limited, so she concluded, 'well, Miss, not for nothing.'

Barbara considered a moment, and then said, 'I have no fear. I will accompany you over the Down, till you come to habitations. I am not afraid of returning alone.'

'Thank you, Miss Barbara, you be wonderfully good.'

The girl was, indeed, very grateful for her company. She had had her nerves sorely shaken by the encounter with Watt, and now in the fulness of her thankfulness she confided to her mistress all that Mr. Jordan had said,



concluding with her opinion that probably 'It was naught but a fancy of the squire; he do have fancies at times. Howmsoever, us must humour 'm.'

Jasper also had gone forth. In his breast also was trouble, and a sharp pain, that had come with a spasm when Barbara told him how she hated him.

But Jasper did not go to Morwell Down. He went towards the Raven Rock that lay on the farther side of the house. He also desired to be alone and under the calm sky. He was stifled by the air of a house, depressed by the ceiling.

The words of Barbara had wounded him rather than stung him. She had not only told him that she hated him, but had given the best proof of her sincerity by betraying him. Suspecting him of carrying on an unworthy intrigue with Eve, she had sacrificed him to save her sister. He could not blame her, her first duty was towards Eve. One comfort he had that, though Barbara had betrayed him, she did not seek his punishment, she sought only his banishment from Morwell.

Once—just once—he had half opened her heart, looked in, and fancied he had discovered a tender regard for him lurking in its bottom. Since then Barbara had sought every oppor-

tunity of disabusing his mind of such an idea. And now, this night, she had poured out her heart at his feet, and shown him hatred, not love.

Jasper's life had been one of self-denial. There had been little joy in it. Anxieties had beset him from early childhood: solicitude for his brother, care not to offend his father. By nature he had a very loving heart, but he had grown up with none to love save his brother, who had cruelly abused his love. A joyous manhood never ensues on a joyless boyhood. Jasper was always sensible of an inner sadness, even when he was happy. His brightest joys were painted on a sombre background, but then, how much brighter they seemed by the contrast—alas, only, that they were so few! The circumstances of his rearing had driven him in upon himself, so that he lived an inner life, which he shared with no one, and which was unperceived by all. Now, as he stood on the rock, with an ache at his heart, Jasper uncovered his head, and looked into the softly lighted vault, set with a few faint stars. As he stood thus with his hands folded over his hat, and looked westward at the clear, cold, silvery sky behind and over the Cornish moors, an unutterable yearning strained his heart. He said no word, he thought no thought.

He simply stood uncovered under the summer night sky, and from his heart his pain exhaled.

Did he surmise that at that same time Barbara was standing on the moor, also looking away beyond the horizon, also suffering, yearning, without knowing for what she longed? No, he had no thought of that.

And as both thus stood far removed in body, but one in sincerity, suffering, fidelity, there shot athwart the vault of heaven a brilliant dazzling star.

Mr. Coyshe at his window, smoking, said: 'By Ginger! a meteor!'

But was it not an angel bearing the dazzling chalice of the sangreal from highest heaven, from the region of the still stars, down to this world of flickering, fading, wandering fires, to minister therewith balm to two distressed spirits?

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## THE OWLS.

BARBARA had been interrupted in her meditations, so was Jasper. As he stood lost in a painful dream, but with a dew from heaven falling on his parched soul, suddenly he was startled out of his abstraction by a laugh and an exclamation at his elbow.

‘ Well, Jasper, composing verses to the weak-eyed Leah or the blue-orbed Rachel ? ’

‘ What brings you here, Watt ? ’ asked Jasper, disguising his annoyance.

‘ Or, my sanctimonious fox, are you waiting here for one of the silly geese to run to you ? ’

‘ You have come here bent on mischief, ’ said Jasper, disdaining to notice his jokes.

The evening, the still scene, the solitary platform raised so high above the land beyond, had seemed holy, soothing as a church, and now, at once, with the sound of Walter’s voice, the feeling was gone, all seemed desecrated.

‘Watt,’ said Jasper, sternly, ‘you sent me away to Buckfastleigh by a lie. Why did you do that? It is utterly false that my father is ill and dying.’

‘Is it so? Then I dreamed it, Jasper. Morning dreams come true, folks say. There, my brother, you are a good, forgiving fellow. You will pardon me. The fact is that Martin and I wanted to know how matters went at home. I did not care to go myself, Martin could not go, so—I sent you, my good simpleton.’

‘You told me a lie.’

‘If I had told you the truth you would not have gone. What was that we were taught at school? “Magna est veritas, et prævalebit.” I don’t believe it; experience tells me the contrary. Long live lies; they win the day all the world over.’

‘What brings you here?’

‘Have I not told you? I desired to see you and to have news of my father. You have been quick about it, Jasper. I could scarce believe my eyes when I saw you riding home.’

‘You have been watching?’

‘Of course I have. My eyes are keen. Nothing escapes them.’

‘Walter, this will not do. I am not deceived; you did not come here for the purpose



you say. You want something else, what is it?’

The boy laughed, snapped his fingers, and began to dance, whistling a tune, on the rock ; approaching, then backing from Jasper.

‘Oh, you clever old Jasper!’ he laughed, ‘now you begin to see—like the puppy pitched into the water-butt, who opened his eyes when too late.’

Jasper folded his arms. He said nothing, but waited till the boy’s mad pranks came to an end. At last Watt, seeing that he could not provoke his brother, desisted, and came to him with affected humility.

‘There, Jasper—Saint Jasper, I mean—I will be quiet and go through my catechism.’

‘Then tell me why you are here.’

‘Well, now, you shall hear our scheme. Martin and I thought that you had better patch up your little quarrel with father, and then we knew we should have a good friend at his ear to prompt forgiveness, and so, perhaps, as his conscience stirred, his purse-strings might relax, and you would be able to send us a trifle in money. Is not this reasonable?’

Yes, there could be no denying it, this was reasonable and consistent with the characters of the two, who would value their father’s favour only by what it would profit them. Neverthe-

less Jasper was unsatisfied. Watt was so false, so unscrupulous, that his word never could be trusted.

Jasper considered for a few minutes, then he asked, 'Where is Martin—is he here?'

'Here!' jeered the boy, 'Martin here, indeed! not he. He is in safe quarters. Where he is I will blab to no one, not even to you. He sends me out from his ark of refuge as the dove, or rather as the raven, to bring him news of the world from which he is secluded.'

'Walter, answer me this. Who met Miss Eve this evening on this very rock? Answer me truly. More depends on this than you are aware of.'

'Miss Eve! What do you mean? My sister who is dead and gone? I do not relish the company of ghosts.'

'You know whom I mean. This is miserable evasion. I mean the younger of the daughters of Mr. Jordan. She was here at sundown this evening and someone was with her. I conjure you by all that you hold sacred——'

'I hold nothing sacred,' said the boy.

'I conjure you most solemnly to tell me the whole truth, as brother to brother.'

'Well, then—as brother to brother—I did.'

'For what purpose, Watt?'

‘ My dear Jasper, can we live on air ? Here am I hopping about the woods, roosting in the branches, and there is poor Martin mewed up in his ark. I must find food for him and myself. You know that I have made the acquaintance of the young lady who, oddly enough, bears the name of our dear departed mother and sister. I have appealed to her compassion, and held out my hat for money. I offered to dance on my head, to turn a wheel all round the edge of this cliff, in jeopardy of my life, for half a guinea, and she gave me the money to prevent me from risking broken bones.’

‘ Oh, Watt, you should not have done this ! ’

‘ We must live. We must have money.’

‘ But, Watt, where is all that which was taken from my pocket ? ’

‘ Gone,’ answered the boy. ‘ Gone as the snow before a south-west wind. Nothing melts like money, not even snow, no, nor butter, no, nor a girl’s heart.’ Then with a sly laugh, ‘ Jasper, where does old addle-brains keep his strong box ? ’

‘ Walter ! ’ exclaimed Jasper, indignantly.

‘ Ah ! ’ laughed the boy, ‘ if I knew where it was I would creep to it by a mouse hole, and put my little finger into the lock, and when I turned that, open flies the box.’

‘ Walter, forbear. You are a wicked boy.’

‘I confess it, I glory in it. Father always said I was predestined to——’

‘Be silent,’ ordered Jasper, angrily; ‘you are insufferable.’

‘There, do not ruffle your feathers over a joke. Have you some money to give me now?’

‘Watt,’ said Jasper, very sternly, ‘answer me frankly, if you can. I warn you.’ He laid his hand on the boy’s arm. ‘A great deal depends on your giving me a truthful answer. Is Martin anywhere hereabouts? I fear he is, in spite of your assurances, for where you are he is not often far away. The jackal and the lion hunt together.’

‘He is not here. Good-bye, old brother Grave-airs.’ Then he ran away, but before he had gone far turned and hooted like an owl, and ran on, and was lost in the gloom of the woods, but still as he ran hooted at intervals, and owls answered his cry from the rocks, and flitted ghost-like about in the dusk, seeking their brother who called them and mocked at them.

Now that he was again alone, Jasper in vain sought to rally his thoughts and recover his former frame of mind. But that was not possible. Accordingly he turned homewards.

He was very tired. He had had two long days’ ride, and had slept little if at all the

previous night. Though recovered after his accident he was not perfectly vigorous, and the two hard days and broken rest had greatly tired him. On reaching Morwell he did not take a light, but cast himself, in his clothes, on his bed, and fell into a heavy sleep.

Barbara walked quietly back after having parted with Jane. She hoped that Jasper had on second thoughts taken the prudent course of escaping. It was inconceivable that he should remain and allow himself to be retaken. She was puzzled how to explain his conduct. Then all at once she remembered that she had left the convict suit in her father's room; she had forgotten to remove it. She quickened her pace and arrived breathless at Morwell.

She entered her father's apartment on tip-toe. She stood still and listened. A night-light burned on the floor, and the enclosing iron pierced with round holes cast circles of light about the walls. The candle was a rushlight of feeble illuminating power.

Barbara could see her father lying, apparently asleep, in bed, with his pale thin hands out, hanging down, clasped, as in prayer; one of the spots of light danced over the finger tips and nails. She heard him breathe, as in sleep.

Then she stepped across the room to where she had cast the suit of clothes. They lay in a



grey heap, with the spots of light avoiding them, dancing above them, but not falling on them.

Barbara stooped to pick them up.

‘Stay, Barbara,’ said her father. ‘I hear you. I see what you are doing. I know your purpose. Leave those things where they lie.’

‘O papa ! dear papa, suffer me to put them away.’

‘Let them lie there, where I can see them.’

‘But, papa, what will the maids think when they come in ? Besides, it is untidy to let them litter about the floor.’

He made an impatient gesture with his hand.

‘May I not, at least, fold them and lay them on the chair?’

‘You may not touch them at all,’ he said in a tone of irritation. She knew his temper too well to oppose him further.

‘Good night, dear papa. I suppose Eve is gone to bed.’

‘Yes ; go also.’

She was obliged, most reluctantly, to leave the room. She ascended the stairs, and entered her own sleeping apartment. From this a door communicated with that of her sister. She opened this door and with her light entered and crossed it.

Eve had gone to bed, and thrown all her

clothes about on the floor. Barbara had some difficulty in picking her way among the scattered articles. When she came to the bedside, she stood, and held her candle aloft, and let the light fall over the sleeping girl.

How lovely she was, with her golden hair in confusion on the pillow! She was lying with her cheek on one rosy palm, and the other hand was out of bed, on the white sheet—and see! upon the finger, Barbara recognised the turquoise ring. Eve did not venture to wear this by day. At night, in her room, she had thrust the golden hoop over her finger, and had gone to sleep without removing it

Barbara stooped, and kissed her sister's cheek. Eve did not awake, but smiled in slumber; a dimple formed at the corner of her mouth.

Then Barbara went to her own room, opened her desk, and the secret drawer, and looked at the bunch of dry roses. They were very yellow now, utterly withered and worthless. The girl took them, stooped her face to them—was it to discover if any scent lingered in the faded leaves? Then she closed the drawer and desk again, with a sigh.

Was Barbara insensible to what is beautiful, inappreciative of the poetry of life? Surely not. She had been forced by circumstances to

be practical, to devote her whole thought to the duties of the house and estate ; she had said to herself that she had no leisure to think of those things that make life graceful ; but through her strong, direct, and genuine nature ran a ‘ Leit-motif ’ of sweet, pure melody, kept under and obscured by the jar and jangle of domestic cares and worries, but never lost. There is no nature, however vulgar, that is deficient in its musical phrase, not always quite original and unique, and only the careless listener marks it not. The patient, attentive ear suspects its presence first, listens for it, recognises it, and at last appreciates it.

In poor faithful Barbara now the sweet melody, somewhat sad, was rising, becoming articulate, asserting itself above all other sounds and adventitious strains—but, alas ! there was no ear to listen to it.

Barbara went to her window and opened it.

‘ How the owls are hooting to-night ! ’ she said. ‘ They, like myself, are full of unrest. To-whit ! To-whoo ! ’

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## THE DOVES.

BARBARA had no thought of going to bed. She could not have slept had she gone. There was a clock in the tower, a noisy clock that made its pulsations heard through the quadrangle, and this clock struck twelve. By this time Jane had roused the young policeman, and he was collecting men to assist him in the capture. Perhaps they were already on their way,—or were they waiting for the arrival of warders from Prince's Town? Those warders were more dangerous men than the constables, for they were armed with short guns, and prepared to fire should their game attempt to break away.

She looked across the court at Jasper's window. No light was in it. Was he there, asleep? or had he taken her advice and gone? She could not endure the thought of his capture, the self-reproach of having betrayed him was

more than she could bear. Barbara, usually so collected and cool, was now nervous and hot.

More light was in the sky than had been when she was on the down. The moon was rising over the roof. She could not see it, but she saw the reflection in Jasper's window, like flakes of silver.

What should she do? Her distress became insupportable, and she felt she must be doing something to relieve her mind. The only thing open to her was to make another attempt to recover the prison suit. If she could destroy that, it would be putting out of the way one piece of evidence against him—a poor piece, still *a* piece. She was not sure that it would avail him anything, but it was worth risking her father's anger on the chance.

She descended the stairs once more to her father's room. The door was ajar, with a feeble yellow streak issuing from it. She looked in cautiously. Then with the tread of a thief she entered and passed through a maze of quivering bezants of dull light. She stooped, but, as she touched the garments, heard her father's voice, and started upright. He was speaking in his sleep—'*De profundis clamavi ad te ;*' then he tossed and moaned, and put up his hand and held it shaking in the air. '*Si iniquitates*'—He seemed troubled in his sleep, unable to catch



the sequence of words, and repeated '*Si iniquitates observaveris,*' and lay still on his pillow again; whilst Barbara stood watching him, with her finger to her lip, afraid to move, afraid of the consequences, should he wake and see her in her disobedience.

Then he mumbled, and she heard him pulling at his sheet. 'Out of love, out of the deeps of love, I have sinned.' Then suddenly he cried out, '*Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine, quis sustinebit?*'—he had the sentence complete, or nearly so, and it appeased him. Barbara heard him sigh, she stole to his side, bowed over his ear, and said, '*Apud te propitiatio est—speravit anima mea in Domino.*' Whether he heard or not she did not know; he breathed thenceforth evenly in sleep, and the expression of distress left his face.

Then Barbara took up the bundle of clothes and softly withdrew. She was risking something for Jasper—the loss of her father's regard. She had recently drawn nearer to his heart than ever before, and he had allowed her to cling round his neck and kiss him. Yet now she deliberately disobeyed him. He would be very angry next morning.

When she was in the hall she turned over in her mind what was best to be done with the clothes. She could not hide them in the house.

Her father would insist on their reproduction. They must be destroyed. She could not burn them: the fire in the kitchen was out. The only way she could think of getting rid of them was to carry them to the Raven Rock and throw them over the precipice. This, accordingly, she did. She left the house, and in the moonlight walked through the fields and wood to the crag and hurled the bundle over the edge.

Now that this piece of evidence against Jasper was removed, it was expedient that he should escape without further delay—if he were still at Morwell.

Barbara had a little money of her own. When she unlocked her desk and looked at the withered flowers, she drew from it her purse that contained her savings. There were several pounds in it. She drew the knitted silk purse from her pocket, and, standing in the moonlight, counted the sovereigns in her hand. She was standing before the gatehouse near the old trees, hidden by their shadow. She looked up at Jasper's other window—that which commanded the entrance and was turned from the moon. Was he there? How could she communicate with him, give him the money, and send him off? Then the grating clock in the tower tolled one. Time was passing, danger drew on apace. Something must be done. Barbara picked up

some pebbles and threw them at Jasper's window, but her aim was bad or her arm shook, and they scattered without touching the glass.

All at once she heard feet—a trampling in the lane—and she saw also that lights were burning on the down. The lights were merely gorse blazes, for Morwell Moor was being 'swaled,' and the flames were creeping on; and the trampling was of young colts and bullocks that fed on the down, which were escaping before the fires; but to Barbara's nervous fear the lights and the tramp betokened the approach of a body of men to capture Jasper Babb. Then, without any other thought but to save him, she ran up the stair, struck at his door, threw it open, and entered. He started from his bed, on which he had cast himself fully dressed, and from dead weariness had dropped asleep.

'For God's dear sake,' said Barbara, 'come away! They are after you; they are close to the house. Here is money—take it, and go by the garden.'

She stood in the door, holding it, trembling in all her limbs, and the door she held rattled.

He came straight towards her.

'Miss Jordan!' he exclaimed. 'Oh, Miss Jordan! I shall never forgive myself. Go down into the garden—I will follow at once. I will speak to you; I will tell you all.'

‘I do not wish you to speak. I insist on your going.’

He came to her, took her hand from the door, and led her down the stairs. As they came out into the gateway they heard the tramp of many feet, and a rush of young cattle debouched from the lane upon the open space before the gate.

Barbara was not one to cry, but she shivered and shrank before her eyes told her what a mistake she had made.

‘Here,’ she said, ‘I give you my purse. Go!’

‘No,’ answered Jasper. ‘There is no occasion for me to go. I have acted wrongly, but I did it for the best. You see, there is no occasion for fear. These ponies have been frightened by the flames, and have come through the moor-gate, which has been left open. I must see that they do not enter the court and do mischief.’

‘Never mind about the cattle, I pray you. Go! Take this money; it is mine. I freely give it you. Go!’

‘Why are you so anxious about me if you hate me?’ asked Jasper. ‘Surely it would gratify hate to see me handcuffed and carried off!’

‘No, I do not hate you—that is, not so

much as to desire that. I have but one desire concerning you—that we should never see your face again.’

‘Miss Jordan, I shall not be taken.’

She flared up with rage, disappointment, shame. ‘How dare you!’ she cried. ‘How dare you stand here and set me at naught, when I have done so much for you—when I have even ventured to rouse you in the depth of night! My God! you are enough to madden me. I will not have the shame come on this house of having you taken here. Yes—I recall my words—I do hate you.’

She wrung her hands; Jasper caught them and held them between his own.

‘Miss Barbara, I have deceived you. Be calm.’

‘I know only too well that you have deceived me—all of us,’ she said passionately. ‘Let go my hands.’

‘You misunderstand me. I shall not be taken, for I am not pursued. I never took your sister’s money. I have never been in jail.’

She plucked her hands away.

‘I do not comprehend.’

‘Nevertheless, what I say is simple. You have supposed me to be a thief and an escaped convict. I am neither.’



Barbara shook her head impatiently.

‘I have allowed you to think it for reasons of my own. But now you must be undeceived.’

The young cattle were galloping about in front, kicking, snorting, trying the hedges. Jasper left Barbara for a while that he might drive them into a field where they could do no harm. She remained under the great gate in the shadow, bewildered, hoping that what he now said was true, yet not daring to believe his words.

Presently he returned to her. He had purposely left her that she might have time to compose herself. When he returned she was calm and stern.

‘You cannot blind me with your falsehoods,’ she said. ‘I know that Mr. Ezekiel Babb was robbed by his own son. I know the prison suit was yours. You confessed it when I showed it you on your return to consciousness: perhaps before you were aware how seriously you committed yourself. I know that you were in jail at Prince’s Town, and that you escaped.’

‘Well, Miss Jordan, what you say is partly true, and partly incorrect.’

‘Are you not Mr. Babb’s son?’ she asked imperiously.

He bowed; he was courtly in manner.

‘ Was not his son found guilty of robbing him ? ’

He bowed again.

‘ Was he not imprisoned for so doing ? ’

‘ He was so.’

‘ Did he not escape from prison ? ’

‘ He did.’

‘ And yet,’ exclaimed Barbara angrily, ‘ you dare to say with one breath that you are innocent, whilst with the next you confess your guilt ! Like the satyr in the fable, I would drive you from my presence, you blower of true and false ! ’

He caught her hands again and held her firmly, whilst he drew her out of the shadow of the archway into the moonlight of the court.

‘ Do you give it up ? ’ he asked ; and, by the moon, the sickle moon, on his pale face, she saw him smile. By that same moon he saw the frown on her brow. ‘ Miss Barbara, I am not Ezekiel Babb’s *only* son ! ’

Her heart stood still ; then the blood rushed through her veins like the tidal bore in the Severn. The whole of the sky seemed full of daylight. She saw all now clearly. Her pride, her anger fell from her as the chains fell from Peter when the angel touched him.

‘ No, Miss Jordan, I am guiltless in this

matter—guiltless in everything except in having deceived you.’

‘God forgive you!’ she said in a low tone as her eyes fell and tears rushed to them. She did not draw her hands from his. She was too much dazed to know that he held them. ‘God forgive you!—you have made me suffer very much!’

She did not see how his large earnest eyes were fixed upon her, how he was struggling with his own heart to refrain from speaking out what he felt; but had she met his eye then in the moonlight, there would have been no need of words, only a quiver of the lips, and they would have been clasped in each other’s arms.

She did not look up; she was studying, through a veil of tears, some white stones that caught the moonlight.

‘This is not the time for me to tell you the whole sad tale,’ he went on. ‘I have acted as I thought my duty pointed out—my duty to a brother.’

‘Yes,’ said Barbara, ‘you have a brother—that strange boy.’

A laugh, jeering and shrill, close in their ears. From behind the great yew appeared the shoulders and face of the impish Walter.

‘Oh, the pious, the proper Jasper! Oh,

ho, ho! What frail men these saints are who read their Bibles to weak-eyed Leahs and blooming Rachels, and make love to both!

He pointed jeeringly at them with his long fingers.

‘I set the down on fire for a little fun. I drove the ponies along this lane; and see, I have disturbed a pair of ring-doves as well. I won’t hoot any more; but—coo! coo! coo!’ He ran away, but stopped every now and then and sent back to them his insulting imitations of the call of wood-pigeons—‘Coo! coo! coo!’

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## THE ALARM BELL.

NEXT morning Barbara entered the hall after having seen about the duties of the house, ordered dinner, weighed out spices and groats, made the under-servant do the work of Jane, who was absent; she moved about her usual duties with her usual precision and order, but without her usual composure.

When she came into the hall on her way to her father's room, she found Eve there engaged and hard at work on some engrossing occupation.

'Oh, Bab! do come and see how bright and beautiful I am making this,' said the girl in overflowing spirits and pride. 'I found it in the chest in the garret, and I am furbishing it up.' She held out a sort of necklace or oriental carcanet, composed of chains of gold beads and bezants. 'It was so dull when I found it, and now it shines like pure gold!' Her innocent,



childish face was illumined with delight. 'I am become really industrious.'

'Yes, dear ; hard at work doing nothing.'

'I should like to wear this,' she sighed.

That she had deceived her sister, that she had given her occasion to be anxious about her, had quite passed from her mind, occupied only with glittering toys.

Barbara hesitated at her father's door. She knew that a painful scene awaited her. He was certain to be angry and reproach her for having disobeyed him. But her heart was relieved. She believed in the innocence of Jasper. Strengthened by this faith, she was bold to confront her father.

She tapped at the door and entered.

She saw at once that he had heard her voice without, and was expecting her. There was anger in his strange eyes, and a hectic colour in his hollow cheeks. He was partly dressed, and sat on the side of the bed. In his hand he held the stick with which he was wont to rap when he needed assistance.

'Where are the clothes that lay on the floor last night?' was his salutation, pointing with the stick to the spot whence Barbara had gathered them up.

'They are gone, papa ; I have taken them away.'

She looked him firmly in the face with her honest eyes, unwincing. He, however, was unable to meet her steadfast gaze. His eyes flickered and fell. His mouth was drawn and set with a hard, cruel expression, such as his face rarely wore; a look which sometimes formed, but was as quickly effaced by a wave of weakness. Now, however, the expression was fixed.

‘I forbade you to touch them. Did you hear me?’

‘Yes, dear papa, I have disobeyed you, and I am sorry to have offended you; but I cannot say that I repent having taken the clothes away. I found them, and I had a right to remove them.’

‘Bring them here immediately.’

‘I cannot do so. I have destroyed them.’

‘You have dared to do that!’ His eyes began to kindle and the colour left his cheeks, which became white as chalk. Barbara saw that he had lost command over himself. His feeble reason was overwhelmed by passion.

‘Papa,’ she said, in her calmest tones, ‘I have never disobeyed you before. Only on this one occasion my conscience——’

‘Conscience!’ he cried. ‘I have a conscience in a thornbush, and yours is asleep in feathers. You have dared to creep in here like

a thief in the night and steal from me what I ordered you to leave.'

He was playing with his stick, clutching it in the middle and turning it. With his other hand he clutched and twisted and almost tore the sheets. Barbara believed that he would strike her, but when he said 'Come here,' she approached him, looking him full in the face without shrinking.

She knew that he was not responsible for what he did, yet she did not hesitate about obeying his command to approach. She had disobeyed him in the night in a matter concerning another, to save that other; she would not disobey now to save herself.

His face was ugly with unreasoning fury, and his eyes wilder than she had seen them before. He held up the stick.

'Papa,' she said, 'not your right arm, or you will re-open the wound.'

Her calmness impressed him. He changed the stick into his left hand, and, gathering up the sheet into a knot, thrust it into his mouth and bit into it.

Was the moment come that Barbara had long dreaded? And was she to be the one on whom his madness first displayed itself?

'Papa,' she said, 'I will take any punishment you think fit, but, pray, do not strike me,

I cannot bear that—not for my own sake, but for yours.’

He paid no attention to her remonstrance, but raised the stick, holding it by the ferule.

Steadily looking into his sparkling eyes, Barbara repeated the words he had muttered and cried in his sleep, ‘*De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine. Si iniquitates observaveris, quis sustinebit?*’

Then, as in a dissolving view on a sheet one scene changes into another, so in his wild eyes the expression of rage shifted to one of fear; he dropped the stick, and Jasper, who at that moment entered, took it and laid it beyond his reach.

Mr. Jordan fell back on his pillow and moaned, and put his hands over his brow, and beat his temples with his palms. He would not look at his daughter again, but peevishly turned his face away.

Now Barbara’s strength deserted her; she felt as if the floor under her feet were rolling and as if the walls of the room were contracting upon her.

‘I must have air,’ she said. Jasper caught her arm and led her through the hall into the garden.

Eve, alarmed to see her sister so colourless, ran to support her on the other side, and

overwhelmed her with inconsiderate attentions.

‘You must allow her time to recover herself,’ said Jasper. ‘Miss Jordan has been up a good part of the night. The horses on the down were driven on the premises by the fire and alarmed her and made her rise. She will be well directly.’

‘I am already recovered,’ said Barbara, with affected cheerfulness. ‘The room was close. I should like to be left a little bit in the sun and air, by myself, and to myself.’

Eve readily ran back to her burnishing of the gold beads and bezants, and Jasper heard Mr. Jordan calling him, so he went to his room. He found the sick gentleman with clouded brow and closed lips, and eyes that gave him furtive glances but could not look at him steadily.

‘Jasper Babb,’ said Mr. Jordan, ‘I do not wish you to leave the house or its immediate precincts to-day. Jane has not returned, Eve is unreliable, and Barbara overstrained.’

‘Yes, sir, I will do as you wish.’

‘On no account leave. Send Miss Jordan to me when she is better.’

When, about half-an-hour after, Barbara entered the room, she went direct to her father to kiss him, but he repelled her.



‘What did you mean,’ he asked, without looking at her, ‘by those words of the Psalm?’

‘Oh, papa! I thought to soothe you. You are fond of the *De Profundis*—you murmur it in your sleep.’

‘You used the words significantly. What are the deeds I have done amiss for which you reproach me?’

‘We all need pardon—some for one thing, some for another. And, dearest papa, we all need to say “*Apud te propitiatio est—speravit anima mea in Domino.*”’

‘*Propitiatio!*’ repeated Mr. Jordan, and resumed his customary trick of brushing his forehead with his hand as though to sweep cobwebs from it which fell over and clouded his eyes. ‘For what? Say out plainly of what you accuse me. I am prepared for the worst. I cannot endure these covert stabs. You are always watching me. You are ever casting innuendos. You cut and pierce me worse than the scythe. That gashed my body, but you drive your sharp words into my soul.’

‘My dear papa, you are mistaken.’

‘I am not mistaken. Your looks and words have meaning. Speak out.’

‘I accuse you of nothing, darling papa, but of being perhaps just a little unjust to me.’

She soon saw that her presence was irritating

him, her protestations unavailing to disabuse his mind of the prejudice that had taken hold of it, and so, with a sigh, she left him.

Jane Welsh did not return all day. This was strange. She had promised Barbara to return the first thing in the morning. She was to sleep in Tavistock, where she had a sister, married.

Barbara went about her work, but with abstracted mind, and without her usual energy.

She was not quite satisfied. She tried to believe in Jasper's innocence, and yet doubts would rise in her mind in spite of her efforts to keep them under.

Whom had Eve met on the Raven Rock? Jasper had denied that he was the person: who, then, could it have been? The only other conceivable person was Mr. Coyshe, and Barbara at once dismissed that idea. Eve would never make a mystery of meeting Doctor Squash, as she called him.

At last, as evening drew on, Jane arrived. Barbara met her at the door and remonstrated with her.

'Please, Miss, I could not help myself. I found Joseph Woodman last night, and he said he must send for the warders to identify the prisoner. Then, Miss, he said I was to wait till he had got the warders and some constables,

and when they was ready to come on I might come too, but not before. I slept at my sister's last night.'

'Where are the men now?'

'They are about the house—some behind hedges, some in the wood, some on the down.'

Barbara shuddered.

'Please, Miss, they have guns. And, Miss, I were to come on and tell the master that all was ready, and if he would let them know where the man was they'd trap him.'

'There is no man here but Mr. Babb.'

Jane's face fell.

'Lawk, Miss! If Joseph thought us had been making games of he, I believe he'd never marry me—and after going to a Love Feast with him, too! 'Twould be serious that, surely.'

'Joseph has taken a long time coming.'

'Joseph takes things leisurely, Miss—'tis his nature. Us have been courting time out o' mind; and, please, Miss, if the man were here, then the master was to give the signal by pulling the alarm-bell. Then the police and warders would close in on the house and take him.'

Barbara was as pale now as when nearly fainting in the morning. This was not the old Barbara with hale cheeks, hearty eyes, and ripe lips, tall and firm, and decided in all her move

ments. No! This was not at all the old Barbara.

‘Well, Miss Jordan, what is troubling you?’ asked Jasper. ‘The house is surrounded. Men are stationed about it. No one can leave it without being challenged.’

‘Yes,’ said Barbara quickly. ‘By the Abbot’s Well there runs a path down between laurels, then over a stile into the wood. It is still possible—will you go?’

‘You do not trust me?’

‘I wish to—but——’

‘Will you do one thing more for me?’

She looked timidly at him.

‘Peal the alarm-bell.’

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

## CONFESSIONS.

As the bell clanged Mr. Jordan came out of his door. He had been ordered to remain quiet and take no exercise ; but now, leaning on his stick and holding the door-jamb, he came forth.

‘What is this?’ he asked, and Jasper put his hand to the rope to arrest the upward cast. ‘Why are you ringing, Barbara? Who told you to do so?’

‘I bade her ring,’ said Jasper, ‘to call these,’ he pointed to the door.

Several constables were visible ; foremost came Joseph and a prison warder.

‘Take him!’ cried Mr. Jordan : ‘arrest the fellow. Here he is—he is unarmed.’

‘What! Mr. Jasper!’ asked Joseph. Among the servants and labourers the young steward was only known as Mr. Jasper.’ ‘Why, sir, this is—this is—Mr. Jasper!’



‘This is the man,’ said Ignatius Jordan, clinging to the door-jamb and pointing excitedly with his stick,—‘this is the man who robbed his own father of money that was mine. This is the man who was locked up in jail and broke out, and, by the mercy and justice of Heaven, was cast at my door.’

‘I beg your pardon, sir,’ said Joseph, ‘I don’t understand. This is your steward, Mr. Jasper.’

‘Take him, handcuff him before my eyes. This is the fellow you have been in search of, I deliver him up.’

‘But, sir,’ said the warder, ‘you are wrong. This is not our escaped convict.’

‘He is; I tell you I know he is.’

‘I am sorry to differ from you, sir, but this is not he. I know which is which. Why, this chap’s hair have never been cut. If he’d been with us he’d have a head like a mole’s back.’

‘Not he!’ cried Mr. Jordan frantically. ‘I say to you this *is* Jasper Babb.’

‘Well, sir,’ said the warder, ‘sorry to differ, sir, but our man ain’t Jasper at all—he’s Martin.’

Then Joseph turned his light blue eyes round in quest of Jane. ‘I’ll roast her! I’ll eat her,’ he muttered, ‘at the next Love Feast.’

The men went away much disappointed, grumbling, swearing, ill-appeased by a glass of cider each ; Jane sulked in the kitchen, and said to Barbara, ' This day month, please, Miss.'

Mr. Jordan, confounded, disappointed, crept back to his room and cast himself on his bed.

The only person in the house who could have helped them out of their disappointment was Eve, who knew something of the story of Martin, and knew, moreover, or strongly suspected, that he was not very far off. But no one thought of consulting Eve.

When all the party of constables was gone, Barbara stood in the garden, and Jasper came to her.

' You will tell me all now ? ' she said, looking at him with eyes full of thankfulness and trust.

' Yes, Miss Jordan, everything. It is due to you. May I sit here by you on the garden seat ? '

She seated herself, with a smile, and made room for him, drawing her skirts to her.

The ten-week stocks, purple and white, in a bed under the window filled the air with perfume ; but a sweeter perfume than ten-week stocks, to Barbara, charged the atmosphere—the perfume of perfect confidence. Was Barbara plain ? Who could think that must have

no love for beauty of expression. She had none of her sister's loveliness, but then Eve had none of hers. Each had a charm of her own,—Eve the charm of exquisite physical perfection, Barbara that of intelligence and sweet faith and complete self-devotion streaming out of eye and mouth—indeed, out of every feature. Which is lovelier—the lantern, or the light within? There was little of soul and character in frivolous Eve.

When Jasper seated himself beside Miss Jordan neither spoke for full ten minutes. She folded her hands on her lap. Perhaps their souls were, like the ten-week stocks, exhaling sweetness.

‘Dear Miss Jordan,’ said Jasper, ‘how pleasantly the thrushes are singing!’

‘Yes,’ she replied, ‘but I want to hear your story—I can always listen to the thrushes.’

He was silent after this for several minutes. She did not further press him. She knew he would tell her all when he had rallied his courage to do so. They heard Eve upstairs in her room lightly singing a favourite air from ‘Don Giovanni.’

‘It is due to you,’ said Jasper at last. ‘I will hide nothing from you, and I know your kind heart will bear with me if I am somewhat long.’

She looked round, smiled, just raised her fingers on her lap and let them fall again.

When Jasper saw that smile he thought he had never seen a sweeter sight. And yet people said that Barbara was plain!

‘Miss Jordan, as you have heard, my brother Martin took the money. Poor Martin! Poor, dear Martin! His is a broken life, and it was so full of promise!’

‘Did you love Martin very dearly?’

‘I *do* love him dearly. I have pitied him so deeply. He has had a hard childhood. I will tell you all, and your good kind soul will pity, not condemn him. You have no conception what a bright handsome lad he was. I love to think of him as he was—guileless, brimming with spirits. Unfortunately for us, our father had the idea that he could mould his children’s character into whatever shape he desired, and he had resolved to make of Martin a Baptist minister, so he began to write on his tender heart the hard tenets of Calvinism with an iron pen dipped in gall. When my brother and I played together we were happy—happy as butterflies in the sun. When we heard our father’s voice or saw him, we ran away and hid behind bushes. He interfered with our pursuits, he sneered at our musical tastes, he tried to stop our practising on the violin. We were

overburdened with religion, had texts rammed into us as they ram groats down the throats of Strasburg geese. Our livers became diseased like these same geese—our moral livers. Poor Martin could least endure this education: it drove him desperate. He did what was wrong through sheer provocation. By nature he is good. He has a high spirit, and that led him into revolt.'

'I have seen your brother Martin,' said Barbara. 'When you were brought insensible to this house he was with you.'

'What did you think of him?' asked Jasper, with pride in his tone.

'I did not see his face, he never removed his hat.'

'Has he not a pleasant voice! and he is so grand and generous in his demeanour!'

Barbara said nothing. Jasper waited, expecting some word of praise.

'Tell me candidly what you thought of him,' said Jasper.

'I do not like to do so. I did form an opinion of him, but—it was not favourable.'

'You saw him for too short a time to be able to judge,' said the young man. 'It never does to condemn a man off-hand without knowing his circumstances. Do you know, Miss Jordan, that saying of St. Paul about pre-



mature judgments? He bids us not judge men, for the Great Day will reveal the secrets of all hearts, and then—what is his conclusion? “All men will be covered with confusion and be condemned of men and angels”? Not so—“Then shall every man have praise of the Lord.” Their motives will show better than their deeds.’

‘How sweetly the thrushes are singing!’ said Barbara now; then—‘So also Eve may be misunderstood.’

‘Oh, Miss Jordan! when I consider what Martin might have become in better hands, with more gentle and sympathetic treatment, it makes my heart bleed. I assure you my boyhood was spent in battling with the fatal influences that surrounded him. At last matters came to a head. Our father wanted to send Martin away to be trained for a preacher, and Martin took the journey money provided him, and joined a company of players. He had a good voice, and had been fairly taught to sing. Whether he had any dramatic talent I can hardly say. After an absence of a twelve-month or more he returned. He was out of his place, and professed penitence. I dare say he really was sorry. He remained a while at home, but could not get on with our father, who was determined to have his way with

Martin, and Martin was equally resolved not to become a Dissenting minister. To me it was amazing that my father should persevere, because it was obvious that Martin had no vocation for the pastorate; but my father is a determined man. Having made up his mind that Martin was to be a preacher, he would not be moved from it. In our village a couple of young men resolved to go to America. They were friends of Martin, and persuaded him to join them. He asked my father to give him a fit-out and let him go. But no—the old gentleman was not to be turned from his purpose. Then a temptation came in poor Martin's way, and he yielded to it in a thoughtless moment, or, perhaps, when greatly excited by an altercation with his father. He took the money and ran away.'

'He did not go to America?'

'No, Miss Jordan. He rejoined the same dramatic company with which he had been connected before. That was how he was caught.'

'And the money?'

'Some of it was recovered, but what he had done with most of it no one knows; the poor thriftless lad least of all. I dare say he gave away pounds right and left to all who made out a case of need to him.'

Then these two, sitting in the garden perfumed with stocks, heard Eve calling Barbara.

‘It is nothing,’ said Barbara ; ‘Eve is tired of polishing her spangles, and so wants me. I cannot go to her now : I must hear the end of your story.’

‘I was on my way to this place,’ Jasper continued, ‘when I had to pass through Prince’s Town. I found my other brother there, Walter, who is also devoted to our poor Martin ; Walter had found means of communicating with his brother, and had contrived plans of escape. He had a horse in readiness, and one day, when the prisoners were cutting turf on the moor, his comrades built a turfstack round Martin, and the warders did not discover that he was missing till he had made off. Walter persuaded me to remain a day or two in the place to assist in carrying out the escape, which was successfully executed. We got away off Dartmoor, avoided Tavistock, and lost ourselves on these downs, but were making for the Tamar, that we might cross into Cornwall by bridge or ferry, or by swimming our horses ; and then we thought to reach Polperro and send Martin out of the kingdom in any ship that sailed.’

‘Why did you not tell me this at once,

when you came to our house?' asked Barbara, with a little of her old sharpness.

'Because I did not know you then, Miss Jordan; I could not be sure that you might be trusted.'

She shook her head. 'Oh, Mr. Jasper! I am not trustworthy. I did betray what I believed to be your secret.'

'Your very trustiness made you a traitor,' he answered courteously. 'Your first duty was to your sister.'

'Why did you allow me to suppose that you were the criminal?'

'You had found the prison clothes, and at first I sought to screen my brother. I did not know where Martin was; I wished to give him ample time for escape by diverting suspicion to myself.'

'But afterwards? You ought, later, to have undeceived me,' she said, with a shake in her voice, and a little accent of reproach.

'I shrank from doing that. I thought when you visited Buckfastleigh you would have found out the whole story; but my father was reticent, and you came away without having learned the truth. Perhaps it was pride, perhaps a lingering uneasiness about Martin, perhaps I felt that I could not tell of my dear brother's fall and disgrace. You were cold, and kept me at a distance——'

Then, greatly agitated, Barbara started up.

‘Oh, Mr. Jasper!’ she said with quivering voice, ‘what cruel words I have spoken to you—to you so generous, so true, so self-sacrificing! You never can forgive me; and yet from the depth of my heart I desire your pardon. Oh, Jasper! Mr.’—a sob broke the thread of her words—‘Mr. Jasper, when you were ill and unconscious, I studied your face hour after hour, trying to read the evil story of your life there, and all I read was pure, and noble, and true. How can I make you amends for the wrong I have done you!’

As she stood, humbled, with heaving bosom and throat choking—Eve came with skips and laugh along the gravel walk. ‘I have found you!’ she exclaimed, and clapped her hands.

‘And I—and I——’ gasped Barbara—‘I have found how I may reward the best of men. There! there!’ she said, clasping Eve’s hand and drawing her towards Jasper. ‘Take her! I have stood between you too long; but, on my honour, only because I thought you unworthy of her.’

She put Eve’s hand in that of Jasper, then before either had recovered from the surprise occasioned by her words and action, she walked back into the house, gravely, with erect head, dignified as ever.



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## THE PIPE OF PEACE.

BARBARA went to her room. She ran up the stairs: her stateliness was gone when she was out of sight. She bolted her door, threw herself on her knees beside her bed, and buried her face in the counterpane.

‘I am so happy!’ she said; but her happiness can hardly have been complete, for the bed vibrated under her weight—shook so much that it shook down a bunch of crimson carnations she had stuck under a sacred picture at the head of the bed, and the red flowers fell about her dark hair, and strewed themselves on the counterpane round her head. She did not see them. She did not feel them.

If she had been really and thoroughly happy when at last she rose from her knees, her cheeks would not have shone with tears, nor would her handkerchief have been so wet that she hung it out of her window to dry it, and took another from her drawer.

Then she went to her glass and brushed her hair, which was somewhat ruffled, and she dipped her face in the basin.

After that she was more herself. She unlocked her desk and from it took a small box tied round with red ribbon. Within this box was a shagreen case, and in this case a handsome rosewood pipe, mounted in silver.

This pipe had belonged to her uncle, and it was one of the little items that had come to her. Indeed, in the division of family relics, she had chosen this. Her cousins had teased her, and asked whether it was intended for her future husband. She had made no other reply than that she fancied it, and so she had kept it. When she selected it, she had thought of Jasper. He smoked occasionally. Possibly, she thought she might some day give it him, when he had proved himself to be truly repentant.

Now he was clear from all guilt, she must make him the present—a token of complete reconciliation. She dusted the pretty bowl with her clean pocket-handkerchief, and looked for the lion and head to make sure that the mounting was real silver. Then she took another look at herself in the glass, and came downstairs, carrying the calumet of peace enclosed in its case.

She found Jasper sitting with Eve on the bench where she had left them. They at once made way for her. He rose, and refused to sit till she had taken his place.

‘Mr. Jasper,’ she said, and she had regained entire self-command, ‘this is a proud and happy day for all of us—for you, for Eve, and for me. I have been revolving in my mind how to mark it and what memorial of it to give to you as a pledge of peace established, misunderstandings done away. I have been turning over my desk as well as my mind, and have found what is suitable. My uncle won this at a shooting-match. He was a first-rate shot.’

‘And the prize,’ said Jasper, ‘has fallen into hands that make very bad shots.’

‘What do you mean? Oh!’ Barbara laughed and coloured. ‘You led me into that mistake about yourself.’

‘This is the bad shot I mean,’ said Jasper: ‘you have brought Miss Eve here to me, and neither does Eve want me, nor do I her.’

Barbara opened her eyes very wide. ‘Have you quarrelled?’ she inquired, turning to see the faces of Jasper and her sister. Both were smiling with a malicious humour.

‘Not at all. We are excellent friends.’

‘You do not love Eve?’

‘ I like Eve, I love someone else.’

The colour rushed into Barbara’s face, and then as suddenly deserted it. What did he mean? A sensation of vast happiness overspread her, and then ebbed away. Perhaps he loved someone at Buckfastleigh. She, plain, downright Barbara—what was she for such a man as Jasper had approved himself? She quickly recovered herself, and said, ‘ We were talking about the pipe.’

‘ Quite so,’ answered Jasper. ‘ Let us return to the pipe. You give it me—your uncle’s prize pipe?’

‘ Yes, heartily. I have kept it in my desk unused, as it has been preserved since my uncle’s death; but you must use it; and I hope the tobacco will taste nice through it.’

‘ Miss Jordan,’ said Jasper, ‘ you have shown me such high honour, that I feel bound to honour the gift in a special manner. I can only worthily do so by promising to smoke out of no other pipe so long as this remains entire, and should an accident befall it, to smoke out of no other not replaced by your kind self.’

Eve clapped her hands.

‘ A rash promise,’ said Barbara. ‘ You are at liberty to recall it. If I were to die, and the pipe were broken, you would be bound to abjure smoking.’

‘If you were to die, dear Miss Jordan, I should bury the pipe in your grave, and something far more precious than that.’

‘What?’

‘Can you ask?’ He looked her in the eyes, and again her colour came, deep as the carnations that had strewed her head.

‘There, there!’ he said, ‘we will not talk of graves, and broken pipes, and buried hearts; we will get the pipe to work at once, if the ladies do not object.’

‘I will run for the tinder-box,’ said Eve eagerly.

‘I have my amadou and steel with me, and tobacco,’ Jasper observed; ‘and mind, Miss Barbara is to consecrate the pipe for ever by drawing out of it the first whiff of smoke.’

Barbara laughed. She would do that. Her heart was wonderfully light, and clear of clouds as that sweet still evening sky.

The pipe was loaded; Eve ran off to the kitchen to fetch a stick out of the fire with glowing end, because, she said, ‘she did not like the smell of the burning amadou.’

Jasper handed the pipe to Barbara, who, with an effort to be demure, took it.

‘Are you ready?’ asked Jasper, who was whirling the stick, making a fiery ring in the air.



Barbara had put the pipe between her lips, precisely in the middle of her mouth.

‘No, that will not do,’ said the young man; ‘put the pipe in the side of your mouth. Where it is now I cannot light it without burning the tip of your nose.’

Barbara put her little finger into the bowl to assure herself that it was full. Eve was on her knees at her sister’s feet, her elbows on her lap, looking up amused and delighted. Barbara kept her neck and back erect, and her chin high in the air. A smile was on her face, but no tremor in her lip. Eve burst into a fit of laughter. ‘Oh, Bab, you look so unspeakably droll!’ But Barbara did not laugh and let go the pipe. Her hands were down on the bench, one on each side of her. She might have been sitting in a dentist’s chair to have a tooth drawn. She was a little afraid of the consequences; nevertheless, she had undertaken to smoke, and smoke she would—one whiff, no more.

‘Ready?’ asked Jasper.

She could not answer, because her lips grasped the pipe with all the muscular force of which they were capable. She replied by gravely and slowly bowing her head.

‘This is our calumet of peace, is it not, Miss Jordan? A lasting peace never to be broken—never?’

She replied again only by a serious bow, head and pipe going down and coming up again.

‘Ready?’ Jasper brought the red-hot coal in contact with the tobacco in the bowl. The glow kindled Barbara’s face. She drew a long, a conscientiously long, breath. Then her brows went up in query.

‘Is it alright?’ asked Eve, interpreting the question.

‘Wait a moment—— Yes,’ answered Jasper.

Then a long spiral of white smoke, like a jet of steam from a kettle that is boiling, issued from Barbara’s lips, and rose in a perfect white ring. Her eyes followed the ring.

At that moment—bang! and again—bang! —the discharge of firearms.

The pipe fell into her lap.

‘What is that?’ asked Eve, springing to her feet. They all hurried out of the garden, and stood in front of the house, looking up and down the lane.

‘Stay here and I will see,’ said Jasper. ‘There may be poachers near.’

‘In pity do not leave us, or I shall die of fear,’ cried Eve.

The darkness had deepened. A few stars were visible. Voices were audible, and the tread of men in the lane. Then human figures

were visible. It was too dark at first to distinguish who they were, and the suspense was great.

As, however, they drew nearer, Jasper and the girls saw that the party consisted of Joseph, the warder, and a couple of constables, leading a prisoner.

‘We have got him,’ said Joseph Woodman, ‘the right man at last.’

‘Whom have you got?’ asked Barbara.

‘Whom!—why, the escaped felon, Martin Babb.’

A cry. Eve had fainted.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## TAKEN !

WE must go back in time, something like an hour and a half or two hours, and follow the police and warders after they left Morwell, to understand how it happened that Martin fell into their hands. They had retired sulky and grumbling. They had been brought a long way, the two warders a very long way, for nothing. When they reached the down, one of the warders observed that he was darned if he had not turned his ankle on the rough stones of the lane. The other said he reckoned they had been shabbily treated, and it was not his ankle but his stomach had been turned by a glass of cider sent down into emptiness. Some cold beef and bread was what he wanted. Whereat he was snapped at by the other, who advised him to kill one of the bullocks on the moor and make his meal on that.

‘Hearken,’ said Joseph ; ‘brothers, an idea

has struck me. We have not captured the man, and so we shan't have the reward.'

'Has it taken you half an hour to discover that?'

'Yes,' answered Joseph simply. 'Thinking and digesting are much the same. I ain't a caterpillar that can eat and digest at once.'

'I wish I'd had another glass of cider,' said one of the constables, 'but these folk seemed in a mighty haste to get rid of us.'

'There is the "Hare and Hounds" at Goatadon,' said Joseph.

'That is a long bit out of the road,' remonstrated the constable.

'What is time to us police!' answered Joseph. 'It is made to be killed, like a flea.'

'And hops away as fast,' said another.

'Let us get back to Tavistock,' said a warder.

'Oh, if you wish it,' answered Joseph; 'only it *do* seem a cruel pity.'

'What is a pity?'

'Why, that you should ha' come so far and not seen the greatest wonder of the world.'

'What may that be?'

'The fat woman,' answered Joseph Woodman. 'The landlady of the "Hare and Hounds." You might as well go to Egypt and not see the pyramids, or to Rome and not see the Pope, or to London and not see the Tower.'



‘I don’t make any account of fat women,’ said the warder who had turned his ankle.

‘But this,’ argued Joseph, ‘is a regular marvel. She’s the fattest woman out of a caravan—I believe the fattest in England; I dare say the very fattest in the known world. What there be in the stars I can’t say.’

‘Now,’ said the warder who had turned his stomach, ‘what do *you* call fat?’ He was in a captious mood.

‘What do I call fat?’ repeated Joseph; ‘why, that woman. Brother, if you and I were to stretch our arms at the farthest, taking hold of each other with one hand, we couldn’t compass her and take hold with the other.’

‘I don’t believe it,’ said the warder emphatically.

‘’Tain’t possible a mortal could be so big,’ said the other warder.

‘I swear it,’ said Joseph with great earnestness.

‘There is never a woman in the world,’ said the warder with the bad ankle, ‘whose waist I couldn’t encircle, and I’ve tried lots.’

‘But I tell you this woman is out of the common altogether.’

‘Have you ever tried?’ sneered the warder with the bad stomach.

‘No, but I’ve measured her with my eye.’

‘The eye is easy deceived as to distances and dimensions. Why, Lord bless you! I’ve seen in a fog a sheep on the moor look as big as a hippopotamus.’

‘But the landlady is not on the moor nor in a fog,’ persisted Joseph. ‘I bet you half-a-guinea, laid out in drink, that ’tis as I say.’

‘Done!’ said both warders. ‘Done!’ said the constables, and turning to their right, they went off to the ‘Hare and Hounds,’ two miles out of their way, to see the fat woman and test her dimensions.

Now this change in the destination of the party led to the capture of Martin, and to the wounding of the warder who complained of his stomach.

The party reached the little tavern—a poor country inn built where roads crossed—a wretched house, tarred over its stone face as protection against the driving rains. They entered, and the hostess cheerfully consented to having her girth tested. She was accustomed to it. Her fatness was part of her stock-in-trade: it drew customers to the ‘Hare and Hounds’ who otherwise would have gone on to Beer Alston, where was a pretty and pert maid.

Whilst the officers were refreshing them-

selves, and one warder had removed his boot to examine his ankle, the door of the room where they sat was opened and Martin came in, followed by Watt. His eyes were dazzled, as the room was strongly lighted, and he did not at first observe who were eating and drinking there. It was in this lonely inn that he and Walter were staying and believed themselves quite safe. A few miners were the only persons they met there.

As Martin stood in the doorway looking at the party, whilst his eyes accustomed themselves to the light, one of the warders started up. 'That is he! Take him! Our man!'

Instantly all sprang to their feet except Joseph, who was leisurely in all his movements, and the warder with bare foot, without considering fully what he did, threw his boot at Martin's head.

Martin turned at once and ran, and the men dashed out of the inn after him, both warders catching up their guns, and he who was bootless running, forgetful of his ankle, with bare foot.

The night was light enough for Martin to be seen, with the boy running beside him, across the moor. The fires were still flickering and glowing; the gorse had been burnt and so no bushes could be utilised as a screen. His

only chance of escape was to reach the woods, and he ran for Morwell.

But Martin, knowing that there were fire-arms among his pursuers, dared not run in a direct line; he swerved from side to side, and dodged, to make it difficult for them to take aim. This gave great facilities to the warder who had both boots on, and who was a wiry, long-legged fellow, to gain on Martin.

‘Halt!’ shouted he, ‘halt, or I fire!’

Then Martin turned abruptly and discharged a pistol at him. The man staggered, but before he fell he fired at Martin, but missed.

Almost immediately Martin saw some black figures in front of him, and stood, hesitating what to do. The figures were those of boys who were spreading the fires among the furze bushes, but he thought that his course was intercepted by his pursuers. Before he had decided where to run he was surrounded and disarmed.

The warder was so seriously hurt that he was at once placed on a gate and carried on the shoulders of four of the constables to Beer Alston, to be examined by Mr. Coyshe and the ball extracted. This left only three to guard the prisoner, one of whom was the warder who had sprained his ankle, and had been running

with that foot bare, and who was now not in a condition to go much farther.

‘There is nothing for it,’ said Joseph, who was highly elated, ‘but for us to go on to Morwell. We must lock the chap up there. In that old house there are scores of strong places where the monks were imprisoned. To-morrow we can take him to Tavistock.’ Joseph did not say that Jane Welsh was at Morwell; this consideration, doubtless, had something to do with determining the arrangement. On reaching Morwell, which they did almost at once, for Martin had been captured on the down near the entrance to the lane, the first inquiry was for a safe place where the prisoner might be bestowed.

Jane, hearing the noise, and, above all, the loved voice of Joseph, ran out.

‘Jane,’ said the policeman, ‘where can we lock the rascal up for the night?’

She considered for a moment, and then suggested the corn-chamber. That was over the cellar, the walls lined with slate, and the floor also of slate. It had a stout oak door studded with nails, and access was had to it from the quadrangle, up a flight of stone steps. There was no window to it. ‘I’ll go ask Miss Barbara for the key,’ she said. ‘There is nothing in it now but some old onions. But’



—she paused—‘if he be locked up there all night, he’ll smell awful of onions in the morning.’

Reassured that this was of no importance, Jane went to her mistress for the key. Barbara came out and listened to the arrangement, to which she gave her consent, coldly. The warder could now only limp. She was shocked to hear of the other having been shot.

A lack of hospitality had been shown when the constables and warders came first, through inadvertence, not intentionally. Now that they desired to remain the night at Morwell and guard there the prisoner, Barbara gave orders that they should be made comfortable in the hall. One would have to keep guard outside the door where Martin was confined, the other two would spend the night in the hall, the window of which commanded the court and the stairs that led to the corn-chamber. ‘I won’t have the men in the kitchen,’ said Barbara, ‘or the maids will lose their heads and nothing will be done.’ Besides, the kitchen was out of the way of the corn-chamber.

‘We shall want the key of the corn-store,’ said Joseph, ‘if we may have it, Miss.’

‘Why not stow the fellow in the cellar?’ asked a constable.

‘For two reasons,’ answered Joseph. ‘First, because he would drink the cider; and second, because—no offence meant, Miss—we hope that the maids ’ll be going to and fro to the cellar with the pitcher pretty often.’

Joseph was courting the maid of the house, and therefore thought it well to hint to Barbara what was expected of the house to show that it was free and open.

The corn-room was unlocked, a light obtained, and it was thoroughly explored. It was floored with large slabs of slate, and the walls were lined six feet high with slate, as a protection against rats and mice. Joseph progged the walls above that. All sound, not a window. He examined the door: it was of two-inch oak plank, and the hinges of stout iron. In the corner of the room was a heap of onions that had not been used the preceding winter. A bundle of straw was procured and thrown down.

‘Lie there, you dog, you murderous dog!’ said one of the men, casting Martin from him. ‘Move at your peril!’

‘Ah!’ said the lame warder, ‘I only wish you would make another attempt to escape that I might give you a leaden breakfast.’ He limped badly. In running he had cut his bare foot and it bled, and he had trodden on the

prickles of the gorse, which had made it very painful.

‘There’s a heap of onions for your pillow,’ said Joseph. ‘Folks say they are mighty helpful to sleep’—this was spoken satirically; then with a moral air—‘But, sure enough, there’s no sleeping, even on an onion pillow, without a good conscience.’

As the men were to spend the night without sleep—one out of doors, to be relieved guard by the other, the lame warder alone excused the duty, as he was unable to walk—Barbara ordered a fire to be lighted in the great hall. The nights were not cold, but damp; the sky was clear, and the dew fell heavily. It would, moreover, be cheerful for the men to sit over a wood fire through the long night, and take naps by it if they so liked. Supper was produced and laid on the oak table by Jane, who ogled Joseph every time she entered and left the hall.

She placed a jug on the table. Joseph went after her.

‘You are a dear maid,’ he said, ‘but one jug don’t go far. You must mind the character of the house and maintain it. I see cold mutton. It is good, but chops are better. This ain’t an inn. It’s a gentleman’s house. I see cheese. Ain’t there anywhere a tart and

cream? Mr. Jordan is not a farmer: he's a squire. I'd not have it said of me I was courting a young person in an inferior situation.'

The fire was made up with a faggot. It blazed merrily. Joseph sat before it with his legs outspread, smiling at the flames; he had his hands on his knees. After having run hard and got hot he felt chilled, and the fire was grateful. Moreover, his hint had been taken. Two jugs stood on the table, and hot chops and potatoes had been served. He had eaten well, he had drunk well. All at once he laughed.

'What is the joke, Joe?'

'I've an idea, brother. If t'other warder dies I shall not have to pay the half-guinea because I lost my bet. He was so confounded long in the arm. That will be prime! And—we shall share the reward without him! Beautiful!'

'Umph! Has it taken you all this time to find that out? I saw it the moment the shot struck. That's why I ran on with a bad foot.'

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

## GONE !

NEITHER Jasper, Barbara, nor Eve appeared. Mr. Jordan was excited, and had to be told what had taken place, and this had to be done by Jasper. Barbara was with her sister. Eve had recovered, and had confessed everything. Now all was clear to the eyes of Barbara. The meeting on the Raven Rock had been the one inexplicable point, and now that was explained. Eve hid nothing from her sister ; she told her about the first meeting with Martin, his taking the ring, then about the giving of the turquoise ring, finally about the meeting on the Rock. The story was disquieting. Eve had been very foolish. The only satisfaction to Barbara was the thought that the cause of uneasiness was removed, and about to be put beyond the power of doing further mischief. Eve would never see Martin again. She had seen so little of him that he could have produced on her heart but a light and transient



impression. The romance of the affair had been the main charm with Eve.

When Jasper left the squire's room, after a scene that had been painful, Barbara came to him and said, 'I know everything now. Eve met your brother Martin on the Raven Rock. He has been trying to win her affections. In this also you have been wrongly accused by me.' Then with a faint laugh, but with a timid entreating look, 'I can do no more than confess now, I have such a heavy burden of amends to make.'

'Will it be a burden, Barbara?'

She put her hand lightly on his arm.

'No, Jasper—a delight.'

He stooped and kissed her hand. Little or nothing had passed between them, yet they understood each other.

'Hist! for shame!' said a sharp voice through the garden window. She looked and saw the queer face of Watt.

'That is too cruel, Jasp—love-making when our poor Martin is in danger! I did not expect it of you.'

Barbara was confused. The boy's face could ill be discerned, as there was no candle in the room, and all the light, such as there was—a silvery summer twilight—flowed in at the window, and was intercepted by his head.

‘Selfish, Jasp! and you, Miss—if you are going to enter the family, you should begin to consider other members than Jasper,’ continued the boy. All his usual mockery was gone from his voice, which expressed alarm and anxiety. ‘There lies poor Martin in a stone box, on a little straw, without a mouthful, and his keepers are given what they like!’

‘Oh, Jasper!’ said Barbara with a start, ‘I am so ashamed of myself. I forgot to provide for him.’

‘You have not considered, I presume, what will become of poor Martin. In self-defence he shot at a warder, and whether he wounded or killed him I cannot say. Poor Martin! Seven years will be spread into fourteen, perhaps twenty-one. What will he be when he comes out of prison! What shall I do all these years without him!’

‘Walter,’ said Jasper, going to the window, and speaking in a subdued voice, ‘what can be done? I am sorry enough for him, but I can do nothing.’

‘Oh, you will not try.’

‘Tell me, what can I do?’

‘There! let *her*,’ he pointed to Barbara, ‘let her come over here and speak with me. Everything now depends on her.’

‘On me!’ exclaimed Barbara.

‘ Ah, on you. But do not shout. I can hear if you whisper. Miss, that poor fellow in the stone box is Jasper’s brother. If you care at all for Jasper, you will not interfere. I do not ask you to move a finger to help Martin : I ask you only not to stand in others’ way.’

‘ What do you mean ? ’

‘ Go into the hall, you and Jasper, instead of standing sighing and billing here. Allow me to be there also. There are two more men arrived—two of those who carried the winged snipe away. That makes four inside and one outside ; but one is lamed and without his boot. Feed them all well. Don’t spare cider ; and give them spirits-and-water. Help to amuse them.’

‘ For what end ? ’

‘ That is no concern of yours. For what end ! Hospitality, the most ancient of virtues. Above all, do not interfere with the other one.’

‘ What other one ? ’

‘ You know—Miss Eve,’ whispered the boy. ‘ Let the maidens in, the housemaid certainly ; she has a sweetheart among them, and the others will make pickings.’

Then, without waiting for an answer, the queer boy ran along the gravel path and leaped the dwarf wall into the stable yard, which lay at a lower level.

‘What does he mean?’ asked Barbara.

‘He means,’ said Jasper, ‘that he is going to make an attempt to get poor Martin off.’

‘But how can he?’

‘That I do not know.’

‘And whether we ought to assist in such a venture I do not know,’ said Barbara thoughtfully.

‘Nor do I,’ said Jasper; ‘my heart says one thing, my head the other.’

‘We will follow our hearts,’ said Barbara vehemently, and caught his hands and pressed them. ‘Jasper, he is your brother; with me that is a chief consideration. Come into the hall; we will give the men some music.’

Jasper and Barbara went to the hall, and found that the warder had his foot bandaged in a chair, and seemed to be in great pain. He was swearing at the constables who had come from Beer Alston for not having called at the ‘Hare and Hounds’ on their way for his boot. He tried to induce one of them to go back for it; but the sight of the fire, the jugs of cider, the plates heaped with cake, made them unwilling again to leave the house.

‘We ain’t a-going without our supper,’ was their retort. ‘You are comfortable enough here, with plenty to eat and to drink.’

‘But,’ complained the man, ‘I can’t go for

my boot myself, don't you see?' But see they would not. Jane had forgotten all her duties about the house in the excitement of having her Joseph there. She had stolen into the hall, and got her policeman into a corner.

'When is it your turn to keep guard, Joe?' she asked.

'Not for another hour,' he replied. 'I wish I hadn't to go out at all.'

'Oh, Joe, I'll go and keep guard with you!'

Also the cook stole in with a bowl and a sponge, and a strong savour of vinegar. She had come to bathe the warder's foot, unsolicited, moved only by a desire to do good, doubtless. Also the under-housemaid's beady eyes were visible at the door looking in to see if more fuel were required for the fire.

Clearly, there was no need for Barbara to summon her maids. As a dead camel in the desert attracts all the vultures within a hundred miles, so the presence of these men in the hall drew to them all the young women in the house.

When they saw their mistress enter, they exhibited some hesitation. Barbara, however, gave them a nod, and more was not needed to encourage them to stay.

'Jane,' said Barbara, 'here is the key. Fetch a couple of bottles of Jamaica rum, or



one of rum and one of brandy. Patience,' to the under-housemaid, 'bring hot water, sugar, tumblers, and spoons.'

A thrill of delight passed through the hearts of the men, and their eyes sparkled.

Then in at the door came the boy with his violin, fiddling, capering, dancing, making faces. In a moment he sprang on the table, seated himself, and began to play some of the pretty 'Don Giovanni' dance music.

He signed to Barbara with his bow, and pointed to the piano in the parlour, the door of which was open. She understood him and went in, lit the candles, and took a 'Don Giovanni' which her sister had bought, and practised with Jasper. Then he signed to his brother, and Jasper also took down his violin, tuned it, and began to play.

'Let us bring the piano into the hall,' said Barbara, and the men started to fulfil her wish. Four of them conveyed it from the parlour. At the same time the rum and hot water appeared, the spoons clinked in the glasses. Patience, the under-housemaid, threw a faggot on the fire.

'What is that?' exclaimed the lame warder, pointing through the window.

It was only the guard, who had extended his march to the hall and put his face to the glass

to look in at the brew of rum-and-water, and the comfortable party about the fire. 'Go back on your beat, you scoundrel!' shouted the warder, menacing the constable with his fist. Then the face disappeared; but every time the sentinel reached the hall window, he applied his nose to the pane and stared in thirstily at the grog that steamed and ran down the throats of his comrades, and cursed the duty that kept him without in the falling dew. His appearance at intervals at the glass, where the fire and candlelight illumined his face, was like that of a fish rising to the surface of a pond to breathe.

'Is your time come yet outside, Joe dear?' whispered Jane.

'Hope not,' growled Joseph, helping himself freely to rum; putting his hand round the tumbler, so that none might observe how high the spirit stood in the glass before he added the water.

'Oh, Joe duckie, don't say that. I'll go and keep you company on the stone steps: we'll sit there in the moonlight all alone, as sweet as anything.'

'You couldn't ekal this grog,' answered the unromantic Joseph, 'if you was ever so sweet. I've put in four lumps of double-refined.'

'You've a sweet tooth, Joe,' said Jane.

‘ Shall I bathe your poor suffering foot again?’ asked the cook, casting languishing eyes at the warder.

‘ By-and-by when the liquor is exhausted,’ answered the warder.

‘ Would you like a little more hot water to the spirit?’ said Patience, who was setting—as it is termed in dance phraseology—at the youngest of the constables.

‘ No, Miss, but I’d trouble you for a little more spirit,’ he answered, ‘ to qualify the hot water.’

Then the scullery-maid, who had also found her way in, blocked the other constable in the corner, and offered to sugar his rum. He was a married man, middle-aged, and with a huge disfiguring mole on his nose; but there was no one else for the damsel to ogle and address, so she fixed upon him.

All at once, whilst this by-play was going on, under cover of the music, the door from the staircase opened, and in sprang Eve, with her tambourine, dressed in the red-and-yellow costume she had found in the garret, and wearing her burnished necklace of bezants. Barbara withdrew her hands from the piano in dismay, and flushed with shame.

‘ Eve!’ she exclaimed, ‘ go back! How can you!’ But the boy from the table beckoned

again to her, pointing to the piano, and her fingers; Eve skipped up to her and whispered, 'Let me alone, for Jasper's sake,' then bounded into the middle of the hall, and rattled her tambourine and clinked its jingles.

The men applauded, and tossed off their rum-and-water; then, having finished the rum, mixed themselves eagerly hot jorums of brandy.

The face was at the window, with the nose flat and white against the glass, like a dab of putty.

Barbara's forehead darkened, and she drew her lips together. Her conscience was not satisfied. She suspected that this behaviour of Eve was what Walter had alluded to when he begged her not to interfere. Walter had seen Eve, and planned it with her. Was she right, Barbara asked herself, in what she was doing to help a criminal to escape?

The money he had taken was theirs—Eve's; and if Eve chose to forgive him and release him from his punishment, why should she object? Martin was the brother of Jasper, and for Jasper's sake she must go on with what she had begun.

So she put her fingers on the keys again, and at once Watt and Jasper resumed their instruments. They played the music in 'Don

Giovanni,' in the last act, where the banquet is interrupted by the arrival of the statue. Barbara knew that Eve was dancing alone in the middle of the floor before these men, before him also who ought to be pacing up and down in front of the corn-chamber; but she would not turn her head over her shoulder to look at her, and her brow burnt, and her cheeks, usually pale, flamed. As for Eve, she was supremely happy; the applause of the lookers-on encouraged her. Her movements were graceful, her beauty radiant. She looked like Zerlina on the boards.

Suddenly the boy dropped his bow, and before anyone could arrest his hand, or indeed had a suspicion of mischief, he threw a canister of gunpowder into the blazing fire. Instantly there was an explosion. The logs were flung about the floor, Eve and the maids screamed, the piano and violins were hushed, doors were burst open, panes of glass broken and fell clinking, and every candle was extinguished. Fortunately the hall floor was of slate.

The men were the first to recover themselves—all, that is, but the warder, who shrieked and swore because a red-hot cinder had alighted on his bad foot.

The logs were thrust together again upon the hearth, and a flame sprang up.



No one was hurt, but in the doorway, white, with wild eyes, stood Mr. Jordan, signing with his hand, but unable to speak.

‘Oh, papa! dear papa!’ exclaimed Barbara, running to him, ‘do go back to bed. No one is hurt. We have had a fright, that is all.’

‘Fools!’ cried the old man, brandishing his stick. ‘He is gone! I saw him—he ran past my window.’

## CHAPTER XL.

## ANOTHER SACRIFICE.

WATT was no longer in the hall. Whither he had gone none knew ; how he had gone none knew. The man in the quadrangle was too alarmed by the glass panes being blown out in his face, to see whether the boy had passed that way. But, indeed, no one now gave thought to Watt ; the men ran to the corn-chamber to examine it. A lantern was lighted, the door examined and found to be locked. It was unfastened, and Joseph and the rest entered. The light penetrated every corner, fell on the straw and the onion-heap. Martin Babb was not there.

‘ May I be darned ! ’ exclaimed Joseph, holding the lantern over his head. ‘ I looked at the walls, at the floor, at the door : I never thought of the roof, and it is by the roof he has got away.’

Indeed, the corn-chamber was unceiled.

Martin, possibly assisted, had reached the rafters, thence had crept along the roof in the attics, and had entered the room that belonged to the girls, and descended from the window by the old Jargonelle pear.

Then the constables and Joseph turned on the sentinel, and heaped abuse upon him for not having warned them of what was going on. It was in vain for him to protest that from the outside he could not detect what was in process of execution under the roof. Blame must attach to someone, and he was one against four.

Their tempers were not the more placable when it was seen that the bottle of brandy had been upset and was empty, the precious spirit having expended itself on the floor.

Then the question was mooted whether the fugitive should not be pursued at once, but the production by Barbara of another bottle of rum decided them not to do so, but await the arrival of morning. Suddenly it occurred to Joseph that the blame attached, not to any of those present, who had done their utmost, but to the warder who had been shot, and so had detached two of their number, and had reduced the body so considerably by this fatality as to incapacitate them from drawing a cordon round the house and watching it from every side. If

that warder were to die, then the whole blame might be shovelled upon him along with the earth into his grave.

The search was recommenced next day, but was ineffectual. In which direction Martin had gone could not be found. Absolutely no traces of him could be discovered.

Presently Mr. Coyshe arrived, in a state of great excitement. He had attended the wounded man, and had heard an account of the capture; on his way to Morwell the rumour reached him that the man had broken away again. Mr. Coyshe had, as he put it, an inquiring mind. He thirsted for knowledge, whether of scientific or of social interest. Indeed, he took a lively interest in other people's affairs. So he came on foot, as hard as he could walk, to Morwell, to learn all particulars, and at the same time pay a professional visit to Mr. Jordan.

Barbara at once asked Mr. Coyshe into the parlour; she wanted to have a word with him before he saw her father.

Barbara was very uneasy about Eve, whose frivolity, lack of ballast, and want—as she feared—of proper self-respect might lead her into mischief. How could her sister have been so foolish as to dress up and dance last evening before a parcel of common constables! To Barbara such conduct was inconceivable. She

herself was dignified and stiff with her inferiors, and would as soon have thought of acting before them as Eve had done as of jumping over the moon. She did not consider how her own love and that of her father had fostered caprice and vanity in the young girl, till she craved for notice and admiration. Barbara thought over all that Eve had told her: how she had lost her mother's ring, how she had received the ring of turquoise, how she had met Martin on the Rock platform. Every incident proclaimed to her mind the instability, the lack of self-respect, in her sister. The girl needed to be watched and put into firmer hands. She and her father had spoiled her. Now that the mischief was done she saw it.

What better step could be taken to rectify the mistake than that of bringing Mr. Coyshe to an engagement with Eve?

She was a straightforward, even blunt, girl, and when she had an aim in view went to her work at once. So, without beating about the bush, she said to the young doctor—

‘Mr. Coyshe, you did me the honour the other day of confiding to me your attachment to Eve. I have been considering it, and I want to know whether you intend at once to speak to her. I told my father your wishes, and he is, I believe, not indisposed to forward them.’



‘I am delighted to hear it,’ said the surgeon; ‘I would like above everything to have the matter settled, but Miss Eve never gives me a chance of speaking to her alone.’

‘She is shy,’ said Barbara; then, thinking that this was not exactly true, she corrected herself; ‘that is to say—she, as a young girl, shrinks from what she expects is coming from you. Can you wonder?’

‘I don’t see it. I’m not an ogre.’

‘Girls have feelings which, perhaps, men cannot comprehend,’ said Barbara.

‘I do not wish to be precipitate,’ observed the young surgeon. ‘I’ll take a chair, please, and then I can explain to you fully my circumstances and my difficulties.’ He suited his action to his word, and graciously signed to Barbara to sit on the sofa near his chair. Then he put his hat between his feet, calmly took off his gloves and threw them into his hat.

‘I hate precipitation,’ said Mr. Coyshe. ‘Let us thoroughly understand each other. I am a poor man. Excuse me, Miss Jordan, if I talk in a practical manner. You are long and clear headed, so—but I need not tell you that—so am I. We can comprehend each other, and for a moment lay aside that veil of romance and poetry which invests an engagement.’

Barbara bowed.

‘An atmosphere surrounds a matrimonial alliance; let us puff it away for a moment and look at the bare facts. Seen from a poetic standpoint, marriage is the union of two loving hearts, the rapture of two souls discovering each other. From the sober ground of common sense it means two loaves of bread a day instead of one, a milliner’s bill at the end of the year in addition to that of the tailor, two tons of coals where one had sufficed. I need not tell you, being a prudent person, that when I am out for the day my fire is not lighted. If I had a wife of course a fire would have to burn all day. I may almost say that matrimony means three tons of coal instead of one, and *you* know how costly coals come here.’

‘But, Mr. Coyshe——’

‘Excuse me,’ he said, ‘I may be plain, but I am truthful. I am putting matters before you in the way in which I am forced to view them myself. When an ordinary individual looks on a beautiful woman he sees only her beauty. I see more; I anatomise her mentally, and follow the bones, and nerves, and veins, and muscles. So with this lovely matrimonial prospect. I see its charms, but I see also what lies beneath, the anatomy, so to speak, and that means increased coal, butcher’s,

baker's bills, three times the washing, additional milliners' accounts.'

'You know, Mr. Coyshe,' said Barbara, a little startled at the way he put matters, 'you know that eventually Morwell comes to Eve.'

'My dear Miss Jordan, if a man walks in stocking soles, expecting his father-in-law's shoes, he is likely to go limpingly. How am I to live so long as Mr. Jordan lives? I know I should flourish after his death—but in the mean time—there is the rub. I'd marry Eve to-morrow but for the expense.'

'Is there not something sordid——' began Barbara.

'I will not allow you to finish a sentence, Miss Jordan, which your good sense will reproach you for uttering. I saw at a fair a booth with outside a picture of a mermaid combing her golden hair, and with the face of an angel. I paid twopence and went inside, to behold a seal flopping in a tub of dirty water. All the great events of life—birth, marriage, death—are idealised by poets, as that disgusting seal was idealised on the canvas by the artist: horrible things in themselves but inevitable, and therefore to be faced as well as we may. I need not have gone in and seen that seal, but I was deluded to do so by the ideal picture.'

‘Surely,’ exclaimed Barbara laughing, ‘you put marriage in a false light?’

‘Not a bit. In almost every case it is as is described, a delusion and a horrible disenchantment. It shall not be so with me, so I picture it in all its real features. If you do not understand me the fault lies with you. Even the blessed sun cannot illumine a room when the panes of the window are dull. I am a poor man, and a poor man must look at matters from what you are pleased to speak of as a sordid point of view. There are plants I have seen suspended in windows said to live on air. They are all pendulous. Now I am not disposed to become a drooping plant. Live on air I cannot. There is enough earth in my pot for my own roots, but for my own alone.’

‘I see,’ said Barbara, laughing, but a little irritated. ‘You are ready enough to marry, but have not the means on which to marry.’

‘Exactly,’ answered Mr. Coyshe. ‘I have a magnificent future before me, but I am like a man swimming, who sees the land but does not touch as much as would blacken his nails. Lord bless you!’ said Mr. Coyshe, ‘I support a wife on what I get at Beer Alston! Lord bless me!’ he stood up and sat down again, ‘you might as well expect a cock to lay eggs.’

Barbara bit her lips. 'I should not have thought you so practical,' she said.

'I am forced to be so. It is the fate of poor men to have to count their coppers. Then there is another matter. If I were married, well, of course, it is possible that I might be the founder of a happy family. In the South Sea Islands the natives send their parents periodically up trees and then shake the trunks. If the old people hold on they are reprieved, if they fall they are eaten. We eat our parents in England also, and don't wait till they are old and leathery. We begin with them when we are babes, and never leave off till nothing is left of them to devour. We feed on their energies, consume their substance, their time, their brains, their hearts piecemeal.'

'Well!'

'Well,' repeated Mr. Coyshe, 'if I am to be eaten I must have flesh on my bones for the coming Coyshes to eat.'

'You need not be alarmed as to the prospect,' said Barbara gravely. 'I have been left a few hundred pounds by my aunt; they bring in about fifty pounds a year. I will make it over to my sister.'

'You see for yourself,' said Mr. Coyshe, 'that Eve is not a young lady who can be made into a sort of housekeeper. She is too dainty



for that. Turnips may be tossed about, but not apricots.'

'Yes,' said Barbara, 'I and my sister are quite different.'

'You will not repent of this determination?' asked Mr. Coyshe. 'I suppose it would not be asking you too much just to drop me a letter with the expression of your intention stated in it? I confess to a weakness for black and white. The memory is so treacherous, and I find it very like an adhesive chest plaster—it sticks only on that side which applies to self.'

'Mr. Coyshe,' said Barbara, 'shall we go in and see papa? You shall be satisfied. My memory will not play me false. My whole heart is wrapped up in dear Eve, and the great ambition of my life is to see her happy. Come, then, we will go to papa.'

## CHAPTER XLI.

## ANOTHER MISTAKE.

BARBARA saw Mr. Coyshe into her father's room, and then went upstairs to Eve, caught her by the arm, and drew her into her own room. Barbara had now completely made up her mind that her sister was to become Mrs. Coyshe. Eve was a child, never would be other, never capable of deciding reasonably for herself. Those who loved her, those who had care of her, must decide for her. Barbara and her father had grievously erred hitherto in humouring all Eve's caprices, now they must be peremptory with her, and arrange for her what was best, and force her to accept the provision made for her.

What are love matches but miserable disappointments? Not quite so bad as pictured by Mr. Coyshe. The reality would not differ from the ideal as thoroughly as the seal from the painted mermaid; but there was truth in

what he said. A love match was entered into by two young people who have idealised each other, and before the first week is out of the honeymoon they find the ideal shattered, and a very prosaic reality standing in its place. Then follow disappointment, discontent, rebellion. Far better the foreign system of parents choosing partners for their children; they are best able to discover the real qualities of the suitor because they study them dispassionately, and they know the characters of their daughters. Who can love a child more than a parent, and therefore who is better qualified to match her suitably?

So Barbara argued with herself. Certainly Eve must not be left to select her husband. She was a creature of impulse, without a grain of common-sense in her whole nature.

Barbara drew Eve down beside her on the sofa at the foot of her bed, and put her arm round her waist. Eve was pouting, and had red eyes; for her sister had scolded her that morning sharply for her conduct the preceding night, and her father had been excited, and for the first time in his life had spoken angrily to her, and bidden her cast off and never resume the costume in which she had dressed and bedizened herself.

Eve had retired to her room in a sulk, and

in a rebellious frame of mind. She cried and called herself an ill-treated girl, and was overcome with immense pity for the hardships she had to undergo among people who could not understand and would not humour her.

Eve's lips were screwed up, and her brow as nearly contracted into a frown as it could be, and her sweet cheeks were kindled with fiery temper-spots.

'Eve dear,' said Barbara, 'Mr. Coyshe is come.'

Eve made no answer, her lips took another screw, and her brows contracted a little more.

'Eve, he is closeted now with papa, and I know he has come to ask for the hand of the dearest little girl in the whole world.'

'Stuff!' said Eve peevishly.

'Not stuff at all,' argued Barbara, 'nor'—intercepting another exclamation—'no, dear, nor fiddlesticks. He has been talking to me in the parlour. He is sincerely attached to you. He is an odd man, and views things in quite a different way from others, but I think I made out that he wanted you to be his wife.'

'Barbara,' said Eve, with great emphasis, 'nothing in the world would induce me to submit to be called Mrs. Squash.'

'My dear, if the name is the only objection, I think he will not mind changing it.'

Indeed, it is only proper that he should. As he and you will have Morwell, it is of course right that a Jordan should be here, and—to please the Duke and you—he will, I feel sure, gladly assume our name. I agree with you that, though Coyshe is not a bad name, it is not a pretty one. It lends itself to corruption.'

'Babb is worse,' said Eve, still sulky.

'Yes, darling, Babb is ugly, and it is the pet name you give me, as short for Barbara. I have often told you that I do not like it.'

'You never said a word against it till Jasper came.'

'Well, dear, I may not have done so. When he did settle here, and we knew his name, it was not, of course, seemly to call me by it. That is to say,' said Barbara, colouring, 'it led to confusion—in calling for me, for instance, he might have thought you were addressing him.'

'Not at all,' said Eve, still filled with a perverse spirit. 'I never called him Babb at all, I always called him Jasper.' Then she took up her little apron and pulled at the embroidered ends, and twisted and tortured them into horns. 'It would be queer, sister, if you were to marry Jasper; you would become double Babb.'

'Don't,' exclaimed Barbara, bridling; 'this



is unworthy of you, Eve; you are trying to turn your arms against me, when I am attacking you.'

'May I not defend myself?'

Then Barbara drew her arm tighter round her sister, kissed her pretty neck under the delicate shell-like ear, and said, 'Sweetest! we never fight. I never would raise a hand against you. I would run a pair of scissors into my own heart rather than snip a corner off this dear little ear. There, no more fencing even with wadded foils. We were talking of Mr. Coyshe.'

Eve shrugged her shoulders.

'*Revenons à nos moutons,*' she said, 'though I cannot say old Coyshe is a sheep; he strikes me rather as a jackdaw.'

'Old Coyshe! how can you exaggerate so, Eve! He is not more than five- or six-and-twenty.'

'He is wise and learned enough to be regarded as old. I hate wise and learned men.'

'What is there that you do not hate which is not light and frivolous?' asked Barbara a little pettishly. 'You have no serious interests in anything.'

'I have no interests in anything here,' said Eve, 'because there is nothing here to interest me. I do not care for turnips and mangold,

and what are the pigs and poultry to me? Can I be enthusiastic over draining? Can the price of bark make my pulses dance? No, Barbie (Bab you object to), I am sick of a country life in a poky corner of the most out-of-the-way county in England except Cornwall. Really, Barbie, I believe I would marry any man who would take me to London, and let me go to the theatre, and to balls and concerts and shows. Why, Barbara! I'd rather travel round the country in a caravan and dance on a tight-rope than be moped up here in Morwell, an old fusty, mouldering monk's cell.'

'My dear Eve!'

Barbara was so shocked, she could say no more.

'I am in earnest. Papa is ill, and that makes the place more dull than ever. Jasper was some fun, he played the violin, and taught me music, but now you have meddled, and deprived me of that amusement; I am sick of the monotony here. It is only a shade better than Lanherne convent, and you know papa took me away from that; I fell ill with the restraint.'

'You have no restraint here.'

'No—but I have nothing to interest me. I feel always as if I was hungry for something I could not get. Why should I have "Don

Giovanni," and "Figaro," and the "Barber of Seville" on my music-stand, and strum at them? I want to see them and hear them—alive, acting, singing, particularly amid lights and scenery, and in proper costume. I cannot bear this dull existence any longer. If Doctor Squash will take me to a theatre or an opera I'll marry him, just for that alone—that is my last word.'

Barbara was accustomed to hear Eve talk extravagantly, and had not been accustomed to lay much weight on what she said; but this was spoken so vehemently, and was so prodigiously extravagant, that Barbara could only loosen her hold of her sister, draw back to the far end of the sofa, and stare at her dismayedly. In her present state of distress about Eve she thought more seriously of Eve's words than they deserved. Eve was angry, discontented, and said what came uppermost, so as to annoy her sister.

'Eve dear,' said Barbara gravely, 'I pray you not to talk in this manner, as if you had said good-bye to all right principle and sound sense. Mr. Coyshe is downstairs. We must decide on an answer, and that a definite one.'

'*We!*' repeated Eve; 'I suppose it concerns me only.'

‘What concerns you concerns me; you know that very well, Eve.’

‘I am not at liberty, I suppose, to choose for myself?’

‘You are a dear good girl, who will elect what is most pleasing to your father and sister, and promises greatest happiness to yourself.’

Eve sat pouting and playing with the ends of her apron. Then she took one end which she had twisted into a horn, and put it between her pearly teeth, whilst she looked furtively and mischievously at her sister, who sat with her hands on her lap, tapping the floor with her feet.

‘Barbie!’ said Eve slyly.

‘Well, dear!’

‘Do lend me your pocket-handkerchief. I have been crying and made mine wet. Papa was so cross and you scolded me so sharply.’

Barbara, without looking at her sister, held out her handkerchief to her. Eve took it, pulled it out by the two ends, twirled it round, folded, knotted it, worked diligently at it, got it into the compact shape she desired, laid it in her arms, with the fingers under it, and then, without Barbara seeing what she was about—‘Hist!’ said Eve, and away shot the white rabbit she had manufactured into Barbara’s

lap. Then she burst into a merry laugh. The clouds had rolled away. The sun was shining.

‘How can you! How can you be so childish!’ burst from Barbara, as she started up, and let the white rabbit fall at her feet. ‘Here we are,’ said Barbara, with some anger, ‘here we are discussing your future, and deciding your happiness or sorrow, and you—you are making white rabbits! You really, Eve, are no better than a child. You are not fit to choose for yourself. Come along with me. We must go down. Papa and I will settle for you as is best. You want a master who will bring you into order, and, if possible, force you to think.’



## CHAPTER XLII.

## ENGAGED.

IF a comparison were made between the results of well and ill considered ventures, which would prove the most uniformly successful? Not certainly those undertakings which have been most carefully weighed and prudently determined on. Just as frequently the rash and precipitate venture is crowned with success as that which has been wisely considered; and just as often the latter proves a failure, and falsifies every expectation. Nature, Fate, whatever it be that rules our destinies, rules them crookedly, and, with mischief, upsets all our calculations. We build our card-houses, and she fillips a marble into them and brings them down. Why do we invariably stop every hole except that by which the sea rolls through our dyke? Why do we always forget to lock the stable door till the nag has been stolen?

The old myth is false which tells of Prometheus as bound and torn and devoured by

the eagle ; Pro-metheus is free and unrent, it is Epi-metheus who is in chains, and writhing, and looks back on the irrevocable past, and curses itself and is corroded with remorse.

What is the fate of Forethought but to be flouted by capricious Destiny, to be ever proved a fool and blind, to be shown that it were just as well had it never existed ?

Eve hung back as Barbara led her to her father's door. Mr. Coyshe was in there, and though she had said she would take him she did not mean it. She certainly did not want to have to make her decision then. Her face became a little pale, some of the bright colour had gone from it when her temper subsided and she had begun to play at making rabbits. Now more left her cheeks, and she held back as Barbara tried to draw her on. But Barbara was very determined, and though Eve was wayward, she would not take the trouble to be obstinate. 'I can but say no,' she said to herself, 'if the creature does ask me.' Then she whispered into Barbara's ear, 'Bab, I won't have a scene before all the parish.'

'All the parish, dear!' remonstrated the elder, 'there is no one there but papa and the doctor; and if the latter means to speak he will ask to have a word with you in private, and you can go into the drawing-room.'

‘But I don’t want to see him.’

Barbara threw open the door.

Mr. Jordan was propped up in his bed on pillows. He was much worse, and a feverish fire burned in his eyes and cheeks. He saw Eve at once and called her to him.

Then her ill-humour returned, she pouted and looked away from Mr. Coyshe so as not to see him. He bowed and smiled, and pushed forward extending his hand, but she brushed past with her eyes fixed on her father. She was angry with Barbara for having brought her down.

‘Eve,’ said Mr. Jordan, ‘I am very ill. The doctor has warned me that I have been much hurt by what has happened. It was your doing, Eve. You were foolish last night. You forgot what was proper to your station. Your want of consideration is the cause of my being so much worse, and of that scoundrel’s escape.’

‘O papa, I am very sorry I hurt you, but as for his getting off—I am glad! He had stolen my money, so I have a right to forgive him, and that I do freely.’

‘Eve!’ exclaimed her father, ‘you do not know what you say. Come nearer to me, child.’

‘If I am to be scolded, papa,’ said Eve,

sullenly, 'I'd like not to have it done in public.' She looked round the room, everywhere but at Mr. Coyshe. Her sister watched her anxiously.

'Eve,' said the old man, 'I am very ill and am not likely to be strong again. I cannot be always with you. I am not any more capable to act as your protector, and Barbara has the cares of the house, and lacks the authority to govern and lead you.'

'I don't want any governing and leading, papa,' said Eve, studying the bed cover. 'Papa,' after a moment, 'whilst you lie in bed, don't you think all those little tufts on the counterpane look like poplars? I often do, and imagine gardens and walks and pleasure-grounds among them.'

'Eve,' said her father, 'I am not going to be put off what I have to say by such poor artifices as this. I am going to send you back to Lanherne.'

'Lanherne!' echoed Eve, springing back. 'I can't go there, papa; indeed I can't. It is dull enough here, but it is ten thousand times duller there. I have just said so to Barbara. I can't go, I won't go to Lanherne. I don't see why I should be forced. I'm not going to be a nun. My education has been completed under Barbara. I know where Cape Guardafui is, and the Straits of Malacca, and the Coro-

mandel Coast. I know Mangnall's questions and answers right through—that is, I know the questions and some of the answers. I can read 'Télémaque.' What more is wanted of any girl? I don't desire any more learning. I hate Lanherne. I fell ill last time I was there. Those nuns look like hobgoblins, and not like angels. I shall run away. Besides, it was eternally semolina pudding there, and, papa, I hate semolina. Always semolina on fast days, and the puddings sometimes burnt. There now, my education *is* incomplete. I do not know whence semolina comes. Is it vegetable, papa? Mr. Coyshe, you are scientific, tell us the whole history of the production of this detestable article of commerce.'

'Semolina——' began Mr. Coyshe.

'Never mind about semolina,' interrupted Barbara, who saw through her sister's tricks. 'We will turn up the word in the encyclopædia afterwards. We are considering Lanherne now.'

'I don't mind the large-grained semolina so much,' said Eve, with a face of childlike simplicity; 'that is almost as good as tapioca.'

Her father caught her wrist and drew her hand upon the bed. He clutched it so tightly that she exclaimed that he hurt her.

'Eve,' he said, 'it is necessary for you to go.'



Her face became dull and stubborn again.

‘Is Mr. Coyshe here to examine my chest, and see if I am strong enough to endure confinement? Because I was the means, according to you, papa, of poor—of the prisoner escaping last night, therefore I am to be sent to prison myself to-morrow.’

‘I am not sending you to prison,’ said her father, ‘I am placing you under wise and pious guardians. You are not to be trusted alone any more. Barbara has been——’

‘There! there!’ exclaimed Eve, flashing an angry glance at her sister, and bursting into tears; ‘was there ever a poor girl so badly treated? I am scolded, and threatened with jail. My sister, who should love me and take my part, is my chief tormentor, and instigates you, papa, against me. She is rightly called Barbara—she is a savage. I know so much Latin as to understand that.’

Barbara touched Mr. Coyshe, and signed to him to leave the room with her.

Eve watched them out of the room with satisfaction. She could manage her father, she thought, if left alone with him. But her father was thoroughly alarmed. He had been told that she had met Martin on the Rock. Barbara had told him this to exculpate Jasper. Her

conduct on the preceding night had, moreover, filled him with uneasiness.

‘Papa,’ said Eve, looking at her little foot and shoe, ‘don’t you think Mr. Coyshe’s ears stick out very much? I suppose his mother was not particular with him to put them under the rim of his cap.’

‘I have not noticed.’

‘And, papa, what eager, staring eyes he has got! I think he straps his cravat too tight.’

‘Possibly.’

‘Do you know, dear papa, there is a little hole just over the mantelshelf in my room, and the other day I saw something hanging down from it. I thought it was a bit of string, and I went up to it and pulled it. Then there came a little squeak, and I screamed. What do you suppose I had laid hold of? It was a mouse’s tail. Was that not an odd thing, papa, for the wee mouse to sit in its run and let its tail hang down outside?’

‘Yes, very odd.’

‘Papa, how did all those beautiful things come into the house which I found in the chest upstairs? And why were you so cross with me for putting them on?’

The old man’s face changed at once, the wild look came back into his eye, and his hand which clasped her wrist clutched it so convul-

sively, that she felt his nails cut her tender skin.

‘Eve!’ he said, and his voice quivered, ‘never touch them again. Never speak of them again. My God!’ he put his hand to his brow and wiped the drops which suddenly started over it, ‘my God! I fear, I fear for her.’

Then he turned his agitated face eagerly to her, and said—

‘Eve! you must take him. I wish it. I shall have no peace till I know you are in his hands. He is so wise and so assured. I cannot die and leave you alone. I wake up in the night bathed in a sweat of fear, thinking of you, fearing for you. I imagine all sorts of things. Do you not wish to go to Lanherne? Then take Mr. Coyshe. He will make you a good husband. I shall be at ease when you are provided for. I cannot die—and I believe I am nearer death than you or Barbara, or even the doctor, supposes—I cannot die, and leave you here alone, unprotected. O Eve! if you love me do as I ask. You must either go to Lanherne or take Mr. Coyshe. It must be one or the other. What is that?’ he asked suddenly, drawing back in the bed, and staring wildly at her, and pointing at her forehead with a white quivering finger. ‘What is there? A

stain—a spot. One of my black spots, very big. No, it is red. It is blood! It came there when I was wounded by the scythe, and every now and then it breaks out again. I see it now.'

'Papa!' said Eve, shuddering. 'don't point at me in that way, and look so strange; you frighten me. There is nothing there. Barbie washed it off long ago.'

Then he wavered in his bed, passing one hand over the other, as washing—'It cannot wash off,' he said, despairingly. 'It eats its way in, farther, farther, till it reaches the very core of the heart, and then——' he cast himself back and moaned.

'It was very odd of the mouse,' said Eve, 'to sit with her little back to the room, looking into the dark, and her tail hanging out into the chamber.' She thought to divert her father's thoughts from his fancies.

'Eve!' he said in a hoarse voice, and turned sharply round on her, 'let me see your mother's ring again. To-day you shall put it on. Hitherto you have worn it hung round your neck. To-day you shall bear it on your finger, in token that you are engaged.'

'Oh, papa, dear! I don't——'

'Which is it to be, Lanherne or Mr. Coyshe?'

‘I won’t indeed go to Lanherne.’

‘Very well; then you will take Mr. Coyshe. He will make you happy. He will not always live here; he talks of a practice in London. He tells me that he has found favour with the Duke. If he goes to London——’

‘Oh, papa! Is he really going to London?’

‘Yes, child!’

‘Where all the theatres are! Oh, papa! I should like to live in a town, I do not like being mewed up in the country. Will he have a carriage?’

‘I suppose so.’

‘Oh, papa! and a tiger in buttons and a gold band?’

‘I do not know.’

‘I am sure he will, papa! I’d rather have that than go to Lanherne.’

Mr. Jordan knocked with his stick against the wall. Eve was frightened.

‘Papa, don’t be too hasty. I only meant that I hate Lanherne!’

In fact, she was alarmed by his mention of the ring, and following her usual simple tactics had diverted the current of his thoughts into another direction.

Barbara and Mr. Coyshe came in.

‘She consents,’ said Mr. Jordan. ‘Eve, give him your hand. Where is the ring?’



She drew back.

‘I want the ring,’ he said again, impatiently.

‘Papa, I have not got it—that is—I have mislaid it.’

‘What!’ he exclaimed, trying to sit up, and becoming excited. ‘The ring—not lost! Mislaid! It must be found. I will have it. Your mother’s ring! I will never, never forgive if that is lost. Produce it at once.’

‘I cannot, papa. I don’t know—— O—Mr. Coyshe, quick, give me your hand. There! I consent. Do not be excited, dear papa. I’ll find the ring to-morrow.’

## CHAPTER XLIII.

## IN A MINE.

EVE had no sooner consented to take Mr. Coyshe, just to save herself the inconvenience of being questioned about the lost ring, than she ran out of the room, and to escape further importunity ran over the fields towards the wood. She had scarcely gone three steps from the house before she regretted what she had done. She did not care for Mr. Coyshe. She laughed at his peculiarities. She did not believe, like her father and sister, in his cleverness. But she saw that his ears and eyes were unduly prominent, and she was alive to the ridiculous. Mr. Coyshe was more to her fancy than most of the young men of the neighbourhood, who talked of nothing but sport, and who would grow with advancing age to talk of sport and rates, and beyond rates would not grow. Eve was not fond of hunting. Barbara rarely went after the hounds, Eve never. She

did not love horse exercise; she preferred sauntering in the woods and lanes, gathering autumn-tinted blackberry leaves, to a run over the downs after a fox. Perhaps hunting required too much exertion for her: Eve did not care for exertion. She made dolls' clothes still, at the age of seventeen; she played on the piano and sang; she collected leaves and flowers for posies. That was all Eve cared to do. Whatever she did she did it listlessly, because nothing thoroughly interested her. Yet she felt that there might be things which were not to be encountered at Morwell that would stir her heart and make her pulses bound. In a word, she had an artistic nature, and the world in which she moved was a narrow and inartistic world. Her proper faculties were unevoked. Her true nature slept.

The hoot of an owl, followed by a queer little face peeping at her from behind a pine. She did not at once recognise Watt, as her mind was occupied with her engagement to Mr. Coyshe.

Now at the very moment Watt showed himself her freakish mind had swerved from a position of disgust at her engagement, into one of semi-content with it. Mr. Coyshe was going to London, and there she would be free

to enjoy herself after her own fashion, in seeing plays, hearing operas, going to all the sights of the great town, in a life of restless pleasure-seeking, and that was exactly what Eve desired.

Watt looked woe-begone. He crept from behind the tree. His impudence and merriment had deserted him. Tears came into his eyes as he spoke.

‘Are they all gone?’ he asked, looking cautiously about.

‘Whom do you mean?’

‘The police.’

‘Yes, they have left Morwell. I do not know whither. Whether they are searching for your brother or have given up the search I cannot say. What keeps you here?’

‘O Miss Eve! poor Martin is not far off. It would not do for him to run far. He is in hiding at no great distance, and—he has nothing to eat.’

‘Where is he? What can I do?’ asked Eve, frightened.

‘He is in an old mine. He will not be discovered there. Even if the constables found the entrance, which is improbable, they would not take him, for he would retreat into one of the side passages and escape by an air-hole in another part of the wood.’

‘I will try what I can do. I dare say I might smuggle some food away from the house and put it behind the hedge, whence you could fetch it.’

‘That is not enough. He must get away.’

‘There is Jasper’s horse still with us. I will ask Jasper, and you can have that.’

‘No,’ answered the boy, ‘that will not do. We must not take the road this time. We must try the water.’

‘We have a boat,’ said Eve, ‘but papa would never allow it to be used.’

‘Your papa will know nothing about it, nor the prudent Barbara, nor the solemn Jasper. You can get the key and let us have the boat.’

‘I will do what I can, but’—as a sudden thought struck her—‘Martin must let me have my ring again. I want it so much. My father has been asking for it.’

‘How selfish you are!’ exclaimed the boy reproachfully. ‘Thinking of your own little troubles when a vast danger menaces our dear Martin. Come with me. You must see Martin and ask him yourself for that ring. I dare not speak of it; he values that ring above everything. You must plead for it yourself with that pretty mouth and those speaking eyes.’

‘I must not; indeed I must not!’



‘Why not? You will not be missed. No one will harm you. You should see the poor fellow, to what he is reduced by love for you. Yes, come and see him. He would never have been here, he would have been far away in safety, but he had the desire to see you again.’

‘Indeed, I cannot accompany you.’

‘Then you must do without the ring.’

‘I want my ring again vastly. My father is cross because I have not got it, and I have promised to show it him. How can I keep my promise unless it be restored to me?’

‘Come, come!’ said the boy impatiently. ‘Whilst you are talking you might have got half-way to his den.’

‘I will only just speak to him,’ said Eve, ‘two words, and then run home.’

‘To be sure. That will be ample—two words,’ sneered the boy, and led the way.

The old mine adit was below the rocks near the river, and at no great distance from the old landing-place, where Jasper had recently constructed a boathouse. The ground about the entrance was thickly strewn with dead leaves, mixed with greenish shale thrown out of the copper mine, and so poisonous that no grass had been able to grow over it, though the mine had probably not been worked for a century or even more. But the mouth of the

adit was now completely overgrown with brambles and fringed with ferns. The dogwood, now in flower, had thickly clambered near the entrance wherever the earth was not impregnated with copper and arsenic.

Eve shrank from the black entrance and hung back, but the boy caught her by the arm and insisted on her coming with him. She surmounted some broken masses of rock that had fallen before the entrance, and brushed aside the dogwood and briars. The air struck chill and damp against her brow as she passed out of the sun under the stony arch.

The rock was lichened. White-green fungoid growths hung down in streamers; the floor was dry, though water dripped from the sides and nourished beds of velvet moss as far in as the light penetrated. So much rubble covered the bottom of the adit, that the water filtered through it and passed by a subterranean channel to the river.

After taking a few steps forward, Eve saw Martin half sitting, half lying on a bed of fern and heather; the grey light from the entrance fell on his face. It was pale and drawn; but he brightened up when he saw Eve, and he started to his knee to salute her.

‘I cannot stand upright in this cursed hole,’ he said, ‘but at this moment it matters

not. On my knee I do homage to my queen.' He seized her hand and pressed his lips to it.

'Here you see me,' he said, 'doomed to shiver in this pit, catching my death of rheumatism.'

'You will surely soon get away,' said Eve. 'I am very sorry for you. I must go home, I may not stay.'

'What! leave me now that you have appeared as a sunbeam, shining into this abyss to glorify it! Oh, no—stay a few minutes, and then I shall remain and dream of the time you were here. Look at my companions.' He pointed to the roof, where curious lumps like compacted cobwebs hung down. 'These are bats, asleep during the day. When night falls they will begin to stir and shake their wings, and scream, and fly out. Shall I have to sleep in this den, with the hideous creatures crying and flapping about my head?'

'Oh, that will be dreadful! But surely you will leave this when night comes on?'

'Yes, if you will help me to get away.'

'I will furnish you with the key to the boat-house. I will hide it somewhere, and then your brother can find it.'

'That will not satisfy me. You must bring the key here.'

'Why? I cannot do that.'

‘Indeed you must ; I cannot live without another glimpse of your sweet face. Peter was released by an angel. It shall be the same with Martin.’

‘I will bring you the key,’ said Eve nervously, ‘if you will give me back my ring.’

‘Your ring!’ exclaimed Martin ; ‘never! Go—call the myrmidons of justice and deliver me into their hands.’

‘I would not do that for the world,’ said Eve with tears in her eyes ; ‘I will do everything that I can to help you. Indeed, last night, I got into dreadful trouble by dressing up and playing my tambourine and dancing to attract the attention of the men, whilst you were escaping from the corn-chamber. Papa was very angry and excited, and Barbara was simply—dreadful. I have been scolded and made most unhappy. Do, in pity, give me up the ring. My papa has asked for it. You have already got me into another trouble, because I had not the ring. I was obliged to promise to marry Doctor Coyshe just to pacify papa, he was so excited about the ring.’

‘What! engaged yourself to another?’

‘I was forced into it, to-day, I tell you—because I had not got the ring. Give it me. I want to get out of my engagement, and I cannot without that.’

‘ And I—it is not enough that I should be hunted as a hare—my heart must be broken! Walter! where are you? Come here and listen to me. Never trust a woman. Curse the whole sex for its falseness and its selfishness. There is no constancy in this world.’ And he sighed and looked reproachfully at Eve. ‘ After all I have endured and suffered—for you.’

Eve’s tears flowed. Martin’s attitude, tone of voice, were pathetic and moved her. ‘ I am very sorry,’ she said, ‘ but—I never gave you the ring. You snatched it from me. You are unknown to me, I am nothing to you, and you are—you are——’

‘ Yes, speak out the bitter truth. I am a thief, a runaway convict, a murderer. Use every offensive epithet that occurs in your vocabulary. Give a dog a bad name and hang him. I ought to have known the sex better than to have trusted you. But I loved, I was blinded by passion. I saw an angel face, and blue eyes that promised a heaven of tenderness and truth. I saw, I loved, I trusted—and here I am, a poor castaway ship, lying ready to be broken up and plundered by wreckers. O the cruel, faithless sex! We men, with our royal trust, our splendid self-sacrifice, become a ready prey; and when we are down, the



laughing heartless tyrants dance over us. When the lion was sick the ass came and kicked him. It was the last indignity the royal beast could endure, he laid his head between his paws and his heart brake. Leave me—leave me to die.'

'O Martin!' said Eve, quite overcome by his greatness, and the vastness of his devotion, 'I have never hurt you, never offended you. You are like my papa, and have fancies.'

'I have fancies. Yes, you are right, terribly right. I have had my fancies. I have lived in a delusion. I believed in the honesty of those eyes. I trusted your word——'

'I never gave you a word.'

'Do not interrupt me. I *did* suppose that your heart had surrendered to me. The delusion is over. The heart belongs to a vulgar village apothecary. That heart which I so treasured——' his voice shook and broke, and Eve sobbed. 'Who brought the police upon me?' he went on. 'It was you, whom I loved and trusted, you who possess an innocent face and a heart full of guile. And here I lie, your victim, in a living grave your cruel hands have scooped out for me in the rock.'

'O—indeed, this mine was dug hundreds of years ago.'

He turned a reproachful look at her.

‘Why do you interrupt me? I speak metaphorically. You brought me to this, and if you have a spark of good feeling in your breast you will get me away from here.’

‘I will bring you the key as soon as the sun sets.’

‘That is right. I accept the token of penitence with gladness, and hope for day in the heart where the light dawns.’

‘I must go—I really must go,’ she said.

He bowed grandly to her, with his hand on his heart.

‘Come,’ said Watt, ‘I will help you over these rubbish heaps. You have had your two words.’

‘O stay!’ exclaimed Eve, ‘my ring! I came for that and I have not got it. I must indeed, indeed have it.’

‘Eve,’ said Martin, ‘I have been disappointed, and have spoken sharply of the sex. But I am not the man to harbour mistrust. Deceived I have been, and perhaps am now laying myself open to fresh disappointment. I cannot say. I cannot go against my nature, which is frank and trustful. There—take your ring. Come back to me this evening with it and the key, and prove to me that all women are not false, that all confidence placed in them is not *mis-placed*.’

## CHAPTER XLIV.

## TUCKERS.

BARBARA sat in the little oak parlour, a pretty room that opened out of the hall ; indeed it had originally been a portion of the hall, which was constructed like a letter L. The hall extended to the roof, but the branch at right angles was not half the height. It was ceiled about ten feet from the floor, and instead of being, like the hall, paved with slate, had oak boards. The window looked into the garden. Mr. Jordan's father had knocked away the granite mullions, and put in a sash-window, out of keeping with the room and house, but agreeable to the taste of the period, and admitting more light. A panelled division cut the room off from the hall. Barbara and Eve could not agree about the adornment of this apartment. On the walls were a couple of oil paintings, and Barbara supplemented them with framed and glazed mezzotints. She could not be made by her

sister to see the incongruity of engravings and oil paintings hanging side by side on dark oak panels. On the chimney-piece was a French ormolu clock, which was Eve's detestation. It was badly designed and unsuitable for the room. So was the banner-screen of a poodle resting on a red cushion; so were the bugle mats on the table; so were the antimacassars on all the arm-chairs and over the back of the sofa; so were some drawing-room chairs purchased by Barbara, with curved legs, and rails that were falling out periodically. Barbara thought these chairs handsome, Eve detestable. The chimney-piece ornaments, the vases of pale green glass illuminated with flowers, were also objects of aversion to one sister and admiration to the other. Eve at one time refused to make posies for the vases in the parlour, and was always protesting against some new introduction by her sister, which violated the principles of taste.

'I don't like to live in a dingy old hall like this,' Eve would say; 'but I like a place to be fitted up in keeping with its character.'

Barbara was now seated in this debatable ground. Eve was out somewhere, and she was alone and engaged with her needle. Her father, in the next room, was dozing. Then to the open window came Jasper, leaned his arms

on the sill—the sash was up—and looked in at Barbara.

‘Hard at work as usual?’ he said.

She smiled and nodded, and looked at him, holding her needle up, with a long white thread in it.

‘On what engaged I dare not ask,’ said Jasper.

‘You may know,’ she said, laughing. ‘Sewing in tuckers. I always sew tuckers on Saturdays, both for myself and for Eve.’

‘And, pray, what are tuckers?’

‘Tuckers’—she hesitated to find a suitable description, ‘tuckers are—well, tuckers.’ She took a neck of a dress which she had finished and put it round her throat. ‘Now you see. Now you understand. Tuckers are the garnishing, like parsley to a dish.’

‘And compliments to speech. So you do Eve’s as well as your own.’

‘O dear, yes; Eve cannot be trusted. She would forget all about them and wear dirty tuckers.’

‘But she worked hard enough burnishing the brass necklace.’

‘O yes, that shone! tuckers are simply—clean.’

‘My Lady Eve should have a lady’s-maid.’

‘Not whilst I am with her. I do all that



is needful for her. When she marries she must have one, as she is helpless.'

'You think Eve will marry?'

'O yes! It is all settled. She has consented.'

He was a little surprised. This had come about very suddenly, and Eve was young.

'I am glad you are here,' said Barbara, 'only you have taken an unfair advantage of me.'

'I—Barbara?'

'Yes, Jasper, you.' She looked up into his face with a heightened colour. He had never called her by her plain Christian name before, nor had she thus addressed him, but their hearts understood each other, and a formal title would have been an affectation on either side.

'I will tell you why,' said the girl; 'so do not put on such a puzzled expression. I want to speak to you seriously about a matter that—that—well, Jasper, that makes me wish you had your face in the light, and mine in the shade. Where you stand the glare of the sky is behind you, and you can see every change in my face, and that unnerves me. Either you shall come in here, take my place at the tuckers, and let me talk to you through the window, or else I shall move my chair close to the window,

and sit with my back to it, and we can talk without watching each other's face.'

'Do that, Barbara. I cannot venture on the tuckers.'

So, laughing nervously, and with her colour changing in her cheeks, and her lips twitching, she drew her chair close to the window, and seated herself, not exactly with her back to it, but sideways, and turned her face from it.

The ground outside was higher than the floor of the parlour, so that Jasper stood above her, and looked down somewhat, not much, on her head, her dark hair so neat and glossy, and smoothly parted. He stooped to the mignonne bed and gathered some of the fragrant delicate little trusses of colourless flowers, and with a slight apology thrust two or three among her dark hair.

'Putting in tuckers,' he said. 'Garnishing the sweetest of heads with the plant that to my mind best symbolises Barbara.'

'Don't,' she exclaimed, shaking her head, but not shaking the sprigs out of her hair. 'You are taking unwarrantable liberties, Mr. Jasper.'

'I will take no more.' He folded his arms on the sill. She did not see, but she felt, the flood of love that poured over her bowed head

from his eyes. She worked very hard fastening off a thread at the end of a tucker.

‘I also,’ said Jasper, ‘have been desirous of a word with you, Barbara.’

She turned, looked up in his face, then bent her head again over her work. The flies, among them a great blue-bottle, were humming in the window; the latter bounced against the glass, and was too stupid to come down and go out at the open sash.

‘We understand each other,’ said Jasper in a low voice, as pleasant and soft as the murmur of the flies. ‘There are songs without words, and there is speech without voice; what I have thought and felt you know, though I have not told you anything, and I think I know also what you think and feel. Now, however, it is as well that we should come to plain words.’

‘Yes, Jasper, I think so as well, that is why I have come over here with my tuckers.’

‘We know each other’s heart,’ he said, stooping in over her head and the garnishing of mignonette, and speaking as low as a whisper, not really in a whisper but in his natural warm, rich voice. ‘There is this, dear Barbara, about me. My name, my family, are dishonoured by the thoughtless, wrongful act of my poor brother. I dare not ask you to share that name with me, not only on this

ground, but also because I am absolutely penniless. A great wrong has been done to your father and sister by us, and it does not become me to ask the greatest and richest of gifts from your family. Hereafter I may inherit my father's mill at Buckfastleigh. When I do I will, as I have undertaken, fully repay the debt to your sister, but till I can do that I may not ask for more. You are, and must be, to me a far-off, unapproachable star, to whom I look up, whom I shall ever love and stretch my hands towards.'

'I am not a star at all,' said Barbara, 'and as for being far off and unapproachable, you are talking nonsense, and you do not mean it or you would not have stuck bits of mignonette in my hair. I do not understand rhodomontade.'

Jasper laughed. He liked her downright, plain way. 'I am quoting a thought from "Preciosa," he said.

'I know nothing of "Preciosa," save that it is something Eve strums.'

'Well—divest what I have said of all exaggeration of simile, you understand what I mean.'

'And I want you to understand my position exactly, Jasper,' she said. 'I also am penniless. The money my aunt left me I have

made over to Eve because she could not marry Mr. Coyshe without something present, as well as a prospect of something to come.'

'What! sewn your poor little legacy in as a tucker to her wedding gown?'

'Mr. Coyshe wants to go to London, he is lost here; and Eve would be happy in a great city, she mopes in the country. So I have consented to this arrangement. I do not want the money as I live here with my father, and it is a real necessity for Eve and Mr. Coyshe. You see—I could not do other.'

'And when your father dies, Morwell also passes to Eve. What is left for you?'

'Oh, I shall do very well. Mr. Coyshe and Eve would never endure to live here. By the time dear papa is called away Mr. Coyshe will have made himself a name, be a physician, and rolling in money. Perhaps he and Eve may like to run here for their short holiday and breathe our pure air, but otherwise they will not occupy the place, and I thought I might live on here and manage for them. Then'—she turned her cheek and Jasper saw a glitter on the long dark lash, but at the same time the dimple of a smile on the cheek—'then, dear friend'—she put up her hand on the sill, and he caught it—'then, dear friend, perhaps you will not mind helping me. Then probably



your little trouble will be over.' She was silent, thinking, and he saw the dimple go out of her smooth cheek, and the sparkling drop fall from the lash on that cheek. 'All is in God's hand,' she said. 'We do wrong to look forward; I shall be happy to leave it so, and wait and trust.'

Then he put the other hand which did not clasp hers under her chin, and tried to raise her face, but he could only reach her brow with his lips and kiss it. He said not one word.

'You do not answer,' she said.

'I cannot,' he replied.

Then the door was thrown open and Eve entered, flushed, and holding up her finger.

'Look, Bab!—look, dear! I have my ring again. Now I can shake off that doctor.'

'O Eve!' gasped Barbara; 'the ring! where did you get it?' She turned sharply to Jasper. 'She has seen him—your brother Martin—again.'

Eve was, for a moment, confused, but only for a moment. She recovered herself and said merrily, 'Why, Barbie dear, however did you get that crown of mignonette in your hair? You never stuck it there yourself. You would not dream of such a thing; besides, your arm is not long enough to reach the flower-bed. Jasper! confess you have been doing this.'

She clasped her hands and danced. 'O what fun!' she exclaimed; 'but really it is a shame of me interfering when Barbara is so busy with the tuckers, and Jasper in garnishing Barbara's head.' Then she bounded out of the room, leaving her sister in confusion.

## CHAPTER XLV.

## DUCK AND GREEN PEAS.

EVE might evade an explanation by turning the defence into an attack when first surprised, but she was unable to resist a determined onslaught, and when Barbara followed her and parried all her feints, and brought her to close quarters, Eve was driven to admit that she had seen Martin, who was in concealment in the wood, and that she had undertaken to furnish him with food and the boathouse key. Jasper was taken into consultation, and promised to seek his brother and provide for him what was necessary, but neither he nor Barbara could induce her to remain at home and not revisit the fugitive.

‘I know that Jasper will not find the place without me,’ she said. ‘Watt only discovered it by his prowling about as a weasel. I must go with Mr. Jasper, but I promise you, Barbie, it shall be for the last time.’ There was reason

in her argument, and Barbara was forced to acquiesce.

Accordingly in the evening, not before, the two set out for the mine, Eve carrying some provisions in a basket. Jasper was much annoyed that his brother was still in the neighbourhood, and still causing trouble to the sisters at Morwell.

Eve had shown her father the ring. The old man was satisfied; he took it, looked hard at it, slipped it on his little finger, and would not surrender it again. Eve must explain this to Martin if he redemanded the ring, which he was like enough to do.

Neither she nor Jasper spoke much to each other on the way; he had his thoughts occupied, and she was not easy in her mind. As they approached the part of the wood where the mine shaft was, she began to sing the song in 'Don Giovanni,' *Là ci darem*, as a signal to Watt that friends drew nigh through the bushes. On entering the adit they found Martin in an ill humour. He had been without food for many hours, and was moreover suffering from an attack of rheumatism.

'I said as much this morning, Eve,' he growled. 'I knew this hateful hole would make me ill, and here I am in agonies. Oh, it is of no use your bringing me the key of the boat;

I can't go on the water with knives running into my back, and, what is more, I can't stick in this hateful burrow. How many hours on the water down to Plymouth? I can't even think of it; I should have rheumatic fever. I'd rather be back in jail—there I suppose they would give me hot-bottles and blankets. And this, too, when I had prepared such a treat for Eve. Curse it! I'm always thinking of others, and getting into pickles myself accordingly.'

'Why, pray, what were you scheming to do for Miss Eve?' asked Jasper.

'O, the company I was with for a bit is at Plymouth, and are performing Weber's new piece, "Preciosa," and I thought I'd like to show it to her—and then the manager, Justice Barret, knows about her mother. When I told him of my escape, and leaving you at Morwell, he said that he had left one of his company there named Eve. I thought it would be a pleasure to the young lady to meet him, and hear what he had to tell of her mother.'

'And you intended to carry Eve off with you?'

'I intended to persuade her to accompany me. Perhaps she will do so still, when I am better.'

Jasper was angry, and spoke sharply to his brother. Martin turned on his bed of fern and



heather, and groaning, put his hands over his ears.

‘Come,’ said he, ‘Watt, give me food. I can’t stand scolding on an empty stomach, and with aches in my bones.’

He was impervious to argument; remonstrance he resented. Jasper took the basket from Eve, and gave him what he required. He groaned and cried out as Watt raised him in his arms. Martin looked at Eve, appealing for sympathy. He was a martyr, a guiltless sufferer, and not spared even by his brother.

‘I think, Martin,’ said Jasper, ‘that if you were well wrapped in blankets you might still go in the boat.’

‘You seem vastly eager to be rid of me,’ answered Martin, peevishly, ‘but, I tell you, I will not go. I’m not going to jeopardise my life on the river in the fogs and heavy dews to relieve you from anxiety. How utterly and unreasonably selfish you are! If there be one vice which is despicable, it is selfishness. I repeat, I won’t go, and I won’t stay in this hole. You must find some safe and warm place in which to stow me. I throw all responsibilities on you. I wish I had never escaped from jail—I have been sinking ever since I left it. There I had a dry cell and food. From that

I went to the corn-chamber at Morwell, which was dry—but, faugh! how it stank of onions! Now I have this damp dungeon that smells of mould. Watt and you got me out of prison, and got me away from the warders and constables, so you must provide for me now. I have nothing more to do with it. If you take a responsibility on you, my doctrine is, go through with it; don't take it up and drop it half finished. What news of that fellow I shot? Is he dead?'

'No—wounded, but not dangerously.'

'There, then, why should I fear? I was comfortable in jail. I had my meals regularly there, and was not subjected to damp. I trust my country would have cared for me better than my brothers, who give me at one time onions for a pillow, and at another heather for a bed.'

'My dear Martin,' said Jasper, 'I think if you try you can walk up the road; there is a woodman's hut among the trees near the Raven Rock, but concealed in the coppice. It is warm and dry, and no one will visit it whilst the leaves are on the trees. The workmen keep their tools there, and their dinners, when shredding in winter or rending in spring. You will be as safe there as here, and so much nearer Morwell that we shall be able easily to furnish you with

necessaries till you are better, and can escape to Plymouth.'

'I'm not sure that it is wise for me to try to get to Plymouth. The police will be on the look-out for me there, and they will not dream that I have stuck here—this is the last place where they would suppose I stayed. Besides, I have no money. No; I will wait till the company move away from the county, and I will rejoin it at Bridgewater, or Taunton, or Dorchester. Justice Barret is a worthy fellow; a travelling company can't always command such abilities as mine, so the accommodation is mutual.'

Martin was assisted out of the mine. He groaned, cried out, and made many signs of distress; he really was suffering, but he made the most of his suffering. Jasper stood on one side of him. He would not hear of Walter sustaining him on the other side; he must have Eve as his support, and he could only support himself on her by putting his arm over her shoulders. No objections raised by Jasper were of avail. Watt was not tall enough. Watt's steps were irregular. Watt was required to go on ahead and see that no one was in the way. Martin was certainly a very handsome man. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, and fair long hair; his eyes were dark and large, his features regular, his complexion pale and interesting.

Seeing that Jasper looked at his hair with surprise, he laughed, and leaning his head towards him whispered, 'Those rascals at Prince's Town cropped me like a Puritan. I wear a theatrical wig before the sex, till my hair grows again.'

Then leaning heavily on Eve, he bent his head to her ear, and made a complimentary remark which brought the colour into her cheek.

'Jasper,' said he, turning his head again to his brother, 'mind this, I cannot put up with cyder; I am racked with rheumatism, and I must have generous drink. I suppose your father's cellar is well stocked?' He addressed Eve. 'You will see that the poor invalid is not starved, and has not his vitals wrung with vinegar. I have seen ducks about Morwell; what do you say to duck with onion stuffing for dinner to morrow—and tawny port, eh? I'll let you both into another confidence. I am not going to lie on bracken. By hook or by crook you must contrive to bring me out a feather bed. If I've not one, and a bolster and pillow and blankets—by George and the dragon! I'll give myself up to the beaks.'

Then he moaned, and squeezed Eve's shoulder.

'Green peas,' he said when the paroxysm was

over. 'Duck and green peas ; I shall dine off that to-morrow—and tell the cook not to forget the mint. Also some carrot sliced, boiled, then fried in Devonshire cream, with a little shallot cut very fine and toasted, sprinkled on top. Sweetheart,' aside to Eve into her ear, 'you shall come and have a snack with me. Remember, it is an invitation. We will not have old solemn-face with us as a mar-fun, shall we?'

The woodman's hut when reached after a slow ascent was found to be small, warm, and in good condition. It was so low that a man could not stand upright in it, but it was sufficiently long to allow him to lie his length therein. The sides were of wattled oak branches, compacted with heather and moss, and the roof was of turf. The floor was dry, deep bedded in fern.

'It is a dog's kennel,' said the dissatisfied Martin ; 'or rather it is not so good as that. It is the sort of place made for swans and geese and ducks beside a pond, for shelter when they lay their eggs. It really is humiliating that I should have to bury my head in a sort of water-fowl's sty.'

Eve promised that Martin should have whatever he desired. Jasper had, naturally, a delicacy in offering anything beyond his own



services, though he knew he could rely on Barbara.

When they had seen the exhausted and anguished martyr gracefully reposing on the bracken bed, to rest after his painful walk, and had already left, they were recalled by his voice shouting to Jasper, regardless of every consideration that should have kept him quiet, 'Don't be a fool, Jasper, and shake the bottle. If you break the crust I won't drink it.' And again the call came, 'Mind the green peas.'

As Jasper and Eve walked back to Morwell neither spoke much, but on reaching the last gate Eve said—

'O, dear Mr. Jasper, do help me to persuade Barbie to let me go! I have made up my mind; I must and will see the play and hear all that the manager can tell me about my mother.'

'I will go to Plymouth, Miss Eve. I must see this Mr. Justice Barret, and I will learn every particular for you.'

'That is not enough. I want to see a play. I have never been to a theatre in all my life.'

'I will see what your sister says.'

'I am obstinate. I shall go, whether she says yes or no.'

‘To-morrow is Sunday,’ said Jasper, ‘when no theatre is open.’

‘Besides,’ added Eve, ‘there is poor Martin’s duck and green peas to-morrow.’

‘And crusted port. If we go, it must be Monday.’

## CHAPTER XLVI.

## 'PRECIOSA.'

EVE had lost something of her light-heartedness ; in spite of herself she was made to think, and grave alternatives were forced upon her for decision. The careless girl was dragged in opposite directions by two men, equally selfish and conceited, the one prosaic and clever, the other æsthetic but ungifted ; each actuated by the coarsest self-seeking, neither regarding the happiness of the child. Martin had a passionate fancy for her, and had formed some fantastic scheme of turning her into a singer and an actress ; and Mr. Coyshe thought of pushing his way in town by the aid of her money.

Eve was without any strength of character, but she had obstinacy, and where her pleasure was concerned she could be very obstinate. Hitherto she had not been required to act with independence. She had submitted in most

things to the will of her father and sister, but then their will had been to give her pleasure and save her annoyance. She had learned always to get her own way by an exhibition of peevishness if crossed.

Now she had completely set her heart on going to Plymouth. She was desirous to know something about her mother, as her father might not be questioned concerning her; and she burned with eagerness to see a play. It would be hard to say which motive predominated. One alone might have been beaten down by Barbara's opposition, but two plaited in and out together made so tough a string that it could not be broken. Barbara did what she could, but her utmost was unavailing. Eve had sufficient shrewdness to insist on her desire to see and converse with a friend of her mother, and to say as little as possible about her other motive. Barbara could appreciate one, she would see no force in the other.

Eve carried her point. Barbara consented to her going under the escort of Jasper. They were to ride to Beer Ferris and thence take boat. They were not to stay in Plymouth, but return the same way. The tide was favourable; they would probably be home by three o'clock in the morning, and Barbara would sit up for them. It was important that Mr. Jordan

should know nothing of the expedition, which would greatly excite him. As for Martin, she would provide for him, though she could not undertake to find him duck and green peas and crusted port every day.

One further arrangement was made. Eve was engaged to Mr. Coyshe, therefore the young doctor was to be invited to join Eve and Jasper at Beer Alston, and accompany her to Plymouth. A note was despatched to him to prepare him, and to ask him to have a boat in readiness, and to allow of the horses being put in his stables.

Thus, everything was settled, if not absolutely in accordance with Eve's wishes—she objected to the company of the doctor—yet sufficiently so to make her happy. Her happiness became greater as the time approached for her departure, and when she left she was in as joyful a mood as any in which Barbara had ever seen her.

Everything went well. The weather was fine, and the air and landscape pleasant; not that Eve regarded either as she rode to Beer Alston. There the tiresome surgeon joined her and Jasper, and insisted on giving them refreshments. Eve was impatient to be on her way again, and was hardly civil in her refusal; but the harness of self-conceit was too dense over



the doctor's breast for him to receive a wound from her light words.

In due course Plymouth was reached, and, as there was time to spare, Eve, by her sister's directions, went to a convent, where were some nuns of their acquaintance, and stayed there till fetched by the two young men to go with them to the theatre. Jasper had written before and secured tickets.

At last Eve sat in a theatre—the ambition, the dream of her youth was gratified. She occupied a stall between Jasper and Mr. Coyshe, a place that commanded the house, but was also conspicuous.

Eve sat looking speechlessly about her, lost in astonishment at the novelty of all that surrounded her; the decorations of white and gold, the crimson curtains, the chandelier of glittering glass-drops, the crowd of well-dressed ladies, the tuning of the instruments of the orchestra, the glare of light, were to her an experience so novel that she felt she would have been content to come all the way for that alone. That she herself was an object of notice, that opera-glasses were turned upon her, never occurred to her. Fond as she was of admiration, she was too engrossed in admiring to think that she was admired.

A hush. The conductor had taken his

place and raised his wand. Eve was startled by the sudden lull, and the lowering of the lights.

Then the wand fell, and the overture began. 'Preciosa' had been performed in London the previous season for the first time, and now, out of season, it was taken to the provinces. The house was very full. A military orchestra played.

Eve knew the overture arranged for the piano, for Jasper had introduced her to it; she had admired it; but what was a piano arrangement to a full orchestra? Her eye sparkled, a brilliant colour rushed into her cheek. This was something more beautiful than she could have conceived. The girl's soul was full of musical appreciation, and she had been kept for seventeen years away from the proper element in which she could live.

Then the curtain rose, and disclosed the garden of Don Carcamo at Madrid. Eve could hardly repress an exclamation of astonishment. She saw a terrace with marble statues, and a fountain of water playing, the crystal drops sparkling as they fell. Umbrageous trees on both sides threw their foliage overhead and met, forming a succession of bowery arches. Roses and oleanders bloomed at the sides. Beyond the terrace extended a distant landscape of rolling woodland and corn fields

threaded by a blue winding river. Far away in the remote distance rose a range of snow-clad mountains.

Eve held up her hands, drew a long breath and sighed, not out of sadness, but out of ecstasy of delight.

Don Fernando de Azevedo, in black velvet and lace, was taking leave of Don Carcamo, and informing him that he would have left Madrid some days ago had he not been induced to stay and see Preciosa, the gipsy girl about whom the town was talking. Then entered Alonzo, the son of Don Carcamo, enthusiastic over the beauty, talent, and virtue of the maiden.

Eve listened with eager eyes and ears, she lost not a word, she missed not a motion. Everything she saw was real to her. This was true Spain, yonder was the Sierra Nevada. For aught she considered, these were true hidalgos. She forgot she was in a theatre, she forgot everything, her own existence, in her absorption. Only one thought obtruded itself on her connecting the real with the fictitious. Martin ought to have stood there as Alonzo, in that becoming costume.

Then the orchestra played softly, sweetly—she knew the air, drew another deep inspiration, her flush deepened. Over the stage swept

a crowd of gentlemen and ladies, and a motley throng singing in chorus. Then came in gipsies with tambourines and castanets, and through the midst of them Preciosa in a crimson velvet bodice and saffron skirt, wearing a necklace of gold chains and coins.

Eve put her hands over her mouth to check the cry of astonishment; the dress—she knew it—it was that she had found in the chest. It was that, or one most similar.

Eve hardly breathed as Preciosa told the fortunes of Don Carcamo and Don Fernando. She saw the love of Alonzo kindled, and Alonzo she had identified with Martin. She—she herself was Preciosa. Had she not worn that dress, rattled that tambourine, danced the same steps? The curtain fell; the first act was over, and the hum of voices rose. But Eve heard nothing. Mr. Coyshe endeavoured to engage her in conversation, but in vain. She was in a trance, lifted above the earth in ecstasy. She was Preciosa, she lived under a Spanish sun. This was her world, this real life. No other world was possible henceforth, no other life endurable. She had passed out of a condition of surprise; nothing could surprise her more, she had risen out of a sphere where surprise was possible into one where music, light, colour, marvel were the proper atmosphere.

The most prodigious marvels occur in dreams and excite no astonishment. Eve had passed into ecstatic dream.

The curtain rose, and the scene was forest, with rocks, and the full moon shining out of the dark blue sky, silvering the trunks of the trees and the mossy stones. A gipsy camp; the gipsies sang a chorus with echo. The captain smote with hammer on a stone and bade his men prepare for a journey to Valencia. The gipsies dispersed, and then Preciosa appeared, entering from the far background, with the moonlight falling on her, subduing to low tones her crimson and yellow, holding a guitar in her hands. She seated herself on a rock, and the moonbeams played about her as she sang and accompanied herself on her instrument.

Lone am I, yet am not lonely,  
 For I see thee, loved and true,  
 Round me flits thy form, thine only,  
 Moonlit gliding o'er the dew.

Wander where I may, or tarry,  
 Hangs my heart alone on thee,  
 Ever in my breast I carry  
 Thoughts that burn and torture me.

Unattainable and peerless  
 In my heaven a constant star,  
 Heart o'erflowing, eyes all tearless,  
 Gaze I on thee from afar



The exquisite melody, the pathos of the scene, the poetry of the words, were more than Eve could bear, and tears rolled down her cheeks. Mr. Coyshe looked round in surprise ; he heard her sob, and asked if she were tired or unwell. No ! she sobbed out of excess of happiness. The combined beauty of scene and song oppressed her heart with pain, the pain of delight greater than the heart could contain.

Eve saw Alonzo come, disguised as a hunter, having abandoned his father, his rank, his prospects, for love of Preciosa. Was not this like Martin?—Martin, the heroic, the self-sacrificing man who rushed into peril that he might be at her feet—Martin, now laid up with rheumatism for her sake.

She saw the gipsies assemble, their tents were taken down, bales were collected, all was prepared for departure. Alonzo was taken into the band and fellowship was sworn.

The moon had set, but see—what is this? A red light smites betwixt the trees and kindles the trunks orange and scarlet, the rocks are also flushed, and simultaneously with a burst, joyous, triumphant, the whole band sing the chorus of salutation to the rising sun. Preciosa is exalted on a litter and is borne on the shoulders of the gipsies. The light brightens, the red blaze pervades, transforms the entire scene,

bathes every actor in fire ; the glorious song swells and thrills every heart, and suddenly, when it seemed to Eve that she could bear no more, the curtain fell. She sprang to her feet, unconscious of everything but what she had seen and heard, and the whole house rose with her and roared its applause and craved for more.

It is unnecessary for us to follow Eve's emotions through the entire drama, and to narrate the plot, to say how that the gipsies arrive at the castle of Don Fernando where he is celebrating his silver wedding, how his son Eugenio, by an impertinence offered to Preciosa, exasperates the disguised Alonzo into striking him, and is arrested, how Preciosa intercedes, and how it is discovered that she is the daughter of Don Fernando, stolen seventeen years before. The reader may possibly know the drama ; if he does not, his loss is not much ; it is a drama of little merit and no originality, which would never have lived had not Weber furnished it with a few scraps of incomparably beautiful music.

The curtain fell, the orchestra departed, the boxes were emptying. All those in the stalls around Eve were in movement. She gave a long sigh and woke out of her dream, looked round at Jasper, then at Mr. Coyshe, and smiled ; her eyes were dazed, she was not fully awake.

‘Very decent performance,’ said the surgeon, ‘but we shall see something better in London.’

‘Well, Eve,’ said Jasper, ‘are you ready? I will ask for the manager, and then we must be pushing home.’

‘Home!’ repeated Eve, and repeated it questioningly.

‘Yes,’ answered Jasper, ‘have you forgotten the row up the river and the ride before us?’

She put her hand to her head.

‘Oh, Jasper,’ she said, ‘I feel as if I were at home now—here, where I ought always to have been, and was going again into banishment.’

## CHAPTER XLVII.

## NOAH'S ARK.

JASPER left Eve with Mr. Coyshe whilst he went in quest of the manager. He had written to Mr. Justice Barret as soon as it was decided that the visit was to be made, so as to prepare him for an interview, but there had not been time for a reply. The surgeon was to order a supper at the inn. A few minutes later Jasper came to them. He had seen the manager, who was then engaged, but requested that they would shortly see him in his rooms at the inn. Time was precious, the little party had a journey before them. They therefore hastily ate their meal, and when Eve was ready, Jasper accompanied her to the apartments occupied by the manager. Mr. Coyshe was left over the half-consumed supper, by no means disposed, as it had to be paid for, to allow so much of it to depart uneaten.

Jasper knocked at the door indicated as

that to the rooms occupied by the manager and his family, and on opening it was met by a combination of noises that bewildered, and of odours that suffocated.

‘Come in, I am glad to see you,’ said a voice; ‘Justice sent word I was to expect and detain you.’

The manager’s wife came forward to receive the visitors.

She was a pretty young woman, with very light frizzled hair, cut short—a head like that of the ‘curly-headed plough-boy.’ Eve could hardly believe her eyes; this was the real *Preciosa*, who on the stage had worn dark flowing hair. The face was good humoured, simple, but not clean, for the paint and powder had been imperfectly washed off. It adhered at the corners of the eyes and round the nostrils. Also a ring of white powder lingered on her neck and at the roots of her hair on her brow.

‘Come in,’ she said, with a kindly smile that made pleasant dimples in her cheeks, ‘but take care where you walk. This is my parrot, a splendid bird, look at his green back and scarlet wing. Awake, old Poll?’

‘Does your mother know you’re out?’ answered the parrot hoarsely, with the hard eyes fixed on Eve.



The girl turned cold and drew back.

‘Look at my Tom,’ said Mrs. Justice Barret, ‘how he races round his cage.’ She pointed to a squirrel tearing inanely up the wires of a revolving drum in which he was confined. ‘That is the way in which he greets my return from the theatre. Mind the cradle! Excuse my dress, I have been attending to baby.’ She rocked vigorously. ‘Slyboots, he knows when I come back without opening his peepers. Sucking your thumb vigorously, are you? I could eat it—I could eat you, you are sweet as barley-sugar.’ The enthusiastic mother dived with both arms into the cradle, brought out the child, and hugged it till it screamed.

‘What is Jacko about, I wonder?’ said the ex-Preciosa; ‘do observe him, sitting in the corner as demure as an old woman during a sermon. I’ll warrant he’s been at more mischief. What do you suppose I have found him out in? I was knitting a stocking for Justice, and when the time came for me to go to the theatre I put the half-finished stocking with the ball of worsted down in the bed, I mistrusted Jacko. As I dare not leave him in this room with baby, I locked him into the sleeping apartment. Will you believe me? he found what I had concealed. He plunged into the bed and discovered the stocking and unravelled

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the whole ; not only so, but he has left his hair on the sheets, and whatever Justice will say to me and to Jacko I do not know. Never mind, if he is cross I'll survive it. Now Jacko, how often have I told you not to bite off the end of your tail? The poor fellow is out of health, and we must not be hard on him.'

The monkey blinked his eyes and rubbed his nose. He knew that his delinquencies were being expatiated on.

'You have not seen all my family yet,' said Mrs. Barret. 'There is a box of white mice under the bed in the next room. The darlings are so tame that they will nestle in my bosom. Do you believe me? I went once to the theatre, quite forgetting one was there, till I came to dress, I mean undress, and then it tumbled out ; I missed my leads that evening, I was distracted lest the mouse should get away. I told the prompter to keep him till I could reclaim the rascal. Come in, dears ! Come in !' This was shouted, and a boy and girl burst in at the door.

'My only darlings, these three,' said Mrs. Barret, pointing to the children and the babe. 'They've been having some supper. Did you see them on the stage? They were gipsies. Be quick and slip out of your clothes, pets, and tumble into bed. Never mind your prayers

to-night. I have visitors, and cannot attend to you. Say them twice over to-morrow morning instead. What? Hungry still? Here, Jacko! surrender that crust, and Polly must give up her lump of sugar, bite evenly between you.' Then turning to her guests, with her pleasant face all smiles, 'I love animals! I have been denied a large family, I have only three, but then—I've not been married six years. One must love. What would the world be without love? We are made to love. Do you agree with me, Jacko, you mischievous little pig? Now—no biting, Polly! You snapping also?'

Then, to her visitors, 'Take a chair—that is—take two.'

To her children, 'What, is this manners? Your hat, Bill, and your frock, Philadelphia, and heaven knows what other rags of clothes on the only available chairs.' She swept the children's garments upon the floor, and kicked them under the table.

'Now then,' to the guests, 'sit down and be comfortable. Justice will be here directly. Barret don't much like all these animals, but Lord bless your souls! I can't do without them. My canary died,' she sniffled and wiped nose and eyes on the back of her hand. 'He got poisoned by the monkey, I suspect, who

fed him on scraps of green paper picked off the wall. One must love! But it comes expensive. They make us pay damages wherever we stay. They charge things to our darlings I swear they never did. The manager is as meek as Moses, and he bears like a miller's ass. Here he comes—I know his sweet step. Don't look at me. I'll sit with my back to you, baby is fidgety.' Then entered the manager, Mr. Justice Barret, a quiet man with a pasty face.

'That's him,' exclaimed the wife, 'I said so. I knew his step. I adore him. He is a genius. I love him—even his pimples. One must love. Now—don't mind me.' The good-natured creature carried off her baby into a corner, and seated herself with it on a stool; the monkey followed her, knowing that he was not appreciated by the manager, and seated himself beside her, also with his back to the company, and was engrossed in her proceedings with the baby.

Mr. Justice Barret had a bald head, he was twice his wife's age, had a very smooth face shining with soap. His hands were delicate and clean. He wore polished boots, and white cravat, and a well-brushed black frock-coat. How he managed in a menagerie of children and animals to keep himself tidy was a wonder to the company.

‘O Barret, dear!’ exclaimed his lady, looking over her shoulder, and the monkey turned its head at the same time. ‘I’ve had a jolly row with the landlady over that sheet to which I set fire.’

‘My dear,’ said the manager, ‘how often have I urged you not to learn your part on the bed with the candle by your side or in your hand? You will set fire to your precious self some day.’

‘About the sheet, Barret,’ continued his wife; ‘I’ve paid for it, and have torn it into four. It will make pocket-handkerchiefs for you, dear.’

‘Rather large?’ asked the manager deferentially.

‘Rather, but that don’t matter. Last longer before coming to the wash, and so save money in the end.’

The manager was now at length able to reach and shake hands with Eve and Jasper.

‘Bless me, my dear child,’ he said to the former, ‘you remind me wonderfully of your mother. How is she? I should like to see her again. A sad pity she ever gave up the profession. She had the instincts of an artiste in her, but no training, horribly amateurish; that, however, would rub off.’



‘She is dead,’ answered Eve. ‘Did you not know that?’

‘Dead!’ exclaimed the manager. ‘Poor soul! so sweet, so simple, so right-minded. Dead, dead! Ah me! the angels go to heaven and the sinners are left. Did she remain with your father, or go home to her own parents?’

‘I thought,’ said Eve, much agitated, ‘that you could have told me concerning her.’

‘I!’ Mr. Justice Barret opened his eyes wide. ‘I!’

‘My dear!’ called Mrs. Barret, ‘will you be so good as to throw me over my apron. I am dressing baby for the night, and heaven alone knows where his little night-shirt is. I’ll tie him up in this apron.’ ‘Does your mother know you’re out?’ asked the parrot with its head on one side, looking at Eve.

‘I think,’ said Jasper, ‘it would be advisable for me to have a private talk with you, Mr. Barret, if you do not mind walking with me in the square, and then Miss Eve Jordan can see you after. Our time is precious.’

‘By all means,’ answered the manager, ‘if Miss Jordan will remain with my wife.’

‘O yes,’ said Eve, looking at the parrot; she was alarmed at the bird.

‘Do not be afraid of Poll,’ said Mr. Barret. Then to his wife, ‘Sophie! I don’t think it wise

to tie up baby as you propose. He might be throttled. We are going out. Look for the night dress, and let me have the apron again for Polly.'

At once the article required rushed like a rocket through the air, and struck the manager on the breast.

'There,' said he, 'I will cover Polly, and she will go to sleep and talk no more.'

Then the manager and Jasper went out.

'Now,' said the latter, 'in few words I beg you to tell me what you know about the wife of Mr. Jordan of Morwell. She was my sister.'

'Indeed!—and your name? I forget what you wrote.'

'My name is Babb, but that matters nothing.'

'I never knew that of your sister. She would not tell whence she came or who she was.'

'From your words just now,' said Jasper, 'I gather that you are unaware that she eloped from Morwell with an actor. I could not speak of this before her daughter.'

'Eloped with an actor!' repeated the manager. 'If she did, it was after I knew her. Excuse me, I cannot believe it. She may have gone home to her father; he wanted her to return to him.'

‘ You know that ? ’

‘ Of course I do. He came to me, when I was at Tavistock, and learned from me where she was. He went to Morwell to see her once or twice, to induce her to return to him.’

‘ You must be very explicit,’ said Jasper gravely. ‘ My sister never came home. Neither my father nor I know to this day what became of her.’

‘ Then she must have remained at Morwell. Her daughter says she is dead.’

‘ She did not remain at Morwell. She disappeared.’

‘ This is very extraordinary. I will tell you all I know, but that is not much. She was not with us very long. She fell ill as we were on our way from Plymouth to Launceston, and we were obliged to leave her at Morwell, the nearest house, that is some eighteen or nineteen years ago. She never rejoined us. After a year, or a year and a half, we were at Tavistock on our way to Plymouth, from Exeter by Okehampton, and there her father met us, and I told him what had become of her. I know that I walked out one day to Morwell and saw her. I believe her father had several interviews with her, then something occurred which prevented his meeting her as he had engaged, and he asked me to see her

again and explain his absence. I believe her union with the gentleman at Morwell was not quite regular, but of that I know nothing for certain. Anyhow, her father disapproved and would not meet Mr.,—what was his name?—O, Jordan. He saw his daughter in private, on some rock that stands above the Tamar. There also I met her, by his direction. She was very decided not to leave her child and husband, though sorry to offend and disobey her father. That is all I know—yes!—I recall the day—Midsummer Eve, June the twenty-third. I never saw her again.'

'But are you not aware that my father went to Morwell on the next day, Midsummer Day, and was told that Eve had eloped with you?'

'With me!' the manager stood still. 'With me! Nonsense!'

'On the twenty-fourth she was gone.'

Mr. Barret shook his head. 'I cannot understand.'

'One word more,' said Jasper. 'You will see Miss Eve Jordan. Do not tell her that I am her uncle. Do not cast a doubt on her mother's death. Speak to her only in praise of her mother as you knew her.'

'This is puzzling indeed,' said the manager. 'We have had a party with us, an amateur, a walking character, who talked of Morwell as if

he knew it, and I told him about the Miss Eve we had left there and her marriage to the squire. I may have said, "If ever you go there again, remember me to the lady, supposing her alive, and tell me if the child be as beautiful as I remember her mother."'

'There is but one man,' said Jasper, 'who holds the key to the mystery, and he must be forced to disclose.'



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

## IN PART.

MR. JORDAN knew more of what went on than Barbara suspected. Jane Welsh attended to him a good deal, and she took a mean delight in spying into the actions of her young mistresses, and making herself acquainted with everything that went on in the house and on the estate. In this she was encouraged by Mr. Jordan, who listened to what he told her and became excited and suspicious; and the fact of exciting his suspicions was encouragement to the maid. The vulgar mind hungers for notoriety, and the girl was flattered by finding that what she hinted stirred the crazy mind of the old man. He was a man prone to suspicion, and to suspect those nearest to him. The recent events at Morwell had made him mistrust his own children. He could not suppose that Martin Babb had escaped without their connivance. It was a triumph to the base

mind of Jane to stand closer in her master's confidence than his own children, and she used her best endeavours to thrust herself further in by aggravating his suspicions.

Barbara was not at ease in her own mind, she was particularly annoyed to hear that Martin was still in the neighbourhood, on their land; naturally frank, she was impatient of the constraint laid on her. She heartily desired that the time would come when concealments might end. She acknowledged the necessity for concealment, but resented it, and could not quite forgive Jasper for having forced it upon her. She even chilled in her manner towards him, when told that Martin was still a charge. The fact that she was obliged to think of and succour a man with whom she was not in sympathy, reacted on her relations with Jasper, and produced constraint.

That Jane watched her and Jasper, Barbara did not suspect. Honourable herself, she could not believe that another would act dishonourably. She undervalued Jane's abilities. She knew her to be a common-minded girl, fond of talking, but she made no allowance for that natural inquisitiveness which is the seedleaf of intelligence. The savage who cannot count beyond the fingers of one hand is a master of cunning. There is this difference between men

and beasts. The latter bite and destroy the weakly of their race; men attack, rend, and trample on the noblest of their species.

Mr. Jordan knew that Jasper and Eve had gone together for a long journey, and that Barbara sat up awaiting their return. He had been left unconsulted, he was uninformed by his daughters, and was very angry. He waited all next day, expecting something to be said on the subject to him, but not a word was spoken.

The weather now changed. The brilliant summer days had suffered an eclipse. The sky was overcast with grey cloud, and cold north-west winds came from the Atlantic, and made the leaves of beech and oak shiver. On the front of heaven, on the face of earth, was written Ichabod — the glory is departed. What poetry is to the mind, that the sun is to nature. The sun was withdrawn, and the hard light was colourless, prosaic. There was nowhere beauty any more. Two chilly damp days had transformed all. Mr. Jordan shivered in his room. The days seemed to have shortened by a leap.

Mr. Jordan, out of perversity, because Barbara had advised his remaining in, had walked into the garden, and after shivering there a few minutes had returned to his room,

out of humour with his daughter because he felt she was in the right in the counsel she gave.

Then Jane came to him, with mischief in her eyes, breathless. 'Please, master,' she said in low tones, looking about her to make sure she was not overheard. 'What do y' think, now! Mr. Jasper have agone to the wood, carrying a blanket. What can he want that for, I'd like to know. He's not thinking of sleeping there, I reckon.'

'Go after him, Jane,' said Mr. Jordan. 'You are a good girl, more faithful than my own flesh and blood. Do not allow him to see that he is followed.'

The girl nodded knowingly, and went out.

'Now,' said Mr. Jordan to himself, 'I'll come to the bottom of this plot at last. My own children have turned against me. I will let them see that I can counter-plot. Though I be sick and feeble and old, I will show that I am master still in my own house. Who is there?'

Mr. Coyshe entered, bland and fresh, rubbing his hands. 'Well, Jordan,' said he—he had become familiar in his address since his engagement—'how are you? And my fairy Eve, how is she? None the worse for her junket?'

‘Junket!’ repeated the old man. ‘What junket?’

‘Bless your soul!’ said the surgeon airily. ‘Of course you think only of curdled milk. I don’t allude to that local dish—or rather bowl—I mean Eve’s expedition to Plymouth t’other night.’

‘Eve—Plymouth!’

‘Of course. Did you not know? Have I betrayed a secret? Lord bless me, why should it be kept a secret? She enjoyed herself famously. Knows no better, and thought the performance was perfection. I have seen Kemble, and Kean, and Vestris. But for a provincial theatre it was well enough.’

‘You went with her to the theatre?’

‘Yes, I and Mr. Jasper. But don’t fancy she went only out of love of amusement. She went to see the manager, a Mr. Justice Thing-amajig.’

‘Barret?’

‘That’s the man, because he had known her mother.’

Mr. Jordan’s face changed, and his eyes stared. He put up his hands as though waving away something that hung before him.

‘And Jasper?’

‘Oh, Jasper was with her. They left me to eat my supper in comfort. I can’t afford



to spoil my digestion, and I'm particularly fond of crab. You cannot eat crab in a scramble and do it justice.'

'Did Jasper see the manager?' Mr. Jordan's voice was hollow. His hands, which he held deprecatingly before him, quivered. He had his elbows on the arms of his chair.

'Oh, yes, of course he did. Don't you understand? He went with Eve whilst I finished the crab. It was really a shame; they neither of them half cleaned out their claws, they were in such a hurry. Preciosa was not amiss, but I preferred crab. One can get plays better elsewhere, but crab nowhere of superior quality.'

Mr. Jordan began to pick at the horse-hair of his chair arm. There was a hole in the cover and his thin white nervous fingers plucked at the stuffing, and pulled it out, and twisted it and threw it down, and plucked again.

'What—what did Jasper hear?' he asked falteringly.

'How can I tell, Jordan? I was not with them. I tell you, I was eating my supper quietly, and chewing every mouthful. I cannot bolt my food. It is bad—unprincipled to do so.'

‘They told you nothing?’

‘I made no inquiries, and no information was volunteered.’

A slight noise behind him made Coyshe turn. Eve was in the doorway. ‘Here she is to answer for herself,’ said the surgeon. ‘Eve, my love, your father is curious about your excursion to Plymouth, and wants to know all you heard from the manager.’

‘Oh, papa! I ought to have told you!’ stammered Eve.

‘What did he say?’ asked the old man, half impatiently, half fearfully.

‘Look here, governor,’ said the surgeon; ‘it strikes me that you are not acting straight with the girl, and as she is about to become my wife, I’ll stand up for her and say what is fitting. I cannot see the fun of forcing her to run away a day’s journey to pick up a few scraps of information about her mother, when you keep locked up in your own head all that she wants to know. I can understand and make allowance for you not liking to tell her everything, if things were not—as is reported—quite ecclesiastically square between you and the lady. But Eve is no longer a child. I intend her to become my wife, and sooner or later she must know all. Make a clean breast and tell everything.’

‘Yes,’ said Jasper entering, ‘the advice is good.’

‘You come also!’ exclaimed the old man, firing up and pointing with trembling fingers to the intruder; ‘*you* come—*you* who have led my children into disobedience? My own daughters are in league against me. As for this girl, Eve, whom I have loved, who has been to me as the apple of my eye, she is false to me.’

‘Oh, papa! dear papa!’ pleaded Eve with tears, ‘do not say this. It is not true.’

‘Not true? Why do you practise concealment from me? Why do you carry about with you a ring which Mr. Coyshe never gave you? Produce it, I have been told about it. You have left it on your table and it has been seen, a ring with a turquoise forget-me-not. Who gave you that? Answer me if you dare. What is the meaning of these runnings to and fro into the woods, to the rocks?’ The old man worked himself into wildness and want of consideration for his child, and for Coyshe to whom she was engaged. ‘Listen to me, you,’ he turned to the surgeon, holding forth his stick which he had caught up; ‘you shall judge between us. This girl, this daughter of mine, has met again and again in secret a man whom I hate, a man who robbed his own

father of money that belonged to me, a man who has been a jail-bird, an escaped felon. Is not this so? Eve, deny it if you can.'

'Father!' began Eve, trembling, 'you are ill, you are excited.'

'Answer me!' he shouted so loud as to make all start, striking at the same time the floor with his stick, 'have you not met him in secret?'

She hung her head and sobbed.

'You aided that man in making his escape when he was in the hands of the police. I brought the police upon him, and you worked to deliver him. Answer me. Was it not so?'

She faintly murmured, 'Yes.'

This had been but a conjecture of Mr. Jordan. He was emboldened to proceed, but now Jasper stood forward, grave, collected, facing the white, wild old man. 'Mr. Jordan,' he said, 'that man of whom you speak is my brother. I am to blame, not Miss Eve. Actively neither I nor—most assuredly—your daughter assisted in his escape; but I will not deny that I was aware he meditated evasion, and he effected it, not through active assistance given him, but because his guards were careless, and because I did not indicate to them the means whereby he was certain to get away, and which I saw and they overlooked.'

‘Stand aside,’ shouted the angry old man. He loved Eve more than he loved anyone else, and as is so often the case when the mind is unhinged, his suspicion and wrath were chiefly directed against his best beloved. He struck at Jasper with his stick, to drive him on one side, and he shrieked with fury to Eve, who cowered and shrank from him. ‘You have met this felon, and you love him. That is why I have had such difficulty with you to get your consent to Mr. Coyshe. Is it not so? Come, answer.’

‘I like poor Martin,’ sobbed Eve. ‘I forgive him for taking my money; it was not his fault.’

‘See there! she confesses all. Who gave you that ring with the blue stones of which I have been told? It did not belong to your mother. Mr. Coyshe never gave it you. Answer me at once or I will throw my stick at you. Who gave you that ring?’

The surgeon, in his sublime self-conceit, not for a moment supposing that any other man had been preferred to himself, thinking that Mr. Jordan was off his head, turned to Eve and said in a low voice, ‘Humour him. It is safest. Say what he wishes you to say.’

‘Martin gave me the ring,’ she answered, trembling.



‘How came you one time to be without your mother’s ring? How came you at another to be possessed of it? Explain that.’

Eve threw herself on her knees with a cry.

‘Oh, papa! dear papa! ask me no more questions.’

‘Listen all to me,’ said Mr. Jordan, in a loud hard voice. He rose from his chair, resting a hand on each arm, and heaving himself into an upright position. His face was livid, his eyes burned like coals, his hair bristled on his head, as though electrified. He came forward, walking with feet wide apart, and with his hands uplifted, and stood over Eve still kneeling, gazing up at him with terror.

‘Listen to me, all of you. I know more than any of you suppose. I spy where you are secret. That man who robbed me of my money has lurked in this neighbourhood to rob me of my child. Shall I tell you who he is, this felon, who stole from his father? He is her mother’s brother, Eve’s uncle.’

Eve stared with blank eyes into his face. Martin—her uncle! She uttered a cry and covered her eyes.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

## THE OLD GUN.

MR. JORDAN was alone in his room. Evening had set in, the room was not only chilly, it was dark. He sat in his leather-backed leather-armed chair with his stick in his hands,—in both hands, held across him, and now and then he put the stick up to his mouth and gnawed at it in the middle. At others he made a sudden movement, slipping his hand down to the ferule and striking in the air with the handle at the black spots which floated in the darkness, of a blackness most intense. He was teased by them, and by his inability to strike them aside. His stick went through them, as through ink, and they closed again when cut, and drifted on through his circle of vision unhurt, undisturbed.

Mr. Coyshe was gone; he had ordered the old man to be left as much in quiet as might be, and he had taken a boy from the farm with

him on a horse, to bring back a soothing draught which he promised to send. Mr. Jordan had complained of sleeplessness, his nerves were evidently in a high and perilous state of tension. Before he left, Mr. Coyshe had said to Barbara, 'Keep an eye on your father, there is irritation somewhere. He talks in an unreasoning manner. I will send him something to compose him, and call again to-morrow. In the mean time,' he coughed, 'I—I—would not allow him to shave himself.'

Barbara's blood curdled. 'You do not think—' She was unable to finish her sentence.

'Do as I say, and do not allow him to suppose himself watched.'

Now Barbara acted with unfortunate indiscretion. Knowing that her father was suspicious of her, and complained of her observing him, knowing also that his suspicions extended to Jasper whom he disliked, knowing also that he had taken a liking for Jane, she bade Jane remain about her father, and not allow him to be many minutes unwatched.

Jane immediately went to the old gentleman, and told him the instructions given her. 'And—please your honour,' she crept close to him, 'I've seen him. He is on the Raven Rock. He has lighted a fire and is warming himself.

I think it be the very man that was took here, but I can't say for certain, as I didn't see the face of him as was took, nor of him on the Rock, but they be both men, and much about a height.'

'Jane! Is Joseph anywhere about?'

'No, sir,—not nigher than Tavistock.'

'Go to him immediately. Bid him collect what men he can, and surround the fellow and secure him.'

'But, your honour! Miss Barbara said I was to watch you as a cat watches a mouse.'

'Who is master here, I or she? I order you to go; and if she is angry I will protect you against her. I am to be watched, am I? By my own children? By my servant? This is more than I can bear. The whole world is conspiring against me. How can I trust anyone—even Jane? How can I say that the police were not bribed before to let him go? And they may be bribed again. Trust none but thyself,' he muttered, and stood up.

'Please, master,' said Jane, 'you may be certain I will do what you want. I'm not like some folks, as is unnatural to their very parents. Why, sir! what do y' think? As I were a coming in, who should run by me, looking the pictur' of fear, but Miss Eve. And where do

y' think her runned? Why, sir—I watched her, and her went as fast as a leaping hare over the fields towards the Raven Rock—to where he be. Well, I'm sure I'd not do that. I don't mind a-going to love feasts in chapel with Joseph, but I wouldn't go seeking him in a wood. Some folks have too much self-respect for that, I reckon.' She muttered this looking up at the old man, uncertain how he would take it.

'Go,' said he. 'Leave me—go at once.'

Presently Barbara came in, and found her father alone.

'What, no one with you, papa?'

'No—I want to be alone. Do you grudge me quiet? Must I live under a microscope? Must I have every thing I do marked, every word noted? Why do you peer in here? Am I an escaped felon to be guarded? Am I likely to break out? Will you leave me? I tell you I do not want you here. I desire solitude. I have had you and Coyshe and Eve jabbering here till my head spins and my temples are bursting. Leave me alone.' Then, with the craftiness of incipient derangement, he said, 'I have had two—three bad nights, and want sleep. I was dozing in my chair when Jane came in to light a fire. I sent her out. Then, when I was nodding off



again, I heard cook or Jasper tramping through the hall. That roused me, and now when I hoped to compose myself again, you thrust yourself upon me; are you all in a league to drive me mad by forbidding me sleep? That is how Hopkins, the witch-finder, got the poor wretches to confess. He would not suffer them to sleep, and at last, in sheer madness and hunger for rest, they confessed whatever was desired of them. You want to force something out of me. That is why you will not let me sleep.'

'Papa dear, I shall be so glad if you can sleep. I promise you shall be left quite alone for an hour.'

'O—an hour! limited to sixty minutes.'

'Dear papa, till you rap on the wall, to intimate that you are awake.'

'You will not pry and peer?'

'No one shall come near you. I will forbid everyone the hall, lest a step on the pavement should disturb you.'

'What are you doing there?'

'Taking away your razor, papa.'

Then he burst into a shrill, bitter laugh—a laugh that shivered through her heart. He said nothing, but remained chuckling in his chair.

'I dare say Jasper will sharpen them for you, papa, he is very kind,' said Barbara,

ashamed of her dissimulation. So it came about that the old half-crazy squire was left in the gathering gloom entirely alone and unguarded. Nothing could do him more good than a refreshing sleep, Barbara argued, and went away to her own room, where she lit a candle, drew down her blind, and set herself to needlework.

She had done what she could. The pantry adjoined the room of her father. Jane would hear if he knocked or called. She did not know that Jane was gone.

Ignatius Jordan sat in the arm-chair, biting at his stick, or beating in the air with it at the blots which troubled his vision. These black spots took various shapes; sometimes they were bats, sometimes falling leaves. Then it appeared to him as if a fluid that was black but with a crimson glow in it as of a subdued hidden fire was running and dripped from ledge to ledge—invisible ledges they were—in the air before him. He put his stick out to touch the stream, and then it ran along the stick and flowed on his hand and he uttered a cry, because it burned him. He held his hand up open before him, and thought the palm was black, but with glowing red veins intersecting the blackness, and he touched the lines with the finger of his left hand.

‘The line of Venus,’ he said, ‘strong at the source, fiery and broken by that cross cut; the line of life—long, thin, twisted, tortured, nowhere smooth, and here—what is this?—the end.’

Then he looked at the index finger of his left hand, the finger that had traced the lines, and it seemed to be alight or smouldering with red fire.

He heard a strange sound at the window, a sound shrill and unearthly, close as in his ear, and yet certainly not in the room. He held his breath and looked round. He could see nothing through the glass but the grey evening sky, no face looking in and crying at the window. What was it? As he looked it was repeated. In his excited condition of mind he did not seek for a natural explanation. It was a spirit call urging him on. It was silent, then again repeated. Had he lighted the candle and examined the glass he would have seen a large snail crawling up the pane, creating the sound by the vibration of the glass as it drew itself along.

Then Mr. Jordan rose out of his chair, and looking cautiously from side to side and timorously at the window whence the shrill sound continued, he unlocked a cupboard in the paneling and drew from it powder and shot.

Barbara had taken away his razors. She feared lest he should do himself an injury; but though he was weary of his life, he had no thought of hastening his departure from it. His mind was set with deadly resolution of hate on Martin—Martin, that man who had robbed him, who escaped from him as often as he was taken. Everyone was in league to favour Martin. No one was to be trusted to punish him. He must make sure that the man did not escape this time. This time he would rely on no one but himself. He crossed the room with soft step, opened the door, and entered the hall. There he stood looking about him. He could hear a distant noise of servants talking in the kitchen, but no one was near, no eye observed him. Barbara, true to her promise, was upstairs, believing him asleep. The hall was dark, but not so dark that he could not distinguish what he sought. Some one passed with a light outside, a maid going to the washhouse. The light struck through the transomed window of the hall, painting a black cross against the wall opposite, a black cross that travelled quickly and fell on the old man, creeping along to the fireplace, holding the wall. He remembered the Midsummer Day seventeen years ago when he had stood there against that wall with arms extended in the blaze of the setting sun as a

crucified figure against the black shadow of the cross. His life had been one long crucifixion ever since, and his cross a shadow. Then he stood on a hall chair and took down from its crooks an old gun.

‘Seventeen years ago,’ he muttered. ‘My God! it failed not then, may it not fail me now!’



## CHAPTER I.

## BY THE FIRE.

MARTIN was weary of the woodman's hut, as he was before weary of the mine. Watt had hard work to pacify him. His rheumatism was better. Neither Jasper nor Walter could decide how far the attack was real and how far simulated. Probably he really suffered, and exaggerated his sufferings to provoke sympathy.

Whilst the weather was summery he endured his captivity, for he could lie in the sun on a hot rock and smoke or whistle, with his hands in his pockets, and Martin loved to lounge and be idle; but when the weather changed he became restive, ill-humoured, and dissatisfied. What aggravated his discontent was a visit from Barbara, whom he found it impossible to impress with admiration for his manly beauty and pity for his sorrows.

'That girl is a beast,' he said to Walter,

when she was gone. 'I really could hardly be civil to her. A perfect Caliban, devoid of taste and feeling. Upon my word, some of our fellow-beings are without humanity. I could see through that person at a glance. She is made up of selfishness. If there be one quality most repulsive to me, that is it—selfishness. I do not believe the creature cast a thought upon me, my wants, my sufferings, my peril. Watt, if she shows her ugly face here again, stand against the door, and say, "Not at home."'

'Dear Martin, we will go as soon as you are well enough to leave.'

'Whither are we to go? I cannot join old Barret and his wife and monkeys and babies and walking-sticks of actors, as long as he is in the county. I would go to Bristol or Bath or Cheltenham if I had money, but these miserly Jordans will not find me any. They want to drive me away without first lining my pocket. I know what was meant by those cold slabs of mutton, to-day. It meant, go away. I wait till they give me money.'

'Dear Martin, you must not be inconsiderate.'

'I glory in it. What harm comes of it? It is your long-headed, prudent prophets who get into scrapes and can't get out of them

again. I never calculate ; I act on impulse, and that always brings me right.'

'Not always, Martin, or you would not be here.'

'O, yes, even here. When the impulse comes on me to go, I shall go, and you will find I go at the right time. If that Miss Jordan comes here again with her glum ugly mug, I shall be off. Or Jasper, looking as if the end of the world were come. I can't stand that. See how cleverly I got away from Prince's Town.'

'I helped you, Martin.'

'I do not pretend that I did all myself. I did escape, and a brilliantly executed manœuvre it was. I thought I was caught in a cleft stick when I dropped on the party of beaks at the "Hare and Hounds," but see how splendidly I got away. I do believe, Watt, I've missed my calling, and ought to have been a general in the British army.'

'But, dear Martin, generals have to scheme other things beside running away.'

'None of your impudence, you jackanapes. I tell you I do *not* scheme. I act on the spur of the moment. If I had lain awake a week planning I could have done nothing better. The inspiration comes to me the moment I require it. Your vulgar man always does the wrong thing when an emergency arises. By heaven,

Watt! this is a dog's life I am leading, and not worth living. I am shivering. The damp worms into one's bones. I shall go out on the rock.'

'O, Martin, stay here. It is warmer in this hut. A cold wind blows.'

'It is midwinter here, and can't be more Siberia-like out there. I am sick of the smell of dry leaves. I am tired of looking at withered sticks. The monotony of this place is unendurable. I wish I were back in prison.'

'I will play my violin to amuse you,' said the boy.

'Curse your fiddle; I do not want to have that squeaking in my ears; besides, it is sure to be out of tune with the damp, and screw up as you may, before you have gone five bars it is flat again. Why has Eve not been here to tell me of what she saw in Plymouth?'

'My dear Martin, you must consider. She dare not come here. You cannot keep open house, and send round cards of invitation, with "Mr. Martin Babb at home."'

'I don't care. I shall go on the Rock, and have a fire.'

'A fire!' exclaimed Watt, aghast.

'Why not? I am cold, and my rheumatism is worse. I won't have rheumatic fever for you or all the Jordans and Jaspers in Devonshire.'

‘I entreat you, be cautious. Remember you are in hiding. You have already been twice caught.’

‘Because on both occasions I ran into the hands of the police. The first time I attempted no concealment. I did not think my father would have been such a—such a pig as to send them after me. I’ll tell you what, my boy, there is no generosity and honour anywhere. They are like the wise teeth that come, not to be used, but to go, and go painfully.’ Then he burst out of the hut, and groaning and cursing scrambled through the coppice to the Raven Rock.

Walter knew too well that when his brother had resolved on anything, however outrageous, it was in vain for him to attempt dissuasion. He therefore accompanied him up the steep slope and through the bushes, lending him a hand, and drawing the boughs back before him, till he reached the platform of rock.

The signs of autumn were apparent everywhere. Two days before they had not been visible. The bird-cherry was turning; the leaves of the dog-wood were royal purple, and those at the extremity of the branches were carmine. Here and there umbelliferous plants had turned white; all the sap was withdrawn, they were bleached at the prospect of the coming



decay of nature. The heather had donned its pale flowers; but there was no brightness in the purples and pinks, they were the purples and pinks not of sunflush, but of chill. A scent of death pervaded the air. The foxgloves had flowered up their long spires to the very top, and only at the very top did a feeble bell or two bloom whilst the seeds ripened below. No butterflies, no moths even were about. The next hot day the scarlet admirals would be out, but now they hung with folded wings downwards, exhibiting pepper and salt and no bright colour under the leaves, waiting and shivering.

‘Everything is doleful,’ said Martin, standing on the platform and looking round. ‘Only one thing lacks to make the misery abject, and that is rain. If the clouds drop, and the water leaks into my den, I’ll give myself up, and secure a dry cell somewhere—then Jasper and the Jordans may make the best of it. I’m not going to become a confirmed invalid to save Jasper’s pride, and help on his suit to that dragon of Wantley. If he thinks it against his interest that I should be in jail, I’ll go back there. I’m not eager to have that heap of superciliousness as a sister-in-law, Walter, so collect sticks and fern that I may have a fire.’

‘Martin, do not insist on this; the light and smoke will be seen.’

‘Who is there to see? This rock is only visible from Cornwall, and there is no bridge over the Tamar for some miles up the river. Who will care to make a journey of some hours to ask why a fire has been kindled on the Raven Rock? Look behind, the trees screen this terrace, no one at Morwell will see. The hills and rocks fold on the river and hide us from all habitable land. Do not oppose me; I will have a fire.’

‘O, Martin,’ said the boy, ‘you throw on me all the responsibility of caring for your safety, and you make my task a hard one by your thoughtlessness.’

‘I am so unselfish,’ said Martin, gravely. ‘I never do consider myself. I can’t help it; such is my nature.’

Walter reluctantly complied with his brother’s wish. The boy had lost his liveliness. The mischief and audacity were driven out of him by the responsibility that weighed on him.

Abundance of fuel was to be had. The summer had been hot, and little rain had fallen. Wood had been cut the previous winter, and bundles of faggots lay about, that had not been removed and stacked.

Before long the fire was blazing, and Martin crouched at it warming his hands and knees. His face relaxed whilst that of Walter became

lined with anxiety. As he was thus seated, Jasper came on him carrying a blanket. He was dismayed at what his brother had done, and reproached him.

Martin shrugged his shoulders. 'It is very well for you in a dry house, on a feather bed and between blankets, but very ill for poor me, condemned to live like a wild beast. You should have felt my hands before I had a fire to thaw them at, they were like the cold mutton I had for my dinner.'

'Martin, you must put that fire out. You have acted with extreme indiscretion.'

'Spare me your reproaches; I know I am indiscreet. It is my nature, as it lies in the nature of a lion to be noble, and of a dog to be true.'

'Really,' said Jasper, hotly, disturbed out of his usual equanimity by the folly of his brother, 'really, Martin, you are most aggravating. You put me to great straits to help you, and strain to the utmost my relations to the Jordan family. I do all I can—more than I ought—for you, and you wantonly provoke danger. Who but you would have had the temerity to return to this neighbourhood after your escape and my accident! Then—why do you remain here? I cannot believe in your illness. Your lack of common consideration

is the cause of incessant annoyance to your friends. 'That fire shall go out.' He went to it resolutely, and kicked it apart, and threw some of the flaming oak sticks over the edge of the precipice.

'I hope you are satisfied now,' said Martin, sulkily. 'You have spoiled my pleasure, robbed me of my only comfort, and have gained only this—that I wash my hands of you, and will leave this place to-night. I will no longer remain near you—inhuman, unbrotherly as you are.'

'I am very glad to hear that you are going,' answered Jasper. 'You shall have my horse. That horse is my own, and he will carry you away. Send Walter for it when you like. I will see that the stable-door is open, and the saddle and bridle handy. The horse is in a stable near the first gate, away from the house, and can be taken unobserved.'

'You are mightily anxious to be rid of me,' sneered Martin. 'And this is a brother!'

'I had brought you a blanket off my own bed, because I supposed you were cold.'

'I will not have it,' said Martin sharply. 'If you shiver for want of your blanket I shall be blamed. Your heart will overflow with gall against poor me. Keep your blanket to curl up in yourself. I shall leave to-night.'

I have too much proper pride to stay where I am not wanted, with a brother who begrudges me a scrap of fire.'

Jasper held out his hand. 'I must go back at once,' he said. 'If you leave to-night it may be years before we meet again. Come, Martin, you know me better than your words imply. Do not take it ill that I have destroyed your fire. I think only of your safety. Give me your hand, brother; your interest lies at my heart.'

Martin would not touch the proffered hand, he folded his arms and turned away. Jasper looked at him, long and sadly, but Martin would not relent, and he left.

'Get the embers together again,' ordered Martin. 'Under the Scottish fir are lots of cones full of resin; pile them on the fire, and make a big blaze. Let Jasper see it. I will show him that I am not going to be beaten by his insolence.'

'He may have been rough, but he was right,' said Watt.

'Oh! you also turn against me! A viper I have cherished in my bosom!'

The boy sighed; he dare no longer refuse, and he sorrowfully gathered the scattered fire together, fanned the embers, applied to them bits of dry fern, then fir cones, and soon a brilliant jet of yellow flame leaped aloft.



Martin raised himself to his full height that the fire might illuminate him from head to foot, and so he stood, with his arms folded, thinking what a fine fellow he was, and regretting that no appreciative eye was there to see him.

‘What a splendid creature man is!’ said he to himself or Walter. ‘So great in himself; and yet, how little and mean he becomes through selfishness! I pity Jasper—from my heart I pity him. I am not angry—only sorry.’

## CHAPTER LI.

## A SHOT.

‘OF all things I could have desired—the best!’ exclaimed Martin Babb as Eve came from the cover of the wood upon the rocky floor. She was out of breath, and could not speak. She put both hands on her breast to control her breathing and quiet her throbbing heart.

Martin drew one foot over the other, poising it on the toe, and allowed the yellow firelight to play over his handsome face and fine form. The appreciative eye was there. ‘Lovelier than ever!’ exclaimed Martin. ‘Preciosa come to the forest to Alonzo, not Alonzo to Preciosa.

The forest green!  
Where warm the summer sheen;  
And echo calls,  
And calls—through leafy halls.  
Hurrah for the life 'neath the greenwood tree!  
My horn and my dogs and my gun for me!  
Trarah! Trarah! Trarah!’

He sang the first verse of the gipsy chorus

with rich tones. He had a beautiful voice, and he knew it.

The song had given her time to obtain breath, and she said, 'Oh, Martin, you must go—you must indeed!'

'Why, my Preciosa?'

'My father knows all—how, I cannot conjecture, but he does know, and he will not spare you.'

'My sweet flower,' said Martin, not in the least alarmed, 'the old gentleman cannot hurt me. He cannot himself fetch the dogs of justice and set them on me; and he cannot send for them without your consent. There is plenty of time for me to give them the slip. All is arranged. To-night I leave on Jasper's horse, which he is good enough to lend me.'

'You do not know my father. He is not alone—Mr. Coyshe is with him. I cannot answer for what he may do.'

'Hah!' said Martin, 'I see! Jealousy may spur him on. He knows that we are rivals. Watt, be off with you after the horse. Perhaps it would be better if I were to depart. I would not spare that pill-compounding Coyshe were he in my power, and I cannot expect him to spare me.' He spoke, and his action was stagy, calculated to impress Eve.

'My dear Walter,' said Martin, 'go to

Morwell some other way than the direct path ; workmen may be about—the hour is not so late.’

The boy did not wait for further orders.

‘ You need not fear for me,’ said the escaped convict. ‘ Even if that despicable roll-pill set off to collect men, I would escape him. I have but to leave this spot, and I am safe. I presume not one of my pursuers will be mounted.’

‘ Why have you a fire here ? ’

‘ The fire matters nothing,’ said Martin grandly ; ‘ indeed ’—he collected more fircones and threw them on—‘ indeed, if the form of the hare is to be discovered, let it be discovered warm. The hunters will search the immediate neighbourhood, and the hare will be flying far, far away.’

‘ You know best, of course ; but it seems to me very dangerous.’

‘ I laugh at danger ! ’ exclaimed Martin, throwing a faggot on the flames. ‘ I disport in danger as the seamew in the storm.’ He unfolded his arms and waved them over the fire as a bird flapping its wings.

‘ And now,’ he went on, ‘ I leave you—*you*—to that blood-letter. Why do I trouble myself about my own worthless existence, when you are about to fall a prey to his ravening jaw ? No, Eve, that must never be.’

‘ Martin,’ said Eve, ‘ I must really go home.’

I only ran here to warn you to be off, and to tell you something. My father has just said that my mother was your sister.'

He looked at her in silence for some moments in real astonishment—so real that he dropped his affected attitude and expression of face.

'Can this be possible!'

'He declared before Mr. Coyshe and me that it was so.'

'You have the same name as my lost sister,' said Martin. 'Her I hardly remember. She ran away from home when I was very young, and what became of her we never heard. If my father knew, he was silent about his knowledge. I am sure Jasper did not know.'

'And Mr. Barret, the manager, did not know either,' added Eve. 'When my mother was with him she bore a feigned name, and said nothing about her parents, nor told where was her home.'

Then Martin recovered himself and laughed.

'Why, Eve,' said he, 'if this extraordinary story be true, I am your uncle and natural protector. This has settled the matter. You shall never have that bolus-maker, leech-applier, Coyshe. I forbid it. I shall stand between you and the altar of sacrifice. I extend my wing, and you take refuge under it.'



I throw my mantle over you and assure you of my protection. The situation is really—really quite dramatic.'

'Do not stand so near the edge of the precipice,' pleaded Eve.

'I always stand on the verge of precipices, but never go over,' he answered. 'I speak metaphorically. Now, Eve, the way is clear. You shall run away from home as did your mother, and you shall run away with me. Remember, I am your natural protector.'

'I cannot—I cannot indeed.' Eve shrank back.

'I swear you shall,' said Martin impetuously. 'It may seem strange that I, who am in personal danger myself, should consider you; but such is my nature—I never regard self when I can do an heroic action. I say, Eve, you shall go with me. I am a man with a governing will, to which all must stoop. You have trifled with the doctor and with me. I hate that man though I have never seen him. I would he were here and I would send him, spectacles and all——'

'He does not wear spectacles.'

'Do not interrupt. I speak symbolically. Spectacles and all, I repeat, with his bottles, of leeches, and pestle and mortar, and pills and lotions, over the edge of this precipice into

perdition. Good heavens! if I leave and you remain, I shall be coming back—I cannot keep away. If I escape, it must be with you or not at all. You have a horse of your own: you shall ride with me. You have a purse: fill it and bring it in your pocket. Diamonds, silver spoons—anything.'

She was too frightened to know what to say. He, coward and bully as he was, saw his advantage, and assumed the tone of bluster. 'Do you understand me? I will not be trifled with. The thing is settled: you come with me.'

'I cannot—indeed I cannot,' said Eve despairingly.

'You little fool! Think of what you saw in the theatre. That is the proper sphere for you, as it is for me. You were born to live on the stage. I am glad you have told me what became of my sister. The artistic instinct is in us. The fire of genius is in our hearts. You cannot drag out life in such a hole as this: you must come into the world. It was so with your mother. Whose example can you follow better than that of a mother?'

'My father would——'

'Your father will not be surprised. What is born in the bone comes out in the flesh. If your mother was an actress—you must be

one also. Compare yourself with your half-sister. Is there soul in that mass of commonplace? Is there fire in that cake? Her mother, you may be certain, was a pudding—a common vulgar suet-pudding. We beings of Genius belong to another world, and we must live in that world or perish. It is settled. You ride with me to-night. I shall introduce you to the world of art, and you will soon be its most brilliant star.'

'Hark!' exclaimed Eve, starting. 'I heard something stir.'

Both were silent, and listened. They stood opposite each other, near the edge of the precipice. The darkness had closed in rapidly. The cloudy sky cut off the last light of day. Far, far below, the river cast up at one sweep a steely light, but for the most part of its course it was lost in the inky murkiness of the shadows of mountain, forest, and rock.

Away at a distance of several miles, on the side of the dark dome of Hingston Hill, a red star was glimmering—the light from a miner's or moorman's cabin. The fire that flickered on the platform cast flashes of gold on the nearest oak boughs, but was unable to illumine the gulf of darkness that yawned under the forest trees.

Martin stood facing the wood, with his back

to the abyss, and the light irradiated his handsome features. Eve timidly looked at him, and thought how noble he seemed.

‘Was it the sound of a horse’s hoof you heard?’ asked Martin. ‘Walter is coming with Jasper’s horse.’

‘I thought a bush moved,’ answered Eve, ‘and that I heard a click.’

‘It is nothing,’ said Martin, ‘nothing but an attempt on your part to evade the force of my argument, to divert the current of my speech. You women squirm like eels. There is no holding you save by running a stick through your gills. Mind you, I have decided your destiny. It will be my pride to make a great actress of you. What applause you will gain! What a life of merriment you will lead! I shall take a pride in the thought that I have snatched you away from under the nose of that doctor. Pshaw!’—he paused—‘Pshaw! I do not believe that story about your mother being my sister. Whether she were or not matters nothing. You, like myself, have a soul, and a soul that cannot live on a farmyard dungheap. What is that! I hear a foot on the bracken. Can it be Watt?’

He was silent, listening. He began to feel uneasy. Then from behind the wood came the shrill clangour of a bell.

‘Something has happened,’ said Eve, in great terror. ‘That is the alarm-bell of our house.’

‘My God!’ cried Martin, ‘what is Watt about! He ought to have been here.’ In spite of his former swagger he became uneasy. ‘Curse him, for a dawdle! am I going to stick here till taken because he is lazy? That bell is ringing still.’ It was pealing loud and fast. ‘I shall leave this rock. If I were taken again I should never escape more. Seven years! seven years in prison—why, the best part of my life would be gone, and you—I should see you no more. When I came forth you would be Mrs. Sawbones. I swear by God that shall not be. Eve! I will not have it. If I get off, you shall follow me. Hark! I hear the tramp of the horse.’

He threw up his hands and uttered a shout of joy. He ran forward to the fire, and stood by it, with the full glare of the blazing fire on his eager face.

‘Eve! joy, joy! here comes help. I will make you mount behind me. We will ride away together. Come, we must meet Watt at the gate.’

A crack, a flash.

Martin staggered back, and put his hand to



his breast. Eve fell to her knees in speechless terror.

‘Come here,’ he said hoarsely, and grasped her arm. ‘It is too late: I am struck, I am done for.’

A shout, and a man was seen plunging through the bushes.

‘Eve!’ said Martin, ‘I will not lose you.’ He dragged her two paces in his arms. All power of resistance was gone from her. ‘That doctor shall not have you—I’ll spoil that at least.’ He stooped, kissed her lips and cheek and brow and eyes, and in a moment flung himself, with her in his arms, over the edge of the precipice into the black abyss.

## CHAPTER LII.

## THE WHOLE.

A MOMENT later, only a moment later, and a moment too late, Mr. Jordan reached the platform, having beaten the branches aside, regardless of the leaves that lashed his face and the brambles that tore his hands. Then, when he saw that he was too late, he uttered a cry of despair. He flung his gun from him, and it went over the edge and fell where it was never found again. Then he raised his arms over his head and clasped them, and brought them down on his hair—he wore no hat; and at the same time his knees gave way, and he fell fainting on his face, with his arms extended: the wound in his side had reopened, and the blood burst forth and ran in a red rill towards the fire.

A few minutes later Jasper came up. Watt was at the gate with the horse. They had heard the shot, and Jasper had run on. He was fol-

lowed quickly by Walter, who had fastened up the horse, unable to endure the suspense.

‘Mr. Jordan is shot,’ gasped Jasper; ‘Martin has shot him. Help me. I must staunch the wound.’

‘Not I,’ answered the boy; ‘I care nothing for him. I must find Martin. Where is he? Gone to the hut? There is no time to be lost. I must find him—that cursed bell is ringing.’

Without another thought for the prostrate man, Walter plunged into the coppice, and ran down the steep slope towards the woodcutter’s hovel. It did not occur to Jasper that the shot he had heard proceeded from the squire’s gun. He knew that Martin was armed. He supposed that he had seen the old man emerge from the wood, and, supposing him to be one of his pursuers, had fired at him and made his escape. He knew nothing of Eve’s visit to the Raven Rock and interview with his brother.

He turned the insensible man over on his back and discovered, to his relief, that he was not dead. He tore open his shirt and found that he was unwounded by any bullet, but that the old self-inflicted wound in his side had opened and was bleeding freely. He knew how to deal with this. He took the old man’s shirt and tore it to form a bandage, and passed it round him and stopped temporarily the ebb-

ing tide. He heard Walter calling Martin in the wood. It was clear that he had not found his brother in the hut. Now Jasper understood why the alarm-bell was ringing. Barbara had discovered that her father had left the house, and, in fear for the consequences, was summoning the workmen from their cottages to assist in finding him.

Watt reappeared in great agitation, and, without casting a look at the insensible man, said, 'He is not there, he may be back in the mine. He may have unlocked the boathouse and be rowing over the Tamar, or down—no—the tide is out, he cannot get down' Then away he went again into the wood.

Mr. Jordan lay long insensible. He had lost much blood. Jasper knelt by him. All was now still. The bell was no longer pealing. No step could be heard. The bats flitted about the rock; the fire-embers snapped. The wind sighed and piped among the trees. The fire had communicated itself to some dry grass, and a tuft flamed up, then a little spluttering flame crept along from grass haulm and twig to a tuft of heather, which it kindled, and which flared up. Jasper, kneeling by Mr. Jordan, watched the progress of the fire without paying it much attention. In moments of anxiety trifles catch the eye. He dare not leave the old man. He

waited till those who had been summoned by the bell came that way.

Presently Ignatius Jordan opened his eyes. 'Eve!' he said, and his dim eyes searched the feebly-illuminated platform. Then he laid his head back again on the moss and was unconscious or lost in dream—Jasper could not decide which. Jasper went to the fire and threw on some wood and collected more. The stronger the flame the more likely to attract the notice of the searchers. He trod out the fire where it stole, snakelike, along the withered grass that sprouted out of the cracks in the surface of the rock. He went to the edge of the precipice, and listened in hopes of hearing something, he hardly knew what—a sound that might tell him Walter had found his brother. He heard nothing—no dip of oars, no rattle of a chain, from the depths and darkness below. He returned to Mr. Jordan, and saw that he was conscious and recognised him. The old man signed to him to draw near.

'The end is at hand. The blood has nearly all run out. Both are smitten—both the guilty and the guiltless.'

Jasper supposed he was wandering in his mind.

'I will tell you all,' said the old man. 'You are her brother, and ought to know.'



‘You are speaking of my lost sister Eve!’ said Jasper eagerly. Not a suspicion crossed his mind that anything had happened to the girl.

‘I shall soon rejoin her, and the other as well. I would not speak before because of my child. I could not bear that she should look with horror on her father. Now it matters not. She has followed her mother. The need for silence is taken away. Wait! I must gather my strength, I cannot speak for long.’

Then from the depths of darkness below the rock, came the hoot of an owl. Jasper knew that it was Watt’s signal to Martin—that he was searching for him still. No answering hoot came.

‘You went to Plymouth. You saw the manager who had known my Eve. What did he say?’

‘He told me very little.’

‘Did he tell you where she was?’

‘No. He saw her for the last time on this rock. He had been sent here by her father, who was unable to keep his appointment.’

‘Go on.’

‘That is all. She refused to desert you and her child. It is false that she ran away with an actor.’

‘Who said she had? Not I—not I. Her own father, her own father—not I.’

‘Then what became of her? Mr. Barret told me he had been to see her here at Morwell once or twice whilst the company was at Tavistock, and found her happy. After that my father came and tried to induce her to return to Buckfastleigh with him.’

Mr. Jordan put out his white thin hand and laid it on Jasper’s wrist.

‘You need say no more. The end is come, and I will tell you all. I knew that one of the actors came out and saw her—not once only, but twice—and then her father came, and she met him in secret, here in the wood, on this rock. I did not know that he whom she met was her father. I supposed she was still meeting the actor privately. I was jealous. I loved Eve. Oh, my God! my God!’—he put his hands against his temples—‘When have I ceased to love her?’

He did not speak for some moments. Again from the depths, but more distant, came the to-whoop of the owl. Mr. Jordan removed his hands from his brow and laid them flat at his side on the rock.

‘I was but a country gentleman, with humble pursuits—a silent man, who did not care for society—and I knew that I could not compare with the witty attractive men of the world. I knew that Morwell was a solitary place, and

that there were few neighbours. I believed that Eve was unhappy here: I thought she was pining to go back to the merry life she had led with the players. I thought she was weary of me, and I was jealous—jealous and suspicious. I watched her, and when I found that she was meeting someone in secret here on this rock, and that she tried to hide from me especially that she was doing this, then I went mad—mad with disappointed love, mad with jealousy. I knew she intended to run away from me.’ He made a sign with his hand that he could say no more.

Jasper was greatly moved. At length the mystery was being revealed. The signs of insanity in the old man had disappeared. He spoke with emotion, as was natural, but not irrationally. The fact of being able to tell what had long been consuming his mind relieved it, and perhaps the blood he had lost reduced the fever which had produced hallucination.

Jasper said in as quiet a voice as he could command, ‘ My sister loved you and her child, and had no mind to leave you. She was grateful to you for your kindness to her. Unfortunately her early life was not a happy one. My father treated her with harshness and lack of sympathy. He drove her, by his

treatment, from home. Now, Mr. Jordan, I can well believe that in a fit of jealousy and unreasoning passion you drove my poor sister away from Morwell—you were not legally married, and could do so. God forgive you! She did not desert you: you expelled her. Now I desire to know what became of her. Whither did she go? If she be still alive, I must find her.'

'She is not alive,' said Mr. Jordan.

Then a great horror came over Jasper, and he shrank away. 'You did not drive her in a fit of desperation to—to self-destruction?'

Mr. Jordan's earnest eyes were fixed on the dark night sky. He muttered—the words were hardly audible—*Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine: Domine, quis sustinebit?*

Jasper did not catch what he said, and thinking it was something addressed to him, he stooped over Mr. Jordan and said, 'What became of her? How did she die? Where is she buried?'

The old man raised himself on one arm and tried to sit up, and looked at Jasper with quivering lips; then held his arm over the rock as, pointing to the abyss, 'Here!' he whispered, and fell back on the moss.

Jasper saw that he had again become unconscious. He feared lest life—or reason—

should desert him before he had told the whole story.

It was some time before the squire was able to speak. When consciousness returned he bent his face to Jasper, and there was not that flicker and wildness in his eyes which Jasper had observed at other times, and which had made him uneasy. Mr. Jordan looked intently and steadily at Jasper.

‘She did not run away from me. I did not drive her from my house as you think. It can avail nothing to conceal the truth longer. I did not wish that Eve, my child, should know it; but now—it matters no more. My fears are over. I have nothing more to disturb me. I care for no one else. I saw my wife on this rock meet the actor, I watched them. They did not know that I was spying. I could not hear much of what they said; I caught only snatches of sentences and stray words. I thought he was urging her to go with him.’

‘No,’ interrupted Jasper, ‘it was not so. He advised her not to return with her father, but to remain with you.’

‘Was it so? I was fevered with love and jealousy. I heard his last words—she was to be there on the morrow, midsummer day, and then to give the final decision. If I had had my gun I would have shot him there, but I



was unarmed. All that night I was restless. I could not sleep: I was as one in a death agony. I thought that Eve was going to desert me for another. And when on the morrow, midsummer day, she went at the appointed hour to the Raven Rock, I followed her. She had taken her child—she had made up her mind—she was going. Then I took down my gun and loaded it.'

Jasper's heart stood still. Now for the first time he began to see and fear what was coming. This was worse than he had anticipated.

'I crept along behind a hedge, till I reached the wood. Then I stole through the gate under the trees. I came beneath the great Scotch pine'—he pointed in the direction. 'She had her child with her. She had made up her mind—so I thought—to leave me, and take with her the babe. That she could not leave. Now I see she took it only that she might show the little thing to her father. I watched her on the rock. She kissed the babe and soothed it, and fondled it, and sang to it. She had a sweet voice. I was watching—there—and I had my gun in my hands. The man was not come. I saw rise up before me the life my Eve would lead; I saw how she would sink, how the man would desert her, and she would fall

lower; and my child, what would become of my child? Then she turned and looked in my direction. She was listening for the step of her lover. She stooped, and laid the child on the moss, where I lie now. I suppose it opened its eyes, and she began to sing and dance to it, snapping her fingers as though playing castanets. My heart flared within me, my hand shook, and God knows how it was—I do not. I cannot say how it came about, but in one moment the gun was discharged and she fell. I did not mean to kill her when I loaded it, but I did mean to kill the man, the seducer. But whether I did it purposely then, or my finger acted without my will, I cannot say. All is dark to me when I look back—dark as is the darkness over the edge of this rock.'

Jasper could not speak. He stood and looked with horror on the wounded, wretched man.

'I buried her,' said Mr. Jordan, 'in the old copper-mine—long deserted, and only known to me—and there she lies. That is the whole.'

Then he covered his eyes and said no more.

## CHAPTER LIII.

## BY LANTERN-LIGHT.

WHEN Barbara had finished her needlework, the wonder which had for some time been obtruding itself upon her—what had become of Eve—became prominent, and awoke a fear in her lest she should have run off into the wood to Martin. She did not wish to think that Eve would do such a thing; but, if she were not in the house, and neither her step nor her voice announced her presence, where was she? Eve was never able to amuse herself, by herself, for long. She must be with someone—with a maid if no one else were available. She had no resources in herself. If she were with Jasper, it did not matter; but Barbara hardly thought Eve was with him.

She laid aside her needlework, looked into her sister's room, without expecting to see Eve there, then descended and sought Jane, to inquire whether her father had given signs of

being awake by knocking. Jane, however, was not in the pantry nor in the kitchen. Jane had not been seen for some time. Then Barbara very softly stole through the hall and tapped at her father's door. No answer. She opened it and looked in. The room was quite dark. She stood still and listened. She did not hear her father breathe. In some surprise, but hardly yet in alarm, she went for a candle, and returned with it to the room Mr. Jordan occupied. To her amazement and alarm, she found it empty. She ran into the parlour—no one was there. She sought through the house and garden, and stables—not a sign of her father anywhere, and, strangely enough, not of Eve, or of Jane either. Jasper, likewise, had not been seen for some time. Then, in her distress, Barbara rang the alarm-bell, long, hastily, and strongly. When, after the lapse of some while spent in fruitless search, Barbara arrived at the Raven Rock, she was not alone—two or three of the farm labourers and Joseph the policeman were with her. Jane had found her sweetheart on his way to Morwell to visit her. The light of the fire on the rock, illumining the air above the trees, had attracted the notice of one of the workmen, and now the entire party came on to the rock as Mr. Jordan had finished his confession, and Jasper, sick at

heart, horror-stricken, stood back, speechless, not able to speak.

Barbara uttered a cry of dismay when she saw her father, and threw herself on her knees at his side. He made a sign to her to keep back, he did not want her; he beckoned to Jasper.

‘One word more,’ he said in a low tone, ‘My hours are nearly over. Lay us all three together—my wife, my child, and me.’

‘Papa,’ said Barbara, ‘what do you mean? what is the matter?’

He paid no attention to her. ‘I have told you where *she* lies. When you have recovered my poor child——’

‘What child?’ asked Jasper.

‘Eve; what other?’

Jasper did not understand, and supposed he was wandering.

‘He—your brother—leaped off the precipice with her in his arms.’

‘Papa!’ cried Barbara.

‘She is dead—dashed to pieces—and he too.’

Barbara looked at Jasper, then, in terror, ran to the edge. Nothing whatever could be seen. That platform of rock might be the end of the world, a cliff jutting forth into infinite space and descending into infinite abysses of



blackness. She leaned over and called, but received no answer. Jasper could hardly believe in the truth of what had been said. Turning to the policeman and servants, he spoke sternly : ‘ Mr. Jordan must be removed at once. Let him be lifted very carefully and carried into the house. He has lain here already unsuccoured too long.’

‘ I will not be removed,’ said the old man ; ‘ leave me here, I shall take no further harm. Go—seek for the body of my poor Eve.’

‘ John Westlake,’ called Barbara to one of the men, ‘ give me the lantern at once.’ The man was carrying one. Then, distracted between fear for her sister and anxiety about her father, she ran back to Mr. Jordan to know how he was.

‘ You need be in no immediate anxiety about him,’ said Jasper. ‘ It is true that his wound has opened and bled, but I have tightly bandaged it again.’

Joseph, the policeman, stood by helpless, staring blankly about him and scratching his ear.

Then Barbara noticed a blanket lying in a heap on the rock—the blanket Jasper had brought to his brother, but which had been refused. She caught it up at once and tore it into shreds, knotted the ends together, took the

lantern from the man Westlake, and let the light down the face of the crag. The lantern was of tin and horn, and through the sides but a dull light was thrown. She could see nothing—the lantern caught in ivy and heather bushes and turned on one side; the candle-flame scorched the horn.

‘I can see nothing,’ she said despairingly. ‘What shall I do!’

Suddenly she grasped Jasper’s hand, as he knelt by her, looking down.

‘Do you hear?’

A faint moan was audible. Was it a human voice, or was a bough swayed and groaning in the wind?

All crowded to the edge and held their breath. Mr. Jordan was disregarded in the immediate interest attaching to the fate of Eve.

No other sound was heard.

Jasper ran and gathered fir and oak branches and grass, bound them into a faggot, set it on fire, and threw it over the edge, so that it might fall wide of the rock and illumine its face. There was a glare for a moment, but the faggot went down too swiftly to be of any avail.

Then Walter, whom none had hitherto observed, pushed through, and, without saying

a word to anyone, kicked off his shoes and went over the edge.

‘Let him go,’ said Jasper as one of the men endeavoured to stay him; ‘the boy can climb like a squirrel. Let him take the lantern, Barbara, that he may see where to plant his foot and what to hold.’ Then he took the blanket rope from her hand, raised the light, and slowly lowered it again beside the descending boy.

Watt went down nimbly yet cautiously, clinging to ivy and tufts of grass, feeling every projection, and trying with his foot before trusting his weight to it. He did not hurry himself. He did not regard those who watched his advance. His descent was in zigzags. He crept along ledges, found a cleft or a step of stone, or a tuft of heather, or a stem of ivy. All at once he grasped the lantern.

‘I see something! Oh, Jasper, what can it be!’ gasped Barbara.

‘Be careful,’ he said; ‘do not overbalance yourself.’

‘I have found *her*,’ shouted Watt; ‘only her—not him.’

‘God be praised!’ whispered Barbara.

‘Is she alive?’ called Jasper.

‘I do not know, I do not care. Martin is not here.’

‘Now,’ said Jasper, ‘come on, you men—that is, all but one. We must go below; not over the cliff, but round through the coppice. We can find our way to the lantern. The boy must be at the bottom. She has fallen,’ he addressed Barbara now, ‘she has fallen, I trust, among bushes of oak which have broken the force of the fall. Do not be discouraged. Trust in God. Stay here and pray.’

‘Oh, Jasper, I cannot! I must go with you.’

‘You cannot. You must not. The coppice and brambles would tear your clothes and hands and face. The scramble is difficult by day and dangerous by night. You must remain here by your father. Trust me. I will do all in my power for poor Eve. We cannot bring her up the way we descend. We must force our way laterally into a path. You remain by your father, and let a man run for another or two more lanterns.’

Then Jasper went down by way of the wood with the men scrambling, falling, bursting through the brakes; some cursing when slashed across the face by an oak bough or torn through cloth and skin by a braid of bramble. They were quite invisible to Barbara, and to each other. They went downward: fast they could not go, fearing at every moment to fall over a

face of rock; groping, struggling as with snakes, in the coils of wood; slipping, falling, scrambling to their feet again, calling each other, becoming bewildered, losing their direction. The lantern that Watt held was quite invisible to them, buried above their heads in the densest undergrowth. The only man of them who came unhurt out of the coppice was Joseph, who, fearing for his face and hands and uniform, unwilling that he should appear lacerated and disfigured before Jane, instead of finding his way down through the brush, descended leisurely by the path or road that made a long circuit to the water's edge, and then ascended by the same road again to the place whence he had started.

Jasper, who had more intelligence than the rest, had taken his bearings, before starting, by the red star on the side of Hingesdon Hill, that shone out of a miner's hut window. This he was able always to see, and by it to steer his course; so that eventually he reached the spot where was Watt with the lantern.

'Where is she? What are you doing?' he asked breathlessly. His hands were torn and bleeding, his face bruised.

'Oh, I do not know. I left her. I want to find Martin—he cannot be far off.'



The boy was scrambling on a slope of fallen rubble.

‘I insist, Watt: tell me. Give me the lantern at once.’

‘I will not. She is up there. You can make out the ledge against the sky, and by the light of the fire above; but Martin—whither is he gone?’

Then away farther down went the boy with his lantern. Instead of following him, Jasper climbed up the rubble slope to the ledge. His eyes had become accustomed to the dark. He distinguished the fluttering end of a white or light-coloured dress. Then he swung himself up upon the ledge, and saw, by the faint light that still lingered in the sky, the figure of a woman—of Eve—lying on one side, with the hands clinging to a broken branch of ivy. A thick bed of heather was on this ledge—so thick that it had prevented Eve from rolling off it when she had fallen into the bush.

He stooped over her. He felt her heart, he put his ear to her mouth. Immediately he called up to Barbara, ‘She is alive, but insensible.’

Then he put his hands to his mouth and shouted to the men who had started with him.

He was startled by seeing Watt with the lantern close to him: the light was on the boy’s

face. It was agitated with fear, rage, and distress. His eyes were full of tears, sweat poured from his brow.

‘Why do you shout?’ he said, and shook his fist in Jasper’s face. ‘Have you no care for Martin? I cannot find him yet, but he is near. Be silent, and do not bring the men here. If he is alive I will get him away in the boat. If he is dead——’ then his sobs burst forth. ‘Martin! poor Martin! where can he be! Do not call: let no one come here. Oh, Martin, Martin!’ and away went the boy down again. ‘Why is *she* fallen here and found at once, and *he* is lost! Oh, Martin—poor Martin!’ the edge of the rock came in the way of the light, and Jasper saw no more of the boy and the lantern.

Unrestrained by what his youngest brother had said, Jasper called repeatedly, till at last the men gathered where he was. Then, with difficulty Eve was moved from where she lay and received in the arms of the men below. She moaned and cried out with pain, but did not recover consciousness.

Watt was travelling about farther down with his dull light, sometimes obscured, sometimes visible. One of the men shouted to him to bring the lantern up, but his call was disregarded, and next moment Watt and his

lantern were forgotten, as another came down the face of the cliff, lowered by Barbara.

Then the men moved away with their burden, and one went before with the light exploring the way. Barbara above knelt at the edge of the rock and prayed, and as she prayed her tears fell over her cheeks.

At length the little cluster of men appeared with their light through the trees, approaching the rock from the wood; they had reached the path and were coming along it. Jasper took the lantern and led the way.

‘Lay her here,’ he said, ‘near her father, where there is moss, till we can get a couple of gates.’ Then, suddenly, as the men were about to obey him, he uttered an exclamation of horror. He had put the lantern down beside Mr. Jordan.

‘Stand back,’ he said to Barbara, who was coming up, ‘stand back, I pray you!’

But there was no need for her to stand back: she had seen what he would have hidden from her. In the darkness and loneliness, unobserved, Mr. Jordan had torn away his bandages, and his blood had deluged the turf. It had ceased to flow now—for he was dead.

## CHAPTER LIV.

## ANOTHER LOAD.

THE sad procession moved to Morwell out of the wood, preceded by the man Westlake, mounted on Jasper's horse, riding hard for the doctor. Then came a stable-boy with the lantern, and after the light two gates—first, that on which was laid the dead body of Mr. Jordan; then another, followed closely by Barbara, on which lay Eve breathing, but now not even moaning. As the procession was half through the first field the bell of the house tolled. Westlake had communicated the news to the servant-maids, and one of them at once went to the bell.

Lagging behind all came Joseph Woodman, the policeman. The King of France in the ballad marched up a hill, and then marched down again, having accomplished nothing. Joseph had reversed the process: he had leisurely marched down the hill, and then more

leisurely marched up it again ; but the result was the same as that attained by the King of France.

On reaching Morwell Jasper said in a low voice to the men, ' You must return with me : there is another to be sought for. Who saw the boy with the lantern last ? He may have found him by this time.'

Then Joseph said slowly, ' As I was down by the boat-house I saw something.'

' What did you see ?'

' I saw up on the hill-side a lantern travelling this way, then that way, so'—he made a zigzag indication in the air with his finger. ' It went very slow. It went, so to speak, like a drop o' rain on a window-pane, that goes this way, then it goes a little more that way, then it goes quite contrary, to the other side. Then it changes its direction once again and it goes a little faster.'

' I wish you would go faster,' said Jasper impatiently. ' What did you see at last ?'

' I'm getting into it, but I must go my own pace,' said Joseph with unruffled composure. ' You understand me, brothers—I'm not speaking of a drop o' rain on a window-glass, but of a lantern-light on the hill-side—and bless you, that hill-side was like a black wall rising up on my right hand into the very sky. Well



then, the light it travelled like a drop o' rain on a glass—first to this side, then to that. You've seen drops o' rain how they travel'—he appealed to all who listened. 'And I reckon you know how that all to once like the drop, after having travelled first this road, then that road, in a queer contrary fashion, and very slow, all to once like, as I said, down it runs like a winking of the eye and is gone. So exactly was it with thicky (that) there light. It rambled about on the face of the blackness: first it crawled this way, then it crept that; always, brothers, going a little lower and then—to once—whish!—I saw it shoot like a falling star—I mean a raindrop—and I saw it no more.'

'And then?'

'Why—and then I came back the same road I went down.'

'You did not go into the bushes in search?'

'How should I?' answered Joseph, 'I'd my best uniform on. I'd come out courting, not thief-catching.'

'And you know nothing further?'

'How should I? Didn't I say I went back up the road same way as I'd come down? I warn't bound to get my new cloth coat and trousers tore all abroad by brimbles, not for

nobody. I know my duty better than that. The county pays for 'em.'

Directed by this poor indication, Jasper led the men back into the wood and down the woodman's truck road, that led by a long sweep to the bottom of the cliffs.

The search was for a long time ineffectual; but at length, at the foot of a rock, they came on the object of their quest—the body of Martin—among fragments of fallen crag, and over it, clinging to his brother with one arm, the hand passed through the ring of a battered lantern, was Walter. The light was extinguished in the lantern and the life was beaten out of the brothers. Jasper looked into the poor boy's face—a scornful smile still lingered on the lips.

Apparently he had discovered his brother's body and then had tried to drag it away down the steep slope towards the old mine, in the hopes of hiding there and finding that Martin was stunned, not dead; but in the darkness he had stumbled over another precipice or slidden down a run of shale and been shot with his burden over a rock. Again the sad procession was formed. The two gates that had been already used were put in requisition a second time, and the bodies of Martin and Watt were carried to Morwell and laid in the hall,

side by side, and he who carried a light placed it at their head.

Mr. Coyshe had arrived. For three of those brought in no medical aid was of avail.

Barbara, always practical and self-possessed, had ordered the cook to prepare supper for the men. Then the two dead brothers were left where they had been laid, with the dull lantern burning at their head, and the hungry searchers went to the kitchen to refresh.

Joseph ensconced himself by the fire, and Jane drew close to him.

‘I reckon,’ said the policeman, ‘I’ll have some hot grog.’ Then he slid his arm round Jane’s waist and said, ‘In the midst of death we are in life. Is that really, now, giblet pie? The cold joint I don’t fancy’—he gave Jane a smack on the cheek. ‘Jane, I’ll have a good help of the giblet pie, please, and the workmen can finish the cold veal. I like my grog hot and strong and with three lumps of double-refined sugar. You’ll take a sip first, Jane, and I’ll drink where your honeyed lips have a-sipped. When you come to consider it in a proper spirit’—he drew Jane closer to his side—‘there’s a deal of truth in Scriptur’. In the midst of death we *are* in life. Why, Jane, we shall enjoy ourselves this evening as much as if we were at a love-feast. I’ve a sweet tooth, Jane—a very sweet tooth.’

## CHAPTER LV.

## WHAT EVERY FOOL KNOWS.

JASPER stood on the staircase waiting. Then he heard a step descend. There was no light: the maids, in the excitement and confusion, had forgotten their duties. No lamp on the staircase, none in the hall. Only in the latter the dull glimmer of the horn lantern that irradiated but did not illumine the faces of two who were dead. The oak door at the foot of the stairs was ajar, and a feeble light from this lantern penetrated to the staircase. The window admitted some greyness from the overcast sky.

‘Tell me, Barbara,’ he said, ‘what is the doctor’s report?’

‘Jasper!’ Then Barbara’s strength gave way, and she burst into a flood of tears. He put his arm round her, and she rested her head on his breast and cried herself out. She needed this relief. She had kept control over

herself by the strength of her will. There was no one in the house to think for her, to arrange anything; she had the care of everything on her, beside her great sorrow for her father, and fear for Eve. As for the servant girls, they were more trouble than help. *Men* were in the kitchen; that sufficed to turn their heads and make them leave undone all they ought to have done, and do just those things they ought not to do. At this moment, after the strain, the presence of a sympathetic heart opened the fountain of her tears and broke down her self-restraint.

Jasper did not interrupt her, though he was anxious to know the result of Mr. Coyshe's examination. He waited patiently, with the weeping girl in his arms, till she looked up and said, 'Thank you, dear friend, for letting me cry here: it has done me good.'

'Now, Barbara, tell me all.'

'Jasper, the doctor says that Eve will live.'

'God's name be praised for that!'

'But he says that she will be nothing but a poor cripple all her days.'

'Then we must take care of her.'

'Yes, Jasper, I will devote my life to her.'

'*We* will, Barbara.'

She took his hand and pressed it between both hers.



‘But,’ she said hesitatingly, ‘what if Mr. Coyshe——’ She did not finish the sentence.

‘Wait till Mr. Coyshe claims her.’

‘He is engaged to her, so of course he will, the more readily now that she is such a poor crushed worm.’

Jasper said nothing. He knew Mr. Coyshe better than Barbara, perhaps. He had taken his measure when he went with him over the farm after the signing of the will.

‘This place is hers by her father’s will,’ said Jasper; ‘and, should the surgeon draw back, she will need you and me to look after her interests.’

‘Yes,’ said Barbara, ‘she will need us both.’

Then she withdrew her hands and returned upstairs.

A few days later Mr. Coyshe took occasion to clear the ground. He explained to Barbara that his engagement must be considered at an end. He was very sorry, but he must look out for his own interests, as he had neither parent alive to look out for them for him. It would be quite impossible for him to get on with a wife who was a cripple.

‘You are premature, Mr. Coyshe,’ said Miss Jordan stiffly. ‘If you had waited till my sister were able to speak and act, she would have, herself, released you.’

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‘ Exactly,’ said the unabashed surgeon ; ‘ but I am so considerate of the feelings of the lady, that I spare her the trouble.’

And now let us spread the golden wings of fancy, and fly the scenes of sorrow—but fly, not in space, but in time ; measure not miles, but months.

It is autumn, far on into September, and Michaelmas has brought with it the last days of summer. Not this the autumn that we saw coming on, with the turning dogwood and bird-cherry, but another.

In the garden the colchicum has raised its pale lilac flowers. The Michaelmas daisy is surrounded by the humming-bird moth with transparent wings, but wings that vibrate so fast that they can only be seen as a quiver of light. The mountain ash is hung with clusters of clear crimson berries, and the redbreasts and finches are about it, tearing improvidently at the store, thoughtless of the coming winter, and strewing the soil with wasted coral.

Eve is seated in the sun outside the house, in the garden, and on her knees is a baby—Barbara’s child, and yet Eve’s also, for if Barbara gave it life, Eve gave it a name. Before her sister Barbara kneels, now just restored from her confinement, a little pale and large in eye, looking up at her sister and then

down at the child. Jasper stands by contemplating the pretty group.

‘Eve,’ said Barbara in a low tremulous voice, ‘I have had for some months on my heart a great fear lest, when my little one came, I should love it with all my heart, and rob you. I had the same fear before I married Jasper, lest he should snatch some of my love away from the dear suffering sister who needs all. But now I have no such fear any more, for love, I find, is a great mystery—it is infinitely divisible, yet ever complete. It is like’—she lowered her voice reverently—‘It is like what we Catholics believe about the body of our Lord, the very Sacrament of Love. That is in Heaven and in every church. It is on every altar, and in every communicant, entire. I thought once that when I had a husband, and then a little child, love would suffer diminution—that I could not share love without lessening the portion of each. But it is not so. I love my baby with my whole undivided heart; I love you, my sister, equally with my whole undivided heart; and I love my husband also,’ she turned and smiled at Jasper, ‘with my very whole and undivided heart. It is a great mystery, but love is divine, and divine things are perceived and believed by the heart, though beyond the reason.’

‘So,’ said Eve, smiling, and with her blue eyes filling, ‘my dear, dear Barbara, once so prosaic and so practical, is becoming an idealist and poetical.’

‘Wherever unselfish love reigns, there is poetry,’ said Jasper; ‘the sweetest of the songs of life is the song of self-sacrificing love. Barbara never was prosaic. She was always an idealist; but, my dear Eve, the heart needs culture to see and distinguish true poetry from false sentiment. That you lacked at one time. That you have now. I once knew a little girl, light of heart, and loving only self, with no earnest purpose, blown about by every caprice. Now I see a change—a change from base element to a divine presence. I see a sweet face as of old, but I see something in it, new-born; a soul full of self-reproach and passionate love; a heart that is innocent as of old, but yet that has learned a great deal, and all good, through suffering. I see a life that was once purposeless now instinct with purpose—the purpose to live for duty, in self-sacrifice, and not for pleasure. My dear Eve, the great and solemn priest Pain has laid his hands on you, and broken you, and held you up to Heaven, and you are not what you were, and yet—and yet are the same.’

Eve could not speak. She put her arms round her sister’s neck, and clung to her, and

the tears flowed from both their eyes, and fell upon the tiny Eve lying on the knees of the elder Eve.

But though they were clasped over the child, no shadow fell on its little face. The baby laughed.

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Some years ago—the author cannot at the moment say how many, nor does it matter—he paid a visit to Morwell, and saw the sad havoc that had been wrought to the venerable hunting-lodge of the Abbots of Tavistock. The old hall had disappeared, a floor had been put across it, and it had been converted into an upper and lower story of rooms. One wing had been transformed into a range of model cottages for labourers. The house of the Jordans was now a farm.

The author asked if he might see the remains of antiquity within the house.

An old woman, who had answered his knock and ring, replied, ‘There are none—all have been swept away.’

‘But,’ said he, ‘in my childhood I remember that the place was full of interest; and by the way, what has become of the good people who lived here? I have been in another part of the country, and indeed a great deal abroad.’



‘ Do you mean Mr. Jasper ? ’

‘ No : Jasper, no—the name began with J.’

‘ The old Squire Jordan your honour means, no doubt. He be dead ages ago. Mr. Jasper married Miss Jordan—Miss Barbara we called her. When Miss Eve died, they went away to Buckfastleigh, where they had a house and a factory. There was a queer matter about the old squire’s death—did you never hear of that, sir ? ’

‘ I heard something ; but I was very young then.’

‘ My Joseph could tell you all about it better than I.’

‘ Who is your Joseph ? ’

‘ Well, sir, I’m ashamed to say it, but he’s my sweetheart, who’s been a-courting of me these fifty years.’

‘ Not married yet ? ’

‘ He’s a slow man is Joseph. I reckon he’d ’a’ spoken out if he’d been able at last, but the paralysis took ’m in the legs. He put off and off—and I encouraged him all I could ; but he always was a slow man.’

‘ Where is he now ? ’

‘ Oh, he’s with his married sister. He sits in a chair, and when I can I run to ’m and take him some backy or barley-sugar. He’s vastly fond o’ sucking sticks o’ barley-sugar. Gentle-

folks as come here sometimes give me a shilling, and I lay that out on getting Joseph what he likes. 'He always had a sweet tooth.'

'Then you love him still?'

The old woman looked at me with surprise. Her hand and head shook.

'Of course I does: love is eternal—every fool knows that.'

**THE END.**



[April, 1888.]



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