VARIOUS

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Содержание

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ELOQUENCE

It is the doctrine of the popular music-masters, that whoever can speak can sing. So, probably, every man is eloquent once in his life. Our temperaments differ in capacity of heat, or we boil at different degrees. One man is brought to the boiling point by the excitement of conversation in the parlor. The waters, of course, are not very deep. He has a two-inch enthusiasm, a pattypan ebullition. Another requires the additional caloric of a multitude, and a public debate; a third needs an antagonist, or a hot indignation; a fourth needs a revolution; and a fifth, nothing less than the grandeur of absolute ideas, the splendors and shades of Heaven and Hell.

But because every man is an orator, how long soever he may have been a mute, an assembly of men is so much more susceptible. The eloquence of one stimulates all the rest, some up to the speaking point, and all others to a degree that makes them good receivers and conductors, and they avenge themselves for their enforced silence by increased loquacity on their return to the fireside.

The plight of these phlegmatic brains is better than that of those who prematurely boil, and who impatiently break the silence before their time. Our county conventions often exhibit a small-pot-soon-hot style of eloquence. We are too much reminded of a medical experiment, where a series of patients are taking nitrous-oxide gas. Each patient, in turn, exhibits similar symptoms,—redness in the face, volubility, violent gesticulation, delirious attitudes, occasional stamping, an alarming loss of perception of the passage of time, a selfish enjoyment of his sensations, and loss of perception of the sufferings of the audience.

Plato says, that the punishment which the wise suffer, who refuse to take part in the government, is, to live under the government of worse men; and the like regret is suggested to all the auditors, as the penalty of abstaining to speak, that they shall hear worse orators than themselves.

But this lust to speak marks the universal feeling of the energy of the engine, and the curiosity men feel to touch the springs. Of all the musical instruments on which men play, a popular assembly is that which has the largest compass and variety, and out of which, by genius and study, the most wonderful effects can be drawn. An audience is not a simple addition of the individuals that compose it. Their sympathy gives them a certain social organism, which fills each member, in his own degree, and most of all the orator, as a jar in a battery is charged with the whole electricity of the battery. No one can survey the face of an excited assembly, without being apprised of new opportunity for painting in fire human thought, and being agitated to agitate. How many orators sit mute there below! They come to get justice done to that ear and intuition which no Chatham and no Demosthenes has begun to satisfy.

The Welsh Triads say, "Many are the friends of the golden tongue." Who can wonder at the attractiveness of Parliament, or of Congress, or the bar, for our ambitious young men, when the highest bribes of society are at the feet of the successful orator? He has his audience at his devotion. All other fames must hush before his. He is the true potentate; for they are not kings who sit on thrones, but they who know how to govern. The definitions of eloquence describe its attraction for young men. Antiphon the Rhamnusian, one of Plutarch's ten orators, advertised in Athens, "that he would cure distempers of the mind with words." No man has a prosperity so high or firm, but two or three words

can dishearten it. There is no calamity which right words will not begin to redress. Isocrates described his art, as "the power of magnifying what was small and diminishing what was great";—an acute, but partial definition. Among the Spartans, the art assumed a Spartan shape, namely, of the sharpest weapon. Socrates says, "If any one wishes to converse with the meanest of the Lacedaemonians, he will at first find him despicable in conversation; but, when a proper opportunity offers, this same person, like a skilful jaculator, will hurl a sentence worthy of attention, short and contorted, so that he who converses with him will appear to be in no respect superior to a boy." Plato's definition of rhetoric is, "the art of ruling the minds of men." The Koran says, "A mountain may change its place, but a man will not change his disposition";—yet the end of eloquence is,—is it not?—to alter in a pair of hours, perhaps in a half-hour's discourse, the convictions and habits of years. Young men, too, are eager to enjoy this sense of added power and enlarged sympathetic existence. The orator sees himself the organ of a multitude, and concentrating their valors and powers:

> "But now the blood of twenty thousand men
> Blushed in my face."

That which he wishes, that which eloquence ought to reach, is, not a particular skill in telling a story, or neatly summing up evidence, or arguing logically, or dexterously addressing the prejudice of the company; no, but a taking sovereign possession of the audience. Him we call an artist, who shall play on an assembly of men as a master on the keys of the piano,—who, seeing the people furious, shall soften and compose them, shall draw them, when he will, to laughter and to tears. Bring him to his audience, and, be they who they may, coarse or refined, pleased or displeased, sulky or savage, with their opinions in the keeping of a confessor, or with their opinions in their bank-safes, —he will have them pleased and humored as he chooses; and they shall carry and execute that which he bids them.

This is that despotism which poets have celebrated in the "Pied Piper of Hamelin," whose music drew like the power of gravitation,—drew soldiers and priests, traders and feasters, women and boys, rats and mice; or that of the minstrel of Meudon, who made the pallbearers dance around the bier. This is a power of many degrees, and requiring in the orator a great range of faculty and experience, requiring a large composite man, such as Nature rarely organizes, so that, in our experience, we are forced to gather up the figure in fragments, here one talent, and there another.

The audience is a constant metre of the orator. There are many audiences in every public assembly, each one of which rules in turn. If anything comic and coarse is spoken, you shall see the emergence of the boys and rowdies, so loud and vivacious, that you might think the house was filled with them. If new topics are started, graver and higher, these roisters recede; a more chaste and wise attention takes place. You would think the boys slept, and that the men have any degree of profoundness. If the speaker utter a noble sentiment, the attention deepens, a new and highest audience now listens, and the audiences of the fun and of facts and of the understanding are all silenced and awed. There is also something excellent in every audience,—the capacity of virtue. They are ready to be beatified. They know so much more than the orator,—and are so just! There is a tablet there for every line he can inscribe, though he should mount to the highest levels. Humble persons are conscious of new illumination; narrow brows expand with enlarged affections: delicate spirits, long unknown to themselves, masked and muffled in coarsest fortunes, who now hear their own native language for the first time, and leap to hear it. But all these several audiences, each above each, which successively appear to greet the variety of style and topic, are really composed out of the same persons; nay, sometimes the same individual will take active part in them all, in turn.

This range of many powers in the consummate speaker and of many audiences in one assembly leads us to consider the successive stages of oratory.

Perhaps it is the lowest of the qualities of an orator, but it is, on so many occasions, of chief importance,—a certain robust and radiant physical health,—or, shall I say? great volumes of animal heat. When each auditor feels himself to make too large a part of the assembly, and shudders with cold at the thinness of the morning audience, and with fear lest all will heavily fail through one bad speech, mere energy and mellowness are then inestimable. Wisdom and learning would be harsh and unwelcome, compared with a substantial cordial man, made of milk, as we say, who is a house-warmer, with his obvious honesty and good meaning, and a hue-and-cry style of harangue, which inundates the assembly with a flood of animal spirits, and makes all safe and secure, so that any and every sort of good speaking becomes at once practicable. I do not rate this animal eloquence very highly, and yet, as we must be fed and warmed before we can do any work well, even the best, so is this semi-animal exuberance, like a good stove, of the first necessity in a cold house.

Climate has much to do with it,—climate and race. Set a New Englander to describe any accident which happened in his presence. What hesitation and reserve in his narrative! He tells with difficulty some particulars, and gets as fast as he can to the result, and, though he cannot describe, hopes to suggest the whole scene. Now listen to a poor Irish-woman recounting some experience of hers. Her speech flows like a river,—so unconsidered, so humorous, so pathetic, such justice done to all the parts! It is a true transubstantiation,—the fact converted into speech, all warm and colored and alive, as it fell out. Our Southern people are almost all speakers, and have every advantage over the New England people, whose climate is so cold, that, 'tis said, we do not like to open our mouths very wide. But neither can the Southerner in the United States, nor the Irish, compare with the lively inhabitant of the South of Europe. The traveller in Sicily needs no gayer melodramatic exhibition than the *table d'hôte* of his inn will afford him, in the conversation of the joyous guests. They mimic the voice and manner of the person they describe; they crow, squeal, hiss, cackle, bark, and scream like mad, and, were it only by the physical strength exerted in telling the story, keep the table in unbounded excitement. But in every constitution some large degree of animal vigor is necessary as material foundation for the higher qualities of the art.

But eloquence must be attractive, or it is none. The virtue of books is to be readable, and of orators to be interesting, and this is a gift of Nature; as Demosthenes, the most laborious student in that kind, signified his sense of this necessity when he wrote, "Good Fortune," as his motto on his shield. As we know, the power of discourse of certain individuals amounts to fascination, though it may have no lasting effect. Some portion of this sugar must intermingle. The right eloquence needs no bell to call the people together, and no constable to keep them. It draws the children from their play, the old from their arm-chairs, and the invalid from his warm chamber; it holds the hearer fast, steals away his feet, that he shall not depart,—his memory, that he shall not remember the most pressing affairs,—his belief, that he shall not admit any opposing considerations. The pictures we have of it in semi-barbarous ages, when it has some advantages in the simpler habit of the people, show what it aims at. It is said that the Khans, or story-tellers in Ispahan and other cities of the East, attain a controlling power over their audience, keeping them for many hours attentive to the most fanciful and extravagant adventures. The whole world knows pretty well the style of these improvisators, and how fascinating they are, in our translations of the "Arabian Nights." Scheherzarade tells these stories to save her life, and the delight of young Europe and young America in them proves that she fairly earned it. And who does not remember in childhood some white or black or yellow Scheherzarade, who, by that talent of telling endless feats of fairies and magicians, and kings and queens, was more dear and wonderful to a circle of children than any orator of England or America is now? The more indolent and imaginative complexion of the Eastern nations makes them much more impressible by these appeals to the fancy.

These legends are only exaggerations of real occurrences, and every literature contains these high compliments to the art of the orator and the bard, from the Hebrew and the Greek down to the Scottish Glenkindie, who

—"harpit a fish out o' saut water,
Or water out of a stone,
Or milk out of a maiden's breast
Who bairn had never none."

Homer specially delighted in drawing the same figure. For what is the "Odyssey," but a history of the orator, in the largest style, carried through a series of adventures furnishing brilliant opportunities to his talent? See with what care and pleasure the poet brings him on the stage. Helen is pointing out to Antenor, from a tower, the different Grecian chiefs. "Antenor said: 'Tell me, dear child, who is that man, shorter by a head than Agamemnon, yet he looks broader in his shoulders and breast. His arms lie on the ground, but he, like a leader, walks about the bands of the men. He seems to me like a stately ram, who goes as a master of the flock.' Him answered Helen, daughter of Jove: 'This is the wise Ulysses, son of Laertes, who was reared in the state of craggy Ithaca, knowing all wiles and wise counsels.' To her the prudent Antenor replied again: 'O woman, you have spoken truly. For once the wise Ulysses came hither on an embassy, with Menelaus, beloved by Mars. I received them, and entertained them at my house. I became acquainted with the genius and the prudent judgments of both. When they mixed with the assembled Trojans and stood, the broad shoulders of Menelaus rose above the other; but, both sitting, Ulysses was more majestic. When they conversed, and interweaved stories and opinions with all; Menelaus spoke succinctly, few but very sweet words, since he was not talkative, nor superfluous in speech, and was the younger. But when the wise Ulysses arose, and stood, and looked down, fixing his eyes on the ground, and neither moved his sceptre backward nor forward, but held it still, like an awkward person, you would say it was some angry or foolish man; but when he sent his great voice forth out of his breast, and his words fell like the winter snows, not then would any mortal contend with Ulysses; and we, beholding, wondered not afterwards so much at his aspect." [*Iliad*, III. 192.]

Thus he does not fail to arm Ulysses at first with this power of overcoming all opposition by the blandishments of speech. Plutarch tells us that Thucydides, when Archidamus, king of Sparta, asked him, Which was the best wrestler, Pericles or he? replied, "When I throw him, he says he was never down, and he persuades the very spectators to believe him." Philip of Macedon said of Demosthenes, on hearing the report of one of his orations, "Had I been there, he would have persuaded me to take up arms against myself"; and Warren Hastings said of Burke's speech on his impeachment, "As I listened to the orator, I felt for more than half an hour as if I were the most culpable being on earth."

In these examples, higher qualities have already entered; but the power of detaining the ear by pleasing speech, and addressing the fancy and imagination, often exists without higher merits. Thus separated, as this fascination of discourse aims only at amusement, though it be decisive in its momentary effect, it is yet a juggle, and of no lasting power. It is heard like a band of music passing through the streets, which converts all the passengers into poets, but is forgotten as soon as it has turned the next corner; and unless this oiled tongue could, in Oriental phrase, lick the sun and moon away, it must take its place with opium and brandy. I know no remedy against it but cotton-wool, or the wax which Ulysses stuffed into the ears of his sailors to pass the Sirens safely.

There are all degrees of power, and the least are interesting, but they must not be confounded. There is the glib tongue and cool self-possession of the salesman in a large shop, which, as is well known, overpower the prudence and resolution of housekeepers of both sexes. There is a petty lawyer's fluency, which is sufficiently impressive to him who is devoid of that talent, though it be, in so many cases, nothing more than a facility of expressing with accuracy and speed what everybody thinks and says more slowly, without new information, or precision of thought,—but the same thing, neither less nor more. It requires no special insight to edit one of our country newspapers. Yet whoever can say off currently, sentence by sentence, matter neither better nor worse than what is there printed,

will be very impressive to our easily-pleased population. These talkers are that class who prosper like the celebrated schoolmaster, by being only one lesson ahead of the pupil. Add a little sarcasm, and prompt allusion to passing occurrences, and you have the mischievous member of Congress. A spice of malice, a ruffian touch in his rhetoric, will do him no harm with his audience. These accomplishments are of the same kind, and only a degree higher than the coaxing of the auctioneer, or the vituperative style well described in the street-word "jawing." These kinds of public and private speaking have their use and convenience to the practitioners; but we may say of such collectively, that the habit of oratory is apt to disqualify them for eloquence.

One of our statesmen said, "The curse of this country is eloquent men." And one cannot wonder at the uneasiness sometimes manifested by trained statesmen, with large experience of public affairs, when they observe the disproportionate advantage suddenly given to oratory over the most solid and accumulated public service. In a Senate or other business committee, the solid result depends on a few men with working talent. They know how to deal with the facts before them, to put things into a practical shape, and they value men only as they can forward the work. But some new man comes there, who has no capacity for helping them at all, is insignificant, and nobody in the committee, but has a talent for speaking. In the debate with open doors, this precious person makes a speech, which is printed, and read all over the Union, and he at once becomes famous, and takes the lead in the public mind over all these executive men, who, of course, are full of indignation to find one who has no tact or skill, and knows he has none, put over them by means of this talking power which they despise.

Leaving behind us these pretensions, better or worse, to come a little nearer to the verity, eloquence is attractive as an example of the magic of personal ascendency;—a total and resultant power,—rare, because it requires a rich coincidence of powers, intellect, will, sympathy, organs, and, over all, good-fortune in the cause. We have a half-belief that the person is possible who can counterpoise all other persons. We believe that there may be a man who is a match for events, —one who never found his match,—against whom other men being dashed are broken,—one of inexhaustible personal resources, who can give you any odds and beat you. What we really wish for is a mind equal to any exigency. You are safe in your rural district, or in the city, in broad daylight, amidst the police, and under the eyes of a hundred thousand people. But how is it on the Atlantic, in a storm? Do you understand how to infuse your reason into men disabled by terror, and to bring yourself off safe then?—how among thieves, or among an infuriated populace, or among cannibals? Face to face with a highwayman who has every temptation and opportunity for violence and plunder, can you bring yourself off safe by your wit, exercised through speech?—a problem easy enough to Caesar, or Napoleon. Whenever a man of that stamp arrives, the highwayman has found a master. What a difference between men in power of face! A man succeeds because he has more power of eye than another, and so coaxes or confounds him. The newspapers, every week, report the adventures of some impudent swindler, who, by steadiness of carriage, duped those who should have known better. Yet any swindlers we have known are novices and bunglers, as is attested by their ill name. A greater power of face would accomplish anything, and, with the rest of their takings, take away the bad name. A greater power of carrying the thing loftily, and with perfect assurance, would confound merchant, banker, judge, men of influence and power, poet, and president, and might head any party, unseat any sovereign, and abrogate any constitution in Europe and America. It was said, that a man has at one step attained vast power, who has renounced his moral sentiment, and settled it with himself that he will no longer stick at anything. It was said of Sir William Pepperel, one of the worthies of New England, that, "put him where you might, he commanded, and saw what he willed come to pass." Julius Caesar said to Metellus, when that tribune interfered to hinder him from entering the Roman treasury, "Young man, it is easier for me to put you to death than to say that I will"; and the youth yielded. In earlier days, he was taken by pirates. What then? He threw himself into their ship; established the most extraordinary intimacies; told them stories; declaimed to them; if they did not applaud his speeches, he threatened them with hanging,—which he performed afterwards,—and,

in a short time, was master of all on board. A man this is who cannot be disconcerted, and so can never play his last card, but has a reserve of power when he has hit his mark. With a serene face, he subverts a kingdom. What is told of him is miraculous; it affects men so. The confidence of men in him is lavish, and he changes the face of the world, and histories, poems, and new philosophies arise to account for him. A supreme commander over all his passions and affections; but the secret of his ruling is higher than that. It is the power of Nature running without impediment from the brain and will into the hands. Men and women are his game. Where they are, he cannot be without resource. "Whoso can speak well," said Luther, "is a man." It was men of this stamp that the Grecian States used to ask of Sparta for generals. They did not send to Lacedaemon for troops, but they said, "Send us a commander"; and Pausanias, or Gylippus, or Brasidas, or Agis, was despatched by the Ephors.

It is easy to illustrate this overpowering personality by these examples of soldiers and kings; but there are men of the most peaceful way of life, and peaceful principle, who are felt, wherever they go, as sensibly as a July sun or a December frost,—men who, if they speak, are heard, though they speak in a whisper,—who, when they act, act effectually, and what they do is imitated: and these examples may be found on very humble platforms, as well as on high ones.

In old countries, a high money-value is set on the services of men who have achieved a personal distinction. He who has points to carry must hire, not a skilful attorney, but a commanding person. A barrister in England is reputed to have made twenty or thirty thousand pounds *per annum* in representing the claims of railroad companies before committees of the House of Commons. His clients pay not so much for legal as for manly accomplishments,—for courage, conduct, and a commanding social position, which enable him to make their claims heard and respected.

I know very well, that, among our cool and calculating people, where every man mounts guard over himself, where heats and panics and abandonments are quite out of the system, there is a good deal of skepticism as to extraordinary influence. To talk of an overpowering mind rouses the same jealousy and defiance which one may observe round a table where anybody is recounting the marvellous anecdotes of mesmerism. Each auditor puts a final stroke to the discourse by exclaiming, "Can he mesmerize *me*?" So each man inquires if any orator can change *his* convictions.

But does any one suppose himself to be quite impregnable? Does he think that not possibly a man may come to him who shall persuade him out of his most settled determination?—for example, good sedate citizen as he is, to make a fanatic of him? or, if he is penurious, to squander money for some purpose he now least thinks of? or, if he is a prudent, industrious person, to forsake his work, and give days and weeks to a new interest? No, he defies any one, every one. Ah! he is thinking of resistance, and of a different turn from his own. But what if one should come of the same turn of mind as his own, and who sees much farther on his own way than he? A man who has tastes like mine, but in greater power, will rule me any day, and make me love my ruler.

Thus it is not powers of speech that we primarily consider under this word Eloquence, but the power that, being present, gives them their perfection, and, being absent, leaves them a merely superficial value. Eloquence is the appropriate organ of the highest personal energy. Personal ascendency may exist with or without adequate talent for its expression. It is as surely felt as a mountain or a planet; but when it is weaponed with a power of speech, it seems first to become truly human, works actively in all directions, and supplies the imagination with fine materials.

This circumstance enters into every consideration of the power of orators, and is the key to all their effects. In the assembly, you shall find the orator and the audience in perpetual balance, and the predominance of either is indicated by the choice of topic. If the talents for speaking exist, but not the strong personality, then there are good speakers who perfectly receive and express the will of the audience, and the commonest populace is flattered by hearing its low mind returned to it with every ornament which happy talent can add. But if there be personality in the orator, the face of things changes. The audience is thrown into the attitude of pupil, follows like a child its preceptor, and hears what he has to say. It is as if, amidst the king's council at Madrid, Ximenes urged that an advantage

might be gained of France, and Mendoza that Flanders might be kept down, and Columbus, being introduced, was interrogated whether his geographical knowledge could aid the cabinet, and he can say nothing to one party or to the other, but he can show how all Europe can be diminished and reduced under the king by annexing to Spain a continent as large as six or seven Europes.

This balance between the orator and the audience is expressed in what is called the pertinence of the speaker. There is always a rivalry between the orator and the occasion, between the demands of the hour and the prepossession of the individual. The emergency which has convened the meeting is usually of more importance than anything the debaters have in their minds, and therefore becomes imperative to them. But if one of them have anything of commanding necessity in his heart, how speedily he will find vent for it, and with the applause of the assembly! This balance is observed in the privatest intercourse. Poor Tom never knew the time when the present occurrence was so trivial that he could tell what was passing in his mind without being checked for unseasonable speech; but let Bacon speak, and wise men would rather listen, though the revolution of kingdoms was on foot. I have heard it reported of an eloquent preacher, whose voice is not yet forgotten in this city, that, on occasions of death or tragic disaster, which overspread the congregation with gloom, he ascended the pulpit with more than his usual alacrity, and, turning to his favorite lessons of devout and jubilant thankfulness, "Let us praise the Lord," carried audience, mourners, and mourning along with him, and swept away all the impertinence of private sorrow with his hosannas and songs of praise. Pepys says of Lord Clarendon, with whom "he is mad in love," on his return from a conference, "I did never observe how much easier a man do speak when he knows all the company to be below him, than in him; for, though he spoke indeed excellent well, yet his manner and freedom of doing it, as if he played with it, and was informing only all the rest of the company, was mighty pretty." [*Diary*, I. 469.]

This rivalry between the orator and the occasion is inevitable, and the occasion always yields to the eminence of the speaker; for a great man is the greatest of occasions. Of course, the interest of the audience and of the orator conspire. It is well with them only when his influence is complete; then only they are well pleased. Especially, he consults his power by making instead of taking his theme. If he should attempt to instruct the people in that which they already know, he would fail; but, by making them wise in that which he knows, he has the advantage of the assembly every moment. Napoleon's tactics of marching on the angle of an army, and always presenting a superiority of numbers, is the orator's secret also.

The several talents which the orator employs, the splendid weapons which went to the equipment of Demosthenes, of AEchines, of Demades, the natural orator, of Fox, of Pitt, of Patrick Henry, of Adams, of Mirabeau, deserve a special enumeration. We must not quite omit to name the principal pieces.

The orator, as we have seen, must be a substantial personality. Then, first, he must have power of statement,—must have the fact, and know how to tell it. In any knot of men conversing on any subject, the person who knows most about it will have the ear of the company, if he wishes it, and lead the conversation,—no matter what genius or distinction other men there present may have; and in any public assembly, him who has the facts, and can and will state them, people will listen to, though he is otherwise ignorant, though he is hoarse and ungraceful, though he stutters and screams.

In a court of justice, the audience are impartial; they really wish to sift the statements, and know what the truth is. And, in the examination of witnesses, there usually leap out, quite unexpectedly, three or four stubborn words or phrases which are the pith and fate of the business, which sink into the ear of all parties, and stick there, and determine the cause. All the rest is repetition and qualifying; and the court and the county have really come together to arrive at these three or four memorable expressions, which betrayed the mind and meaning of somebody.

In every company, the man with the fact is like the guide you hire to lead your party up a mountain or through a difficult country. He may not compare with any of the party in mind, or breeding, or courage, or possessions, but he is much more important to the present need than any

of them. That is what we go to the court-house for,—the statement of the fact, and the elimination of a general fact, the real relation of all the parties; and it is the certainty with which, indifferently in any affair that is well handled, the truth stares us in the face, through all the disguises that are put upon it,—a piece of the well-known human life,—that makes the interest of a court-room to the intelligent spectator.

I remember, long ago, being attracted by the distinction of the counsel, and the local importance of the cause, into the court-room. The prisoner's counsel were the strongest and cunningest lawyers in the Commonwealth. They drove the attorney for the State from corner to corner, taking his reasons from under him, and reducing him to silence, but not to submission. When hard-pressed, he revenged himself, in his turn, on the judge, by requiring the court to define what salvage was. The court, thus pushed, tried words, and said everything it could think of to fill the time, supposing cases, and describing duties of insurers, captains, pilots, and miscellaneous sea-officers that are or might be,—like a schoolmaster puzzled by a hard sum, who reads the context with emphasis. But all this flood not serving the cuttle-fish to get away in, the horrible shark of the district-attorney being still there, grimly awaiting with his "The court must define,"—the poor court pleaded its inferiority. The superior court must establish the law for this, and it read away piteously the decisions of the Supreme Court, but read to those who had no pity. The judge was forced at last to rule something, and the lawyers saved their rogue under the fog of a definition. The parts were so well cast and discriminated, that it was an interesting game to watch. The government was well enough represented. It was stupid, but it had a strong will and possession, and stood on that to the last. The judge had a task beyond his preparation, yet his position remained real; he was there to represent a great reality, the justice of states, which we could well enough see beetling over his head, and which his trifling talk nowise affected, and did not impede, since he was entirely well-meaning.

The statement of the fact, however, sinks before the statement of the law, which requires immeasurably higher powers, and is a rarest gift, being in all great masters one and the same thing,—in lawyers, nothing technical, but always some piece of common sense, alike interesting to laymen as to clerks. Lord Mansfield's merit is the merit of common sense. It is the same quality we admire in Aristotle, Montaigne, Cervantes, or in Samuel Johnson, or Franklin. Its application to law seems quite accidental. Each of Mansfield's famous decisions contains a level sentence or two, which hit the mark. His sentences are not always finished to the eye, but are finished to the mind. The sentences are involved, but a solid proposition is set forth, a true distinction is drawn. They come from and they go to the sound human understanding; and I read, without surprise, that the black-letter lawyers of the day sneered at his "equitable decisions," as if they were not also learned. This, indeed, is what speech is for, to make the statement; and all that is called eloquence seems to me of little use, for the most part, to those who have it, but inestimable to such as have something to say.

Next to the knowledge of the fact and its law, is method, which constitutes the genius and efficiency of all remarkable men. A crowd of men go up to Faneuil Hall; they are all pretty well acquainted with the object of the meeting; they have all read the facts in the same newspapers. The orator possesses no information which his hearers have not; yet he teaches them to see the thing with his eyes. By the new placing, the circumstances acquire new solidity and worth. Every fact gains consequence by his naming it, and trifles become important. His expressions fix themselves in men's memories, and fly from mouth to mouth. His mind has some new principle of order. Where he looks, all things fly into their places. What will he say next? Let this man speak, and this man only. By applying the habits of a higher style of thought to the common affairs of this world, he introduces beauty and magnificence wherever he goes. Such a power was Burke's, and of this genius we have had some brilliant examples in our own political and legal men.

Imagery. The orator must be, to a certain extent, a poet. We are such imaginative creatures, that nothing so works on the human mind, barbarous or civil, as a trope. Condense some daily experience into a glowing symbol, and an audience is electrified. They feel as if they already possessed some

new right and power over a fact, which they can detach, and so completely master in thought. It is a wonderful aid to the memory, which carries away the image, and never loses it. A popular assembly, like the House of Commons, or the French Chamber, or the American Congress, is commanded by these two powers,—first by a fact, then by skill of statement. Put the argument into a concrete shape, into an image, some hard phrase, round and solid as a ball, which they can see and handle and carry home with them, and the cause is half won.

Statement, method, imagery, selection, tenacity of memory, power of dealing with facts, of illuminating them, of sinking them by ridicule or by diversion of the mind, rapid generalization, humor, pathos, are keys which the orator holds; and yet these fine gifts are not eloquence, and do often hinder a man's attainment of it. And if we come to the heart of the mystery, perhaps we should say that the truly eloquent man is a sane man with power to communicate his sanity. If you arm the man with the extraordinary weapons of this art, give him a grasp of facts, learning, quick fancy, sarcasm, splendid allusion, interminable illustration,—all these talents, so potent and charming, have an equal power to insnare and mislead the audience and the orator. His talents are too much for him, his horses run away with him; and people always perceive whether you drive, or whether the horses take the bits in their teeth and run. But these talents are quite something else when they are subordinated and serve him; and we go to Washington, or to Westminster Hall, or might well go round the world, to see a man who drives, and is not run away with,—a man who, in prosecuting great designs, has an absolute command of the means of representing his ideas, and uses them only to express these; placing facts, placing men; amid the inconceivable levity of human beings, never for an instant warped from his erectness. There is for every man a statement possible of that truth which he is most unwilling to receive,—a statement possible, so broad and so pungent, that he cannot get away from it, but must either bend to it or die of it. Else there would be no such word as eloquence, which means this. The listener cannot hide from himself that something has been shown him and the whole world, which he did not wish to see; and, as he cannot dispose of it, it disposes of him. The history of public men and affairs in America will readily furnish tragic examples of this fatal force.

For the triumphs of the art somewhat more must still be required, namely, a reinforcing of man from events, so as to give the double force of reason and destiny. In transcendent eloquence, there was ever some crisis in affairs, such as could deeply engage the man to the cause he pleads, and draw all this wide power to a point. For the explosions and eruptions, there must be accumulations of heat somewhere, beds of ignited anthracite at the centre. And in cases where profound conviction has been wrought, the eloquent man is he who is no beautiful speaker, but who is inwardly drunk with a certain belief. It agitates and tears him, and perhaps almost bereaves him of the power of articulation. Then it rushes from him as in short, abrupt screams, in torrents of meaning. The possession the subject has of his mind is so entire, that it insures an order of expression which is the order of Nature itself, and so the order of greatest force, and inimitable by any art. And the main distinction between him and other well-graced actors is the conviction, communicated by every word, that his mind is contemplating a whole and inflamed by the contemplation of the whole, and that the words and sentences uttered by him, however admirable, fall from him as unregarded parts of that terrible whole which he sees, and which he means that you shall see. Add to this concentration a certain regnant calmness, which, in all the tumult, never utters a premature syllable, but keeps the secret of its means and method; and the orator stands before the people as a demoniacal power to whose miracles they have no key. This terrible earnestness makes good the ancient superstition of the hunter, that the bullet will hit its mark, which is first dipped in the marksman's blood.

Eloquence must be grounded on the plainest narrative. Afterwards, it may warm itself until it exhales symbols of every kind and color, speaks only through the most poetic forms; but, first and last, it must still be at bottom a biblical statement of fact. The orator is thereby an orator, that he keeps his feet ever on a fact. Thus only is he invincible. No gifts, no graces, no power of wit or learning or illustration will make any amends for want of this. All audiences are just to this point. Fame of

voice or of rhetoric will carry people a few times to hear a speaker, but they soon begin to ask, "What is he driving at?" and if this man does not stand for anything, he will be deserted. A good upholder of anything which they believe, a fact-speaker of any kind, they will long follow; but a pause in the speaker's own character is very properly a loss of attraction. The preacher enumerates his classes of men, and I do not find my place therein; I suspect, then, that no man does. Every thing is my cousin, and whilst he speaks things, I feel that he is touching some of my relations, and I am uneasy; but whilst he deals in words, we are released from attention. If you would lift me, you must be on higher ground. If you would liberate me, you must be free. If you would correct my false view of facts,—hold up to me the same facts in the true order of thought, and I cannot go back from the new conviction.

The power of Chatham, of Pericles, of Luther, rested on this strength of character, which, because it did not and could not fear anybody, made nothing of their antagonists, and became sometimes exquisitely provoking and sometimes terrific to these.

We are slenderly furnished with anecdotes of these men, nor can we help ourselves by those heavy books in which their discourses are reported. Some of them were writers, like Burke; but most of them were not, and no record at all adequate to their fame remains. Besides, what is best is lost, the fiery life of the moment. But the conditions for eloquence always exist. It is always dying out of famous places, and appearing in corners. Wherever the polarities meet, wherever the fresh moral sentiment, the instinct of freedom and duty, come in direct opposition to fossil conservatism and the thirst of gain, the spark will pass. The resistance to slavery in this country has been a fruitful nursery of orators. The natural connection by which it drew to itself a train of moral reforms, and the slight yet sufficient party organization it offered, reinforced the city with new blood from the woods and mountains. Wild men, John Baptists, Hermit Peters, John Knoxes, utter the savage sentiment of Nature in the heart of commercial capitals. They send us every year some piece of aboriginal strength, some tough oak-stick of a man who is not to be silenced or insulted or intimidated by a mob, because he is more mob than they,—one who mobs the mob,—some sturdy countryman, on whom neither money, nor politeness, nor hard words, nor eggs, nor blows, nor brickbats, make any impression. He is fit to meet the bar-room wits and bullies; he is a wit and a bully himself, and something more; he is a graduate of the plough, and the stub-hoe, and the bush-whacker; knows all the secrets of swamp and snow-bank, and has nothing to learn of labor or poverty or the rough of farming. His hard head went through in childhood the drill of Calvinism, with text and mortification, so that he stands in the New England assembly a purer bit of New England than any, and flings his sarcasms right and left. He has not only the documents in his pocket to answer all cavils and to prove all his positions, but he has the eternal reason in his head. This man scornfully renounces your civil organizations,—county, or city, or governor, or army,—is his own navy and artillery, judge and jury, legislature and executive. He has learned his lessons in a bitter school. Yet, if the pupil be of a texture to bear it, the best university that can be recommended to a man of ideas is the gauntlet of the mobs.

He who will train himself to mastery in this science of persuasion must lay the emphasis of education, not on popular arts, but on character and insight. Let him see that his speech is not differenced from action; that, when he has spoken, he has not done nothing, nor done wrong, but has cleared his own skirts, has engaged himself to wholesome exertion. Let him look on opposition as opportunity. He cannot be defeated or put down. There is a principle of resurrection in him, an immortality of purpose. Men are averse and hostile, to give value to their suffrages. It is not the people that are in fault for not being convinced, but he that cannot convince them. He should mould them, armed as he is with the reason and love which are also the core of their nature. He is not to neutralize their opposition, but he is to convert them into fiery apostles and publishers of the same wisdom.

The highest platform of eloquence is the moral sentiment. It is what is called affirmative truth, and has the property of invigorating the hearer; and it conveys a hint of our eternity, when he feels himself addressed on grounds which will remain when everything else is taken, and which have no trace of time or place or party. Everything hostile is stricken down in the presence of the sentiments;

their majesty is felt by the most obdurate. It is observable, that, as soon as one acts for large masses, the moral element will and must be allowed for, will and must work; and the men least accustomed to appeal to these sentiments invariably recall them when they address nations. Napoleon, even, must accept and use it as he can.

It is only to these simple strokes that the highest power belongs, when a weak human hand touches, point by point, the eternal beams and rafters on which the whole structure of Nature and society is laid. In this tossing sea of delusion, we feel with our feet the adamant; in this dominion of chance, we find a principle of permanence. For I do not accept that definition of Isocrates, that the office of his art is to make the great small and the small great; but I esteem this to be its perfection,—when the orator sees through all masks to the eternal scale of truth, in such sort that he can hold up before the eyes of men the fact of today steadily to that standard, thereby making the great great and the small small,—which is the true way to astonish and to reform mankind.

All the first orators of the world have been grave men, relying on this reality. One thought the philosophers of Demosthenes's own time found running through all his orations,—this, namely, that "virtue secures its own success." "To stand on one's own feet" Heeren finds the keynote to the discourses of Demosthenes, as of Chatham.

Eloquence, like every other art, rests on laws the most exact and determinate. It is the best speech of the best soul. It may well stand as the exponent of all that is grand and immortal in the mind. If it do not so become an instrument, but aspires to be somewhat of itself, and to glitter for show, it is false and weak. In its right exercise, it is an elastic, unexhausted power,—who has sounded, who has estimated it?—expanding with the expansion of our interests and affections. Its great masters, whilst they valued every help to its attainment, and thought no pains too great which contributed in any manner to further it, and, resembling the Arabian warrior of fame, who wore seventeen weapons in his belt, and in personal combat used them all occasionally,—yet undervalued all means, never permitted any talent, neither voice, rhythm, poetic power, anecdote, sarcasm, to appear for show, but were grave men, who preferred their integrity to their talent, and esteemed that object for which they toiled, whether the prosperity of their country, or the laws, or a reformation, or liberty of speech or of the press, or letters, or morals, as above the whole world, and themselves also.

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THE KINLOCH ESTATE, AND HOW IT WAS SETTLED

[Concluded.]

CHAPTER XII

The disappearance of Lucy Ransom did not long remain a secret; it rang through the town, and was accompanied by all sorts of rumors. Some thought she had eloped; but the prevailing opinion was, that she had been tempted into a fatal error, and then, in the frenzy of remorse and shame, had destroyed herself, in order to hide her disgrace from the world. Slight hints were now recalled by many of the poor girl's acquaintance,—hints of love, unrequited and hopeless,—of base and unfeeling treachery,—of remediless sorrow, appealing to the deepest sympathy, and not the less because her heart found utterance in rude and homely phrases. This idea of self-destruction gained the more currency because no one had seen the least trace of the girl after the twilight of the preceding night, and it was deemed improbable that she could have made her way on foot the whole distance to the railway-station without being seen by some one. And when it was reported that a boy had found a shawl not far from the dam, the public became so much aroused that it was determined to make a thorough search. The pond and canal were dragged, and the bank of the river carefully explored for miles below the town. The search was kept up far into the night, the leaders being provided with pitch-pine torches. At every bend, or eddy, or sand-bar, or fallen tree, where it might be supposed that a drifting body would be stopped, the boldest breathed faster, and started at the first glimpse of a white stone or a peeled and bleached poplar-trunk, or other similar object, fearing it might prove to be what they expected, yet dreaded to see. But it was in vain. Lucy, whether alive or dead, was not to be found. Her grandmother hobbled down to the village, moaning piteously; but she could get little consolation, least of all from Mrs. Kinloch. This incident made a lasting impression. The village boys, who remembered the search with shuddering horror, avoided the river, and even Hugh found means to persuade Mildred to give up the pleasant road on its bank and take the hill district for their afternoon rides.

Meanwhile the time for the trial of the ejectment suit was rapidly approaching, and it was difficult to say whether plaintiff or defendant showed the more signs of anxiety. Mr. Hardwick's life seemed to be bound up in his shop; it was dear to him in the memory of long years of cheerful labor; it was his pride as well as his dependence; he had grown old by its flaming forge, and he could never feel at home in any other spot. "Young trees may be moved," he would say; "an old one dies in transplanting." It was noticed by all his friends that the stoop in his shoulders was more decided, his step less elastic, and his ordinary flow of spirits checked.

Mrs. Kinloch, too, grew older unaccountably fast. Her soft brown hair began to whiten, her features grew sharp, and her expression quick, watchful, and intense. Upon being spoken to, she would start and tremble in her whole frame; her cheeks would glow momentarily, and then become waxen again.

Impatient at the slow progress of her son's wooing, and impelled now by a new fear that all her plans might be frustrated, if Mildred should happen to hear any rumor touching the cause of Lucy's disappearance, Mrs. Kinloch proposed to herself to assist him more openly than she had hitherto done—She was not aware that anything implicating Hugh had been reported, but she knew enough of human nature to be sure that some one would be peering into the mystery,—a mystery which she divined by instinct, but had not herself dared to explore. So, finding a favorable opportunity, she sat down beside Mildred, determined to read the secret of her soul; for she made no question that she could scan her, as she might the delicate machinery of the French clock, noiselessly moving under its crystal cover.

Mildred shuddered unconsciously, as she felt her step-mother's thin fingers gently smoothing the hair upon her temples; still more, as the pale and quivering lips were pressed to her forehead. The caress was not a feigned tenderness. Mrs. Kinloch really loved the girl, with such love as she had to bestow; and if her manner had been latterly abstracted or harsh, it was from preoccupation. She was

soon satisfied that the suspicion she dreaded had not found place in the girl's mind. Leading the way by imperceptible approaches, she spoke in her softest tones of her joy at Hugh's altered manners, her hopes of his future, and especially of her desire to have him leave the navy and settle on shore.

"How happy we might be, Hugh and we," she said, "if we could live here in this comfortable home, and feel that nothing but death would break up the circle! How much your dear father counted on the happiness in store for him in growing old with his children around him!—and would he not be rejoiced to see us cling together, bound by ties as strong as life, and cherishing his memory by our mutual affection?"

Mildred replied in some commonplaces,—rather wondering at the vein of sentiment, and in no way suspecting the object which her step-mother had in view.

Mrs. Kinloch continued:—"Hugh needs some new attraction now to detain him; he is tired of the sea, but he finds the village dull. He is just of the age to think of looking for some romantic attachment; but you know how few girls there are here whose manners and education are such as to please a cultivated man."

Mildred grew uneasy, but remained silent. Mrs. Kinloch was every moment more eager in her manner; a novice, waiting for the turn of the cards in *rouge et noir*, would not have manifested a greater anxiety as to the result. But the girl looked out of the window, and did not see the compressed lips, dilated nostrils, and glittering eyes, that gave such a contradiction to the bland words.

"Mildred, my daughter," she continued, "I have no secrets from you,—least of all about matters that concern us both. Don't you see what I would say? Don't you know what would make our circle complete, inseparable? Pardon the boldness of a fond mother, whose only desire is to see her children happy."

Mildred felt a tear dropping upon the hand which Mrs. Kinloch held with a passionate grasp. She felt the powerful magnetism which the woman exerted upon her, and she trembled, but still kept silent.

"It is for Hugh that I speak. He loves you. Has he not told you so?"

"I do not wish to talk with you about it," said Mildred.

"But I have a right, as his mother and your guardian, to know. I should be wanting in my duty, if I suffered your happiness to be perilled for want of a clear understanding between you. Hugh is proud and sensitive, and you bashful and just the least foolish; so that you are at cross purposes."

"Hugh fully understands my feelings towards him."

"You have given him encouragement?" she asked, eagerly.

"None whatever: it would have been wrong in me to do so."

"Wrong to love him! Why, he is your brother only in name."

"Wrong to encourage him in a love I do not and cannot return," replied Mildred, with a mighty effort, at the same time disengaging her hand.

Mrs. Kinloch could not repress a feeling of admiration, even in her despair, as she saw the clear, brave glance, the heightened color, and the heaving bosom of the girl.

"But, in time, you may think differently," she said, almost piteously.

"I wished to be spared this pain, mother," Mildred replied, trembling at her own boldness, "but you will not let me; and I must tell you, kindly, but decidedly, that I never could marry Hugh under any circumstances whatever."

Her mother did not wince at the rebuff, but followed on even closer. "And why? Who is there more manly, well-educated, kindly, dutiful, than Hugh?"

"I don't wish to analyze his character; probably we shouldn't altogether agree in our judgment; but it is enough that I don't feel in the least attracted by him, and that I could not love him, if he were all that you imagine."

"Then you love another!" said Mrs. Kinloch, fiercely.

Mildred was excessively agitated; but, though her knees trembled, her voice was clear and soft as it had been. "Yes, I do love another; and I don't hesitate to avow it."

"That blacksmith's upstart?" in a still louder key.

"You mean Mark Davenport, probably, who deserves more respectful language."

"Brought up in coal-dust,—the spoiled and forward pet of a foolish old stutterer, who depends for his bread on his dirty work, and who, if he had only his own, would have to leave even the hovel he works in." It was fearful to see how these contemptuous words were hissed out by the infuriated woman.

Mildred was courageous, but she had not passed through the discipline that had developed her step-mother's faculties. So she burst into tears, saying, amidst her sobs, that Mark was allowed by all who knew him to be a young man of promise; that, for herself, she didn't care how much coal-dust he had been through,—*that* would wash off; that, at any rate, she loved him, and would never marry anybody else.

Mrs. Kinloch began to consider. Anger had whirled her away once; a second explosion might create an irreparable breach between them.

"Don't lay up what I have said, Mildred," she urged, in a mild voice. "If I object to your choice, it is because I am proud of you and want you to look high. You can marry whom you choose; no rank or station need be considered above you. Come, don't cry, dear!"

But Mildred refused to be soothed. She could not sympathize with the tropical nature, that smiled like sunshine at one moment, and the next burst into the fury of a tornado. She pushed off the beseeching hand, turned from the offered endearments, and, with reddened, tear-stained face, left the room.

Hugh presently passed through the hall. "Well, mother," said he, "I suppose you think you've done it now."

"Go about your business, you foolish boy!" she retorted. "Go and try something that you do know about. You can snare a partridge, or shoot a woodcock, perhaps!"

CHAPTER XIII

Mildred had now no peace; after what had happened, she could not meet Hugh and his mother with any composure. The scheming woman had risked everything in the appeal she made to her daughter,—risked everything, and lost. Nothing could restore harmony; neither could forget the struggle and live the old quiet life. Mrs. Kinloch, always pursued by anxiety, was one day full of courage, fruitful in plans and resources, and the next day cast down into the pit of despair. Now she clung to her first hope, believing that time, patience, kindness, would soften Mildred's resolution; then, seeing the blank indifference with which she treated Hugh, she racked her invention to provide other means of attaining her end.

Again, the thought of her inexplicable loss came over her, and she was frightened to madness; creeping chills alternating with cold sweats tortured her. It was a mystery she could not penetrate. She could not but implicate Lucy: but then Lucy might be in her grave. After every circumstance had passed in review, her suspicions inevitably returned and fastened upon her lawyer, Clamp. She almost wished he would come to see her again; for he, being naturally sulky at his first reception, had left the haughty woman severely alone. She determined to send for him, on business, and then to try her fascinations upon him, to draw him out, and see if he held her secret.

"Aha!" thought the Squire, as he received the message, "she comes to her senses! Give a woman like Mrs. Kinloch time enough to consider, and she will not turn her back on her true interest. O Theophilus, you are not by any means a fool! Slow and steady, slow and steady you go! Let the frisky woman *appear* to have her way,—you will win in the end!"

The wig and best suit were brushed anew, water was brought into requisition for the visible portions of his person, and, with his most engaging expression arranged upon his parchment face, he presented himself before the widow.

There was a skirmish of small talk, during which Mr. Clamp was placid and self-conscious, while his *vis-à-vis*, though smiling and apparently at ease, was yet alert and excited,—darting furtive glances, that would have startled him like flashes of sunlight reflected from a mirror, if he had not been shielded by his own self-complacency.

"You-have-sent-for-me-on-business,-I-believe," said the lawyer, in a tone continuous and bland as a stream of honey.

"Yes, Sir; I have great confidence in your judgment, and I know that you are devoted to the interests of our family. My poor husband always esteemed you highly."

"Oh, Ma'am! you do me honor!"

"If I have not consulted you about our affairs of late, it is because I have had troubles which I did not wish to burden you with."

"We all have our troubles, Mrs. Kinloch."

"They are very sad to bear,—but profitable, nevertheless.

"But I'm sure you must be wonderfully supported in your trials; I never saw you looking better."

And truly, her thin and mobile lips were of a strangely bright coral, and her usually wan cheeks wore a delicate flush, lending her a beauty, not youthful, to be sure, but yet fascinating. One might desire to see an eye less intense and restless, but he would rarely see a woman of forty so charming.

"You notice my color," said Mrs. Kinloch, mournfully, and with a faint smile; "it's only the effect of a headache. I am far enough from well."

"Indeed!" was the sympathetic reply.

"I have met with a great loss, Mr. Clamp,—some papers of the greatest importance. I was going to consult you about them."

"In which I got ahead of you," thought he.

"Now, ever since the disappearance of Lucy, I have thought she had something to do with them. I never went to the secretary, but she was sure to be spying about. And I believe she knew about my affairs as well as I do myself."

"Or I," mentally ejaculated the lawyer,—meanwhile keeping as close as an oyster.

She continued,—"As the girl was ignorant, and without any interest in the matter more than that of curiosity, I am puzzled to account for all this."

"'Tis strange, truly!"

"Yes, I'm sure she must be only the tool of some shrewder person."

"You alarm me! Who can it be?"

"Perhaps Mildred, or some one who is plotting for her. The Hardwicks, you know, expect she will marry Mark Davenport."

"Do they, indeed? Well, now, that's a shrewd conjecture. Then you think Lucy didn't drown herself?"

"She? By no means!"

"But what can I do in the matter, Mrs. Kinloch?"

"We must find Lucy, or else discover her confidant,"—looking fixedly at him.

"Not very easy to do," said he, never once wincing under her scrutiny.

"Not easy for me. But those that hide can find. Nothing is beyond search, if one really tries."

During this cross-examination, Mr. Clamp's premeditated gallantry had been kept in the background; but he was determined not to let the present opportunity pass by; he therefore turned the current of conversation.

"You have not told me, Mrs. Kinloch, *what* the loss is; so I cannot judge of its importance. You don't wish to have any more repositories of secrets than are necessary; but I think you will readily see that our interests lie in the same direction. If the girl can be found and the papers recovered by anybody, I am the one to do it. If that is impossible, however, the next thing is to be prepared for what may happen; in either emergency, you can hardly do better than to accept my aid."

"Of course, I depend entirely upon you."

"We may as well understand each other," said the lawyer, forgetting the wily ways by which he had intended to approach her. "I have certain views, myself, which I think run parallel with yours; and if I am able to carry you and your property safely through these difficulties, I think you will not scruple to–

"To pay you to your heart's content," she broke in, quickly. "No, I shall not scruple, unless you ask more than half the estate."

"I ask for nothing but yourself," said he, with sudden boldness.

"That is to say, you want the whole of it."

"Charming woman! don't, pray, compel me to talk in this language of traffic. It is you I desire,—not the estate. If there is enough to make you more comfortable than would be possible with my means, I shall be happy for your sake."

Her lips writhed and her eyes shot fire. Should she breathe the scorn she felt, and brave the worst? Or should she temporize? Time might bring about a change, when she could safely send the mercenary suitor back to his dusty and cobwebbed office.

"We do understand each other," she said, slowly. "This is a matter to think of. I had never thought to marry again, and I cannot answer your delicate proposal now. Let me have a week to consider."

"Couldn't we arrange the matter just as well now? I beg your pardon, Ma'am, if I seem too bold."

"Oh, your youthful ardor and impetuosity! To be sure, one must forgive the impatience of a lover in his first passion! But you must wait, nevertheless."

Mr. Clamp laughed. It was a good joke, he thought.

"I must bid you good afternoon, Squire Clamp. I have made my headache worse by talking on a subject I was not prepared for."

So Mr. Clamp was bowed out. He did not clearly understand her quick and subtle movements, but he felt sure of his game in the end. The scornful irony that had played about him like electricity he had not felt.

When he was gone, the woman's worst enemy would have pitied her distress. She believed more than ever that Clamp had used Lucy to abstract her papers, and that he now would hold his power over her to bring about the hated marriage. Her firmness gave way; she sank on the sofa and wept like a child. Would that she might yet retreat! But no, the way is closed up behind her. She must go on to her destiny.

CHAPTER XIV

Mark Davenport was prosperous in all his undertakings. His position in the school did not give much scope to his ambition, but the salary he received was ample enough to pay his expenses, while the duties were not so onerous as to engross all his time. All his leisure was given to literary pursuits. He had many times thought he would relinquish the drudgery of teaching, and support himself by his pen; but he remembered the maxim of Scott,—that literature was a good staff, but a poor crutch,—and he stuck to his school. As he grew into a practised writer, he became connected with the staff of a daily newspaper in the great city, furnishing leading articles when called upon, and he soon acquired a position of influence among his associates. He had maintained a correspondence with Mildred, and was looking forward to the time when he should make a visit to his native town, hoping then to be so well established in the world that he might be able to bring her back with him as his bride. Every thought centred in her. He coveted fame, wealth, position, only for her sake; and stimulated by this thought, he had made exertions that would have broken down a man less vigorous and less resolute.

He received a letter from Innisfield one day, after a long interval,—so long that he had become uneasy, and imagined every kind of evil as the cause of delay. He broke the seal; it was not from Mildred, but from his cousin Lizzie. These were the contents:—

"My dear Mark,—I suppose you may have been anxious before this, at not hearing from us; but the truth is, we have not had anything very pleasant to write, and so have put off sending to you. Father is by no means well or strong. The lawsuit, which is now likely to go wrong, has troubled him very much. He has grown thin, he stoops as he walks about, and by night he coughs terribly. I rarely hear him sing as he used to. Then Squire Clamp has complained of him before the church, and you know father is over-sensitive about his relations with 'the brethren,'—even with those who are trying to ruin him. He is melancholy enough. I hope he will be better, if he gets through his difficulties; otherwise I am afraid to think of what may happen.

"You wonder, probably, at not getting a letter from Mildred. Don't be surprised when I tell you that she has left home and is staying at Mr. Alford's. Mrs. Kinloch has for a long time wanted her to marry that hateful Hugh Branning, and became so violent about it that Mildred was afraid of her. Lucy Ransom, who lived there, ran away a short time ago, very mysteriously. It seems that the girl had stolen something from the house, and, after Mildred had plumply refused to marry Hugh, Mrs. Kinloch charged upon her that she had induced Lucy to steal the papers or money, or whatever it was. Mrs. Kinloch acted so like an insane woman, that Mildred would not stay in the house, but ran over to Mr. Alford's, with only the clothes she wore. She passed by our house yesterday and told me this hurriedly. I have heard, too, that Squire Clamp is about to marry Mrs. Kinloch, and that he actually has procured the license. It's a very strange affair.

"To fill out the account of disagreeable things,—last evening, in one of the stores, people were talking of Lucy Ransom's fate, (as they have been for weeks,) when Will Fenton, the cripple, said, 'he guessed Hugh Branning could tell what had become of her, if he chose.' Hugh, it seems, heard of the remark, and to-day he went with a dandyish doctor, belonging to the navy, I believe, and beat the poor cripple with a horsewhip, most shamefully. I think this violence has turned suspicion against him.

"I am sorry not to have one pleasant thing to say, except that we all love you as warmly as ever, and hope to see you soon here. Indeed, Cousin Mark, I dread to write it,—but if you don't come soon, I think you will see father only on his last bed.

"Good-bye, dear Mark!
Your Cousin,—LIZZIE."

We will waste no time in attempting to analyze Mark's conflicting emotions, but follow him to Innisfield, whither he went the same day. Great as was his desire to see his betrothed, from whom

he had received no letter for many weeks, he went first of all, where duty and affection called, to see the dear old man who had been to him more than a father.

Mr. Hardwick was sitting in the corner, but rose up with a new energy as he heard the well-known voice. Mark was not prepared, even by his cousin's foreboding letter, to see such a change as his uncle exhibited;—the hollow eyes, the wasted cheeks, the bent figure, the trembling hands, bore painful testimony to his enfeebled condition. He held both of Mark's hands in his, and, while his eyes were dim in a tear-mist, said, with a faltering voice, "Bless you, m-my boy! I'm glad to see you once more. I thought I might hear my s-summons before you'd come. You do remember your old uncle!"

Mark could not restrain himself, but wept outright. The old gentleman sank into his chair, still clasping Mark's hands. Neither could speak, but they looked towards each other an unutterable tenderness.

At length, controlling the tide of feeling, Mr. Hardwick said,—"D-don't be cast down, Mark; these tears are not b-bitter, but f-full of joy. Th-there, now, go and kiss your sister and Lizzie."

The girls appeared wiping their eyes, for they had left the room overpowered; they greeted Mark affectionately, and then all sat down about the hearth. Topics enough there were. Mark told of his pursuits and prospects. The village gossip about the lost servant-girl, (of whom Mark knew something, but had reasons for silence,) the approaching marriage of Mrs. Kinloch, and the exile of the heiress from her own home, were all discussed. After a reasonable time, Mark excused himself and went to Mr. Alford's, pondering much on the strange events that had perplexed the usually quiet village. He reached the house, after a brief walk, and was met by Aunt Mercy, the portly mistress, but with something less than her accustomed cordiality.

"Miss Kinloch is not able to see company," she said, "and must be excused."

Mark poured forth a torrent of questions, to which Mrs. Alford listened, her broad features softening visibly; and at length, with an apparent effort, she asked him "to come agin to-morrer or the day arter."

The more Mark reflected on Mrs. Alford's behavior, the more he was puzzled. Had Mildred denied him admission? His own betrothed refuse to see him! No, he was sure she was sick; and besides, she could not have heard of his coming. So he soothed himself. But the imps of suspicion and jealousy still haunted him at intervals, and a more miserable man than the usually buoyant and sanguine Mark it would be difficult to find.

The next day, as soon as breakfast was over, Mark, though trying to cheer up his uncle, was secretly longing for the hour when it would be proper to present himself at Mr. Alford's. But time does move, albeit with lagging pace to a lover, and in due season Mark was on his way. Near the house he met the farmer, who greeted him heartily, and wished him joy with a knowing smile. Mark took a freer breath; if there was any difficulty, Mr. Alford certainly did not know it. But then it occurred to him, that shy young ladies do not often make confidants of elderly husbandmen in long blue frocks, and his spirits fell again.

Mr. Alford leaned against a fence and threshed his hands to keep them warm, while he told Mark that "he had been with Mildred privately out to the Probate Court,—that the case had been stated to the jedge, who allowed, that, as she was above fourteen, she had a right to choose her own guardeen,—that he, Alford, was to be put in, in place of the Squire,—and that then, in his opinion, there would be an overhaulin' so's to hev things set to rights."

Mark shook the hand of his good friend warmly, and commended his shrewdness.

"But 'ta'n't best to stan' talkin' with an ol' feller like me," said the farmer, "when you can do so much better. Jest look!"

Mark turned his head, and through the window of the house saw the retreating figure of Mildred. He bounded across the yard, opened the door without knocking, and rushed into the house. She had vanished: no one was visible but Mrs. Alford, who was cutting up golden pumpkins in long coils to dry.

"Come, Milly," said the good woman, "'ta'n't no use; he saw ye."

And Mildred appeared, coming slowly out of the buttery.

"Ye see, Mildred felt a little hurt about a letter; but I *knew* there was some mistake; so I wa'n't a-goin' to hev ye go off 'thout some explanation."

"A letter?—explanation?" said Mark, thoroughly bewildered.

"Here it is," said Mildred, taking a letter from her pocket, still looking down. Mark hastily took and opened it. The envelope bore Mildred's address in a hand not unlike his own; the inclosure was a letter from Mildred to himself, which he now saw for the first time.

"Mildred," said he, holding out his hands, "could you doubt me?"

She covered her face with her apron, but stood irresolute. He looked again at the letter.

"Why, the clumsy trick, Mildred! This post-office stamp, 'New York,' is not genuine. Just look! it is a palpable cheat, an imitation made with a pen. The color did not spread, you see, as ink mixed with oil does. This letter never left this village. I never saw it before,—could not have seen it. Do you doubt me now, dear Mildred?"

Even if the evidence had been less convincing, the earnest, heartfelt tone, the pleading look and gesture, would have satisfied a much more exacting woman. She sprang towards her lover, and flung her arms about his neck. The pent-up feeling of days and weeks rushed over her like a flood, and the presence of Mrs. Alford was forgotten.

Mrs. Alford, it would seem, suddenly thought of something; for, gathering herself up, she walked off as fast as the laws of gravitation allowed, exclaiming,—"There! I never did see! Sech hens! Allus a-flyin' into the kitchen. I wonder now who left that are door open."

The frightened cackle of the hens, the rattling of pots and pans by the assiduous housewife in the kitchen, were unheeded by the lovers, "emparadised in one another's arms." The conversation took too wide a range and embraced too many trivial details to be set down here. Only this I may say: they both believed, (as every enamored couple believes,) that, though other people might cherish the properest affection for each other, yet no man or woman ever did or could experience such intense and all-pervading emotion as now throbbed in their breasts,—in fact, that they had been created to exemplify the passion, which, before, poets had only imagined. Simple children! they had only found out what hearts are made for!

CHAPTER XV

The last picture was a pleasant relief in a rather sombre story, therefore we prefer to commence a stormier scene in a new chapter. Mark and Mildred were sitting cozily by the ample fireplace,—not at opposite corners, you may believe,—when there was a warning *ahem!* at the door, and the sound of feet "a-raspin' on the scraper." Mr. Alford entered and said, "Milly, your step-mother's team is comin' up the road." In a moment there was a bustle in the house, but before any preparation could be made the carriage was at the gate, and Mrs. Kinloch, accompanied by Squire Clamp, knocked at the door.

"Milly, you go into the kitchen with Mrs. Alford," said the farmer.

"I'll attend to matters for them."

"No, Mr. Alford," she answered; "you are very good, but I think I'll stay and see them. Shan't I, Mark?"

Mrs. Kinloch and the lawyer entered. She had left off her mourning, but looked as pale and thoughtful as ever. After the common courtesies, brief and cool in this case, Mrs. Kinloch made known her errand. She had been grieved that Mildred should have left her father's house and remained so long with strangers, and she had now come to beg her to return home. Mildred replied, that she had not left home without cause, and that she had no intention of going back at present. Mrs. Kinloch looked hurt, and said that this unusual conduct, owing partly to the common and wicked prejudice against step-mothers, had wounded her sorely, and she hoped Mildred would do her the simple justice of returning to a mother who loved her, and would make every sacrifice for her happiness. Mildred said she did not wish to go over the ground again; she thought she understood the love that had been shown her; and she did not desire any further sacrifices, such as she had witnessed. The request was renewed in various forms, but to no purpose. Then Squire Clamp interposed with great solemnity, saying, that, if she had forgotten the respect and affection due to the mother who had fostered her, she ought to know that the law had conferred upon him, as her guardian, the authority of a father, and he begged her not to give him the pain of exercising the control which it would be his bounden duty to use.

Mr. Alford had been uneasy during this conversation, and broke in at the first pause.

"Well, Square, I guess you'd best wait till 'bout next week-a-Thursday afore you try to use your 'thority. Probate Court sets on Wednesday, an' I guess that'll 'bout wind up your business as guardeen."

What a magazine of wrath that shot exploded! The lawyer was dumb for a moment, but presently he and Mrs. Kinloch both found breath for their indignation.

The woman turned first upon Mark. "This is your doing, Sir!"

"You do too much honor to my foresight," he replied. "I am heartily glad that my good friend here was thoughtful enough and ready to interfere for the protection of a fatherless girl."

"Insolence!" shouted the lawyer.

"The impertinent puppy!" chimed in the woman.

"Come, come!" said the farmer, "too loud talkin'!"

"Then you uphold this girl in her undutiful behavior, do you?" asked Mrs. Kinloch.

"You are amenable to the statutes, Sir," said the Squire.

Mr. Alford rose to his feet. "Now you might jest as well get inter yer kerridge an' drive back ter town," said he; "you won't make one o' them hairs o' yourn black or white, Square, not by talkin' all day."

The lawyer settled his wig in a foaming rage. "Come, Mrs. Clamp," said he, "we shall not remain here to be insulted. Let us go; I shall know how to protect our property, our authority, and honor, from the assault of adventurers and meddlers."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said Mark, "but what was the appellation you gave to the lady just now? You can call us what you like."

"Mrs. Clamp, Sir," he answered, with a portentous emphasis,—"Mrs. Clamp,—united to me, Sir, this morning, by the Reverend Mr. Rook, in the holy bands of matrimony."

They swept out of the house. Mildred sank to her chair as if stunned.

"O God!" she said, "*my* mother and father!"

"Poor gal!" said Mr. Alford, "small comfort you'll hev in sich parents. But cheer up; you won't need for friends."

She looked up through her tears at Mark's manly face, full now of sympathy, and blessed the farmer for his words.

Mr. Alford, taking Mark aside, said, "You know about Lucy's runnin' away, most likely. Wal, now, ef she could be found, there's no knowin' what might happen; for it's my opinion she knows about Square Kinloch's affairs. I thought mebbe you might 'a' seen her in York?"

Mark replied, that he did meet her in Broadway late one afternoon, and that she looked as if she would speak; but that he hurried on, for the flaunting style of her dress was not calculated to prepossess the passers by.

"Good gracious! you don't say so! Seen her yourself? Now do you go right back to York an' hunt her up—no matter what it costs."

"But my uncle?"

"We'll look arter him."

It was speedily determined, and Mark set out the same day. Meanwhile, Mildred had promised to go and see Mr. Hardwick and endeavor to make him cheerful.

"It beats all," said Mr. Alford to his wife. "Now 'f he *should* find that unfort'nate gal! Wal, wal, I begin to think the Lord does look arter things some, even in this world."

We leave Squire Clamp and his new wife to their happiness; it would not be well to lift the decent veil which drops over their household. The dark, perchance guilty, past,—the stormy present, and the retribution of the future,—let memory and conscience deal with them!

CHAPTER XVI

Never was a little village in greater commotion than Innisfield after Mark's departure. The succession of events had been such as to engage the attention of the most indifferent. The mysterious exile of Mildred, the failing health and spirits of the blacksmith, the new rumors respecting the fate of Lucy, the sudden and unaccountable marriage of Mrs. Kinloch, and her fruitless attempt to bring her daughter back, were all discussed in every house, as well as in places of public resort. Hugh Branning was soon convinced that the village was no place for him. He had bravely horsewhipped a cripple, but he could not stop the tongues of the whole parish, even if he could protect himself from swift and extempore justice. He gathered his clothes, and, after a long private conference with his mother, started before daylight for the railway-station. As he does not appear on the stage again, we may say here, that, not long after, during a financial panic in New York, he made a fortune of nearly half a million dollars by speculating in stocks. He used to tell his friends in after years that he had "only five thousand to begin with,—the sole property left him by his lamented parents." He has now a handsome mansion in the Fifth Avenue, is a conspicuous member of the Rev. Dr. Holdfast's church, and most zealous against the ill-timed discussions and philanthropic vagaries of the day. What would he not give to forget that slowly-moving figure, with swimming eyes, carrying a flaring candle? How far along the years that feeble light was thrown! He never went through the hall of his house at night without a shudder, dreading to catch a glimpse of that sorrowing face.

It was on Tuesday evening, the night preceding the Probate Court to which Squire Clamp had been cited. Nothing had been heard from Mark, and his friends were much depressed. Mildred sat by Mr. Hardwick's bedside, during the long hours, and read to him from his favorite authors. About ten o'clock, just as the family were preparing to go to bed, Mark drove up to the door. He was warmly welcomed, and at once overwhelmed with questions. "Did he find Lucy?" "What did she know?" "Why did she secrete herself?" To all these Mark merely replied, "I found Lucy; how much I have accomplished I dare not say. But do you, James, come with me. We will go up to old Mrs. Ransom's."

"Why, she's not there; she's gone to the poor-house."

"Broken down with old age and sorrow, I suppose. But I don't care to see her now. Let us go to the old house; and meantime, you girls, go to bed."

But they protested they should wait till he returned,—that they could not sleep a wink until they knew the result.

Provided with a lantern, the young men set out. They found the hovel nearly in ruins; for pilferers had taken such pieces as they could strip off for firewood. Mark eagerly ripped up the floor near the hearth. At the first flash of the light he saw a paper, dusty and discolored. He seized and opened it. *It was the will of Mr. Kinloch, duly signed and attested*. Lucy had not deceived him.

With hurried pace they returned to the village, scarcely stopping to take breath until they reached Mr. Hardwick's house. It was no vain hope, then! It was true! The schemes of the step-mother would be frustrated. The odious control of Squire Clamp would end. Mark began to read the will, then stopped, embraced his cousins and Mildred by turns, then read again. He was beside himself with joy.

All were too much excited to sleep; and when the first transports of surprise were over, they naturally inquired after the unfortunate girl. He had found her, after great difficulty, in a miserable garret. The surmises of the villagers were correct. She was ruined, heart-broken. Dissipation, exposure, and all the frightful influences of her wretched life had brought on a fever, and now, destitute and forsaken, she was left by those who had made merchandise of her beauty, to die. He learned from Lucy what she knew of the affair of the will. She became satisfied, soon after Mr. Kinloch's death, that some wrong was intended, and she watched her mistress. Then Squire Clamp had induced her by threats and bribes to get for him the papers. As she took them out of the desk,

one, larger than the rest, and with several seals, attracted her attention. She felt quite sure it was Mr. Kinloch's will; so she secreted it and gave the lawyer the rest. The Monday afternoon following, she took the will to her grandmother's and put it under a plank in the floor. Squire Clamp, strangely enough, chanced to stop just as she had hidden it. He gave her back the papers, as she supposed, and she replaced them in the secretary. On her way home she fell in with Hugh,—a day neither of them would ever forget.

The lawyer, who had counted on an easy victory over Mr. Alford, was greatly surprised, the next day, to see him accompanied by Mark, as he came into court; he had not heard of the young man's return. Besides, their unmistakable air of confidence and exultation caused him some misgivings. But he was boldness itself, compared with his wife. Her face was bloodless, her hands tremulous, and her expression like that of one ready to faint. Imagine the horror with which she saw the production of the will, and then the proof by the only surviving witness, brought to court from his residence in a neighboring town! The letters of administration were revoked, and Mr. Alford, one of the executors, was appointed Mildred's guardian. Completely baffled, dumb and despairing, Squire Clamp and his bride left the room and drove homeward. A pleasant topic for conversation they had by the way, each accusing the other of duplicity, treachery, and folly! The will provided that she should receive an annuity of one thousand dollars *during her widowhood*; so that the Squire, by wedding her, had a new incumbrance without any addition to his resources; a bad bargain, decidedly, he thought. She, on the other hand, had thrown away her sure dependence, in the hope of retaining the control of the whole estate; for when she consented to marry Clamp, she had no doubt that he had possession of the will and would, of course, keep it concealed. Seldom it is that *both* parties to a transaction are so overreached.

The successful party stopped at Mr. Hardwick's that evening to exchange congratulations. He, as well as Mildred and Mark, was interested in the lost will; for Mr. Kinloch had mentioned the fact of the unsettled boundary-line, and directed his executors to make a clear title of the disputed tract to the blacksmith. The shop was his; the boys, at all events, would be undisturbed. One provision in the will greatly excited Mark's curiosity. The notes which he owed to the estate were to be cancelled, and there was an unexplained reference to his uncle Hardwick and to some occurrences of long ago. Mildred at once recalled to mind her father's dying words,—his calling for Mr. Hardwick, and his mention of the cabinet. She had often thought of her search in its drawers, and of her finding the lock of sunny hair and the dried flower. And the blacksmith now, when asked, shook his head mournfully, and said, (as he had before,) "Sus-some time; nun-not now!"

CHAPTER XVII

The next day Mr. Alford came to town and advised Mark to marry forthwith.

"I've ben thinkin' it over," he said, "and I b'lieve it's the best thing to be done. You've got a tough customer to deal with, and it may be some trouble to git all the property out of his hands. But when the heiress is married, her husband can act for her to better advantage. I guess I'll speak to Mr. Rook and have the 'fair 'tended to right away."

Mark submitted the matter to Mildred, who blushed properly, and thought it rather hasty. But Mr. Alford's clear reasoning prevailed, and the time was appointed at once. Mark and Mr. Alford then went to call upon the lawyer. They entered his office without knocking, and by chance found him busy with the accounts and papers; they were scattered over the table, and he was making computations. As soon as he was aware of the presence of visitors, he made an effort to slide the documents under some loose sheets of paper; but Mark knew the bold hand at once, and without a word seized the papers and handed them to Mr. Alford.

"Not very p'lite, Square, I know," said Mr. Alford, "but possession is nine p'ints of the law, as I've heerd you say; and as you won't deny the handwritin', I s'pose you don't question my right to these 'ere."

The rage of Mr. Clamp may be imagined.

"Good mornin', Square," said the triumphant executor. "When we've looked over these affairs, we'll trouble you and the widder that was, to 'count for what the schedool calls for."

The simple preparations for the wedding were soon made, and the honest, great-hearted farmer had the pleasure of giving away the bride. It was a joyful, but not a merry wedding; both had passed through too many trials, and had too many recollections. And the evident decline of Mr. Hardwick made Mark sad and apprehensive. But he devoutly thanked God, as he clasped his bride to his bosom, for the providence that had brought to him the fulfilment of his dearest hopes.

Here we might stop, according to ancient custom, leaving our hero and heroine to their happiness. But though a wedding is always an event of interest, there are other things to be narrated before we have done with our story.

Not long after, Mark called at the Kinloch house, then occupied by Mr. Clamp; as a measure of precaution, he took Mr. Alford with him. Mildred had never regained her wardrobe; everything that was dear to her was still in her stepmother's keeping,—her father's picture, her own mother's miniature, the silver cup she had used from infancy, and all the elegant and tasteful articles that had accumulated in a house in which no wish was left ungratified. Ever since the session of the Probate Court, the house had been shut to visitors, if any there had been. Mrs. Clamp had not been seen once out of doors. But after waiting a time, Mark and his friend were admitted. As they entered the house, the bare aspect of the rooms confirmed the rumors which Mark had heard. Mrs. Clamp received them with a kind of sullen civility, and, upon hearing the errand, replied,—

"Certainly, Mrs. Davenport can have her clothes. She need not have sent more than one man to get them. Is that all?"

"Not quite," said Mark. "Perhaps you are not aware of the change which the discovery of the will may make in your circumstances. I do not speak of the punishment which the fraud merits, but of the rights which are now vested in me. First, I am desired to ask after the plate, jewels, furs, and wardrobe of the first Mrs. Kinloch."

Mrs. Clamp was silent. A word let fall by Lucy suddenly flashed into Mark's mind, and he intimated to the haughty woman his purpose to go into the east front-chamber.

"Fine gentlemen," she said at length, "to pry into a lady's private apartment! You will not dare enter it without my permission!"

And she stood defiantly in the doorway. But, without parley, Mark and Mr. Alford pushed by her and walked up the staircase, not heeding the shout of Mr. Clamp, who had followed them to the house.

"It might seem mean," said Mark to Mr. Alford; "but I think you'll agree presently, that it wasn't a case for ceremony."

He stripped the clothes from the bed. The pillows were stuffed with valuable furs; fine linen and embroideries filled the bolsters. The feather-sack contained dresses of rich and costly fabrics,—the styles showing them to be at least twenty years old. And in the mattress were stowed away the dinner and tea services of silver, together with porcelain, crystal, and Bohemian ware.

"What a deal o' comfort a body could take in sleepin' on a bed stuffed like this 'ere!" said Mr. Alford; "I sh'd think he'd dream of the 'Rabian Nights."

"After this, Madam," said Mark, upon returning to the hall, "you can hardly expect any special lenity from me. The will allowed you an annuity of one thousand dollars while you remained single; since you are married your interest ceases, but you shall receive two hundred a year. The house, however, belongs to my wife. Your husband there has a home to which you can go."

"Yes," said the lawyer, "he *has* a home, and won't be beholden to any man for a roof to shelter his family."

The pride of the woman was still unbent. Though her cheek was blanched and her lips were bitten blue, still she stood erect and her head turned queenly as ever. The glance she threw to the man who called her wife was enough to have pierced him. Turning to Mark, she said,—

"If you will come to-morrow,—or Monday, rather,—you can have possession of the house and property. My own things can be easily removed, and it will be a simple matter to make ready for new comers."

"I could keep them out of it a year, if I chose," said Mr. Clamp.

"But I do not choose," said she, with superb haughtiness.

"Wal, good mornin'," said Mr. Alford.

As they left the house, Mrs. Clamp sat down in the silent room. Without, the wind whistled through the naked trees and whirled up spiral columns of leaves; the river below was cased in ice; the passers-by looked pinched with cold, and cast hurried glances over their shoulders at the ill-fated house and the adjacent burying-ground. Within, the commotion, the chill, the hurry, the fright, were even more intense. What now remained to be done? Her son, vanquished in love by a blacksmith's *protégé*, had fled, and left her to meet her fate alone. The will had been discovered, and, as if by a special interposition of Providence, the victim of her son's passions had been the instrument of vengeance. The lawyer who had worked upon her fears had proved unable to protect her. The estate was out of her hands; the property with which she had hoped to escape from the hated town and join her son was seized; she was a ruined, disgraced woman. She had faced the battery of curious eyes, as she walked with the husband she despised to the Sunday services; but what screen had she now that her pride was humbled? The fearful struggle in the mind of the lonely woman in the chill and silent room, who shall describe it? She denied admission to the servants and her husband, and through the long evening still sat by the darkening window, far into the dim and gusty night.

Squire Clamp went to bed moody, if not enraged; but when, on waking, he found his wife still absent, he became alarmed. Early in the morning he tracked her through a light snow, that had sifted down during the night, to the river-bank, at the bend where the current keeps the ice from closing over. An hour after, some neighbors, hastily summoned, made a search at the dam. One of them, crossing the flume by Mr. Hardwick's shop, broke the newly-formed ice and there found the drifting body of Mrs. Clamp. Her right hand, stretched out stiff, was thrust against the floats of the water-wheel, as if, even in death, she remembered her hate against the family whose fortune had risen upon her overthrow!

CHAPTER XVIII

Mark and Mr. Alford, after their disagreeable interview with the Clamps, went to see Mr. Hardwick, whom they wished to congratulate. At the door they were met by Lizzie, whose sad face said, "Hush!" Mark's spirits fell instantly. "Is he worse?" he asked. A tear was the only answer. He asked Mr. Alford to go for Mildred. "She has just come," said Lizzie.

They found Mr. Hardwick propped up in bed, whence he could look out of the window. The church-spire rose on the one hand, and on the other the chimney of the shop was seen above the trees on the river-bank. By night the column of sparks had gladdened his eye, as he thought of the cheerful industry of his sons. Mark tenderly pressed his uncle's hand, and leaned over him with an affectionate, sorrowing interest.

"Der-don't take it to heart, my boy," said Mr. Hardwick. "I am very h-happy."

"I am glad that the boys won't lose the shop," said Mark. "I see you are looking out to the chimney."

"Yer-yes, it was thoughtful of Mr. Kinloch, and a special Pr-Providence that the will was found."

"You know he mentioned his claim against me," said Mark; "that is paid, and it doesn't matter; but I can't guess the reason for the unusual kindness he has shown towards me."

The old man answered slowly, for his breathing was difficult and often painful.

"It is an old story,—old as the dried f-flowers that Mildred told me of,—but it had a f-fragrance once. Yer-your mother, Mark, was as per-pretty a girl as you'd often see. Walter Kinloch ler-loved her, and she him. He sailed to the Indies, an' some der-diff'culty happened, so that the letters stopped. I d-don't know how 'twas. But arter a while sh-she married your father. Mr. Kinloch, he m-married, too; but I guess he nun-never forgot the girl of his choice."

Mark grasped his young wife's hand, at this tale of years gone by.

"The lock of hair and the rose were your mother's, then!" she whispered. "Dear father! faithful, even in death, to his friends, and to the memory of his first love! How much suffering and crime would have been prevented, if he could only have uttered the words which his heart prompted!"

"God forgive the woman!" said Mr. Hardwick, solemnly. None knew then how much she had need of forgiveness, standing as she was on the brink of that last fatal plunge!

Mr. Alford suggested that the fatigue of talking would wear upon the enfeebled man, and advised that he should be left to get some rest, if possible.

"To-morrow is S-Sabba'-day, ef I've counted right," said Mr. Hardwick.

"I sh-should like to see the sun on the st-heeple once more."

"Dear uncle, I hope you may see it a great many times. We must leave you to rest."

"Good-night, mum-my children," he replied. "God b-bless you all! Let me put my hands on your h-heads."

They knelt by his bedside, and he blessed them fervently. Mr. Alford and Lizzie remained to attend upon him, and the others withdrew.

The night passed, how wearily! None could sleep, for through all the air there was a presage of sorrow, a solemn "tingling silentness," to which their senses were painfully alive. Who, that has passed the interminable gloomy hours that preceded the departure of a loved and venerated friend into the world of spirits, does not remember this unutterable suspense, this fruitless struggle with eternal decrees, this clinging of affection to the parting soul? What a sinking of the heart even the recollection of such a scene produces!

The day dawned upon sleepless, tear-stained eyes. The dying man was conscious, cheerful, and calmly breathing. In the adjoining room the family sat beside the table on which was spread their untasted breakfast.

The bell began to ring for meeting. Mr. Hardwick roused up at the sound, and called for his children. He blessed them again, and placed his hands on their bowed heads in turn. He thought of the psalms which he had so often led, and he asked all to join in singing Billings's "Jordan."

"There is a land of pure delight,
  Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
  And pleasures banish pain."

With faltering voices they sang the triumphal hymn. The old man's eyes were fixed upon the steeple, which pointed upward through the clear air, and shone in the golden light of the sun. He kept time with a feeble movement, and once or twice essayed to raise his own wavering voice. A smile of heavenly beauty played over his pallid features as the music ceased,—a radiance like that crimson glow which covers the mountain-top at dawn. He spoke almost inaudibly, as if in a trance; then repeating with a musical flow the words of his favorite author,

"Where the bright seraphim in burning row
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow,
And the cherubic host in thousand choirs
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly,"—

his voice sank again, though it was easy to see that a prayer trembled on his lips. As a strain of music fades into silence, his tones fell away, fainter and fainter; and with the same seraphic light on his countenance his breathing ceased.

THE BIRTH-MARK

A.D. 12—

See, here it is, upon my breast,—
  The bloody image of a hand!
On her white bosom it was pressed,
  Who should have nursed—you understand;—
I never yet have named her name,
Nor will I, till 'tis free from shame.

The good old crone that tended me
  Through sickly childhood, lonely youth,
Told me the story: so, you see,
  I know it is God's sacred truth,
That holy lips and holy hands
In secrecy had blessed the bands.

And well he knew it, too,—the accursed!—
  To whom my grandsire gave his child
With dying breath;—for from the first
  He saw, and tried to snare the wild
And frightened love that thought to rest
Its wings upon my father's breast.

You may have seen him riding by,—
  This same Count Bernard, stern and cold;
You know, then, how his creeping eye
  One's very soul in charm will hold.
Snow-locks he wears, and gracious art;
But hell is whiter than his heart.

Well, as I said, the secret rite
  Had joined them, and the two were one;
And so it chanced, one summer night,
  When the half-moon had set, and none
But faint star-shadows on the grass
Lay watching for his feet to pass,

Led by the waiting light that gleamed
  From out one chamber-window, came
The husband-lover;—soon they dreamed,—
  Her lips still murmuring his name
In sleep,—while, as to guard her, fell
His arm across her bosom's swell.

The low wind shook the darkened pane,
  The far clock chimed along the hall,
There came a moment's gust of rain,
  The swallow chirped a single call
From his eaves'-nest, the elm-bough swayed
Moaning;—they slumbered unafraid.

Without a creak the chamber-door
  Crept open!—with a cat-like tread,
Shading his lamp with hand that bore
  A dagger, came beside their bed
The Count. His hair was tinged with gray:
Gold locks brown-mixed before him lay.

A thrust,—a groan,—a fearful scream,
  As from the peace of love's sweet rest
She starts!—O God! what horrid dream
  Swells her bound eyeballs? From her breast
Fall off the garments of the night,—
A red hand strikes her bosom's white!

She knew no more that passed; her ear
  Caught not the hurried cries,—the rush
Of the scared household,—nor could hear
  The voice that broke the after-hush:—
"There with her paramour she lay!
He lies here!—carry her away!"

The evening after I was born
  No roses on the bier were spread,
As when for maids or mothers mourn
  Pure-hearted ones who love the dead;
They buried her, so young, so fair,
With hasty hands and scarce a prayer.

Count Bernard gained the lands, while I,
  Cast forth, forgotten, thus have grown
To manhood; for I could not die—
  I cannot die—till I atone
For her great shame; and so you see
I track him, and he flies from me.

And one day soon my hand I'll lay
  Upon his arm, with lighter touch
Than ladies use when in their play
  They tap you with their fans; yet such
A thrill will freeze his every limb
As if the dead were clutching him!

I think that it would make you smile
  To see him kneel and hear him plead,—
I leaning on my sword the while,
  With a half-laugh, to watch his need:—
At last my good blade finds his heart,
And then this red stain will depart.

RAMBLES IN AQUIDNECK

I

NEWPORT BEACH

Newport has many beaches, each bearing a distinctive appellation. To the one of which we are speaking rightfully belongs the name of Easton; but it is more widely known by that of the town itself, and still more familiarly to the residents as "The Beach." It lies east of the city, a mile from the harbor, and is about half a mile in length. Its form is that of the new moon, the horns pointing southward.

Let us go there now. No better time could be chosen by the naturalist, for the tide will be at its lowest ebb. Descending Bath Road, the beautiful crescent lies before us on the right,—Easton's Pond, with its back-ground of farms, upon the left. There is no wind to-day to break the surface of the standing water, and it gives back the dwarf willows upon its banks and the houses on the hill-side with more than Daguerrian fidelity. The broad ocean lies rocking in the sunshine, not as one a-weary, but resting at his master's bidding, waiting to begin anew the work he loves. In the horizon, the ships, motionless in the calm, spread all sail to catch the expected breeze. The waves idly chase each other to the shore, in childish strife to kiss first the mother Earth.

Turning the sea-wall and crossing a bit of shingle on the right, we stand upon the western extremity of the beach.

At our feet, a smooth, globular object, of the size of a crab-apple, is lying half-buried in the sand. Taking it in your hand, you find it to be a univalve shell, the inhabitant of which is concealed behind a closely-fitting door, resembling a flake of undissolved glue.

It is a Natica. Place it gently in this pool and watch for a few moments. Slowly and cautiously the horny operculum is pushed out, turned back, and hidden beneath a thick fleshy mantle, which spreads over half the shell. Two long tentacles appear upon its front, like the horns of an ox, and it begins to glide along upon its one huge foot.

Had you seen it thus at first, you could not have believed it possible for so bulky a body to be retracted into so small a shell. Lift it into the air, and a stream of water pours forth as it contracts.

Two kinds are common here, one of which has a more conical spire than the other. The animals differ somewhat in other points, but both have a cream-colored base, and a mantle of pale cream clouded with purple. You may get them from half an inch to three inches in diameter. Take them home and domesticate them, and you will see surprising things.

I kept one of middling size for many months. During two or three weeks I wondered how he lived, for he was never seen to eat. He used to climb to the top of the tank and slide down the slippery glass as though it were a *montagne russe*. Then he would wander about upon the bottom, ploughing deep furrows in the sand, and end by burrowing beneath it. There he would stay whole days, entirely out of sight.

One morning I found him on his back, his body bent upward, with the edge of the base turned in all round towards the centre. Did you ever see an apple-dumpling before it was boiled, just as the cook was pinching the dough together? Yes? Then you may imagine the appearance of my Natica; but no greening pared and cored lay within that puckered wrapper.

Two days passed with no visible change; but on the third day the strange gasteropod unfolded both himself and the mystery. From his long embrace fell the shell of a Mactra, nearly as broad as his own. Near the hinge was a smooth, round hole, through which the poor Clam had been sucked. Foot, stomach, siphon, muscles, all but a thin strip of mantle, were gone. The problem of the Natica's

existence was solved, and the verification was found in more than one Buccinum minus the animal,—the number of the latter victims being still an unknown quantity.

Not in sport had Natty driven the plough, not in idleness had he hollowed the sand. He sought his food in the furrow, and dug riches in the mine.

Doubtless he killed the bivalve,—for until the time of its disappearance it had been in full vigor,—but with what weapon? And whereabouts in that soft bundle was hidden the wimble which bored the hole?

A few days after, a Crab, of the size of a dime, died. Nat soon learned the fact, and enveloped the crustacean as he had done the mollusk. Thirty hours sufficed to drill through the Crab's foundation-wall, and to abstract the unguarded treasure.

Every week some rifled Trivittatum tells a new tale of his felonious deeds.

His last feat was worthy of a cannibal, for it was the savage act of devouring a fellow-Natica. You might suppose that in this case the trap-like operculum would afford an easy entrance to one familiar with its use; but, true to his secret system, the burglar broke in as before. How did he do this? Did he abrade the stone-work with flinty sand until a hole was worn? Did he apply an acid to the limy wall until it opened before him? Who can find the tools of the cunning workman, or the laboratory where his corrodents are composed?

Some rods farther south, the shore is covered with smooth stones, and there you may find the Limpet in great numbers. Patella is the Latin name, but children call it Tent-Shell. Oval at the base, it slopes upward to a point a little aside from the centre.

In this locality they are small, seldom more than an inch in length. At first, you will not readily distinguish them, they are so nearly of the color of the stones to which they are attached. This is one of those Providential adjustments by which the weak are rendered as secure as the strong. Slow in their movements, without offensive weapons, their form and their coloring are their two great safeguards. The stones to which they adhere are variegated with brown and purple blotches of incipient Coralline, and the shells are beautifully mottled with every shade of those colors. Some are lilac, heightening nearly to crimson; others are dark chocolate and white, sharply checkered.

Pebbles and Patella alike are half-covered with Confervae, and from the top of the latter, fronds of Ulva are often found floating like flags. I have one with a clump of Corallina rising from its apex, like a coppice on the summit of a hill.

By atmospheric pressure, its union with the stone is so close that it is not easy to pull it away without injury; but if you slip it along, until by some slight inequality air is admitted beneath the hitherto exhausted receiver, the little pneumatician is obliged to yield.

When turned upon its back, or resting against glass, the soft arms, sprawling aimlessly about, and the bare, round head, give it the appearance of an infant in a cradle, so that a tank well stocked with them might be taken for a Liliputian foundling-hospital.

They are as innocent as they look, being vegetable-feeders, and finding most of their sustenance in matters suspended in the water. A friend of mine placed several upon the side of a vessel coated with Conferva. In a few days, each industrious laborer had mowed round him a circular space several times larger than himself.

They are not ambulatory, but remain on one spot for successive weeks, perhaps longer.

Sometimes they raise the shell so as to allow a free circulation beneath; but if some predatory Prawn draw near, the tent is lowered in a twinkling, so as effectually to shut out the submarine Tartar.

Tread warily, or you will trip upon the slimy Fucus that fringes the seaward side of every rock. This is one of the few Algae that grow here in luxuriance. The slate has not the deep fissures necessary to afford shelter to the more delicate kinds; and the heavy swell of the sea drags them from their slight moorings. Therefore, though Ulva, Chondrus, Cladophora, Enteromorpha, and as many more, are within our reach, we will not stop to gather them; for Newport has other shores, where we can get them in full perfection.

We will take some tufts of Corallina, however, for that is temptingly fine. What a curious plant it is! Its root, a mere crustaceous disk, and its fronds, depositing shelly matter upon their surface, bear so strong a resemblance to the true Corals, that, until recently, naturalists have thought it a zoophyte.

Here the plants are of a dull brick-red; but in less exposed situations they are purple. If you wish them to live and increase, you must chip off a bit of the rock on which they are growing. With a chisel, or even a knife, you can do it without difficulty, for the soft slate scales and crumbles under a slight blow.

For an herbarium, it ought to be gummed at once to the paper, for it becomes so brittle, in drying, that it falls to pieces with the most careful handling. In the air and light it fades white, but the elegance of its pinnate branches will well repay any pains you may bestow upon it.

If you have a lingering belief in its animal nature, steeping it in acid will cause the carbonate of lime and your credulity to disappear together, leaving the vegetable tissue clearly revealed.

Between low-water and the Cliff are hundreds of pools rich in vegetable and animal life—Look at this one: it is a lakelet of exquisite beauty. Bordered with the olive-colored Rock-Weed, fronds of purple and green Laver rise from its limpid depths. Amphipods of varied hue emerge from the clustering weeds, cleave the clear water with easy swiftness, and hide beneath the opposite bank. Here a graceful Annelid describes Hogarth's line of beauty upon the sandy bottom. There another glides over the surface with sinuous course, rowed by more oars than a Venetian galley, more brilliant in its iridescence than the barge of Cleopatra, albeit

"The poop was beaten gold,
Purple the sails."

We loiter here, forgetful that we are only at the first end of the bow along whose curve we propose to walk. Let us go on. The firm sand affords pleasanter footing than the slippery stones we leave behind us, but it seems bare of promise to the curiosity-hunter. Nevertheless we will hunt, and quite at variance with my experience will it be, if we return empty-handed.

Here is something already. Dark-colored, horny, flat, oblong, each corner furnished with a wiry, thorn-like projection;—what is it? A child tells you it is a Mermaid's Purse, and, giving the empty bag a shake, you straightway conclude that the maids of the sea know "hard times," as well as those of the land. But the Purse is not always so light. Sometimes it is found to contain a most precious deposit, the egg which is to produce a future fish.

These egg-cases belong to different members of the Ray family. I saw one last winter, in which the inmate was fully developed. Should some old seaman hear me, he might say that I am telling a "fish-story" in good earnest. He might inform you furthermore, that the object in question is "but a pod of sea-weed, and that he has seen hundreds of them in the Gulf Stream." I cannot help it, neither do I question his veracity. Notwithstanding, these two eyes of mine, in sound condition, awake, and in broad day, did see the supposed pericarp, with one side taken off, and did behold, lying within, as veritable a Raia as ever was caught upon the New-England coast. Moreover, its countenance was no more classical, in its minuteness, than that of its most ancient ancestor in its hugeness.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.