

East Lynne

Vol.II

By

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***Free*editorial** 

EAST LYNNE Vol.II

CHAPTER XXIV.

RICHARD HARE AT MR. DILL'S WINDOW.

Bright was the moon on that genial Monday night, bright was the evening star, as they shone upon a solitary wayfarer who walked on the shady side of the road with his head down, as though he did not care to court observation. A laborer, apparently, for he wore a smockfrock and had hobnails in his shoes; but his whiskers were large and black, quite hiding the lower part of his face, and his broadbrimmed "wideawake" came far over his brows. He drew near the dwelling of Richard Hare, Esq., plunged rapidly over some palings, after looking well to the right and to the left, into a field, and thence over the side wall into Mr. Hare's garden, where he remained amidst the thick trees.

Now, by some mischievous spirit of intuition or contrariety, Justice Hare was spending this evening at home, a thing he did not do once in six months unless he had friends with him. Things in real life do mostly go by the rules of contrary, as children say in their play, holding the corners of the handkerchief, "Here we go round and round by the rules of contrary; if I tell you to hold fast, you must loose; if I tell you to loose, you must hold fast." Just so in the play of life. When we want people to "hold fast," they "loose;" and when we want them to "loose," they "hold fast."

Barbara, anxious, troubled, worn out almost with the suspense of looking and watching for her brother, feeling a feverish expectation that night would bring him but so had she felt for the two or three nights past would have given her hand for her father to go out. But nothings were going by the rule of contrary. There sat the stern justice in full view of the garden and the grove, his chair drawn precisely in front of the window, his wig awry, and a long pipe in his mouth.

"Are you not going out, Richard?" Mrs. Hare ventured to say.

"No."

"Mamma, shall I ring for the shutters to be closed?" asked Barbara, by and by.

"Shutters closed?" said the justice. "Who'd shut out this bright moon? You have got the lamp at the far end of the room, young lady, and can go to it."

Barbara ejaculated an inward prayer for patience for safety of Richard, if he did come, and waited on, watching the grove in the distance. It came, the signal, her quick eye

caught it; a movement as if some person or thing had stepped out beyond the trees and stepped back again. Barbara's face turned white and her lips dry.

"I am so hot!" she exclaimed, in her confused eagerness for an excuse; "I must take a turn in the garden."

She stole out, throwing a dark shawl over her shoulders, that might render her less conspicuous to the justice, and her dress that evening was a dark silk. She did not dare to stand still when she reached the trees, or to penetrate them, but she caught glimpses of Richard's face, and her heart ached at the change in it. It was white, thin, and full of care; and his hair, he told her, was turning gray.

"Oh, Richard, darling, and I may not stop to talk to you!" she wailed, in a deep whisper. "Papa is at home, you see, of all the nights in the world."

"Can't I see my mother?"

"How can you? You must wait till tomorrow night."

"I don't like waiting a second night, Barbara. There's danger in every inch of ground that this neighborhood contains."

"But you must wait, Richard, for reasons. That man who caused all the mischiefThorn"

"Hang him!" gloomily interrupted Richard.

"He is at West Lynne. At least there is a Thorn, weI and Mr. Carlylebelieve to be the same, and we want you to see him."

"Let me see him," panted Richard, whom the news appeared to agitate; "let me see him, Barbara, I say"

Barbara had passed on again, returning presently.

"You know, Richard, I must keep moving, with papa's eyes there. He is a tall man, very goodlooking, very fond of dress and ornament, especially of diamonds."

"That's he," cried Richard, eagerly.

"Mr. Carlyle will contrive that you shall see him," she continued, stooping as if to tie her shoe. "Should it prove to be the same, perhaps nothing can be doneimmediately donetoward clearing you, but it shall be a great point ascertained. Are you sure you should know him again?"

"Sure! That I should know him?" uttered Richard Hare. "Should I know my own father? Should I know you? And are you not engraven on my heart in letters of blood, as is he? How and when am I to see him, Barbara?"

"I can tell you nothing till I have seen Mr. Carlyle. Be here tomorrow, as soon as ever the dusk will permit you. Perhaps Mr. Carlyle will contrive to bring him here. If"

The window was thrown open, and the stentorian voice of Justice Hare was heard from it.

"Barbara, are you wandering about there to take cold? Come in! Come in, I say!"

"Oh, Richard, I am so sorry!" she lingered to whisper. "But papa is sure to be out tomorrow evening; he would not stay in two evenings running. Goodnight, dear."

There must be no delay now, and the next day Barbara, braving comments, appeared once more at the office of Mr. Carlyle. Terribly did the rules of contrary seem in action just then. Mr. Carlyle was not in, and the clerks did not know when to expect him; he was gone out for some hours, they believed.

"Mr. Dill," urged Barbara, as the old gentleman came to the door to greet her, "I must see him."

"He will not be in till late in the afternoon, Miss Barbara. I expect him then. Is it anything I can do?"

"No, no," sighed Barbara.

At that moment Lady Isabel and her little girl passed in the chariot. She saw Barbara at her husband's door; what should she be doing there, unless paying him a visit? A slight, haughty bow to Barbara, a pleasant nod and smile to Mr. Dill, and the carriage bowled on.

It was four o'clock before Barbara could see Mr. Carlyle, and communicate her tidings that Richard had arrived.

Mr. Carlyle held deceit and all underhand doings in especial abhorrence; yet he deemed that he was acting right, under the circumstances, in allowing Captain Thorn to be secretly seen by Richard Hare. In haste he arranged his plans. It was the evening of his own dinner engagement at Mrs. Jefferson's but that he must give up. Telling Barbara to dispatch Richard to his office as soon as he should make his appearance at the grove, and to urge him to come boldly and not fear, for none would know him in his disguise, he wrote a hurried note to Thorn, requesting him also to be at his office at eight o'clock that evening, as he had something to communicate to him. The latter plea was no

fiction, for he had received an important communication that morning relative to the business on which Captain Thorn had consulted him, and his own absence from the office in the day had alone prevented his sending for him earlier.

Other matters were calling the attention of Mr. Carlyle, and it was five o'clock ere he departed for East Lynne; he would not have gone so early, but that he must inform his wife of his inability to keep his dinner engagement. Mr. Carlyle was one who never hesitated to sacrifice personal gratification to friendship or to business.

The chariot was at the door, and Lady Isabel dressed and waiting for him in her dressingroom. "Did you forget that the Jeffersons dined at six?" was her greeting.

"No, Isabel; but it was impossible for me to get here before. And I should not have come so soon, but to tell you that I cannot accompany you. You must make my excuses to Mrs. Jefferson."

A pause. Strange thoughts were running through Lady Isabel's mind. "Why so?" she inquired.

"Some business has arisen which I am compelled to attend to this evening. As soon as I have snatched a bit of dinner at home I must hasten back to the office."

Was he making this excuse to spend the hours of her absence with Barbara Hare? The idea that it was so took firm possession of her mind, and remained there. Her face expressed a variety of feelings, the most prominent that of resentment. Mr. Carlyle saw it.

"You must not be vexed, Isabel. I assure you it is no fault of mine. It is important private business which cannot be put off, and which I cannot delegate to Dill. I am sorry it should have so happened."

"You never return to the office in the evening," she remarked, with pale lips.

"No; because if anything arises to take us there after hours, Dill officiates. But the business tonight must be done by myself."

Another pause. Lady Isabel suddenly broke it. "Shall you join us later in the evening?"

"I believe I shall not be able to do so."

She drew her light shawl around her shoulders, and swept down the staircase. Mr. Carlyle followed to place her in the carriage. When he said farewell, she never answered but looked out straight before her with a stony look.

"What time, my lady?" inquired the footman, as he alighted at Mrs. Jefferson's.

"Early. Halfpast nine."

A little before eight o'clock, Richard Hare, in his smockfrock and his slouching hat and his false whiskers, rang dubiously at the outer door of Mr. Carlyle's office. That gentleman instantly opened it. He was quite alone.

"Come in, Richard," said he, grasping his hand. "Did you meet any whom you knew?"

"I never looked at whom I met, sir," was the reply. "I thought that if I looked at people, they might look at me, so I came straight ahead with my eyes before me. How the place has altered! There's a new brick house on the corner where old Morgan's shop used to stand."

"That's the new police station. West Lynne I assure you, is becoming grand in public buildings. And how have you been, Richard?"

"Ailing and wretched," answered Richard Hare. "How can I be otherwise, Mr. Carlyle, with so false an accusation attached to me; and working like a slave, as I have to do?"

"You may take off the disfiguring hat, Richard. No one is here."

Richard slowly heaved it from his brows, and his fair face, so like his mother's, was disclosed. But the moment he was uncovered he turned shrinkingly toward the entrance door. "If any one should come in, sir?"

"Impossible!" replied Mr. Carlyle. "The front door is fast, and the office is supposed to be empty at this hour."

"For if I should be seen and recognized, it might come to hanging, you know, sir. You are expecting that cursed Thorn here, Barbara told me."

"Directly," replied Mr. Carlyle, observing the mode of addressing him "sir." It spoke plainly of the scale of society in which Richard had been mixing; that he was with those who said it habitually; nay, that he used it habitually himself. "From your description of the Lieutenant Thorn who destroyed Hallijohn, we believe this Captain Thorn to be the same man," pursued Mr. Carlyle. "In person he appears to tally exactly; and I have ascertained that a few years ago he was a deal at Swainson, and got into some sort of scrape. He is in John Herbert's regiment, and is here with him on a visit."

"But what an idiot he must be to venture here!" uttered Richard. "Here of all places in the world!"

"He counts, no doubt, on not being known. So far as I can find out, Richard, nobody here did know him, save you and Afy. I shall put you in Mr. Dill's room you may remember the little window in it and from thence you can take a full view of Thorn, whom I shall keep in the front office. You are sure you would recognize him at this distance of time?"

"I should know him if it were fifty years to come; I should know him were he disguised as I am disguised. We cannot," Richard sank his voice, "forget a man who has been the object of our frenzied jealousy."

"What has brought you to East Lynne again, Richard? Any particular object?"

"Chiefly a hankering within me that I could not get rid of," replied Richard. "It was not so much to see my mother and Barbara though I did want that, especially since my illness as that a feeling was within me that I could not rest away from it. So I said I'd risk it again, just for a day."

"I thought you might possibly want some assistance, as before."

"I do want that, also," said Richard. "Not much. My illness has run me into debt, and if my mother can let me have a little, I shall be thankful."

"I am sure she will," answered Mr. Carlyle. "You shall have it from me tonight. What has been the matter with you?"

"The beginning of it was a kick from a horse, sir. That was last winter, and it laid me up for six weeks. Then, in the spring, after I got well and was at work again, I caught some sort of fever, and down again I was for six weeks. I have not been to say well since."

"How is it you have never written or sent me your address?"

"Because I dared not," answered Richard, timorously, "I should always be in fear; not of you, Mr. Carlyle, but of its becoming known some way or other. The time is getting on, sir; is that Thorn sure to come?"

"He sent me word that he would, in reply to my note. And there he is!" uttered Mr. Carlyle, as a ring was heard at the bell. "Now, Richard, come this way. Bring your hat."

Richard complied by putting his hat on his head, pulling it so low that it touched his nose. He felt himself safer in it. Mr. Carlyle showed him into Mr. Dill's room, and then turned the key upon him, and put it in his pocket. Whether this precautionary measure was intended to prevent any possibility of Captain Thorn's finding his way in, or of Richard's finding his way out, was best known to himself.

Mr. Carlyle came to the front door, opened it, and admitted Captain Thorn. He brought him into the clerk's office, which was bright with gas, keeping him in conversation for a few minutes standing, and then asking him to be seated all in full view of the little window.

"I must beg your pardon, for being late," Captain Thorn observed. "I am half an hour beyond the time you mentioned, but the Herberts had two or three friends at dinner, and I could not get away. I hope, Mr. Carlyle, you have not come to your office tonight purposely for me."

"Business must be attended to," somewhat evasively answered Mr. Carlyle; "I have been out myself nearly all day. We received a communication from London this morning, relative to your affair, and I am sorry to say anything but satisfactory. They will not wait."

"But I am not liable, Mr. Carlyle, not liable in justice."

"No if what you tell me be correct. But justice and law are sometimes in opposition, Captain Thorn."

Captain Thorn sat in perplexity. "They will not get me arrested here, will they?"

"They would have done it, beyond doubt; but I have caused a letter to be written and dispatched to them, which must bring forth an answer before any violent proceedings are taken. That answer will be here the morning after tomorrow."

"And what am I to do then?"

"I think it is probable there may be a way of checkmating them. But I am not sure, Captain Thorn, that I can give my attention further to this affair."

"I hope and trust you will," was the reply.

"You have not forgotten that I told you at first I could not promise to do so," rejoined Mr. Carlyle. "You shall hear from me tomorrow. If I carry it on for you, I will then appoint an hour for you to be here on the following day; if not why, I dare say you will find a solicitor as capable of assisting you as I am."

"But why will you not? What is the reason?"

"I cannot always give reasons for what I do," was the response. "You will hear from me tomorrow."

He rose as he spoke; Captain Thorn also rose. Mr. Carlyle detained him yet a few moments, and then saw him out at the front door and fastened it.

He returned and released Richard. The latter took off his hat as he advanced into the blaze of light.

"Well, Richard, is it the same man?"

"No, sir. Not in the least like him."

Mr. Carlyle, though little given to emotion, felt a strange relief for Captain Thorn's sake. He had rarely seen one whom he could so little associate with the notion of a murderer as Captain Thorn, and he was a man who exceedingly won upon the regard. He would heartily help him out of his dilemma now.

"Excepting that they are both tall, with nearly the same color of hair, there is no resemblance whatever between them," proceeded Richard. "Their faces, their figures, are as opposite as light is from dark. That other, in spite of his handsome features, had the expression at times of a demon, but this one's expression is the best part of his face. Halliwell's murderer had a curious look here, sir."

"Where?" questioned Mr. Carlyle, for Richard had only pointed to his face generally.

"Well I cannot say precisely where it lay, whether in the eyebrows or the eyes; I could not tell when I used to have him before me; but it was in one of them. Ah, Mr. Carlyle, I thought, when Barbara told me Thorn was here, it was too good news to be true; depend upon it, he won't venture to West Lynne again. This man is no more like that other villain than you are like him."

"Then as that is set at rest we had better be going, Richard. You have to see your mother, and she must be waiting in anxiety. How much money do you want?"

"Twenty-five pounds would do, but" Richard stopped in hesitation.

"But what?" asked Mr. Carlyle. "Speak out, Richard."

"Thirty would be more welcome. Thirty would put me at ease."

"You shall take thirty," said Mr. Carlyle, counting out the notes to him. "Now will you walk with me to the grove, or will you walk alone? I mean to see you there in safety."

Richard thought he would prefer to walk alone; everybody they met might be speaking to Mr. Carlyle. The latter inquired why he chose moonlight nights for his visits.

"It is pleasanter for travelling. And had I chosen dark nights, Barbara could not have seen my signal from the trees," was the answer of Richard.

They went out and proceeded unmolested to the house of Justice Hare. It was past nine, then. "I am so much obliged to you Mr. Carlyle," whispered Richard, as they walked up the path.

"I wish I could help you more effectually, Richard, and clear up the mystery. Is Barbara on the watch? Yes; there's the door slowly opening."

Richard stole across the hall and into the parlor to his mother. Barbara approached and softly whispered to Mr. Carlyle, standing, just outside the portico; her voice trembled with the suspense of what the answer might be.

"Is it the same man the same Thorn?"

"No. Richard says this man bears no resemblance to the real one."

"Oh!" uttered Barbara, in her surprise and disappointment. "Not the same! And for the best part of poor Richard's evening to have been taken up for nothing."

"Not quite nothing," said Mr. Carlyle. "The question is now set at rest."

"Set at rest!" repeated Barbara. "It is left in more uncertainty than ever."

"Set at rest so far as regards Captain Thorn. And whilst our suspicions were concentrated upon him, we thought not of looking to other quarters."

When they entered the sittingroom Mrs. Hare was crying over Richard, and Richard was crying over her; but she seized the hand of Mr. Carlyle.

"You have been very kind; I don't know whatever we should do without you. And I want to tax your kindness further. Has Barbara mentioned it?"

"I could not talk in the hall, mamma; the servants might have overheard."

"Mr. Hare is not well, and we terribly fear he will be home early, in consequence; otherwise we should have been quite safe until after ten, for he is gone to the Buck's Head, and they never leave, you know, till that hour has struck. Should he come in and see Richardoh, I need not enlarge upon the consequences to you, Archibald; the very thought sends me into a shiver. Barbara and I have been discussing it all the evening, and we can only think of one plan; it is, that you will kindly stay in the garden, near the gate; and, should he come in, stop him, and keep him in conversation. Barbara will be with you, and will run in with the warning, and Richard can go inside the closet in the

hall till Mr. Hare has entered and is safe in this room, and then he can make his escape. Will you do this, Archibald?"

"Certainly I will."

"I cannot part with him before ten o'clock, unless I am forced," she whispered, pressing Mr. Carlyle's hands, in her earnest gratitude. "You don't know what it is, Archibald, to have a lost son home for an hour but once in seven years. At ten o'clock we will part."

Mr. Carlyle and Barbara began to pace in the path in compliance with the wish of Mrs. Hare, keeping near the entrance gate. When they were turning the second time, Mr. Carlyle offered her his arm; it was an act of mere politeness. Barbara took it; and there they waited and waited; but the justice did not come.

Punctually to the minute, half after nine, Lady Isabel's carriage arrived at Mrs. Jefferson's, and she came out immediately a headache being the plea for her early departure. She had not far to go to reach East Lynne about two miles and it was a byroad nearly all the way. They could emerge into the open road, if they pleased, but it was a trifle further. Suddenly a gentleman approached the carriage as it was bowling along, and waved his hand to the coachman to pull up. In spite of the glowing moonlight, Lady Isabel did not at first recognize him, for he wore a disfigured fur cap, the ears of which were tied over his ears and cheeks. It was Francis Levison. She put down the window.

"I thought it must be your carriage. How early you are returning! Were you tired of your entertainers?"

"Why, he knew what time my lady was returning," thought John to himself; "he asked me. A false sort of a chap that, I've a notion."

"I came out for a midnight stroll, and have tired myself," he proceeded. "Will you take compassion on me, and give me a seat home?"

She acquiesced. She could not do otherwise. The footman sprang from behind the door, and Francis Levison took his place beside Lady Isabel. "Take the high road," he put out his head to say to the coachman; and the man touched his hat which high road would cause them to pass Mr. Hare's.

"I did not know you," she began, gathering herself into her own corner. "What ugly thing is that you have on? It is like a disguise."

He was taking off the "ugly thing" as she spoke and began to twirl it round his hand. "Disguise? Oh, no; I have no creditors in the immediate neighborhood of East Lynne."

False as ever it was worn as a disguise and he knew it.

"Is Mr. Carlyle at home?" she inquired.

"No." Then, after a pause "I expect he is more agreeably engaged."

The tone, a most significant one, brought the tingling blood to the cheeks of Lady Isabel. She wished to preserve a dignified silence, and did for a few moments; but the jealous question broke out,

"Engaged in what manner?"

"As I came by Hare's house just now, I saw two people, a gentleman and a young lady, coupled lovingly together, enjoying a teteatete by moonlight. Unless I am mistaken, he was the favored individual whom you call lord and master."

Lady Isabel almost gnashed her teeth; the jealous doubts which had been tormenting her all the evening were confirmed. That the man whom she hatedyes, in her blind anger, she hated him thenshould so impose upon her, should excuse himself by lies, lies base and false as he was, from accompanying her out, on purpose to pass the hours with Barbara Hare! Had she been alone in the carriage, a torrent of passion had probably escaped her.

She leaned back, panting in her emotion, but hiding it from Captain Levison. As they came opposite to Justice Hare's she deliberately bent forward and scanned the garden with eager eyes.

There, in the bright moonlight, all too bright and clear, slowly paced arm in arm, and drawn close to each other, her husband and Barbara Hare. With a choking sob that could no longer be controlled or hidden, Lady Isabel sunk back again.

He, that bold, bad man, dared to put his arm around her, to draw her to his side; to whisper that his love was left to her, if another's was withdrawn. She was most assuredly out of her senses that night, or she never would have listened.

A jealous woman is mad; an outraged woman is doubly mad; and the illfated Lady Isabel truly believed that every sacred feeling which ought to exist between man and wife was betrayed by Mr. Carlyle.

"Be avenged on that false hound, Isabel. He was never worthy of you. Leave your life of misery, and come to happiness."

In her bitter distress and wrath, she broke into a storm of sobs. Were they caused by passion against her husband, or by those bold and shameless words? Alas! Alas! Francis Levison applied himself to soothe her with all the sweet and dangerous sophistry of his crafty nature.

The minutes flew on. A quarter to ten; now a quarter past ten; and still Richard Hare lingered on with his mother, and still Mr. Carlyle and Barbara paced patiently the garden path. At halfpast ten Richard came forth, after having taken his last farewell. Then came Barbara's tearful farewell, which Mr. Carlyle witnessed; and then a hard grasp of that gentleman's hand, and Richard plunged amidst the trees to depart the way he came.

"Good night, Barbara," said Mr. Carlyle.

"Will you not come in and say good night to mamma?"

"Not now; it is late. Tell her how glad I am things have gone off so well."

He started off at a strapping pace toward his home, and Barbara leaned on the gate to indulge her tears. Not a soul passed to interrupt her, and the justice did not come. What could have become of him? What could the Buck's Head be thinking of, to retain respectable elderly justices from their beds, who ought to go home early and set a good example to the parish? Barbara knew, the next day, that Justice Hare, with a few more gentlemen, had been seduced from the staid old inn to a friend's house, to an entertainment of supper, pipes, and whist, two tables, penny points, and it was between twelve and one ere the party rose from the fascination. So far, well as it happened.

Barbara knew not how long she lingered at the gate; ten minutes it may have been. Nobody summoned her. Mrs. Hare was indulging her grief indoors, giving no thought to Barbara, and the justice did not make his appearance. Exceedingly surprised was Barbara to hear fast footsteps, and to find that they were Mr. Carlyle's.

"The more haste, the less speed, Barbara," he called out as he came up. "I had got halfway home and have had to come back again. When I went into your sittingroom, I left a small parcel, containing a parchment, on the sideboard. Will you get it for me?"

Barbara ran indoors and brought forth the parcel, and Mr. Carlyle, with a brief word of thanks, sped away with it.

She leaned on the gate as before, the ready tears flowing again; her heart was aching for Richard; it was aching for the disappointment the night had brought forth respecting Captain Thorn. Still nobody passed; still the steps of her father were not heard, and Barbara stayed on. But what was that figure cowering under the shade of the hedge at a distance, and seemingly, watching her? Barbara strained her eyes, while her heart beat as if it would burst its bounds. Surely, surely, it was her brother? What had he ventured back for?

Richard Hare it was. When fully assured that Barbara was standing there, he knew the justice was still absent, and ventured to advance. He appeared to be in a strange state of emotion his breath labored, his whole frame trembling.

"Barbara! Barbara!" he called. "I have seen Thorn."

Barbara thought him demented. "I know you saw him," she slowly said, "but it was not the right Thorn."

"Not he," breathed Richard; "and not the gentleman I saw tonight in Carlyle's office. I have seen the fellow himself. Why to you stare at me so, Barbara?"

Barbara was in truth scanning his face keenly. It appeared to her a strange tale that he was telling.

"When I left here, I cut across into Bean lane, which is more private for me than this road," proceeded Richard. "Just as I got to that clump of trees you know it, Barbara I saw somebody coming toward me from a distance. I stepped back behind the trunks of the trees, into the shade of the hedge, for I don't care to be met, though I am disguised. He came along the middle of the lane, going toward West Lynne, and I looked out upon him. I knew him long before he was abreast of me; it was Thorn." Barbara made no comment; she was digesting the news.

"Every drop of blood within me began to tingle, and an impulse came upon me to spring upon him and accuse him of the murder of Halli John," went on Richard, in the same excited manner. "But I resisted it; or, perhaps, my courage failed. One of the reproaches against me had used to be that I was a physical coward, you know, Barbara," he added, in a tone of bitterness. "In a struggle, Thorn would have had the best of it; he is taller and more powerful than I, and might have battered me to death. A man who can commit one murder won't hesitate at a second."

"Richard, do you think you could have been deceived?" she urged. "You had been talking of Thorn, and your thoughts were, naturally bearing upon him. Imagination"

"Be still, Barbara," he interrupted in a tone of pain. "Imagination, indeed! Did I not tell you he was stamped here?" touching his breast. "Do you take me for a child, or an imbecile, that I should fancy I see Thorn in every shadow, or meet people where I do not? He had his hat off, as if he had been walking fast and had got hot fast he was walking; and he carried the hat in one hand, and what looked like a small parcel. With the other hand he was pushing the hair from his brow in this way a peculiar way," added Richard, slightly lifting his own hat and pushing back his hair. "By that action alone I should have known him, for he was always doing it in the old days. And there was his

white hand, adorned with his diamond ring! Barbara, the diamond glittered in the moonlight!"

Richard's voice and manner were singularly earnest, and a conviction of the truth of his assertion flashed over his sister.

"I saw his face as plainly as I ever saw it every feature he is scarcely altered, save for a haggardness in his cheeks now. Barbara, you need not doubt me; I swear it was Thorn!"

She grew excited as he was; now that she believed the news, it was telling upon her; reason left its place and impulse succeeded; Barbara did not wait to weigh her actions.

"Richard! Mr. Carlyle ought to know this. He has but just gone; we may overtake him, if we try."

Forgetting the strange appearances it would have her flying along the public road at that hour of the night should she meet any who knew her forgetting what the consequence might be, did Justice Hare return and find her absent, Barbara set off with a fleet foot, Richard more stealthily following her his eyes cast in all directions. Fortunately Barbara wore a bonnet and mantle, which she had put on to pace the garden with Mr. Carlyle; fortunately, also, the road was remarkably empty of passengers. She succeeded in reaching Mr. Carlyle before he turned into East Lynne gates.

"Barbara!" he exclaimed in the extreme of astonishment. "Barbara!"

"Archibald! Archibald!" She panted, gasping for breath. "I am not out of my mind but do come and speak to Richard! He has just seen the real Thorn."

Mr. Carlyle, amazed and wondering, turned back. They got over the field stile, nearly opposite the gates, drew behind the hedge, and there Richard told his tale. Mr. Carlyle did not appear to doubt it, as Barbara had done; perhaps he could not, in the face of Richard's agitated and intense earnestness.

"I am sure there is no one named Thorn in the neighborhood, save the gentleman you saw in my office tonight, Richard," observed Mr. Carlyle, after some deliberation. "It is very strange."

"He may be staying here under a feigned name," replied Richard. "There can be no mistake that it was Thorn whom I have just met."

"How was he dressed? As a gentleman?"

"Catch him dressing as anything else," returned Richard. "He was in an evening suit of black, with a sort of thin overcoat thrown on, but it was flung back at the shoulders, and

I distinctly saw his clothes. A gray alpaca, it looked like. As I have told Barbara, I should have known him by this action of the hand," imitating it, "as he pushed his hair off his forehead; it was the delicate white hand of the days gone by, Mr. Carlyle; it was the flashing of the diamond ring!"

Mr. Carlyle was silent; Barbara also; but the thoughts of both were busy. "Richard," observed the former, "I should advise you to remain a day or two in the neighborhood, and look out for this man. You may see him again, and may track him home; it is very desirable to find out who he really is if practicable."

"But the danger?" urged Richard.

"Your fears magnify that. I am quite certain that nobody would know you in broad daylight, disguised as you are now. So many years have flown since, that people have forgotten to think about you, Richard."

But Richard could not be persuaded; he was full of fears. He described the man as accurately as he could to Mr. Carlyle and Barbara, and told them they must look out. With some trouble, Mr. Carlyle got from him an address in London, to which he might write, in case anything turned up, and Richard's presence should be necessary. He then once more said farewell, and quitted them, his way lying past East Lynne.

"And now to see you back, Barbara," said Mr. Carlyle.

"Indeed you shall not do it late as it is, and tired as you must be. I came here alone; Richard did not keep near me."

"I cannot help your having come here alone, but you may rely upon it, I do not suffer you to go back so. Nonsense, Barbara! Allow you to go along the high road by yourself at eleven o'clock at night? What are you thinking of?"

He gave Barbara his arm, and they pursued their way. "How late Lady Isabel will think you!" observed Barbara.

"I don't know that Lady Isabel has returned home yet. My being late once in a while is of no consequence."

Not another word was spoken, save by Barbara. "Whatever excuse can I make, should papa come home?" Both were buried in their own reflections. "Thank you very greatly," she said as they reached her gate, and Mr. Carlyle finally turned away. Barbara stole in, and found the coast clear; her papa had not arrived.

Lady Isabel was in her dressingroom when Mr. Carlyle entered; she was seated at a table, writing. A few questions as to her evening's visit, which she answered in the briefest way possible, and then he asked her if she was not going to bed.

"By and by. I am not sleepy."

"I must go at once, Isabel, for I am dead tired." And no wonder.

"You can go," was her answer.

He bent down to kiss her, but she dexterously turned her face away. He supposed that she felt hurt that he had not gone with her to the party, and placed his hand on her shoulder with a pleasant smile.

"You foolish child, to be aggrieved at that! It was no fault of mine, Isabel; I could not help myself. I will talk to you in the morning; I am too tired tonight. I suppose you will not be long."

Her head was bent over her writing again, and she made no reply. Mr. Carlyle went into his bedroom and shut the door. Some time after, Lady Isabel went softly upstairs to Joyce's room. Joyce, fast in her first sleep, was suddenly aroused from it. There stood her mistress, a wax light in her hand. Joyce rubbed her eyes, and collected her senses, and finally sat up in bed.

"My lady! Are you ill?"

"Ill! Yes; ill and wretched," answered Lady Isabel; and ill she did look, for she was perfectly white. "Joyce, I want a promise from you. If anything should happen to me, stay at East Lynne with my children."

Joyce stared in amazement, too much astonished to make any reply.

"Joyce, you promised it once before; promise it again. Whatever betide you, you will stay with my children when I am gone."

"I will stay with them. But, oh, my lady, what can be the matter with you? Are you taken suddenly ill?"

"Goodbye, Joyce," murmured Lady Isabel, gliding from the chamber as quietly as she had entered it. And Joyce, after an hour of perplexity, dropped asleep again.

Joyce was not the only one whose rest was disturbed that eventful night. Mr. Carlyle himself awoke, and to his surprise found that his wife had not come to bed. He wondered what the time was, and struck his repeater. A quarter past three!

Rising, he made his way to the door of his wife's dressingroom. It was in darkness; and, so far as he could judge by the absence of sound, unoccupied.

"Isabel!"

No reply. Nothing but the echo of his own voice in the silence of the night.

He struck a match and lighted a taper, partially dressed himself, and went about to look for her. He feared she might have been taken ill; or else that she had fallen asleep in some one of the rooms. But nowhere could he find her, and feeling perplexed, he proceeded to his sister's chamber door and knocked.

Miss Carlyle was a slight sleeper, and rose up in bed at once. "Who's that?" cried out she.

"It is only I, Cornelia," said Mr. Carlyle.

"You!" cried Miss Corny. "What in the name of fortune do you want? You can come in."

Mr. Carlyle opened the door, and met the keen eyes of his sister bent on him from the bed. Her head was surmounted by a remarkable nightcap, at least a foot high.

"Is anybody ill?" she demanded.

"I think Isabel must be, I cannot find her."

"Not find her?" echoed Miss Corny. "Why, what's the time? Is she not in bed?"

"It is three o'clock. She had not been to bed. I cannot find her in the sittingrooms; neither is she in the children's room."

"Then I'll tell you what it is, Archibald; she's gone worrying after Joyce. Perhaps the girl may be in pain tonight."

Mr. Carlyle was in full retreat toward Joyce's room, at this suggestion, when his sister called to him.

"If anything is amiss with Joyce, you come and tell me, Archibald, for I shall get up and see after her. The girl was my servant before she was your wife's."

He reached Joyce's room, and softly unlatched the door, fully expecting to find a light there, and his wife sitting by the bedside. There was no light there, however, save that which came from the taper he held, and he saw no signs of his wife. Where was she? Was it probable that Joyce should tell him? He stepped inside the room and called to her.

Joyce started up in a fright, which changed to astonishment when she recognized her master. He inquired whether Lady Isabel had been there, and for a few moments Joyce did not answer. She had been dreaming of Lady Isabel, and could not at first detach the dream from the visit which had probably given rise to it.

"What did you say, sir? Is my lady worse?"

"I asked if she had been here. I cannot find her."

"Why, yes," said Joyce, now fully aroused. "She came here and woke me. That was just before twelve, for I heard the clock strike. She did not stay here a minute, sir."

"Woke you!" repeated Mr. Carlyle. "What did she want? What did she come here for?"

Thoughts are quick; imagination is still quicker; and Joyce was giving the reins to both. Her mistress's gloomy and ambiguous words were crowding on her brain. Three o'clock and she had not been in bed, and was not to be found in the house? A nameless horror struggled to Joyce's face, her eyes were dilating with it; she seized and threw on a large flannel gown which lay on a chair by the bed, and forgetful of her master who stood there, out she sprang to the floor. All minor considerations faded to insignificance beside the terrible dread which had taken possession of her. Claspings the flannel gown tight around her with one hand, she laid the other on the arm of Mr. Carlyle.

"Oh, master! Oh, master! She has destroyed herself! I see it all now."

"Joyce!" sternly interrupted Mr. Carlyle.

"She has destroyed herself, as true as that we two are living here," persisted Joyce, her own face livid with emotion. "I can understand her words now; I could not before. She came here and her face was like a corpse as the light fell upon it saying she had come to get a promise from me to stay with her children when she was gone, I asked whether she was ill, and she answered, 'Yes, ill and wretched.' Oh, sir, may heaven support you under this dreadful trial!"

Mr. Carlyle felt bewildered and perplexed. Not a syllable did he believe. He was not angry with Joyce, for he thought she had lost her reason.

"It is so, sir, incredible as you may deem my words," pursued Joyce, wringing her hands. "My lady has been miserably unhappy; and that has driven her to it."

"Joyce, are you in your senses or out of them?" demanded Mr. Carlyle, a certain sternness in his tone. "Your lady miserably unhappy! What do you mean?"

Before Joyce could answer, an addition was received to the company in the person of Miss Carlyle, who appeared in black stockings and a shawl, and the lofty nightcap. Hearing voices in Joyce's room, which was above her own, and full of curiosity, she ascended, not choosing to be shut out from the conference.

"Whatever's up?" cried she. "Is Lady Isabel found?"

"She is not found, and she never will be found but in her windingsheet," returned Joyce, whose lamentable and unusual state of excitement completely overpowered her customary quiet respect and plain good sense. "And, ma'am, I am glad that you have come up; for what I was about to say to my master I would prefer to say in your presence. When my lady is brought into this house, and laid before us dead, what will your feelings be? My master has done his duty by her in love; but you you have made her life a misery. Yes, ma'am, you have."

"Hoitytoity!" muttered Miss Carlyle, staring at Joyce in consternation. "What is all this? Where's my lady?"

"She has gone and taken the life that was not hers to take," sobbed Joyce, "and I say she has been driven to it. She has not been allowed to indulge a will of her own, poor thing, since she came to East Lynne; in her own house she has been less free than either of her servants. You have curbed her, ma'am, and snapped at her, and you made her feel that she was but a slave to your caprices and temper. All these years she has been crossed and put upon; everything, in short, but beaten ma'am, you know she has and has borne it all in silence, like a patient angel, never, as I believe, complaining to master; he can say whether she has or not. We all loved her, we all felt for her; and my master's heart would have bled had he suspected what she had to put up with day after day, and year after year."

Miss Carlyle's tongue was glued to her mouth. Her brother, confounded at the rapid words, could scarcely gather in their sense.

"What is it that you are saying, Joyce?" he asked, in a low tone. "I do not understand."

"I have longed to say it to you many a hundred times, sir; but it is right that you should hear it, now things have come to this dreadful ending. Since the very night Lady Isabel came home here, your wife, she had been taunted with the cost she has brought to East Lynne and to you. If she wanted but the simplest thing, she was forbidden to have it, and told that she was bringing her husband to poverty. For this very dinner party that she went to tonight she wished for a new dress, and your cruel words, ma'am, forbade her having it. She ordered a new frock for Miss Isabel, and you countermanded it. You have told her that master worked like a dog to support her extravagances, when you know that she never was extravagant; that none were less inclined to go beyond proper limits

than she. I have seen her, ma'am, come away from your reproaches with the tears in her eyes, and her hands meekly clasped upon her bosom, as though life was heavy to bear. A gentlespirited, highborn lady, as I know she was, could not fail to be driven to desperation; and I know that she has been."

Mr. Carlyle turned to his sister. "Can this be true?" he inquired, in a tone of deep agitation.

She did not answer. Whether it was the shade cast by the nightcap, or the reflection of the wax taper, her face looked of a green cast, and, for the first time probably in Miss Carlyle's life, her words failed her.

"May God forgive you, Cornelia!" he muttered, as he went out of the chamber.

He descended to his own. That his wife had laid violent hands upon herself, his reason utterly repudiated, she was one of the least likely to commit so great a sin. He believed that, in her unhappiness, she might have wandered out in the grounds, and was lingering there. By this time the house was aroused, and the servants were astir. Joycesurely a supernatural strength was given her, for though she had been able to put her foot to the ground, she had not yet walked upon itcrept downstairs, and went into Lady Isabel's dressingroom. Mr. Carlyle was hastily assuming the articles of attire he had not yet put on, to go out and search the grounds, when Joyce limped in, holding out a note. Joyce did not stand on ceremony that night.

"I found this in the dressingglass drawer, sir. It is my lady's writing."

He took it in his hand and looked at the address"Archibald Carlyle." Though a calm man, one who had his emotions under his own control, he was no stoic, and his fingers shook as he broke the seal.

"When years go on, and my children ask where their mother is, and why she left them, tell them that you, their father, goaded her to it. If they inquire what she is, tell them, also, if you so will; but tell them, at the same time, that you outraged and betrayed her, driving her to the very depth of desperation ere she quitted them in her despair."

The handwriting, his wife's, swam before the eyes of Mr. Carlyle. All, save the disgraceful fact that she had flownand a horrible suspicion began to dawn upon him, with whomwas totally incomprehensible. How had he outraged her? In what manner had he goaded her to it. The discomforts alluded to by Joyce, and the work of his sister, had evidently no part in this; yet what had he done? He read the letter again, more slowly. No he could not comprehend it; he had not the clue.

At that moment the voices of the servants in the corridor outside penetrated his ears. Of course they were peering about, and making their own comments. Wilson, with her long tongue, the busiest. They were saying that Captain Levison was not in his room; that his bed had not been slept in.

Joyce sat on the edge of a chair she could not stand watching her master with a blanched face. Never had she seen him betray agitation so powerful. Not the faintest suspicion of the dreadful truth yet dawned upon her. He walked to the door, the open note in his hand; then turned, wavered, and stood still, as if he did not know what he was doing. Probably he did not. Then he took out his pocketbook, put the note inside it, and returned it to his pocket, his hands trembling equally with his livid lips.

"You need not mention this," he said to Joyce, indicating the note. "It concerns myself alone."

"Sir, does it say she's dead?"

"She is not dead," he answered. "Worse than that," he added in his heart.

"Why who's this?" uttered Joyce.

It was little Isabel, stealing in with a frightened face, in her white nightgown. The commotion had aroused her.

"What's the matter?" she asked. "Where's mamma?"

"Child, you'll catch your death of cold," said Joyce. "Go back to bed."

"But I want mamma."

"In the morning, dear," evasively returned Joyce. "Sir, please, must not Isabel go back to bed?"

Mr. Carlyle made no reply to the question; most likely he never heard its import. But he touched Isabel's shoulder to draw Joyce's attention to the child.

"Joyce Miss Lucy in future."

He left the room, and Joyce remained silent from amazement. She heard him go out at the hall door and bang it after him. Isabel nay, we must say "Lucy" also went and stood outside the chamber door; the servants gathered in a group near, did not observe her. Presently she came running back, and disturbed Joyce from her reverie.

"Joyce, is it true?"

"Is what true, my dear?"

"They are saying that Captain Levison has taken away my mamma."

Joyce fell back in her chair with a scream. It changed to a long, low moan of anguish.

"What has he taken her for to kill her? I thought it was only kidnappers who took people."

"Child, child, go to bed."

"Oh, Joyce, I want mamma. When will she come back?"

Joyce hid her face in her hands to conceal its emotion from the motherless child. And just then Miss Carlyle entered on tiptoe, and humbly sat down on a low chair, her green face green that night in its grief, its remorse, and its horror, looking nearly as dark as her stockings.

She broke into a subdued wail.

"God be merciful to this dishonored house!"

Mr. Justice Hare turned into the gate between twelve and one, turned in with a jaunty air; for the justice was in spirits, he having won nine sixpences, and his friend's tap of ale having been unusually good. When he reached his bedroom, he told Mrs. Hare of a chaise and four which had gone tearing past at a furious pace as he was closing the gate, coming from the direction of East Lynne. He wondered where it could be going at that midnight hour, and whom it contained.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHARMING RESULTS.

Nearly a year went by.

Lady Isabel Carlyle had spent it on the continent that refuge for such fugitives now moving about from place to place with her companion, now stationary and alone. Quite half the time taking one absence with the other he had been away from her, chiefly in Paris, pursuing his own course and his own pleasure.

How fared it with Lady Isabel? Just as it must be expected to fare, and does fare, when a high principled gentlewoman falls from her pedestal. Never had she experienced a moment's calm, or peace, or happiness, since the fatal night of quitting her home. She had taken a blind leap in a moment of wild passion, when, instead of the garden of roses it had been her persuader's pleasure to promise her she would fall into, but which, in truth, she had barely glanced at, for that had not been her moving motive, she had found herself plunged into a yawning abyss of horror, from which there was never more any escape never more, never more. The very instant the very night of her departure, she awoke to what she had done. The guilt, whose aspect had been shunned in the prospective, assumed at once its true frightful color, the blackness of darkness; and a lively remorse, a never dying anguish, took possession of her soul forever. Oh, reader, believe me! Ladywife mother! Should you ever be tempted to abandon your home, so will you awake. Whatever trials may be the lot of your married life, though they may magnify themselves to your crushed spirit as beyond the nature, the endurance of woman to bear, resolve to bear them; fall down upon your knees, and pray to be enabled to bear them pray for patience pray for strength to resist the demon that would tempt you to escape; bear unto death, rather than forfeit your fair name and your good conscience; for be assured that the alternative, if you do rush on to it, will be found worse than death.

Poor thing poor Lady Isabel! She had sacrificed husband, children, reputation, home, all that makes life of value to woman. She had forfeited her duty to God, had deliberately broken his commandments, for the one poor miserable mistake of flying with Francis Levison. But the instant the step was irrevocable, the instant she had left the barrier behind, repentance set in. Even in the first days of her departure, in the fleeting moments of abandonment, when it may be supposed she might momentarily forget conscience, it was sharply wounding her with its adder stings; and she knew that her whole future existence, whether spent with that man or without him, would be a dark course of gnawing retribution.

Nearly a year went by, save some six or eight weeks, when, one morning in July, Lady Isabel made her appearance in the breakfastroom. They were staying now at Grenoble. Taking that town on their way to Switzerland through Savoy, it had been Captain Levison's pleasure to halt in it. He engaged apartments, furnished, in the vicinity of the Place Grenette. A windy, old house it was, full of doors and windows, chimneys and cupboards; and he said he should remain there. Lady Isabel remonstrated; she wished to go farther on, where they might get quicker news from England; but her will now was as nothing. She was looking like the ghost of her former self. Talk of her having looked ill when she took that voyage over the water with Mr. Carlyle; you should have seen her now misery marks the countenance worse than sickness. Her face was white and worn, her hands were thin, her eyes were sunken and surrounded by a black circle care was digging caves for them. A stranger might have attributed these signs to the state of her health; she knew better knew that they were the effects of her wretched mind and heart.

It was very late for breakfast, but why should she rise early only to drag through another endless day? Languidly she took her seat at the table, just as Captain Levison's servant, a Frenchman whom he had engaged in Paris, entered the room with two letters.

"Point de gazette, Pierre?" she said.

"Non, miladi."

And all the time the sly fox had got the Times in his coat pocket. But he was only obeying the orders of his master. It had been Captain Levison's recent pleasure that the newspapers should not be seen by Lady Isabel until he had overlooked them. You will speedily gather his motive.

Pierre departed toward Captain Levison's room, and Lady Isabel took up the letters and examined their superscription with interest. It was known to her that Mr. Carlyle had not lost a moment in seeking a divorce and the announcement that it was granted was now daily expected. She was anxious for it anxious that Captain Levison should render her the only reparation in his power before the birth of her unhappy child. Little thought she that there was not the least intention on his part to make her reparation, any more than he had made it to others who had gone before her. She had become painfully aware of the fact that the man for whom she had chosen to sacrifice herself was bad, but she had not learned all his badness yet.

Captain Levison, unwashed, unshaven, with a dressinggown loosely flung on, lounged in to breakfast. The deckedout dandies before the world are frequently the greatest slovens in domestic privacy. He wished her good morning in a careless tone of apathy, and she as apathetically answered to it.

"Pierre says there are some letters," he began. "What a precious hot day it is!"

"Two," was her short reply, her tone sullen as his. For if you think my good reader, that the flattering words, the ardent expressions, which usually attend the first gooff of these promising unions last out a whole ten months, you are in egregious error. Compliments the very opposite to honey and sweetness have generally supervened long before. Try it, if you don't believe me.

"Two letters," she continued, "and they are both in the same handwriting your solicitors', I believe."

Up went his hand at the last word, and he made a sort of grab at the letters, stalked to the farthest window, opened it, and glanced over its contents.

"Sir We beg to inform you that the suit Carlyle vs. Carlyle, is at an end. The divorce was pronounced without opposition. According to your request, we hasten to forward you the earliest intimation of the fact.

"We are, sir, faithfully yours,

"MOSS & GRAB.

"F. LEVISON, Esq."

It was over, then, and all claim to the name of Carlyle was declared to have been forfeited by the Lady Isabel forever. Captain Levison folded up the letter, and placed it securely in an inner pocket.

"Is there any news?" she asked.

"News!"

"Of the divorce, I mean?"

"Tush!" was the response of Captain Levison, as if wishing to imply that the divorce was yet a faroff affair, and he proceeded to open the other letter.

"Sir After sending off our last, dated today, we received tidings of the demise of Sir Peter Levison, your granduncle. He expired this afternoon in town, where he had come for the benefit of medical advice. We have much pleasure in congratulating you upon your accession to the title and estates, and beg to state that should it not be convenient to you to visit England at present, we will be happy to transact all necessary matters for you, on your favoring us with instructions. And we remain, sir, most faithfully yours,

"MOSS & GRAB.

"SIR FRANCIS LEVISON, Bart."

The outside of the letter was superscribed as the other, "F. Levison, Esquire," no doubt with a view to its more certain delivery.

"At last, thank the pigs!" was the gentleman's euphonious expression, as he tossed the letter, open, on the breakfasttable.

"The divorce is granted!" feverishly uttered Lady Isabel.

He made no reply, but seated himself to breakfast.

"May I read the letter? Is it for me to read?"

"For what else should I have thrown it there?" he said.

"A few days ago you put a letter, open on the table, I thought for me; but when I took it up you swore at me. Do you remember it Captain Levison?"

"You may drop that odious title, Isabel, which has stuck to me too long. I own a better, now."

"What one, pray?"

"You can look and see."

Lady Isabel took up the letter and read it. Sir Francis swallowed down his coffee, and rang the table handbellthe only bell you generally meet with in France. Pierre answered it.

"Put me up a change of things," said he, in French. "I start for England in an hour."

"It is very well," Pierre responded; and departed to do it. Lady Isabel waited till the man was gone, and then spoke, a faint flush of emotion in her cheeks.

"You do not mean what you say? You will not leave me yet?"

"I cannot do otherwise," he answered. "There's a mountain of business to be attended to, now that I am come into power."

"Moss & Grab say they will act for you. Had there been a necessity for your going, they would not have offered that."

"Ay, they do say so with a nice eye to the feathering of their pockets! Besides, I should not choose for the old man's funeral to take place without me."

"Then I must accompany you," she urged.

"I wish you would not talk nonsense, Isabel. Are you in a state to travel night and day? Neither would home be agreeable to you yet awhile."

She felt the force of the objections. Resuming after a moment's pause "Were you to go to England, you might not be back in time."

"In time for what?"

"Oh, how can you ask?" she rejoined, in a sharp tone of reproach; "you know too well. In time to make me your wife when the divorce shall appear."

"I shall chance it," coolly observed Sir Francis.

"Chance it! chance the legitimacy of the child? You must assure that, before all things. More terrible to me than all the rest would it be, if"

"Now don't put yourself in a fever, Isabel. How many times am I to be compelled to beg that of you! It does no good. Is it my fault, if I am called suddenly to England?"

"Have you no pity for your child?" she urged in agitation. "Nothing can repair the injury, if you once suffer it to come upon him. He will be a byword amidst men throughout his life."

"You had better have written to the law lords to urge on the divorce," he returned. "I cannot help the delay."

"There has been no delay; quite the contrary. But it may be expected hourly now."

"You are worrying yourself for nothing, Isabel. I shall be back in time."

He quitted the room as he spoke, and Lady Isabel remained in it, the image of despair. Nearly an hour elapsed when she remembered the breakfast things, and rang for them to be removed. A maidservant entered to do it, and she thought how ill miladi looked.

"Where is Pierre?" miladi asked.

"Pierre was making himself ready to attend monsieur to England."

Scarcely had she closed the door upon herself and the tray when Sir Francis Levison appeared, equipped for traveling. "Goodbye, Isabel," said he, without further circumlocution or ceremony.

Lady Isabel, excited beyond all selfcontrol, slipped the bolt of the door; and, half leaning against it, half leaning at his feet, held up her hand in supplication.

"Francis, have you any consideration left for meany in the world?"

"How can you be so alarmed, Isabel? Of course I have," he continued, in a peevish, though kind tone, as he took hold of her hands to raise her.

"No, not yet. I will remain here until you say you will wait another day or two. You know that the French Protestant minister is prepared to marry us the instant news of the divorce shall arrive; if you do care still for me, you will wait."

"I cannot wait," he replied, his tone changing to one of determination. "It is useless to urge it."

He broke from her and left the room, and in another minute had left the house, Pierre attending him. A feeling, amounting to a conviction, rushed over the unhappy lady that she had seen him for the last time until it was too late.

She was right. It was too late by weeks and months.

December came in. The Alps were covered with snow; Grenoble borrowed the shade, and looked cold, and white, and sleety, and sloppy; the gutters, running through the middle of certain of the streets, were unusually black, and the people crept along especially dismal. Close to the fire in the barn of a French bedroom, full of windows, and doors, and draughts, with its wide hearth and its wide chimney, into which we could put four or five of our English ones, shivered Lady Isabel Vane. She had an invalid cap on, and a thick woolen invalid shawl, and she shook and shivered perpetually; though she had drawn so close to the wood fire that there was a danger of her petticoats igniting, and the attendant had frequently to spring up and interpose between them and the crackling logs. Little did it seem to matter to Lady Isabel; she sat in one position, her countenance the picture of stony despair.

So had she sat, so looking, since she began to get better. She had had a long illness, terminating in a low fever; but the attendants whispered among themselves that miladi would soon get about if she would only rouse herself. She had got so far about as to sit up in the windy chamber; and it seemed to be to her a matter of perfect indifference whether she ever got out of it.

This day she had partaken of her early dinnersuch as it was, for her appetite failedand had dozed asleep in the arm chair, when a noise arose from below, like a carriage driving into the courtyard through the porte cochere. It instantly aroused her. Had he come?

"Who is it?" she asked of the nurse.

"Miladi, it is monsieur; and Pierre is with him. I have begged milady often and often not to fret, for monsieur would surely come; miladi, see, I am right."

The girl departed, closing the door, and Lady Isabel sat looking at it, schooling her patience. Another moment, and it was flung open.

Sir Francis Levison approached to greet her as he came in. She waved him off, begging him, in a subdued, quiet tone, not to draw too near, as any little excitement made her faint now. He took a seat opposite to her, and began pushing the logs together with his boot, as he explained that he really could not get away from town before.

"Why did you come now?" she quietly rejoined.

"Why did I come?" repeated he. "Are these all the thanks a fellow gets for travelling in this inclement weather? I thought you would at least have been glad to welcome me, Isabel."

"Sir Francis," she rejoined, speaking still with almost unnatural calmness, as she continued to do throughout the interview though the frequent changes in her countenance, and the movement of her hands, when she laid them from time to time on her chest to keep down its beating, told what effort the struggle cost her "Sir Francis, I am glad, for one reason, to welcome you; we must come to an understanding one with the other; and, so far, I am pleased that you are here. It was my intention to have communicated with you by letter as soon as I found myself capable of the necessary exertion, but your visit has removed the necessity. I wish to deal with you quite unreservedly, without concealment, or deceit; I must request you so to deal with me."

"What do you mean by 'deal?'" he asked, settling the logs to his apparent satisfaction.

"To speak and act. Let there be plain truth between us at this interview, if there never has been before."

"I don't understand you."

"Naked truth, unglossed over," she pursued, bending her eyes determinately upon him. "It must be."

"With all my heart," returned Sir Francis. "It is you who have thrown out the challenge, mind."

"When you left in July you gave me a sacred promise to come back in time for our marriage; you know what I mean when I say 'in time,' but"

"Of course I meant to do so when I gave the promise," he interrupted. "But no sooner had I set my foot in London than I found myself overwhelmed with business, and away from it I could not get. Even now I can only remain with you a couple of days, for I must hasten back to town."

"You are breaking faith already," she said, after hearing him calmly to the end. "Your words are not words of truth, but of deceit. You did not intend to be back in time for the marriage, or otherwise you would have caused it to take place ere you went at all."

"What fancies you do take up!" uttered Francis Levison.

"Some time subsequent to your departure," she quietly went on, "one of the maids was setting to rights the clothes in your dressingcloset, and she brought me a letter she found in one of the pockets. I saw by the date that it was one of those two which you received on the morning of your departure. It contained the information that the divorce was pronounced."

She spoke so quietly, so apparently without feeling or passion, that Sir Francis was agreeably astonished. He should have less trouble in throwing off the mask. But he was an illtempered man; and to hear that the letter had been found to have the falseness of his fine protestations and promises laid bare, did not improve his temper now. Lady Isabel continued,

"It would have been better to have undeceived me then; to have told me that the hopes I was cherishing for the sake of the unborn child were worse than vain."

"I did not judge so," he replied. "The excited state you then appeared to be in, would have precluded your listening to any sort of reason."

Her heart beat a little quicker; but she stilled it.

"You deem that it was not in reason that I should aspire to be the wife of Sir Francis Levison?"

He rose and began kicking at the logs; with the heel of his boot this time.

"Well, Isabel, you must be aware that it is an awful sacrifice for a man in my position to marry a divorced woman."

The hectic flushed into her thin cheeks, but her voice sounded calm as before.

"When I expected or wished, for the 'sacrifice,' it was not for my own sake; I told you so then. But it was not made; and the child's inheritance is that of sin and shame. There he lies."

Sir Francis half turned to where she pointed, and saw an infant's cradle by the side of the bed. He did not take the trouble to look at it.

"I am the representative now of an ancient and respected baronetcy," he resumed, in a tone as of apology for his previous heartless words, "and to make you my wife would so offend all my family, that"

"Stay," interrupted Lady Isabel, "you need not trouble yourself to find needless excuses. Had you taken this journey for the purpose of making me your wife, were you to propose to do so this day, and bring a clergyman into the room to perform the ceremony, it would be futile. The injury to the child can never be repaired; and, for myself, I cannot imagine any fate in life worse than being compelled to pass it with you."

"If you have taken this aversion to me, it cannot be helped," he coldly said, inwardly congratulating himself, let us not doubt, at being spared the work of trouble he had anticipated. "You made commotion enough once about me making you reparation."

She shook her head.

"All the reparation in your power to make all the reparation that the whole world can invent could not undo my sin. It and the effects must lie upon me forever."

"Ohsin!" was the derisive exclamation. "You ladies should think of that beforehand."

"Yes," she sadly answered. "May heaven help all to do so who may be tempted as I was."

"If you mean that as a reproach to me, it's rather out of place," chafed Sir Francis, whose fits of illtemper were under no control, and who never, when in them, cared what he said to outrage the feelings of another. "The temptation to sin, as you call it, lay not in my persuasions half so much as in your jealous anger toward your husband."

"Quite true," was her reply.

"And I believe you were on the wrong scent, Isabel if it will be any satisfaction to you to hear it. Since we are mutually on this complimentary discourse, it is of no consequence to smooth over facts."

"I do not understand what you would imply," she said, drawing her shawl round her with a fresh shiver. "How on the wrong scent?"

"With regard to your husband and that Hare girl. You were blindly, outrageously jealous of him."

"Go on."

"And I say I think you are on the wrong scent. I do not believe Mr. Carlyle ever thought of the girl in that way."

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

"They had a secret between them not of love a secret of business; and those interviews they had together, her dancing attendance upon him perpetually, related to that, and that alone."

Her face was more flushed than it had been throughout the interview. He spoke quietly now, quite in an equal tone of reasoning; it was his way when the illtemper was upon him: and the calmer he spoke, the more cutting were his words. He need not have told her this.

"What was the secret?" she inquired, in a low tone.

"Nay, I can't explain all; they did not take me into their confidence. They did not even take you; better, perhaps that they had though, as things have turned out, or seem to be turning. There's some disreputable secret attaching to the Hare family, and Carlyle was acting in it, under the rose, for Mrs. Hare. She could not seek out Carlyle herself, so she sent the young lady. That's all I know."

"How did you know it?"

"I had reason to think so."

"What reason? I must request you to tell me."

"I overheard scraps of their conversation now and then in those meetings, and so gathered my information."

"You told a different tale to me, Sir Francis," was her remark, as she turned her indignant eyes toward him.

Sir Francis laughed.

"All stratagems are fair in love and war."

She dared not immediately trust herself to reply, and a silence ensued. Sir Francis broke it, pointing with his left thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the cradle.

"What have you named that young article there?"

"The name which ought to have been his by inheritance'Francis Levison,'" was her icy answer.

"Let's see how old is he now?"

"He was born on the last day of August."

Sir Francis threw up his arms and stretched himself, as if a fit of idleness had overtaken him; then advanced to the cradle and pulled down the clothes.

"Who is he like, Isabel? My handsome self?"

"Were he like you in spirit, I would pray that he might die ere he could speak, or think!" she burst forth. And then remembering the resolution marked out for herself, subsided outwardly into calmness again.

"What else?" retorted Sir Francis. "You know my disposition pretty well by this time, Isabel, and may be sure that if you deal out small change to me, you will get it back again with interest."

She made no reply. Sir Francis put the clothes back over the sleeping child, returned to the fire, and stood a few moments with his back to it.

"Is my room prepared for me, do you know?" he presently asked.

"No, it is not," she quietly rejoined. "These apartments are mine now; they have been transferred into my name, and they can never again afford you accommodation. Will you be so obliging I am not strong as to hand me that writing case?"

Sir Francis walked to the table she indicated, which was at the far end of the great barn of a room, and taking the writingcase from it, gave it to her.

She reached her keys from the stand at her elbow, unlocked the case, and took from it some banknotes.

"I received these from you a month ago," she said. "They came by post."

"And never had the grace to acknowledge them," he returned, in a sort of mock reproachful tone.

"Forty pounds. That was the amount, was it not?"

"I believe so."

"Allow me to return them to you. Count them."

"Return them to me for what?" inquired Sir Francis, in amazement.

"I have no longer anything whatever to do with you in any way. Do not make my arm ache, holding out these notes to you so long! Take them!"

Sir Francis took the notes from her hand and placed them on a stand near to her.

"If it be your wish that all relations should end between us, why, let it be so," he said. "I must confess I think it may be the wisest course, as things have come to this pass; for a cat and dog life, which would seemingly be ours, is not agreeable. Remember, though, that it is your doing, not mine. But you cannot think I am going to see you starve, Isabel. A sum we will fix upon the amount amicably shall be placed to your credit half yearly, and"

"I beg of you to cease," she passionately interrupted. "What do you take me for?"

"Take you for! Why, how can you live? You have no fortune you must receive assistance from some one."

"I will not receive it from you. If the whole world denied me, and I could find no help from strangers, or means of earning my own bread, and it was necessary that I should still exist, I would apply to my husband for means, rather than to you. In saying this, it ought to convince you that the topic may cease."

"Your husband!" sarcastically rejoined Sir Francis. "Generous man!"

A flush, deep and painful, dyed her cheeks. "I should have said my late husband. You need not have reminded me of the mistake."

"If you will accept nothing for yourself, you must for the child. He, at any rate, falls to my share. I shall give you a few hundred a year with him."

She beat her hands before her, as if beating off the man and his words. "Not a farthing, now or ever. Were you to attempt to send money to him, I would throw it into the nearest river. Whom do you take me for? What do you take me for?" she repeated, rising in her bitter mortification. "If you have put me beyond the pale of the world, I am still Lord Mount Severn's daughter!"

"You did as much toward putting yourself beyond its pale as"

"Don't I know it? Have I not said so?" she sharply interrupted. And then she sat, striving to calm herself, clasping together her shaking hands.

"Well, if you will persist in this perverse resolution, I cannot mend it," resumed Sir Francis. "In a little time you may probably wish to recall it; in which case a line, addressed to me at my banker's, will"

Lady Isabel drew herself up. "Put away those notes, if you please," she interrupted, not allowing him to finish his sentence.

He took out his pocketbook and placed the bank notes within it.

"Your clothesthose you left here when you went to Englandyou will have the goodness to order Pierre to take away this afternoon. And now, Sir Francis, I believe that is all: we will part."

"To remain mortal enemies from henceforth? Is that to be it?"

"To be strangers," she replied, correcting him. "I wish you a good day."

"So you will not even shake hands with me, Isabel?"

"I would prefer not."

And thus they parted. Sir Francis left the room, but not immediately the house. He went into a distant apartment, and, calling the servants before himthere were but twogave them each a year's wages in advance"That they might not have to trouble miladi for money," he said to them. Then he paid a visit to the landlord, and handed him, likewise a year's rent in advance, making the same remark. After that, he ordered dinner at a hotel, and the same night he and Pierre departed on their journey home again, Sir Francis thanking his lucky star that he had so easily got rid of a vexatious annoyance.

And Lady Isabel? She passed her evening alone, sitting in the same place, close to the fire and the sparks. The attendant remonstrated that miladi was remaining up too late for her strength, but miladi ordered her and her remonstrances into an adjoining room.

When Lady Isabel lay down to rest, she sank into a somewhat calmer sleep than she had known of late; also into a dream. She thought she was back at East Lynnenot back, in one sense, but that she seemed never to have gone away from itwalking in the flower garden with Mr. Carlyle, while the three children played on the lawn. Her arm was within her husband's, and he was relating something to her. What the news was, she could not remember afterward, excepting that it was connected with the office and old Mr. Dill, and that Mr. Carlyle laughed when he told it. They appeared to be interrupted by the crying of Archibald; and, in turning to the lawn to ask what was the matter, she awoke. Alas! It was the actual crying of her own child which awoke herthis last childthe illfated little being in the cradle beside her. But, for a single instant, she forgot recent

events and doings, she believed she was indeed in her happy home at East Lynne, a proud woman, an honored wife. As recollection flashed across her, with its piercing stings, she gave vent to a sharp cry of agony, of unavailing despair.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ALONE FOR EVERMORE.

A surprise awaited Lady Isabel Vane. It was on a windy day in the following March that a traveller arrived at Grenoble, and inquired his way of a porter, to the best hotel in the place, his French being such as only an Englishman can produce.

"Hotel? Let's see," returned the man, politely, but with native indifference. "There are two hotels, nearly contiguous to each other, and monsieur would find himself comfortable at either. There is the Tross Dauphins, and there is the Ambassadeurs."

"Monsieur" chose haphazard, the Hotel des Ambassadeurs, and was conducted to it. Shortly after his arrival there, he inquired his road to the Place Grenette, and was offered to be shown: but he preferred that it should be described to him, and to go alone. The Place was found, and he thence turned to the apartments of Lady Isabel Vane.

Lady Isabel was sitting where you saw her the previous December in the precise spot, courting the warmth of the fire, and it seemed, courting the sparks also, for they appeared as fond of her as formerly. The marvel was, how she had escaped spontaneous combustion; but there she was yet, and her clothes likewise. You might think that but a night had passed, when you looked at the room, for it wore precisely the same aspect now, as then; everything was the same, even to the child's cradle in the remote corner, partially hidden by the bedcurtains, and the sleeping child in it. Lady Isabel's progress toward recovery was remarkably lingering, as is frequently the case when mind and body are both diseased. She was so sitting when Susanne entered the room, and said that a "Monsieur Anglais" had arrived in the town to see her, and was waiting below, in the saloon.

Lady Isabel was startled. An English gentleman to see her!

English for certain, was Susanne's answer, for she had difficulty to comprehend his French.

Who could be desirous to see her? One out of the world and forgotten! "Susanne," she cried aloud, a thought striking her, "it is never Sir Franit is not monsieur!"

"Not in the least like monsieur," complacently answered Susanne. "It is a tall, brave English gentleman, proud and noble looking like a prince."

Every pulse within Lady Isabel's body throbbed rebelliously: her heart bounded till it was like to burst her side, and she turned sick with astonishment.

"Tall, brave, noble?" could that description apply to any but Mr. Carlyle? Strange that so unnatural an idea should have occurred to her; it would not have done so in a calmer moment. She rose, tottered across the chamber, and prepared to descend. Susanne's tongue was let loose at the proceeding.

"Was miladi out of her senses? To attempt going downstairs would be a pretty ending, for she'd surely fall by the way. Miladi knew that the bottom step was of lead, and that no head could pitch down upon that, without ever never being a head any more, except in the hospitals. Let miladi sit still in her place and she'd bring the monsieur up. What did it signify? He was not a young petit maitre, to quiz things: he was fifty, if he was a day: his hair already turned to fine gray."

This set the question touching Mr. Carlyle at rest, and her heart stilled again. The next moment she was inwardly laughing in her bitter mockery at her insensate folly. Mr. Carlyle come to see her! Her! Francis Levison might be sending over some man of business, regarding the money question, was her next thought: if so, she should certainly refuse to see him.

"Go down to the gentleman and ask him his name Susanne. Ask also from whence he came."

Susanne disappeared, and returned, and the gentleman behind her. Whether she had invited him, or whether he had chosen to come uninvited, there he was. Lady Isabel caught a glimpse, and flung her hands over her burning cheeks of shame. It was Lord Mount Severn.

"How did you find out where I was?" she gasped, when some painful words had been uttered on both sides.

"I went to Sir Francis Levison and demanded your address. Certain recent events implied that he and you must have parted, and I therefore deemed it time to inquire what he had done with you."

"Since last July," she interrupted. Lifting up her wan face, now colorless again. "Do not think worse of me than I am. He was here in December for an hour's recriminating interview, and we parted for life."

"What have you heard of him lately?"

"Not anything. I never know what is passing in the world at home; I have no newspaper, no correspondence; and he would scarcely be so bold as to write to me again."

"I shall not shock you, then by some tidings I bring you regarding him," returned Lord Mount Severn.

"The greatest shock to me would be to hear that I should ever again be subjected to the sight of him," she answered.

"He is married."

"Heaven have pity on his poor wife!" was all the comment of Lady Isabel.

"He has married Alice Challoner."

She lifted her head, then, in simple surprise. "Alice? Not Blanche?"

"The story runs that he has played Blanche very false. That he has been with her much during the last three or four months, leading on her expectations; and then suddenly proposed for her younger sister. I know nothing of the details myself; it is not likely; and I heard nothing, until one evening at the club I saw the announcement of the marriage for the following day at St. George's. I was at the church the next morning before he was."

"Not to stop it; not to intercept the marriage!" breathlessly uttered the Lady Isabel.

"Certainly not. I had no power to attempt anything of the sort. I went to demand an answer to my question what he had done with you, and where you were. He gave me this address, but said he knew nothing of your movements since December."

There was a long silence. The earl appeared to be alternately ruminating and taking a survey of the room. Isabel sat with her head down.

"Why did you seek me out?" she presently broke forth. "I am not worth it. I have brought enough disgrace upon your name."

"And upon your husband's and upon your children's," he rejoined, in the most severe manner, for it was not in the nature of the Earl of Mount Severn to gloss over guilt. "Nevertheless it is incumbent upon me, as your nearest blood relative, to see after you, now that you are alone again, and to take care, as far as I can, that you do not lapse lower."

He might have spared her that stab. But she scarcely understood him. She looked at him, wondering whether she did understand.

"You have not a shilling in the world," he resumed. "How do you propose to live?"

"I have some money yet. When"

"His money?" sharply and haughtily interposed the earl.

"No," she indignantly replied. "I am selling my trinkets. Before they are all gone, I shall look out to get a living in some way; by teaching, probably."

"Trinkets!" repeated Lord Mount Severn. "Mr. Carlyle told me that you carried nothing away with you from East Lynne."

"Nothing that he had given me. These were mine before I married. You have seen Mr. Carlyle, then?" she faltered.

"Seen him?" echoed the indignant earl. "When such a blow was dealt him by a member of my family, could I do less than hasten to East Lynne to tender my sympathies? I went with another subject to discover what could have been the moving springs of your conduct; for I protest, when the black tidings reached me, I believed that you must have gone mad. You were one of the last whom I should have feared to trust. But I learned nothing, and Carlyle was as ignorant as I. How could you strike him such a blow?"

Lower and lower drooped her head, brighter shone the shame on her hectic cheek. An awful blow to Mr. Carlyle it must have been; she was feeling it in all its bitter intensity. Lord Mount Severn read her repentant looks.

"Isabel," he said, in a tone which had lost something of its harshness, and it was the first time he had called her by her Christian name, "I see that you are reaping the fruits. Tell me how it happened. What demon prompted you to sell yourself to that bad man?"

"He is a bad man!" she exclaimed. "A base, heartless man!"

"I warned you at the commencement of your married life to avoid him; to shun all association with him; not to admit him to your house."

"His coming to East Lynne was not my doing," she whispered. "Mr. Carlyle invited him."

"I know he did. Invited him in his unsuspecting confidence, believing his wife to be his wife, a trustworthy woman of honor," was the severe remark.

She did not reply; she could not gainsay it; she only sat with her meek face of shame and her eyelids drooping.

"If ever a woman had a good husband, in every sense of the word, you had, in Carlyle; if ever man loved his wife, he loved you. How could you so requite him?"

She rolled, in a confused manner, the corners of her warm shawl over her unconscious fingers.

"I read the note you left for your husband. He showed it to me; the only one, I believe, to whom he did show it. It was to him entirely inexplicable, it was so to me. A notion had been suggested to him, after your departure, that his sister had somewhat marred your peace at East Lynne, and he blamed you much, if it was so, for not giving him your full confidence on the point, that he might set matters on the right footing. But it was impossible, and there was the evidence in the note besides, that the presence of Miss Carlyle at East Lynne could be any excuse for your disgracing us all and ruining yourself."

"Do not let us speak of these things," said Lady Isabel, faintly. "It cannot redeem the past."

"But I must speak of them; I came to speak of them," persisted the earl; "I could not do it as long as that man was here. When these inexplicable things take place in the career of a woman, it is a father's duty to look into motives and causes and actions, although the events in themselves may be, as in this case, irreparable. Your father is gone, but I stand in his place, there is no one else to stand in it."

Her tears began to fall. And she let them fall in silence. The earl resumed.

"But for that extraordinary letter, I should have supposed you had been actuated by a mad infatuation for the cur, Levison; its tenor gave the matter a different aspect. To what did you allude when you asserted that your husband had driven you to it?"

"He knew," she answered, scarcely above her breath.

"He did not know," sternly replied the earl. "A more truthful, honorable man than Carlyle does not exist on the face of the earth. When he told me then, in his agony of grief, that he was unable to form even a suspicion of your meaning, I could have staked my earldom on his veracity. I would stake it still."

"I believed," she began, in a low, nervous voice, for she knew that there was no evading the questions of Lord Mount Severn, when he was resolute in their being answered, and, indeed she was too weak, both in body and spirit, to resist "I believed that his love was no longer mine; that he had deserted me, for another."

The earl stared at her. "What can you mean by 'deserted!' He was with you."

"There is a desertion of the heart," was her murmured answer.

"Desertion of a fiddlestick!" retorted his lordship. "The interpretation we gave to the note, I and Carlyle, was, that you had been actuated by motives of jealousy; had penned it in a jealous mood. I put the question to Carlyle as between man and man and you listen, Isabel! whether he had given you cause; and he answered me, as with God over us, he had never given you cause; he had been faithful to you in thought, word and deed; he had never, so far as he could call to mind, even looked upon another woman with covetous feelings, since the hour that he made you his wife; his whole thoughts had been of you, and of you alone. It is more than many a husband can say," significantly coughed Lord Mount Severn.

Her pulses were beating wildly. A powerful conviction that the words were true; that her own blind jealousy had been utterly mistaken and unfounded, was forcing its way to her brain.

"After that I could only set your letter down as a subterfuge," resumed the earl "a false, barefaced plea, put forth to conceal your real motives, and I told Carlyle so. I inquired how it was he had never detected any secret understanding between you and that that beast, located, as the fellow was, in the house. He replied that no such suspicion had ever occurred to him. He placed the most implicit confidence in you, and would have trusted you with the creature around the world, ay, with any one else."

She entwined her hands one within the other, pressing them to pain. It would not deaden the pain at her heart.

"Carlyle told me he had been unusually occupied during the stay of that man. Besides his customary office work, his time was taken up with some private business for a family in the neighborhood, and he had repeatedly to see them, more particularly the daughter, after office hours. Very old acquaintances of his, he said, relatives of the Carlyle family; and he was as anxious about the secret as painful ones as they were. This, I observed to him, may have rendered him unobservant to what was passing at home. He told me, I remember, that on the very evening of the catastrophe, he ought to have gone with you to a dinner party, but most important circumstances arose, in connection with the affair, which obliged him to meet two gentlemen at his office, and to receive them in secret, unknown to his clerks."

"Did he mention the name of the family?" inquired Lady Isabel, with white lips.

"Yes, he did. I forgot it, though. Rabbit! Rabbit! some such name as that."

"Was it Hare?"

"That was it Hare. He said you appeared vexed that he did not accompany you to the dinner; and seeing that he intended to go in afterward, but was prevented. When the

interview was over in his office, he was again detained at Mrs. Hare's house, and by business as impossible to avoid as the other."

"Important business!" she echoed, giving way for a moment to the bitterness of former feelings. "He was promenading in their garden by moonlight with BarbaraMiss Hare. I saw them as my carriage passed."

"And you were jealous that he should be there!" exclaimed Lord Mount Severn, with mocking reproach, as he detected her mood. "Listen!" he whispered, bending his head toward her. "While you may have thought, as your present tone would seem to intimate, that they were pacing there to enjoy each other's society, know that theyCarlyle, at any ratewas pacing the walk to keep guard. One was within that housefor a short half hour's interview with his poor motherone who lives in danger of the scaffold, to which his own father would be the first to deliver him up. They were keeping the path against that fatherCarlyle and the young lady. Of all the nights in the previous seven years, that one only saw the unhappy son at home for a half hour's meeting with his mother and sister. Carlyle, in the grief and excitement caused by your conduct, confided so much to me, when mentioning what kept him from the dinner party."

Her face had become crimsoncrimson at her past lamentable folly. And there was no redemption!

"But he was always with Barbara Hare," she murmured, by way of some faint excuse.

"I have mentioned so. She had to see him upon this affair, her mother could not, for it was obliged to be kept from the father. And so, you construed business interviews into assignments!" continued Lord Mount Severn with cutting derision. "I had given you credit for better sense. But was this enough to hurl you on the step you took? Surely not. You must have yielded in the persuasions of that wicked man."

"It is all over now," she wailed.

"Carlyle was true and faithful to you, and to you alone. Few women have the chance of happiness, in their married life, in the degree that you had. He is an upright and good man; one of nature's gentlemen; one that England may be proud of as having grown upon her soil. The more I see of him, the greater becomes my admiration of him, and of his thorough honor. Do you know what he did in the matter of the damages?"

She shook her head.

"He did not wish to proceed for damages, or only for the trifling sum demanded by law; but the jury, feeling for his wrongs, gave unprecedentedly heavy ones. Since the fellow came into his baronetcy they have been paid. Carlyle immediately handed them over to

the county hospital. He holds the apparently obsolete opinion that money cannot wipe out a wife's dishonor."

"Let us close those topics" implored the poor invalid. "I acted wickedly and madly, and have the consequences to bear forever. More I cannot say."

"Where do you intend to fix your future residence?" inquired the earl.

"I am unable to tell. I shall leave this town as soon as I am well enough."

"Aye. It cannot be pleasant for you to remain under the eyes of its inhabitants. You were here with him, were you not?"

"They think I am his wife," she murmured. "The servants think it."

"That's well, so far. How many servants have you?"

"Two. I am not strong enough yet to do much myself, so am obliged to keep two," she continued, as if in apology for the extravagance, under her reduced circumstances. "As soon as ever the baby can walk, I shall manage to do with one."

The earl looked confounded. "The baby!" he uttered, in a tone of astonishment and grief painful to her to hear. "Isabel, is there a child?"

Not less painful was her own emotion as she hid her face. Lord Mount Severn rose and paced the room with striding steps.

"I did not know it! I did not know it! Wicked, heartless villain! He ought to have married you before its birth. Was the divorce out previously?" he asked stopping short in his strides to put the question.

"Yes."

"Coward! Sneak! May good men shun him from henceforth! May his queen refuse to receive him! You, an earl's daughter! Oh, Isabel, how utterly you have lost yourself!"

Lady Isabel started from her chair in a burst of hysterical sobs, her hands extended beseechingly toward the earl. "Spare me! Spare me! You have been rending my heart ever since you came; indeed I am too weak to bear it."

The earl, in truth, had been betrayed into showing more of his sentiments than he intended. He recalled his recollection.

"Well, well, sit down again, Isabel," he said, putting her into her chair. "We shall go to the point I chiefly came here to settle. What sum will it take you to live upon? Quietly; as of course you would now wish to live, but comfortably."

"I will not accept anything," she replied. "I will get my own living." And the earl's irascibility again arose at the speech. He spoke in a sharp tone.

"Absurd, Isabel! Do not add romantic folly to your own mistakes. Get your own living, indeed! As much as is necessary for you to live upon, I shall supply. No remonstrance; I tell you I am acting as for your father. Do you suppose he would have abandoned you to starve or to work?"

The allusion touched every chord within her bosom, and the tears fell fast. "I thought I could get my living by teaching," she sobbed.

"And how much did you anticipate the teaching would bring you in?"

"Not very much," she listlessly said. "A hundred a year, perhaps; I am very clever at music and singing. That sum might keep us, I fancy, even if I only went out by the day."

"And a fine 'keep' it would be! You shall have that sum every quarter!"

"No, no! no, no! I do not deserve it; I could not accept it; I have forfeited all claim to assistance."

"Not to mine. Now, it is of no use to excite yourself, my mind is made up. I never willingly forego a duty, and I look upon this not only as a duty, but as an imperative one. Upon my return, I shall immediately settle four hundred upon you, and you can draw it quarterly."

"Then half that sum," she reflected, knowing how useless it was to contend with Lord Mount Severn when he got upon the stilts of "duty." "Indeed, two hundred a year will be ample; it will seem like riches to me."

"I have named the sum, Isabel, and I shall not make it less. A hundred pounds every three months shall be paid to you, dating from this day. This does not count," said he, laying down some notes on the table.

He took her hand within his in token of farewell; turned and was gone.

And Lady Isabel remained in her chamber alone.

Alone; alone! Alone for evermore!

CHAPTER XXVII.

BARBARA'S MISDOINGS.

A sunny afternoon in summer. More correctly speaking, it may be said a summer's evening, for the bright beams were already slanting athwart the substantial garden of Mr. Justice Hare, and the tea hour, seven, was passing. Mr. and Mrs. Hare and Barbara were seated at the meal; somehow, meals always did seem in process at Justice Hare's; if it was not breakfast, it was luncheon if it was not luncheon, it was dinner if it was not dinner, it was tea. Barbara sat in tears, for the justice was giving her a "piece of his mind," and poor Mrs. Hare deferently agreeing with her husband, as she would have done had he proposed to set the house on fire and burn her up in it, yet sympathizing with Barbara, moved uneasily in her chair.

"You do it for the purpose; you do it to anger me," thundered the justice, bringing down his hand on the teatable and causing the cups to rattle.

"No I don't, papa," sobbed Barbara.

"Then why do you do it?"

Barbara was silent.

"No; you can't answer; you have nothing to urge. What is the matter, pray, with Major Thorn? Come, I will be answered."

"I don't like him," faltered Barbara.

"You do like him; you are telling me an untruth. You have liked him well enough whenever he has been here."

"I like him as an acquaintance, papa; not as a husband."

"Not as a husband!" repeated the exasperated justice. "Why, bless my heart and body, the girl's going mad! Not as a husband! Who asked you to like him as a husband before he became such? Did ever you hear that it was necessary or expedient, or becoming for a young lady to act on and begin to 'like' a gentleman as 'her husband?'"

Barbara felt a little bewildered.

"Here's the whole parish saying that Barbara Hare can't be married, that nobody will have her, on account of that cursed stain left by, I won't trust myself to name him, I should go too far. Now, don't you think that's a pretty disgrace, a fine state of things?"

"But it is not true," said Barbara; "people do ask me."

"But what's the use of their asking when you say 'No?'" raved the justice. "Is that the way to let the parish know that they ask? You are an ungrateful, rebellious, selfwilled daughter, and you'll never be otherwise."

Barbara's tears flowed freely. The justice gave a dash at the bell handle, to order the tea things carried away, and after their removal the subject was renewed, together with Barbara's grief. That was the worst of Justice Hare. Let him seize hold of a grievance, it was not often he got upon a real one, and he kept on at it, like a blacksmith hammering at his forge. In the midst of a stormy oration, tongue and hands going together, Mr. Carlyle came in.

Not much altered; not much. A year and threequarters had gone by and they had served to silver his hair upon the temples. His manner, too, would never again be careless and light as it once had been. He was the same keen man of business, the same pleasant, intelligent companion; the generality of people saw no change in him. Barbara rose to escape.

"No," said Justice Hare, planting himself between her and the door; "that's the way you like to get out of my reach when I am talking to you. You won't go; so sit down again. I'll tell you of your illconduct before Mr. Carlyle, and see if that will shame you."

Barbara resumed her seat, a rush of crimson dyeing her cheeks. And Mr. Carlyle looked inquiringly, seeming to ask an explanation of her distress. The justice continued after his own fashion.

"You know, Carlyle, that horrible blow that fell upon us, that shameless disgrace. Well, because the parish can't clack enough about the fact itself, it must begin about Barbara, saying that the disgrace and humiliation are reflected upon her, and that nobody will come near her to ask her to be his wife. One would think, rather than lie under the stigma and afford the parish room to talk, she'd marry the first man that came, if it was the parish beadleanybody else would. But now, what are the facts? You'll stare when you know them. She has received a bushel of good offersa bushel of them," repeated the justice, dashing his hand down on his knee, "and she says 'No!' to all. The last was today, from Major Thorn, and, my young lady takes and puts the stopper upon it, as usual, without reference to me or her mother, without saying with your leave or by your leave. She wants to be kept in her room for a week upon bread and water, to bring her to her senses."

Mr. Carlyle glanced at Barbara. She was sitting meekly under the infliction, her wet eyelashes falling on her flushed cheeks and shading her eyes. The justice was heated enough, and had pushed his flaxen wig nearly hindpart before, in the warmth of his argument.

"What did you say to her?" snapped the justice.

"Matrimony may not have charms for Barbara," replied Mr. Carlyle half jokingly.

"Nothing does have charms for her that ought to have," growled Justice Hare. "She's one of the contrary ones. By the way, though," hastily resumed the justice, leaving the objectionable subject, as another flashed across his memory, "they were coupling your name and matrimony together, Carlyle, last night, at the Buck's Head."

A very perceptible tinge of red rose to the face of Mr. Carlyle, telling of inward emotion, but his voice and manner betrayed none.

"Indeed," he carelessly said.

"Ah, you are a sly one; you are, Carlyle. Remember how sly you were over your first" marriage, Justice Hare was going to bring out, but it suddenly occurred to him that all circumstances considered, it was not precisely the topic to recall to Mr. Carlyle. So he stopped himself in the utterance, coughed, and went on again. "There you go, over to see Sir John Dobede, not to see Sir John, but paying court to Miss Dobede."

"So the Buck's Head was amusing itself with that!" goodnaturedly observed Mr. Carlyle. "Well, Miss Dobede is going to be married, and I am drawing up the settlements."

"It's not she; she marries young Somerset; everybody knows that. It's the other one, Louisa. A nice girl, Carlyle."

"Very," responded Mr. Carlyle, and it was all the answer he gave. The justice, tired of sitting indoors, tired, perhaps, of extracting nothing satisfactory from Mr. Carlyle, rose, shook himself, set his wig aright before the chimneyglass, and quitted the house on his customary evening visit to the Buck's Head. Barbara, who watched him down the path, saw that he encountered someone who happened to be passing the gate. She could not at first distinguish who it might be, nothing but an arm and shoulder cased in velveteen met her view, but as their positions changed in conversation his and her father's she saw that it was Locksley; he had been the chief witness, not a vindictive one; he could not help himself, against her brother Richard, touching the murder of Halli John.

Meanwhile Mrs. Hare had drawn Mr. Carlyle into a chair close by her own.

"Archibald, will you forgive me if I say a word upon the topic introduced by Mr. Hare?" she said, in a low tone, as she shook his hand. "You know how fondly I have ever regarded you, second only to my poor Richard. Your welfare and happiness are precious to me. I wish I could in any way promote them. It occurs to me, sometimes, that you are not at present so happy as you might be."

"I have some sources of happiness," said Mr. Carlyle. "My children and I have plenty of sources of interest. What do you mean, dear Mrs. Hare?"

"Your home might be made happier."

Mr. Carlyle smiled, nearly laughed. "Cornelia takes care of that, as she did in the old days, you know."

"Yes, I know. Would it not be as well to consider whether she would not be better in a home of her own and for you to give East Lynne another mistress?"

He shook his head.

"Archibald, it would be happier for you; it would indeed. It is only in new ties that you can forget the past. You might find recompense yet for the sorrow you have gone through; and I know none," repeated Mrs. Hare, emphatically, "more calculated to bring it you than that sweet girl, Louisa Dobede."

"So long as" Mr. Carlyle was beginning, and had not got so far in his sentence, when he was interrupted by an exclamation from Barbara.

"What can be the matter with papa? Locksley must have said something to anger him. He is coming in the greatest passion, mamma; his face crimson, and his hands and arms working."

"Oh, dear, Barbara!" was all poor Mrs. Hare's reply. The justice's great bursts of passion frightened her.

In he came, closed the door, and stood in the middle of the room, looking alternately at Mrs. Hare and Barbara.

"What is this cursed report, that's being whispered in the place!" quoth he, in a tone of suppressed rage, but not unmixed with awe.

"What report?" asked Mr. Carlyle, for the justice waited for an answer, and Mrs. Hare seemed unable to speak. Barbara took care to keep silence; she had some misgivings that the justice's words might be referring to herself to the recent grievance.

"A report that hehehas been here disguised as a laborer, has dared to show himself in the place where he'll come yet, to the gibbet."

Mrs. Hare's face turned as white as death; Mr. Carlyle rose and dexterously contrived to stand before her, so that it should not be seen. Barbara silently locked her hands, one within the other, and turned to the window.

"Of whom did you speak?" asked Mr. Carlyle, in a matteroffact tone, as if he were putting the most matteroffact question. He knew too well; but he thought to temporize for the sake of Mrs. Hare.

"Of whom do I speak!" uttered the exasperated justice, nearly beside himself with passion; "of whom would I speak but the bastard Dick! Who else in West Lynne is likely to come to a felon's death?"

"Oh, Richard!" sobbed forth Mrs. Hare, as she sank back in her chair, "be merciful. He is our own true son."

"Never a true son of the Hares," raved the justice. "A true son of wickedness, and cowardice, and blight, and evil. If he has dared to show his face at West Lynne, I'll set the whole police of England upon his track, that he may be brought here as he ought, if he must come. When Locksley told me of it just now, I raised my hand to knock him down, so infamously false did I deem the report. Do you know anything of his having been here?" continued the justice to his wife, in a pointed, resolute tone.

How Mrs. Hare would have extricated herself, or what she would have answered, cannot even be imagined, but Mr. Carlyle interposed.

"You are frightening Mrs. Hare, sir. Don't you see that she knows nothing of itthat the very report of such a thing is alarming her into illness? Butallow me to inquire what it may be that Locksley said?"

"I met him at the gate," retorted Justice Hare, turning his attention upon Mr. Carlyle. "He was going by as I reached it. 'Oh, justice, I am glad I met you. That's a nasty report in the place that Richard has been here. I'd see what I could do toward hushing it up, sir, if I were you, for it may only serve to put the police in mind of by gone things, which it may be better they should forget.' Carlyle, I went, as I tell you, to knock him down. I asked him how he could have the hardihood to repeat such slander to my face. He was on the high horse directly; said the parish spoke the slander, not he; and I got out of him what it was he had heard."

"And what was it?" interrupted Mr. Carlyle, more eagerly than he generally spoke.

"Why, they say the fellow showed himself here some time ago, a year or so, disguised as a farm laborer confounded fools! Not but what he'd have been the fool had he done it."

"To be sure he would," repeated Mr. Carlyle, "and he is not fool enough for that, sir. Let West Lynne talk, Mr. Hare; but do not put faith in a word of its gossip. I never do. Poor Richard, wherever he may be"

"I won't have him pitied in my presence," burst forth the justice. "Poor Richard, indeed! Villain Richard, if you please."

"I was about to observe that, wherever he may bewhether in the backwoods of America, or digging for gold in California, or wandering about the United Kingdom there is little fear that he will quit his place of safety to dare the dangerous ground of West Lynne. Had I been you, sir, I should have laughed at Locksley and his words."

"Why does West Lynne invent such lies?"

"Ah, there's the rub. I dare say West Lynne could not tell why, if it were paid for doing it; but it seems to have been a lame story it had got up this time. If they must have concocted a report that Richard had been seen at West Lynne, why put it back to a year ago why not have fixed it for today or yesterday? If I heard anything more, I would treat it with the silence and contempt it deserves, justice."

Silence and contempt were not greatly in the justice's line; noise and explosion were more so. But he had a high opinion of the judgment of Mr. Carlyle; and growling a sort of assent, he once more set forth to pay his evening visit.

"Oh, Archibald!" uttered Mrs. Hare, when her husband was halfway down the path, "what a mercy that you were here! I should inevitably have betrayed myself."

Barbara turned round from the window, "But what could have possessed Locksley to say what he did?" she exclaimed.

"I have no doubt Locksley spoke with a motive," said Mr. Carlyle. "He is not unfriendly to Richard, and thought, probably, that by telling Mr. Hare of the report he might get it stopped. The rumor had been mentioned to me."

Barbara turned cold all over. "How can it have come to light?" she breathed.

"I am at a loss to know," said Mr. Carlyle. "The person to mention it to me was Tom Herbert. 'I say,' said he meeting me yesterday, 'what's this row about Dick Hare?' 'What now?' I asked him. 'Why, that Dick was at West Lynne some time back, disguised as a farm laborer.' Just the same, you see, that Locksley said to Mr. Hare. I laughed at Tom

Herbert," continued Mr. Carlyle; "turned his report into ridicule also, before I had done with him."

"Will it be the means of causing Richard's detection?" murmured Mrs. Hare from between her dry lips.

"No, no," warmly responded Mr. Carlyle. "Had the report arisen immediately after he was really here, it might not have been so pleasant; but nearly two years have elapsed since the period. Be under no uneasiness, dear Mrs. Hare, for rely upon it there is no cause."

"But how could it have come out, Archibald?" she urged, "and at this distant period of time?"

"I assure you I am quite at a loss to imagine. Had anybody at West Lynne seen and recognized Richard, they would have spoken of it at the time. Do not let it trouble you; the rumor will die away."

Mrs. Hare sighed deeply, and left the room to proceed to her own chamber. Barbara and Mr. Carlyle were alone.

"Oh, that the real murderer could be discovered!" she aspirated, clasping her hands. "To be subjected to these shocks of fear is dreadful. Mamma will not be herself for days to come."

"I wish the right man could be found; but it seems as far off as ever," remarked Mr. Carlyle.

Barbara sat ruminating. It seemed that she would say something to Mr. Carlyle, but a feeling caused her to hesitate. When she did at length speak, it was in a low, timid voice.

"You remember the description Richard gave, that last night, of the person he had met the true Thorn?"

"Yes."

"Did it strike you then has it ever occurred to you to think that it accorded with some one?"

"In what way, Barbara?" he asked, after a pause. "It accorded with the description Richard always gave of the man Thorn."

"Richard spoke of the peculiar movement of throwing off the hair from the forehead in this way. Did that strike you as being familiar, in connection with the white hand and the diamond ring?"

"Many have a habit of pushing off their hair. I think I do it myself sometimes. Barbara, what do you mean? Have you a suspicion of any one?"

"Have you?" she returned, answering the question by asking another.

"I have not. Since Captain Thorn was disposed of, my suspicions have not pointed anywhere."

This sealed Barbara's lips. She had hers, vague doubts, bringing wonder more than anything else. At times she had thought the same doubts might have occurred to Mr. Carlyle; she now found that they had not. The terrible domestic calamity which had happened to Mr. Carlyle the same night that Richard protested he had seen Thorn, had prevented Barbara's discussing the matter with him then, and she had never done so since. Richard had never been further heard of, and the affair had remained in abeyance.

"I begin to despair of its ever being discovered," she observed. "What will become of poor Richard?"

"We can but wait, and hope that time may bring forth its own elucidation," continued Mr. Carlyle.

"Ah," sighed Barbara, "but it is weary waiting—weary, weary."

"How is it you contrive to get under the paternal displeasure?" he resumed, in a gay tone.

She blushed vividly, and it was her only answer.

"The Major Thorn alluded to by your papa is our old friend, I presume?"

Barbara inclined her head.

"He is a very pleasant man, Barbara. Many a young lady in West Lynne would be proud to get him."

There was a pause. Barbara broke it, but she did not look at Mr. Carlyle as she spoke.

"The other rumor is it a correct one?"

"What other rumor?"

"That you are to marry Louisa Dobede."

"It is not. I have no intention of marrying any one. Nay, I will say it more strongly; it is my intention not to marry any one to remain as I am."

Barbara lifted her eyes to his in the surprise of the moment.

"You look amused, Barbara. Have you been lending your credence to the gossips, who have so kindly disposed of me to Louisa Dobede?"

"Not so. But Louisa Dobede is a girl to be coveted, and, as mamma says, it might be happier for you if you married again. I thought you would be sure to do so."

"No. She who was my wife lives."

"What of that?" uttered Barbara, in simplicity.

He did not answer for a moment, and when he did, it was in a low, almost imperceptible tone, as he stood by the table at which Barbara sat, and looked down on her.

"Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery."

And before Barbara could answer, if, indeed, she had found any answer to make, or had recovered her surprise, he had taken his hat and was gone.

To return for a short while to Lady Isabel. As the year advanced she grew stronger, and in the latter part of the summer she made preparations for quitting Grenoble. Where she would fix her residence, or what she would do, she knew not. She was miserable and restless, and cared little what became of her. The remotest spot on earth, one unpenetrated by the steps of civilized man, appeared the most desirable for her. Where was she to find this?

She set out on her search, she and the child and its nurse. Not Susanne. Susanne had a sweetheart in Grenoble, and declined to leave it, so a girl was engaged for the child in her place. Lady Isabel wound up her housekeeping, had her things packed and forwarded to Paris, there to wait her orders and finally quitted Grenoble. It was a fine day when she left it all too fine for the dark ending it was to bring.

When a railway accident does take place in France, it is an accident. None of your milk-and-water affairs, where a few bruises and a great fright are the extent of the damages but too often a calamity whose remembrance lasts a lifetime. Lady Isabel had travelled a considerable distance that first day, and at the dusk of evening, as they were

approaching a place, Cammere, where she purposed to halt for the night, a dreadful accident occurred. The details need not be given, and will not be. It is sufficient to say that some of the passengers were killed, her child and nurse being amongst them, and she herself was dangerously injured.

The injuries lay chiefly in her left leg and in her face the lower part of her face. The surgeons, taking their cursory view of her, as they did of the rest of the sufferers, were not sparing in their remarks, for they believed her to be insensible. She had gathered that the leg was to be amputated, and that she would probably die under the operation but her turn to be attended to was not yet. How she contrived to write she never knew, but she got a pen and ink brought to her, and did succeed in scrawling a letter to Lord Mount Severn.

She told him that a sad accident had taken place; she could not say how; all was confusion; and that her child and maid were killed. She herself was dangerously injured, and was about to undergo an operation, which the doctors believed she could not survive; only in case of her death would the letter be sent to Lord Mount Severn. She could not die, she said, without a word of thanks for all his kindness; and she begged him, when he saw Mr. Carlyle, to say that with her last breath she humbly implored his forgiveness, and his children's whom she no longer dared to call hers.

Now this letter, by the officiousness of a servant at the inn to which the sufferers were carried, was taken at once to the post. And, after all, things turned out not quite so bad as anticipated; for when the doctors came to examine the state of Lady Isabel, not cursorily, they found there would be no absolute necessity for the operation contemplated. Fond as the French surgeons are of the knife, to resort to it in this instance would have been cruel, and they proceeded to other means of cure.

The letter was duly delivered at the town house of Lord Mount Severn, where it was addressed. The countess was sojourning there for a few days; she had quitted it after the season, but some business, or pleasure, had called her again to town. Lord Vane was with her, but the earl was in Scotland. They were at breakfast, she and her son, when the letter was brought in: eighteen pence to pay. Its scrawled address, its foreign aspect, its appearance, altogether, excited her curiosity; in her own mind, she believed she had dropped upon a nice little conjugal mare's nest.

"I shall open this," cried she.

"Why, it is addressed to papa!" exclaimed Lord Vane who possessed all his father's notions of honor.

"But such an odd letter! It may require an immediate answer; or is some begging petition, perhaps. Get on with your breakfast."

Lady Mount Severn opened the letter, and with some difficulty spelt through its contents. They shocked even her.

"How dreadful!" she uttered, in the impulse of the moment.

"What is dreadful?" asked Lord Vane, looking up from his breakfast.

"Lady Isabel Isabel Vane you have not forgotten her?"

"Forgotten her!" he echoed. "Why, mamma, I must possess a funny memory to have forgotten her already."

"She is dead. She has been killed in a railway accident in France."

His large blue eyes, honest and true as they had been in childhood, filled, and his face flushed. He said nothing, for emotion was strong within him.

"But, shocking as it is, it is better for her," went on the countess; "for, poor creature what could her future life had been?"

"Oh, don't say it!" impetuously broke out the young viscount. "Killed in a railway accident, and for you to say that it is better for her!"

"So it is better," said the countess. "Don't go into heroics, William. You are quite old enough to know that she had brought misery upon herself, and disgrace upon all connected with her. No one could ever have taken notice of her again."

"I would," said the boy, stoutly.

Lady Mount Severn smiled derisively.

"I would. I never liked anybody in the world half so much as I liked Isabel."

"That's past and gone. You would not have continued to like her, after the disgrace she wrought."

"Somebody else wrought more of the disgrace than she did; and, had I been a man, I would have shot him dead," flashed the viscount.

"You don't know anything about it."

"Don't I!" returned he, not over dutifully. But Lady Mount Severn had not brought him up to be dutiful.

"May I read the letter, mamma?" he demanded, after a pause.

"If you can read it," she replied, tossing it to him. "It is written in the strangest style; syllables divided, and the words running one into the other. She wrote it herself when she was dying."

Lord Vane took the letter to a window, and stayed looking over it for some time; the countess ate an egg and a plate of ham meanwhile. Presently he came back with it folded, and laid in on the table.

"You will forward it to papa today," he observed.

"I shall forward it to him. But there's no hurry; and I don't exactly know where your papa may be. I shall send the notice of her death to the papers; and I am glad to do it; it is a blight removed from the family."

"Mamma, I do think you are the unkindest woman that ever breathed!"

"I'll give you something to call me unkind for, if you don't mind," retorted the countess, her color rising. "Dock you of your holiday, and pack you back to school today."

A few mornings after this Mr. Carlyle left East Lynne and proceeded to his office as usual. Scarcely was he seated, when Mr. Dill entered, and Mr. Carlyle looked at him inquiringly, for it was not Mr. Carlyle's custom to be intruded upon by any person until he had opened his letters; then he would ring for Mr. Dill. The letters and the Times newspaper lay on the table before him. The old gentleman came up in a covert, timid sort of way, which made Mr. Carlyle look all the more.

"I beg pardon, sir; will you let me ask if you have heard any particular news?"

"Yes, I have heard it," replied Mr. Carlyle.

"Then, sir, I beg your pardon a thousand times over. It occurred to me that you probably had not, Mr. Archibald; and I thought I would have said a word to prepare you, before you came upon it suddenly in the paper."

"To prepare me!" echoed Mr. Carlyle, as old Dill was turning away. "Why, what has come to you, Dill? Are you afraid my nerves are growing delicate, or that I shall faint over the loss of a hundred pounds? At the very most, we shall not suffer above that extent."

Old Dill turned back again.

"If I don't believe you are speaking of the failure of Kent & Green! It's not that, Mr. Archibald. They won't affect us much; and there'll be a dividend, report runs."

"What is it, then?"

"Then you have not heard it, sir! I am glad that I'm in time. It might not be well for you to have seen it without a word of preparation, Mr. Archibald."

"If you have not gone demented, you will tell me what you mean, Dill, and leave me to my letters," cried Mr. Carlyle, wondering excessively at his sober, matteroffact clerk's words and manner.

Old Dill put his hands upon the Times newspaper.

"It's here, Mr. Archibald, in the column of deaths; the first on the list. Please, prepare yourself a little before you look at it."

He shuffled out quickly, and Mr. Carlyle as quickly unfolded the paper. It was, as old Dill said, the first on the list of deaths:

"At Cammere, in France, on the 18th inst., Isabel Mary, only child of William, late Earl of Mount Severn."

Clients called; Mr. Carlyle's bell did not ring; an hour or two passed, and old Dill protested that Mr. Carlyle was engaged until he could protest no longer. He went in, deprecatingly. Mr. Carlyle sat yet with the newspaper before him, and the letters unopened at his elbow.

"There are one or two who will come in, Mr. Archibaldwho will see you; what am I to say?"

Mr. Carlyle stared at him for a moment, as if his wits had been in the next world. Then he swept the newspaper from before him, and was the calm, collected man of business again.

As the news of Lady Isabel's marriage had first come in the knowledge of Lord Mount Severn through the newspapers, so singular to say did the tidings of her death. The next post brought him the letter, which his wife had tardily forwarded. But, unlike Lady Mount Severn, he did not take her death as entirely upon trust; he thought it possible the letter might have been dispatched without its having taken place; and he deemed it incumbent on him to make inquiries. He wrote immediately to the authorities of the town, in the best French he could muster, asking for particulars, and whether she was really dead.

He received, in due course a satisfactory answer; satisfactory in so far as that it set his doubts at rest. He had inquired after her by her proper name, and title, "La Dame Isabelle Vane," and as the authorities could find none of the survivors owning that

name, they took it for granted she was dead. They wrote him word that the child and nurse were killed on the spot; two ladies, occupying the same compartment of the carriage, had since died, one of whom was no doubt the mother and lady he inquired for. She was dead and buried, sufficient money having been found upon her person to defray the few necessary expenses.

Thus, through no premeditated intention of Lady Isabel, news of her death went forth to Lord Mount Severn and to the world. Her first intimation that she was regarded as dead, was through a copy of that very day's Times seen by Mr. Carlyle seen by Lord Mount Severn. An English traveller, who had been amongst the sufferers, and who received the English newspaper daily, sometimes lent them to her to read. She was not travelling under her own name; she left that behind her when she left Grenoble; she had rendered her own too notorious to risk the chance recognition of travellers; and the authorities little thought that the quiet unobtrusive Madame Vine, slowly recovering at the inn, was the Dame Isabella Vane, respecting whom the grand English comte wrote.

Lady Isabel understood it at once; that the dispatching of her letter had been the foundation of the misapprehension; and she began to ask herself now, why she should undeceive Lord Mount Severn and the world. She longed, none knew with what intense longings, to be unknown, obscure, totally unrecognized by all; none can know it, till they have put a barrier between themselves and the world, as she had done. The child was gone happy being! She thought she could never be sufficiently thankful that it was released from the uncertain future therefore she had not his support to think of. She had only herself; and surely she could with ease earn enough for that; or she could starve; it mattered little which. No, there was no necessity for her continuing to accept the bounty of Lord Mount Severn, and she would let him and everybody else continue to believe that she was dead, and be henceforth only Madame Vine. A resolution she adhered to.

Thus the unhappy Isabel's career was looked upon as run. Lord Mount Severn forwarded her letter to Mr. Carlyle, with the confirmation of her death, which he had obtained from the French authorities. It was a nine day's wonder: "That poor, erring Lady Isabel was dead" people did not call her names in the very teeth of her fate and then it was over.

It was over. Lady Isabel was as one forgotten.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR AT EAST LYNNE.

There went, sailing up the avenue to East Lynne, a lady, one windy afternoon. If not a lady, she was attired as one; a flounced dress, and a stylish looking shawl, and a white veil. A very pretty woman, tall and slender was she, and she minced as she walked, and coquetted with her head, and, altogether contrived to show that she had quite as much vanity as brains. She went boldly up to the broad entrance of the house, and boldly rang at it, drawing her white veil over her face as she did so.

One of the menservants answered it, not Peter; and, seeing somebody very smart before him, bowed deferentially.

"Miss Hallijohn is residing here, I believe. Is she within?"

"Who, ma'am?"

"Miss Hallijohn; Miss Joyce Hallijohn," somewhat sharply repeated the lady, as if impatient of any delay. "I wish to see her."

The man was rather taken aback. He had deemed it a visitor to the house, and was prepared to usher her to the drawingroom, at least; but it seemed it was only a visitor to Joyce. He showed her into a small parlor, and went upstairs to the nursery, where Joyce was sitting with Wilson for there had been no change in the domestic department of East Lynne. Joyce remained as upper maid, partially superintending the servants, attending upon Lucy, and making Miss Carlyle's dresses as usual. Wilson was nurse still.

"Miss Joyce, there's a lady asking for you," said the man. "I have shown her into the gray parlor."

"A lady for me?" repeated Joyce. "Who is it? Some one to see the children, perhaps."

"It's for yourself, I think. She asked for Miss Hallijohn."

Joyce looked at the man; but she put down her work and proceeded to the gray parlor. A pretty woman, vain and dashing, threw up her white veil at her entrance.

"Well, Joyce, how are you?"

Joyce, always pale, turned paler still, as she gazed in blank consternation. Was it really Afy who stood before her Afy, the erring?

Afy it was. And she stood there, holding out her hand to Joyce, with what Wilson would have called, all the brass in the world. Joyce could not reconcile her mind to link her own with it.

"Excuse me, Afy, but I cannot take your hand, I cannot welcome you here. What could have induced you to come?"

"If you are going to be upon the high ropes, it seems I might as well have stayed away," was Afy's reply, given in the pert, but goodhumored manner she had ever used to Joyce. "My hand won't damage yours. I am not poison."

"You are looked upon in the neighborhood as worse than poison, Afy," returned Joyce, in a tone, not of anger but of sorrow. "Where's Richard Hare?"

Afy tossed her head. "Where's who?" asked she.

"Richard Hare. My question was plain enough."

"How should I know where he is? It's like your impudence to mention him to me. Why don't you ask me where Old Nick is, and how he does? I'd rather own acquaintance with him than with Richard Hare, if I'd my choice between the two."

"Then you have left Richard Hare? How long since?"

"I have left what do you say?" broke off Afy, whose lips were quivering ominously with suppressed passion. "Perhaps you'll condescend to explain. I don't understand."

"When you left here, did you not go after Richard Hare? Did you not join him?"

"I'll tell you what it is, Joyce," flashed Afy, her face indignant and her voice passionate, "I have put up with some things from you in my time, but human nature has its limits of endurance, and I won't bear that. I have never set eyes on Richard Hare since that night of horror; I wish I could; I'd help to hang him."

Joyce paused. The belief that Afy was with him had been long and deeply imbued within her; it was the long continued and firm conviction of all West Lynne, and a settled belief, such as that, is not easily shaken. Was Afy telling the truth? She knew her propensity for making false assertions, when they served to excuse herself.

"Afy," she said at length, "let me understand you. When you left this place, was it not to share Richard Hare's flight? Have you not been living with him?"

"No!" burst forth Afy, with kindling eyes. "Living with him with our father's murderer! Shame upon you, Joyce Halliwell! You must be precious wicked yourself to suppose it."

"If I have judged you wrongly, Afy, I sincerely beg your pardon. Not only myself, but the whole of West Lynne, believed you were with him; and the thought has caused me pain night and day."

"What a cannibal minded set you all must be, then!" was Afy's indignant rejoinder.

"What have you been doing ever since, then? Where have you been?"

"Never mind, I say," repeated Afy. "West Lynne has not been so complimentary to me, it appears, that I need put myself out of my way to satisfy its curiosity. I was knocking about a bit at first, but I soon settled down as steady as Old Time as steady as you."

"Are you married?" inquired Joyce, noting the word "settled."

"Catch me marrying," retorted Afy; "I like my liberty too well. Not but what I might be induced to change my condition, if anything out of the way eligible occurred; it must be very eligible, though, to tempt me. I am what I suppose you call yourself a lady's maid."

"Indeed!" said Joyce, much relieved. "And are you comfortable, Afy? Are you in good service?"

"Middling, for that. The pay's not amiss, but there's a great deal to do, and Lady Mount Severn's too much of a Tartar for me."

Joyce looked at her in surprise. "What have you to do with Lady Mount Severn?"

"Well, that's good! It's where I am at service."

"At Lady Mount Severn's?"

"Why not? I have been there two years. It is not a great deal longer I shall stop, though; she had too much vinegar in her for me. But it poses me to imagine what on earth could have induced you to fancy I should go off with that Dick Hare," she added, for she could not forget the grievance.

"Look at the circumstances," argued Joyce. "You both disappeared."

"But not together."

"Nearly together. There were only a few days intervening. And you had neither money nor friends."

"You don't know what I had. But I would rather have died of want on father's grave than have shared his means," continued Afy, growing passionate again.

"Where is he? Not hung, or I should have heard of it."

"He has never been seen since that night, Afy."

"Nor heard of?"

"Nor heard of. Most people think he is in Australia, or some other foreign land."

"The best place for him; the more distance he puts between him and home, the better. If he does come back, I hope he'll get his deserts which is a rope's end. I'd go to his hanging."

"You are as bitter against him as Mr. Justice Hare. He would bring his son back to suffer, if he could."

"A crossgrained old camel!" remarked Afy, in allusion to the qualities, social and amiable, of the revered justice. "I don't defend Dick Hare I hate him too much for that but if his father had treated him differently, Dick might have been different. Well, let's talk of something else; the subject invariably gives me the shivers. Who is mistress here?"

"Miss Carlyle."

"Oh, I might have guessed that. Is she as fierce as ever?"

"There is little alteration in her."

"And there won't be on this side the grave. I say, Joyce, I don't want to encounter her; she might set on at me, like she has done many a time in the old days. Little love was there lost between me and Corny Carlyle. Is Mr. Carlyle at home?"

"He will be home to dinner. I dare say you would like some tea; you shall come and take it with me and Wilson, in the nursery."

"I was thinking you might have the grace to offer me something," cried Afy. "I intend to stop till tomorrow in the neighborhood. My lady gave me two days' holiday for she was going to see her dreadful old grandmother, where she can't take a maid and I thought I'd use it in coming to have a look at the old place again. Don't stare at me in that blank way, as if you feared I should ask the grand loan of sleeping here. I shall sleep at the Mount Severn Arms."

"I was not glancing at such a thought, Afy. Come and take your bonnet off."

"Is the nursery full of children?"

"There is only one child in it. Miss Lucy and Master William are with the governess."

Wilson received Afy with lofty condescension, having Richard Hare in her thoughts. But Joyce explained that it was all a misapprehension that her sister had never been near Richard Hare, but was as indignant against him as they were. Upon which Wilson grew cordial and chatty, rejoicing in the delightful recreation her tongue would enjoy that evening.

Afy's account of herself, as to past proceedings, was certainly not the most satisfactory in the world; but, altogether, taken in the present, it was so vast an improvement upon Joyce's conclusions, that she had not felt so elated for many a day. When Mr. Carlyle returned home Joyce sought him, and acquainted him with what had happened; that Afy was come; was maid to Lady Mount Severn; and, above all, that she had never been with Richard Hare.

"Ah! You remember what I said, Joyce," he remarked. "That I did not believe Afy was with Richard Hare."

"I have been telling her so, sir, to be sure, when I informed her what people had believed," continued Joyce. "She nearly went into one of her old passions."

"Does she seem steady, Joyce?"

"I think so, sir, steady for her. I was thinking, sir, that as she appears to have turned out so respectable, and is with Lady Mount Severn, you, perhaps, might see no objection to her sleeping here for tonight. It would be better than for her to go to the inn, as she talks of doing."

"None at all," replied Mr. Carlyle. "Let her remain."

Later in the evening, after Mr. Carlyle's dinner, a message came that Afy was to go to him. Accordingly she proceeded to his presence.

"So, Afy, you have returned to let West Lynne know that you are alive. Sit down."

"West Lynne may go awalking for me in future, sir, for all the heed I shall take of it," retorted Afy. "A set of wickedminded scandalmongers, to take and say I had gone after Richard Hare!"

"You should not have gone off at all, Afy."

"Well, sir, that was my business, and I chose to go. I could not stop in the cottage after that night's work."

"There is a mystery attached to that night's work, Afy," observed Mr. Carlyle; "a mystery that I cannot fathom. Perhaps you can help me out."

"What mystery, sir?" returned Afy.

Mr. Carlyle leaned forward, his arms on the table. Afy had taken a chair at the other end of it. "Who was it that committed the murder?" he demanded, in a grave and somewhat imperative tone.

Afy stared some moments before she replied, astonished at the question. "Who committed the murder, sir?" she uttered at length. "Richard Hare committed it. Everybody knows that."

"Did you see it done?"

"No," replied Afy. "If I had seen it, the fright and horror would have killed me. Richard Hare quarreled with my father, and drew the gun upon him in passion."

"You assume this to have been the case, Afy, as others have assumed it. I do not think that it was Richard Hare who killed your father."

"Not Richard Hare!" exclaimed Afy, after a pause. "Then who do you think did it, sir?"

"Nonsense, Afy."

"I know he did it," proceeded Afy. "It is true that I did not see it done, but I know it for all that. I know it, sir."

"You cannot know it, Afy."

"I do know it, sir; I would not assert it to you if I did not. If Richard Hare was here, present before us, and swore until he was black in the face that it was not him, I could convict him."

"By what means?"

"I had rather not say, sir. But you may believe me, for I am speaking truth."

"There was another friend of yours present that evening, Afy. Lieutenant Thorn."

Afy's face turned crimson; she was evidently surprised. But Mr. Carlyle's speech and manner were authoritative, and she saw it would be useless to attempt to trifle with him.

"I know he was, sir. A young chap who used to ride over some evenings to see me. He had nothing to do with what occurred."

"Where did he ride from?"

"He was stopping with some friends at Swainson. He was nobody, sir."

"What was his name?" questioned Mr. Carlyle.

"Thorn," said Afy.

"I mean his real name. Thorn was an assumed name."

"Oh, dear no," returned Afy. "Thorn was his name."

Mr. Carlyle paused and looked at her.

"Afy, I have reason to believe that Thorn was only an assumed name. Now, I have a motive for wishing to know his real one, and you would very much oblige me by confiding it to me. What was it?"

"I don't know that he had any other name, sir; I am sure he had no other," persisted Afy. "He was Lieutenant Thorn, then and he was Captain Thorn, afterward."

"You have seen him since?"

"Once in a way we have met."

"Where is he now?"

"Now! Oh, my goodness, I don't know anything about him now," muttered Afy. "I have not heard of him or seen him for a long while. I think I heard something about his going to India with his regiment."

"What regiment is he in?"

"I'm sure I don't know about that," said Afy. "Is not one regiment the same as another; they are all in the army, aren't they, sir?"

"Afy, I must find this Captain Thorn. Do you know anything of his family?"

Afy shook her head. "I don't think he had any. I never heard him mention as much as a brother or a sister."

"And you persist in saying his name was Thorn?"

"I persist in saying it because it was his name. I am positive it was his name."

"Afy, shall I tell you why I want to find him; I believe it was he who murdered your father, not Richard Hare."

Afy's mouth and eyes gradually opened, and her face turned hot and cold alternately. Then passion mastered her, and she burst forth.

"It's a lie! I beg your pardon, sir, but whoever told you that, told you a lie. Thorn had no more to do with it than I had; I'll swear it."

"I tell you, Afy, I believe Thorn to have been the man. You were not present; you cannot know who actually did it."

"Yes, I can, and do know," said Afy, bursting into sobs of hysterical passion. "Thorn was with me when it happened, so it could not have been Thorn. It was that wicked Richard Hare. Sir, have I not said that I'll swear it?"

"Thorn was with you at the moment of the murder?" repeated Mr. Carlyle.

"Yes, he was," shrieked Afy, nearly beside herself with emotion. "Whoever has been trying to put it off Richard Hare, and on to him, is a wicked, falsehearted wretch. It was Richard Hare, and nobody else, and I hope he'll be hung for it yet."

"You are telling me the truth, Afy?" gravely spoke Mr. Carlyle.

"Truth!" echoed Afy, flinging up her hands. "Would I tell a lie over my father's death? If Thorn had done it, would I screen him, or shuffle it off to Richard Hare? Not so."

Mr. Carlyle felt uncertain and bewildered. That Afy was sincere in what she said, was but too apparent. He spoke again but Afy had risen from her chair to leave.

"Locksley was in the wood that evening. Otway Bethel was in it. Could either of them have been the culprit?"

"No, sir," firmly retorted Afy; "the culprit was Richard Hare; and I'd say it with my latest breath I'd say it because I know it though I don't choose to say how I know it; time enough when he gets taken."

She quitted the room, leaving Mr. Carlyle in a state of puzzled bewilderment. Was he to believe Afy, or was he to believe the bygone assertion of Richard Hare?

CHAPTER XXIX.

A NIGHT INVASION OF EAST LYNNE.

In one of the comfortable sittingrooms of East Lynne sat Mr. Carlyle and his sister, one inclement January night. The contrast within and without was great. The warm, blazing fire, the handsome carpet on which it flickered, the exceedingly comfortable arrangement of the furniture, of the room altogether, and the light of the chandelier, which fell on all, presented a picture of home peace, though it may not have deserved the name of luxury. Without, heavy flakes of snow were falling thickly, flakes as large and nearly as heavy as a crown piece, rendering the atmosphere so dense and obscure that a man could not see a yard before him. Mr. Carlyle had driven home in the pony carriage, and the snow had so settled upon him that Lucy, who happened to see him as he entered the hall, screamed out laughingly that her papa had turned into a white man. It was now later in the evening; the children were in bed; the governess was in her own sitting room; it was not often that Miss Carlyle invited her to theirs of an evening and the house was quite. Mr. Carlyle was deep in the pages of one of the monthly periodicals, and Miss Carlyle sat on the other side of the fire, grumbling, and grunting, and sniffing, and choking.

Miss Carlyle was one of your strongminded ladies, who never condescended to be ill. Of course, had she been attacked with scarlet fever, or paralysis, or St. Vitus' dance, she must have given in to the enemy; but trifling ailments, such as headache, influenza, sore throat, which other people get, passed her by. Imagine, therefore, her exasperation at finding her head stuffed up, her chest sore, and her voice going; in short, at having, for once in her life, caught a cold like ordinary mortals.

"What's the time, I wonder?" she exclaimed.

Mr. Carlyle looked at his watch. "It is just nine, Cornelia."

"Then I think I shall go to bed. I'll have a basin of arrowroot or gruel, or some slop of that sort, after I'm in it. I'm sure I have been free enough all my life from requiring such sick dishes."

"Do so," said Mr. Carlyle. "It may do you good."

"There's one thing excellent for a cold in the head, I know. It's to double your flannel petticoat crossways, or any other large piece of flannel you may conveniently have at hand, and put it on over your nightcap. I'll try it."

"I would," said Mr. Carlyle, smothering an irreverent laugh.

She sat on five minutes longer, and then left, wishing Mr. Carlyle goodnight. He resumed his reading; but another page or two concluded the article, upon which Mr. Carlyle threw the book on the table, rose and stretched himself, as if tired of sitting.

He stirred the fire into a brighter blaze, and stood on the hearthrug. "I wonder if it snows still?" he exclaimed to himself.

Proceeding to the window, one of those opening to the ground, he threw aside the half of the warm crimson curtain. It all looked dull and dark outside. Mr. Carlyle could see little what the weather was, and he opened the window and stepped half out.

The snow was falling faster and thicker than ever. Not at that did Mr. Carlyle start with surprise, if not with a more unpleasant sensation; but a feeling a man's hand touch his, and at finding a man's face nearly in contact with his own.

"Let me come in, Mr. Carlyle, for the love of life! I see you are alone. I'm dead beat, and I don't know but I'm dodged also."

The tones struck familiarly on Mr. Carlyle's ear. He drew back mechanically, a thousand perplexing sensations overwhelming him, and the man followed him into the room a white man, as Lucy called her father. Aye, for he had been hours and hours on foot in the snow; his hat, his clothes, his eyebrows, his large whiskers, all were white. "Lock the door, sir," were his first words. Need you be told that it was Richard Hare?

Mr. Carlyle fastened the window, drew the heavy curtains across, and turned rapidly to lock the two doors for there were two to the room, one of them leading into the adjoining one. Richard meanwhile took off his wet smockfrock of former memory his hat, and his false black whiskers, wiping the snow from the latter with his hand.

"Richard," uttered Mr. Carlyle, "I am thunderstruck! I fear you have done wrong to come here."

"I cut off from London at a moment's notice," replied Richard, who was literally shivering with the cold. "I'm dodged, Mr. Carlyle, I am indeed. The police are after me, set on by that wretch Thorn."

Mr. Carlyle turned to the sideboard and poured out a wineglass of brandy. "Drink it, Richard, it will warm you."

"I'd rather have it in some hot water, sir."

"But how am I to get the hot water brought in? Drink this for now. Why, how you tremble."

"Ah, a few hours outside in the cold snow is enough to make the strongest man tremble, sir; and it lies so deep in places that you have to come along at a snail's pace. But I'll tell you about this business. A fortnight ago I was at a cabstand at the West End, talking to a cabdriver, when some drops of rain came down. A gentleman and lady were passing at the time, but I had not paid any attention to them. 'By Jove!' I heard him exclaim to her, 'I think we're going to have pepper. We had better take a cab, my dear.' With that the man I was talking to swung open the door of his cab, and she got in such a fair young lady, she was! I turned to look at him, and you might just have knocked me down with astonishment. Mr. Carlyle, it was the man, Thorn."

"Indeed!"

"You thought I might be mistaken in him that moonlight night, but there was no mistaking him in broad daylight. I looked him full in the face, and he looked at me. He turned as white as cloth. Perhaps I did I don't know."

"Was he well dressed?"

"Very. Oh, there's no mistaking his position. That he moves in the higher classes there's no doubt. The cab drove away, and I got up behind it. The driver thought boys were there, and turned his head and his whip, but I made him a sign. We didn't go much more than the length of a street. I was on the pavement before Thorn was, and looked at him again, and again he went white. I marked the house, thinking it was where he lived, and"

"Why did you not give him into custody, Richard?"

Richard Hare shook his head. "And my proofs of his guilt, Mr. Carlyle? I could bring none against him no positive ones. No, I must wait till I can get proofs to do that. He would turn round upon me now and swear my life away to murder. Well, I thought I'd ascertain for certain what his name was, and that night I went to the house, and got into conversation with one of the servants, who was standing at the door. 'Does Captain Thorn live here?' I asked him.

"'Mr. Westleby lives here,' said he; 'I don't know any Captain Thorn.'"

"Then that's his name, thought I to myself. 'A youngish man, isn't he?' said I, 'very smart, with a pretty wife?'

"I don't know what you call youngish,' he laughed, 'my master's turned sixty, and his wife's as old.'

"That checked me. 'Perhaps he has sons?' I asked.

"Not any,' the man answered; 'there's nobody but their two selves.'

"So, with that, I told him what I wanted that a lady and gentleman had alighted there in a cab that day, and I wished to know his name. Well, Mr. Carlyle, I could get at nothing satisfactory; the fellow said that a great many had called there that day, for his master was just up from a long illness, and people came to see him."

"Is that all, Richard?"

"All! I wish it had been all. I kept looking about for him in all the best streets; I was half mad"

"Do you not wonder, if he is in this position of life, and resides in London, that you have never dropped upon him previously?" interrupted Mr. Carlyle.

"No, sir; and I'll tell you why. I have been afraid to show myself in those latter parts of the town, fearing I might meet with some one I used to know at home, who would recognize me, so I have kept mostly in obscure places stables and such like. I had gone up to the West End this day on a matter of business."

"Well, go on with your story."

"In a week's time I came upon him again. It was at night. He was coming out of one of the theatres, and I went up and stood before him."

"What do you want, fellow?' he asked. 'I have seen you watching me before this.'

"I want to know your name,' I said, 'that's enough for me at present.'

"He flew into a passion, and swore that if ever he caught sight of me near him again he would hand me over into custody. 'And remember, men are not given into custody for watching others,' he significantly added. 'I know you, and if you have any regard for yourself, you'll keep out of my way.'

"He had got into a private carriage as he spoke, and it drove away; I could see that it had a great coat of arms upon it."

"When do you say this was?"

"A week ago. Well, I could not rest; I was half mad, I say, and went about, still trying if I could not discover his name and who he was. I did come upon him, but he was walking quickly, arm in arm with another gentleman. Again I saw him, standing at the entrance to the betting rooms, talking to the same gentleman, and his face turned savage I believe with fear as much as anger when he discerned me. He seemed to hesitate, and then as if he acted in a passion suddenly beckoned to a policeman, pointed me out, and said something to him in a fast tone. That frightened me, and I slipped away. Two hours after, when I was in quite a different part of the town, in turning my head I saw the same policeman following me. I bolted under the horses of a passing vehicle, down some turnings and passages, out into another street, and up beside a cabman who was on his box, driving a fare past. I reached my lodgings in safety, as I thought, but happening to glance into the street, there I saw the man again, standing opposite, and reconnoitering the house. I had gone home hungry, but this took all my hunger away from me. I opened the box where I kept my disguise, put it on, and got out by a back way. I have been pretty nearly ever since on my feet reaching here; I only got a lift now and then."

"But, Richard, do you know that West Lynne is the very worst place you could have flown to? It has come to light that you were here before, disguised as a farm laborer."

"Who the deuce betrayed that?" interrupted Richard.

"I am unable to tell; I cannot even imagine. The rumor was rife in the place, and it reached your father's ear. The rumor may make people's wits sharper to know you in your disguise, than they otherwise might have been."

"But what was I to do? I was forced to come here first and get a little money. I shall fix myself in some other big town, far away from London Liverpool or Manchester, perhaps; and see what employment I can get into, but I must have something to live upon till I can get it. I don't possess a penny piece," he added, drawing out his trousers pockets for the inspection of Mr. Carlyle. "The last coppers, I had, three pence, I spent in bread and cheese and half a pint of beer at midday. I have been outside that window for more than an hour, sir."

"Indeed!"

"And as I neared West Lynne I began to think what I should do. It was no use in me trying to catch Barbara's attention such a night as this; I had no money to pay for a lodging; so I turned off here, hoping I might, by good luck, drop upon you. There was a little partition in the window curtain it had not been drawn close and through it I could see you and Miss Carlyle. I saw her leave the room; I saw you come to the window and

open it, and then I spoke. Mr. Carlyle," he added, after a pause, "is this life to go on with me forever?"

"I am deeply sorry for you, Richard," was the sympathizing answer. "I wish I could remedy it."

Before another word was spoken the room door was tried, and then gently knocked at. Mr. Carlyle placed his hand on Richard, who was looking scared out of his wits.

"Be still; be at ease, Richard; no one shall come in. It is only Peter."

Not Peter's voice, however, but Joyce's was heard, in response to Mr. Carlyle's demand of who was there.

"Miss Carlyle has left her handkerchief downstairs, sir, and has sent me for it."

"You cannot come in I am busy," was the answer, delivered in a clear and most decisive tone.

"Who was it?" quivered Richard, as Joyce was heard going away.

"It was Joyce."

"What! Is she here still? Has anything ever been heard of Afy, sir?"

"Afy was here herself two or three months ago."

"Was she, though?" uttered Richard, beguiled for an instant from the thought of his own danger. "What is she doing?"

"She is in service as a lady's maid. Richard, I questioned Afy about Thorn. She protested solemnly to me that it was not Thorn who committed the deed that it could not have been he, for Thorn was with her at the moment of its being done."

"It's not true!" fired Richard. "It was Thorn."

"Richard, you cannot tell; you did not see it done."

"I know that no man could have rushed out in that frantic manner, with those signs of guilt and fear about him, unless he had been engaged in a bad deed," was Richard Hare's answer. "It could have been no one else."

"Afy declared he was with her," repeated Mr. Carlyle.

"Look here, sir, you are a sharp man, and folks say I am not, but I can see things and draw my reasoning as well as they can, perhaps. If Thorn were not Hallijohn's murderer, why should he be persecuting mewhat would he care about me? And why should his face turn livid, as it has done, each time he has seen my eyes upon him? Whether he did commit the murder, or whether he didn't, he must know that I did not, because he came upon me, waiting, as he was tearing from the cottage."

Dick's reasoning was not bad.

"Another thing," he resumed. "Afy swore at the inquest that she was alone when the deed was done; that she was alone at the back of the cottage, and knew nothing about it till afterwards. How could she have sworn she was alone, if Thorn was with her?"

The fact had entirely escaped Mr. Carlyle's memory in his conversation with Afy, or he would not have failed to point out the discrepancy, and to inquire how she could reconcile it. Yet her assertion to him had been most positive and solemn. There were difficulties in the matter which he could not reconcile.

"Now that I have got over my passion for Afy, I can see her faults, Mr. Carlyle. She'd no more tell an untruth than I should stick"

A most awful thundering at the room door loud enough to bring the very house down. No officers of justice, searching for a fugitive, ever made a louder. Richard Hare, his face turned to chalk, his eyes starting, and his own light hair bristling up with horror, struggled into his wet smockfrock after a fashion, the tails up about his ears and the sleeves hanging, forced on his hat and his false whiskers, looked round in a bewildered manner for some cupboard or mousehole into which he might creep, and, seeing none, rushed to the fireplace and placed his foot on the fender. That he purposed an attempt at chimneyclimbing was evident, though how the fire would have agreed with his pantaloons, not to speak of what they contained, poor Dick appeared completely to ignore. Mr. Carlyle drew him back, keeping his calm, powerful hand upon his shoulder, while certain sounds in an angry voice were jerked through the keyhole.

"Richard, be a man, put aside this weakness, this fear. Have I not told you that harm shall not come near you in my house?"

"It may be that officer from London; he may have brought half a dozen more with him!" gasped the unhappy Richard. "I said they might have dodged me all the way here."

"Nonsense. Sit you down, and be at rest, it is only Cornelia; and she will be as anxious to shield you from danger as I can be."

"Is it?" cried the relieved Richard. "Can't you make her keep out?" he continued, his teeth still chattering.

"No, that I can't, if she has a mind to come in," was the candid answer. "You remember what she was, Richard; she is not altered."

Knowing that to speak on this side the door to his sister, when she was in one of her resolute moods, would be of no use, Mr. Carlyle opened the door, dexterously swung himself through it, and shut it after him. There she stood; in a towering passion, too.

It had struck Miss Carlyle, while undressing, that certain sounds, as of talking, proceeded from the room underneath, which she had just quitted. She possessed a remarkably keen sense of hearing, did Miss Carlyle; though, indeed, none of her faculties lacked the quality of keenness. The servants, Joyce and Peter excepted, would not be convinced but that she must "listen;" but, in that, they did her injustice. First of all, she believed her brother must be reading aloud to himself; but she soon decided otherwise. "Who on earth has he got in there with him?" quoth Miss Carlyle.

She rang her bell; Joyce answered it.

"Who is it that is with your master?"

"Nobody, ma'am."

"But I say there is. I can hear him talking."

"I don't think anybody can be with him," persisted Joyce. "And the walls of this house are too well built, ma'am, for sounds from the down stairs rooms to penetrate here."

"That's all you know about it," cried Miss Carlyle. "When talking goes on in that room, there's a certain sound given out which does penetrate here, and which my ears have grown accustomed to. Go and see who it is. I believe I left my handkerchief on the table; you can bring it up."

Joyce departed, and Miss Carlyle proceeded to take off her things; her dress first, her silk petticoat next. She had arrived as far as the flannel petticoat when Joyce returned.

"Yes, ma'am, some one is talking with master. I could not go in, for the door was bolted, and master called out that he was busy."

Food for Miss Carlyle. She, feeling sure that no visitor had come to the house, ran her thoughts rapidly over the members of the household, and came to the conclusion that it must be the governess, Miss Manning, who had dared to closet herself with Mr. Carlyle. This unlucky governess was pretty, and Miss Carlyle had been cautious to keep her and

her prettiness very much out of her brother's sight; she knew the attraction he would present to her visions, or to those of any other unprovided-for governess. Oh, yes; it was Miss Manning; she had stolen in; believing she, Miss Carlyle, was safe for the night; but she'd just unearth my lady. And what in the world could possess Archibald to lock the door!

Looking round for something warm to throw over her shoulders, and catching up an article that looked as much like a green baize tablecover as anything else, and throwing it on, down stalked Miss Carlyle. And in this trim Mr. Carlyle beheld her when he came out.

The figure presented by Miss Carlyle to her brother's eyes was certainly ridiculous enough. She gave him no time to comment upon it, however, but instantly and curtly asked,

"Who have you got in that room?"

"It is some one on business," was his prompt reply. "Cornelia, you cannot go in."

She very nearly laughed. "Not go in?"

"Indeed it is much better that you should not. Pray go back. You will make your cold worse, standing here.

"Now, I want to know whether you are not ashamed of yourself?" she deliberately pursued. "You! A married man, with children in your house! I'd rather have believed anything downright wicked of myself, than of you, Archibald."

Mr. Carlyle stared considerably.

"Come; I'll have her out. And out of this house she tramps tomorrow morning. A couple of audacious ones, to be in there with the door locked, the moment you thought you had got rid of me! Stand aside, I say, Archibald, I will enter."

Mr. Carlyle never felt more inclined to laugh. And, to Miss Carlyle's exceeding discomposure she, at this juncture, saw the governess emerge from the gray parlor, glance at the hall clock, and retire again.

"Why! She's there," she uttered. "I thought she was with you."

"Miss Manning, locked in with me! Is that the mare's nest, Cornelia? I think your cold must have obscured your reason."

"Well, I shall go in, all the same. I tell you, Archibald, that I will see who is there."

"If you persist in going in, you must go. But allow me to warn you that you will find tragedy in that room, not comedy. There is no woman in it, but there is a man; a man who came in through the window, like a hunted stag; a man upon whom a ban is set, who fears the police are upon his track. Can you guess his name?"

It was Miss Carlyle's turn to stare now. She opened her dry lips to speak, but they closed again.

"It is Richard Hare, your kinsman. There's not a roof in the wide world open to him this bitter night."

She said nothing. A long pause of dismay, and then she motioned to have the door opened.

"You will not show yourself in that guise?"

"Not show myself in this guise to Richard Hare whom I have whipped when he was a child ten times a day! Stand on ceremony with him! I dare say he looks no better than I do. But it's nothing short of madness, Archibald, for him to come here."

He left her to enter, telling her to lock the door as soon as she was inside, and went himself into the adjoining room, the one which, by another door, opened to the one Richard was in. Then he rang the bell. It was answered by a footman.

"Send Peter to me."

"Lay supper here, Peter, for two," began Mr. Carlyle, when the old servant appeared. "A person is with me on business. What have you in the house?"

"There's the spiced beef, sir; and there are some homemade raised pork pies."

"That will do," said Mr. Carlyle. "Put a quart of ale on the table, and everything likely to be wanted. And then the household can go to bed; we may be late, and the things can be removed in the morning. Oh and Peter none of you must come near the room, this or the next, under any pretence whatever, unless I ring, for I shall be too busy to be disturbed."

"Very well, sir. Shall I serve the ham also?"

"The ham?"

"I beg pardon, sir; I guessed it might be Mr. Dill, and he is so fond of our hams."

"Ah, you were always a shrewd guesser, Peter," smiled his master. "He is fond of ham I know; yes, you may put it on the table. Don't forget the small kettle."

The consequence of which little finesse on Mr. Carlyle's part was, that Peter announced in the kitchen that Mr. Dill had arrived, and supper was to be served for two. "But what a night for the old gentleman to have trudged through on foot!" exclaimed he.

"And what a trudge he'll have of it back again, for it'll be worse then!" chimed in one of the maids.

When Mr. Carlyle got back in the other room, his sister and Richard Hare had scarcely finished staring at each other.

"Please lock the door, Miss Cornelia," began poor shivering Dick.

"The door's locked," snapped she. "But what on earth brought you here, Richard? You must be worse than mad."

"The Bowstreet officers were after me in London," he meekly responded, unconsciously using a term which had been familiar to his boyish years. "I had to cut away without a thing belonging to me, without so much as a clean shirt."

"They must be polite officers, not to have been after you before," was the consolatory remark of Miss Carlyle. "Are you going to dance a hornpipe through the streets of West Lynne tomorrow, and show yourself openly?"

"Not if I can help it," replied Richard.

"You might just as well do that, if you come to West Lynne at all; for you can't be here now without being found out. There was a bother about your having been here the last time: I should like to know how it got abroad."

"The life I lead is dreadful!" cried Richard. "I might make up my mind to toil, though that's hard, after being reared a gentleman; but to be an exile, banned, disgraced, afraid to show my face in broad daylight amidst my fellowmen, in dread every hour that the sword may fall! I would almost as soon be dead as continue to live it."

"Well, you have got nobody to grumble at; you brought it upon yourself," philosophically returned Miss Carlyle, as she opened the door to admit her brother. "You would go hunting after that brazen hussy, Afy, you know, in defiance of all that could be said to you."

"That would not have brought it upon me," said Richard. "It was through that fiend's having killed Hallijohn; that was what brought the ban upon me."

"It's a most extraordinary thing, if anybody else did kill him, that the facts can't be brought to light," retorted Miss Carlyle. "Here you tell a cockandbull story of some

man's having done it, some Thorn; but nobody ever saw or heard of him, at the time or since. It looks like a madeup story, Mr. Dick, to whiten yourself."

"Made up!" panted Richard, in agitation, for it seemed cruel to him, especially in his present frame of mind, to have a doubt cast upon his tale. "It is Thorn who is setting the officers upon me. I have seen him three or four times within the last fortnight."

"And why did you not turn the tables, and set the officers upon him?" demanded Miss Carlyle.

"Because it would lead to no good. Where's the proof, save my bare word, that he committed the murder?"

Miss Carlyle rubbed her nose. "Dick Hare," said she.

"Well?"

"You know you always were the greatest natural idiot that ever was let loose out of leading strings."

"I know I always was told so."

"And it's what you always will be. If I were accused of committing a crime, which I knew another had committed and not myself, should I be such an idiot as not to give that other into custody if I got the chance? If you were not in such a cold, shivery, shaky state, I would treat you to a bit of my mind, you may rely upon that."

"He was in league with Afy, at that period," pursued Richard; "a deceitful, bad man; and he carries it in his countenance. And he must be in league with her still, if she asserts that he was in her company at the moment the murder was committed. Mr. Carlyle says she does; that she told him so the other day, when she was here. He never was; and it was he, and no other, who did the murder."

"Yes," burst forth Miss Carlyle, for the topic was sure to agitate her, "that Jezebel of brass did presume to come here! She chose her time well, and may thank her lucky stars I was not at home. Archibald, he's a fool too, quite as bad as you are, Dick Hare, in some things actually suffered her to lodge here for two days! A vain, illconducted hussy, given to nothing but finery and folly!"

"Afy said that she knew nothing of Thorn's movements now, Richard, and had not for some time," interposed Mr. Carlyle, allowing his sister's compliments to pass in silence. "She heard a rumor, she thought, that he had gone abroad with his regiment."

"So much the better for her, if she does know nothing of him, sir," was Richard's comment. "I can answer for it that he is not abroad, but in England."

"And where are you going to lodge tonight?" abruptly spoke Miss Carlyle, confronting Richard.

"I don't know," was the brokenspirited answer, sighed forth. "If I lay myself down in a snowdrift, and am found frozen in the morning, it won't be of much moment."

"Was that what you thought of doing?" returned Miss Carlyle.

"No," he mildly said. "What I thought of doing was to ask Mr. Carlyle for the loan of a few shillings, and then I can get a bed. I know a place where I shall be in safety, two or three miles from here."

"Richard, I would not turn a dog out to go two or three miles on such a night as this," impulsively uttered Mr. Carlyle. "You must stop here."

"Indeed I don't see how he is to get up to a bedroom, or how a room is to be made ready for him, for the matter of that, without betraying his presence to the servants," snapped Miss Carlyle. And poor Richard laid his aching head upon his hands.

But now Miss Carlyle's manner was more in fault than her heart. Will it be believed that, before speaking the above ungracious words, before Mr. Carlyle had touched upon the subject, she had been casting about in her busy mind for the best plan of keeping Richard how it could be accomplished.

"One thing is certain," she resumed, "that it will be impossible for you to sleep here without its being known to Joyce. And I suppose you and Joyce are upon the friendly terms of drawing daggers, for she believes you were the murderer of her father."

"Let me disabuse her," interrupted Richard, his pale lips working as he started up. "Allow me to see her and convince her, Mr. Carlyle. Why did you not tell Joyce better?"

"There's that small room at the back of mine," said Miss Carlyle, returning to the practical part of the subject. "He might sleep there. But Joyce must be taken in confidence."

"Joyce had better come in," said Mr. Carlyle. "I will say a word to her first."

He unlocked the door and quitted the room. Miss Carlyle as jealously locked it again; called to Joyce and beckoned her into the adjoining apartment. He knew that Joyce's belief in the guilt of Richard Hare was confirmed and strong, but he must uproot that belief if Richard was to be lodged in his house that night.

"Joyce," he began, "you remember how thoroughly imbued with the persuasion you were, that Afy went off with Richard Hare, and was living with him. I several times expressed my doubts upon the point. The fact was, I had positive information that she was not with him, and never had been, though I considered it expedient to keep my information to myself. You are convinced now that she was not with him?"

"Of course I am, sir."

"Well, you see, Joyce, that my opinion would have been worth listening to. Now I am going to shake your belief upon another point, and if I assure you that I have equally good grounds for doing so, you will believe me?"

"I am quite certain, sir, that you would state nothing but what was true, and I know that your judgment is sound," was Joyce's answer.

"Then I must tell you that I do not believe it was Richard Hare who murdered your father."

"Sir!" uttered Joyce, amazed out of her senses.

"I believe Richard Hare to be as innocent of the murder as you or I," he deliberately repeated. "I have held grounds for this opinion, Joyce, for many years."

"Then, sir, who did it?"

"Afy's other lover. That dandy fellow, Thorn, as I truly believe."

"And you say you have grounds, sir?" Joyce asked, after a pause.

"Good grounds; and I tell you I have been in possession of them for years. I should be glad for you to think as I do."

"But, sir, if Richard Hare was innocent, why did he run away?"

"Ah, why, indeed! It is that which has done the mischief. His own weak cowardice was in fault. He feared to come back, and he felt that he could not remove the odium of circumstances. Joyce I should like you to see him and hear his story."

"There is not much chance of that, sir. I dare say he will never venture here again."

"He is here now."

Joyce looked up, considerably startled.

"Here, in this house," repeated Mr. Carlyle. "He has taken shelter in it, and for the few hours that he will remain, we must extend our hospitality and protection to him, concealing him in the best manner we can. I thought it well that this confidence should be reposed in you, Joyce. Come now and see him."

Considering that it was a subdued interview the voices subdued, I mean it was a confused one. Richard talking vehemently, Joyce asking question after question, Miss Carlyle's tongue going as fast as theirs. The only silent one was Mr. Carlyle. Joyce could not refuse to believe protestations so solemn, and her suspicions veered round upon Captain Thorn.

"And now about the bed," interjected Miss Carlyle, impatiently. "Where's he to sleep, Joyce? The only safe room that I know of will be the one through mine."

"He can't sleep there, ma'am. Don't you know that the key of the door was lost last week, and we cannot open it?"

"So much the better. He'll be all the safer." "But how is he to get in?"

"To get in? Why, through my room, of course. Doesn't mine open to it, stupid?"

"Oh, well, ma'am, if you would like him to go through yours, that's different."

"Why shouldn't he go through? Do you suppose I mind young Dick Hare? Not I, indeed," she irascibly continued. "I only wish he was young enough for me to flog him as I used to, that's all. He deserves it as much as anybody ever did, playing the fool, as he has done, in all ways. I shall be in bed, with the curtains drawn, and his passing through won't harm me, and my lying there won't harm him. Stand on ceremony with Dick Hare! What next, I wonder?"

Joyce made no reply to this energetic speech, but at once retired to prepare the room for Richard. Miss Carlyle soon followed. Having made everything ready, Joyce returned.

"The room is ready, sir," she whispered, "and all the household are in bed."

"Then now's your time, Richard. Goodnight."

He stole upstairs after Joyce, who piloted him through the room of Miss Carlyle. Nothing could be seen of that lady, though something might be heard, one given to truth more than politeness might have called it snoring. Joyce showed Richard his chamber, gave him the candle, and closed the door upon him.

Poor hunted Richard, goodnight to you

CHAPTER XXX.

BARBARA'S HEART AT REST.

Morning dawned. The same dull weather, the same heavy fall of snow. Miss Carlyle took her breakfast in bed, an indulgence she had not favored for ever so many years. Richard Hare rose, but remained in his chamber, and Joyce carried his breakfast in to him.

Mr. Carlyle entered whilst he was taking it. "How did you sleep, Richard?"

"I slept well. I was so dead tired. What am I to do next, Mr. Carlyle? The sooner I get away from here the better. I can't feel safe."

"You must not think of it before evening. I am aware that you cannot remain here, save for a few temporary hours, as it would inevitably become known to the servants. You say you think of going to Liverpool or Manchester?"

"To any large town; they are all alike to me; but one pursued as I am is safer in a large place than a small one."

"I am inclined to think that this man, Thorn, only made a show of threatening you, Richard. If he be really the guilty party, his policy must be to keep all in quietness. The very worst thing that could happen for him, would be your arrest."

"Then why molest me? Why send an officer to dodge me?"

"He did not like your molesting him, and he thought he would probably frighten you. After that day you would probably have seen no more of the officer. You may depend upon one thing, Richard, had the policeman's object been to take you, he would have done so, not have contented himself with following you about from place to place. Besides when a detective officer is employed to watch a party, he takes care not to allow himself to be seen; now this man showed himself to you more than once."

"Yes, there's a good deal in all that," observed Richard. "For, to one in his class of life, the bare suspicion of such a crime, brought against him, would crush him forever in the eyes of his compeers."

"It is difficult to me Richard, to believe that he is in the class of life you speak of," observed Mr. Carlyle.

"There's no doubt about it; there's none indeed. But that I did not much like to mention the name, for it can't be a pleasant name to you, I should have said last night who I have seen him walking with," continued simplehearted Richard.

Mr. Carlyle looked inquiringly. "Richard say on."

"I have seen him, sir, with Sir Francis Levison, twice. Once he was talking to him at the door of the bettingrooms, and once they were walking arm in arm. They are apparently upon intimate terms."

At this moment a loud, flustering, angry voice was heard calling from the stairs, and Richard leaped up as if he had been shot. His door not the one leading to the room of Miss Carlyle opened upon the corridor, and the voice sounded close, just as if its owner were coming in with a hound. It was the voice of Mr. Justice Hare.

"Carlyle, where are you? Here's a pretty thing happened! Come down!"

Mr. Carlyle for once in his life lost his calm equanimity, and sprang to the door, to keep it against invasion, as eagerly as Richard could have done. He forgot that Joyce had said the door was safely locked, and the key mislaid. As to Richard, he rushed on his hat and his black whiskers, and hesitated between under the bed and inside the wardrobe.

"Don't agitate yourself, Richard," whispered Mr. Carlyle, "there is no real danger. I will go and keep him safely."

But when Mr. Carlyle got through his sister's bedroom, he found that lady had taken the initiative, and was leaning over the balustrades, having been arrested in the process of dressing. Her clothes were on, but her nightcap was not off; little cared she, however, who saw her nightcap.

"What on earth brings you up in this weather?" began she, in a tone of exasperation.

"I want to see Carlyle. Nice news I have had!"

"What about? Anything concerning Anne, or her family?"

"Anne be bothered," replied the justice, who was from some cause, in a furious temper. "It concerns that precious rascal, who I am forced to call son. I am told he is here."

Down the stairs leaped Mr. Carlyle, four at a time, wound his arm within Mr. Hare's, and led him to a sittingroom.

"Goodmorning, justice. You had courage to venture up through the snow! What is the matter, you seem excited."

"Excited?" raved the justice, dancing about the room, first on one leg, then on the other, like a cat upon hot bricks, "so you would be excited, if your life were worried out, as mine is, over a wicked scamp of a son. Why can't folks trouble their heads about their own business, and let my affairs alone? A pity but what he was hung, and the thing done with!"

"But what has happened?" questioned Mr. Carlyle.

"Why this has happened," retorted the justice, throwing a letter on the table. "The post brought me this, just now and pleasant information it gives."

Mr. Carlyle took up the note and read it. It purported to be from "a friend" to Justice Hare, informing that gentleman that his "criminal son" was likely to have arrived at West Lynne, or would arrive in the course of a day or so; and it recommended Mr. Hare to speed his departure from it, lest he should be pounced upon.

"This letter is anonymous!" exclaimed Mr. Carlyle.

"Of course it is," stamped the justice.

"The only notice I should ever take of an anonymous letter would be to put it in the fire," cried Mr. Carlyle, his lip curling with scorn.

"But who has written it?" danced Justice Hare. "And is Dick at West Lynne that's the question."

"Now, is it likely that he should come to West Lynne?" remonstrated Mr. Carlyle. "Justice, will you pardon me, if I venture to give you my candid opinion."

"The fool at West Lynne, running into the very jaws of death! By Jupiter! If I can drop upon him, I'll retain him in custody, and make out a warrant for his committal! I'll have this everlasting bother over."

"I was going to give you my opinion," quietly put in Mr. Carlyle. "I fear, Justice, you bring these annoyances upon yourself."

"Bring them upon myself!" ranted the indignant justice. "I? Did I murder Halli John? Did I fly away from the law? Am I hiding, Beelzebub knows where? Do I take starts, right into my native parish, disguised as a laborer, on purpose to worry my own father? Do I write anonymous letters? Bring them upon myself, do I? That cobs all, Carlyle."

"You will not hear me out. It is known that you are much exasperated against Richard"

"And if your son serves you the same when he is grown up, shan't you be exasperated, pray?" fired Justice Hare.

"Do hear me. It is known that you are much exasperated, and that any allusion to him excites and annoys you. Now, my opinion is, justice, that some busybody is raising these reports and writing these letters on purpose to annoy you. It may be somebody at West Lynne, very near to us, for all we know."

"That's all rubbish!" peevishly responded the justice, after a pause. "It's not likely. Who'd do it?"

"It is very likely; but you may be sure they will not give us a clue as to the 'who.' I should put that letter in the fire, and think no more about it. That's the only way to serve them. A pretty laugh they have had in their sleeve, if it is anybody near, at seeing you waded up here through the snow this morning! They would know you were bringing the letter, to consult me."

The justice in spite of his obstinacy he was somewhat easily persuaded to different views of things, especially by Mr. Carlyle. Let fall his coat tails, which had been gathered in his arms, as he stood with his back to the fire, and brought down both his hands upon the table with force enough to break it.

"If I thought that," he spluttered, "if I could think it, I'd have the whole parish of West Lynne before me today, and commit them for trial."

"It's a pity but what you could," said Mr. Carlyle.

"Well, it may be, or it may not be, that that villain is coming here," he resumed. "I shall call in at the police station, and tell them to keep a sharp lookout."

"You will do nothing of the sort justice," exclaimed Mr. Carlyle, almost in agitation. "Richard is not likely to make his appearance at West Lynne; but if he did, would you, his own father, turn the flood upon him? Not a man living but would cry shame upon you."

"I took an oath I'd do it," said the justice.

"You did not take an oath to go openmouthed to the police station, upon the receipt of any despicable anonymous letter or any foolish report, to say, 'I have news that my son will be here today; look after him.' Nonsense, justice! Let the police look out for themselves, but don't you set them on."

The justice growled, whether in assent or dissent did not appear, and Mr. Carlyle resumed,

"Have you shown this letter to Mrs. Hare, or mentioned it to her?"

"Not I. I didn't give myself time. I had gone down to the front gate, to see how deep the snow lay in the road, when the postman came up; so I read it as I stood there. I went in for my coat and umbrella, to come off to you, and Mrs. Hare wanted to know where I was going in such a hurry, but I did not satisfy her."

"I am truly glad to hear it," said Mr. Carlyle. "Such information as this could not fail to have a dangerous effect upon Mrs. Hare. Do not suffer a hint of it to escape you justice; consider how much anxiety she has already suffered."

"It's partly her own fault. Why can't she drive the illdoing boy from her mind?"

"If she could," said Mr. Carlyle, "she would be acting against human nature. There is one phase of the question which you may possibly not have glanced at, justice. You speak of delivering your son up to the law; has it ever struck you that you would be delivering up at the same time your wife's life?"

"Stuff!" said the justice.

"You would find it no 'stuff.' So sure as Richard gets brought to trial, whether through your means, or through any other, so sure will it kill your wife."

Mr. Hare took up the letter, which had lain open on the table, folded it, and put it in its envelope.

"I suppose you don't know the writing?" he asked of Mr. Carlyle.

"I never saw it before, that I remember. Are you returning home?"

"No. I shall go on to Beauchamp's and show him this, and hear what he says. It's not much farther."

"Tell him not to speak of it then. Beauchamp's safe, for his sympathies are with Richardoh, yes, they are, justice, ask him the question plainly if you like, and he will confess to it. I can tell you more sympathy goes with Richard than is acknowledged to you. But I would not show that letter to anyone else than Beauchamp," added Mr. Carlyle, "neither would I speak of it."

"Who can have written it?" repeated the justice. "It bears, you see the London Postmark."

"It is too wide a speculation to enter upon. And no satisfactory conclusion could come of it."

Justice Hare departed. Mr. Carlyle watched him down the avenue, striding under his umbrella, and then went up to Richard. Miss Carlyle was sitting with the latter then.

"I thought I should have died," spoke poor Dick. "I declare, Mr. Carlyle, my very blood seemed turned to water, and I thought I should have died with fright. Is he gone away is all safe?"

"He is gone, and it's all safe."

"And what did he want? What was it he had heard about me?"

Mr. Carlyle gave a brief explanation, and Richard immediately set down the letter as the work of Thorn.

"Will it be possible for me to see my mother this time?" he demanded of Mr. Carlyle.

"I think it would be highly injudicious to let your mother know you are here, or have been here," was the answer of Mr. Carlyle. "She would naturally be inquiring into particulars, and when she came to hear that you were pursued, she would never have another minute's peace. You must forego the pleasure of seeing her this time, Richard."

"And Barbara?"

"Barbara might come and stay the day with you. Only"

"Only what, sir?" cried Richard, for Mr. Carlyle had hesitated.

"I was thinking what a wretched morning it is for her to come out in."

"She would go through an avalanche she'd wade through mountains of snow, to see me," cried Richard eagerly, "and be delighted to do it."

"She always was a little fool," put in Miss Carlyle, jerking some stitches out of her knitting.

"I know she would," observed Mr. Carlyle, in answer to Richard. "We will try and get her here."

"She can arrange about the money I am to have, just as well as my mother could you know, sir."

"Yes; for Barbara is in receipt of money of her own now, and I know she would not wish better than to apply some of it to you. Cornelia, as an excuse for getting her here, I must

say to Mrs. Hare that you are ill, and wish Barbara to come for the day and bear your company. Shall I?"

"Say I am dead, if you like," responded Miss Corny, who was in one of her cross moods.

Mr. Carlyle ordered the pony carriage, and drove forth with John. He drew in at the grove. Barbara and Mrs. Hare were seated together, and looked surprised at the early visit.

"Do you want Mr. Hare, Archibald? He is out. He went while the breakfast was on the table, apparently in a desperate hurry."

"I don't want Mr. Hare; I want Barbara. I have come to carry her off."

"To carry off Barbara!" echoed Mrs. Hare.

"Cornelia is not well; she had caught a violent cold, and wishes Barbara to spend the day with her."

"Oh, Mr. Carlyle, I cannot leave mamma today. She is not well herself, and she would be dull without me."

"Neither can I spare her, Archibald. It is not a day for Barbara to go out."

How could he get to say a word to Barbara alone? Whilst he deliberated, talking on, though, all the while to Mrs. Hare, a servant appeared at the sittingroom door.

"The fishmonger's boy is come up, ma'am. His master has sent him to say that he fears there'll be no fish in today, in anything like time. The trains won't get up, with this weather."

Mrs. Hare rose from her seat to hold a confab at the door with the maid; and Mr. Carlyle seized his opportunity.

"Barbara," he whispered, "make no opposition. You must come. What I really want you for is connected with Richard."

She looked up at him, a startled glance, and the crimson flew to her face. Mrs. Hare returned to her seat. "Oh, such a day!" she shivered. "I am sure Cornelia cannot expect Barbara."

"But Cornelia does. And there is my pony carriage waiting to take her before I go to the office. Not a flake of snow can come near her, Mrs. Hare. The large warm apron will be up, and an umbrella shield her bonnet and face. Get your things on, Barbara."

"Mamma if you would not very much mind being left, I should like to go," said Barbara, with almost trembling eagerness.

"But you would be sure to take cold, child."

"Oh, dear no. I can wrap up well."

"And I will see that she comes home all right this evening," added Mr. Carlyle.

In a few minutes they were seated in the pony carriage. Barbara's tongue was burning to ask questions, but John sat behind them, and would have overheard. When they arrived at East Lynne, Mr. Carlyle gave her his arm up the steps, and took her into the breakfastroom.

"Will you prepare yourself for a surprise, Barbara?"

Suspensefearhad turned her very pale. "Something that has happened to Richard!" she uttered.

"Nothing that need agitate you. He is here."

"Here? Where?"

"Here. Under this roof. He slept here last night."

"Oh, Archibald!"

"Only fancy, Barbara, I opened the window at nine last night to look at the weather, and in burst Richard. We could not let him go out again in the snow, so he slept here, in that room next Cornelia's."

"Does she know of it?"

"Of course. And Joyce also; we were obliged to tell Joyce. It is he you have come to spend the day with. But just imagine Richard's fear. Your father came this morning, calling up the stairs after me, saying he heard Richard was here. I thought Richard would have gone out of his mind with fright."

A few more explanations, and Mr. Carlyle took Barbara into the room, Miss Carlyle and her knitting still keeping Richard company. In fact, that was to be the general sitting room of the day, and a hot lunch, Richard's dinner, would be served to Miss Carlyle's chamber at one o'clock. Joyce only admitted to wait on her.

"And now I must go," said Mr. Carlyle, after chatting a few minutes. "The office is waiting for me, and my poor ponies are in the snow."

"But you'll be sure to be home early, Mr. Carlyle," said Richard. "I dare not stop here; I must be off not a moment later than six or seven o'clock."

"I will be home, Richard."

Anxiously did Richard and Barbara consult that day, Miss Carlyle of course putting in her word. Over and over again did Barbara ask the particulars of the slight interviews Richard had had with Thorn; over and over again did she openly speculate upon what his name really was. "If you could but discover some one whom he knows, and inquire it," she exclaimed.

"I have seen him with one person, but I can't inquire of him. They are too thick together, he and Thorn, and are birds of a feather also, I suspect. Great swells both."

"Oh, Richard don't use those expressions. They are unsuited to a gentleman."

Richard laughed bitterly. "A gentleman?"

"Who is it you have seen Thorn with?" inquired Barbara.

"Sir Francis Levison," replied Richard, glancing at Miss Carlyle, who drew in her lips ominously.

"With whom?" uttered Barbara, betraying complete astonishment. "Do you know Sir Francis Levison?"

"Oh, yes, I know him. Nearly the only man about town that I do know."

Barbara seemed lost in a puzzled reverie, and it was some time before she aroused herself from it.

"Are they at all alike?" she asked.

"Very much so, I suspect. Both bad men."

"But I meant in person."

"Not in the least. Except that they are both tall."

Again Barbara sank into thought. Richard's words had surprised her. She was aroused by it from hearing a child's voice in the next room. She ran into it, and Miss Carlyle immediately fastened the intervening door.

It was little Archibald Carlyle. Joyce had come in with the tray to lay the luncheon, and before she could lock the door, Archibald ran in after her. Barbara lifted him in her arms to carry him back to the nursery.

"Oh, you heavy boy!" she exclaimed.

Archie laughed. "Wilson says that," he lisped, "if ever she has to carry me."

"I have brought you a truant, Wilson," cried Barbara.

"Oh, is it you, Miss Barbara? How are you, miss? Naughty boy! yes, he ran away without my noticing him he is got now so that he can open the door."

"You must be so kind as to keep him strictly in for today," concluded Miss Barbara, authoritatively. "Miss Carlyle is not well, and cannot be subjected to the annoyance of his running into the room."

Evening came, and the time of Richard's departure. It was again snowing heavily, though it had ceased in the middle of the day. Money for the present had been given to him; arrangements had been discussed. Mr. Carlyle insisted upon Richard's sending him his address, as soon as he should own one to send, and Richard faithfully promised. He was in very low spirits, almost as low as Barbara, who could not conceal her tears; they dropped in silence on her pretty silk dress. He was smuggled down the stairs, a large cloak of Miss Carlyle's enveloping him, into the room he had entered by storm the previous night. Mr. Carlyle held the window open.

"Goodbye, Barbara dear. If ever you should be able to tell my mother of this day, say that my chief sorrow was not to see her."

"Oh, Richard!" she sobbed forth, brokenhearted, "goodbye. May God be with you and bless you!"

"Farewell, Richard," said Miss Carlyle; "don't you be fool enough to get into any more scrapes."

Last of all he rung the hand of Mr. Carlyle. The latter went outside with him for an instant, and their leavetaking was alone.

Barbara returned to the chamber he had quitted. She felt that she must indulge in a few moments sobbing; Joyce was there, but Barbara was sobbing when she entered it.

"It is hard for him, Miss Barbara, if he is really innocent."

Barbara turned her streaming eyes upon her. "If! Joyce do you doubt that he is innocent?"

"I quite believe him to be so now, miss. Nobody could so solemnly assert what was not true. The thing at present will be to find that Captain Thorn."

"Joyce!" exclaimed Barbara, in excitement, seizing hold of Joyce's hands, "I thought I had found him; I believed in my own mind that I knew who he was. I don't mind telling you, though I have never before spoken of it; and with one thing or other, this night I feel just as if I should die as if I must speak. I thought it was Sir Francis Levison."

Joyce stared with all her eyes. "Miss Barbara!"

"I did. I have thought it ever since the night that Lady Isabel went away. My poor brother was at West Lynne then he had come for a few hours, and he met the man Thorn walking in Bean lane. He was in evening dress, and Richard described a peculiar motion of his throwing off of his hair from his brow. He said his white hand and his diamond ring glittered in the moonlight. The white hand, the ring, the motion for he was always doing it all reminded me of Captain Levison; and from that hour until today I believed him to be the man Richard saw. Today Richard tells me that he knows Sir Francis Levison, and that he and Thorn are intimate. What I think now is, that this Thorn must have paid a flying visit to the neighborhood that night to assist Captain Levison in the wicked work that he had on hand."

"How strange it all sounds!" uttered Joyce.

"And I never could tell my suspicions to Mr. Carlyle! I did not like to mention Francis Levison's name to him."

Barbara soon returned down stairs. "I must be going home," she said to Mr. Carlyle. "It is turned halfpast seven, and mamma will be uneasy."

"Whenever you like, Barbara."

"But can I not walk? I am sorry to take out your ponies again, and in this storm."

Mr. Carlyle laughed. "Which would feel the storm the worst, you or the ponies?"

But when Barbara got outside, she saw that it was not the pony carriage, but the chariot that was in waiting for her. She turned inquiringly to Mr. Carlyle.

"Did you think I should allow you to go home in an open carriage tonight, Barbara?"

"Are you coming also?"

"I suppose I had better," he smiled. "To see that you and the carriage do not get fixed in a rut."

Barbara withdrew to her corner of the chariot, and cried silently. Very, very deeply did she mourn the unhappy situation the privations of her brother; and she knew that he was one to feel them deeply. He could not battle with the world's hardships so bravely as many could. Mr. Carlyle only detected her emotion as they were nearing the Grove. He leaned forward, took her hand, and held it between his.

"Don't grieve, Barbara. Bright days may be in store for us yet."

The carriage stopped.

"You may go back," he said to the servants, when he alighted. "I shall walk home."

"Oh," exclaimed Barbara, "I do think you intend to spend the evening with us? Mamma will be so pleased."

Her voice sounded as if she was also. Mr. Carlyle drew her hand within his arm as they walked up the path.

But Barbara had reckoned without her host. Mrs. Hare was in bed, consequently could not be pleased at the visit of Mr. Carlyle. The justice had gone out, and she, feeling tired and not well, thought she would retire to rest. Barbara stole into her room, but found her asleep, so that it fell to Barbara to entertain Mr. Carlyle.

They stood together before the large pierglass, in front of the blazing fire. Barbara was thinking over the events of the day. What Mr. Carlyle was thinking of was best known to himself; his eyes, covered with their drooping eyelids, were cast upon Barbara. There was a long silence, at length Barbara seemed to feel that his gaze was upon her, and she looked up at him.

"Will you marry me, Barbara?"

The words were spoken in the quietest, most matter-of-fact tone, just as if he had said, "Shall I give you a chair, Barbara?" But, oh! The change that passed over her countenance! The sudden light of joy! The scarlet flush of emotion and happiness. Then it all faded down to paleness and sadness.

She shook her head in the negative. "But you are very kind to ask me," she added in words.

"What is the impediment, Barbara?"

Another rush of color as before and a deep silence. Mr. Carlyle stole his arm around her and bent his face on a level with hers.

"Whisper it to me, Barbara."

She burst into a flood of tears.

"Is it because I once married another?"

"No, no. It is the remembrance of that night you cannot have forgotten it, and it is stamped on my brain in letters of fire. I never thought so to betray myself. But for what passed that night you would not have asked me now."

"Barbara!"

She glanced up at him; the tone was so painful.

"Do you know that I love you? That there is none other in the whole world whom I would care to marry but you? Nay, Barbara, when happiness is within our reach, let us not throw it away upon a chimera."

She cried more softly, leaning upon his arm. "Happiness? Would it be happiness for you?"

"Great and deep happiness," he whispered.

She read truth in his countenance, and a sweet smile illumined her sunny features. Mr. Carlyle read its signs.

"You love me as much as ever, Barbara!"

"Far more, far more," was the murmured answer, and Mr. Carlyle held her closer, and drew her face fondly to his. Barbara's heart was at length at rest, and she had been content to remain where she was forever.

And Richard? Had he got clear off? Richard was stealing along the road, plunging into the snow by the hedge because it was more sheltered there than in the beaten path, when his umbrella came in contact with another umbrella. Miss Carlyle had furnished it to him; not to protect his battered hat but to protect his face from being seen by the passers by. The umbrella he encountered was an aristocratic silk one, with an ivory handle; Dick's was of democratic cotton, with hardly any handle at all; and the respective owners had been bearing on, heads down and umbrellas out, till they, the umbrellas, met smash, right under a gas lamp. Aside went the umbrellas, and the antagonists stared at each other.

"How dare you, fellow? Can't you see where you are going on?"

Dick thought he should have dropped. He would have given all the money his pockets held if the friendly earth had but opened and swallowed him in; for he was now peering into the face of his own father.

Uttering an exclamation of dismay, which broke from him involuntarily, Richard sped away with the swiftness of an arrow. Did Justice Hare recognize the tones? It cannot be said. He saw a rough, strange looking man, with bushy, black whiskers, who was evidently scared at the sight of him. That was nothing; for the justice, being a justice, and a strict one, was regarded with considerable awe in the parish by those of Dick's apparent caliber. Nevertheless, he stood still and gazed in the direction until all sound of Richard's footsteps had died away in the distance.

Tears were streaming down the face of Mrs. Hare. It was a bright morning after the snowstorm, so bright that the sky was blue, and the sun was shining, but the snow lay deeply upon ground. Mrs. Hare sat in her chair, enjoying the brightness, and Mr. Carlyle stood near her. The tears were of joy and of grief mingled of grief at hearing that she should at last have to part with Barbara, of joy that she was going to one so entirely worthy of her as Mr. Carlyle.

"Archibald, she has had a happy home here; you will render yours as much so?"

"To the very utmost of my power."

"You will be ever kind to her, and cherish her?"

"With my whole strength and heart. Dear Mrs. Hare; I thought you knew me too well to doubt me."

"Doubt you! I do not doubt you, I trust you implicitly, Archibald. Had the whole world laid themselves at Barbara's feet, I should have prayed that she might choose you."

A small smile flitted over Mr. Carlyle's lips. He knew it was what Barbara would have done.

"But, Archibald, what about Cornelia?" returned Mrs. Hare. "I would not for a moment interfere in your affairs, or in the arrangements you and Barbara may agree upon, but I cannot help thinking that married people are better alone."

"Cornelia will quit East Lynne," said Mr. Carlyle. "I have not spoken to her yet, but I shall do so now. I have long made my mind up that if ever I did marry again, I and my wife would live alone. It is said she interfered too much with my former wife. Had I

suspected it, Cornelia should not have remained in the house a day. Rest assured that Barbara shall not be an object to the chance."

"How did you come over her?" demanded the justice, who had already given his gratified consent, and who now entered in his dressing gown and morning wig. "Others have tried it on, and Barbara would not listen to them."

"I suppose I must have cast a spell upon her," answered Mr. Carlyle, breaking into a smile.

"Here she is. Barbara," carried on the unceremonious justice, "what is it that you see in Carlyle more than anybody else?"

Barbara's scarlet cheeks answered for her. "Papa," she said, "Otway Bethel is at the door asking to speak to you. Jasper says he won't come in."

"Then I'm sure I'm not going out to him in the cold. Here, Mr. Otway, what are you afraid of?" he called out. "Come in."

Otway Bethel made his appearance in his usual sporting costume. But he did not seem altogether at his ease in the presence of Mrs. Hare and Barbara.

"The colonel wished to see you, justice, and ask you if you had any objection to the meeting's being put off from one o'clock till two," cried he, after nodding to Mr. Carlyle. "He has got a friend coming to see him unexpectedly who will leave again by the two o'clock train."

"I don't care which it is," answered Mr. Hare. "Two o'clock will do as well as one, for me."

"That's all right, then; and I'll drop in upon Herbert and Pinner and acquaint them."

Miss Carlyle's cold was better that evening, in fact she seemed quite herself again, and Mr. Carlyle introduced the subject of his marriage. It was after dinner that he began upon it.

"Cornelia, when I married Lady Isabel Vane, you reproached me severely with having kept you in the dark"

"If you had not kept me in the dark, but consulted me, as any other Christian would, the course of events would have been wholly changed, and the wretchedness and disgrace that fell on this house been spared to it," fiercely interrupted Miss Carlyle.

"We will leave the past," he said, "and consider the future. I was about to remark, that I do not intend to fall under your displeasure again for the like offense. I believe you have never wholly forgiven it."

"And never shall," cried she, impetuously. "I did not deserve the slight."

"Therefore, almost as soon as I know it myself, I acquaint you. I am about to marry a second time, Cornelia."

Miss Carlyle started up. Her spectacles dropped off her nose, and a knittingbox which she happened to have on her knees, clattered to the floor.

"What did you say?" she uttered, aghast.

"I'm about to marry."

"You!"

"I. Is there anything so very astonishing in it?"

"For the love of common sense, don't go and make such a fool of yourself. You have done it once; was not that enough for you, but you must run your head into the noose again?"

"Now, Cornelia, can you wonder that I do not speak of things when you meet them in this way? You treat me just as you did when I was a child. It is very foolish."

"When folk act childishly, they must be treated as children. I always thought you were mad when you married before, but I shall think you doubly mad now."

"Because you have preferred to remain single and solitary yourself, is it any reason why you should condemn me to do the same? You are happy alone; I should be happier with a wife."

"That she may go and disgrace you, as the last one did!" intemperately spoke Miss Carlyle, caring not a rush what she said in her storm of anger.

Mr. Carlyle's brow flushed, but he controlled his temper.

"No," he calmly replied. "I am not afraid of that in the one I have now chosen."

Miss Corny gathered her knitting together, he had picked up her box. Her hands trembled, and the lines of her face were working. It was a blow to her as keen as the other had been.

"Pray who is it that you have chosen?" she jerked forth. "The whole neighborhood has been after you."

"Let it be who it will, Cornelia, you will be sure to grumble. Were I to say that it was a royal princess, or a peasant's daughter, you would equally see grounds for finding fault."

"Of course I should. I know who it is that stuck up Louisa Dobede."

"No, it is not. I never had the slightest intention of choosing Louisa Dobede, nor she of choosing me. I am marrying to please myself, and, for a wife, Louisa Dobede would not please me."

"As you did before," sarcastically put in Miss Corny.

"Yes; as I did before."

"Well, can't you open your mouth and say who it is?" was the exasperated rejoinder.

"It is Barbara Hare."

"Who?" shrieked Miss Carlyle.

"You are not deaf, Cornelia."

"Well, you are an idiot!" she exclaimed, lifting up her hands and eyes.

"Thank you," he said, but without any signs of irritation.

"And so you are; you are, Archibald. To suffer that girl, who has been angling after you so long, to catch you at last."

"She has not angled after me; had she done so, she would probably never have been Mrs. Carlyle. Whatever passing fancy she may have entertained for me in earlier days, she has shown no symptoms of it of late years; and I am quite certain that she had no more thought or idea that I should choose her for my second wife, than you had I should choose you. Others have angled after me too palpably, but Barbara has not."

"She is a conceited minx, as vain as she is high."

"What else have you to urge against her?"

"I would have married a girl without a slur, if I must have married," aggravatingly returned Miss Corny.

"Slur?"

"Slur, yes. Dear me, is it an honor the possessing a brother such as Richard?"

Miss Corny sniffed. "Pigs may fly; but I never saw them try at it."

"The next consideration, Cornelia, is about your residence. You will go back, I presume, to your own home."

Miss Corny did not believe her own ears. "Go back to my own home!" she exclaimed. "I shall do nothing of the sort. I shall stop at East Lynne. What's to hinder me?"

Mr. Carlyle shook his head. "It cannot be," he said, in a low, decisive tone.

"Who says so?" she sharply asked.

"I do. Have you forgotten that night when she went away the words spoken by Joyce? Cornelia, whether they were true or false, I will not subject another to the chance."

She did not answer. Her lips parted and closed again. Somehow, Miss Carlyle could not bear to be reminded of that revelation of Joyce's; it subdued even her.

"I cast no reflection upon you," hastily continued Mr. Carlyle. "You have been a mistress of a house for many years, and you naturally look to be so; it is right you should. But two mistresses in a house do not answer, Cornelia; they never did, and they never will."

"Why did you not give me so much of your sentiments when I first came to East Lynne?" she burst forth. "I hate hypocrisy."

"They were not my sentiments then; I possessed none. I was ignorant upon the subject as I was upon many others. Experience has come to me since."

"You will not find a better mistress of a house than I have made you," she resentfully spoke.

"I do not look for it. The tenants leave your house in March, do they not?"

"Yes, they do," snapped Miss Corny. "But as we are on the subject of details of ways and means, allow me to tell you that if you did what is right, you would move into that house of mine, and I will go to a smaller as you seem to think I shall poison Barbara if I remain with her. East Lynne is a vast deal too fine and too grand for you."

"I do not consider it so. I shall not quit East Lynne."

"Are you aware that, in leaving your house, I take my income with me, Archibald?"

"Most certainly. Your income is yours, and you will require it for your own purposes. I have neither a right to, nor wish for it."

"It will make a pretty good hole in your income, the withdrawing of it, I can tell you that. Take care that you and East Lynne don't go bankrupt together."

At this moment the summons of a visitor was heard. Even that excited the ire of Miss Carlyle. "I wonder who's come bothering tonight?" she uttered.

Peter entered. "It is Major Thorn, sir. I have shown him into the drawingroom."

Mr. Carlyle was surprised. He had not thought Major Thorn within many a mile of West Lynne. He proceeded to the drawingroom.

"Such a journey!" said Major Thorn to Mr. Carlyle. "It is my general luck to get illweather when I travel. Rain and hail, thunder and heat; nothing bad comes amiss when I am out. The snow lay on the rails, I don't know how thick; at one station we were detained two hours."

"Are you proposing to make any stay at West Lynne?"

"Off again tomorrow. My leave, this time, is to be spent at my mother's. I may bestow a week of it or so on West Lynne, but am not sure. I must be back in Ireland in a month. Such a horrid boghole we are quartered in just now!"

"To go from one subject to another," observed Mr. Carlyle; "there is a question I have long thought to put to you, Thorn, did we ever meet again. Which year was it that you were staying at Swainson?"

Major Thorn mentioned it. It was the year of Hallijohn's murder.

"As I thought in fact, know," said Mr. Carlyle. "Did you, while you were stopping there, ever come across a namesake of yoursone Thorn?"

"I believe I did. But I don't know the man, of my knowledge, and I saw him but once only. I don't think he was living at Swainson. I never observed him in the town."

"Where did you meet with him?"

"At a roadside beershop, about two miles from Swainson. I was riding one day, when a fearful storm came on, and I took shelter there. Scarcely had I entered, when another horseman rode up, and he likewise took shelter. A tall, dandified man, aristocratic and exclusive. When he departed for he quitted first, the storm being over I asked the people who he was. They said they did not know, though they had often seen him ride by; but a

man who was there, drinking, said he was a Captain Thorn. The same man, by the way, volunteered the information that he came from a distance; somewhere near West Lynne; I remember that."

"That Captain Thorn did?"

"No that he, himself did. He appeared to know nothing of Captain Thorn, beyond the name."

It seemed to be ever so! Scraps of information, but nothing tangible. Nothing to lay hold of, or to know the man by. Would it be thus always?

"Should you recognize him again were you to see him?" resumed Mr. Carlyle awakening from his reverie.

"I think I should. There was something peculiar in his countenance, and I remember it well yet."

"Were you by chance to meet him, and discover his real name for I have reason to believe that Thorn, the one he went by then, was an assumed one will you oblige me by letting me know it?"

"With all the pleasure in life," replied the major. "The chances are against it though, confined as I am to that confounded sister country. Other regiments get the luck of being quartered in the metropolis, or near it; ours doesn't."

When Major Thorn departed, and Mr. Carlyle was about to return to the room where he left his sister, he was interrupted by Joyce.

"Sir," she began. "Miss Carlyle tells me that there is going to be a change at East Lynne."

The words took Mr. Carlyle by surprise.

"Miss Carlyle has been in a hurry to tell you," he remarked a certain haughty displeasure in his tone.

"She did not speak for the sake of telling me, sir, it is not likely; but I fancy she was thinking about her own plans. She inquired whether I would go with her when she left, or whether I meant to remain at East Lynne. I would not answer her, sir, until I had spoken to you."

"Well?" said Mr. Carlyle.

"I gave a promise sir, to my late lady that I would remain with her children as long as I was permitted. She asked it of me when she was ill when she thought she was going to die. What I would inquire of you, sir, is, whether the change will make any difference to my staying?"

"No," he decisively replied. "I also, Joyce, wish you to remain with the children."

"It is well, sir," Joyce answered, and her face looked bright as she quitted the room.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MR. DILL IN AN EMBROIDERED SHIRTFRONT.

It was a lovely morning in June, and all West Lynne was astir. West Lynne generally was astir in the morning, but not in the bustling manner that might be observed now. People were abroad in numbers, passing down to St. Jude's Church, for it was the day of Mr. Carlyle's marriage to Barbara Hare.

Miss Carlyle made herself into a sort of martyr. She would not go near it; fine weddings in fine churches did not suit her, she proclaimed; they could tie themselves up together fast enough without her presence. She had invited the little Carlyles and their governess and Joyce to spend the day with her; and she persisted in regarding the children as martyrs too, in being obliged to submit to the advent of a second mother. She was back in her old house again, next door to the office, settled there for life now with her servants. Peter had mortally offended her in electing to remain at East Lynne.

Mr. Dill committed himself terribly on the wedding morning. About ten o'clock he made his appearance at Miss Carlyle's; he was a man of the old stage, possessing oldfashioned notions, and he had deemed that to step in to congratulate her on the auspicious day would be only good manners.

Miss Carlyle was seated in her diningroom, her hands folded before her. It was rare indeed that she was caught doing nothing. She turned her eyes on Mr. Dill as he entered.

"Why, what on earth has taken you?" began she, before he could speak. "You are decked out like a young duck!"

"I am going to the wedding, Miss Cornelia. Did you know it? Mrs. Hare was so kind as to invite me to the breakfast, and Mr. Archibald insists upon my going to church. I am not too fine, am I?"

Poor old Dill's "finery" consisted of a white waistcoat with gold buttons, and an embroidered shirtfront. Miss Corny was pleased to regard it with sarcastic wrath.

"Fine!" echoed she. "I don't know what you call it. I would not make myself such a spectacle for untold gold. You'll have all the ragamuffins in the street forming a tail after you, thinking you are the bridegroom. A man of your years to deck yourself out in a worked shirt! I would have had some rosettes on my coattails, while I was about it."

"My coat's quite plain, Miss Cornelia," he meekly remonstrated.

"Plain! What would you have it?" snapped Miss Cornelia. "Perhaps you covet a wreath of embroidery round it, gold leaves and scarlet flowers, with a swansdown collar? It would only be in keeping with that shirt and waistcoat. I might as well have gone and ordered a white tarletan dress, looped up with peas, and streamed through the town in that guise. It would be just as consistent."

"People like to dress a little out of common at a wedding, Miss Cornelia; it's only respectful, when they are invited guests."

"I don't say people should go to a wedding in a hop sack. But there's a medium. Pray, do you know your age?"

"I am turned sixty, Miss Corny."

"You just are. And do you consider it decent for an old man, going on for seventy, to be decorated off as you are now? I don't; and so I tell you my mind. Why, you'll be the laughingstock of the parish! Take care the boys don't tie a tin kettle to you!"

Mr. Dill thought he would leave the subject. His own impression was, that he was not too fine, and that the parish would not regard him as being so; still, he had a great reverence for Miss Corny's judgment, and was not altogether easy. He had had his white gloves in his hand when he entered, but he surreptitiously smuggled them into his pocket, lest they might offend. He passed to the subject which had brought him thither.

"What I came in for, was to offer you my congratulations on this auspicious day, Miss Cornelia. I hope Mr. Archibald and his wife, and you, ma'am"

"There! You need not trouble yourself to go on," interrupted Miss Corny, hotly arresting him. "We want condolence here today, rather than the other thing. I'm sure I'd nearly as soon see Archibald go to his hanging."

"Oh, Miss Corny!"

"I would; and you need not stare at me as if you were throttled. What business has he to go and fetter himself with a wife again. One would have thought he had had enough with the other. It is as I have always said, there's a soft place in Archibald's brain."

Old Dill knew there was no "soft place" in the brain of Mr. Carlyle, but he deemed it might be as well not to say so, in Miss Corny's present humor. "Marriage is a happy state, as I have heard, ma'am, and honorable; and I am sure Mr. Archibald"

"Very happy! Very honorable!" fiercely cried Miss Carlyle, sarcasm in her tone. "His last marriage brought him all that, did it not?"

"That's past and done with, Miss Corny, and none of us need recall it. I hope he will find in his present wife a recompense for what's gone; he could not have chosen a prettier or nicer young lady than Miss Barbara; and I am glad to my very heart that he has got her."

"Couldn't he?" jerked Miss Carlyle.

"No, ma'am, he could not. Were I young, and wanted a wife, there's no one in all West Lynne I would so soon look out for as Miss Barbara. Not that she'd have me; and I was not speaking in that sense, Miss Corny."

"It's to be hoped you were not," retorted Miss Corny. "She is an idle, insolent, vain fagot, caring for nothing but her own doll's face and for Archibald."

"Ah, well, ma'am never mind that; pretty young girls know they are pretty, and you can't take their vanity from them. She'll be a good and loving wife to him; I know she will; it is in her nature; she won't serve him as that other poor unfortunate did."

"If I feared she was one to bring shame to him, as the other did, I'd go into the church this hour and forbid the marriage; and if that didn't do, I'd smother her!" shrieked Miss Carlyle. "Look at that piece of impudence!"

That last sentence was uttered in a different tone, and concerned somebody in the street. Miss Carlyle hopped off her chair and strode to the window. Mr. Dill's eyes turned in the like direction.

In a gay and summer's dress, fine and sparkling, with a coquettish little bonnet, trimmed with pink, shaded by one of those nondescript articles at present called veils, which article was made of white spotted net with a pink ruche round it, sailed Afy Hallijohn, conceited and foolish and goodlooking as ever. Catching sight of Mr. Dill, she made him a flourishing and gracious bow. The courteous old gentleman returned it, and was pounced upon by Miss Corny's tongue for his pains.

"Whatever possessed you to do that?"

"Well, Miss Corny, she spoke to me. You saw her."

"I saw her? Yes, I did see her, the brazen bellwether! And she saw me, and spoke to you in her insolence. And you must answer her, in spite of my presence, instead of shaking your fist and giving her a reproving frown. You want a little sharp talking to, yourself."

"But, Miss Corny, it's always best to let bygones be bygones," he pleaded. "She was flighty and foolish, and all that, was Afy; but now that it's proved she did not go with Richard Hare, as was suspected, and is at present living creditably, why should she not be noticed?"

"If the very deuce himself stood there with his horns and tail, you would find excuses to make for him," fired Miss Corny. "You are as bad as Archibald! Notice Afy Hallijohn, when she dresses and flirts and minces as you saw her but now! What creditable servant would flaunt abroad in such a dress and bonnet as that, with that flimsy gauze thing over her face. It's as disreputable as your shirtfront."

Mr. Dill coughed humbly, not wishing to renew the point of the shirtfront. "She is not exactly a servant, Miss Corny, she's a lady's maid; and ladies' maids do dress outrageously fine. I had great respect for her father, ma'am; never a better clerk came into our office."

"Perhaps you'll tell me you have a respect for her! The world's being turned upside down, I think. Formerly, mistresses kept their servants to work; now it seems they keep them for play! She's going to St. Jude's, you may be sure of it, to stare at this fine wedding, instead of being at home, in a cotton gown and white apron, making beds. Mrs. Latimer must be a droll mistress, to give her liberty in this way. What's that fly for?" sharply added Miss Corny, as one drew up to the office door.

"Fly," said Mr. Dill, stretching forward his bald head. "It must be the one I ordered. Then I'll wish you goodday, Miss Corny."

"Fly for you?" cried Miss Corny. "Have you got the gout, that you could not walk to St. Jude's on foot?"

"I am not going to the church yet; I am going on to the Grove, Miss Corny. I thought it would look more proper to have a fly ma'am; more respectful."

"Not a doubt but you need it in that trim," retorted she. "Why didn't you put on pumps and silk stockings with pink clocks?"

He was glad to bow himself out, she kept on so. But he thought he would do it with a pleasant remark, to show her he bore no illwill. "Just look at the crowds pouring down, Miss Corny; the church will be as full as it can cram."

"I dare say it will," retorted she. "One fool makes many."

"I fear Miss Cornelia does not like this marriage, any more than she did the last," quoth Mr. Dill to himself as he stepped into his fly. "Such a sensible woman as she is in other things, to be so bitter against Mr. Archibald because he marries! It's not like her. I wonder," he added, his thoughts changing, "whether I do look foolish in this shirt? I'm sure I never thought of decking myself out to appear young as Miss Corny said I only wished to testify respect to Mr. Archibald and Miss Barbara; nothing else would have made me give five and twenty shillings for it. Perhaps it's not etiquette or whatever they

call it to wear them in the morning, Miss Corny ought to know; and there certainly must be something wrong about it, by the way it put her up. Well, it can't be helped now; it must go; there's no time to return home now to change it."

St. Jude's Church was in a cram; all the world and his wife had flocked into it. Those who could not get in, took up their station in the churchyard and in the road.

Well, it was a goodly show. Ladies and gentlemen as smart as fine feathers could make them. Mr. Carlyle was one of the first to enter the church, selfpossessed and calm, the very sense of a gentleman. Oh, but he was noble to look upon; though when was he otherwise? Mr. and Mrs. Clithero were there, Anne Hare, that was; a surprise for some of the gazers, who had not known they were expected at the wedding. Gentle, delicate Mrs. Hare walked up the church leaning on the arm of Sir John Dobede, a paler shade than usual on her sweet, sad face. "She's thinking of her wretched, illdoing son," quoth the gossips, one to another. But who comes in now, with an air as if the whole church belonged to him? An imposing, pompous man, stern and grim, in a new flaxen wig, and a white rose in his buttonhole. It is Mr. Justice Hare, and he leads in one, whom folks jump upon seats to get a look at.

Very lovely was Barbara, in her soft white silk robes and her floating veil. Her cheeks, now blushing rosy red, now pale as the veil that shaded them, betrayed how intense was her emotion. The bridesmaids came after her with jaunty steps, vain in their important office—Louisa Dobede, Augusta and Kate Herbert, and Mary Pinner.

Mr. Carlyle was already in his place at the altar, and as Barbara neared him, he advanced, took her hand, and placed her on his left. I don't think that it was quite usual; but he had been married before, and ought to know. The clerk directed the rest where to stand, and, after some little delay, the service proceeded.

In spite of her emotion and that it was great, scarcely to be suppressed, none could doubt Barbara made the responses bravely. Be you very sure that a woman who loves him she is being united to, must experience this emotion.

"Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance, in the holy estate of matrimony?" spoke the Rev. Mr. Little. "Wilt thou obey him, and serve him, love, honor, and keep him in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?"

"I will."

Clearly, firmly, impressively was the answer given. It was as if Barbara had in her thoughts one who had not "kept holy unto him," and would proclaim her own resolution never so to betray him, God helping her.

The ceremony was very soon over, and Barbara, the magic ring upon her finger and her arm within Mr. Carlyle's was led out to his chariot, now hers had he not just endowed her with his worldly goods?

The crowd shouted and hurraed as they caught sight of her blushing face, but the carriage was soon clear of the crowd, who concentrated their curiosity upon the other carriages that were to follow it. The company were speeding back to the Grove to breakfast. Mr. Carlyle, breaking the silence, suddenly turned to his bride and spoke, his tone impassioned, almost unto pain.

"Barbara, you will keep your vows to me?"

She raised her shy blue eyes, so full of love to his; earnest feeling had brought the tears to them.

"Always, in the spirit and in the letter, until death shall claim me. So help me Heaven!"

The German wateringplaces were crowded that early autumn. They generally are crowded at that season, now that the English flock abroad in shoals, like the swallows quitting our cold country, to return again some time. France has been pretty well used up, so now we fall upon Germany. Stalkenberg was that year particularly full, for its size you might have put it in a nutshell; and it derived its importance, name, and most else belonging to it, from its lord of the soil, the Baron von Stalkenberg. A stalwart old man was the baron, with grizzly hair, a grizzled beard, and manners as loutish as those of the boars he hunted. He had four sons as stalwart as himself, and who promised to be in time as grizzled. They were all styled the Counts von Stalkenberg, being distinguished by their Christian names all save the eldest son, and he was generally called the young baron. Two of them were away soldiers; and two, the eldest and the youngest, lived with their father in the tumble-down castle of Stalkenberg, situated about a mile from the village to which it gave its name. The young Baron von Stalkenberg was at liberty to marry; the three Counts von Stalkenberg were not unless they could pick up a wife with enough money to keep herself and her husband. In this creed they had been brought up. It was a perfectly understood creed, and not rebelled against.

The young Baron von Stalkenberg, who was only styled young in contradistinction to his father, being in his forty-first year, was famous for a handsome person, and for his passionate love of the chase: of wild boars and wolves he was the deadly enemy. The Count Otto von Stalkenberg, eleven years his brother's junior, was famous for nothing but his fiercely ringed moustache, a habit of eating, and an undue addiction to draughts of Marcobrunen. Somewhat meager fare, so report ran, was the fashion in the Castle of Stalkenberg neither the old baron nor his heir cared for luxury; therefore Count von Otto was sure to be seen at the table d' hôte as often as anybody would invite him, and that

was nearly every day, for the Count von Stalkenberg was a high-sounding title, and his baronial father, proprietor of all Stalkenberg, lorded it in the baronial castle close by, all of which appeared very grand and great, and that the English bow down to with an idol's worship.

Stopping at the Ludwig Bad, the chief hotel in the place, was a family of the name of Crosby. It consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Crosby, an only daughter, her governess, and two or three servants. What Mr. Crosby had done to England, or England to him, I can't say, but he never went near his native country. For years and years he had lived abroad not in any settled place of residence: they would travel about, and remain a year or two in one place, a year or two in another, as the whim suited them. A respectable, portly man, of quiet and gentlemanly manners, looking as little like one who need be afraid of the laws of his own land as can be. Neither is it said or insinuated that he was afraid of them. A gentleman who knew him had told, many years before, in answer to a doubt, that Crosby was as free to go home and establish himself in a mansion in Piccadilly as the best of them. But he had lost fearfully by some roguish scheme, like the South Sea Bubble, and could not live in the style he once had done, therefore preferred remaining abroad. Mrs. Crosby was a pleasant, chatty woman given to take as much gaiety as she could get, and Helena Crosby was a remarkably fine grown girl of seventeen. You might have given her some years on it had you been guessing her age, for she was no child, either in appearance or manners, and never had been. She was an heiress, too. An uncle had left her twenty thousand pounds, and at her mother's death she would have ten thousand more. The Count Otto von Stalkenberg heard of the thirty thousand pounds, and turned his fierce moustache and his eyes on Miss Helena.

"Thirty thousand pounds and von handsome girls!" cogitated he, for he prided himself upon his English. "It is just what I have been seeking after."

He found the rumor touching her fortune to be correct, and from that time was seldom apart from the Crosbys. They were as pleased to have his society as he was to be in theirs, for was he not the Count von Stalkenberg? And the other visitors at Stalkenberg looking on with envy, would have given their ears to be honored with a like intimacy.

One day there thundered down in a vehicle the old Baron von Stalkenberg. The old chief had come to pay a visit of ceremony to the Crosbys. And the host of the Ludwig Bad, as he appeared himself to marshal this chieftain to their saloon, bowed his body low with every step.

"Room there, room there, for the mighty Baron von Stalkenberg."

The mighty baron had come to invite them to a feast at his castle, where no feast had ever been made so grand before as this would be; and Otto had carte blanche to engage

other distinguished sojourners at Stalkenberg, English, French, and natives, who had been civil to him. Mrs. Crosby's head was turned.

And now, I ask you, knowing as you do our national notions, was it not enough to turn it? You will not, then, be surprised to hear that when, some days subsequent to the feast, the Count Otto von Stalkenberg laid his proposals at Helena's feet, they were not rejected.

Helena Crosby rushed into her governess's room.

"Madam! Madam! Only think. I am going to be married!"

Madam lifted her pale, sad face; a very sad and pale face was hers.

"Indeed!" she gently uttered.

"And my studies are to be over from today, Mamma says so."

"You are over young to marry, Helena."

"Now don't you bring up that, madam. It is just what papa is harping upon," returned Miss Helena.

"It is to Count Otto?" And it may be remarked that the governess's English was perfect, although the young lady addressed her as "Madam."

"Count Otto, of course. As if I would marry anybody else!"

Look at the governess, reader, and see whether you know her. You will say "No." But you do, for it is Lady Isabel Vane. But how strangely she is altered! Yes, the railway accident did that for her, and what the accident left undone, grief and remorse accomplished. She limps as she walks, and slightly stoops, taken from her former height. A scar extends from her chin above her mouth, completely changing the character of the lower part of her face; some of her teeth are missing, so that she speaks with a lisp, and the sober bands of her gray hair are nearly silver and are confined under a large and close cap. She herself tries to make the change greater, so that all chance of being recognized may be at an end, and for that reason she wears disfiguring spectacles, and a broad band of gray velvet, coming down low upon her forehead. Her dress, too, is equally disfiguring. Never is she seen in one that fits her person, but in those frightful "loose jackets," which must surely have been invented by somebody envious of a pretty shape. As to her bonnet, it would put to shame those masquerade things tilted on to the back of the head, for it actually shaded her face; and she was never seen out without a thick veil. She was pretty easy upon the score of being recognized now; for Mrs. Ducie and her daughters had been sojourning at Stalkenberg, and they did not know her in the least. Who could know

her? What resemblance was there between that gray, brokendown woman, with her disfiguring marks, and the once loved Lady Isabel, with her bright color, her beauty, her dark flowing curls, and her agile figure? Mr. Carlyle himself could not have told her. But she was goodlooking still, in spite of it all, gentle and interesting; and people wondered to see that gray hair in one yet young.

She had been with the Crosbys going on for two years. After her recovery from the railway accident, she removed to a quiet town in the vicinity; they were living there, and she became daily governess to Helena. The Crosbys were given to understand that she was English, but the widow of a Frenchman she was obliged to offer some plausible account. There were no references; but she so won upon their esteem as the daily governess, that they soon took her into the house. Had Lady Isabel surmised that they would be travelling to so conspicuous a spot as an Englishfrequented German wateringplace, she might have hesitated to accept the engagement. However, it had been of service to her, the meeting with Mrs. Ducie proving that she was altered beyond chance of recognition. She could go anywhere now.

But now, about her state of mind? I don't know how to describe it; the vain yearning, the inward fever, the restless longing for what might not be. Longing for what? For her children. Let the mother, be she a duchess, or be she an applewoman at a stand, be separated for awhile from her little children; let her answer how she yearns for them. She may be away on a tour of pleasure for a few weeks; the longing to see their little faces again, to hear their prattling tongues, to feel their soft kisses, is kept under; and there may be frequent messages, "The children's dear love to mamma;" but as the weeks lengthen out, the desire to see them again becomes almost irrepressible. What must it have been then, for Lady Isabel, who had endured this longing for years? Talk of the *mal du pays*, which is said to attack the Swiss when exiled from their countrythat is as nothing compared to the heartsickness which clung to Lady Isabel. She had passionately loved her children; she had been anxious for their welfare in all ways; and not the least she had to endure now was the thought that she had abandoned them to be trained by strangers. Would they be trained to goodness, to morality, to religion? Careless as she herself had once been upon these points, she had learnt better now. Would Isabel grow up to indifference, to perhaps do as she had done? Lady Isabel flung her hands before her eyes and groaned in anguish.

It happened that Mrs. Latimer, a lady living at West Lynne, betook herself about that time to Stalkenberg, and with her, three parts maid and one part companion, went Afy Hallijohn. Not that Afy was admitted to the society of Mrs. Latimer, to sit with her or dine with her, nothing of that; but she did enjoy more privileges than most ladies' maids do, and Afy, who was never backward at setting off her own consequence, gave out that she was "companion." Mrs. Latimer was an easy woman, fond of Afy, and Afy had made

her own tale good to her respecting the illnatured reports at the time of the murder, so that Mrs. Latimer looked upon her as one to be compassionated.

Mrs. Latimer and Mrs. Crosby, whose apartments in the hotel joined, struck up a violent friendship, the one for the other. Ere the former had been a week at the Ludwig, they had sworn something like eternal sisterhoodas both had probably done for others fifty times before.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MEETING OF LADY ISABEL AND AFY.

On the evening of the day when Helena Crosby communicated her future prospects to Lady Isabel, the latter strolled out in the twilight and took her seat on a bench in an unfrequented part of the gardens, where she was fond of sitting. Now it occurred that Afy, some minutes afterwards, found herself in the same walk and a very dull one, too, she was thinking.

"Who's that?" quoth Afy to herself, her eyes falling upon Lady Isabel. "Oh, it's that governess of the Crosby's. She may be known, a half a mile off, by her grandmother's bonnet. I'll go and have a chat with her."

Accordingly Afy, who was never troubled with bashfulness, went up and seated herself beside Lady Isabel. "Good evening, Madame Vine," cried she.

"Good evening," replied Lady Isabel, courteously, not having the least idea who Afy might be.

"You don't know me, I fancy," pursued Afy, so gathering from Lady Isabel's looks. "I am companion to Mrs. Latimer; and she is spending the evening with Mrs. Crosby. Precious dull, this Stalkenberg."

"Do you think so?"

"It is for me. I can't speak German or French, and the upper attendants of families here can't; most of them speak English. I'm sure I go about like an owl, able to do nothing but stare. I was sick enough to come here, but I'd rather be back at West Lynne, quiet as it is."

Lady Isabel had not been encouraging her companion, either by words or manner, but the last sentence caused her heart to bound within her. Control herself as she would, she could not quite hide her feverish interest.

"Do you come from West Lynne?"

"Yes. Horrid place. Mrs. Latimer took a house there soon after I went to live with her. I'd rather she'd taken it at Botany Bay."

"Why do you not like it?"

"Because I don't," was Afy's satisfactory answer.

"Do you know East Lynne?" resumed Lady Isabel, her heart beating and her brain whirling, as she deliberated how she could put all the questions she wished to ask.

"I ought to know it," returned Afy. "My own sister, Miss Hallijohn, is head maid there. Why, do you know it, Madame Vine?"

Lady Isabel hesitated; she was deliberating upon her answer.

"Some years ago I was staying in the neighborhood for a little time," she said. "I should like to hear of the Carlyles again; they were a nice family."

Afy tossed her head.

"Ah! But there have been changes since that. I dare say you knew them in the time of Lady Isabel?"

Another pause.

"Lady Isabel? Yes she was Mr. Carlyle's wife."

"And a nice wife she made him!" ironically rejoined Afy. "You must have heard of it, Madame Vine, unless you lived in the wood. She eloped and abandoned him and her children."

"Are the children living?"

"Yes, poor things. But the one's on the road to the churchyard if ever I saw threatened consumption yet. Joyce, that's my sister, is in a flaring temper when I say it. She thinks it will get strong again."

Lady Isabel passed her handkerchief across her moist brow.

"Which of the children is it?" she faintly asked. "Isabel?"

"Isabel!" retorted Afy. "Who's Isabel?"

"The eldest child, I mean; Miss Isabel Carlyle."

"There's no Isabel. There's Lucy. She's the only daughter."

"When I knew them, there was only one daughter; the other two were boys; I remember quite well that she was called Isabel."

"Stay," said Afy; "now you speak of it, what was it that I heard? It was Wilson told me, I recollect she's the nurse. Why, the very night that his wife went away Mr. Carlyle gave orders that the child in future should be called Lucy, her second name. No wonder," added Afy, violently indignant, "that he could no longer endure the sound of her mother's or suffer the child to bear it."

"No wonder," murmured Lady Isabel. "Which child is it that's ill?"

"It's William, the eldest boy. He is not to say ill, but he is as thin as a herring, with an unnaturally bright look on his cheek, and a glaze upon his eye. Joyce says that his cheeks are no brighter than his mother's were, but I know better. Folks in health don't have those brilliant colors."

"Did you ever see Lady Isabel?" she asked, in a low tone.

"Not I," returned Afy; "I should have thought it demeaning. One does not care to be brought into contact with that sort of misdoing lot, you know, Madame Vine."

"There as another one, a little boy Archibald, I think, his name was. Is he well?"

"Oh, the troublesome youngster! He is as sturdy as a Turk. No fear of his going into consumption. He is the very image of Mr. Carlyle, is that child. I say though, madame," continued Afy, changing the subject unceremoniously, "if you were stopping at West Lynne, perhaps you heard some wicked mischiefmaking stories concerning me?"

"I believe I did hear your name mentioned. I cannot charge my memory now with the particulars."

"My father was murdered you must have heard of that?"

"Yes, I recollect so far."

"He was murdered by a chap called Richard Hare, who decamped instant. Perhaps you know the Hares also? Well, directly after the funeral I left West Lynne; I could not bear the place, and I stopped away. And what do you suppose they said of me? That I had gone after Richard Hare. Not that I knew they were saying it, or I should pretty soon have been back and given them the length of my tongue. But now I just ask you, as a lady, Madame Vine, whether a more infamous accusation was ever pitched upon?"

"And you had not gone after him?"

"No; that I swear," passionately returned Afy. "Make myself a companion of my father's murderer! If Mr. Calcraft, the hangman, finished off a few of those West Lynne scandalmongers, it might be a warning to the others. I said so to Mr. Carlyle."

"To Mr. Carlyle?" repeated Lady Isabel, hardly conscious that she did repeat it.

"He laughed, I remember, and said that would not stop the scandal. The only one who did not misjudge me was himself; he did not believe that I was with Richard Hare, but he was ever noblejudging was Mr. Carlyle."

"I suppose you were in a situation?"

Afy coughed.

"To be sure. More than one. I lived as companion with an old lady, who so valued me that she left me a handsome legacy in her will. I lived two years with the Countess of Mount Severn."

"With the Countess of Mount Severn!" echoed Lady Isabel, surprised into the remark. "Why, sheshewas related to Mr. Carlyle's wife. At least Lord Mount Severn was."

"Of course; everybody knows that. I was living there at the time the business happened. Didn't the countess pull Lady Isabel to pieces! She and Miss Levison used to sit, cant, cant all day over it. Oh, I assure you I know all about it, just as much as Joyce did. Have you got that headache, that you are leaning on your hand?"

"Headache and heartache both," she might have answered.

Miss Afy resumed.

"So, after the flattering compliment West Lynne had paid to me, you may judge I was in no hurry to go back to it, Madame Vine. And if I had not found that Mrs. Latimer's promised to be an excellent place, I should have left it, rather than be marshaled there. But I have lived it down; I should like to hear any of them fibbing against me now. Do you know that blessed Miss Corny?"

"I have seen her."

"She shakes her head and makes eyes at me still. But so she would at an angel; a crossgrained old cockatoo!"

"Is she still at East Lynne?"

"Not she, indeed. There would be drawn battles between her and Mrs. Carlyle, if she were."

A dart, as of an icebolt, seemed to arrest the blood in Lady Isabel's veins.

"Mrs. Carlyle," she faltered. "Who is Mrs. Carlyle?"

"Mr. Carlyle's wife who should she be?"

The rushing blood leaped on now fast and fiery.

"I did not know he had married again."

"He has been married nowoh, getting on for fifteen months; a twelvemonth last June. I went to the church to see them married. Wasn't there a cram! She looked beautiful that day."

Lady Isabel laid her hand upon her breast. But for that delectable "loose jacket," Afy might have detected her bosom rise and fall. She steadied her voice sufficiently to speak.

"Did he marry Barbara Hare?"

"You may take your oath of that," said Afy. "If folks tell true, there was love scenes between them before he ever thought of Lady Isabel. I had that from Wilson, and she ought to know, for she lived at the Hares'. Another thing is saidonly you must just believe one word of West Lynne talk, and disbelieve tenthat if Lady Isabel had not died, Mr. Carlyle never would have married again; he had scruples. Half a dozen were given him by report; Louisa Dobede for one, and Mary Pinner for another. Such nonsense! Folks might have made sure it would be Barbara Hare. There's a baby now."

"Is there?" was the faint answer.

"A beautiful boy three or four months old. Mrs. Carlyle is not a little proud of him. She worships her husband."

"Is she kind to the first children?"

"For all I know. I don't think she has much to do with them. Archibald is in the nursery, and the other two are mostly with the governess."

"I wonder," cried the governess, "how the tidings of Lady Isabel's death were received at East Lynne?"

"I don't know anything about that. They held it as a jubilee, I should say, and set all the bells in town to ring, and feasted the men upon legs of mutton and onion sauce afterward. I should, I know. A brute animal, deaf and dumb, such as a cow or a goose, clings to its offspring, but she abandoned hers. Are you going in Madame Vine?"

"I must go in now. Good evening to you."

She had sat till she could sit no longer; her very heartstrings were wrung, and she might not rise up in defence of herself. Defence? Did she not deserve more, ten thousand times more reproach than had met her ears now? This girl did not say of her half what the world must say.

"There is a governess?"

"Nearly the first thing that Mr. Carlyle did, after his wife's moonlight flitting, was to seek a governess, and she has been there ever since. She is going to leave now; to be married, Joyce told me."

"Are you much at East Lynne?"

Afy shook her head. "I am not going much, I can tell you, where I am looked down upon. Mrs. Carlyle does not favor me. She knew that her brother Richard would have given his hand to marry me, and she resents it. Not such a great catch, I'm sure, that Dick Hare, even if he had gone on right," continued Afy, somewhat after the example of the fox, looking at the unattainable grapes. "He had no brains to speak of; and what he had were the color of a peacock's tailgreen."

To bed at the usual time, but not to sleep. What she had heard only increased her vain, insensate longing. A stepmother at East Lynne, and one of her children gliding on to death! Oh! To be with them! To see them once again! To purchase that boon, she would willingly forfeit all the rest of her existence.

Her frame was fevered; the bed was fevered; and she arose and paced the room. This state of mind would inevitably bring on bodily illness, possibly an attack of the brain. She dreaded that; for there was no telling what she might reveal in her delirium. Her temples were throbbing, her heart was beating, and she once more threw herself upon the bed, and pressed the pillow down upon her forehead. There is no doubt that the news of Mr. Carlyle's marriage helped greatly the excitement. She did not pray to die, but she did wish that death might come to her.

What would have been the ending, it is impossible to say, but a strange turn in affairs came; one of those wonderful coincidences sometimes, but not often to be met with. Mrs. Crosby appeared in Madame Vine's room after breakfast, and gave her an account of Helena's projected marriage. She then apologized, the real object of her visit, for dispensing so summarily with madame's services, but had reason to hope that she could introduce her to another situation. Would madame have any objection to take one in England? Madame was upon the point of replying that she should not choose to enter one in England, when Mrs. Crosby stopped her, saying that she would call in Mrs. Latimer, who could tell her about it better than she could.

Mrs. Latimer came in, all eagerness and volubility. "Ah, my dear madame," she exclaimed, "you would be fortunate indeed if you were to get into this family. The nicest people they are; he so liked and respected; she so pretty and engaging. A most desirable situation, too, treated as a lady, and all things comfortable. There's only one pupil, a girl; one of the little boys, I believe, goes in for an hour or two, but that's not much; and the salary's seventy guineas. They are friends of mine; the Carlyles; such a beautiful place they live at East Lynne."

The Carlyles! East Lynne! Go governess there? Lady Isabel's breath was taken away.

"They are parting with their governess," continued Mrs. Latimer, "and when I was there, a day or two before I started on my tour to Germany, Mrs. Carlyle said to me, 'I suppose you could not pick us up a desirable governess for Lucy; one who is mistress of French and German.' She spoke in a half joking tone, but I feel sure that were I to write word I had found one desirable, it would give her pleasure. Now, Mrs. Crosby tells me your French is quite that of a native, Madame Vine, that you read and speak German well, and that your musical abilities are excellent. I think you would be just the one to suit; and I have no doubt I could get you the situation. What do you say?"

What could she say? Her brain was in a whirl.

"I am anxious to find you one if I can," put in Mrs. Crosby. "We have been much pleased with you, and I should like you to be desirably placed. As Mrs. Latimer is so kind as to interest herself, it appears to me an opportunity that should not be missed."

"Shall I write to Mrs. Carlyle?" rejoined Mrs. Latimer.

Lady Isabel roused herself, and so far cleared her intellect as to understand and answer the question. "Perhaps you would kindly give me until tomorrow morning to consider on it? I had not intended to take a situation in England."

A battle she had with herself that day. At one moment it seemed to her that Providence must have placed this opportunity in her way that she might see her children, in her desperate longing; at another, a voice appeared to whisper that it was a wily, dangerous temptation flung across her path, one which it was her duty to resist and flee from. Then came another phase of the picture how should she bear to see Mr. Carlyle the husband of another to live in the same house with them, to witness his attentions, possibly his caresses? It might be difficult; but she could force and school her heart to endurance. Had she not resolved, in her first bitter repentance, to take up her cross daily, and bear it? No, her own feelings, let them be wrung as they would, should not prove the obstacle.

Evening came, and she had not decided. She passed another night of pain, of restlessness, of longing for her children; this intense longing appeared to be

overmastering all her powers of mind and body. The temptation at length proved too strong; the project having been placed before her covetous eyes could not be relinquished, and she finally consented to go. "What is it that would keep me away?" she argued. "The dread of discovery? Well if that comes it must; they could not hang me or kill me. Deeper humiliation than ever would be my portion when they drive me from East Lynne with abhorrence and ignominy, as a soldier is drummed out of his regiment; but I could bear that as I must bear the rest and I can shrink under the hedge and lay myself down to die. Humiliation for me? No; I will not put that in comparison with seeing and being with my children."

Mrs. Latimer wrote to Mrs. Carlyle. She had met with a governess; one desirable in every way who could not fail to suit her views precisely. She was a Madame Vine, English by birth, but the widow of a Frenchman; a Protestant, a thorough gentlewoman, an efficient linguist and musician, and competent to her duties in all ways. Mrs. Crosby, with whom she had lived two years regarded her as a treasure, and would not have parted with her but for Helena's marriage with a German nobleman. "You must not mind her appearance," went on the letter. "She is the oddestlooking person; wears spectacles, caps, enormous bonnets, and has a great scar on her mouth and chin; and though she can't be more than thirty, her hair is gray; she is also slightly lame. But, understand you, she is a lady, with it all, and looks one."

When this description reached East Lynne, Barbara laughed at it as she read it aloud to Mr. Carlyle. He laughed also.

"It is well governesses are not chosen according to their looks," he said, "or I fear Madame Vine would stand but a poor chance."

They resolved to engage her, and word went back to that effect.

A strangely wild tumult filled Lady Isabel's bosom. She first of all hunted her luggage over, her desk, everything belonging to her lest any mark on the linen might be there, which could give a clue to her former self. The bulk of her luggage remained in Paris, warehoused, where it had been sent ere she quitted Grenoble. She next saw to her wardrobe, making it still more unlike anything she had used to wear; her caps, save that they were simple, and fitted closely to the face, nearly rivaled those of Miss Carlyle. Her handwriting she had been striving for years to change the character of, and had so far succeeded that none would now take it for Lady Isabel Vane's. But her hand shook as she wrote to Mrs. Carlyle who had written to her. She was writing to Mr. Carlyle's wife! And in the capacity of a subordinate! How would she like to live with her as a subordinate, as servant it may be said where she had once reigned, the idolized lady? She must bear that, as she must bear all else. Hot tears came into her eyes, with a gush, as they fell on the signature, "Barbara Carlyle."

All ready, she sat down and waited the signal of departure; but that was not to be yet. It was finally arranged that she should travel to England and to West Lynne with Mrs. Latimer, and that lady would not return until October. Lady Isabel could only fold her hands and strive for patience.

But the day did come it actually did; and Mrs. Latimer, Lady Isabel, and Afy quitted Stalkenberg. Mrs. Latimer would only travel slowly, and the impatient, fevered woman thought the journey would never end.

"You have been informed, I think, of the position of these unhappy children that you are going to," Mrs. Latimer observed to her one day. "You must not speak to them of their mother. She left them."

"Yes."

"It is never well to speak to children of a mother who has disgraced them. Mr. Carlyle would not like it; and I dare say they are taught to forget her, and to regard Mrs. Carlyle as their only mother."

Her aching heart had to assent to all.

It was a foggy afternoon, gray with the coming twilight, when they arrived at West Lynne.

Mrs. Latimer believing the governess was a novice in England, kindly put her into a fly, and told the driver his destination. "Au revoir, madame," she said, "and good luck to you."

Once more she was whirling along the familiar road. She saw Justice Hare's house, she saw other marks which she knew well; and once more she saw East Lynne, the dear old house, for the fly had turned into the avenue. Lights were moving in the windows; it looked gay and cheerful, a contrast to her. Her heart was sick with expectation, her throat was beating; and as the man thundered up with all the force of his one horse, and halted at the steps, her sight momentarily left her. Would Mr. Carlyle come to the fly to hand her out? She wished she had never undertaken the project, now, in the depth of her fear and agitation. The hall door was flung open, and there gushed forth a blaze of light.

Two menservants stood there. The one remained in the hall, the other advanced to the chaise. He assisted Lady Isabel to alight, and then busied himself with the luggage. As she ascended to the hall she recognized old Peter. Strange, indeed, did it seem not to say, "How are you, Peter?" but to meet him as a stranger. For a moment, she was at a

loss for words; what should she say, or ask, coming to her own home? Her manner was embarrassed, her voice low.

"Is Mrs. Carlyle within?"

"Yes, ma'am."

At that moment Joyce came forward to receive her. "It is Madame Vine, I believe," she respectfully said. "Please to step this way, madame."

But Lady Isabel lingered in the hall, ostensibly to see that her boxes came in right. Stephen was bringing them up in reality to gather a short respite, for Joyce might be about to usher her into the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle.

Joyce, however, did nothing of the sort. She merely conducted her to the gray parlor. A fire was burning in the grate, looking cheerful on the autumn night.

"This is your sittingroom, madame. What will you please to take? I will order it brought in while I show you your bedchamber."

"A cup of tea," answered Lady Isabel.

"Tea and some cold meat?" suggested Joyce. But Lady Isabel interrupted her.

"Nothing but tea and a little cold toast."

Joyce rang the bell, ordered the refreshment to be made ready, and then preceded Lady Isabel upstairs. On she followed her heart palpitating; past the rooms that used to be hers, along the corridor, toward the second staircase. The door of her old dressingroom stood open, and she glanced in with a yearning look. No, never more, never more could it be hers; she had put it from her by her own free act and deed. Not less comfortable did it look now than in former days, but it had passed into another's occupancy. The fire threw its blaze on the furniture. There were the little ornaments on the large dressingtable, as they used to be in her time; and the cut glass of crystal essencebottles was glittering in the firelight. On the sofa lay a shawl and a book, and on the bed a silk dress, as thrown there after being taken off. No, those rooms were not for her now, and she followed Joyce up the other staircase. The bedroom she was shown to was commodious and well furnished. It was the one Miss Carlyle had occupied when she, Isabella, had been taken a bride to East Lynne, though that lady had subsequently quitted it for one on the lower floor. Joyce put down the waxlight she carried and looked round.

"Would you like a fire lighted here, madame, for tonight? Perhaps it will feel welcome after travelling."

"Oh, no, thank you," was the answer.

Stephen, with somebody to help him, was bringing up the luggage. Joyce directed him where to place it, telling him to uncord the boxes. That done, the man left the room, and Joyce turned to Lady Isabel, who had stood like a statue, never so much as attempting to remove her bonnet.

"Can I do anything for you, madame?" she asked.

Lady Isabel declined. In the first moments of her arrival she was dreading detection how was it possible that she should not and she feared Joyce's keen eyes more, perhaps than she feared any others. She was only wishing that the girl would go down.

"Should you want anything, please to ring, and Hannah will come up," said Joyce, preparing to retire. "She is the maid who waits upon the gray parlor, and will do anything you like up here."

Joyce had quitted the room, and Lady Isabel had got her bonnet off, when the door opened again. She hastily thrust it on, somewhat after the fashion of Richard Hare's rushing on his hat and false whiskers. It was Joyce.

"Do you think you shall find your way down alone, madame?"

"Yes, I can do that," she answered. Find her way in that house!

Lady Isabel slowly took her things off. What was the use of lingeringshe must meet their eyes, sooner or later. Though, in truth, there was little, if any, fear of her detection, so effectually was she disguised by nature's altering hand, or by art's. It was with the utmost difficulty she kept tranquil. Had the tears once burst forth, they would have gone on to hysterics, without the possibility of control. The coming home again to East Lynne! Oh, it was indeed a time of agitation, terrible, painful agitation, and none can wonder at it. Shall I tell you what she did? Yes, I will at the expense of ridicule. She knelt down by the bed and prayed for courage to go through the task she had undertaken; prayed for selfcontrol even she, the sinful, who had quitted that house under circumstances notorious. But I am not sure that this mode of return to it was an expedition precisely calculated to call down a blessing.

There was no excuse for lingering longer, and she descended, the waxlight in her hand. Everything was ready in the gray parlortheteatray on the table, the small urn hissing away, the teacaddy in proximity to it. A silver rack of dry toast, butter, and a hot muffin covered with a small silver cover. The things were to her sight as old facethe rack, the small cover, the butterdish, the teaserviceshe remembered them all; not the urna copper oneshe had no recollection of that. It had possibly been bought for the use of the

governess, when a governess came into use at East Lynne. Could she have given herself leisure to reflect on the matter, she might have told, by the signs observable in the short period she had been in the house, that governesses of East Lynne were regarded as gentlewomen treated well and liberally. Yes; for East Lynne owned Mr. Carlyle for its master.

She made the tea, and sat down with what appetite she might, her brain, her thoughts, all in a chaos together. She wondered whether Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle were at dinner; she wondered in what part of the house were the children. She heard bells ring now and then; she heard servants cross and recross the hall. Her meal over, she rang her own.

A neat-looking, goodtempered maid answered it, Hannah, who, as Joyce had informed her, waited upon the gray parlor, and was at her, the governess's, especial command. She took away the things, and then Lady Isabel sat on alone. For how long, she scarcely knew, when a sound caused her heart to beat as if it would burst its bounds, and she started from her chair like one who has received an electric shock.

It was nothing to be startled at either for ordinary people for it was but the sound of children's voices. Her children! Were they being brought in to her? She pressed her hand upon her heaving bosom.

No; they were but traversing the hall, and the voices faded away up the wide staircase. Perhaps they had been in to desert, as in the old times, and were now going up to bed. She looked at her new watch half past seven.

Her new watch. The old one had been changed away for it. All her trinkets had been likewise parted with, sold or exchanged away, lest they should be recognized at East Lynne. Nothing whatever had she kept except her mother's miniature and a small golden cross, set with its seven emeralds. Have you forgotten that cross? Francis Levison accidentally broke it for her, the first time they ever met. If she had looked upon the breaking of that cross which her mother had enjoined her to set such store by, as an evil omen, at the time of the accident, how awfully had the subsequent events seemed to bear her fancy out! These two articles the miniature and the cross she could not bring her mind to part with. She had sealed them up, and placed them in the remotest spot of her dressingcase, away from all chance of public view. Peter entered.

"My mistress says, ma'am, she would be glad to see you, if you are not too tired. Will you please to walk into the drawingroom?"

A mist swam before her eyes. Was she about to enter the presence of Mrs. Carlyle? Had the moment really come? She moved to the door, which Peter held open. She turned her head from the man, for she could feel how ashy white were her face and lips.

"Is Mrs. Carlyle alone?" she asked, in a subdued voice. The most indirect way she could put the question, as to whether Mr. Carlyle was there.

"Quite alone, ma'am. My master is dining out today. Madame Vine, I think?" he added, waiting to announce her, as, the hall traversed, he laid his hand on the drawingroom door.

"Madame Vine," she said, correcting him. For Peter had spoken the name, Vine, broadly, according to our English habitude; she set him right, and pronounced it a la mode Francaise.

"Madame Vine, ma'am," quoth Peter to his mistress, as he ushered in Lady Isabel.

The old familiar drawingroom; its large handsome proportions, the well arranged furniture, its bright chandelier! It all came back to her with a heartsickness. No longer her drawingroom, that she should take pride in it; she had flung it away from her when she flung away the rest.

Seated under the blaze of the chandelier was Barbara. Not a day older did she look than when Lady Isabel had first seen her at the churchyard gates, when she had inquired of her husband who was that pretty girl. "Barbara Hare," he answered. Ay. She was Barbara Hare then, but now she was Barbara Carlyle; and she, she, who had been Isabel Carlyle, was Isabel Vane again! Oh, woe! Woe!

Inexpressibly more beautiful, looked Barbara than Lady Isabel had ever seen her or else she fancied it. Her evening dress was of pale skyblue no other color suited Barbara so well, and there was no other she was so fond of and on her fair neck there was a gold chain, and on her arms were gold bracelets. Her pretty features were attractive as ever; her cheeks were flushed; her blue eyes sparkled, and her light hair was rich and abundant. A contrast, her hair, to that of the worn woman opposite to her.

Barbara came forward, her hand stretched out with a kindly greeting. "I hope you are not very much tired after your journey?"

Lady Isabel murmured something she did not know what and pushed the chair set for her as much as possible into the shade.

"You are not ill, are you?" uttered Barbara, noting the intensely pale face as much as could be seen of it for the cap and the spectacles.

"Not ill," was the low answer; "only a little fatigued."

"Would you prefer that I spoke with you in the morning? You would like, possibly, to retire to bed at once."

But Lady Isabel declined. Better get the interview over by candlelight than by daylight.

"You look so very pale, I feared you might be ill."

"I am generally pale; sometimes remarkably so; but my health is good."

"Mrs. Latimer wrote us word that you would be quite sure to suit us," freely spoke Barbara. "I hope you will; and that you may find your residence here agreeable. Have you lived much in England?"

"In the early portion of my life."

"And you have lost your husband and your children? Stay. I beg your pardon if I am making a mistake; I think Mrs. Latimer did mention children."

"I have lost them," was the faint, quiet response.

"Oh, but it must be terrible grief when children die!" exclaimed Barbara, clasping her hands in emotion. "I would not lose my babe for the world! I could not part with him."

"Terrible grief, and hard to bear," outwardly assented Lady Isabel. But in her heart she was thinking that death was not the worst kind of parting. There was another far more dreadful. Mrs. Carlyle began to speak of the children she was to take charge of.

"You are no doubt aware that they are not mine; Mrs. Latimer would tell you. They are the children of Mr. Carlyle's first wife."

"And Mr. Carlyle's," interrupted Lady Isabel. What in the world made her put in that? She wondered herself the moment the words were out of her mouth. A scarlet streak flushed her cheeks, and she remembered that there must be no speaking upon impulse at East Lynne.

"Mr. Carlyle's, of course," said Barbara, believing Madame Vine had asked the question. "Their position the girl's in particular is a sad one, for their mother left them. Oh, it was a shocking business!"

"She is dead, I hear," said Lady Isabel hoping to turn the immediate point of conversation. Mrs. Carlyle, however, continued as though she had not heard her.

"Mr. Carlyle married Lady Isabel Vane, the late Lord Mount Severn's daughter. She was attractive and beautiful, but I do not fancy she cared very much for her husband. However that may have been, she ran away from him."

"It was very sad," observed Lady Isabel, feeling that she was expected to say something. Besides, she had her role to play.

"Sad? It was wicked it was infamous!" returned Mrs. Carlyle, giving way to some excitement. "Of all men living, of all husbands, Mr. Carlyle least deserved such a requital. You will say so when you come to know. And the affair altogether was a mystery; for it never was observed or suspected by any one that Lady Isabel entertained a liking for another. It was Francis Levison she eloped with Sir Francis he is now. He had been staying at East Lynne, but no one detected any undue intimacy between them, not even Mr. Carlyle. To him, as others, her conduct must always remain a mystery."

Madame appeared to be occupied with her spectacles, setting them straight. Barbara continued,

"Of course the disgrace is reflected on the children, and always will be; the shame of having a divorced mother"

"Is she not dead?" interrupted Lady Isabel.

"She is dead oh, yes. But they will not be the less pointed at, the girl especially, as I say. They allude to their mother now and then in conversation, Wilson tells me; but I would recommend you, Madame Vine, not to encourage them in that. They had better forget her."

"Mr. Carlyle would naturally wish them to do so."

"Most certainly. There is little doubt that Mr. Carlyle would blot out the recollection of her, were it possible. But unfortunately she was the children's mother, and, for that, there's no help. I trust you will be able to instill principles into the little girl which will keep her from a like fate."

"I will try," answered Lady Isabel, with more fervor than she had yet spoken. "Do you have the children much with you, may I inquire?"

"No. I never was fond of being troubled with children. When my own grow up into childhood I shall deem the nursery and the schoolroom the fitter place for them. What I trust I shall never give up to another, will be the training of my children," pursued Barbara. "Let the offices properly pertaining to a nurse be performed by the nurse of course, taking care that she is thoroughly to be depended on. Let her have the trouble of the children, their noise, their romping; in short, let the nursery be her place, and the children's. But I hope that I shall never fail to gather my children round me daily, at stated and convenient periods, for higher purposes; to instill into them Christian and moral duties; to strive to teach them how best to fulfil the obligations of life. This is a

mother's task as I understand the question let her do this work well, and the nurse can attend to the rest. A child should never hear aught from his mother's lips but persuasive gentleness; and this becomes impossible if she is very much with her children."

Lady Isabel silently assented. Mrs. Carlyle's views were correct ones.

"When I first came to East Lynne I found Miss Manning, the governess, was doing everything necessary for Mr. Carlyle's children in the way of the training that I speak of," resumed Barbara. "She had them with her for a short period every morning, even the little one; I saw that it was all right, therefore did not interfere. Since she left it is nearly a month now I have taken them myself. We were sorry to part with Miss Manning; she suited very well. But she has been long engaged, it turns out, to an officer in the navy, and now they are to be married. You will have the entire charge of the little girl; she will be your companion out of school hours; did you understand that?"

"I am quite ready and willing to undertake it," said Lady Isabel, her heart fluttering. "Are the children well? Do they enjoy good health?"

"Quite so. They had the measles in the spring, and the illness left a cough upon William, the eldest boy. Mr. Wainwright says he will outgrow it."

"He has it still, then?"

"At night and morning. They went last week to spend the day with Miss Carlyle, and were a little late in returning home. It was foggy, and the boy coughed dreadfully after he came in. Mr. Carlyle was so concerned that he left the dinner table and went up to the nursery; he gave Joyce strict orders that the child should never again be out in the evening so long as the cough was upon him. We had never heard him cough like that."

"Do you fear consumption?" asked Lady Isabel, in a low tone.

"I do not fear that, or any other incurable disease for them," answered Barbara. "I think, with Mr. Wainwright, that time will remove the cough. The children come of a healthy stock on the father's side; and I have no reason to think they do not on their mother's. She died young you will say. Ay, but she did not die of disease; her death was the result of accident. Mrs. Latimer wrote us word you were of gentle birth and breeding," she continued, changing the subject of conversation. "I am sure you will excuse my speaking of these particulars," Barbara added, in a tone of apology, "but this is our first interview our preliminary interview, it may in a measure be called, for we could not say much by letter."

"I was born and reared a gentlewoman," answered Lady Isabel.

"Yes, I am sure of it; there is no mistaking the tone of a gentlewoman," said Barbara. "How sad it is when pecuniary reverses fall upon us! I dare say you never thought to go out as a governess."

A half smile positively crossed her lips. She think to go out as a governess!the Earl of Mount Severn's only child! "Oh, no, never," she said, in reply.

"Your husband, I fear, could not leave you well off. Mrs. Latimer said something to that effect."

"When I lost him, I lost all," was the answer. And Mrs. Carlyle was struck with the wailing pain betrayed in the tone. At that moment a maid entered.

"Nurse says the baby is undressed, and quite ready for you ma'am," she said, addressing her mistress.

Mrs. Carlyle rose, but hesitated as she was moving away.

"I will have the baby here tonight," she said to the girl. "Tell nurse to put a shawl round him and bring him down. It is the hour for my baby's supper," she smiled, turning to Lady Isabel. "I may as well have him here for once, as Mr. Carlyle is out. Sometimes I am out myself, and then he has to be fed."

"You do not stay indoors for the baby, then?"

"Certainly not. If I and Mr. Carlyle have to be out in the evening, baby gives way. I should never give up my husband for my baby; never, never, dearly as I love him."

The nurse came inWilson. She unfolded a shawl, and placed the baby on Mrs. Carlyle's lap. A proud, fine, fair young baby, who reared his head and opened wide his great blue eyes, and beat his arms at the lights of the chandelier, as no baby of nearly six months ever did yet. So thought Barbara. He was in his clean white nightgown and nightcap, with their pretty crimped frills and border; altogether a pleasant sight to look upon. She had once sat in that very chair, with a baby as fair upon her own knee; but all that was past and gone. She leaned her hot head upon her hand, and a rebellious sigh of envy went forth from her aching heart.

Wilson, the curious, was devouring her with her eyes. Wilson was thinking she never saw such a mortal fright as the new governess. Them blue spectacles capped everything, she decided; and what on earth made her tie up her throat in that fashion? As well wear a man's color and stock at once! If her teaching was no better than her looks, Miss Lucy might as well go to the parish charity school!

"Shall I wait, ma'am?" demurely asked Wilson, her investigation being concluded.

"No," said Mrs. Carlyle. "I will ring."

Baby was exceedingly busy taking his supper. And of course, according to all baby precedent, he ought to have gone off into a sound sleep over it. But the supper concluded, and the gentleman seemed to have no more sleep in his eyes than he had before he began. He sat up, crowed at the lights, stretched out his hands for them, and set his mother at defiance, absolutely refusing to be hushed up.

"Do you wish to keep awake all night, you rebel?" cried Barbara, fondly looking on him.

A loud crow, by way of answer. Perhaps it was intended to intimate he did. She clasped him to her with a sudden gesture of rapture, a sound of love, and devoured his pretty face with kisses. Then she took him in her arms, putting him to sit upright, and approached Madame Vine.

"Did you ever see a more lovely child?"

"A fine baby, indeed," she constrained herself to answer; and she could have fancied it her own little Archibald over again when he was a baby. "But he is not much like you."

"He is the very image of my darling husband. When you see Mr. Carlyle" Barbara stopped, and bent her ear, as listening.

"Mr. Carlyle is probably a handsome man!" said poor Lady Isabel, believing that the pause was made to give her an opportunity of putting in an observation.

"He is handsome: but that is the least good about him. He is the most noble man! Revered, respected by everyone; I may say loved! The only one who could not appreciate him was his wife; and we must assume that she did not, by the ending that came. However she could leave him how she could even look at another, after calling Mr. Carlyle husband will always be a marvel to those who know him."

A bitter groan and it nearly escaped her lips.

"That certainly is the pony carriage," cried Barbara, bending her ear again. "If so, how very early Mr. Carlyle is home! Yes, I am sure it is the sound of the wheels."

How Lady Isabel sat she scarcely knew; how she concealed her trepidation she never would know. A pause: an entrance to the hall; Barbara, baby in arms, advanced to the drawingroom door, and a tall form entered. Once more Lady Isabel was in the presence of her sometime husband.

He did not perceive that any one was present, and he bent his head and fondly kissed his wife. Isabel's jealous eyes were turned upon them. She saw Barbara's passionate,

lingering kiss in return, she heard her fervent, whispered greeting, "My darling!" and she watched him turn to press the same fond kisses on the rosy open lips of his child. Isabel flung her hand over her face. Had she bargained for this? It was part of the cross she had undertaken to carry, and she must bear it.

Mr. Carlyle came forward and saw her. He looked somewhat surprised. "Madame Vine," said Barbara; and he held out his hand and welcomed her in the same cordial, pleasant manner that his wife had done. She put her shaking hand into his; there was no help for it. Little thought Mr. Carlyle that that hand had been tenderly clasped in his a thousand times that it was the one pledged to him at the altar of Castle Marling.

She sat down on her chair again, unable to stand, feeling as though every drop of blood within her had left her body. It had certainly left her face. Mr. Carlyle made a few civil inquiries as to her journey, but she did not dare to raise her eyes to his, as she breathed forth the answers.

"You are at home soon, Archibald," said Barbara, addressing him. "I did not expect you so early. I did not think you could get away. Do you know what I was wishing today?" she continued. "Papa is going to London with Squire Pinner to see those new agricultural implements or whatever it is. They are sure to be away as much as three days. I was thinking if we could but persuade mamma to come to us for the time papa is to be away, it would be a delightful little change for her a break in her monotonous life."

"I wish you could," warmly spoke Mr. Carlyle. "Her life, since you left, is a monotonous one; though, in her gentle patience, she will not say so. It is a happy thought, Barbara, and I only hope it may be carried out. Mrs. Carlyle's mother is an invalid, and lonely, for she has no child at home with her now," he added, in a spirit of politeness, addressing himself to Madame Vine.

She simply bowed her head; trust herself to speak she did not. Mr. Carlyle scanned her face attentively, as she sat, her spectacles bent downward. She did not appear inclined to be sociable, and he turned to the baby, who was wider awake than ever.

"Young sir, I should like to know what brings you up, and here, at this hour."

"You may well ask," said Barbara. "I just had him brought down, as you were not here, thinking he would be asleep directly. And only look at him! no more sleep in his eyes than there is in mine."

She would have hushed him to her as she spoke, but the young gentleman stoutly repudiated it. He set up a half cry, and struggled his arms, and head free again, crowing the next moment most impudently. Mr. Carlyle took him.

"It is no use, Barbara; he is beyond your coaxing this evening." And he tossed the child in his strong arms, held him up to the chandelier, made him bob at the baby in the pierglass, until the rebel was in an ecstasy of delight. Finally he smothered his face with kisses, as Barbara had done. Barbara rang the bell.

Oh! Can you imagine what it was for Lady Isabel? So had he tossed, so had he kissed her children, she standing by, the fond, proud, happy mother, as Barbara was standing now. Mr. Carlyle came up to her.

"Are you fond of these little troubles, Madame Vine? This one is a fine fellow, they say."

"Very fine. What is his name?" she replied, by way of saying something.

"Arthur."

"Arthur Archibald," put in Barbara to Madame Vine. "I was vexed that his name could not be entirely Archibald, but that was already monopolized. Is that you, Wilson? I don't know what you'll do with him, but he looks as if he would not be asleep by twelve o'clock."

Wilson, with a fresh satisfying of her curiosity, by taking another prolonged stare from the corner of her eyes at Madame Vine, received the baby from Mr. Carlyle, and departed with him.

Madame Vine rose. "Would they excuse her?" she asked, in a low tone; "she was tired and would be glad to retire to rest."

"Of course. And anything she might wish in the way of refreshment, would she ring for?" Barbara shook hands with her, in her friendly way; and Mr. Carlyle crossed the room to open the door for her, and bowed her out with a courtly smile.

She went up to her chamber at once. To rest? Well, what think you? She strove to say to her lacerated and remorseful heart that the crossfar heavier though it was proving than anything she had imagined or pictured was only what she had brought upon herself, and must bear. Very true; but none of us would like such a cross to be upon our shoulders.

"Is she not droll looking?" cried Barbara, when she was alone with Mr. Carlyle. "I can't think why she wears those blue spectacles; it cannot be for her sight, and they are very disfiguring."

"She puts me in mind of" began Mr. Carlyle, in a dreamy tone.

"Of whom?"

"Her face, I mean," he said, still dreaming.

"So little can be seen of it," resumed Mrs. Carlyle. "Of whom does she put you in mind?"

"I don't know. Nobody in particular," returned he, rousing himself. "Let us have tea in, Barbara."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE YEARNING OF A BREAKING HEART.

At her bedroom door, the next morning, stood Lady Isabel, listening whether the coast was clear ere she descended to the gray parlor, for she had a shrinking dread of encountering Mr. Carlyle. When he was glancing narrowly at her face the previous evening she had felt the gaze, and it impressed upon her the dread of his recognition. Not only that; he was the husband of another; therefore it was not expedient that she should see too much of him, for he was far dearer to her than he had ever been.

Almost at the same moment there burst out of a remote room the nurseryan upright, fair, noble boy, of some five years old, who began careering along on the corridor, astride upon a hearthbroom. She did not need to be told it was her boy, Archibald; his likeness to Mr. Carlyle would have proclaimed it, even if her heart had not. In an impulse of unrestrainable tenderness, she seized the child, as he was galloping past her, and carried him into her room, broom and all.

"You must let me make acquaintance with you," she said to him by way of excuse. "I love little boys."

Love! Down she sat upon a low chair, the child held upon her lap, kissing him passionately, and the tears raining from her eyes. She could not have helped the tears had it been to save her life; she could as little have helped the kisses. Lifting her eyes, there stood Wilson, who had entered without ceremony. A sick feeling came over Lady Isabel: she felt as if she had betrayed herself. All that could be done now, was to make the best of it; to offer some lame excuse. What possessed her thus to forget herself?

"He did so put me in remembrance of my own children," she said to Wilson, gulping down her emotion, and hiding her tears in the best manner she could; whilst the astonished Archibald, released now, stood with his finger in his mouth and stared at her spectacles, his great blue eyes opened to their utmost width. "When we have lost children of our own, we are apt to love fondly all we come near."

Wilson, who stared only in a less degree than Archie, for she deemed the new governess had gone suddenly mad, gave some voluble assent, and turned her attention upon Archie.

"You naughty young monkey! How dare you rush out in that way with Sarah's hearthbroom? I'll tell you what it is, sir, you are getting a might deal too owdacious and rumbustical for the nursery. I shall speak to your mamma about it."

She seized hold of the child and shook him. Lady Isabel started forward, her hands up, her voice one of painful entreaty.

"Oh, don't, don't beat him! I cannot see him beaten."

"Beaten!" echoed Wilson; "if he got a good beating it would be all the better for him; but it's what he never does get. A little shake, or a tap, is all I must give; and it's not half enough. You wouldn't believe the sturdy impudence of that boy, madame; he runs riot, he does. The other two never gave a quarter of the trouble. Come along, you figure! I'll have a bolt put at the top of the nursery door; and if I did, he'd be for climbing up the doorpost to get at it."

The last sentence Wilson delivered to the governess, as she jerked Archie out of the room, along the passage, and into the nursery. Lady Isabel sat down with a wrung heart, a chafed spirit. Her own child! And she might not say to the servant, you shall not beat him.

She descended to the gray parlor. The two older children and breakfast were waiting; Joyce quitted the room when she entered it.

A graceful girl of eight years old, a fragile boy a year younger, both bearing her once lovely featuresher once bright and delicate complexionher large, soft brown eyes. How utterly her heart yearned to them; but there must be no scene like there had just been above. Nevertheless she stooped and kissed them bothone kiss each of impassioned fervor. Lucy was naturally silent, William somewhat talkative.

"You are our new governess," said he.

"Yes. We must be good friends."

"Why not!" said the boy. "We were good friends with Miss Manning. I am to go into Latin soonas soon as my cough's gone. Do you know Latin?"

"Nonot to teach it," she said, studiously avoiding all endearing epithets.

"Papa said you would be almost sure not to know Latin, for that ladies rarely did. He said he should send up Mr. Kane to teach me."

"Mr. Kane?" repeated Lady Isabel, the name striking upon her memory. "Mr. Kane, the musicmaster?"

"How did you know he was a musicmaster?" cried shrewd William. And Lady Isabel felt the red blood flush to her face at the unlucky admission she had made. It flushed deeper

at her own falsehood, as she muttered some evasive words about hearing of him from Mrs. Latimer.

"Yes, he is a musicmaster; but he does not get much money at it, and he teaches the classics as well. He has come up to teach us music since Miss Manning left; mamma said that we ought not to lose our lessons."

Mamma! How the word, applied to Barbara, grated on her ear.

"Whom does he teach?" she asked.

"Us two," replied William, pointing to his sister and himself.

"Do you always take bread and milk?" she inquired, perceiving that to be what they were eating.

"We get tired of it sometimes and then we have milk and water, and bread and butter, or honey; and then we take to bread and milk again. It's Aunt Cornelia who thinks we should eat bread and milk for breakfast. She says papa never had anything else when he was a boy."

Lucy looked up.

"Papa would give me an egg when I breakfasted with him," cried she, "and Aunt Cornelia said it was not good for me, but papa gave it to me all the same. I always had breakfast with him then."

"And why do you not now?" asked Lady Isabel.

"I don't know. I have not since mamma came."

The word "stepmother" rose up rebelliously in the heart of Lady Isabel. Was Mrs. Carlyle putting away the children from their father?

Breakfast over, she gathered them to her, asking them various questions about their studies, their hours of recreation, the daily routine of their lives.

"This is not the schoolroom, you know," cried William, when she made some inquiry as to their books.

"No?"

"The schoolroom is upstairs. This is for our meals, and for you in an evening."

The voice of Mr. Carlyle was heard at this juncture in the hall, and Lucy was springing toward the sound. Lady Isabel, fearful lest he might enter if the child showed herself, stopped her with a hurried hand.

"Stay here, Isabel."

"Her name's Lucy," said William, looking quickly up. "Why do you call her Isabel?"

"I thought I had heard her called Isabel," stammered the unfortunate lady, feeling quite confused with the errors she was committing.

"My name is Isabel Lucy," said the child; "but I don't know who could have told you, for I am never called Isabel. I have not been since since shall I tell you? since mamma went away," she concluded, dropping her voice. "Mamma that was, you know."

"Did she go?" cried Lady Isabel, full of emotion, and possessing a very faint idea of what she was saying.

"She was kidnapped," whispered Lucy.

"Kidnapped!" was the surprised answer.

"Yes, or she would not have gone. There was a wicked man on a visit to papa, and he stole her. Wilson said she knew he was a kidnapper before he took mamma. Papa said I was never to be called Isabel again, but Lucy. Isabel was mamma's name."

"How do you know papa said it?" dreamily returned Lady Isabel.

"I heard him. He said it to Joyce, and Joyce told the servants. I put only Lucy to my copies. I did put Isabel Lucy, but papa saw it one day, and he drew his pencil through Isabel, and told me to show it to Miss Manning. After that, Miss Manning let me put nothing but Lucy. I asked her why, and she told me papa preferred the name, and that I was not to ask questions."

She could not well stop the child, but every word was rending her heart.

"Lady Isabel was our very, very own mamma," pursued Lucy. "This mamma is not."

"Do you love this one as you did the other?" breathed Lady Isabel.

"Oh, I loved mamma I loved mamma!" uttered Lucy, clasping her hands. "But it's all over. Wilson said we must not love her any longer, and Aunt Cornelia said it. Wilson said, if she loved us she would not have gone away from us."

"Wilson said so?" resentfully spoke Lady Isabel.

"She said she need not let that man kidnap her. I am afraid he beat her, for she died. I lie in my bed at night, and wonder whether he did beat her, and what made her die. It was after she died that our new mamma came home. Papa said that she was to be our mamma in place of Lady Isabel and we were to love her dearly."

"Do you love her?" almost passionately asked Lady Isabel.

Lucy shook her head.

"Not as I loved mamma."

Joyce entered to show the way to the schoolroom, and they followed her upstairs. As Lady Isabel stood at the window, she saw Mr. Carlyle depart on foot on his way to the office. Barbara was with him, hanging fondly on his arm, about to accompany him to the park gates. So had she fondly hung, so had she accompanied him, in the days gone forever.

Barbara came into the schoolroom in the course of the morning, and entered upon the subject of their studies, the different allotted hours, some to play, some to work. She spoke in a courteous but decided tone, showing that she was the unmistakable mistress of the house and children, and meant to be. Never had Lady Isabel felt her position so keenly never did it so gall and fret her spirit; but she bowed to meek obedience. A hundred times that day did she yearn to hold the children to her heart, and a hundred times she had to repress the longing.

In a soft, damask dress, not unlike the color of the walls from which the room took its name, a cap of Honiton lace shading her delicate features, sat Mrs. Hare. The justice was in London with Squire Pinner, and Barbara had gone to the Grove and brought her mamma away in triumph. It was evening now, and Mrs. Hare was paying a visit to the gray parlor. Miss Carlyle had been dining there, and Lady Isabel, under plea of a violent headache, had begged to decline the invitation to take tea in the drawingroom, for she feared the sharp eyes of Miss Carlyle. Barbara, upon leaving the desserttable, went to the nursery, as usual, to her baby, and Mrs. Hare took the opportunity to go and sit a few minutes with the governess she feared the governess must be very lonely. Miss Carlyle, scorning usage and ceremony, had remained in the diningroom with Mr. Carlyle, a lecture for him, upon some defalcation or other most probably in store. Lady Isabel was alone. Lucy had gone to keep a birthday in the neighborhood, and William was in the nursery. Mrs. Hare found her in a sad attitude, her hands pressed upon her temples. She had not yet made acquaintance with her beyond a minute's formal introduction.

"I am sorry to hear you are not well, this evening," she gently said.

"Thank you. My head aches much" which was no false plea.

"I fear you must feel your solitude irksome. It is dull for you to be here all alone."

"I am so used to solitude."

Mrs. Hare sat down, and gazed with sympathy at the young, though somewhat strangelooking woman before her. She detected the signs of mental suffering on her face.

"You have seen sorrow," she uttered, bending forward, and speaking with the utmost sweetness.

"Oh, great sorrow!" burst from Lady Isabel, for her wretched fate was very palpable to her mind that evening, and the tone of sympathy rendered it nearly irrepressible.

"My daughter tells me that you have lost your children, and you have lost your fortune and position. Indeed I feel for you. I wish I could comfort you!"

This did not decrease her anguish. She completely lost all self control, and a gush of tears fell from her eyes.

"Don't pity me! Don't pity me dear Mrs. Hare! Indeed, it only makes endurance harder. Some of us," she added, looking up, with a sickly smile, "are born to sorrow."

"We are all born to it," cried Mrs. Hare. "I, in truth, have cause to say so. Oh, you know not what my position has been the terrible weight of grief that I have to bear. For many years, I can truly say that I have not known one completely happy moment."

"All do not have to bear this killing sorrow," said Lady Isabel.

"Rely upon it, sorrow of some nature does sooner or later come to all. In the brightest apparent lot on earth, dark days must mix. Not that there is a doubt but that it falls unequally. Some, as you observe, seem born to it, for it clings to them all their days; others are more favored as we reckon favor. Perhaps this great amount of trouble is no more than is necessary to take us to Heaven. You know the saying, 'Adversity hardens the heart, or it opens it to Paradise.' It may be that our hearts continue so hard, that the long continued life's trouble is requisite to soften them. My dear," Mrs. Hare added, in a lower tone, while the tears glistened on her pale cheeks, "there will be a blessed rest for the weary, when this toilsome life is ended; let us find comfort in that thought."

"Ay! Ay!" murmured Lady Isabel. "It is all that is left to me."

"You are young to have acquired so much experience of sorrow."

"We cannot estimate sorrow by years. We may live a whole lifetime of it in a single hour. But we generally bring ill fate upon ourselves," she continued, in a desperation of remorse; "as our conduct is, so will our happiness or misery be."

"Not always," sighed Mrs. Hare. "Sorrow, I grant you, does come all too frequently, from illdoing; but the worst is, the consequences of this illdoing fall upon the innocent as well as upon the guilty. A husband's errors will involve his innocent wife; parent's sins fall upon their children; children will break the hearts of their parents. I can truly say, speaking in all humble submission, that I am unconscious of having deserved the great sorrow which came upon me; that no act of mine invited it on; but though it has nearly killed me, I entertain no doubt that it is lined with mercy, if I could only bring my weak rebellious heart to look for it. You, I feel sure, have been equally undeserving."

She? Mrs. Hare marked not the flush of shame, the drooping of the eyelids.

"You have lost your little ones," Mrs. Hare resumed. "That is griefgreat grief; I would not underrate it; but, believe me, it is as nothing compared to the awful fate, should it ever fall upon you, of finding your children grow up and become that which makes you wish they had died in their infancy. There are times when I am tempted to regret that all my treasures are not in that other world; that they had not gone before me. Yes; sorrow is the lot of all."

"Surely, not of all," dissented Lady Isabel. "There are some bright lots on earth."

"There is not a lot but must bear its appointed share," returned Mrs. Hare. "Bright as it may appear, ay, and as it may continue to be for years, depend upon it, some darkness must overshadow it, earlier or later."

"Mr. and Mrs. Carlylewhat sorrow can there be in store for them?" asked Lady Isabel, her voice ringing with a strange sound, which Mrs. Hare noted, though she understood it not.

"Mrs. Carlyle's lot is bright," she said, a sweet smile illumining her features. "She loves her husband with an impassioned love; and he is worthy of it. A happy fate, indeed, is hers; but she must not expect to be exempted from sorrow. Mr. Carlyle has had his share of it," continued Mrs. Hare.

"Ah!"

"You have doubtless been made acquainted with his history. His first wife left him left home and her children. He bore it bravely before the world, but I know that it wrung his very heartstrings. She was his heart's sole idol."

"She? Not Barbara?"

The moment the word "Barbara" had escaped her lips, Lady Isabel, recollected herself. She was only Madame Vine, the governess; what would Mrs. Hare think of her familiarity?

Mrs. Hare did not appear to have noticed it; she was absorbed in the subject.

"Barbara?" she uttered; "certainly not. Had his first love been given to Barbara, he would have chosen her then. It was given to Lady Isabel."

"It is given his wife now?"

Mrs. Hare nearly laughed.

"Of course it is; would you wish it to be buried in the grave with the dead, and with one who was false to him? But, my dear, she was the sweetest woman, that unfortunate Lady Isabel. I loved her then, and I cannot help loving her still. Others blamed her, but I pitied. They were well matched; he so good and noble; she, so lovely and endearing."

"And she left him threw him to the winds with all his nobility and love!" exclaimed the poor governess, with a gesture of the hands that looked very much like despair.

"Yes. It will not do to talk of it is a miserable subject. How she could abandon such a husband, such children, was a marvel to many; but to none more than it was to me and my daughter. The false step though I feel almost ashamed to speak out the thought, lest it may appear to savor of triumph while it must have secured her own wretchedness, led to the happiness of my child; for it is certain Barbara would never love one as she loves Mr. Carlyle."

"It did secure wretchedness to her, you think?" cried Lady Isabel, her tone one of bitter mockery more than anything else.

Mrs. Hare was surprised at the question.

"No woman ever took that fatal step yet, without its entailing on her the most dire wretchedness," she replied. "It cannot be otherwise. And Lady Isabel was of a nature to feel remorse beyond common to meet it halfway. Refined, modest, with every feeling of an English gentlewoman, she was the very last, one would have thought, to act so. It was

as if she had gone away in a dream, not knowing what she was doing; I have thought so many a time. That terrible mental wretchedness and remorse did overtake her, I know."

"How did you know it? Did you hear it?" exclaimed Lady Isabel, her tone all too eager, had Mrs. Hare been suspicious. "Did he proclaim that Francis Levison? Did you hear it from him?"

Mrs. Hare, gentle Mrs. Hare, drew herself up, for the words grated on her feelings and on her pride. Another moment, and she was mild and kind again, for she reflected that the poor, sorrowful governess must have spoken without thought.

"I know not what Sir Francis Levison may have chose to proclaim," she said, "but you may be sure he would not be allowed opportunity to proclaim anything to me, or to any other friend of Mr. Carlyle's; nay, I should say, nor to any of the good and honorable. I heard it from Lord Mount Severn."

"From Lord Mount Severn?" repeated Lady Isabel. And she opened her lips to say something more, but closed them again.

"He was here on a visit in the summer; he stayed a fortnight. Lady Isabel was the daughter of the late earl perhaps you may not have known that. He Lord Mount Severn told me, in confidence, that he had sought out Lady Isabel when the man, Levison, left her; he found her sick, poor, brokenhearted, in some remote French town, utterly borne down with remorse and repentance."

"Could it be otherwise?" sharply asked Lady Isabel.

"My dear, I have said it could not. The very thought of her deserted children would entail it, if nothing she did. There was a baby born abroad," added Mrs. Hare, dropping her voice, "an infant in its cradle, Lord Mount Severn said; but that child, we knew, could only bring pain and shame."

"True," issued from her trembling lips.

"Next came her death; and I cannot but think it was sent to her in mercy. I trust she was prepared for it, and had made her peace with God. When all else is taken from us, we turn to him; I hope she had learned to find the Refuge."

"How did Mr. Carlyle receive the news of her death?" murmured Lady Isabel, a question which had been often in her thoughts.

"I cannot tell; he made no outward sign either of satisfaction or grief. It was too delicate a subject for any one to enter upon with him, and most assuredly he did not enter upon

it himself. After he was engaged to my child, he told me he should never have married during Lady Isabel's life."

"From the remains of affection?"

"I should think not. I inferred it to be from conscientious scruples. All his affection is given to his present wife. There is no doubt that he loves her with a true, a fervent, a lasting love: though there may have been more romantic sentiment in the early passion felt for Lady Isabel. Poor thing! She gave up a sincere heart, a happy home."

Ay, poor thing! She had very nearly wailed forth her vain despair.

"I wonder whether the drawingroom is tenanted yet," smiled Mrs. Hare, breaking a pause which had ensued. "If so I suppose they will be expecting me there."

"I will ascertain for you," said Lady Isabel, speaking in the impulse of the moment; for she was craving an instant to herself, even though it were but in the next hall.

She quitted the gray parlor and approached the drawingroom. Not a sound came from it; and, believing it was empty, she opened the door and looked cautiously in.

Quite empty. The fire blazed, the chandelier was lighted, but nobody was enjoying the warmth or the light. From the inner room, however, came the sound of the piano, and the tones of Mr. Carlyle's voice. She recognized the chords of the music they were those of the accompaniment to the song he had so loved when she sang it him. Who was about to sing it to him now?

Lady Isabel stole across the drawingroom to the other door, which was ajar. Barbara was seated at the piano, and Mr. Carlyle stood by her, his arm on her chair, and bending his face on a level with hers, possibly to look at the music. So once had stolen, so once had peeped the unhappy Barbara, to hear this selfsame song. She had been his wife then; she had craved, and received his kisses when it was over. Their positions were reversed.

Barbara began. Her voice had not the brilliant power of Lady Isabel's, but it was a sweet and pleasant voice to listen to.

"When other lips and other hearts

 Their tales of love shall tell,

In language whose excess imparts

 The power they feel so well,

There may, perhaps, in such a scene,

Some recollection be,

Of days that have as happy been

And you'll remember me."

Days that had as happy been! Ay! did he remember her? Did a thought of her, his first and best love, flit across him, as the words fell on his ear? Did a past vision of the time when she had sat there and sung it to him arouse his heart to even momentary recollection?

Terribly, indeed, were their positions reversed; most terribly was she feeling it. And by whose act and will had the change been wrought? Barbara was now the cherished wife, East Lynne's mistress. And what was she? Not even the courted, welcomed guest of an hour, as Barbara had been; but an interloper; a criminal woman who had thrust herself into the house; her act, in doing so, not justifiable, her position a most false one. Was it right, even if she did succeed in remaining undiscovered, that she and Barbara should dwell in the same habitation, Mr. Carlyle being in it? Did she deem it to be right? No, she did not; but one act of illdoing entails more. These thoughts were passing through her mind as she stood there, listening to the song; stood there as one turned to stone, her throbbing temples pressed against the door's pillar.

The song was over, and Barbara turned to her husband, a whole world of love in her bright blue eyes. He laid his hand upon her head; Lady Isabel saw that, but she would not wait to see the caress that most probably followed it. She turned and crossed the room again, her hands clasped tightly on her bosom, her breath catching itself in hysterical sobs. Miss Carlyle was entering the hall. They had not yet met, and Lady Isabel swept meekly past her with a hurried courtesy. Miss Carlyle spoke, but she dared not answer, to wait would have been to betray herself.

Sunday came, and that was the worst of all. In the old East Lynne pew at St. Jude's, so conspicuous to the congregation, sat she, as in former times; no excuse, dared she, the governess make, to remain away. It was the first time she had entered an English Protestant church since she had last sat in it, there, with Mr. Carlyle. Can you wonder that the fact alone, with all the terrible remembrances it brought in its train, was sufficient to overwhelm her with emotion? She sat at the upper end now, with Lucy; Barbara occupied the place that had been hers, by the side of Mr. Carlyle. Barbara there, in her own right his wife; she severed from him forever and forever!

She scarcely raised her head; she tightened her thick veil over her face; she kept her spectacles bent toward the ground. Lucy thought she must be crying; she never had seen

anyone so still at church before. Lucy was mistaken; tears came not to solace the bitter anguish of hopeless, selfcondemning remorse. How she sat out the service she could not tell; she could not tell how she could sit out other services, as the Sundays came round! The congregation did not forget to stare at her. What an extraordinary looking governess Mrs. Carlyle had picked up!

They went out when it was over. Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle in advance; she, humbly following them with Lucy. She glanced aside at the tomb in the churchyard's corner, where moldered the remains of her father; and a yearning cry went forth from the very depth of her soul. "Oh, that I were laid there with him! Why did I come back again to East Lynne?"

Why, truly? But she had never thought that her cross would be so sharp as this.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AN M. P. FOR WEST LYNNE.

As this is not a history of the British constitution, it does not concern it to relate how or why West Lynne got into hot water with the House of Commons. The House threatened to disfranchise it, and West Lynne under the fear, went into mourning for its sins. The threat was not carried out; but one of the sitting members was unseated with ignominy, and sent to the right about. Being considerably humiliated thereby, and in disgust with West Lynne, he retired accordingly, and a fresh writ was issued. West Lynne then returned the Hon. Mr. Attley, a county nobleman's son; but he died in the very midst of his first session, and another writ had to be issued.

Of course the consideration now was, who should be the next lucky man fixed upon. All the notables within ten miles were discussed, not excepting the bench justices. Mr. Justice Hare? No! he was too uncompromising, he would study his own will, but not that of West Lynne. Squire Pinner? He never made a speech in his life, and had not an idea beyond turnips and farming stock. Colonel Bethel? He had no money to spend upon an election. Sir John Dobede? He was too old. "By a good twenty years," laughed Sir John, to himself. "But here we stand, like a pack of noodles, conning over the incapables, and passing by the right one," continued Sir John. "There's only one man amongst us fit to be our member."

"Who's that?" cried the meeting.

"Archibald Carlyle."

A pause of consternationconsternation at their collective forgetfulnessand then a loud murmur of approaching to a shout, filled the room. Archibald Carlyle. It should be no other.

"If we can get him," cried Sir John. "He may decline, you know."

The best thing, all agreed, was to act promptly. A deputation, half the length of the streetits whole length, if you include the tagrag and bobtail that attended behindset off on the spur of the moment to the office of Mr. Carlyle. They found that gentleman about to leave it for the evening, to return home to dinner; for, in the discussion of the allimportant topic, the meeting had suffered time to run on to a late hour; those gentlemen who dined at a somewhat earlier one had, for once in their lives, patiently allowed their dinners and their stomachs to waitwhich is saying a great deal for the patience of a justice.

Mr. Carlyle was taken by surprise. "Make me your member?" cried he, merrily. "How do you know I should not sell you all?"

"We'll trust you, Carlyle. Too happy to do it."

"I am not sure that I could spare the time," deliberated Mr. Carlyle.

"Now, Carlyle, you must remember that you avowed to me, no longer than last Christmas, your intention of going into parliament some time," struck in Mr. Justice Herbert. "You can't deny it."

"Some time!yes," replied Mr. Carlyle; "but I did not say when. I have no thoughts of it yet awhile."

"You must allow us to put you in nominationyou must, indeed, Mr. Carlyle. There's nobody else fit for it. As good send a pig to the House as some of us."

"An extremely flattering reason for proposing to shift the honor upon me," laughed Mr. Carlyle.

"Well, you know what we mean, Carlyle; there's not a man in the whole county so suitable as you, search it to the extremity of its boundariesyou must know there is not."

"I don't know anything of the sort," returned Mr. Carlyle.

"At any rate, we shall do it, for we have determined upon having you. When you walk into West Lynne tomorrow, you'll see the walks alive with placards, 'Carlyle forever!'"

"Suppose you allow me until tomorrow to consider of it, and defer the garnishing of the walls a day later," said Mr. Carlyle, a serious tone peeping out in the midst of his jocularly.

"You do not fear the expenses?"

It was but a glance he returned in answer. As soon as the question had been putit was stupid old Pinner who propounded itthey had felt how foolish it was. And indeed the cost would be a mere nothing, were there no opposition.

"Come, decide now, Carlyle. Give us your promise."

"If I decide now, it will be in the negative," replied Mr. Carlyle. "It is a question that demands consideration. Give me till tomorrow for that, and it is possible that I may accede to your request."

This was the best that could be made of him, and the deputation backed out, and as nothing more could be done, departed to their several dinnertables. Mr. Dill, who had been present, remained rubbing his hands with satisfaction, and casting admiring glances at Mr. Carlyle.

"What's the matter, Dill?" asked the latter; "you look as though you were pleased at this movement, and assumed that I should accept it."

"And so you will, Mr. Archibald. And as to the looking pleased, there's not a man, woman or child in West Lynne who won't do that."

"Don't make too sure, Dill."

"Of which, sir, of your becoming our member, or of the people looking pleased?"

"Of either," laughed Mr. Carlyle.

He quitted the office to walk home, revolving the proposition as he did so. That he had long thought of some time entering parliament was certain, though no definite period of the "when" had fixed itself in his mind. He saw not why he should confine his days entirely to toil, to the work of his calling. Pecuniary considerations did not require it, for his realized property, combined with the fortune brought by Barbara, was quite sufficient to meet expenses, according to their present style of living. Not that he had the least intention of giving up his business; it was honorable, as he conducted it, and lucrative, and he really liked it. He would not have been condemned to lead an idle life for the world; but there was no necessity for his being always at it. Mr. Dill made as good a principal as he did, and if length of service and experience might be counted a better one. He could safely be left to manage during the time it would be necessary for him, Mr. Carlyle, to be in London. He would rather represent West Lynne than any other spot on the face of the earth, no matter what might be the other's importance; and, as West Lynne was now in want of a member, perhaps his opportunity had come. That he would make a good and efficient public servant, he believed; his talents were superior, his oratory persuasive, and he had the gift of a true and honest spirit. That he would have the interest of West Lynne, at heart was certain, and he knew that he should serve his constituents to the very best of his power and ability. They knew it also.

Before Mr. Carlyle had reached East Lynne, he had decided that it should be.

It was a fine spring evening. The lilac was in bloom, the hedges and trees were clothed in their early green, and all things seemed full of promise. Even Mr. Carlyle's heart was rejoicing in the prospect opened to it; he was sure he should like a public life; but in the sanguine moments of realization or of hope, some dark shade will step in to mar the brightness.

Barbara stood at the drawingroom window watching for him. Not in her was the dark shade; her dress was a marvel of vanity and prettiness, and she had chosen to place on her fair hair a dainty headdress of lace as if her hair required any such ornament! She waltzed up to Mr. Carlyle when he entered, and saucily held up her face, the light of love dancing in her bright blue eyes.

"What do you want?" he provokingly asked, putting his hands behind him, and letting her stand there.

"Oh, well if you won't say good evening to me, I have a great mind to say you should not kiss me for a week, Archibald."

He laughed. "Who would be punished by that?" whispered he.

Barbara pouted her pretty lips, and the tears positively came into her eyes. "Which is as much as to say it would be no punishment to you. Archibald, don't you care for me?"

He threw his arms around her and clasped her to his heart, taking plenty of kisses then. "You know whether I care not," he fondly whispered.

But now, will you believe that that unfortunate Lady Isabel had been a witness to this? Well, it was only what his greeting to her had once been. Her pale face flushed scarlet, and she glided out of the room again as softly as she had entered it. They had not seen her. Mr. Carlyle drew his wife to the window, and stood there, his arms round her waist.

"Barbara, what should you say to living in London for a few months out of the twelve?"

"London? I am very happy where I am. Why should you ask me that? You are not going to live in London?"

"I am not sure of that. I think I am for a portion of the year. I have had an offer made me this afternoon, Barbara."

She looked at him, wondering what he meant wondering whether he was serious. An offer? What sort of an offer? Of what nature could it be?

He smiled at her perplexity. "Should you like to see M. P. attached to my name? West Lynne wants me to become its member."

A pause to take in the news; a sudden rush of color, and then she gleefully clasped her hands round his arm, her eyes sparkling with pleasure.

"Oh, Archibald, how glad I am! I knew how you were appreciated, and you will be appreciated more and more. This is right; it was not well for you to remain what you are for life a private individual, a country lawyer."

"I am perfectly contented with my lot, Barbara," he seriously said. "I am too busy to be otherwise."

"I know that; were you but a laboring man, toiling daily for the bread you eat, you would be contented, feeling that you were fulfilling your appointed duty to the utmost," she impulsively said; "but, Archibald, can you not still be a busy man at West Lynne, although you do become its representative?"

"If I could not, I should never accept the honor, Barbara. For some few months of the year I must of necessity be in town; but Dill is an efficient substitute, and I can run down for a week or so between times. Part of Saturday, Sunday, and part of Monday, I can always pass here, if I please. Of course these changes have their drawbacks, as well as their advantages."

"Where would be the drawbacks in this?" she interrupted.

"Well," smiled Mr. Carlyle, "in the first place, I suppose you could not always be with me."

Her hands fell her color faded. "Oh, Archibald!"

"If I do become their member, I must go up to town as soon as elected, and I don't think it will do for my little wife to be quitting her home to travel about just now."

Barbara's face wore a very blank look. She could not dissent from Mr. Carlyle's reasoning.

"And you must remain in London to the end of the session, while I am here! Separated! Archibald," she passionately added, while the tears gushed into her eyes. "I could not live without you."

"Then what is to be done? Must I decline it?"

"Decline it! Oh, of course not! I know we are looking on the dark side of things. I can go very well with you for a month perhaps two."

"You think so?"

"I am sure so. And, mind you must not encourage mamma to talk me out of it. Archibald," she continued, resting her head upon his breast, her sweet face turned up beseechingly to his, "you would rather have me with you, would you not?"

He bent his own down upon it. "What do you think about it, my darling?"

Once more an opportune moment for her to enter Lady Isabel. Barbara heard her this time, and sprang away from her husband. Mr. Carlyle turned round at the movement, and saw Madame Vine. She came forward, her lips ashy, her voice subdued.

Six months now had she been at East Lynne, and had hitherto escaped detection. Time and familiarity render us accustomed to most things to danger among the rest; and she had almost ceased to fear recognition, living so far as that point went far more peaceably than she had done at first. She and the children were upon the best of terms. She had greatly endeared herself to them; she loved them, and they loved her perhaps nature was asserting her own hidden claims.

She felt very anxious about William. He seemed to grow weaker, and she determined to make her fears known to Mr. Carlyle.

She quitted the parlor. She had heard Mr. Carlyle come in. Crossing the hall, she tapped softly at the drawingroom door, and then as softly entered. It was the moment of Mr. Carlyle's loud greeting to his wife. They stood together heedless of her.

Gliding out again, she paced the hall, her hands pressed upon her beating heart. How dared that heart rise up in sharp rebellion at these witnessed tokens of love? Was Barbara not his wife? Had she not a legal claim to all his tenderness? Who was she that she should resent them in her jealousy? What, though they had once been hers, hers only, had she not signed and sealed her own forfeit of them, and so made room for Barbara?

Back to the gray parlor, there she stood, her elbow on the mantelpiece, her eyes hidden by her hand. Thus she remained for some minutes, and Lucy thought how sad she looked.

But Lucy felt hungry, and was casting longing glances to the teatable. She wondered how long her governess meant to keep it waiting. "Madame Vine," cried she presently, "don't you know that tea is ready?"

This caused Madame Vine to raise her eyes. They fell on the pale boy at her feet. She made no immediate answer, only placed her hand on Lucy's shoulder.

"Oh, Lucy dear, I have many sorrows to bear."

"The tea will warm you, and there is some nice jam," was Miss Lucy's offered consolation.

"Their greeting, tender as it may be, is surely over by this time," thought Lady Isabel, an expression something like mockery curving her lips. "I will venture again."

Only to see him with his wife's face on his breast, and his lips bent upon it. But they had heard her this time, and she had to advance, in spite of her spirit of misery and her whitened features.

"Would you be so good sir, as to come and look at William?" she asked in a low tone, of Mr. Carlyle.

"Certainly."

"What for?" interjected Barbara.

"He looks very ill. I do not like his looks. I am fearing whether he can be worse than we have thought."

They went to the gray parlor, all three of them. Mr. Carlyle was in first, and had taken a long, silent look at William before the others entered.

"What is he doing on the floor?" exclaimed Barbara, in her astonishment. "He should not lie on the floor, Madame Vine."

"He lays himself down there at the dusk hour, and I cannot get him up again. I try to persuade him to use the sofa, but it is of no use."

"The floor will not hurt him," said Mr. Carlyle. This was the dark shade: his boy's failing health.

William opened his eyes. "Who's thatpapa?"

"Don't you feel well, William?"

"Oh, yes, I'm very well; but I am tired."

"Why do you lie down here?"

"I like lying here. Papa, that pretty white rabbit of mine is dead."

"Indeed. Suppose you get up and tell me all about it."

"I don't know about it myself yet," said William, softly rising. "The gardener told Lucy when she was out just now: I did not go; I was tired. He said"

"What has tired you?" interrupted Mr. Carlyle, taking hold of the boy's hand.

"Oh, nothing. I am always tired."

"Do you tell Mr. Wainwright that you are tired?"

"No. Why should I tell him? I wish he would not order me to take that nasty medicine, that cod liver oil."

"But it is to make you strong, my boy."

"It makes me sick. I always feel sick after it, papa. Madame Vine says I ought to have cream. That would be nice."

"Cream?" repeated Mr. Carlyle, turning his eyes on Madame Vine.

"I have known cream to do a great deal of good in a case like William's," she observed. "I believe that no better medicine can be given; that it has in fact no substitute."

"It can be tried," said Mr. Carlyle.

"Pray give your orders, Madame Vine, for anything you think may be beneficial to him," Mrs. Carlyle added. "You have had more experience with children than I. Joyce"

"What does Wainwright say?" interrupted Mr. Carlyle, speaking to his wife, in his low tone.

"I do not always see him when he comes, Archibald. Madame Vine does, I believe."

"Oh, dear!" cried Lucy, "can't we have tea? I want some bread and jam."

Mr. Carlyle turned round, smiled and nodded at her. "Patience is good for little girls, Miss Lucy. Would you like some bread and jam, my boy?"

William shook his head. "I can't eat jam. I am only thirsty."

Mr. Carlyle cast a long and intent look at him, and then left the room. Lady Isabel followed him, her thoughts full of her ailing child.

"Do you think him very ill, sir?" she whispered.

"I think he looks so. What does Mr. Wainwright say?"

"He says nothing to me. I have not inquired his true condition. Until tonight it did not come to me that there was any apprehension."

"Does he look so much worse tonight?"

"Not any worse than customary. Latterly he had looked just like this in the evening. It was a remark of Hannah's that roused my alarm: she thinks he is on the road to death. What can we do to save him?"

She clasped her hands as she spoke, in the intensity of her emotion. She almost forgot, as they stood there together talking of the welfare of the child, their child, that he was no longer her husband. Almost, not quite, utterly impossible would it be for her wholly to forget the dreadful present. Neither he nor the child could again belong to her in this world.

A strange rising of the throat in her wild despair, a meek courtesy, as she turned from him, his last words ringing in her ears: "I shall call in further advice for him, Madame Vine."

William was clinging round Mrs. Carlyle, in a coaxing attitude, when she reentered the gray parlor. "I know what I could eat, mamma, if you'd let me have it," cried he, in answer to her remonstrance that he must eat something.

"What could you eat?"

"Some cheese."

"Cheese! Cheese with tea!" laughed Mrs. Carlyle.

"For the last week or two he has fancied strange things, the effect of a diseased appetite," exclaimed Madame Vine; "but if I allow them to be brought in he barely tastes them."

"I am sure, mamma, I could eat some cheese now," said William.

"You may have it," answered Mrs. Carlyle.

As she turned to leave the room, the impatient knock and ring of a visitor was heard. Barbara wondered who could be arriving at that, their dinner hour. Sailing majestically into the hall, her lips compressed, her aspect threatening, came Miss Carlyle.

Now it turned out that Miss Corny had been standing at her own window, grimly eyeing the ill doings of the street, from the fine housemaid opposite, who was enjoying a flirting interview with the baker, to the ragged urchins, pitchpolling in the gutter and the dust. And there she caught sight of the string, justices and others, who came flowing out of the

office of Mr. Carlyle. So many of them were they that Miss Corny involuntarily thought of a conjuror flinging flowers out of a hat the faster they come, the more it seems there are to come. "What on earth is up?" cried Miss Corny, pressing her nose flat against the pane, that she might see better.

They filed off, some one way, some another. Miss Carlyle's curiosity was keener than her appetite, for she stayed on the watch, although just informed that her dinner was served. Presently Mr. Carlyle appeared and she knocked at the window with her knuckles. He did not hear it; he had turned off at a quick pace toward home. Miss Corny's temper rose.

The clerks came out next, one after another; and the last was Mr. Dill. He was less hurried than Mr. Carlyle had been, and heard Miss Corny's signal.

"What in the name of wonder, did all that stream of people want at the office?" began she, when Mr. Dill had entered in obedience to it.

"That was the deputation, Miss Cornelia."

"What deputation?"

"The deputation to Mr. Archibald. They want him to become their new member."

"Member of what?" cried she, not guessing at the actual meaning.

"Of parliament, Miss Corny; to replace Mr. Attley. The gentlemen came to solicit him to be put in nomination."

"Solicit a donkey!" irascibly uttered Miss Corny, for the tidings did not meet her approbation. "Did Archibald turn them out again?"

"He gave them no direct answer, ma'am. He will consider of it between now and tomorrow morning."

"Consider of it!" shrieked she. "Why, he'd never, never be such a flat as to comply. He go into parliament! What next?"

"Why should he not, Miss Corny? I'm sure I should be proud to see him there."

Miss Corny gave a sniff. "You are proud of things more odd than even John Dill. Remember that fine shirt front! What has become of it? Is it laid up in lavender?"

"Not exactly in lavender, Miss Corny. It lies in the drawer; for I have never liked to put it on since, after what you said."

"Why don't you sell it at halfprice, and buy a couple of good useful ones with the money?" returned she, tartly. "Better that than keep the foppish thing as a witness of your folly. Perhaps he'll be buying embroidered fronts next, if he goes into that idle, donothing House of Commons. I'd rather enter myself for six months at the treadmill."

"Oh, Miss Corny! I don't think you have well considered it. It's a great honor, and worthy of him. He will be elevated above us all, as it were, and he deserves to be."

"Elevate him on a weathercock!" raged Miss Corny. "There, you may go. I've heard quite enough."

Brushing past the old gentleman, leaving him to depart or not, as he might please, Miss Carlyle strode upstairs, flung on her shawl and bonnet, and strode down again. Her servant looked considerably surprised, and addressed her as she crossed the hall.

"Your dinner, ma'am?" he ventured to say.

"What's my dinner to you?" returned Miss Corny, in her wrath. "You have had yours."

Away she strode. And thus it happened that she was at East Lynne almost as soon as Mr. Carlyle.

"Where's Archibald?" began she, without ceremony, the moment she saw Barbara.

"He is here. Is anything the matter?"

Mr. Carlyle, hearing the voice, came out and she pounced upon him with her tongue.

"What's this about your becoming the new member for West Lynne?"

"West Lynne wishes it," said Mr. Carlyle. "Sit down, Cornelia."

"Sit down yourself," retorted she, keeping on her feet. "I want my question answered. Of course you will decline?"

"On the contrary, I have made up my mind to accept."

Miss Corny untied the strings of her bonnet, and flung them behind her.

"Have you counted the cost?" she asked, and there was something quite sepulchral in her solemn tone.

"I have given it consideration, Cornelia; both as regards money and time. The expenses are not worth naming, should there be no opposition. And if there is any"

"Ay!" groaned Miss Corny. "If there is?"

"Well? I am not without a few hundred to spare for the playing," he said, turning upon her the goodhumored light of his fine countenance.

Miss Carlyle emitted some dismal groans.

"That ever I should have lived to see this day! To hear money talked of as though it were dirt. And what's to become of your business?" she sharply added. "Is that to be let run to rack and ruin, while you are kicking up your heels in that wicked London, under plea of being at the House night after night?"

"Cornelia," he gravely said, "were I dead, Dill could carry on the business just as well as it is being carried on now. I might go into a foreign country for seven years and come back to find the business as flourishing as ever, for Dill could keep it together. And even were the business to drop off though I tell you it will not do so I am independent of it."

Miss Carlyle faced tartly round upon Barbara.

"Have you been setting him on to this?"

"I think he had made up his mind before he spoke to me. But," added Barbara, in her truth, "I urged him to accept it."

"Oh, you did! Nicely moped and miserable you'll be here, if he goes to London for months on the stretch. You did not think of that, perhaps."

"But he would not leave me here," said Barbara, her eyelashes becoming wet at the thought, as she unconsciously moved to her husband's side. "He would take me with him."

Miss Carlyle made a pause, and looked at them alternately.

"Is that decided?" she asked.

"Of course it is," laughed Mr. Carlyle, willing to joke the subject and his sister into goodhumor. "Would you wish to separate man and wife, Cornelia?"

She made no reply. She rapidly tied her bonnetstrings, the ribbons trembling ominously in her fingers.

"You are not going, Cornelia? You must stay to dinner, now that you are here it is ready and we will talk this further over afterward."

"This has been dinner enough for me for one day," spoke she, putting on her gloves. "That I should have lived to see my father's son throw up his business, and change himself into a lazy, stuckup parliament man!"

"Do stay and dine with us, Cornelia; I think I can subdue your prejudices, if you will let me talk to you."

"If you wanted to talk to me about it, why did you not come in when you left the office?" cried Miss Corny, in a greater amount of wrath than she had shown yet. And there's no doubt that, in his not having done so, lay one of the sore points.

"I did not think of it," said Mr. Carlyle. "I should have come in and told you of it tomorrow morning."

"I dare say you would," she ironically answered. "Good evening to you both."

And, in spite of their persuasions, she quitted the house and went stalking down the avenue.

Two or three days more, and the address of Mr. Carlyle to the inhabitants of West Lynne appeared in the local papers, while the walls and posts convenient were embellished with various colored placards, "Vote for Carlyle." "Carlyle forever!"

Wonders never cease. Surprises are the lot of man; but perhaps a greater surprise had never been experienced by those who knew what was what, than when it went forth to the world that Sir Francis Levison had converted himself fromfrom what he wasinto a redhot politician.

Had he been offered the post of prime minister? Or did his conscience smite him, as was the case with a certain gallant captain renowned in song? Neither the one nor the other. The simple fact was, that Sir Francis Levison was in a state of pecuniary embarrassment, and required something to prop him upsome snug sinecureplenty to get and nothing to do.

Patch himself up he must. But how? He had tried the tables, but luck was against him; he made a desperate venture upon the turf, a grand coup that would have set him on his legs for some time, but the venture turned out the wrong way, and Sir Francis was a defaulter. He began then to think there was nothing for it but to drop into some nice government nest, where, as I have told you, there would be plenty to get and nothing to do. Any place with much to do would not suit him, or he it; he was too emptyheaded for work requiring talent; you may have remarked that a man given to Sir Francis Levison's pursuits generally is.

He dropped into something good, or that promised good nothing less than the secretaryship to Lord Headthelot, who swayed the ministers in the upper House. But that he was a connection of Lord Headthelot's he never would have obtained it, and very dubiously the minister consented to try him. Of course a condition was, that he should enter parliament the first opportunity, his vote to be at the disposal of the ministry rather a shaky ministry and supposed, by some, to be on its last legs. And this brings us to the present time.

In a handsome drawingroom in Eaton Square, one sunny afternoon, sat a lady, young and handsome. Her eyes were of violet blue, her hair was auburn, her complexion delicate; but there was a stern look of anger, amounting to sullenness, on her wellformed features, and her pretty foot was beating the carpet in passionate impatience. It was Lady Levison.

The doings of the past had been coming home to her for some time now past doings, be they good or be they ill, are sure to come home, one day or another, and bring their fruits with them.

In the years past many years past now Francis Levison had lost his heart or whatever the thing might be that, with him, did duty for one to Blanche Challoner. He had despised her once to Lady Isabel as Lord Thomas says in the old ballad; but that was done to suit his own purpose, for he had never, at any period, cared for Lady Isabel as he had cared for Blanche. He gained her affection in secret they engaged themselves to each other. Blanche's sister, Lydia Challoner, two years older than herself suspected it, and taxed Blanche with it. Blanche, true to her compact of keeping it a secret, denied it with many protestations. "She did not care for Captain Levison; rather disliked him, in fact." "So much the better," was Miss Challoner's reply; for she had no respect for Captain Levison, and deemed him an unlikely man to marry.

Years went on, and poor, unhappy Blanche Challoner remained faithful to her love.

He played fast and loose with her professing attachment for her in secret, and visiting at the house; perhaps he feared an outbreak from her, an exposure that might be anything but pleasant, did he throw off all relations between them. Blanche summoned up her courage and spoke to him, urging the marriage; she had not yet glanced at the fear that his intention of marrying her, had he ever possessed such, was over. Bad men are always cowards. Sir Francis shrank from an explanation, and so far forgot honor as to murmur some indistinct promise that the wedding should be speedy.

Lydia Challoner had married, and been left a widow, well off. She was Mrs. Waring; and at her house resided Blanche. For the girls were orphans. Blanche was beginning to show symptoms of her nearly thirty years; not the years, but the long continued

disappointment, the heartburnings, were telling upon her. Her hair was thin, her face was pinched, her form had lost its roundness. "Marry her, indeed!" scoffed to himself Sir Francis Levison.

There came to Mrs. Waring's upon a Christmas visit a younger sister, Alice Challoner, a fair girl of twenty years. She resided generally with an aunt in the country. Far more beautiful was she than Blanche had ever been, and Francis Levison, who had not seen her since she was a child, fell as he would have called it in love with her. Love! He became her shadow; he whispered sweet words in her ear; he turned her head giddy with its own vanity, and he offered her marriage. She accepted him, and preparations for the ceremony immediately began. Sir Francis urged speed, and Alice was nothing loth.

And what of Blanche? Blanche was stunned. A despairing stupor took possession of her; and, when she woke from it, desperation set in. She insisted upon an interview with Sir Francis, and evade it he could not, though he tried hard. Will it be believed that he denied the past that he met with mocking suavity her indignant reminders of what had been between them? "Love! Marriage? Nonsense! Her fancy had been too much at work." Finally, he defied her to prove that he had regarded her with more than ordinary friendship, or had ever hinted at such a thing as a union.

She could not prove it. She had not so much as a scrap of paper written on by him; she had not a single friend or enemy to come forward and testify that they heard him breathe to her a word of love. He had been too wary for that. Moreover there was her own solemn protestations to her sister Lydia that there was not anything between her and Francis Levison; who would believe her if she veered round now, and avowed these protestations were false? No; she found that she was in a sinking ship; one there was no chance of saving.

But one chance did she determine to try an appeal to Alice. Blanche Challoner's eyes were suddenly and rudely opened to the badness of the man, and she was aware now how thoroughly unfit he was to become the husband of her sister. It struck her that only misery could result from the union, and that, if possible, Alice should be saved from entering upon it. Would she have married him herself, then? Yes. But it was a different thing for that fair, fresh young Alice; she had not wasted her life's best years in waiting for him.

When the family had gone to rest, and the house was quiet, Blanche Challoner proceeded to her sister's bedroom. Alice had not begun to undress; she was sitting in a comfortable chair before the fire, her feet on the fender, reading a love letter from Sir Francis.

"Alice, I am come to tell you a story," she said quietly. "Will you hear it?"

"In a minute. Stop a bit," replied Alice. She finished the perusal of the letter, put it aside, and then spoke again. "What did you say, Blanche? A story?"

Blanche nodded. "Several years ago there was a fair young girl, none too rich, in our station of life. A gentleman, who was none too rich either, sought and gained her love. He could not marry; he was not rich, I say. They loved on in secret, hoping for better times, she wearing out her years and her heart. Oh, Alice! I cannot describe to you how she loved him how she has continued to love him up to this moment. Through evil report she clung to him tenaciously and tenderly as the vine clings to its trellis, for the world spoke ill of him."

"Who was the young lady?" interrupted Alice. "Is this a fable of romance, Blanche, or a real history?"

"A real history. I knew her. All those years years and years, I say he kept leading her on to love, letting her think that his love was hers. In the course of time he succeeded to a fortune, and the bar to their marriage was over. He was abroad when he came into it, but returned home at once; their intercourse was renewed, and her fading heart woke up once more to life. Still, the marriage did not come on; he said nothing of it, and she spoke to him. Very soon now, should it be, was his answer, and she continued to live on in hope."

"Go on, Blanche," cried Alice, who had grown interested in the tale, never suspecting that it could bear a personal interest.

"Yes, I will go on. Would you believe, Alice, that almost immediately after this last promise, he saw one whom he fancied he should like better, and asked her to be his wife, forsaking the one to whom he was bound by every tie of honor repudiating all that had been between them, even his own words and promises?"

"How disgraceful! Were they married?"

"They are to be. Would you have such a man?"

"I!" returned Alice, quite indignant at the question. "It is not likely that I would."

"That man, Alice is Sir Francis Levison."

Alice Challoner gave a start, and her face became scarlet. "How dare you say so, Blanche? It is not true. Who was the girl, pray? She must have traduced him."

"She has not traduced him," was the subdued answer. "The girl was myself."

An awkward pause. "I know!" cried Alice, throwing back her head resentfully. "He told me I might expect something of this that you had fancied him in love with you, and were angry because he had chosen me."

Blanche turned upon her with streaming eyes; she could no longer control her emotion. "Alice, my sister, all the pride is gone out of me; all the reticence that woman loves to observe as to her wrongs and her inward feelings I have broken through for you this night. As sure as there is a heaven above us, I have told you the truth. Until you came I was engaged to Francis Levison."

An unnatural scene ensued. Blanche, provoked at Alice's rejection of her words, told all the ill she knew or heard of the man; she dwelt upon his conduct with regard to Lady Isabel Carlyle, his heartless aftertreatment of that unhappy lady. Alice was passionate and fiery. She professed not to believe a word of her sister's wrongs, and as to the other stories, they were no affairs of hers, she said: "what had she to do with his past life?"

But Alice Challoner did believe; her sister's earnestness and distress, as she told the tale, carried conviction with them. She did not very much care for Sir Francis; he was not entwined round her heart, as he was round Blanche's; but she was dazzled with the prospect of so good a settlement in life, and she would not give him up. If Blanche broke her heart why, she must break it. But she need not have mixed taunts and jeers with her refusal to believe; she need not have triumphed openly over Blanche. Was it well done? Was it the work of an affectionate sister! As we sow, so shall we reap. She married Sir Francis Levison, leaving Blanche to her broken heart, or to any other calamity that might grow out of the injustice. And there sat Lady Levison now, her three years of marriage having served to turn her love for Sir Francis into contempt and hate.

A little boy, two years old, the only child of the marriage, was playing about the room. His mother took no notice of him; she was buried in all absorbing thought which caused her lips to contract, and her brow to scowl. Sir Francis entered, his attitude lounging, his air listless. Lady Levison roused herself, but no pleasant manner of tone was hers, as she set herself to address him.

"I want some money," she said.

"So do I," he answered.

An impatient stamp of the foot and a haughty toss. "And I must have it. I must. I told you yesterday that I must. Do you suppose I can go on, without a sixpence of ready money day after day?"

"Do you suppose it is of any use to put yourself in this fury?" retorted Sir Francis. "A dozen times a week do you bother me for money and a dozen times do I tell you I have

got none. I have got none for myself. You may as well ask that baby for money as ask me."

"I wish he had never been born!" passionately uttered Lady Levison; "unless he had had a different father."

That the last sentence, and the bitter scorn of its tone, would have provoked a reprisal from Sir Francis, his flashing countenance betrayed. But at that moment a servant entered the room.

"I beg your pardon, sir. That man, Brown, forced his way into the hall, and"

"I can't see himI won't see him!" interrupted Sir Francis backing to the furthest corner of the room, in what looked very like abject terror, as if he had completely lost his presence of mind. Lady Levison's lips curled.

"We got rid of him, sir, after a dreadful deal of trouble, I was about to say, but while the door was open in the dispute, Mr. Meredith entered. He has gone into the library, sir, and vows he won't stir till he sees you, whether you are sick or well."

A moment's pause, a halfmuttered oath, and the Sir Francis quitted the room. The servant retired, and Lady Levison caught up her child.

"Oh, Franky dear," she wailed forth, burying her face in his warm neck. "I'd leave him for good and all, if I dared; but I fear he might keep you."

Now, the secret was, that for the last three days Sir Francis had been desperately ill, obliged to keep his bed, and could see nobody, his life depending upon quiet. Such was the report, or something equivalent to it, which had gone in to Lord Headthelot, or rather, to the official office, for that renowned chief was himself out of town; it had also been delivered to all callers at Sir Francis Levison's house; the royal truth being that Sir Francis was as well as you or I, but, from something that had transpired touching one of his numerous debts, did not dare to show himself. That morning the matter had been arrangedpatched up for a time.

"My stars, Levison!" began Mr. Meredith, who was a whipperin of the ministry, "what a row there is about you! Why, you look as well as ever you were."

"A great deal better today," coughed Sir Francis.

"To think that you should have chosen the present moment for skulking! Here have I been dancing attendance at your door, day after day, in a state of incipient fever, enough to put me into a real one, and could neither get admitted nor a letter taken up. I should

have blown the house up today and got in amidst the flying debris. By the way, are you and my lady two just now?"

"Two?" growled Sir Francis.

"She was stepping into her carriage yesterday when they turned me from the door, and I made inquiry of her. Her ladyship's answer was, that she knew nothing either of Francis or his illness."

"Her ladyship is subject to flights of distemper," chafed Sir Francis. "What desperate need have you of me, just now? Headthelot's away and there's nothing doing."

"Nothing doing up here; a deal too much doing somewhere else. Attley's seat's in the market."

"Well?"

"And you ought to have been down there about it three or four days ago. Of course you must step into it."

"Of course I shan't," returned Sir Francis. "To represent West Lynne will not suit me."

"Not suit you? West Lynne! Why, of all places, it is most suitable. It's close to your own property."

"If you call ten miles close. I shall not put up for West Lynne, Meredith."

"Headthelot came up this morning," said Mr. Meredith.

The information somewhat aroused Sir Francis. "Headthelot? What brings him back?"

"You. I tell you, Levison, there's a hot row. Headthelot expected you would be at West Lynne days past, and he has come up in an awful rage. Every additional vote we can count in the House is worth its weight in gold; and you, he says are allowing West Lynne to slip through your fingers! You must start for it at once Levison."

Sir Francis mused. Had the alternative been given him, he would have preferred to represent a certain warm place underground, rather than West Lynne. But, to quit Headthelot, and the snug post he anticipated, would be ruin irretrievable; nothing short of outlawry, or the queen's prison. It was awfully necessary to get his threatened person into parliament, and he began to turn over in his mind whether he could bring himself to make further acquaintance with West Lynne. "The thing must have blown over for good by this time," was the result of his cogitations, unconsciously speaking aloud.

"I can understand your reluctance to appear at West Lynne," cried Mr. Meredith; "the scene, unless I mistake, of that notorious affair of yours. But private feelings must give way to public interests, and the best thing you can do is to start. Headthelot is angry enough as it is. He says, had you been down at first, as you ought to have been, you would have slipped in without opposition, but now there will be a contest."

Sir Francis looked up sharply. "A contest? Who is going to stand the funds?"

"Pshaw! As if we should let funds be any barrier! Have you heard who is in the field?"

"No," was the apathetic answer.

"Carlyle."

"Carlyle!" uttered Sir Francis, startled. "Oh, by George, though! I can't stand against him."

"Well, there's the alternative. If you can't, Thornton will."

"I should run no chance. West Lynne would not elect me in preference to him. I'm not sure, indeed, that West Lynne would have me in any case."

"Nonsense! You know our interest there. Government put in Attley, and it can put you in. Yes, or no, Levison?"

"Yes," answered Sir Francis.

An hour's time, and Sir Francis Levison went forth. On his way to be conveyed to West Lynne? Not yet. He turned his steps to Scotland Yard. In considerably less than an hour the following telegram, marked "Secret," went down from the head office to the superintendent of police at West Lynne.

"Is Otway Bethel at West Lynne? If not; where is he? And when will he be returning to it?"

It elicited a prompt answer.

"Otway Bethel is not at West Lynne. Supposed to be in Norway. Movements uncertain."

CHAPTER XXXV.

A MISHAP TO THE BLUE SPECTACLES.

Mr. Carlyle and Barbara were seated at breakfast, when, somewhat to their surprise, Mr. Dill was shown in. Following close upon his heels came Justice Hare; and close upon his heels came Squire Pinner; while bringing up the rear was Colonel Bethel. All the four had come up separately, not together, and all four were out of breath, as if it had been a race which should arrive soonest.

Quite impossible was it for Mr. Carlyle, at first, to understand the news they brought. All were talking at once, in the utmost excitement; and the fury of Justice Hare alone was sufficient to produce temporary deafness. Mr. Carlyle caught a word of the case presently.

"A second man? Opposition? Well, let him come on," he goodhumoredly cried. "We shall have the satisfaction of ascertaining who wins in the end."

"But you have not heard who it is, Mr. Archibald," cried Old Dill, "It"

"Stand a contest with him?" raved Justice Hare. "He"

"The fellow wants hanging," interjected Colonel Bethel.

"Couldn't he be ducked?" suggested Squire Pinner.

Now all these sentences were ranted out together, and their respective utterers were fain to stop till the noise subsided a little. Barbara could only look from one to the other in astonishment.

"Who is this formidable opponent?" asked Mr. Carlyle.

There was a pause. Not one of them but had the delicacy to shrink from naming that man to Mr. Carlyle. The information came at last from Old Dill, who dropped his voice while he spoke it.

"Mr. Archibald, the candidate who has come forward, is that man Levison."

"Of course, Carlyle, you'll go into it now, neck and crop," cried Justice Hare.

Mr. Carlyle was silent.

"You won't let the beast frighten you from the contest!" uttered Colonel Bethel in a loud tone.

"There's a meeting at the Buck's Head at ten," said Mr. Carlyle, not replying to the immediate question. "I will be with you there."

"Did you not say, Mr. Dill, that was where the scoundrel Levison is at the Buck's Head?"

"He was there," answered Mr. Dill. "I expect he is ousted by this time. I asked the landlord what he thought of himself, for taking in such a character, and what he supposed the justice would say to him. He vowed with tears in his eyes that the fellow should not be there another hour, and that he should never have entered it, had he known who he was."

A little more conversation, and the visitors filed off. Mr. Carlyle sat down calmly to finish his breakfast. Barbara approached him.

"Archibald, you will not suffer this man's insolent doings to deter you from your plans you will not withdraw?" she whispered.

"I think not, Barbara. He has thrust himself offensively upon me in this measure; I believe my better plan will be to take no more heed of him than I should of the dirt under my feet."

"Right right," she answered, a proud flush deepening the rose on her cheeks.

Mr. Carlyle was walking into West Lynne. There were the placards, sure enough, side by side with his own, bearing the name of that wicked coward who had done him the greatest injury one man can do to another. Verily, he must possess a face of brass to venture there.

"Archibald, have you heard the disgraceful news?"

The speaker was Miss Carlyle, who had come down upon her brother like a ship with all sails set. Her cheeks wore a flush; her eyes glistened; her tall form was drawn up to its most haughty height.

"I have heard it, Cornelia, and, had I not, the walls would have enlightened me."

"Is he out of his mind?"

"Out of his reckoning, I fancy," replied Mr. Carlyle.

"You will carry on the contest now," she continued, her countenance flashing. "I was averse to it before, but I now withdraw all my objection. You will be no brother of mine if you yield the field to him."

"I do not intend to yield it."

"Good. You bear on upon your course, and let him crawl on upon his. Take no more heed of him than if he were a viper. Archibald, you must canvass now."

"No," said Mr. Carlyle, "I shall be elected without canvass. You'll see, Cornelia."

"There will be plenty canvassing for you, if you don't condescend to take the trouble, my indifferent brother. I'll give a thousand pounds myself, for ale, to the electors."

"Take care," laughed Mr. Carlyle. "Keep your thousand pounds in your pocket, Cornelia. I have no mind to be unseated, on the plea of 'bribery and corruption.' Here's Sir John Dobede galloping in, with a face as red as the sun in a fog."

"Well, it may be he has heard the news. I can tell you, Archibald, West Lynne is in a state of excitement that has not been its lot for many a day."

Miss Carlyle was right. Excitement and indignation had taken possession of West Lynne. How the people rallied around Mr. Carlyle! Town and country were alike up in arms. But government interest was rife at West Lynne, and, whatever the private and public feeling might be, collectively or individually, many votes should be recorded for Sir Francis Levison.

One of the first to become cognizant of the affair was Lord Mount Severn. He was at his club one evening in London, poring over an evening paper, when the names "Carlyle," "West Lynne," caught his view. Knowing that Mr. Carlyle had been named as the probable member, and heartily wishing that he might become such, the earl naturally read the paragraph.

He read it, and read it again; he rubbed his eyes, he rubbed his glasses, he pinched himself, to see whether he was awake or dreaming. For believe what that paper asserted that Sir Francis Levison had entered the lists in opposition to Mr. Carlyle, and was at West Lynne, busily canvassing he could not.

"Do you know anything of this infamous assertion?" he inquired of an intimate friend "infamous, whether true or false."

"It's true, I heard of it an hour ago. Plenty of cheek that Levison must have."

"Cheek!" repeated the dismayed earl, feeling as if every part of him, body and mind, were outraged by the news, "don't speak of it in that way. The hound deserves to be gibbeted."

He threw aside the paper, quitted the club, returned home for a carpet bag, and went shrieking and whistling down to West Lynne, taking his son with him. Or, if he did not whistle and shriek the engine did. Fully determined was the earl of Mount Severn to show his opinion of the affair.

On these fine spring mornings, their breakfast over, Lady Isabel was in the habit of going into the grounds with the children. They were on the lawn before the house, when two gentlemen came walking up the avenue; or, rather, one gentleman, and a handsome young stripling growing into another. Lady Isabel thought she should have dropped, for she stood face to face with Lord Mount Severn. The earl stopped to salute the children, and raised his hat to the strange lady.

"It is my governess, Madame Vine," said Lucy.

A silent courtesy from Madame Vine. She turned away her head and gasped for breath.

"Is your papa at home, Lucy?" cried the earl.

"Yes; I think he is at breakfast. I'm so glad you are come!"

Lord Mount Severn walked on, holding William by the hand, who had eagerly offered to "take him" to papa. Lord Vane bent over Lucy to kiss her. A little while, a very few more years, and my young lady would not hold up her rosy lips so boldly.

"You have grown a dearer girl than ever, Lucy. Have you forgotten our compact?"

"No," laughed she.

"And you will not forget it?"

"Never," said the child, shaking her head. "You shall see if I do."

"Lucy is to be my wife," cried he, turning to Madame Vine. "It is a bargain, and we have both promised. I mean to wait for her till she is old enough. I like her better than anybody else in the world."

"And I like him," spoke up Miss Lucy. "And it's all true."

Lucy was a child it may almost be said an infant and the viscount was not of an age to render important such avowed passions. Nevertheless, the words did thrill through the

veins of the hearer. She spoke, she thought, not as Madame Vine would have spoken and thought, but as the unhappy mother, the illfated Lady Isabel.

"You must not say these things to Lucy. It could never be."

Lord Vane laughed.

"Why?" asked he.

"Your father and mother would not approve."

"My father wouldI know he would. He likes Lucy. As to my motheroh, well, she can't expect to be master and mistress too. You be off for a minute, Lucy; I want to say some thing to Madame Vine. Has Carlyle shot that fellow?" he continued, as Lucy sprung away. "My father is so stiff, especially when he's put up, that he would not sully his lips with the name, or make a single inquiry when we arrived; neither would he let me, and I walked up here with my tongue burning."

She would have responded, what fellow? But she suspected too well, and the words died away on her unwilling lips.

"That brute, Levison. If Carlyle riddled his body with shots for this move, and then kicked him till he died, he'd only get his deserts, and the world would applaud. He oppose Carlyle! I wish I had been a man a few years ago, he'd have got a shot through his heart then. I say," dropping his voice, "did you know Lady Isabel?"

"Yesnoyes."

She was at a loss what to sayalmost as unconscious what she did say.

"She was Lucy's mother, you know, and I loved her. I think that's why I love Lucy, for she is the very image of her. Where did you know her? Here?"

"I knew her by hearsay," murmured Lady Isabel, arousing to recollection.

"Oh, hearsay! Has Carlyle shot the beast, or is he on his legs yet? By Jove! To think that he should sneak himself up, in this way, at West Lynne!"

"You must apply elsewhere for information," she gasped. "I know nothing of these things."

She turned away with a beating heart, and took Lucy's hand, and departed. Lord Vane set off on a run toward the house, his heels flying behind him.

And now the contest began in earnest—that is, the canvass. Sir Francis Levison, his agent, and a friend from town, who, as it turned out, instead of being some great gun of the government, was a private chum of the baronet's by name Drake, sneaked about the town like dogs with their tails burnt, for they were entirely alive to the color in which they were held, their only attendants being a few young gentlemen and ladies in rags, who commonly brought up the rear. The other party presented a stately crowd—county gentry, magistrates, Lord Mount Severn. Sometimes Mr. Carlyle would be with them, arm and arm with the latter. If the contesting groups came within view of each other, and were likely to meet, the brave Sir Francis would disappear down an entry, behind a hedge, any place convenient; with all his "face of brass," he could not meet Mr. Carlyle and that condemning jury around him.

One afternoon it pleased Mrs. Carlyle to summon Lucy and the governess to accompany her into West Lynne. She was going shopping. Lady Isabel had a dread and horror of appearing in there while that man was in town, but she could not help herself. There was no pleading illness, for she was quite well; there must be no saying, "I will not go," for she was only a dependant. They started, and had walked as far as Mrs. Hare's gate, when Miss Carlyle turned out of it.

"Your mamma's not well, Barbara."

"Is she not?" cried Barbara, with quick concern. "I must go and see her."

"She has had one of those ridiculous dreams again," pursued Miss Carlyle, ignoring the presence of the governess and Lucy. "I was sure of it by her very look when I got in, shivering and shaking, and glancing fearfully around, as if she feared a dozen spectres were about to burst out of the walls. So I taxed her with it, and she could make no denial. Richard is in some jeopardy, she protests, or will be. And there she is, shaking still, although I told her that people who put faith in dreams were only fit for a lunatic asylum."

Barbara looked distressed. She did not believe in dreams any more than Miss Carlyle, but she could not forget how strangely peril to Richard had supervened upon some of these dreams.

"I will go in now and see mamma," she said. "If you are returning home, Cornelia, Madame Vine can walk with you, and wait for me there."

"Let me go in with you, mamma!" pleaded Lucy.

Barbara mechanically took the child's hand. The gates closed on them, and Miss Carlyle and Lady Isabel proceeded in the direction of the town. But not far had they gone when, in turning a corner, the wind, which was high, blew away with the veil of Lady Isabel,

and, in raising her hand in trepidation to save it before it was finally gone, she contrived to knock off her blue spectacles. They fell to the ground, and were broken.

"How did you manage that?" uttered Miss Carlyle.

How, indeed? She bent her face on the ground, looking at the damage. What should she do? The veil was over the hedge, the spectacles were brokenhow could she dare show her naked face? That face was rosy just then, as in former days, the eyes were bright, and Miss Carlyle caught their expression, and stared in very amazement.

"Good heavens above," she uttered, "what an extraordinary likeness!" And Lady Isabel's heart turned faint and sick within her.

Well it might. And, to make matters worse, bearing down right upon them, but a few paces distant, came Sir Francis Levison.

Would he recognize her?

Standing blowing in the wind at the turning of the road were Miss Carlyle and Lady Isabel Vane. The latter, confused and perplexed, was picking up the remnant of her damaged spectacles; the former, little less perplexed, gazed at the face which struck upon her memory as being so familiar. Her attention, however, was called off the face to the apparition of Sir Francis Levison.

He was close upon them, Mr. Drake and the other comrade being with him, and some tagrag in attendance, as usual. It was the first time he and Miss Carlyle had met face to face. She bent her condemning brow, haughty in its bitter scorn, full upon him, for it was not in the nature of Miss Carlyle to conceal her sentiments, especially when they were rather of the strongest. Sir Francis, when he arrived opposite, raised his hat to her. Whether it was done in courtesy, in confused unconsciousness, or in mockery, cannot be told. Miss Carlyle assumed it to have been the latter, and her lips, in their anger grew almost as pale as those of the unhappy woman who was cowering behind her.

"Did you intend that insult for me, Francis Levison?"

"As you please to take it," returned he, calling up insolence to his aid.

"You dare to lift off your hat to me! Have you forgotten that I am Miss Carlyle?"

"It would be difficult for you to be forgotten, once seen."

Now this answer was given in mockery; his tone and manner were redolent of it, insolently so. The two gentlemen looked on in discomfort, wondering what it meant; Lady Isabel hid her face as best she could, terrified to death lest his eyes should fall on

it: while the spectators, several of whom had collected now, listened with interest, especially some farm laborers of Squire Pinner's who had happened to be passing.

"You contemptible worm!" cried Miss Carlyle, "do you think you can outrage me with impunity as you, by your presence in it, are outraging West Lynne? Out upon you for a bold, bad man!"

Now Miss Corny, in so speaking, had certainly no thought of present and immediate punishment for the gentleman; but it appeared that the mob around had. The motion was commented by those stoutshouldered laborers. Whether excited thereto by the words of Miss Carlyle who, whatever may have been her faults of manner, held the respect of the neighborhood, and was looked up to only in a less degree than her brother; whether Squire Pinner, their master, had let drop, in their hearing, a word of the ducking he had hinted at, when at East Lynne, or whether their own feelings alone spurred them on, was best known to the men themselves. Certain it is, that the ominous sound of "Duck him," was breathed forth by a voice, and it was caught up and echoed around.

"Duck him! Duck him! The pond be close at hand. Let's give him a taste of his deservings! What do he the scum, turn himself up at West Lynne for, bearding Mr. Carlyle? What have he done with Lady Isabel? Him put up for others at West Lynne! West Lynne's respectable, it don't want him; it have got a better man; it won't have a villain. Now, lads!"

His face turned white, and he trembled in his shoesworthless men are frequently cowards. Lady Isabel trembled in hers; and well she might, hearing that one allusion. They set upon him, twenty pairs of hands at least, strong, rough, determined hands; not to speak of the tagrag's help, who went in with cuffs, and kicks, and pokes, and taunts, and cheers, and a demoniac dance.

They dragged him through a gap in the hedge, a gap that no baby could have got through in a cool moment; but most of us know the difference between coolness and excitement. The hedge was extensively damaged, but Justice Hare, to whom it belonged, would forgive that. Mr. Drake and the lawyer for the other was a lawyer were utterly powerless to stop the catastrophe. "If they didn't mind their own business, and keep themselves clear, they'd get served the same," was the promise held out in reply to their remonstrances; and the lawyer, who was short and fat, and could not have knocked a man down, had it been to save his life, backed out of the melee, and contented himself with issuing forth confused threatenings of the terrors of the law. Miss Carlyle stood her ground majestically, and looked on with a grim countenance. Had she interfered for his protection, she could not have been heard; and if she could have been, there's no knowing whether she would have done it.

On, to the brink of the ponda green, dank, dark, slimy sour, stinking pond. His coattails were gone by this time, and sundry rents and damages appeared in another useful garment. One pulled him, another pushed him, a third shook him by the collar, half a dozen buffeted him, and all abused him.

"In with him, boys!"

"Mercy! Mercy!" shrieked the victim, his knees bending and his teeth chattering "a little mercy for the love of Heaven!"

"Heaven! Much he knows of Heaven!"

A souse, a splash, a wild cry, a gurgle, and Sir Francis Levison was floundering in the water, its green poison, not to mention its adders and toads and frogs, going down his throat by bucketfuls. A hoarse, derisive laugh, and a hip, hip, hurrah! broke from the actors; while the juvenile ragtag, in wild delight, joined their hands round the pool, and danced the demon's dance, like so many red Indians. They had never had such a play acted for them before.

Out of the peasoup before he was quite dead, quite senseless. Of all drowned rats, he looked the worst, as he stood there with his white, rueful face, his shivery limbs, and his dilapidated garments, shaking the wet off him. The laborers, their duty done, walked coolly away; the tagrag withdrew to a safe distance, waiting for what might come next; and Miss Carlyle moved away also. Not more shivery was that wretched man than Lady Isabel, as she walked by her side. A sorry figure to cut, that, for her once chosen cavalier. What did she think of his beauty now? I know what she thought of her past folly.

Miss Carlyle never spoke a word. She sailed on, with her head up, though it was turned occasionally to look at the face of Madame Vine, at the deep distressing blush which this gaze called into her cheeks. "It's very odd," thought Miss Corny. "The likeness, especially in the eyes, is Where are you going, madame?"

They were passing a spectacle shop, and Madame Vine had halted at the door, one foot on its step. "I must have my glasses to be mended, if you please."

Miss Carlyle followed her in. She pointed out what she wanted done to the old glasses, and said she would buy a pair of new ones to wear while the job was about. The man had no blue ones, no green; plenty of white. One ugly, old pair of green things he had, with tortoiseshell rims, left by some stranger, ages and ages ago, to be mended, and never called for again. This very pair of ugly old green things was chosen by Lady Isabel. She put them on, there and then, Miss Carlyle's eyes searching her face inquisitively all the time.

"Why do you wear glasses?" began Miss Corny, abruptly as soon as they were indoors.

Another deep flush, and an imperceptible hesitation.

"My eyes are not strong."

"They look as strong as eyes can look. But why wear colored glasses? White ones would answer every purpose, I should suppose."

"I am accustomed to colored ones. I should not like white ones now."

Miss Corny paused.

"What is your Christian name, madame?" began she, again.

"Jane," replied madame, popping out an unflinching story in her alarm.

"Here! Here! What's up? What's this?"

It was a crowd in the street, and rather a noisy one. Miss Corny flew to the window, Lady Isabel in her wake. Two crowds, it may almost be said; for, from the opposite way, the scarlet and purple party as Mr. Carlyle's was called, in allusion to his colors came in view. Quite a collection of gentlemen Mr. Carlyle and Lord Mount Severn heading them.

What could it mean, the mob they were encountering? The yellow party, doubtless, but in a disreputable condition. Who or what was that object in advance of it, supported between Drake and the lawyer, and looking like a drowned rat, hair hanging, legs tottering, cheeks shaking, and clothes in tatters, while the mob, behind, had swollen to the length of the street, and was keeping up a perpetual fire of derisive shouts, groans, and hisses. The scarlet and purple halted in consternation, and Lord Mount Severn, whose sight was not as good as it had been twenty years back, stuck his pendent eye glasses astride on the bridge of his nose.

Sir Francis Levison? Could it be? Yes, it actually was! What on earth had put him into that state? Mr. Carlyle's lip curled; he continued his way and drew the peer with him.

"What the deuce is a gale now?" called out the followers of Mr. Carlyle. "That's Levison! Has he been in a railway smash, and got drenched by the engine?"

"He has been ducked!" grinned the yellows, in answer. "They have been and ducked him in the rush pool on Mr. Justice Hare's land."

The soaked and miserable man increased his speed as much as his cold and trembling legs would allow him; he would have borne on without legs at all, rather than remain

under the enemy's gaze. The enemy loftily continued their way, their heads in the air, and scorning further notice, all, save young Lord Vane. He hovered round the ranks of the unwashed, and looked vastly inclined to enter upon an Indian jig, on his own account.

"What a thundering ass I was to try it on at West Lynne!" was the enraged comment of the sufferer.

Miss Carlyle laid her hand upon the shrinking arm of her pale companion.

"You see himmy brother Archibald?"

"I see him," faltered Lady Isabel.

"And you see him, that pitiful outcast, who is too contemptible to live? Look at the two, and contrast them. Look well."

"Yes!" was the gaping answer.

"The woman who called him, that noble man, husband, quitted him for the other! Did she come to repentance, think you?"

You may wonder that the submerged gentleman should be walking through the streets, on his way to his quarters, the Raven Inn for he had been ejected from the Buck's Head but he could not help himself. As he was dripping and swearing on the brink of the pond, wondering how he should get to the Raven, an empty fly drove past, and Mr. Drake immediately stopped it; but when the driver saw that he was expected to convey not only a passenger, but a tolerable quantity of water as well, and that the passenger, moreover, was Sir Francis Levison, he refused the job. His fly was fresh lined with red velvet, and he "weren't a going to have it spoilt," he called out, as he whipped his horse and drove away, leaving the three in wrathful despair. Sir Francis wanted another conveyance procured; his friends urged that if he waited for that he might catch his death, and that the shortest way would be to hasten to the inn on foot. He objected. But his jaws were chattering, his limbs were quaking, so they seized him between them, and made off, but never bargained for the meeting of Mr. Carlyle and his party. Francis Levison would have stopped in the pond, of his own accord, head downward, rather than face them.

Miss Carlyle went that day to dine at East Lynne, walking back with Mrs. Carlyle, Madame Vine and Lucy. Lord Vane found them out, and returned at the same time; of course East Lynne was the headquarters of himself and his father. He was in the seventh heaven, and had been ever since the encounter with the yellows.

"You'd have gone into laughing convulsions, Lucy had you seen the drowned cur. I'd give all my tin for six months to come to have a photograph of him as he looked then!"

Lucy laughed in glee; she was unconscious, poor child, how deeply the "drowned cur" had injured her.

When Miss Carlyle was in her dressingroom taking her things off the room where once had slept Richard Hareshe rang for Joyce. These two rooms were still kept for Miss Carlyle for she did sometimes visit them for a few days and were distinguished by her name "Miss Carlyle's rooms."

"A fine row we have had in the town, Joyce, this afternoon."

"I have heard of it, ma'am. Served him right, if they had let him drown! Bill White, Squire Pinner's plowman, called in here and told us the news. He'd have burst with it, if he hadn't, I expect; I never saw a chap so excited. Peter cried."

"Cried?" echoed Miss Carlyle.

"Well, ma'am, you know he was very fond of Lady Isabel, was Peter, and somehow his feelings overcame him. He said he had not heard anything to please him so much for many a day; and with that he burst out crying, and gave Bill White half a crown out of his pocket. Bill White said it was he who held one leg when they soused him in. Afy saw it if you'll excuse me mentioning her name to you, ma'am, for I know you don't think well of her and when she got in here, she fell into hysterics."

"How did she see it?" snapped Miss Carlyle, her equanimity upset by the sound of the name. "I didn't see her, and I was present."

"She was coming here with a message from Mrs. Latimer to the governess."

"What did she go into hysterics for?" again snapped Miss Carlyle.

"It upset her so, she said," returned Joyce.

"It wouldn't have done her harm had they ducked her too," was the angry response.

Joyce was silent. To contradict Miss Corny brought triumph to nobody. And she was conscious, in her innermost heart, that Afy merited a little wholesome correction, not perhaps to the extent of a ducking.

"Joyce," resumed Miss Carlyle, abruptly changing the subject, "who does the governess put you in mind of?"

"Ma'am?" repeated Joyce, in some surprise, as it appeared. "The governess? Do you mean Madame Vine?"

"Do I mean you, or do I mean me? Are we governesses?" irascibly cried Miss Corny. "Who should I mean, but Madame Vine?"

She turned herself round from the lookingglass, and gazed full in Joyce's face, waiting for the answer. Joyce lowered her voice as she gave it.

"There are times when she puts me in mind of my late lady both in her face and manner. But I have never said so, ma'am; for you know Lady Isabel's name must be an interdicted one in this house."

"Have you seen her without her glasses?"

"No; never," said Joyce.

"I did today," returned Miss Carlyle. "And I can tell you, Joyce, that I was confounded at the likeness. It is an extraordinary likeness. One would think it was a ghost of Lady Isabel Vane come into the world again."

That evening after dinner, Miss Carlyle and Lord Mount Severn sat side by side on the same sofa, coffee cups in hand. Miss Carlyle turned to the earl.

"Was it a positively ascertained fact that Lady Isabel died?"

The earl stared with all his might; he thought it the strangest question that ever was asked him. "I scarcely understand you, Miss Carlyle. Died? Certainly she died."

"When the result of the accident was communicated to you, you made inquiry yourself into its truth, its details, I believe?"

"It was my duty to do so. There was no one else to undertake it."

"Did you ascertain positively, beyond all doubt, that she did die?"

"Of a surety I did. She died in the course of the same night. Terribly injured she was."

A pause. Miss Carlyle was ruminating. But she returned to the charge, as if difficult to be convinced.

"You deem that there could be no possibility of an error? You are sure that she is dead?"

"I am as sure that she is dead as that we are living," decisively replied the earl: and he spoke but according to his belief. "Wherefore should you be inquiring this?"

"A thought came over me only today to wonder whether she was really dead."

"Had any error occurred at that time, any false report of her death, I should soon have found it out by her drawing the annuity I settled upon her. It has never been drawn since. Besides, she would have written to me, as agreed upon. No, poor thing, she is gone beyond all doubt, and has taken her sins with her."

Convincing proofs; and Miss Carlyle lent her ear to them.

The following morning while Madame Vine was at breakfast, Mr. Carlyle entered.

"Do you admit intruders here Madame Vine?" cried he, with his sweet smile, and attractive manner.

She arose; her face burning, her heart throbbing.

"Keep your seat, pray; I have but a moment to stay," said Mr. Carlyle. "I have come to ask you how William seems?"

"There was no difference," she murmured, and then she took courage and spoke more openly. "I understood you to say the other night, sir, that he should have further advice."

"Ay; I wish him to go over to Lynneborough, to Dr. Martin; the drive, I think, will do him good," replied Mr. Carlyle. "And I would like you to accompany him, if you do not mind the trouble. You can have the pony carriage, it will be better to go in that than boxed up in the railway carriage. You can remind Dr. Martin that the child's constitution is precisely what his mother's was," continued Mr. Carlyle, a tinge lightening his face. "It may be a guide to his treatment; he said himself it was, when he attended him for an illness a year or two ago."

"Yes, sir."

He crossed the hall on his entrance to the breakfastroom. She tore upstairs to her chamber, and sank down in an agony of tears and despair. Oh, to love him as she did now! To yearn after his affection with this passionate, jealous longing, and to know that they were separated for ever and ever; that she was worse to him than nothing!

Softly, my lady. This is not bearing your cross.