

# **East Lynne Vol.III**

**By**

**Ellen Wood**

## **EAST LYNNE Vol.III**

### **CHAPTER XXXVI.**

#### **APPEARANCE OF A RUSSIAN BEAR AT WEST LYNNE.**

Mr. Carlyle harangued the populace from the balcony of the Buck's Head, a substantial old House, renowned in the days of posting, now past and gone. Its balcony was an oldfashioned, roomy balcony, painted green, where there was plenty of space for his friends to congregate. He was a persuasive orator, winning his way to ears and hearts; but had he spoken with plums in his mouth, and a stammer on his tongue, and a breakdown at every sentence, the uproarious applause and shouts would be equally rife. Mr. Carlyle was intensely popular in West Lynne, setting aside his candidateship and his oratory; and West Lynne made common cause against Sir Francis Levison.

Sir Francis Levison harangued the mob from the Raven, but in a more ignoble manner. For the Raven possessed no balcony, and he was fain to let himself down with a stride and a jump from the first floor window on the top of the bowwindow of the parlor, and stand there. The Raven, though a comfortable, old established, and respectable inn, could boast only of casements for its upper windows, and they are not convenient to deliver speeches from. He was wont, therefore to take his seat on the bowwindow, and, that was not altogether convenient either, for it was but narrow, and he hardly dared move an arm or a leg for fear of pitching over on the upturned faces. Mr. Drake let himself down also, to support him on one side, and the first day, the lawyer supported him on the other. For the first day only; for that worthy, being not as high as Sir Francis Levison's or Mr. Drake's shoulder, and about five times their breadth, had those two been rolled into one, experienced a slight difficulty in getting back again. It was accomplished at last, Sir Francis pulling him up, and Mr. Drake hoisting him from behind, just as a ladder was being brought out to the rescue amidst shouts of laughter. The stout man wiped the perspiration from his face when he was landed in safety, and recorded a mental vow never to descend from a window again. After that the candidate and his friend shared the shelf between them. The lawyer's name was Rubiny, illnaturally supposed to be a corruption of Reuben.

They stood there one afternoon, Sir Francis' eloquence in full play, but he was a shocking speaker, and the crowd, laughing, hissing, groaning and applauding, blocking up the road. Sir Francis could not complain of one thing that he got no audience; for it was the pleasure of West Lynne extensively to support him in that respect a few to cheer, a great many to jeer and hiss. Remarkably dense was the mob on this afternoon, for Mr.

Carlyle had just concluded his address from the Buck's Head, and the crowd who had been listening to him came rushing up to swell the ranks of the other crowd. They were elbowing, and pushing, and treading on each other's heels, when an open barouche drove suddenly up to scatter them. Its horses wore scarlet and purple rosettes; and one lady, a very pretty one, sat inside of it Mrs. Carlyle.

But the crowd could not be so easily scattered; it was too thick; the carriage could advance but at a snail's pace, and now and then came to a standstill also, till the confusion should be subsided; for where was the use of wasting words? He did not bow to Barbara; he remembered the result of his having done so to Miss Carlyle, and the little interlude of the pond had washed most of his impudence out of him. He remained at his post, not looking at Barbara, not looking at anything in particular, waiting till the interruption should have passed.

Barbara, under cover of her dainty lace parasol, turned her eyes upon him. At that very moment he raised his right hand, slightly shook his head back, and tossed his hair off his brow. His hand, ungloved, was white and delicate as a lady's, and his rich diamond ring gleamed in the sun. The pink flush on Barbara's cheek deepened to a crimson damask, and her brow contracted with a remembrance of pain.

"The very action Richard described! The action he was always using at East Lynne! I believe from my heart that the man is Thorn; that Richard was laboring under some mistake when he said he knew Sir Francis Levison."

She let her hands fall upon her knee as she spoke, heedless of the candidate, heedless of the crowd, heedless of all save her own troubled thoughts. A hundred respected salutations were offered her; she answered them mechanically; a shout was raised, "Long live Carlyle! Carlyle forever!" Barbara bowed her pretty head on either side, and the carriage at length got on.

The parting of the crowd brought Mr. Dill, who had come to listen for once to the speech of the second man, and Mr. Ebenezer James close to each other. Mr. Ebenezer James was one who, for the last twelve or fifteen years, had been trying his hand at many trades. And had not come out particularly well at any. A rolling stone gathers no moss. First, he had been clerk to Mr. Carlyle; next, he had been seduced into joining the corps of the Theatre Royal at Lynneborough; then he turned auctioneer; then travelling in the oil and color line; then a parson, the urgent pastor of some new sect; then omnibus driver; then collector of the water rate; and now he was clerk again, not in Mr. Carlyle's office, but in that of Ball & Treadman, other solicitors of West Lynne. A goodhumored, goodnatured, freeofmannered, idle chap was Mr. Ebenezer James, and that was the worst that could be urged against him, save that he was sometimes out at pocket and out at elbows. His father was a respectable man, and had made money in trade, but he had

married a second wife, had a second family, and his eldest son did not come in for much of the paternal money, though he did for a large share of the paternal anger.

"Well, Ebenezer, and how goes the world with you?" cried Mr. Dill by way of salutation.

"Jogging on. It never gets to a trot."

"Didn't I see you turning into your father's house yesterday?"

"I pretty soon turned out of it again. I'm like the monkey when I venture thereget more kicks than halfpence. Hush, old gentleman! We interrupt the eloquence."

Of course "the eloquence" applied to Sir Francis Levison, and they set themselves to listenMr. Dill with a serious face, Mr. Ebenezer with a grinning one. But soon a jostle and movement carried them to the outside of the crowd, out of sight of the speaker, though not entirely out of hearing. By these means they had a view of the street, and discerned something advancing to them, which they took for a Russian bear on its hind legs.

"I'llbeblest," uttered Mr. Ebenezer James, after a prolonged pause of staring consternation, "if I don't believe it's Bethel!"

"Bethel!" repeated Mr. Dill, gazing at the approaching figure. "What has he been doing to himself?"

Mr. Otway Bethel it was, just arrived from foreign parts in his travelling costumesomething shaggy, terminating all over with tails. A wild object he looked; and Mr. Dill rather backed as he drew near, as if fearing he was a real animal which might bite him.

"What's your name?" cried he.

"It used to be Bethel," replied the wild man, holding out his hand to Mr. Dill. "So you are in the world, James, and kicking yet?"

"And hope to kick in it for some time to come," replied Mr. James. "Where did you hail from last? A settlement at the North Pole?"

"Didn't get quite as far. What's the row here?"

"When did you arrive, Mr. Otway?" inquired old Dill.

"Now. Four o'clock train. I say, what's up?"

"An election; that's all," said Mr. Ebenezer. "Attley went and kicked the bucket."

"I don't ask about the election; I heard all that at the railway station," returned Otway Bethel, impatiently. "What's this?" waving his hand at the crowd.

"One of the candidates wasting breath and words Levison."

"I say," repeated Otway Bethel, looking at Mr. Dill, "wasn't it rather rather of the ratherest, for him to oppose Carlyle?"

"Infamous! Contemptible!" was the old gentleman's excited answer. "But he'll get his deserts yet, Mr. Otway; they have already begun. He was treated to a ducking yesterday in Justice Hare's green pond."

"And he did look a miserable devil when he came out, trailing through the streets," added Mr. Ebenezer, while Otway Bethel burst into a laugh. "He was smothered into some hot blankets at the Raven, and a pint of burnt brandy put into him. He seems all right today."

"Will he go in and win?"

"Chut! Win against Carlyle! He has not the ghost of a chance; and government if it is the government who put him on must be a pack of fools; they can't know the influence of Carlyle. Bethel, is that style of costume the fashion where you come from?"

"For slender pockets. I'll sell 'em to you now, James, at half price. Let's get a look at this Levison, though. I have never seen the fellow."

Another interruption of the crowd, even as he spoke, caused by the railway van bringing up some luggage. They contrived, in the confusion, to push themselves to the front, not far from Sir Francis. Otway Bethel stared at him in unqualified amazement.

"Why, what brings him here? What is he doing?"

"Who?"

He pointed his finger. "The one with the white handkerchief in his hand."

"That is Sir Francis."

"No!" uttered Bethel, a whole world of astounded meaning in his tone. "By Jove! He Sir Francis Levison?"

At that moment their eyes met, Francis Levison's and Otway Bethel's. Otway Bethel raised his shaggy hat in salutation, and Sir Francis appeared completely scared. Only for an instant did he lose his presence of mind. The next, his eyeglass was stuck in his eye and turned on Mr. Bethel, with a hard, haughty stare; as much as to say, who are you, fellow, that you should take such a liberty? But his cheeks and lips were growing as white as marble.

"Do you know Levison, Mr. Otway?" inquired old Dill.

"A little. Once."

"When he was not Levison, but somebody else," laughed Mr. Ebenezer James. "Eh, Bethel?"

Bethel turned as reproving a stare on Mr. Ebenezer as the baronet had just turned on him. "What do you mean, pray? Mind your own business."

A nod to old Dill, and he turned off and disappeared, taking no further notice of James. The old gentleman questioned the latter.

"What was that little bit of byplay, Mr. Ebenezer?"

"Nothing much," laughed Mr. Ebenezer. "Only he," nodding towards Sir Francis, "was not always the great man he is now."

"Ah!"

"I have held my tongue about it, for it's no affair of mine, but I don't mind letting you into the secret. Would you believe that that grand baronet there, wouldbe member for West Lynne, used, years ago, to dodge about Abbey Wood, mad after Afy Hallijohn? He didn't call himself Levison then."

Mr. Dill felt as if a hundred pins and needles were pricking at his memory, for there rose up in it certain doubts and troubles touching Richard Hare and one Thorn. He laid his eager hand upon the other's arm. "Ebenezer James, what did he call himself?"

"Thorn. A dandy, then, as he is now. He used to come galloping down the Swainson road at dusk, tie his horse in the woods, and monopolize Miss Afy."

"How do you know this?"

"Because I've seen it a dozen times. I was spooney after Afy myself in those days, and went down there a good deal in an evening. If it hadn't been for him, andperhaps that murdering villain, Dick Hare, Afy would have listened to me. Not that she cared for

Dick; but, you see, they were gentlemen. I am thankful to the stars, now, for my luck in escaping her. With her for a wife, I should have been in a pickle always; as it is, I do get out of it once in a while."

"Did you know then that he was Francis Levison?"

"Not I. He called himself Thorn, I tell you. When he came down to offer himself for member, and oppose Carlyle, I was thunderstruck like Bethel was a minute ago. Ho ho, said I, so Thorn's defunct, and Levison has risen."

"What had Otway Bethel to do with him?"

"Nothing that I know of. Only Bethel was fond of the woods also after other game than Afy, though and may have seen Thorn often. You saw that he recognized him."

"Thorn Levison, I mean did not appear to like the recognition," said Mr. Dill.

"Who would, in his position?" laughed Ebenezer James. "I don't like to be reminded of many a wild scrape of my past life, in my poor station; and what would it be for Levison, were it to come out that he once called himself Thorn, and came running after Miss Afy Halli John?"

"Why did he call himself Thorn? Why disguise his own name?"

"Not knowing, can't say. Is his name Levison, or is it Thorn?"

"Nonsense, Mr. Ebenezer!"

Mr. Dill, bursting with the strange news he had heard, endeavored to force his way through the crowd, that he might communicate it to Mr. Carlyle. The crowd was, however, too dense for him, and he had to wait the opportunity of escaping with what patience he might. When it came he made his way to the office, and entered Mr. Carlyle's private room. That gentleman was seated at his desk, signing letters.

"Why, Dill, you are out of breath!"

"Well I may be! Mr. Archibald, I have been listening to the most extraordinary statement. I have found out about Thorn. Who do you think he is?"

Mr. Carlyle put down his pen and looked full in the old man's face; he had never seen him so excited.

"It's that man, Levison."

"I do not understand you," said Mr. Carlyle. He did not. It was as good as Hebrew to him. "The Levison of today, your opponent, is the Thorn who went after Afy Hallijohn. It is so, Mr. Archibald."

"It cannot be!" slowly uttered Mr. Carlyle, thought upon thought working havoc with his brain. "Where did you hear this?"

Mr. Dill told his tale. Otway Bethel's recognition of him; Sir Francis Levison's scared paleness, for he had noticed that; Mr. Ebenezer's revelation. The point in it all, that finally settled most upon Mr. Carlyle, was the thought that if Levison were indeed the man, he could not be instrumental in bringing him to justice.

"Bethel has denied to me more than once that he knew Thorn, or was aware of such a man being in existence," observed Mr. Carlyle.

"He must have had a purpose in it, then," returned Mr. Dill. "They knew each other today. Levison recognized him for certain, although he carried it off with a high hand, pretending not."

"And it was not as Levison, but as Thorn, that Bethel recognized him?"

"There's little doubt of that. He did not mention the name, Thorn; but he was evidently struck with astonishment at hearing that it was Levison. If they have not some secret between them, Mr. Archibald, I'll never believe my own eyes again."

"Mrs. Hare's opinion is that Bethel had to do with the murder," said Mr. Carlyle, in a low tone.

"If that is their secret, Bethel knows the murderer, rely upon it," was the answer. "Mr. Archibald, it seems to me that now or never is the time to clear up Richard."

"Aye; but how set about it?" responded Mr. Carlyle.

Meanwhile Barbara had proceeded home in her carriage, her brain as busy as Mr. Carlyle's, perhaps more troubled. Her springing lightly and hastily out the moment it stopped, disdaining the footman's arm, her compressed lips and absent countenance, proved that her resolution was set upon some plan of action. William and Madame Vine met her in the hall.

"We have seen Dr. Martin, Mrs. Carlyle."

"And he says"

"I cannot stay to hear now, William. I will see you later, madame."



She ran upstairs to her dressingroom, Madame Vine following her with her reproachful eyes. "Why should she care?" thought madame. "It is not her child."

Throwing her parasol on one chair, her gloves on another, down sat Barbara to her writingtable. "I will write to him; I will have him here, if it be but for an hour!" she passionately exclaimed. "This shall be, so far, cleared up. I am as sure as sure can be that it is that man. The very action Richard described! And there was the diamond ring! For better, for worse, I will send for him; but it will not be for worse if God is with us."

She dashed off a letter, getting up ere she had well begun it, to order her carriage round again. She would trust none but herself to put it in the post.

"MY DEAR MR. SMITH We want you here. Something has arisen that it is necessary to see you upon. You can get here by Saturday. Be in these grounds, near the covered walk, that evening at dusk. Ever yours,

"B."

And the letter was addressed to Mr. Smith, of some street in Liverpool, the address furnished by Richard. Very cautious to see, was Barbara. She even put "Mr. Smith," inside the letter.

"Now stop," cried Barbara to herself, as she was folding it. "I ought to send him a five pound note, for he may not have the means to come; and I don't think I have one of that amount in the house."

She looked in her secretaire. Not a single fivepound note. Out of the room she ran, meeting Joyce, who was coming along the corridor.

"Do you happen to have a fivepound note, Joyce?"

"No, ma'am, not by me."

"I dare say Madame Vine has. I paid her last week, and there were two fivepound notes amongst it." And away went Barbara to the gray parlor.

"Could you lend me a fivepound note, Madame Vine? I have occasion to enclose one in a letter, and find I do not possess one."

Madame Vine went to her room to get it. Barbara waited. She asked William what Dr. Martin said.

"He tried my chest withoh, I forget what they call itand he said I must be a brave boy and take my codliver oil well, and port wine, and everything I liked that was good. And

he said he should be at West Lynne next Wednesday afternoon; and I am to go there, and he would call in and see me."

"Where are you to meet him?"

"He said, either at papa's office or at Aunt Cornelia's, as we might decide. Madame fixed it for papa's office, for she thought he might like to see Dr. Martin. I say, mamma."

"What?" asked Barbara.

"Madame Vine has been crying ever since. Why should she?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Crying!"

"Yes but she wipes her eyes under her spectacles, and thinks I don't see her. I know I am very ill, but why should she cry for that?"

"Nonsense, William. Who told you you were very ill?"

"Nobody. I suppose I am," he thoughtfully added. "If Joyce or Lucy cried, now, there'd be some sense in it, for they have known me all my life."

"You are so apt to fancy things! You are always doing it. It is not likely that madame would be crying because you are ill."

Madame came in with the banknote. Barbara thanked her, ran upstairs, and in another minute or two was in her carriage.

She was back again, and dressing when the gentlemen returned to dinner. Mr. Carlyle came upstairs. Barbara, like most persons who do things without reflection, having had time to cool down from her ardor, was doubting whether she had acted wisely in sending so precipitately for Richard. She carried her doubt and care to her husband, her sure refuge in perplexity.

"Archibald, I fear I have done a foolish thing."

He laughed. "I fear we all do that at times, Barbara. What is it?"

He had seated himself in one of Barbara's favorite low chairs, and she stood before him, leaning on his shoulder, her face a little behind, so that he could not see it. In her delicacy she would not look at him while she spoke what she was going to speak.

"It is something that I have had upon my mind for years, and I did not like to tell it to you."

"For years?"

"You remember that night, years ago, when Richard was at the Grove in disguise"

"Which night, Barbara? He came more than once."

"The night the night that Lady Isabel quitted East Lynne," she answered, not knowing how better to bring it to his recollection and she stole her hand lovingly into his, as she said it. "Richard came back after his departure, saying he had met Thorn in Bean lane. He described the peculiar motion of the hand as he threw back his hair from his brow; he spoke of the white hand and the diamond ring how it glittered in the moonlight. Do you remember?"

"I do."

"The motion appeared perfectly familiar to me, for I had seen it repeatedly used by one then staying at East Lynne. I wondered you did not recognize it. From that night I had little doubt as to the identity of Thorn. I believed that he and Captain Levison were one."

A pause. "Why did you not tell me so, Barbara?"

"How could I speak of that man to you, at that time? Afterwards, when Richard was here, that snowy winter's day, he asserted that he knew Sir Francis Levison; that he had seen him and Thorn together; and that put me off the scent. But today, as I was passing the Raven, in the carriage going very slow, on account of the crowd he was perched out there, addressing the people, and I saw the very same action the old action that I had used to see."

Barbara paused. Mr. Carlyle did not interrupt her.

"I feel a conviction that they are the same that Richard must have been under some unaccountable mistake in saying that he knew Francis Levison. Besides, who but he, in evening dress, would have been likely to go through Bean lane that night? It leads to no houses, but one wishing to avoid the high road could get into it from these grounds, and so on to West Lynne. He must have gone back directly on foot to West Lynne, to get the post carriage, as was proved, and he would naturally go through Bean lane. Forgive me, Archibald, for recalling these things to you, but I feel so sure that Levison and Thorn are one."

"I know they are," he quietly said.

Barbara, in her astonishment drew back and stared him in the face a face of severe dignity it was just then.

"Oh, Archibald! Did you know it at that time?"

"I did not know it until this afternoon. I never suspected it."

"I wonder you did not. I have wondered often."

"So do I now. Dill, Ebenezer James, and Otway Bethel who came home today were standing before the Raven, listening to his speech, when Bethel recognized him; not as Levison he was infinitely astonished to find he was Levison. Levison, they say, was scared at the recognition, and changed color. Bethel would give no explanation, and moved away; but James told Dill that Levison was the man Thorn who used to be after Afy Hallijohn."

"How did you know?" breathlessly asked Barbara.

"Because Mr. Ebenezer was after Afy himself, and repeatedly saw Thorn in the wood. Barbara, I believe now that it was Levison who killed Hallijohn, but I should like to know what Bethel had to do with it."

Barbara clasped her hands. "How strange it is!" she exclaimed, in some excitement. "Mamma told me, yesterday, that she was convinced something or other was going to turn up relative to the murder. She had had the most distressing dream, she said, connected with Richard and Bethel, and somebody else, whom she appeared to know in the dream, but could not recognize or remember when she was awake. She was as ill as could be she does put such faith in these wretched dreams."

"One would think you did also, Barbara, by your vehemence."

"No, no; you know better. But it is strange you must acknowledge that it is that, so sure as anything fresh happens touching the subject of the murder, so sure is a troubled dream the forerunner of it. Mamma does not have them at other times. Bethel denied to you that he knew Thorn."

"I know he did."

"And now it turns out that he does know him, and he is always in mamma's dreams none more prominent in them than Bethel. But, Archibald, I am not telling you I have sent for Richard."

"You have?"

"I felt sure that Levison was Thorn. I did not expect that others would recognize him, and I acted on the impulse of the moment and wrote to Richard, telling him to be here on Saturday evening. The letter is gone."

"Well, we must shelter him as best we can."

"Archibalddear Archibald, what can be done to clear him?" she asked, the tears rising to her eyes.

"Being Levison, I cannot act."

"What!" she uttered. "Not actnot act for Richard!"

He bent his clear, truthful eyes upon her.

"My dearest, how can I?"

She looked a little rebellious, and the tears fell.

"You have not considered, Barbara. Any one in the world but Levison; it would look like my own revenge."

"Forgive me!" she softly whispered. "You are always right. I did not think of it in that light. But, what steps do you imagine can be taken?"

"It is a case encompassed with difficulties," mused Mr. Carlyle. "Let us wait until Richard comes."

"Do you happen to have a fivepound note in your pocket, Archibald? I had not one to send to him, and borrowed it from Madame Vine."

He took out his pocket book and gave it to her.

In the gray parlor, in the dark twilight of the April eveningor it was getting far into the nightwere William Carlyle and Lady Isabel. It had been a warm day, but the spring evenings were still chilly, and a fire burned in the grate. There was no blaze, the red embers were smoldering and half dead, but Madame Vine did not bestir herself to heed the fire. William lay on the sofa, and she sat by, looking at him. Her glasses were off, for the tears wetted them continually; and it was not the recognition of the children she feared. He was tired with the drive to Lynneborough and back, and lay with eyes shut; she thought asleep. Presently he opened them.

"How long will it be before I die?"

The words took her utterly by surprise, and her heart went round in a whirl. "What do you mean, William? Who said anything about dying?"

"Oh, I know. I know by the fuss there is over me. You heard what Hannah said the other night."

"What? When?"

"When she brought in the tea, and I was lying on the rug. I was not asleep, though you thought I was. You told her she ought to be more cautious, for that I might not have been asleep."

"I don't remember much about it," said Lady Isabel, at her wits' ends how to remove the impression Hannah's words must have created, had he indeed heard them. "Hannah talks great nonsense sometimes."

"She said I was going on fast to the grave."

"Did she? Nobody attends to Hannah. She is only a foolish girl. We shall soon have you well, when the warm weather comes."

"Madame Vine."

"Well, my darling?"

"Where's the use of your trying to deceive me? Do you think I don't see that you are doing it? I'm not a baby; you might if it were Archibald. What is it that's the matter with me?"

"Nothing. Only you are not strong. When you get strong again, you will be as well as ever."

William shook his head in disbelief. He was precisely that sort of child from whom it is next to impossible to disguise facts; quick, thoughtful, observant, and advanced beyond his years. Had no words been dropped in his hearing, he would have suspected the evil, by the care evinced for him, but plenty of words had been dropped; hints, by which he had gathered suspicion; broad assertions, like Hannah's, which had too fully supplied it; and the boy in his inmost heart, knew as well that death was coming for him as that death itself did.

"Then, if there's nothing the matter with me, why could not Dr. Martin speak to you before me today? Why did he send me into the other room while he told you what he thought? Ah, Madame Vine, I am as wise as you."

"A wise little boy, but mistaken sometimes," she said from her aching heart.

"It's nothing to die, when God loves us. Lord Vane says so. He had a little brother who died."

"A sickly child, who was never likely to live, he had been pale and ailing from a baby," spoke Lady Isabel.

"Why! Did you know him?"

"I heard so," she replied, turning off her thoughtless avowal in the best manner she could.

"Don't you know that I am going to die?"

"No."

"Then why have you been grieving since we left Dr. Martin's? And why do you grieve at all for me? I am not your child."

The words, the scene altogether, overcame her. She knelt down by the sofa, and her tears burst forth freely. "There! You see!" cried William.

"Oh, William, I had a little boy of my own, and when I look at you, I think of him, and that is why I cry."

"I know. You have told us of him before. His name was William, too."

She leaned over him, her breath mingling with his; she took his little hand in hers; "William, do you know that those whom God loves best He takes first? Were you to die, you would go to Heaven, leaving all the cares and sorrows of the world behind you. It would have been happier for many of us had we died in infancy."

"Would it have been happier for you?"

"Yes," she faintly said. "I have had more than my share of sorrow. Sometimes I think that I cannot support it."

"Is it not past, then? Do you have sorrow now?"

"I have it always. I shall have it till I die. Had I died a child, William, I should have escaped it. Oh! The world is full of it! full and full."

"What sort of sorrow?"

"All sorts. Pain, sickness, care, trouble, sin, remorse, weariness," she wailed out. "I cannot enumerate the half that the world brings upon us. When you are very, very tired, William, does it not seem a luxury, a sweet happiness, to lie down at night in your little bed, waiting for the bliss of sleep?"

"Yes. And I am often tired; so tired as that."

"Then just so do we, who are tired of the world's cares, long for the grave in which we shall lie down to rest. We covet it, William; long for it; but you cannot understand that."

"We don't lie in the grave, Madame Vine."

"No, no, child. Our bodies lie there, to be raised again in beauty at the last day. We go into a blessed place of rest, where sorrow and pain cannot come. I wish I wish," she uttered, with a bursting heart, "that you and I were both there!"

"Who says the world's so sorrowful, Madame Vine? I think it is lovely, especially when the sun's shining on a hot day, and the butterflies come out. You should see East Lynne on a summer's morning, when you are running up and down the slopes, and the trees are waving overhead, and the sky's blue, and the roses and flowers are all out. You would not call it a sad world."

"A pleasant world one might regret to leave if we were not wearied by pain and care. But, what is this world, take it at its best, in comparison with that other world, Heaven? I have heard of some people who are afraid of death; they fear they shall not go to it; but when God takes a little child there it is because He loves him. It is a land, as Mrs. Barbauld says, where the roses are without thorns, where the flowers are not mixed with brambles"

"I have seen the flowers," interrupted William, rising in his earnestness. "They are ten times brighter than our flowers here."

"Seen the flowers! The flowers we shall see in Heaven?" she echoed.

"I have seen a picture of them. We went to Lynneborough to see Martin's picture of the Last Judgment I don't mean Dr. Martin," said William interrupting himself.

"I know."

"There were three pictures. One was called the 'Plains of Heaven,' and I liked that best; and so we all did. Oh, you should have seen it! Did you ever see them, Madame Vine?"

"No. I have heard of them."



"There was a river, you know, and boats, beautiful gondolas they looked, taking the redeemed to the shores of Heaven. They were shadowy figures in white robes, myriads of them, for they reached all up in the air to the holy city; it seemed to be in the clouds coming down from God. The flowers grew on the banks of the river, pink, and blue, and violet, all colors they were, but so bright and beautiful; brighter than our flowers are."

"Who took you to see the pictures?"

"Papa. He took me and Lucy; and Mrs. Hare went with us, and Barbara she was not our mamma then. But, madame" dropping his voice "what stupid thing do you think Lucy asked papa?"

"What did she ask him?"

"She asked whether mamma was amongst that crowd in the white robes; whether she was gone up to Heaven? Our mamma that was, you know, and lots of people could hear what she said."

Lady Isabel dropped her face upon her hands.

"What did your papa answer?" she breathed.

"I don't know. Nothing, I think; he was talking to Barbara. But it was very stupid of Lucy, because Wilson has told her over and over again that she must never talk of Lady Isabel to papa. Miss Manning told her so too. When we got home, and Wilson heard of it, she said Lucy deserved a good shaking."

"Why must not Lady Isabel be talked of to him?"

A moment after the question had left her lips, she wondered what possessed her to give utterance to it.

"I'll tell you," said William in a whisper. "She ran away from papa. Lucy talks nonsense about her having been kidnapped, but she knows nothing. I do, though they don't think it, perhaps."

"She may be among the redeemed, some time, William, and you with her."

He fell back on the sofa pillow with a weary sigh, and lay in silence. Lady Isabel shaded her face, and remained in silence also. Soon she was aroused from it; William was in a fit of loud, sobbing tears.

"Oh, I don't want to die! I don't want to die! Why should I go and leave papa and Lucy?"

She hung over him; she clasped her arms around him; her tears, her sobs, mingling with his. She whispered to him sweet and soothing words; she placed him so that he might sob out his grief upon her bosom; and in a little while the paroxysm had passed.

"Hark!" exclaimed William. "What's that?"

A sound of talking and laughter in the hall. Mr. Carlyle, Lord Mount Severn, and his son were leaving the diningroom. They had some committee appointed that evening at West Lynne and were departing to keep it. As the halldoor closed upon them, Barbara came into the gray parlor. Up rose Madame Vine, scuffled on her spectacles, and took her seat soberly upon a chair.

"All in the dark, and your fire going out!" exclaimed Barbara, as she hastened to stir the latter and send it into a blaze. "Who's on the sofa? William, you ought to be to bed!"

"Not yet, mamma. I don't want to go yet."

"But it is quite time that you should," she returned, ringing the bell. "To sit up at night is not the way to make you strong."

William was dismissed. And then she returned to Madame Vine, and inquired what Dr. Martin had said.

"He said the lungs were undoubtedly affected; but, like all doctors, he would give no decisive opinion. I could see that he had formed one."

Mrs. Carlyle looked at her. The firelight played especially upon the spectacles, and she moved her chair into the shade.

"Dr. Martin will see him again next week; he is coming to West Lynne. I am sure, by the tone of his voice, by his evasive manner, that he anticipates the worst, although he would not say so in words."

"I will take William into West Lynne myself," observed Barbara. "The doctor will, of course, tell me. I came in to pay my debts," she added, dismissing the subject of the child, and holding out a fivepound note.

Lady Isabel mechanically stretched out her hand for it.

"Whilst we are, as may be said, upon the money topic," resumed Barbara, in a gay tone, "will you allow me to intimate that both myself and Mr. Carlyle very much disapprove of your making presents to the children. I was calculating, at a rough guess the cost of the toys and things you have bought for them, and I think it must amount to a very large portion of the salary you have received. Pray do not continue this, Madame Vine."

"I have no one else to spend my money on; I love the children," was madame's answer, somewhat sharply given, as if she were jealous of the interference between her and the children, and would resent it.

"Nay, you have yourself. And if you do not require much outlay, you have, I should suppose, a reserve fund to which to put your money. Be so kind as to take the hint, madame, otherwise I shall be compelled more peremptorily to forbid your generosity. It is very good of you, very kind; but if you do not think yourself, we must for you."

"I will buy them less," was the murmured answer. "I must give them a little token of love now and then."

"That you are welcome to do a 'little token,' once in a way, but not the costly toys you have been purchasing. Have you ever had an acquaintance with Sir Francis Levison?" continued Mrs. Carlyle, passing with abruptness from one point to another.

An inward shiver, a burning cheek, a heart pang of wild remorse, and a faint answer. "No."

"I fancied from your manner when I was speaking of him the other day, that you knew him or had known him. No compliment, you will say, to assume an acquaintance with such a man. He is a stranger to you, then?"

Another faint reply. "Yes."

Barbara paused.

"Do you believe in fatality, Madame Vine?"

"Yes, I do," was the steady answer.

"I don't," and yet the very question proved that she did not wholly disbelieve it. "No, I don't," added Barbara, stoutly, as she approached the sofa vacated by William, and sat down upon it, thus bringing herself opposite and near to Madame Vine. "Are you aware that it was Francis Levison who brought the evil to this house?"

"The evil" stammered Madame Vine.

"Yes, it was he," she resumed, taking the hesitating answer for an admission that the governess knew nothing, or but little, of past events. "It was he who took Lady Isabel from her homethough perhaps she was as willing to go as he was to take her; I do know"

"Oh, no, no!" broke from the unguarded lips of Madame Vine. "At least I mean I should think not," she added, in confusion.

"We shall never know; and of what consequence is it? One thing is certain, she went; another thing, almost equally certain, is, she did not go against her will. Did you ever hear the details?"

"No." Her answer would have been "Yes," but possibly the next question might have been, "From whom did you hear them?"

"He was staying at East Lynne. The man had been abroad; outlawed; dared not show his face in England; and Mr. Carlyle, in his generosity, invited him to East Lynne as a place of shelter, where he would be safe from his creditors while something was arranged. He was a connection in some way of Lady Isabel's, and they repaid Mr. Carlyle, he and she, by quitting East Lynne together."

"Why did Mr. Carlyle give that invitation?" The words were uttered in a spirit of remorseful wailing. Mrs. Carlyle believed they were a question put, and she rose up haughtily against it.

"Why did he give the invitation? Did I hear you aright, Madame Vine? Did Mr. Carlyle know he was a reprobate? And, if he had known it, was not Isabel his wife? Could he dream of danger for her? If it pleased Mr. Carlyle to fill East Lynne with bad men tomorrow, what would that be to me to my safety, to my wellbeing, to my love and allegiance to my husband? What were you thinking of, madame?"

"Thinking of?" She leaned her troubled head upon her hand. Mrs. Carlyle resumed,

"Sitting alone in the drawingroom just now, and thinking matters over, it did seem to me very like what people call a fatality. That man, I say, was the one who wrought the disgrace, the trouble to Mr. Carlyle's family; and it is he, I have every reason now to believe, who brought a nearly equal disgrace and trouble upon mine. Did you know" Mrs. Carlyle lowered her voice "that I have a brother in evilin shame?"

Lady Isabel did not dare to answer that she did know it. Who had there been likely to inform her, the strange governess of the tale of Richard Hare!

"So the world calls it shame," pursued Barbara, growing excited. "And it is shame, but not as the world thinks it. The shame lies with another, who had thrust the suffering and shame upon Richard; and that other is Francis Levison. I will tell you the tale. It is worth the telling."

She could only dispose herself to listen; but she wondered what Francis Levison had to do with Richard Hare.

"In the days long gone by, when I was little more than a child, Richard took to going after Afy Hallijohn. You have seen the cottage in the wood; she lived there with her father and Joyce. It was very foolish for him; but young men will be foolish. As many more went after her, or wanted to go after her, as she could count upon her ten fingers. Among them, chief of them, more favored even than Richard, was one called Thorn, by social position a gentleman. He was a stranger, and used to ride over in secret. The night of the murder came the dreadful murder, when Hallijohn was shot down dead. Richard ran away; testimony was strong against him, and the coroner's jury brought in a verdict of 'Wilful Murder against Richard Hare the younger.' We never supposed but what he was guilty of the act, mind you, not of the intention; even mamma, who so loved him, believed he had done it; but she believed it was the result of accident, not design. Oh, the trouble that has been the lot of my poor mamma!" cried Barbara, clasping her hands. "And she had no one to sympathize with her no one, no one! I, as I tell you, was little more than a child; and papa, who might have done it, took part against Richard. It went on for three or four years, the sorrow, and there was no mitigation. At the end of that period Richard came for a few hours to West Lynne came in secret and we learnt for the first time that he was not guilty. The man who did the deed was Thorn; Richard was not even present. The next question was, how to find Thorn. Nobody knew anything about him who he was, what he was, where he came from, where he went to; and thus more years passed on. Another Thorn came to West Lynne an officer in her majesty's service; and his appearance tallied with the description Richard had given. I assumed it to be the one; Mr. Carlyle assumed it; but, before anything could be done or even thought of Captain Thorn was gone again."

Barbara paused to take breath, Madame Vine sat listless enough. What was this tale to her?

"Again years went on. The period came of Francis Levison's sojourn at East Lynne. Whilst I was there, Captain Thorn arrived once more, on a visit to the Herberts. We then strove to find out points of his antecedents, Mr. Carlyle and I, and we became nearly convinced that he was the man. I had to come here often to see Mr. Carlyle, for mamma did not dare to stir in the affair, papa was so violent against Richard. Thus I often saw Francis Levison; but he was visible to scarcely any other visitor, being at East Lynne en cachette. He intimated that he was afraid of encountering creditors. I now begin to doubt whether that was not a false plea; and I remember Mr. Carlyle said, at the time, that he had no creditors in or near West Lynne."

"Then what was his motive for shunning society for never going out?" interrupted Lady Isabel. Too well she remembered that bygone time; Francis Levison had told that the fear of his creditors kept him up so closely; though he had once said to her they were not in the immediate neighborhood of East Lynne.

"He had a worse fear upon him than that of creditors," returned Mrs. Carlyle. "Singular to say, during this visit of Captain Thorn to the Herberts, we received an intimation from my brother that he was once more about to venture for a few hours to West Lynne. I brought the news to Mr. Carlyle. I had to see him and consult with him more frequently than ever; mamma was painfully restless and anxious, and Mr. Carlyle as eager as we were for the establishment of Richard's innocence; for Miss Carlyle and papa are related, consequently the disgrace may be said to reflect on the Carlyle name."

Back went Lady Isabel's memory and her bitter repentance. She remembered how jealously she had attributed these meetings between Mr. Carlyle and Barbara to another source. Oh! Why had she suffered her mind to be so falsely and fatally perverted?

"Richard came. It was hastily arranged that he should go privately to Mr. Carlyle's office, after the clerks had left for the night, be concealed there, and have an opportunity given him of seeing Captain Thorn. There was no difficulty, for Mr. Carlyle was transacting some matter of business for the captain, and appointed him to be at the office at eight o'clock. A memorable night, that, to Mr. Carlyle, for it was the one of his wife's elopement."

Lady Isabel looked up with a start.

"It was, indeed. SheLady Isabeland Mr. Carlyle were engaged to a dinner party; and Mr. Carlyle had to give it up, otherwise he could not have served Richard. He is always considerate and kind, thinking of others' welfare never of his own gratification. Oh, it was an anxious night. Papa was out. I waited at home with mamma, doing what I could to sooth her restless suspense, for there was hazard to Richard in his night walk through West Lynne to keep the appointment; and, when it was over, he was to come home for a short interview with mamma, who had not seen him for several years."

Barbara stopped, lost in thought. Not a word spoke Madame Vine. She still wondered what this affair touching Richard Hare and Thorn could have to do with Francis Levison.

"I watched from the window and saw them come in at the garden gateMr. Carlyle and Richardbetween nine and ten o'clock, I think it must have been then. The first words they said to me were that it was not the Captain Thorn spoken of by Richard. I felt a shock of disappointment, which was wicked enough of me, but I had been so sure he was the man; and to hear that he was not, seemed to throw us further back than ever. Mr. Carlyle, on the contrary, was glad for he had taken a liking to Captain Thorn. Well, Richard went in to mamma, and Mr. Carlyle was so kind as to accede to her request that he would remain and pace the garden with me. We were so afraid of papa's coming home; he was bitter against Richard, and would inevitably have delivered him up at

once to justice. Had he come in, Mr. Carlyle was to keep him in the garden by the gate whilst I ran in to give notice and conceal Richard in the hall. Richard lingered; papa did not come; and I cannot tell how long we paced there; but I had my shawl on, and it was a lovely moonlight night."

That unhappy listener clasped her hands to pain. The matteroffact tone, the unconscious mention of commonplace trifles, proved that they had not been pacing about in disloyalty to her, or for their own gratification. Why had she not trusted her noble husband? Why had she listened to that false man, as he pointed them out to her walking there in the moonlight? Why had she given vent, in the chariot, to that burst of passionate tears, of angry reproach? Why, oh! why had she hastened to be revenged? But for seeing them together, she might not have done as she did.

"Richard came forth at last, and departed, to be again an exile. Mr. Carlyle also departed; and I remained at the gate, watching for papa. By and by Mr. Carlyle came back again; he had got nearly home when he remembered that he had left a parchment at our house. It seemed to be nothing but coming back; for just after he had gone a second time, Richard returned in a state of excitement, stating that he had seen ThornThorn the murderer, I mean in Bean lane. For a moment I doubted him, but not for long, and we ran after Mr. Carlyle. Richard described Thorn's appearance; his evening dress, his white hands and diamond ring; more particularly he described a peculiar motion of his hand as he threw back his hair. In that moment it flashed across me that Thorn must be Captain Levison; the description was exact. Many and many a time since have I wondered that the thought did not strike Mr. Carlyle."

Lady Isabel sat with her mouth open, as if she could not take in the sense of the words; and when it did become clear to her, she utterly rejected it.

"Francis Levison a murderer! Oh, no! bad man as he is, he is not that."

"Wait," said Mrs. Carlyle. "I did not speak of this doubtnay, this convictionwhich had come; how could I mention to Mr. Carlyle the name of the man who did him that foul wrong? And Richard has remained so long in exile, with the ban of guilt upon him. Today as my carriage passed through West Lynne, Francis Levison was haranguing the people. I saw that very same actionthe throwing back of the hair with his white hand. I saw the selfsame diamond ring; and my conviction that he was the same man became more firmly seated than ever."

"It is impossible!" murmured Lady Isabel.

"Wait, I say," said Barbara. "When Mr. Carlyle came home to dinner, I, for the first time, mentioned this to him. It was no newthe fact was not. This afternoon during that same

harangue, Francis Levison was recognized by two witnesses to be the man Thornthe man who went after Afy Hallijohn. It is horrible."

Lady Isabel sat and looked at Mrs. Carlyle. Not yet did she believe it.

"Yes, it does appear to me as being perfectly horrible," continued Mrs. Carlyle. "He murdered Hallijohnhe, that bad man; and my poor brother has suffered the odium. When Richard met him that night in Bean lane, he was sneaking to West Lynne in search of the chaise that afterward bore away him and his companion. Papa saw them drive away. Papa stayed out late; and, in returning home, a chaise and four tore past, just as he was turning in at the gate. If that miserable Lady Isabel had but known with whom she was flying! A murderer! In addition to his other achievements. It is a mercy for her that she is no longer alive. What would her feelings be?"

What were they, then, as she sat there? A murderer? And she hadIn spite of her caution, of her strife for selfcommand, she turned of a deadly whiteness, and a low, sharp cry of horror and despair burst from her lips.

Mrs. Carlyle was astonished. Why should her communication have produced this effect upon Madame Vine? A renewed suspicion that she knew more of Francis Levison than she would acknowledge, stole over her.

"Madame Vine, what is he to you?" she asked, bending forward.

Madame Vine, doing fierce battle with herself, recovered her outward equanimity. "I beg your pardon, Mrs. Carlyle," she said, shivering; "I am apt to picture things too vividly. It is, as you say, so very horrible."

"Is he nothing to you? Don't you know him?"

"He is nothing to meless than nothing. As to knowing himI saw him yesterday, when they put him into the pond. A man like that! I should shudder to meet him!"

"Ay, indeed!" said Barbara, reassured. "You will understand, Madame Vine, that this history has been given to you in confidence. I look upon you as one of ourselves."

There was no answer. Madame Vine sat on, with her white face. She and it wore altogether a ghastly look.

"It tells like a fable out of a romance," resumed Mrs. Carlyle. "Well for him if the romance be not ended in the gibbet. Fancy what it would be for himSir Francis Levisonto be hung for murder!"

"Barbara, my dearest!"



The voice was Mr. Carlyle's, and she flew off on the wings of love. It appeared that the gentlemen had not yet departed, and now thought they would take coffee first.

She flew off to her idolized husband, leaving her who had once been idolized to her loneliness. She sank down on the sofa; she threw her arms up in her heartsickness; she thought she would faint; she prayed to die. It was horrible, as Barbara had called it. For that man with the red stain upon his hand and soul she had flung away Archibald Carlyle.

If ever retribution came home to woman, it came home in that hour to Lady Isabel.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### MR. CARLYLE INVITED TO SOME PATE DE FOIE GRAS.

A sighing morning wind swept round the domains of East Lynne, bending the tall poplar trees in the distance, swaying the oak and elms nearer, rustling the fine old chestnuts in the park, a melancholy, sweeping, fitful wind. The weather had changed from brightness and warmth, and heavy, gathering clouds seemed to be threatening rain; so, at least, deemed one wayfarer, who was journeying on a solitary road that Saturday night.

He was on foot. A man attired in the garb of a sailor, with black, curling ringlets of hair, and black, curling whiskers; a prodigious pair of whiskers, hiding his neck above his blue, turned collar, hiding partially his face. The glazed hat, brought low upon his brows, concealed it still more; and he wore a loose, rough peajacket and wide rough trousers hitched up with a belt. Bearing steadily on, he struck into Bean lane, a byway already mentioned in this history, and from thence, passing through a small, unfrequented gate, he found himself in the grounds of East Lynne.

"Let me see," mused he as he closed the gate behind him, and slipped the bolt. "The covered walk? That must be near the acacia trees. Then I must wind round to the right. I wonder if either of them will be there, waiting for me?"

Yes. Pacing the covered walk in her bonnet and mantle, as if taking an evening stroll had any one encountered her, which was very unlikely, seeing that it was the most retired spot in the grounds was Mrs. Carlyle.

"Oh, Richard! My poor brother!"

Locked in a yearning embrace, emotion overpowered both. Barbara sobbed like a child. A little while, and then he put her from him, to look at her.

"So Barbara, you are a wife now?"

"Oh, the happiest wife! Richard, sometimes I ask myself what I have done that God should have showered down blessings so great upon me. But for the sad trouble when I think of you, my life would be as one long summer's day. I have the sweetest baby nearly a year old he is now; I shall have another soon, God willing. And Archibald oh, I am so happy!"

She broke suddenly off with the name "Archibald;" not even to Richard could she speak of her intense love for, and happiness in her husband.

"How is it at the Grove?" he asked.

"Quite well; quite as usual. Mamma has been in better health lately. She does not know of this visit, but"

"I must see her," interrupted Richard. "I did not see her the last time, you remember."

"All in good time to talk of that. How are you getting on in Liverpool? What are you doing?"

"Don't inquire too closely, Barbara. I have no regular work, but I get a job at the docks, now and then, and rub on. It is seasonable help, that, which comes to me occasionally from you. Is it from you or Carlyle?"

Barbara laughed. "How are we to distinguish? His money is mine now, and mine is his. We don't have separate purses, Richard; we send it to you jointly."

"Sometimes I have fancied it came from my mother."

Barbara shook her head. "We have never allowed mamma to know that you left London, or that we hold an address where we can write to you. It would not have done."

"Why have you summoned me here, Barbara? What has turned up?"

"Thorn has I think. You would know him again Richard?"

"Know him!" passionately echoed Richard Hare.

"Were you aware that a contest for the membership is going on at West Lynne?"

"I saw it in the newspapers. Carlyle against Sir Francis Levison. I say, Barbara, how could he think of coming here to oppose Carlyle after his doing with Lady Isabel?"

"I don't know," said Barbara. "I wonder that he should come here for other reasons also. First of all, Richard, tell me how you came to know Sir Francis Levison. You say you did know him, and that you had seen him with Thorn."

"So I do know him," answered Richard. "And I saw him with Thorn twice."

"Know him by sight only, I presume. Let me hear how you came to know him."

"He was pointed out to me. I saw him walk arm in arm with a gentleman, and I showed them to the waterman at the cabstand hard by. 'Do you know that fellow?' I asked him, indicating Thorn, for I wanted to come at who he really is which I didn't do. 'I don't know

that one,' the old chap answered, 'but the one with him is Levison the baronet. They are often together a couple of swells they looked.'"

"And that's how you got to know Levison?"

"That was it," said Richard Hare.

"Then, Richard, you and the waterman made a mess of it between you. He pointed out the wrong one, or you did not look at the right. Thorn is Sir Francis Levison."

Richard stared at her with all his eyes.

"Nonsense, Barbara!"

"He is, I have never doubted it since the night you saw him in Bean lane. The action you described, of his pushing back his hair, his white hands, his sparkling diamond ring, could only apply in my mind to one person Francis Levison. On Thursday I drove by the Raven, when he was speechifying to the people, and I noticed the selfsame action. In the impulse of the moment I wrote off for you, that you might come and set the doubt at rest. I need not have done it, it seems, for when Mr. Carlyle returned home that evening, and I acquainted him with what I had done, he told me that Thorn and Francis Levison are one and the same. Otway Bethel recognized him that same afternoon, and so did Ebenezer James."

"They'd both know him," eagerly cried Richard. "James I am positive would, for he was skulking down to Halli John's often then, and saw Thorn a dozen times. Otway Bethel must have seen him also, though he protested he had not. Barbara!"

The name was uttered in affright, and Richard plunged amidst the trees, for somebody was in sight a tall, dark form advancing from the end of the walk. Barbara smiled. It was only Mr. Carlyle, and Richard emerged again.

"Fears still, Richard," Mr. Carlyle exclaimed, as he shook Richard cordially by the hand. "So you have changed your travelling toggery."

"I couldn't venture here again in the old suit; it had been seen, you said," returned Richard. "I bought this rigout yesterday, secondhand. Two pounds for the lot I think they shaved me."

"Ringlets and all?" laughed Mr. Carlyle.

"It's the old hair oiled and curled," cried Dick. "The barber charged a shilling for doing it, and cut my hair into the bargain. I told him not to spare grease, for I liked the curls to

shinesailors always do. Mr. Carlyle, Barbara says that Levison and that brute Thornthe one's as much of a brute as the other, thoughhave turned out to be the same."

"They have, Richard, as it appears. Nevertheless, it may be as well for you to take a private view of Levison before anything is doneas you once did by the other Thorn. It would not do to make a stir, and then discover that there was a mistakethat he was not Thorn."

"When can I see him?" asked Richard, eagerly.

"It must be contrived somehow. Were you to hang about the doors of the Raven this evening, evenyou'd be sure to get the opportunity, for he is always passing in and out. No one will know you, or think of you, either: their heads are turned with the election."

"I shall look odd to people's eyes. You don't get many sailors in West Lynne."

"Not odd at all. We have a Russian bear here at present, and you'll be nobody beside him."

"A Russian bear!" repeated Richard, while Barbara laughed.

"Mr. Otway Bethel has returned in what is popularly supposed to be a bear's hide; hence the new name he is greeted with. Will it turn out, Richard that he had anything to do with the murder?"

Richard shook his head.

"He couldn't have, Mr. Carlyle; I have said so all along. But about Levison. If I find him to be the man Thorn, what steps can then be taken?"

"That's the difficulty," said Mr. Carlyle.

"Who will set it agoing. Who will move in it?"

"You must, Richard."

"I!" uttered Richard Hare, in consternation. "I move in it!"

"You, yourself. Who else is there? I have been thinking it well over, and can hit upon no one."

"Why, won't you take it upon yourself, Mr. Carlyle?"

"No. Being Levison," was the answer.

"Curse him!" impetuously retorted Richard. "Curse him doubly if he be the double villain. But why should you scruple Mr. Carlyle? Most men, wronged as you have been, would leap at the opportunity for revenge."

"For the crime perpetrated upon Hallijohn I would pursue him to the scaffold. For my own wrong, no. But the remaining negative has cost me something. Many a time, since this appearance of his at West Lynne, have I been obliged to lay violent control upon myself, or I should have horsewhipped him within an ace of his life."

"If you horsewhipped him to death he would only meet his deserts."

"I leave him to a higher retribution to One who says, 'Vengeance is mine.' I believe him to be guilty of the murder but if the uplifting of my finger would send him to his disgraceful death, I would tie down my hand rather than lift it, for I could not, in my own mind, separate the man from the injury. Though I might ostensibly pursue him as the destroyer of Hallijohn, to me he would appear ever as the destroyer of another, and the world, always charitable, would congratulate Mr. Carlyle upon gratifying his revenge. I stir in it not, Richard."

"Couldn't Barbara?" pleaded Richard.

Barbara was standing with her arm entwined within her husband's, and Mr. Carlyle looked down as he answered,

"Barbara is my wife."

It was a sufficient answer.

"Then the thing's again at an end," said Richard, gloomily, "and I must give up hope of ever being cleared."

"By no means," said Mr. Carlyle. "The one who ought to act in this is your father, Richard; but we know he will not. Your mother cannot. She has neither health nor energy for it; and if she had a full supply of both, she would not dare to brave her husband and use them in the cause. My hands are tied; Barbara's equally so, as part of me. There only remains yourself."

"And what can I do?" wailed poor Dick. "If your hands are tied, I'm sure my whole body is, speaking in comparison; hands, and legs, and neck. It's in jeopardy, that is, every hour."

"Your acting in this affair need not put it any the more in jeopardy. You must stay in the neighborhood for a few days"

"I dare not," interposed Richard, in a fright. "Stay in the neighborhood for a few days! No; that I never may."

"Listen, Richard. You must put away these timorous fears, or else you must make up your mind to remain under the ban for good; and, remember, your mother's happiness is at stake equally with yours. I could almost say her life. Do you suppose I would advise you for danger? You used to say there was some place, a mile or two from this, where you could sojourn in safety."

"So there is. But I always feel safer when I get away from it."

"There your quarters must be, for two or three days at any rate. I have turned matters over in my own mind, and will tell you what I think should be done, so far as the preliminary step goes, though I do not interfere myself."

"Only the preliminary step! There must be a pretty many to follow it, sir, if it's to come to anything. Well, what is it?"

"Apply to Ball & Treadman, and get them to take it."

They were now slowly pacing the covered walk, Barbara on her husband's arm, Richard by the side of Mr. Carlyle. Dick stopped when he heard the last words.

"I don't understand you, Mr. Carlyle. You might as well advise me to go before the bench of magistrates at once. Ball & Treadman would walk me off there as soon as I showed myself."

"Nothing of the sort, Richard. I do not tell you to go openly to their office, as another client would. What I would advise is this: make a friend of Mr. Ball; he can be a good man and true, if he chooses; tell the whole story to him in a private place and interview, and ask him whether he will carry it through. If he is fully impressed with the conviction that you are innocent, as the facts appear to warrant, he will undertake it. Treadman need know nothing of the affair at first; and when Ball puts things in motion, he need not know that you are here, or where you are to be found."

"I don't dislike Ball," mused Richard, "and if he would only give his word to be true, I know he would be. The difficulty will be, who is to get the promise from him?"

"I will," said Mr. Carlyle. "I will so far pave the way for you. That done, my interference is over."

"How will he go about it, think you, if he does take it up?"

"That is his affair. I know how I should."

"How, sir?"

"You cannot expect me to say, Richard. I might as well act for you."

"I know. You'd go at it slapdash, and arrest Levison offhand on the charge."

A smile parted Mr. Carlyle's lips, for Dick had just guessed it. But his countenance gave no clue by which anything could be gathered.

A thought flashed across Richard's mind; a thought which rose up on end even his false hair. "Mr. Carlyle," he uttered, in an accent of horror, "if Ball should take it up in that way against Levison, he must apply to the bench for a warrant."

"Well?" quietly returned Mr. Carlyle.

"And they'd send and clap me into prison. You know the warrant is always out against me."

"You'd never make a conjurer, Richard. I don't pretend to say, or guess at, what Ball's proceedings may be. But, in applying to the bench for a warrant against Levison should that form part of them is there any necessity for him to bring you into say: 'Gentlemen, Richard Hare is within reach, ready to be taken?' Your fears run away with your common sense, Richard."

"Ah, well, if you had lived with the cord around your neck this many a year, not knowing any one hour but it might get tied the next, you'd lose your common sense, too, at times," humbly sighed poor Richard. "What's to be my first move, sir?"

"Your first move, Richard, must be to go to this place of concealment, which you know of, and remain quiet there until Monday. On Monday, at dusk, be here again. Meanwhile, I will see Ball. By the way, though, before speaking to Ball, I must hear from yourself that Thorn and Levison are one."

"I will go down to the Raven at once," eagerly cried Richard. "I'll come back here, to this walk, as soon as I have obtained sight of him." With the last words he turned, and was speeding off, when Barbara caught him.

"You will be so tired, Richard."

"Tired!" echoed Richard Hare. "A hundred miles on foot would not tire me if Thorn was at the end of them, waiting to be identified. I may not be back for two or three hours, but I will come, and wait here till you come out to me."



"You must be hungry and thirsty," returned Barbara, the tears in her eyes. "How I wish we dare have you in, and shelter you. But I can manage to bring some refreshments out here."

"I don't require it, Barbara. I left the train at the station next before West Lynne, and dropped into a roadside public house as I walked, and got a good supper. Let me go, dear, I am all in a fever."

Richard departed, reached the part of West Lynne where the Raven was situated, and was so far favored by fortune that he had not long to wait. Scarcely had he taken up his lounge outside, when two gentlemen came forth from it, arminarm. Being the headquarters of one of the candidates, the idlers of the place thought they could not do better than make it their headquarters also, and the road and pavement were never free from loitering starers and gossipers. Richard Hare, his hat well over his eyes, and his black ringlets made the most of, only added one to the rest.

Two gentlemen came forth, arminarm. The loiterers raised a feeble shout of "Levison forever!" Richard did not join in the shout, but his pulses were beating, and his heart leaped up within him. The one was Thorn; the other the gentleman he had seen with Thorn in London, pointed out to him as he had believed as Sir Francis Levison.

"Which of those two is Levison?" he inquired of a man near whom he stood.

"Don't you know him? Him with the hat off, bowing his thanks to us, is Levison."

No need to inquire further. It was the Thorn of Richard's memory. His ungloved hand, raised to his hat, was as white as ever; more sparkling than ever, as it flashed in the street gaslight, was the diamond ring. By the hand and ring alone Richard would have sworn to the man, had it been needful.

"Who is the other one?" he continued.

"Some gent as came down from London with him. His name's Drake. Be you yellow, sailor, or be you scarlet and purple?"

"I am neither. I am only a stranger, passing through the town."

"On the tramp?"

"Tramp? No." And Richard moved away, to make the best of his progress to East Lynne and report to Mr. Carlyle.

Now it happened, on that windy night, that Lady Isabel, her mind disordered, her brow fevered with its weight of care, stole out into the grounds, after the children had left her

for the night, courting any discomfort she might meet. As if they could, even for a moment, cool the fire within! To the solitude of this very covered walk bent she her steps; and, not long had she paced it, when she descried some man advancing, in the garb of a sailor. Not caring to be seen, she turned short off amidst the trees, intending to emerge again when he had passed. She wondered who he was, and what brought him there.

But he did not pass. He lingered in the walk, keeping her a prisoner. A minute more and she saw him joined by Mrs. Carlyle. They met with a loving embrace.

Embrace a strange man? Mrs. Carlyle? All the blood in Lady Isabel's body rushed to her brain. Was she, his second wife, false to him more shamelessly false than even herself had been, inasmuch as she had had the grace to quit him and East Lynne before as the servant girls say, when they change their sweethearts "taking up" with another? The positive conviction that such was the case seized firm hold upon her fancy; her thoughts were in a tumult, her mind was a chaos. Was there any small corner of rejoicing in her heart that it was so? And yet, what was it to her? It could not alter by one iota her own position; it could not restore to her the love she had forfeited.

Coupled lovingly together, they were now sauntering up the walk, the sailor's arm thrown round the waist of Mrs. Carlyle. "Oh! The shameless woman!" Ay; she could be bitter enough upon graceless doings when enacted by another.

But, what was her astonishment when she saw Mr. Carlyle advance, and that his appearance caused not the slightest change in their gracelessness, for the sailor's arm was not withdrawn. Two or three minutes they stood there talking together in a group. Then the goodnights were exchanged, the sailor left them, and Mr. Carlyle, his own arm lovingly pressed where the other's had been, withdrew with his wife. The truth that it was Barbara's brother dashed to the mind of Lady Isabel.

"Was I mad?" she cried, with a hollow laugh. "She false to him? No, no; that fate was reserved for me alone!"

She followed them to the house; she glanced in at the windows of the drawingroom. Lights and fire were in the room, but the curtains and windows were not closed for the night, for it was through those windows that Mr. Carlyle and his wife had passed in and out on their visits to the covered walk. There they were, alone in their happiness, and she stopped to glance in upon it. Lord Mount Severn had departed for London, to be down again early in the week. The tea was on the table, but Barbara had not begun to make it. She sat on the sofa, by the fire, her face, with its ever loving gaze upon it, turned up to her husband's. He stood near, was talking with apparent earnestness, and looking down at Barbara. Another moment, and a smile crossed his lips, the same sweet smile so

often bent upon her in the bygone days. Yes, they were together in their unclouded happiness, and she turned away toward her own lonely sittingroom, sick and faint at heart.

Ball & Treadman, as the brass plate on their office door intimated, were conveyancers and attorneys at law. Mr. Treadman, who attended chiefly to the conveyancing, lived at the office, with his family. Mr. Ball, a bachelor, lived away; Lawyer Ball, West Lynne styled him. Not a young bachelor; midway, he may have been between forty and fifty. A short stout man, with a keen face and green eyes. He took up any practice that was brought to him dirty odds and ends that Mr. Carlyle would not have touched with his toe but, as that gentleman had remarked, he could be honest and true upon occasion, and there was no doubt that he would be so to Richard Hare. To his house, on Monday morning, early, so as to catch him before he went out, proceeded Mr. Carlyle. A high respect for Mr. Carlyle had Lawyer Ball, as he had had for his father before him. Many a good turn had the Carlyles done him, if only helping him and his partner to clients whom they were too fastidious to take up. But the two, Mr. Carlyle and Lawyer Ball did not rank alike, though their profession was the same; Lawyer Ball knew that they did not, and was content to feel humble. The one was a received gentleman; the other was a country attorney.

Lawyer Ball was at breakfast when Mr. Carlyle was shown in.

"Halloo, Carlyle! You are here betimes."

"Sit still; don't disturb yourself. Don't ring; I have breakfasted."

"The most delicious pate de foie," urged Lawyer Ball, who was a regular gourmand. "I get 'em direct from Strasbourg."

Mr. Carlyle resisted the offered dainty with a smile. "I have come on business," said he, "not to feast. Before I enter upon it, you will give me your word, Ball, that my communication shall be held sacred, in the event of your not consenting to pursue it further."

"Certainly I will. What business is it? Some that offends the delicacy of the Carlyle office?" he added, with a laugh. "A wouldbe client whom you turn over to me in your exclusiveness?"

"It is a client for whom I cannot act. But not from the motives you assume. It concerns that affair of Hallijohn's," Mr. Carlyle continued, bending forward, and somewhat dropping his voice. "The murder."

Lawyer Ball, who had just taken in a delicious *bonne bouche* of the foie gras, bolted it whole in his surprise. "Why, that was enacted ages and ages ago; it is past and done with," he exclaimed.

"Not done with," said Mr. Carlyle. "Circumstances have come to light which tend to indicate that Richard Hare was innocentthat it was another who committed the murder."

"In conjunction with him?" interrupted the attorney.

"No: alone. Richard Hare had nothing whatever to do with it. He was not even present at the time."

"Do you believe that?" asked Lawyer Ball.

"I have believed it for years."

"Then who did do it?"

"Richard accuses one of the name of Thorn. Many years backten at leastI had a meeting with Richard Hare, and he disclosed certain facts to me, which if correct, could not fail to prove that he was not guilty. Since that period this impression has been gradually confirmed by little and by little, trifle upon trifle and I would now stake my life upon his innocence. I should long ago have moved in this matter, hit or miss, could I have lighted upon Thorn, but he was not to be found, neither any clue to him, and we now know that this name, Thorn, was an assumed one."

"Is he to be found?"

"He is found. He is at West Lynne. Mark you, I don't accuse himI do not offer an opinion upon his guiltI only state my belief in Richard's innocence; it may have been another who did it, neither Richard nor Thorn. It was my firm intention to take Richard's case up, the instant I saw my way clearly in it, and now that that time has come I am debarred from doing so."

"What debars you?"

"Hence I come to you," continued Mr. Carlyle, disregarding the question. "I come on the part of Richard Hare. I have seen him lately, and conversed with him. I gave him my reasons for not personally acting, advised him to apply to you, and promised to come here and open the matter. Will you see Richard in good faith, and hear his story, giving the understanding that he shall depart unmolested, as he came, although you do not decide to entertain the business?"

"I'll give it with all the pleasure in life," freely returned the attorney. "I'm sure I don't want to harm poor Dick Hare, and if he can convince me of his innocence, I'll do my best to establish it."

"Of his own tale you must be the judge. I do not wish to bias you. I have stated my belief in his innocence, but I repeat that I give no opinion myself as to who else may be guilty. Hear his account, and then take up the affair or not, as you may think fit. He would not come to you without your previous promise to hold him harmless; to be his friend, in short, for the time being. When I bear this promise to him for you, my part is done."

"I give it to you in all honor, Carlyle. Tell Dick he has nothing to fear from me. Quite the contrary; for if I can befriend him, I shall be glad to do it, and I won't spare trouble. What can possibly be your objection to act for him?"

"My objection applies not to Richard. I would willingly appear for him, but I will not take proceedings against the man he accuses. If that man is to be denounced and brought before justice, I will hold neither act nor part in it."

The words aroused the curiosity of Lawyer Ball, and he began to turn over all persons, likely and unlikely, in his mind, never, according to usage, giving a suspicion to the right one. "I cannot fathom you, Carlyle."

"You will do that better, possibly, when Richard shall have made his disclosure."

"It's it's never his own father that he accuses? Justice Hare?"

"Your wits must be woolgathering, Ball."

"Well, so they must, to give utterance to so preposterous a notion," acquiesced the attorney, pushing back his chair and throwing his breakfast napkin on the carpet. "But I don't know a soul you could object to go against except the justice. What's anybody else in West Lynne to you, in comparison to restoring Dick Hare to his fair fame? I give it up."

"So do I, for the present," said Mr. Carlyle, as he rose. "And now, about the ways and means for your meeting this poor fellow. Where can you see him?"

"Is he at West Lynne?"

"No. But I can get a message conveyed to him, and he could come."

"When?"

"Tonight, if you like."

"Then let him come here to this house. He will be perfectly safe."

"So be it. My part is now over," concluded Mr. Carlyle. And with a few more preliminary words, he departed. Lawyer Ball looked after him.

"It's a queer business. One would think Dick accuses some old flame of Carlyle's some demoiselle or dame he daren't go against."

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.

On Monday evening the interview between Lawyer Ball and Richard Hare took place. With some difficulty would the lawyer believe his tale not as to its broad details; he saw that he might give credit to them but as to the accusation against Sir Francis Levison. Richard persisted, mentioned every minute particular he could think of his meeting him the night of the elopement in Bean lane, his meetings with him again in London, and Sir Francis's evident fear of him, and thence pursuit, and the previous Saturday night's recognition at the door of the Raven, not forgetting to tell of the anonymous letter received by Justice Hare the morning that Richard was in hiding at Mr. Carlyle's. There was no doubt in the world it had been sent by Francis Levison to frighten Mr. Hare into dispatching him out of West Lynne, had Richard taken refuge in his father's home. None had more cause to keep Dick from falling into the hands of justice than Francis Levison.

"I believe what you say I believe all you say, Mr. Richard, touching Thorn," debated the attorney; "but it's next to impossible to take in so astounding a fact as that he is Sir Francis Levison."

"You can satisfy yourself of the fact from other lips than mine," said Richard. "Otway Bethel could testify to it if he would, though I doubt his willingness. But there's Ebenezer James."

"What does he know about it?" asked the attorney, in surprise. "Ebenezer James is in our office at present."

"He saw Thorn often enough in those days, and has, I hear, recognized him as Levison. You had better inquire of him. Should you object to take cause against Levison?"

"Not a bit of it. Let me be assured that I am upon safe grounds as to the identity of the man, and I'll proceed in it forthwith. Levison is an outandout scoundrel, as Levison, and deserves hanging. I will send for James at once, and hear what he says," he concluded, after a pause of consideration.

Richard Hare started wildly up. "Not while I am here; he must not see me. For Heaven's sake, consider the peril to me, Mr. Ball!"

"Pooh, pooh!" laughed the attorney. "Do you suppose I have but this one receptionroom? We don't let cats into cages where canary birds are kept."

Ebenezer James returned with the messenger dispatched after him.

"You'll be sure to find him at the singing saloon," Mr. Ball had said; and there the gentleman was found.

"Is it any copying, sir, wanted to be done in a hurry?" cried James, when he came in.

"No," replied the attorney. "I wish a question or two answered, that's all. Did you ever know Sir Francis Levison to go by any name but his own?"

"Yes, sir. He has gone by the name of Thorn."

A pause. "When was this?"

"It was the autumn when Hallijohn was killed. Thorn used to be prowling about there in an evening in the wood and at the cottage, I mean."

"What did he prowl for?"

Ebenezer James laughed. "For the same reason that several more did I, for one. He was sweet upon Afy Hallijohn."

"Where was he living at the time? I never remember him in West Lynne."

"He was not at West Lynne, sir. On the contrary, he seemed to take precious good care that West Lynne and he kept separate. A splendid horse he rode, a thoroughbred; and he used to come galloping into the wood at dusk, get over his chat with Miss Afy, mount, and gallop away again."

"Where to? Where did he come from?"

"From somewhere toward Swainson; a ten mile's ride, Afy used to say he had. Now that he has appeared here in his own plumage, of course I can put two and two together, and not be at much fault for the exact spot."

"And where's that?" asked the lawyer.

"Levison Park," said Mr. Ebenezer. "There's little doubt he was stopping at his uncle's, and you know that is close to Swainson."

Lawyer Ball thought things were becoming clearer or darker, whatever you may please to call it. He paused again, and then put a question impressively.

"James, have you any doubt whatever, or shadow of doubt, that Sir Francis Levison is the same man you know as Thorn?"



"Sir, have I any doubt that you are Mr. Ball, or that I am Eb. James?" retorted Mr. Ebenezer. "I am as certain of that man's identity as I am of yours."

"Are you ready to swear to that fact in a court of justice?"

"Ready and willing, in any court in the world. Tomorrow, if I am called upon."

"Very well. You may go back to your singing club now. Keep a silent tongue in your head."

"All close, sir," answered Mr. Ebenezer James.

Far into the middle of the night sat Lawyer Ball and Richard Hare, the former chiefly occupied in taking notes of Richard's statement.

"It's half a crochet, this objection of Carlyle's to interfere with Levison," suddenly uttered Richard, in the midst of some desultory conversation. "Don't you think so, Mr. Ball?"

The lawyer pursed up his lips. "Um! A delicate point. Carlyle was always fastidiously honorable. I should go at him, thunder and fury, in his place; but I and Carlyle are different."

The following day, Tuesday, Mr. Ball was much occupied, putting, to use nearly Ebenezer James' words, that and that together. Later in the day he took a journey to Levison Park, ferreted out some information, and came home again. On that same day, at evening, Richard departed for Liverpool he was done with for the present Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle being, as before, alone cognizant of his address.

Wednesday morning witnessed the arrival again of the Earl of Mount Severn. Lord Vane, too. The latter ought to have gone back to Eton, but he had teased and prayed to be allowed to "see the fun out," meaning the election. "And that devil's discomfiture when he finds himself beaten," he surreptitiously added, behind his father's back, who was a great stickler for the boy's always being "gentlemanly." So the earl had yielded. They arrived, as before, about breakfasttime, having traveled all night. Subsequently, they and Mr. Carlyle walked into West Lynne together.

West Lynne was alive and astir. The election was to come off that week, and people made it their business to be in a bustle over it, collectively and individually. Mr. Carlyle's committee sat at the Buck's Head, and the traffic in and out was enough to wear the stones away. The bench of justices were remarkably warm over it, neglecting the judicial business, and showing themselves at the Buck's Head windows in purple and scarlet streamers.

"I will be with you in ten minutes," said Mr. Carlyle, withdrawing his arm from Lord Mount Severn's, as they approached his office, "but I must go in and read my letters."

So the earl went on to the Buck's Head, and Lord Vane took a foot canter down to the Raven, to reconnoiter it outside. He was uncommonly fond of planting himself where Sir Francis Levison's eyes were sure to fall upon him which eyes were immediately dropped, while the young gentleman's would be fixed in an audacious stare. Being Lord Vaneor it may be more correct to say, being the Earl of Mount Severn's son, and under control, he was debarred from dancing and jeering after the yellow candidate, as the unwashed gentry of his own age indulged in, but his tongue and his feet itched to do it.

Mr. Carlyle took his seat in his private room, opened his letters, assorted them, marked on the back of some what was to be the purport of their answer, and then called in Mr. Dill. Mr. Carlyle put the letters in his hand, gave some rapid instructions, and rose.

"You are in a hurry, Mr. Archibald?"

"They want me at the Buck's Head. Why?"

"A curious incident occurred to me last evening, sir. I was an earwitness to a dispute between Levison and Otway Bethel."

"Indeed!" carelessly replied Mr. Carlyle, who was busy at the time looking for something in the deep drawer of the desk.

"And what I heard would go far to hang Levison, if not Bethel. As sure as we are here, Mr. Archibald, they hold the secret of Hallijohn's murder. It appears that Levison"

"Stop!" interposed Mr. Carlyle. "I would prefer not to hear this. Levison may have murdered him, but it is no affair of mine, neither shall I make it such."

Old Dill felt checkmated. "Meanwhile Richard Hare suffers, Mr. Archibald," he observed, in a remonstrating tone.

"I am aware he does."

"Is it right that the innocent should suffer for the guilty?"

"No; very wrong. But the case is all too common."

"If some one would take up Richard Hare's cause now, he might be proved innocent," added the old man, with a wistful look at Mr. Carlyle.

"It is being taken up, Dill."

A pause and a glad look. "That's the best news I have had for many a day, sir. But my evidence will be necessary to your case. Levison"

"I'm not taking up the case. You must carry your news elsewhere. It is no affair of mine, I say."

"Then who is taking it up?" echoed Mr. Dill, in astonishment.

"Ball. He has had a meeting with Richard, and is now acting for him under the rose."

Mr. Dill's eyes sparkled. "Is he going to prosecute, Mr. Archibald?"

"I tell you I know nothing I will know nothing. When the affair comes out to the public if it ever does come out I shall share in the information, Dill, and that is all."

"Ah, well, I can understand. But I shall go on to their office at once, Mr. Archibald, and inform them of what I overheard," spoke old Dill, in vehement decision.

"That is not my affair either," laughed Mr. Carlyle, "it is yours. But remember, if you do go, it is Ball, not Treadman."

Waiting only to give certain orders to the head clerk, Mr. Dill proceeded to the office of Ball & Treadman. A full hour was he closeted there with the senior partner.

Not until three o'clock that afternoon did the justices take their seats on the bench. Scarcely were they seated when Lawyer Ball bustled in and craved a secret hearing. His application was of the last importance, he promised, but, that the ends of justice might not be defeated it was necessary their worships should entertain it in private; he therefore craved the bench to accord it to him.

The bench consulted, looked wise, and, possibly possessing some latent curiosity themselves upon the point, graciously acceded. They adjourned to a private room, and it was full halfpast four before they came out of it. Very long faces, scared and grim, were their worships', as if Lawyer Ball's communication had both perplexed and confounded them.

"This is the afternoon we are to meet Dr. Martin at papa's office," William Carlyle had suddenly exclaimed that day at dinner. "Do we walk in, Madame Vine?"

"I do not know, William. Mrs. Carlyle is going to take you."

"No, she is not; you are going to take me."

A flush passed over Lady Isabel's face at the bare thought, though she did not believe it. She go to Mr. Carlyle's office! "Mrs. Carlyle told me herself that she should take you," was the reply.

"All I know is, mamma told me this morning you would take me to West Lynne today," persisted William.

The discussion was interrupted by the appearance of Mrs. Carlyleinterrupted and decided also.

"Madame Vine," she said, "you will be ready at three o'clock to go in with William?"

Lady Isabel's heart beat. "I understood you to say that you should go with him yourself, madame."

"I know I did. I intended to do so, but I heard this morning that some friends from a distance are coming this afternoon to call upon me, therefore I shall not go out."

How she, Lady Isabel, wished that she dare say, also, "I shall not go out either." But that might not be. Well, she must go through with it as she had to go through with the rest.

William rode his pony into West Lynne, the groom attending to take it back again. He was to walk home with Madame Vine, who walked both ways.

Mr. Carlyle was not in when they arrived at the office. The boy went boldly on to the private room, leaving Madame Vine to follow him.

Presently Mr. Carlyle appeared. He was talking to Mr. Dill, who followed him.

"Oh, you are here, Madame Vine! I left word that you were to go into Miss Carlyle's. Did I not leave word, Dill?"

"Not with me, sir."

"I forgot it, then; I meant to do so. What is the time?" He looked at his watch: ten minutes to four. "Did the doctor say at what hour he should call?" Mr. Carlyle added to Madame Vine.

"Not precisely. I gathered that it would be very early in the afternoon."

"Here he is!" exclaimed Mr. Carlyle with alacrity, as he went into the hall. She supposed he alluded to the physiciansupposed he had seen him pass the window. Their entrance together woke up William.

"Well," said the doctor, who was a little man with a bald head, "and how fares it with my young patient? Bon jour madame."

"Bon jour, monsieur," responded she. She wished everybody would address her in French, and take her for French; there seemed less chance of recognition. She would have to speak in good plain English, however, if she must carry on conversation with the doctor. Beyond a familiar phrase or two, he was something like Justice HareNong parley Fronsay me!

"And how does the codliver oil get on?" asked the doctor of William, as he drew him to the light. "It is nicer now than it used to be, eh?"

"No," said William; "it is nastier than ever."

Dr. Martin looked at the boy; felt his pulse, his skin, listened to his breathing. "There," said he, presently, "you may sit down and have your nap out."

"I wish I might have something to drink; I am very thirsty. May I ring for some water, papa?"

"Go and find your aunt's maid, and ask her for some," said Mr. Carlyle.

"Ask her for milk," called out Dr. Martin. "Not water."

Away went William. Mr. Carlyle was leaning against the side of the window; Dr. Martin folded his arms before it: Lady Isabel stood near the latter. The broad, full light was cast upon all, but the thick veil hid Lady Isabel's face. It was not often she could be caught without that veil, for she seemed to wear her bonnet at all sorts of seasonable and unseasonable times.

"What is your opinion, doctor?" asked Mr. Carlyle.

"Well," began the doctor, in a very professional tone, "the boy is certainly delicate. But"

"Stay, Dr. Martin," was the interruption, spoken in a low, impressive voice, "you will deal candidly with me. I must know the truth, without disguise. Tell it me freely."

Dr. Martin paused. "The truth is not always palatable, Mr. Carlyle."

"True. But for that very reason, all the more necessary. Let me hear the worst. And the child has no mother, you know, to be shocked with it."

"I fear that it will be the worst."

"Death?"

"Ay. The seeds of consumption must have been inherent in him. They are showing out too palpably."

"Is there no hope for the child?"

Dr. Martin looked at him. "You bade me give you the truth."

"Nothing else; nothing but the truth," returned Mr. Carlyle, his tone one of mingled pain and command.

"Then, there is none; no hope whatever. The lungs are extensively diseased."

"And how long"

"That I cannot say," interrupted the doctor, divining what the next question was to be. "He may linger on for months; for a year, it may even be; or a very short period may see the termination. Don't worry him with any more lessons and stuff of learning; he'll never want it."

The doctor cast his eyes on the governess as he spoke; the injunction concerned her as much as it did Mr. Carlyle. And the doctor started, for he thought she was fainting; her face had become so ghastly white; he could see it through her veil.

"You are ill, madame! You are ill? Trouve malade, don't you?"

She opened her lips to speak; her trembling lips, that would not obey her. Dr. Martin, in his concern, pulled off the blue spectacles. She caught them from him with one hand, sat down on the nearest chair, and hid her face with the other.

Mr. Carlyle, scarcely understanding the scuffle, came forward. "Are you ill, Madame Vine?"

She was putting her spectacles under her veil, her face whiter than ever. "Pray do not interrupt your conversation to pay attention to me! I thank you; I thank you both. I am subject to slight spasms, and they do make me look ill for the moment. It has passed now."

The doctor turned from her; Mr. Carlyle resumed his place by the window. "What should be the treatment?" asked the latter.

"Almost anything you please that the boy himself likes. Let him play or rest, ride or walk, eat and drink, or let it alone; it cannot make much difference."

"Doctor! You yield it, as a last hope, very lightly."

Dr. Martin shook his head. "I speak as I know. You insisted on having my true opinion."

"A warmer climate?" suggested Mr. Carlyle eagerly, the idea crossing his mind.

"It might prolong the end for a little while a few weeks, perhaps avert it it could not. And who could take him? You could not go; and he has no mother. No! I should not advise it."

"I wish you would see Wainwright with reference to William."

"I have seen him. I met him this afternoon, by chance, and told him my opinion. How is Mrs. Carlyle?"

"Pretty well. She is not in robust health, you are aware, just now."

Dr. Martin smiled. "These things will happen. Mrs. Carlyle has a thoroughly good constitution; a far stronger one than"

"Than what?" said Mr. Carlyle, wondering why he hesitated.

"You must grant me pardon. I may as well finish, now I have begun; but I was not thinking when I spoke. She is stronger than was Lady Isabel. I must be off to catch the six train."

"You will come over from time to time to East Lynne to see William?"

"If you wish it. It may be a satisfaction, perhaps. Bon jour, madame."

Lady Isabel bowed to him as he left the room with Mr. Carlyle. "How fond that French governess of yours is of the boy!" the doctor whispered, as they crossed the hall. "I detected it when she brought him to Lynneborough. And you saw her just now! That emotion was all because he could not live. Goodbye."

Mr. Carlyle grasped his hand. "Doctor, I wish you could save him!" he passionately uttered.

"Ah, Carlyle! If we humble mites of human doctors could but keep those whom it is the Great Physician's pleasure to take, how we should be run after! There's hidden mercy, remember, in the darkest cloud. Farewell my friend."

Mr. Carlyle returned to the room. He approached Lady Isabel, looking down upon her as she sat; not that he could see much of her face. "These are grievous tidings. But you were more prepared for them, I fancy, than I was."

She started suddenly up, approached the window, and looked out, as if she saw somebody passing whom she would gaze at. All of emotion was stirred up within her; her temples throbbed, her throat beat, her breath became hysterical. Could she bear thus to hold confidential converse with him over the state of their child? She pulled off her gloves for coolness to her burning hands, she wiped the moisture from her pale forehead, she struggled manfully for calmness. What excuse could she offer to Mr. Carlyle?

"I had begun to like the boy so very much, sir," she said, half turning round. "And the doctor's fiat, too plainly pronounced has given me pain; pain to agitation."

Again Mr. Carlyle approached her, following close up to where she stood. "You are very kind, thus to feel an interest in my child."

She did not answer.

"Here, papa, papa! I want you," cried William, breaking into the room. "Let me walk home with you? Are you going to walk?"

How could he find it in his heart to deny anything to the child then?

"Very well," he said. "Stay here till I come for you."

"We are going home with papa," proclaimed William to Madame Vine.

Madame Vine did not relish the news. But there was no help for it. In a very short time Mr. Carlyle appeared, and they set off; he holding William's hand; madame walking on the other side of the child.

"Where's William Vane, papa?" asked the boy.

"He has gone on with Lord Mount Severn."

Scarcely had the words been spoken, when some one came bolting out of the postoffice, and met them face to face; almost ran against them in fact, creating some hindrance. The man looked confused, and slunk off into the gutter. And you will not wonder that he did, when you hear that it was Francis Levison. William, child like, turned his head to gaze at the intruder.



"I would not be an ugly bad man like him for the world," quoth he, as he turned his back again. "Would you, papa?"

Mr. Carlyle did not answer, and Isabel cast an involuntary glance upon him from her white face. His was impassive, save that a cast of ineffable scorn marred the delicate beauty of his lips. If humiliation for the past had never wrung Lady Isabel's heart before, it would have wrung it then.

At Mr. Justice Hare's gate they encountered that gentleman, who appeared to be standing there to give himself an airing. William caught sight of Mrs. Hare seated on the garden bench, outside the window, and ran to kiss her. All the children loved Mrs. Hare. The justice was looking not pale; that would not be a term half strong enough: but yellow. The curls of his best wig were limp, and all his pomposity appeared to have gone out of him.

"I say, Carlyle, what on earth's this?" cried he, in a tone that, for him, was wonderfully subdued and meek. "I was not on the bench this afternoon, but Pinner has been telling me of an application that was made to them in private. It's not true, you know; it can't be; it's too farfetched a tale. What do you know about it?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Carlyle. "I do not know what you are talking of. I have been privy to no application."

"It seems they want to make out now that Dick never murdered Hallijohn," proceeded the justice, in a half whisper, glancing round as if to be sure that there were no eavesdroppers amidst the trees.

"Oh," said Mr. Carlyle.

"But that Levison did. Levison!"

Mr. Carlyle made no reply, save by a gesture; his face more impassive than before. Not so another face beside him, a fair face; that turned white again with emotion as she listened.

"But it can't be, you know. It can't, I say."

"So far as Richard's innocence goes, of that I have long been convinced," spoke Mr. Carlyle.

"And that Levison's guilty?" returned the justice, opening his eyes in puzzled wonderment.

"I have no opinion upon that point," was the cold rejoinder.

"It's impossible, I say. Dick can't be innocent. You may as well tell me that the world's turned upside down."

"It is, sometimes, I think. That Richard was not the guilty man will be proved yet, justice, in the broad face of day."

"If that other did do it, I should think you'd take the warrant out of the hands of the police and capture him yourself."

"I would not touch him with a pair of tongs," spoke Mr. Carlyle, his lips curling again. "If the man goes to his punishment, he goes; but I do not help him on his road thither."

"Can Dick be innocent?" mused the justice, returning to the thought which so troubled his mind. "Then why has he kept away? Why did he not come back and say so?"

"That you might deliver him up, justice. You know you took an oath to do it."

The justice looked green, and remarkably humble.

"Oh, but Carlyle," impulsively spoke he, the thought occurring to him, "what an awful revenge this would have been for you on somebody had she lived. How her false step would have come home to her now!"

"False steps come home to most people," responded Mr. Carlyle, as he took William by the hand, who then ran up. And, lifting his hat to Mrs. Hare in the distance, he walked on.

She, Lady Isabel, walked on, too, by the side of the child, as before, walked on with a shivering frame, and a heart sick unto death. The justice looked after her, his mind unoccupied. He was in a maze of bewilderment. Richard innocent! Richard, whom he had striven to pursue to a shameful end! And that other the guilty one! The world was turning upside down.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### MRS. CARLYLE IN FULL DRESS, AFY ALSO.

Merrily rose West Lynne on Thursday morning; merrily rang out the bells, clashing and chiming. The street was alive with people; the windows were crowded with heads; something unusual was astir. It was the day of the nomination of the two candidates, and everybody took the opportunity to make a holiday.

Ten o'clock was the hour named; but, before that hour struck, West Lynne was crammed. The country people had come in, thick and threefold; rich and poor; people of note, and people of none; voters and nonvoters, all eager to mix themselves up with the day's proceedings. You see the notorious fact of Sir Francis Levison's having come forward to oppose Mr. Carlyle, caused greater interest in this election than is usual, even in small country places and that need not be. Barbara drove in her carriage, the two children with her, and the governess. The governess said she preferred to remain at home. Barbara would not hear of it; almost felt inclined to resent it as a slight; besides, if she took no interest in Mr. Carlyle, she must go to take care of Lucy; she, Barbara, would be too much occupied to look after children. So Madame Vine, perforce, stepped into the barouche and sat opposite to Mrs. Carlyle, her thick veil shading her features, and their pallor contrasting with the blue spectacles.

They alighted at the residence of Miss Carlyle. Quite a gathering was already there. Lady and Miss Dobede, the Herberts, Mrs. Hare, and many others; for the house was in a good spot for seeing the fun; and all the people were eager to testify their respect to Mr. Carlyle, in contradiction to that other one. Miss Carlyle was in full rig; a brocaded dress, and a scarlet and purple bow in front of it, the size of a pumpkin. It was about the only occasion, in all Miss Carlyle's life, that she deemed it necessary to attire herself beyond common. Barbara wore no bow, but she exhibited a splendid bouquet of scarlet and purple flowers. Mr. Carlyle had himself given it to her that morning.

Mr. Carlyle saw them all at the windows of the large upper drawingroom, and came in; he was then on his way to the townhall. Shaking hands, laughter, hearty and hasty good wishes; and he quitted the room again. Barbara stole after him for a sweeter farewell.

"God bless you and prosper you, Archibald, my dearest!"

The business of the day began. Mr. Carlyle was proposed by Sir John Dobede, and seconded by Mr. Herbert. Lord Mount Severn, than whom not a busier man was there, would willingly have been proposer and seconder too, but he had no local influence in the place. Sir Francis Levison was proposed also by two gentlemen of standing. The

show of hands was declared to be in favor of Mr. Carlyle. It just was in favor of him; about twenty to one. Upon which the baronet's friends demanded a poll.

Then all was bustle, and scuffle, and confusion, every one tearing away to the hustings, which had been fixed in a convenient spot, the townhall, not affording the accommodation necessary for a poll. Candidates, and proposers and seconders, and gentlemen, and officers, and mob, hustling and jostling each other. Mr. Carlyle was linked arm in arm with Sir John Dobede; Sir John's arm was within Lord Mount Severn's but, as to order, it was impossible to observe any. To gain the place they had to pass the house of Miss Carlyle. Young Vane, who was in the thick of the crowd, of course, cast his eyes up to its lined windows, took off his hat and waved it. "Carlyle and honor forever!" shouted he.

The ladies laughed and nodded, and shook their handkerchiefs, and displayed their scarlet and purple colors. The crowd took up the shout, till the very air echoed with it. "Carlyle and honor forever!" Barbara's tears were falling; but she smiled through them at one pair of loving eyes, which sought out hers.

"A galaxy of beauty!" whispered Mr. Drake in the ear of Sir Francis. "How the women rally round him! I tell you what, Levison, you and the government were stupid to go on with the contest, and I said so days ago. You have no more chance against Carlyle than that bit of straw has against the wind. You ought to have withdrawn in time."

"Like a coward?" angrily returned Sir Francis. "No, I'll go on with it to the last, though I do get beaten."

"How lovely his wife is," observed Mr. Drake, his admiring eyes cast up at Barbara. "I say, Levison, was the first one as charming?"

Sir Francis looked perfectly savage; the allusion did not please him. But, ere another word could be spoken, some one in the garb of a policeman, who had wound his way through the crowd, laid his hand upon the baronet.

"Sir Francis Levison, you are my prisoner."

Nothing worse than debt occurred at that moment to the mind of Sir Francis. But that was quite enough, and he turned purple with rage.

"Your hands off, vermin! How dare you?"

A quick movement, a slight click, a hustle from the wondering crowd more immediately around, and the handcuffs were on. Utter amazement alone prevented Mr. Drake from knocking down the policeman. A dozen vituperating tongues assailed him.

"I'm sorry to do it in this public place and manner," spoke the officer, partly to Sir Francis, partly to the gentlemen around, "but I couldn't come across you last night, do as I would. And the warrant has been in my hands since five o'clock yesterday afternoon. Sir Francis Levison, I arrest you for the wilful murder of George Hallijohn."

The crowd fell back; the crowd was paralyzed with consternation; the word was passed from one extreme to the other, and back and across again, and the excitement grew high. The ladies looking from Miss Carlyle's windows saw what had happened, though they could not divine the cause. Some of them turned pale at sight of the handcuffs, and Mary Pinner, an excitable girl, fell into a screaming fit.

Pale! What was their gentle paleness compared with the frightfully livid one of Francis Levison? His agitation was pitiable to witness, his face a terror to look upon; once or twice he gasped, as if in an agony; and then his eyes happened to fall on Otway Bethel, who stood near. Shorn of his adornments which might not be thought adornments upon paper the following was the sentence that burst involuntarily from his lips,

"You hound! It is you who have done this!"

"No! by" Whether Mr. Otway Bethel was about to swear by Jupiter or Juno never was decided, the sentence being cut ignominiously short at the above two words. Another policeman, in the summary manner exercised towards Sir Francis, had clapped a pair of handcuffs upon him.

"Mr. Otway Bethel, I arrest you as an accomplice in the murder of George Hallijohn."

You may be sure that the whole assembly was arrested, too figuratively and stood with eager gaze and open ears. Colonel Bethel, quitting the scarlet and purple, flashed into those of the yellows. He knew his nephew was graceless enough; but to see him with a pair of handcuffs on!

"What does all this mean?" he authoritatively demanded of the officers.

"It's no fault of ours, colonel, we have but executed the warrant," answered one of them. "The magistrate, issued it yesterday against these two gentlemen, on suspicion of their being concerned in the murder of Hallijohn."

"In conjunction with Richard Hare?" cried the astounded colonel, gazing from one to the other, prisoners and officers, in scared bewilderment.

"It's alleged now that Richard Hare didn't have nothing to do with it," returned the man. "It's said he is innocent. I'm sure I don't know."

"I swear that I am innocent," passionately uttered Otway Bethel.

"Well, sir, you have only got to prove it," civilly rejoined the policeman.

Miss Carlyle and Lady Isabel leaned from the window, their curiosity too much excited to remain silent longer. Mrs. Hare was standing by their side.

"What is the matter?" both asked of the upturned faces immediately beneath.

"Them two the fine member as wanted to be, and young Bethelbe arrested for murder," spoke a man's clear voice in answer. "The tale runs as they murdered Hallijohn, and then laid it on the shoulders of young Dick Hare, who didn't do it after all."

A faint wailing cry of startled pain, and Barbara flew to Mrs. Hare, from whom it proceeded.

"Oh, mamma, my dear mamma, take comfort! Do not suffer this to agitate you to illness. Richard is innocent, and it will surely be so proved. Archibald," she added, beckoning to her husband in her alarm, "come, if you can, and say a word of assurance to mamma!"

It was impossible that Mr. Carlyle could hear the words, but he could see that his wife was greatly agitated, and wanted him.

"I will be back with you in a few moments," he said to his friends, as he began to elbow his way through the crowd, which made way when they saw who the elboweer was.

Into another room, away from the gay visitors, they got Mrs. Hare, and Mr. Carlyle locked the door to keep them out, unconsciously taking out the key. Only himself and his wife were with her, except Madame Vine, in her bonnet, who had been dispatched by somebody with a bottle of smelling salts. Barbara knelt at her mamma's feet; Mr. Carlyle leaned over her, her hands held sympathizingly in his. Madame Vine would have escaped, but the key was gone.

"Oh, Archibald, tell me the truth. You will not, deceive me?" she gasped, in earnest entreaty, the cold dew gathering on her pale, gentle face. "Is the time come to prove my boy's innocence?"

"It is."

"Is it possible that it can be that false, bad man who is guilty?"

"From my soul I believe him to be," replied Mr. Carlyle, glancing round to make sure that none could hear the assertion save those present. "But what I say to you and Barbara, I would not say to the world. Whatever be the man's guilt, I am not his Nemesis. Dear Mrs. Hare, take courage, take comfort happier days are coming round."

Mrs. Hare was weeping silently. Barbara rose and laid her mamma's head lovingly upon her bosom.

"Take care of her, my darling," Mr. Carlyle whispered to his wife. "Don't leave her for a moment, and don't let that chattering crew in from the next room. I beg your pardon, madame."

His hand had touched Madame Vine's neck in turning round—that is, had touched the jacket that encased it. He unlocked the door and regained the street, while Madame Vine sat down with her beating and rebellious heart.

Amidst the shouts, the jeers, and the escort of the mob, Sir Francis Levison and Otway Bethel were lodged in the stationhouse, preparatory to their examination before the magistrates. Never, sure, was so mortifying an interruption known. So thought Sir Francis's party. And they deemed it well, after some consultation amongst themselves, to withdraw his name as a candidate for the membership. That he never had a shadow of chance from the first, most of them knew.

But there's an incident yet to tell of the election day. You have seen Miss Carlyle in her glory, her brocaded silk standing on end with richness, her displayed colors, her pride in her noble brother. But now could you or she, which it is more to the purpose have divined who and what was right above her head at an upper window, I know not what the consequence would have been.

No less an eyesore to Miss Carlyle than that "brazen hussy," Afy Hallijohn! Smuggled in by Miss Carlyle's servants, there she was in full dress, too. A green and white checked saracenet, flounced up to the waist, over a crinoline extending from here to yonder; a fancy bonnet, worn on the plait of hair behind, with a wreath and a veil; delicate white gloves, and a swinging handkerchief of lace, redolent of musk. It was well for Miss Corny's peace of mind ever after that she remained in ignorance of that daring act. There stood Afy, bold as a sunflower, exhibiting herself and her splendor to the admiring eyes of the mob below, gentle and simple.

"He is a handsome man, after all," quoth she to Miss Carlyle's maids, when Sir Francis Levison arrived opposite the house.

"But such a horrid creature!" was the response. "And to think that he should come here to oppose Mr. Archibald!"

"What's that?" cried Afy. "What are they stopping for? There are two policemen there! Oh!" shrieked Afy, "if they haven't put handcuffs on him! Whatever has he done? What can he have been up to?"

"Where? Who? What?" cried the servants, bewildered with the crowd. "Put handcuffs on which?"

"Sir Francis Levison. Hush! What is that they say?"

Listening, looking, turning from white to red, from red to white, Afy stood. But she could make nothing of it; she could not divine the cause of the commotion. The man's answer to Miss Carlyle and Lady Dobede, clear though it was, did not quite reach her ears.

"What did he say?" she cried.

"Good Heavens!" cried one of the maids, whose hearing had been quicker than Afy's. "He says they are arrested for the wilful murder of Halof your father, Miss Afy! Sir Francis Levison and Otway Bethel."

"What!" shrieked Afy, her eyes starting.

"Levison was the man who did it, he says," continued the servant, bending her ear to listen. "And young Richard Hare, he says, has been innocent all along."

Afy slowly gathered in the sense of the words. She gasped twice, as if her breath had gone, and then, with a stagger and a shiver, fell heavily to the ground.

Afy Hallijohn, recovered from her fainting fit, had to be smuggled out of Miss Carlyle's, as she had been smuggled in. She was of an elastic nature, and the shock, or the surprise, or the heat, whatever it may have been, being over, Afy was herself again.

Not very far removed from the residence of Miss Carlyle was a shop in the cheese and ham and butter and bacon line. A very respectable shop, too, and kept by a very respectable mana young man of mild countenance, who had purchased the goodwill of the business through an advertisement, and come down from London to take possession. His predecessor had amassed enough to retire, and people foretold that Mr. Jiffin would do the same. To say that Miss Carlyle dealt at the shop will be sufficient to proclaim the good quality of the articles kept in it.

When Afy arrived opposite the shop, Mr. Jiffin was sunning himself at the door; his shopman inside being at some urgent employment over the contents of a buttercask. Afy stopped. Mr. Jiffin admired her uncommonly, and she, always ready for anything in that way, had already enjoyed several passing flirtations with him.



"Good day, Miss Hallijohn," cried he, warmly, tucking up his white apron and pushing it round to the back of his waist, in the best manner he could, as he held out his hand to her. For Afy had once hinted in terms of disparagement at that very apron.

"Ohhow are you Jiffin?" cried Afy, loftily, pretending not to have seen him standing there. And she condescended to put the tips of her white gloves into the offered hand, as she coquetted with her handkerchief, her veil, and her ringlets. "I thought you would have shut up your shop today, Mr. Jiffin, and taken a holiday."

"Business must be attended to," responded Mr. Jiffin, quite lost in the contemplation of Afy's numerous attractions, unusually conspicuous as they were. "Had I known that you were abroad, Miss Hallijohn, and enjoying a holiday, perhaps I might have done it, too, in the hope of coming across you somewhere or other."

His words were bona fide as his admiration. Afy saw that, so she could afford to treat him rather de haut en bas. "And he's as simple as a calf," thought she.

"The greatest pleasure I have in life, Miss Hallijohn, is to see you go by the shop window," continued Mr. Jiffin. "I'm sure it's like as if the sun itself passed."

"Dear me!" bridled Afy, with a simper, "I don't know any good that can do you. You might have seen me go by an hour or two ago if you had possessed eyes. I was on my way to Miss Carlyle's," she continued, with the air of one who proclaims the fact of a morning call upon a duchess.

"Where could my eyes have been?" exclaimed Mr. Jiffin, in an agony of regret. "In some of those precious buttertubs, I shouldn't wonder! We have had a bad lot in, Miss Hallijohn, and I am going to return them!"

"Oh," said Afy, conspicuously resenting the remark. "I don't know anything about that sort of thing. Buttertubs are beneath me."

"Of course, of course, Miss Hallijohn," deprecated poor Jiffin. "They are very profitable, though, to those who understand the trade."

"What is all that shouting?" cried Afy, alluding to a tremendous noise in the distance, which had continued for some little time.

"It's the voters cheering Mr. Carlyle. I suppose you know that he's elected, Miss Hallijohn?"

"No, I didn't."

"The other was withdrawn by his friends, so they made short work of it, and Mr. Carlyle is our member. God bless him! there's not many like him. But, I say, Miss Hallijohn, whatever is it that the other one has done? Murder, they say. I can't make top nor tail of it. Of course we know he was bad enough before."

"Don't ask me," said Afy. "Murder's not a pleasant subject for a lady to discuss. Are all these customers? Dear me, you'll have enough to do to attend to them; your man can't do it all; so I won't stay talking any longer."

With a gracious flourish of her flounces and wave of the handkerchief Afy sailed off. And Mr. Jiffin, when he could withdraw his fascinated eyes from following her, turned into his shop to assist in serving four or five servant girls, who had entered it.

"It wouldn't be such a bad catch, after all," soliloquized Afy, as she and her crinoline swayed along. "Of course I'd never put my nose inside the shop unless it was to order things like another customer. The worst is the name. Jiffin, Joe Jiffin. How could I ever bear to be called Mrs. Joe Jiffin! Not but Goodness me! what do you want?"

The interruption to Afy's chickens was caused by Mr. Ebenezer James. That gentleman, who had been walking with quick steps to overtake her, gave her flounces a twitch behind, to let her know somebody had come up.

"How are you, Afy? I was going after you to Mrs. Latimer's, not knowing but you had returned home. I saw you this morning at Miss Corny's windows."

"Now, I don't want any of your sauce, Ebenezer James. Afying me! The other day, when you were on with your nonsense, I said you should keep your distance. You took and told Mr. Jiffin that I was an old sweetheart of yours. I heard of it."

"So you were," laughed Mr. Ebenezer.

"I never was," flashed Afy. "I was the company of your betters in those days: and if there had been no betters in the case, I should have scorned you. Why! you have been a strolling player!"

"And what have you been?" returned Mr. Ebenezer, a quiet tone of meaning running through his goodhumored laughter.

Afy's cheeks flushed scarlet, and she raised her hand with a quick, menacing gesture. But that they were in the public street Mr. Ebenezer might have found his ears boxed. Afy dropped her hand again, and made a dead standstill.

"If you think any vile, false insinuations that you may concoct will injure me, you are mistaken, Ebenezer James. I am too much respected in the place. So don't try it on."

"Why, Afy, what has put you out? I don't want to injure you. Couldn't do it, if I tried, as you say," he added, with another quiet laugh. "I have been in too many scrapes myself to let my tongue bring other folks into one."

"There, that's enough. Just take yourself off. It's not over reputable to have you at one's side in public."

"Well, I will relieve you of my company, if you'll let me deliver my commission. Though, as to 'reputable' however, I won't put you out further. You are wanted at the justiceroom at three o'clock this afternoon. And don't fail, please."

"Wanted at the justiceroom!" retorted Afy. "I! What for?"

"And must not fail, as I say," repeated Mr. Ebenezer. "You saw Levison taken up your old flame"

Afy stamped her foot in indignant interruption. "Take care what you say, Ebenezer James! Flame! He? I'll have you put up for defamation of character."

"Don't be a goose, Afy. It's of no use riding the high horse with me. You know where I saw you and saw him. People here said you were with Dick Hare; I could have told them better; but I did not. It was no affair of mine, that I should proclaim it, neither is it now. Levison alias Thorn is taken up for your father's murder, and you are wanted to give evidence. There! that's your subpoena; Ball thought you would not come without one."

"I will never give evidence against Levison," she uttered, tearing the subpoena to pieces, and scattering them in the street. "I swear I won't. There, for you! Will I help to hang an innocent man, when it was Dick Hare who was the guilty one? No! I'll walk myself off a hundred miles away first, and stop in hiding till it's over. I shan't forget this turn that you have chosen to play me, Ebenezer James."

"I chosen! Why, do you suppose I have anything to do with it? Don't take up that notion, Afy. Mr. Ball put that subpoena in my hand, and told me to serve it. He might have given it to the other clerk, just as he gave it to me; it was all chance. If I could do you a good turn I'd do it not a bad one."

Afy strode on at railroad speed, waving him off. "Mind you don't fail, Afy," he said, as he prepared to return.

"Fail," answered she, with flashing eyes. "I shall fail giving evidence, if you mean that. They don't get me up to their justiceroom, neither by force or stratagem."

Ebenezer James stood and looked after her as she tore along.

"What a spirit that Afy has got, when it's put up!" quoth he. "She'll be doing as she said make off unless she's stopped. She's a great simpleton! Nothing particular need come out about her and Thorn, unless she lets it out herself in her tantrums. Here comes Ball, I declare! I must tell him."

On went Afy, and gained Mrs. Latimer's. That lady, suffering from indisposition was confined to the house. Afy, divesting herself of certain little odds and ends of her finery, made her way into Mrs. Latimer's presence.

"Oh, ma'am, such heartrending news as I have had!" began she. "A relation of mine is dying, and wants to see me. I ought to be away by the next train."

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Latimer, after a pause of dismay. "But how can I do without you, Afy?"

"It's a dying request, ma'am," pleaded Afy, covering her eyes with her handkerchief not the lace one as if in the depth of woe. "Of course I wouldn't ask you under any other circumstances, suffering as you are!"

"Where is it to!" asked Mrs. Latimer. "How long shall you be away?"

Afy mentioned the first town that came uppermost, and "hoped" she might be back tomorrow.

"What relation is it?" continued Mrs. Latimer. "I thought you had no relatives, except Joyce and your aunt, Mrs. Kane."

"This is another aunt," cried Afy, softly. "I have never mentioned her, not being friends. Differences divided us. Of course that makes me all the more anxious to obey her request."

An uncommon good hand at an impromptu tale was Afy. And Mrs. Latimer consented to her demand. Afy flew upstairs, attired herself once more, put one or two things in a small leather bag, placed some money in her purse, and left the house.

Sauntering idly on the pavement on the sunny side of the street was a policeman. He crossed over to Afy, with whom he had a slight acquaintance.

"Goodday, Miss Halli-john. A fine day, is it not?"

"Fine enough," returned Afy, provoked at being hindered. "I can't talk to you now, for I am in a hurry."

The faster she walked, the faster he walked, keeping at her side. Afy's pace increased to a run. His increased to a run too.

"Whatever are you in such haste over?" asked he.

"Well, it's nothing to you. And I am sure I don't want you to dance attendance upon me just now. There's a time for all things. I'll have some chatter with you another day."

"One would think you were hurrying to catch a train."

"So I am if you must have your curiosity satisfied. I am going on a little pleasure excursion, Mr. Inquisitive."

"For long?"

"Um! Home tomorrow, perhaps. Is it true that Mr. Carlyle's elected?"

"Oh, yes; don't go up that way, please."

"Not up this way?" repeated Afy. "It's the nearest road to the station. It cuts off all that corner."

The officer laid his hand upon her, gently. Afy thought he was venturing upon it in sport as if he deemed her too charming to be parted with.

"What do you mean by your nonsense? I tell you I have not time for it now. Take your hand off me," she added grimly for the hand was clasping her closer.

"I am sorry to hurt a lady's feelings, especially yours, miss, but I daren't take it off, and I daren't part with you. My instructions are to take you on at once to the witnessroom. Your evidence is wanted this afternoon."

If you ever saw a ghost more livid than ghosts in ordinary, you may picture to your mind the appearance of Afy Halliwell just then. She did not faint as she had done once before that day, but she looked as if she should die. One sharp cry, instantly suppressed, for Afy did retain some presence of mind, and remembered that she was in the public road one sharp tussle for liberty, over as soon, and she resigned herself, perforce, to her fate.

"I have no evidence to give," she said, in a calmer tone. "I know nothing of the facts."

"I'm sure I don't know anything of them," returned the man. "I don't know why you are wanted. When instructions are given us, miss, we can't ask what they mean. I was bid to watch that you didn't go off out of the town, and to bring you on to the witnessroom if you attempted it, and I have tried to do it as politely as possible."

"You don't imagine I am going to walk through West Lynne with your hand upon me!"

"I'll take it off, Miss Hallijohn, if you'll give a promise not to bolt. You see, 'twould come to nothing if you did, for I should be up with you in a couple of yards; besides, it would be drawing folks' attention on you. You couldn't hope to outrun me, or be a match for me in strength."

"I will go quietly," said Afy. "Take it off."

She kept her word. Afy was no simpleton, and knew that she was no match for him. She had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, was powerless, and must make the best of it. So they walked through the street as if they were taking a quiet stroll, he gallantly bearing the leather bag. Miss Carlyle's shocked eyes happened to fall upon them as they passed her window. She wondered where could be the eyes of the man's inspector.

## CHAPTER XL.

### THE JUSTICEROOM.

The magistrates took their seats on the bench. The bench would not hold them. All in the commission of the peace flocked in. Any other day they would not have been at West Lynne. As to the room, the wonder was how it ever got emptied again, so densely was it packed. Sir Francis Levison's friends were there in a body. They did not believe a word of the accusation. "A scandalous affair," cried they, "got up, probably, by some sneak of the scarlet and purple party." Lord Mount Severn, who chose to be present, had a place assigned him on the bench. Lord Vane got the best place he could fight for amid the crowd. Mr. Justice Hare sat as chairman, unusually stern, unbending, and grim. No favor would he show, but no unfairness. Had it been to save his son from hanging, he would not adjudge guilt to Francis Levison against his conscience. Colonel Bethel was likewise on the bench, stern also.

In that primitive place primitive in what related to the justiceroom and the justice things were not conducted with the regularity of the law. The law there was often a dead letter. No very grave cases were decided there; they went to Lynneborough. A month at the treadmill, or a week's imprisonment, or a bout of juvenile whipping, were pretty near the harshest sentences pronounced. Thus, in this examination, as in others, evidence was advanced that was inadmissible at least, that would have been inadmissible in a more orthodox court hearsay testimony, and irregularities of that nature. Mr. Rubiny watched the case on behalf of Sir Francis Levison.

Mr. Ball opened the proceedings, giving the account which had been imparted to him by Richard Hare, but not mentioning Richard as his informant. He was questioned as to whence he obtained his information, but replied that it was not convenient at present to disclose the source. The stumbling block of the magistrates appeared to be the identifying Levison with Thorn. Ebenezer James came forward to prove it.

"What do you know of the prisoner, Sir Francis Levison?" questioned Justice Herbert.

"Not much," responded Mr. Ebenezer. "I used to know him as Captain Thorn."

"Captain Thorn?"

"Afy Hallijohn called him captain; but I understood he was but a lieutenant."

"From whom did you understand that?"

"From Afy. She was the only person I heard speak of him."

"And you say you were in the habit of seeing him in the place mentioned, the Abbey Wood?"

"I saw him there repeatedly; also at Hallijohn's cottage."

"Did you speak with him as Thorn?"

"Two or three times. I addressed him as Thorn, and he answered to the name. I had no suspicion but that it was his name. Otway Bethel"casting his eyes on Mr. Otway, who stood in his shaggy attire"also knew him as Thorn, and so I have no doubt, did Locksley, for he was always in the wood."

"Anybody else?"

"Poor Hallijohn himself knew him as Thorn. He said to Afy one day, in my presence, that he would not have that confounded dandy, Thorn, coming there."

"Were those the words he used?"

"They were; 'that confounded dandy Thorn.' I remember Afy's replyit was rather insolent. She said Thorn was as free to come there as anybody else, and she would not be found fault with, as though she was not fit to take care of herself."

"That is nothing to the purpose. Were any others acquainted with this Thorn?"

"I should imagine the elder sister, Joyce, was. And the one who knew him best of all of us was young Richard Hare."

Old Richard Hare, from his place on the bench, frowned menacingly at an imaginary Richard.

"What took Thorn into the wood so often?"

"He was courting Afy."

"With an intention of marrying her?"

"Wellno," cried Mr. Ebenezer, with a twist of the mouth; "I should not suppose he entertained any intention of the sort. He used to come over from Swainson, or its neighborhood, riding a splendid horse."

"Whom did you suppose him to be?"



"I supposed him to be moving in the upper ranks of life. There was no doubt of it. His dress, his manners, his tone, all proclaimed it. He appeared to wish to shun observation, and evidently did not care to be seen by any of us. He rarely arrived until twilight."

"Did you see him there on the night of Hallijohn's murder?"

"No. I was not there myself that evening, so could not have seen him."

"Did a suspicion cross your mind at any time that he may have been guilty of the murder?"

"Never. Richard Hare was accused of it by universal belief, and it never occurred to me to suppose he had not done it."

"Pray, how many years is this ago?" sharply interrupted Mr. Rubiny, perceiving that the witness was done with.

"Let's see!" responded Mr. Ebenezer. "I can't be sure as to a year without reckoning up. A dozen, if not more."

"And you mean to say that you can swear to Sir Francis Levison being that man, with all these years intervening?"

"I swear that he is the man. I am as positive of his identity as I am of my own."

"Without having seen him from that time to this?" derisively returned the lawyer.  
"Nonsense, witness."

"I did not say that," returned Mr. Ebenezer.

The court pricked up its ears. "Have you seen him between then and now?" asked one of them.

"Once."

"Where and when?"

"It was in London, about eighteen months after the period of the trial!"

"What communication had you with him?"

"None at all. I only saw him quite by chance."

"And whom did you suppose him to be then Thorn or Levison?"

"Thorn, certainly. I never dreamt of his being Levison until he appeared here, now, to oppose Mr. Carlyle."

A wild, savage curse shot through Sir Francis's heart as he heard the words. What demon had possessed him to venture his neck into the lion's den? There had been a strong hidden power holding him back from it, independent of his dislike to face Mr. Carlyle; how could he be so mad as to disregard it? How? Could a man go from his doom? Can any?

"You may have been mistaken, witness, as to the identity of the man you saw in London. It may not have been the Thorn you had known here."

Mr. Ebenezer James smiled a peculiar smile. "I was not mistaken," he said, his tone sounding remarkably significant. "I am upon my oath."

"Call Aphrodite Hallijohn."

The lady appeared, supported by her friend, the policeman. And Mr. Ebenezer James was desired by Mr. Ball to leave the court while she gave her evidence. Doubtless he had his reasons.

"What is your name?"

"Afy," replied she, looking daggers at everybody, and sedulously keeping her back turned upon Francis Levison and Otway Bethel.

"Your name in full, if you please. You were not christened 'Afy'?"

"Aphrodite Hallijohn. You all know my name as well as I do. Where's the use of asking useless questions?"

"Swear the witness," spoke up Mr. Justice Hare. The first word he had uttered.

"I won't be sworn," said Afy.

"You must be sworn," said Mr. Justice Herbert.

"But I say I won't," repeated Afy.

"Then we must commit you to prison for contempt of court."

There was no mercy in his tone, and Afy turned white. Sir John Dobede interposed.

"Young woman, had you a hand in the murder of your father?"

"I?" returned Afy, struggling with passion, temper, and excitement. "How dare you ask me such an unnatural question, sir? He was the kindest father," she added, battling with her tears. "I loved him dearly. I would have saved his life with mine."

"And yet you refuse to give evidence that may assist in bringing his destroyer to justice."

"No; I don't refuse on that score. I should like his destroyer to be hanged, and I'd go to see it. But who knows what other questions you may be asking me, about things that concerned neither you nor anybody else? That's why I object."

"We have only to deal with what bears upon the murder. The questions put to you will relate to that."

Afy considered. "Well, you may swear me, then," she said.

Little notion had she of the broad gauge those questions would run upon. And she was sworn accordingly. Very unwillingly yet; for Afy, who would have told lies by the bushel unsworn, did look upon an oath as a serious matter, and felt herself compelled to speak the truth when examined under it.

"How did you become acquainted with a gentleman you often saw in those days Captain Thorn?"

"There," uttered the dismayed Afy. "You are beginning already. He had nothing to do with it he did not do the murder."

"You have sworn to answer the questions put," was the uncompromising rejoinder. "How did you become acquainted with Captain Thorn?"

"I met him at Swainson," doggedly answered Afy. "I went over there one day, just for a spree, and I met him at a pastrycook's."

"And he fell in love with your pretty face?" said Lawyer Ball, taking up the examination.

In the incense to her vanity, Afy nearly forgot her scruples. "Yes, he did," she answered, casting a smile of general satisfaction round upon the court.

"And got out of you where you lived, and entered upon his courting, riding over nearly every evening to see you?"

"Well," acknowledged Afy, "there was no harm in it."

"Oh, certainly not!" acquiesced the lawyer, in a pleasant, free tone, to put the witness at her ease. "Rather good, I should say: I wish I had had the like luck. Did you know him at the time by the name of Levison?"

"No! He said he was Captain Thorn, and I thought he was."

"Did you know where he lived?"

"No! He never said that. I thought he was stopping temporarily at Swainson."

"And dear me! what a sweet bonnet that is you have on!"

Afy, whose egregious vanity was her besetting sin who possessed enough of it for any ten pretty women going cast a glance out of the corners of her eyes at the admired bonnet, and became Mr. Ball's entirely.

"And how long was it, after your first meeting with him, before you discovered his real name?"

"Not for a long time several months."

"Subsequent to the murder, I presume?"

"Oh, yes!"

Mr. Ball's eyes gave a twinkle, and the unconscious Afy surreptitiously smoothed, with one finger, the glossy parting of her hair.

"Besides Captain Thorn, what gentlemen were in the wood the night of the murder?"

"Richard Hare was there. Otway Bethel and Locksley also. Those were all I saw until the crowd came."

"Were Locksley and Mr. Otway Bethel martyrs to your charms, as the other two were?"

"No, indeed!" was the witness's answer, with an indignant toss of the head. "A couple of poaching fellows like them! They had better have tried it on!"

"Which of the two, Hare or Thorn, was inside the cottage with you that evening?"

Afy came out of her vanity and hesitated. She was beginning to wonder where the questions would get to.

"You are upon your oath, witness!" thundered Mr. Justice Hare. "If it was my if it was Richard Hare who was with you, say so. But there must be no equivocation here."

Afy was startled. "It was Thorn," she answered to Mr. Ball.

"And where was Richard Hare?"

"I don't know. He came down, but I sent him away; I would not admit him. I dare say he lingered in the wood."

"Did he leave a gun with you?"

"Yes. It was one he had promised to lend my father. I put it down just inside the door. He told me it was loaded."

"How long after this was it, that your father interrupted you?"

"He didn't interrupt us at all," returned Afy. "I never saw my father until I saw him dead."

"Were you not in the cottage all the time?"

"No; we went out for a stroll at the back. Captain Thorn wished me goodbye there, and I stayed out."

"Did you hear the gun go off?"

"I heard a shot as I was sitting on the stump of a tree, and was thinking; but I attached no importance to it, never supposing it was in the cottage."

"What was it that Captain Thorn had to get from the cottage after he quitted you? What had he left there?"

Now, this was a random shaft. Lawyer Ball, a keen man, who had well weighed all points in the tale imparted to him by Richard, as well as other points, had colored them with his own deductions, and spoke accordingly. Afy was taken in.

"He had left his hat there nothing else. It was a warm evening, and he had gone out without it."

"He told you, I believe, sufficient to convince you of the guilt of Richard Hare?" Another shaft thrown at random.

"I did not want convincing I knew it without. Everybody else knew it."

"To be sure," equably returned Lawyer Ball. "Did Captain Thorn see it did he tell you that?"

"He had got his hat, and was away down the wood some little distance, when he heard voices in dispute in the cottage, and recognized one of them to be that of my father. The shot followed close upon it, and he guessed some mischief had been done, though he did not suspect its extent."

"Thorn told you thiswhen?"

"The same nightmuch later."

"How came you to see him?"

Afy hesitated; but she was sternly told to answer the question.

"A boy came up to the cottage and called me out, and said a strange gentleman wanted to see me in the wood, and had given him sixpence to come for me. I went, and found Captain Thorn. He asked me what the commotion was about, and I told him Richard Hare had killed my father. He said, that now I spoke of him, he could recognize Richard Hare's as having been the other voice in the dispute."

"What boy was thatthe one who came for you?"

"It was Mother Whiteman's little son."

"And Captain Thorn then gave you this version of the tragedy?"

"It was the right version," resentfully spoke Afy.

"How do you know that?"

"Oh! because I'm sure it was. Who else would kill him but Richard Hare? It is a scandalous shame, your wanting to put it upon Thorn!"

"Look at the prisoner, Sir Francis Levison. Is it he whom you knew as Thorn?"

"Yes; but that does not make him guilty of the murder."

"Of course it does not," complacently assented Lawyer Ball. "How long did you remain with Captain Thorn in Londonupon that little visit, you know?"

Afy started like anybody moonstruck.

"When you quitted this place, after the tragedy, it was to join Captain Thorn in London. How long, I ask, did you remain with him?"

Entirely a random shaft, this. But Richard had totally denied to Lawyer Ball the popular assumption that Afy had been with him.

"Who says I was with him? Who says I went after him?" flashed Afy, with scarlet cheeks.

"I do," replied Lawyer Ball, taking notes of her confusion. "Come, it's over and done with; it's of no use to deny it now. We all go upon visits to friends sometimes."

"I never heard anything so bold!" cried Afy. "Where will you tell me I went next?"

"You are upon your oath, woman!" again interposed Justice Hare, and a trembling, as of agitation, might be detected in his voice, in spite of its ringing severity. "Were you with the prisoner Levison, or were you with Richard Hare?"

"I with Richard Hare!" cried Afy, agitated in her turn, and shaking like an aspenleaf, partly with discomfiture, partly with unknown dread. "How dare that cruel falsehood be brought up again, to my face? I never saw Richard Hare after the night of the murder. I swear it. I swear that I never saw him since. Visit him! I'd sooner visit Calcraft, the hangman."

There was truth in the words in the tone. The chairman let fall the hand which had been raised to his face, holding on his eyeglasses; and a sort of selfcondemning fear arose, confusing his brain. His son, proved innocent of one part, might be proved innocent of the other; and then how would his own harsh conduct show out! West Lynne, in its charity, the justice in his, had cast more odium to Richard, with regard to his after conduct touching this girl, than it had on the score of the murder.

"Come," said Lawyer Ball, in a coaxing tone, "let us be pleasant. Of course you were not with Richard Hare. West Lynne is always ill-natured; you were on a visit to Captain Thorn, as any other young lady might be?"

Afy hung her head, cowed down to abject meekness.

"Answer the question," came forth the chairman's voice again. "Were you with Thorn?"

"Yes," though the answer was feeble enough.

Mr. Ball coughed an insinuating cough.

"Did you remain with him say two or three years?"

"Not three."

"A little over two, perhaps?"

"There was no harm in it," shrieked Afy, with a catching sob of temper. "If I chose to live in London, and he chose to make a morning call upon me, now and then, as an old friend, what's that to anybody? Where was the harm, I ask?"

"Certainly where was the harm? I am not insinuating any," returned Lawyer Ball, with a wink of the eye furthest from the witness and the bench. "And, during the time that that he was making these little morning calls upon you, did you know him to be Levison?"

"Yes. I knew him to be Captain Levison then."

"Did he ever tell you why he had assumed the name of Thorn?"

"Only for a whim, he said. The day he spoke to me in the pastrycook's shop at Swainson, something came over him, in the spur of the moment, not to give his right name, so he gave the first that came into his head. He never thought to retain it, or that other people would hear of him by it."

"I dare say not," laconically spoke Lawyer Ball. "Well, Miss Afy, I believe that is all for the present. I want Ebenezer James in again," he whispered to an officer of the justice room, as the witness retired.

Ebenezer James reappeared and took Afy's place.

"You informed their worships, just now, that you had met Thorn in London, some eighteen months subsequent to the murder," began Lawyer Ball, launching another of his shafts. "This must have been during the period of Afy Hallijohn's sojourn with him. Did you also see her?"

Mr. Ebenezer opened his eyes. He knew nothing of the evidence just given by Afy, and wondered how on earth it had come out that she had been with Thorn at all. He had never betrayed it.

"Afy?" stammered he.

"Yes, Afy," sharply returned the lawyer. "Their worships know that when she took that trip of hers from West Lynne it was to join Thorn not Richard Harethough the latter has borne the credit of it. I ask you, did you see her? for she was then still connected with him."

"Well yes, I did," replied Mr. Ebenezer, his own scruples removed, but wondering still how it had been discovered, unless Afy had as he had prophesied she would let out in her "tantrums." "In fact, it was Afy whom I first saw."

"State the circumstances."



"I was up Paddington way one afternoon, and saw a lady going into a house. It was Afy Hallijohn. She lived there, I found had the drawingroom apartments. She invited me to stay to tea with her, and I did."

"Did you see Captain Levison there?"

"I saw Thornas I thought him to be. Afy told me I must be away by eight o'clock, for she was expecting a friend who sometimes came to sit with her for an hour's chat. But, in talking over old times not that I could tell her much about West Lynne, for I had left it almost as long as she had the time slipped on past the hour. When Afy found that out she hurried me off, and I had barely got outside the gate when a cab drove up, and Thorn alighted from it, and let himself in with a latchkey. That is all I know."

"When you knew that the scandal of Afy's absence rested on Richard Hare, why could you not have said this, and cleared him, on your return to West Lynne?"

"It was no affair of mine, that I should make it public. Afy asked me not to say I had seen her, and I promised her I would not. As to Richard Hare, a little extra scandal on his back was nothing, while there remained on it the worse scandal of murder."

"Stop a bit," interposed Mr. Rubiny, as the witness was about to retire. "You speak of the time being eight o'clock in the evening, sir. Was it dark?"

"Yes."

"Then how can you be certain it was Thorn who got out of the cab and entered?"

"I am quite certain. There was a gaslamp right at the spot, and I saw him as well as I should have seen him in daylight. I knew his voice, too; could have sworn to it anywhere; and I would almost have sworn to him by his splendid diamond ring. It flashed in the lamplight."

"His voice! Did he speak to you?"

"No. But he spoke to the cabman. There was a half dispute between them. The man said Thorn had not paid him enough, that he had not allowed for having been kept waiting twenty minutes on the road. Thorn swore at him a bit, and then flung him an extra shilling."

The next witness was a man who had been groom to the late Sir Peter Levison. He testified that the prisoner, Francis Levison had been on a visit to his master late in the summer and part of the autumn, the year that Hallijohn was killed. That he frequently rode out in the direction of West Lynne, especially toward evening; would be away three or four hours, and come home with the horse in a foam. Also that he picked up two

letters at different times, which Mr. Levison had carelessly let fall from his pocket, and returned them to him. Both the notes were addressed "Captain Thorn." But they had not been through the post, for there was no further superscription on them; and the writing looked like a lady's. He remembered quite well hearing of the murder of Hallijohn, the witness added, in answer to a question; it made a great stir through out the country. It was just at that same time that Mr. Levison concluded his visit, and returned to London.

"A wonderful memory!" Mr. Rubiny sarcastically remarked.

The witness, a quiet, respectable man, replied that he had a good memory; but that circumstances had impressed upon it particularly the fact that Mr. Levison's departure followed close upon the murder of Hallijohn.

"One day, when Sir Peter was round at the stables, gentlemen, he was urging his nephew to prolong his visit, and asked what sudden freak was taking him off. Mr. Levison replied that unexpected business called him to London. While they were talking, the coachman came up, all in a heat, telling that Hallijohn, of West Lynne, had been murdered by young Mr. Hare. I remember Sir Peter said he could not believe it; and that it must have been an accident, not murder."

"Is that all?"

"There was more said. Mr. Levison, in a shameful sort of manner, asked his uncle, would he let him have five or ten pounds? Sir Peter seemed angry, and asked, what had he done with the fiftypound note he had made him a present of only the previous morning? Mr. Levison replied that he had sent that away to a brother officer, to whom he was in debt. Sir Peter refused to believe it, and said he had more likely squandered it upon some disgraceful folly. Mr. Levison denied that he had; but he looked confused, indeed, his manner altogether was confused that morning."

"Did he get the five or ten pounds?"

"I don't know, gentlemen. I dare say he did, for my master was as persuadable as a woman, though he'd fly out a bit sometimes at first. Mr. Levison departed for London that same night."

The last witness called was Mr. Dill. On the previous Tuesday evening, he had been returning home from spending an hour at Mr. Beauchamp's, when, in a field opposite to Mr. Justice Hare's, he suddenly heard a commotion. It arose from the meeting of Sir Francis Levison and Otway Bethel. The former appeared to have been enjoying a solitary moonlight ramble, and the latter to have encountered him unexpectedly. Words ensued. Bethel accused Sir Francis of "shirking" him. Sir Francis answered angrily that he knew nothing of him, and nothing he wanted to know.

"You were glad enough to know something of me the night of Hallijohn's murder," retorted Bethel to this. "Do you remember that I could hang you. One little word from me, and you'd stand in Dick Hare's place."

"You fool!" passionately cried Sir Francis. "You couldn't hang me without putting your own head in a noose. Did you not have your hush money? Are you wanting to do me out of more?"

"A cursed paltry note of fifty pounds!" foamed Otway Bethel, "which, many a time since, I have wished my fingers were blown off before they touched. I never should have touched it, but that I was altogether overwhelmed with the moment's confusion. I have not been able to look Mrs. Hare in the face since, knowing that I held the secret that would save her son from the hangman."

"And put yourself in his place," sneered Sir Francis.

"No. Put you."

"That's as it might be. But, if I went to the hangman, you would go with me. There would be no excuse or escape for you. You know it."

The warfare continued longer, but this was the cream of it. Mr. Dill heard the whole, and repeated it now to the magistrate. Mr. Rubiny protested that it was "inadmissible;" "hearsay evidence;" "contrary to law;" but the bench oracularly put Mr. Rubiny down, and told him they did not want any stranger to come there and teach them their business.

Colonel Bethel had leaned forward at the conclusion of Mr. Dill's evidence, dismay on his face, agitation in his voice. "Are you sure that you made no mistake that the other in this interview was Otway Bethel?"

Mr. Dill sadly shook his head. "Am I one to swear to a wrong man, colonel? I wish I had not heard it save that it may be the means of clearing Richard Hare."

Sir Francis Levison had braved out the proceedings with a haughty, cavalier air, his delicate hands and his diamond ring remarkably conspicuous. Was that stone the real thing, or a false one, substituted for the real? Hard up as he had long been for money, the suspicion might arise. A derisive smile crossed his features at parts of the evidence, as much as to say, "You may convict me as to Mademoiselle Afy, but you can't as to the murder." When, however, Mr. Dill's testimony was given, what a change was there! His mood tamed down to what looked like abject fear, and he shook in his shoes as he stood.

"Of course your worships will take bail for Sir Francis?" said Mr. Rubiny, at the close of the proceedings.

Bail! The bench looked at one another.

"Your worships will not refuse it a gentleman in Sir Francis Levison's position!"

The bench thought they never had so insolent an application made to them. Bail for him! on this charge! No; not if the lord chancellor himself came down to offer it.

Mr. Otway Bethel, conscious, probably, that nobody would offer bail for him, not even the colonel, did not ask the bench to take it. So the two were fully committed to take their trial for the "Wilful murder, otherwise the killing and slaying of George Hallijohn;" and before night would be on their road to the county prison at Lynneborough.

And that vain, illstarred Afy! What of her? Well, Afy had retreated to the witnessroom again, after giving evidence, and there she remained to the close, agreeably occupied in a mental debate. What would they make out from her admission regarding her sojourn in London and the morning calls? How would that precious West Lynne construe it? She did not much care; she would brave it out, and assail them with towering indignation, did any dare to cast a stone at her.

Such was her final decision, arrived at just as the proceedings terminated. Afy was right glad to remain where she was, till some of the bustle had gone.

"How was it ended?" asked she of Mr. Ball, who, being a bachelor, was ever regarded with much graciousness by Afy, for she kept her eyes open to contingencies; although Mr. Joe Jiffin was held in reserve.

"They are both committed for wilful murder off to Lynneborough within an hour!"

Afy's color rose. "What a shame! To commit two innocent men upon such a charge."

"I can tell you what, Miss Afy, the sooner you disabuse your mind of that prejudice, the better. Levison has been as good as proved guilty today; but if proof were wanting, he and Bethel have criminated each other. 'When rogues fall out, honest men get their own.' Not that I can quite fathom Bethel's share in the exploit, though I can pretty well guess at it. And, in proving themselves guilty they have proved the innocence of Richard Hare."

Afy's face was changing to whiteness; her confident air to one of dread; her vanity to humiliation.

"It can't be true!" she gasped.

"It's true enough. The part you have hitherto ascribed to Thorn, was enacted by Richard Hare. He heard the shot from his place in the wood, and saw Thorn run, ghastly, trembling, horrified, from his wicked work. Believe me, it was Thorn who killed your father."

Afy grew cold as she listened. That one awful moment, when conviction that his words were true, forced itself upon her, was enough to sober her for a whole lifetime. Thorn! Her sight failed; her head reeled; her very heart turned to sickness. One struggling cry of pain; and, for the second time that day, Afy Hallijohn fell forward in a fainting fit.

Shouts, hisses, execrations, yells! The prisoners were being brought forth, to be conveyed to Lynneborough. A whole posse of constables was necessary to protect them against the outbreak of the mob, which outbreak was not directed against Otway Bethel, but against Sir Francis Levison. Cowering like the guilty culprit that he was, shivered he, hiding his white face wondering whether it would be a repetition of Justice Hare's green pond, or tearing him asunder piecemeal and cursing the earth because it did not open and let him in!

## CHAPTER XLI.

### FIRM!

Miss Lucy was en penitence. She had been guilty of some childish fault that day at Aunt Cornelia's, which, coming to the knowledge of Mrs. Carlyle, after their return home the young lady was ordered to the nursery for the rest of the day, and to be regaled upon bread and water.

Barbara was in her pleasant dressingroom. There was to be a dinner party at East Lynne that evening, and she had just finished dressing. Very lovely looked she in her dinner dress, with purple and scarlet flowers in her bosom. She glanced at her watch somewhat anxiously, for the gentlemen had not made their appearance. Halfpast six! And they were to dine at seven.

Madame Vine tapped at the door. Her errand was to beg grace for Lucy. She had been promised half an hour in the drawingroom, when the ladies entered it from the desserttable, and was now in agony of grief at the disappointment. Would Mrs. Carlyle pardon her, and allow her to be dressed?

"You are too lenient to the child, madame," spoke Barbara. "I don't think you ever would punish her at all. But when she commits faults, they must be corrected."

"She is very sorry for her fault; she promises not to be rude again. She is crying as if she would cry her heart out."

"Not for her illbehavior, but because she's afraid of missing the drawingroom tonight," cried Barbara.

"Do, pray, restore her to favor," pleaded madame.

"I shall see. Just look, Madame Vine! I broke this, a minute or two ago. Is it not a pity?"

Barbara held in her hand a beautiful toilette ornament, set in pure gold. One of the petals had come off.

Madame Vine examined it. "I have some cement upstairs that would join it," she exclaimed. "I could do it in two minutes. I bought it in France."

"Oh, I wish you would," was Barbara's delighted response. "Do bring it here and join it now. Shall I bribe you?" she added, laughing. "You make this all right, and then you

shall bear back grace to Lucy for I perceive that is what your heart is set upon."

Madame Vine went, and returned with her cement. Barbara watched her, as she took the pieces in her hand, to see how the one must fit on to the other.

"This has been broken once, as Joyce tells me," Barbara said. "But it must have been imperceptibly joined, for I have looked in vain for the damage. Mr. Carlyle bought it for his first wife, when they were in London, after their marriage. She broke it subsequently here, at East Lynne. You will never do it, Madame Vine, if your hand shakes like that. What is the matter?"

A great deal was the matter. First, the ominous words had been upon her tongue. "It was here where the stem joins the flower;" but she recollected herself in time. Next came up the past vision of the place and hour when the accident occurred. Her hanging sleeve had swept it off the table. Mr. Carlyle was in the room, and he had soothed her sorrow with almost childish sorrow with kisses sweet. Ah me! poor thing! I think our hands would have shaken as hers did. The ornament and the kisses were Barbara's now.

"I ran quickly up the stairs and back again," was the explanation she offered to Mrs. Carlyle for her shaking hands.

At that moment Mr. Carlyle and their guests were heard to return, and ascend to their respective apartments, Lord Vane's gleeful voice echoing through the house. Mr. Carlyle came into his wife's dressingroom, and Madame Vine would have made a precipitate retreat.

"No, no," said Barbara, "finish it, now you have begun. Mr. Carlyle will be going to his room. Look at the misfortune I have had. Archibald, I have broken this."

Mr. Carlyle glanced carelessly at the trinket, and at Madame Vine's white fingers. He crossed to the door of his dressingroom and opened it, then held out his hand in silence for Barbara to approach and drew her in with him. Madame Vine went on with her work.

Presently Barbara returned, and approached the table where stood Madame Vine, while she drew on her gloves. Her eyelashes were wet.

"I could not help shedding a few tears of joy," exclaimed Barbara, with a pretty blush, perceiving that madame observed the signs. "Mr. Carlyle has been telling me that my brother's innocence is now all but patent to the world. It came out upon the examination of those two men, Sir Francis and Otway Bethel. Lord Mount Severn was present at the

proceedings, and says they have in some way incriminated each other. Papa sat in his place as chairman; I wonder that he liked to do so."

Lower bent the head of Madame Vine over her employment. "Has anything been proved against them?" she asked, in her usual soft tone, almost a whisper.

"There is not the least doubt of the guilt of Levison, but Otway Bethel's share in the affair is a puzzle yet," replied Mrs. Carlyle. "Both are committed for trial. Oh, that man! that man! how his sins come out!" she continued in excitement.

Madame Vine glanced up through her spectacles.

"Would you believe," continued Barbara, dropping her voice, "that while West Lynne, and I fear ourselves also, gave that miserable Afy credit for having gone away with Richard, she was all the time with Levison? Ball, the lawyer got her to confess today. I am unacquainted with the details; Mr. Carlyle would not give them to me. He said the bare fact was quite enough, and considering the associations it involved, would not do to talk of."

Mr. Carlyle was right.

"Out it seems to come, little by little, one wickedness after another!" resumed Barbara. "I do not like Mr. Carlyle to hear it. No, I don't. Of course there is no help for it; but he must feel it terribly, as must also Lord Mount Severn. She was his wife, you know, and the children are hers; and to think that she must feel it for her," went on Barbara after her sudden pause, and there was some hauteur in her tone lest she should be misunderstood. "Mr. Carlyle is one of the very few men, so entirely noble, whom the sort of disgrace reflected from Lady Isabel's conduct cannot touch."

The carriage of the first guest. Barbara ran across the room, and rattled at Mr. Carlyle's door. "Archibald do you hear?"

Back came the laughing answer. "I shan't keep them long. But they may surely accord a few minutes' grace to a man who has just been converted into an M. P."

Barbara descended to the drawingroom, leaving her, that unhappy lady, to the cement and the broken pieces, and to battle as best she could with her bitter heart. Nothing but stabs; nothing but stabs! Was her punishment ever to end? No. The step she had taken in coming back to East Lynne had precluded that.

The guests arrived; all save Mr. and Mrs. Hare. Barbara received a note from her instead. The justice did not feel well enough to join them.

I should think he did not.



A pleasant party it was at East Lynne, and twelve o'clock struck before the carriage of the last guest drove away. It may have been from one to two hours after that, and the house was steeped in moonlight and quietness, everybody being abed and asleep when a loud summons at the hall bell echoed through the stillness.

The first to put her head out the window was Wilson. "Is it fire?" shrieked she, in the most excessive state of terror conceivable. Wilson had a natural dread of firesome people do possess this dread more than others and had oftentimes aroused the house to a commotion by declaring she smelt it. "Is it fire?" shrieked Wilson.

"Yes!" was shouted at the top of a man's voice, who stepped from between the entrance pillars to answer.

Wilson waited for no more. Clutching at the baby with one hand a fine young gentleman now of near twelve months old, promising fair to be as great a source of trouble to Wilson and the nursery as was his brother Archibald, whom he greatly resembled and at Archie with the other, out she flew to the corridor screeching "Fire! fire! fire!" never ceasing, down tore Wilson with the four children, and burst unceremoniously into the sleeping apartment of Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle. By this time the children, terrified out of their senses, not at Wilson's cry of alarm, but at the summary propelling downstairs, set up a shrieking, too. Madame Vine, believing that half the house at least was in flames, was the next to appear, throwing on a shawl she had caught up, and then came Joyce.

"Fire! fire! fire!" shouted Wilson; "we are all being burnt up together!"

Poor Mrs. Carlyle, thus wildly aroused from sleep, sprang out of bed and into the corridor in her nightdress. Everybody else was in a nightdress when folks are flying for dear life, they don't stop to look for their dresscoats and best blonde caps. Out came Mr. Carlyle, who had hastily assumed his pantaloons.

He cast a rapid glance down to the hall, and saw that the stairs were perfectly free for escape; therefore to hurry was not so violent. Every soul around him was shrieking in concert, making the confusion and din terrific. The bright moonlight streamed in at the corridor windows, but there was no other light; shadowy and indistinct enough looked the white figures.

"Where is the fire?" he exclaimed. "I don't smell any. Who gave the first alarm?"

The bell answered him. The hall bell, which rang out ten times louder and longer than before. He opened one of the windows and leaned from it. "Who's there?" Madame Vine caught up Archie.

"It's me, sir," responded a voice, which he at once recognized to be that of one of Mr. Hare's menservants. "Master has been took in a fit, sir, and mistress sent me for you and Miss Barbara. You must please make haste, sir, if you want to see him alive."

Miss Barbara! It was more familiar to Jasper, in a moment of excitement, than the new name.

"You, Jasper! Is the house on fire this house?"

"Well, I don't know, sir. I can hear a dreadful deal of screeching in it."

Mr. Carlyle closed the window. He began to suspect that the danger lay in fear alone. "Who told you there was fire?" he demanded of Wilson.

"That man ringing at the door," sobbed Wilson. "Thank goodness I have saved the children!"

Mr. Carlyle felt somewhat exasperated at the mistake. His wife was trembling from head to foot, her face of a deadly whiteness, and he knew that she was not in a condition to be alarmed, necessarily or unnecessarily. She clung to him in terror, asking if they could escape.

"My darling, be calm! There's no fire; it's a stupid mistake. You may all go back to bed and sleep in peace," he added to the rest, "and the next time that you alarm the house in the night, Wilson, have the goodness to make yourself sure, first of all, that there's cause for it."

Barbara, frightened still, bewildered and uncertain, escaped to the window and threw it open. But Mr. Carlyle was nearly as quick as she; he caught her to him with one hand, and drew the window down with the other. To have these tidings told to her abruptly would be worse than all. By this time some of the servants had descended the other staircase with a light, being in various stages of costume, and hastened to open the hall door. Jasper entered. The man had probably waited to help to put out the "fire." Barbara caught sight of him ere Mr. Carlyle could prevent it, and grew sick with fear, believing some ill had happened to her mother.

Drawing her inside their chamber, he broke the news to her soothingly and tenderly, making light of it.

She burst into tears. "You are not deceiving me, Archibald? Papa is not dead?"

"Dead!" cheerfully echoed Mr. Carlyle, in the same tone he might have used had Barbara wondered whether the justice was taking a night airing for pleasure in a balloon. "Wilson has indeed frightened you, love. Dress yourself, and we will go and see him."

At that moment Barbara recollected William. Strange that she should have been the first to do so before Lady Isabel before Mr. Carlyle. She ran out again to the corridors, where the boy stood shivering. "He may have caught his death!" she uttered, snatching him up in her arms. "Oh, Wilson! What have you done? His nightgown is damp and cold."

Unfit as she was for the burden, she bore him to her own bed. Wilson was not at leisure to attend to reproaches just then. She was engaged in a wordy war with Jasper, leaning over the balustrades to carry it on.

"I never told you there was a fire!" indignantly denied Jasper.

"You did. I opened the nursery window and called out 'Is it fire?' and you answered 'Yes.'"

"You called out 'Is it Jasper?' What else should I say but 'Yes,' to that? Fire? Where was the fire likely to be in the park?"

"Wilson take the children back to bed," authoritatively spoke Mr. Carlyle, as he advanced to look down into the hall. "John, are you there? The close carriage, instantly look sharp. Madame Vine, pray don't continue to hold that heavy boy; Joyce can't you relieve madame?"

In crossing back to his room, Mr. Carlyle had brushed past madame, and noticed that she appeared to be shaking, as with the weight of Archibald. In reality she was still alarmed, not understanding yet the cause of the commotion. Joyce, who comprehended it as little, and had stood with her arms round Lucy, advanced to take Archibald, and Mr. Carlyle disappeared. Barbara had taken off her own warm nightgown then, and put it upon William in place of his cold one; had struck a light and was busily dressing herself.

"Just feel his nightgown Archibald! Wilson"

A shrill cry of awful terror interrupted the words, and Mr. Carlyle made one bound out again. Barbara followed; the least she thought was that Wilson had dropped the baby in the hall.

That was not the catastrophe. Wilson, with the baby and Lucy, had already disappeared up the staircase, and Madame Vine was disappearing. Archibald lay on the soft carpet of the corridor, where madame had stood; for Joyce, in the act of taking him, had let him slip to the ground; let him fall from sheer terror. She held on to the balustrades, her face ghastly, her mouth open, her eyes fixed in horror; altogether an object to look upon. Archie gathered himself on his sturdy legs, and stood staring.

"Why, Joyce! What is the matter with you?" cried Mr. Carlyle. "You look as if you had seen a spectre."

"Oh, master!" she wailed, "I have seen one."

"Are you all going deranged together?" retorted he, wondering what had come to the house. "Seen a spectre, Joyce?"

Joyce fell on her knees, as if unable to support herself, and crossed her shaking hands upon her chest. Had she seen ten spectres she could not have betrayed more dire distress. She was a sensible and faithful servant, one not given to flights of fancy, and Mr. Carlyle gazed at her in very amazement.

"Joyce, what is this?" he asked, bending down and speaking kindly.

"Oh, my dear master! Heaven have mercy upon us all!" was the inexplicable answer.

"Joyce I ask you what is this?"

She made no reply. She rose up shaking; and, taking Archie's hand, slowly proceeded toward the upper stairs, low moans breaking from her, and the boy's naked feet pattering on the carpet.

"What can ail her?" whispered Barbara, following Joyce with her eyes. "What did she mean about a spectre?"

"She must have been reading a ghostbook," said Carlyle. "Wilson's folly has turned the house topsyturvy. Make your haste, Barbara."

Spring waned. Summer came, and would soon be waning, too, for the hot days of July were now in. What had the months brought forth, since the election of Mr. Carlyle in April? Be you very sure they had not been without their events.

Mr. Justice Hare's illness had turned out to be a stroke of paralysis. People cannot act with unnatural harshness toward a child, and then discover they have been in the wrong, with impunity. Thus it proved with Mr. Justice Hare. He was recovering, but would never again be the man he had been. The fright, when Jasper had gone to tell of his illness at East Lynne, and was mistaken for fire, had done nobody any damage, save William and Joyce. William had caught a cold, which brought increased malady to the lungs; and Joyce seemed to have caught fear. She went about, more like one in a dream than awake, would be buried in a reverie for an hour at a time, and if suddenly spoken to, would start and shiver.

Mr. Carlyle and his wife departed for London immediately that Mr. Hare was pronounced out of danger; which was in about a week from the time of his seizure. William accompanied them, partly for the benefit of London advice, partly that Mr. Carlyle would not be parted from him. Joyce went, in attendance with some of the servants.

They found London ringing with the news of Sir Francis Levison's arrest. London could not understand it; and the most wild and improbable tales were in circulation. The season was at its height; the excitement in proportion; it was more than a nine days' wonder. On the very evening of their arrival a lady, young and beautiful, was shown in to the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle. She had declined to give her name, but there arose to Mr. Carlyle's memory, when he looked upon her, one whom he had seen in earlier days as the friend of his first wife Blanche Challoner. It was not Blanche, however.

The stranger looked keenly at Mr. Carlyle. He was standing with his hat in his hand, on the point of going out. "Will you pardon this intrusion?" she asked. "I have come to you as one human being in need comes to crave help of another. I am Lady Levison."

Barbara's face flushed. Mr. Carlyle courteously invited the stranger to a chair, remaining standing himself. She sat for a moment, and then rose, evidently in an excess of agitation.

"Yes, I am Lady Levison, forced to call that man husband. That he has been a wicked man, I have long known; but now I hear he is a criminal. I hear it, I say, but I can get the truth from none. I went to Lord Mount Severn; he declined to give me particulars. I heard that Mr. Carlyle would be in town today, and I resolved to come and ask them of him."

She delivered the sentences in a jerking, abrupt tone, betraying her inward emotion. Mr. Carlyle, looking somewhat unapproachable, made no immediate reply.

"You and I have both been deeply wronged by him, Mr. Carlyle, but I brought my wrong upon myself, you did not. My sister, Blanche, whom he had cruelly treated and if I speak of it, I only speak of what is known to the world warned me against him. Mrs. Levison, his grandmother, that ancient lady who must now be bordering upon ninety, she warned me. The night before my wedding day, she came on purpose to tell me that if I married Francis Levison I should rue it for life. There was yet time to retract she said. Yes; there would have been time; but there was no will. I would not listen to either. I was led away by vanity, by folly, by something worse the triumphing over my own sister. Poor Blanche! But which has the best of the bargain now, she or I? And I have a child," she

continued, dropping her voice, "a boy who inherits his father's name. Mr. Carlyle, will they condemn him?"

"Nothing, as yet, is positively proved against him," replied Mr. Carlyle, compassionating the unhappy lady.

"If I could but get a divorce!" she passionately uttered, apparently losing all self-control. "I might have got one, over and over again, since we married, but there would have been the expose and the scandal. If I could but change my child's name! Tell me does any chance of redress remain for me?"

There was none, and Mr. Carlyle did not attempt to speak of any. He offered a few kind words of sympathy, very generally expressed, and then prepared to go out. She moved, and stood in his way.

"You will not leave until you have given me the particulars! I pray you, do not! I came trustingly to you, hoping to know them."

"I am waited for, to keep an important engagement," he answered. "And were my time at liberty, I should decline to tell them to you, on my own account, as well as on yours. Lay not discourtesy to my charge, Lady Levison. Were I to speak of the man, even to you, his name would blister my lips."

"In every word of hate spoken by you I would sympathize; every contemptuous expression of scorn, cast upon him from your heart, I would join in, tenfold."

Barbara was shocked. "He is your husband, after all," she took leave to whisper.

"My husband!" broke forth Lady Levison, in agitation, seemingly. "Yes! there's the wrong. Why did he, knowing what he was, delude me into becoming his wife? You ought to feel for me, Mrs. Carlyle; and you do feel for me, for you are a wife and mother. How dare these base men marrytake to themselves an innocent, inexperienced girl, vowing, before God, to love and honor and cherish her? Were not his other sins impediment enough but he must have crime, also, and woo me! He has done me deep and irredeemable wrong, and has entailed upon his child an inheritance of shame. What had he or I done to deserve it, I ask?"

Barbara felt half frightened at her vehemence; and Barbara might be thankful not to understand it. All her native gentleness, all her reticence of feeling, as a wife and a gentlewoman, had been goaded out of her. The process had been going on for some time, but this last revelation was the crowning point; and Alice, Lady Levison, turned round upon the world in her helpless resentment, as any poor wife, working in a garret, might have done. There are certain wrongs which bring out human nature in the

highborn, as well as in the low. "Still he is your husband," was all Barbara could, with deprecation, again plead.

"He made himself my husband by deceit, and I will throw him off in the face of day," returned Lady Levison. "There is no moral obligation why I should not. He has worked ill and ruin upon me and my child, and the world shall never be allowed to think I have borne my share in it. How was it you kept your hands off him, when he reappeared, to brave you, in West Lynne?" she added, in a changed tone, turning to Mr. Carlyle.

"I cannot tell. I was a marvel oftentimes to myself."

He quitted the room as he spoke, adding a few civil words about her with Mrs. Carlyle. Barbara, not possessing the scruples of her husband, yielded to Lady Levison's request, and gave her the outline of the dark tale. Its outline only; and generously suppressing Afy's name beyond the evening of the fatal event. Lady Levison listened without interruption.

"Do you and Mr. Carlyle believe him to have been guilty?"

"Yes; but Mr. Carlyle will not express his opinion to the world. He does not repay wrong with revenge. I have heard him say that if the lifting of his finger would send the man to his punishment, he would tie down his hand rather than lift it."

"Was his first wife, Isabel Vane, mad?" she presently asked.

"Mad!" echoed Barbara, in surprise.

"When she quitted him for the other. It could have been nothing else than madness. I could understand a woman's flying from him for love of Mr. Carlyle; but now that I have seen your husband, I cannot understand the reverse side of the picture. I thank you for your courtesy, Mrs. Carlyle."

And, without another word, Alice Levison quitted the room as abruptly as she had entered it.

Well, the London visit came to an end. It was of little more than three weeks' duration, for Barbara must be safe at home again. Mr. Carlyle remained for the rest of the season alone, but he varied it with journeys to East Lynne. He had returned home for good now, July, although the season had not quite terminated. There was another baby at East Lynne, a lovely little baby, pretty as Barbara herself had been at a month old. William was fading rapidly. The London physicians had but confirmed the opinion of Dr. Martin, and it was evident to all that the close would not be long protracted.

Somebody else was fading Lady Isabel. The cross had been too heavy, and she was sinking under its weight. Can you wonder at it?

An intensely hot day it was under the July sun. Afy Hallijohn was sailing up the street in its beams, finer and vainer than ever. She encountered Mr. Carlyle.

"So, Afy, you are really going to be married at last?"

"Jiffin fancies so, sir. I am not sure yet but what I shall change my mind. Jiffin thinks there's nobody like me. If I could eat gold and silver, he'd provide it; and he's as fond as fond can be. But then you know, sir, he's half soft."

"Soft as to you, perhaps," laughed Mr. Carlyle. "I consider him a very civil, respectable man, Afy."

"And then, I never did think to marry a shopkeeper," grumbled Afy; "I looked a little higher than that. Only fancy, sir, having a husband who wears a white apron tied round him!"

"Terrible!" responded Mr. Carlyle, with a grave face.

"Not but what it will be a tolerable settlement," rejoined Afy, veering round a point. "He's having his house done up in style, and I shall keep two good servants, and do nothing myself but dress and subscribe to the library. He makes plenty of money." "A very tolerable settlement, I should say," returned Mr. Carlyle; and Afy's face fell before the glance of his eye, merry though it was. "Take care you don't spend all his money for him, Afy."

"I'll take care of that," nodded Afy, significantly. "Sir," she somewhat abruptly added, "what is it that's the matter with Joyce?"

"I do not know," said Mr. Carlyle, becoming serious. "There does appear to be something the matter with her, for she is much changed."

"I never saw anybody so changed in my life," exclaimed Afy. "I told her the other day that she was just like one who had got some dreadful secret upon their mind."

"It is really more like that than anything else," observed Mr. Carlyle.

"But she is one of the close ones, is Joyce," continued Afy. "No fear that she'll give out a clue, if it does not suit her to do so. She told me, in answer, to mind my own business, and not to take absurd fancies in my head. How is the baby, sir, and Mrs. Carlyle?"

"All well. Good day, Afy."



## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE TRIAL.

Spacious courts were the assize courts of Lynneborough; and it was well they were so, otherwise more people had been disappointed, and numbers were, of hearing the noted trial of Sir Francis Levison for the murder of George Hallijohn.

The circumstances attending the case caused it to bear for the public an unparalleled interest. The rank of the accused, and his antecedents, more especially that particular local antecedent touching the Lady Isabel Carlyle; the verdict still out against Richard Hare; the length of time which had elapsed since; the part played in it by Afy; the intense curiosity as to the part taken in it by Otway Bethel; the speculation as to what had been the exact details, and the doubt of a convictionall contributed to fan the curiosity of the public. People came from far and near to be presentfriends of Mr. Carlyle, friends of the Hares, friends of the Challoner family, friends of the prisoner, besides the general public. Colonel Bethel and Mr. Justice Hare had conspicuous seats.

At a few minutes past nine the judge took his place on the bench, but not before a rumor had gone through the courta rumor that seemed to shake it to its centre, and which people stretched out their necks to hearOtway Bethel had turned Queen's evidence, and was to be admitted as a witness for the crown.

Thin, haggard, pale, looked Francis Levison as he was placed in the dock. His incarceration had not in any way contributed to his personal advantages, and there was an everrecurring expression of dread upon his countenance not pleasant to look upon. He was dressed in black, old Mrs. Levison having died, and his diamond ring shone conspicuous still on his white hand, now whiter than ever. The most eminent counsel were engaged on both sides.

The testimony of the witnesses already given need not be recapitulated. The identification of the prisoner with the man Thorn was fully establishedEbenezer James proved that. Afy proved it, and also that he, Thorn, was at the cottage that night. Sir Peter Levison's groom was likewise reexamined. But still there wanted other testimony. Afy was made to reassert that Thorn had to go to the cottage for his hat after leaving her, but that proved nothing, and the conversation, or quarrel overheard by Mr. Dill was now again, put forward. If this was all the evidence, people opined that the case for the prosecution would break down.

"Call Richard Hare" said the counsel for the prosecution.

Those present who knew Mr. Justice Hare, looked up at him, wondering why he did not stir in answer to his namewondering at the pallid hue which overspread his face. Not he, but another came forward a fair, placid, gentlemanly young man, with blue eyes, fair hair, and a pleasant countenance. It was Richard Hare the younger. He had assumed his original position in life, so far as attire went, and in that, at least, was a gentleman again. In speech also with his working dress Richard had thrown off his working manners.

A strange hubbub arose in court. Richard Hare, the exile the reported dead the man whose life was in jeopardy! The spectators rose with one accord to get a better view; they stood on tiptoe; they pushed forth their necks; they strained their eyesight: and, amidst all the noisy hum, the groan bursting from the lips of Justice Hare was unnoticed. Whilst order was being called for, and the judge threatened to clear the court, two officers moved themselves quietly up and stood behind the witness. Richard Hare was in custody, though he might know it not. The witness was sworn.

"What is your name?"

"Richard Hare."

"Son of Mr. Justice Hare, I believe, of the Grove, West Lynne?"

"His only son."

"The same against whom a verdict of wilful murder is out?" interposed the judge.

"The same, my lord," replied Richard Hare, who appeared, strange as it may seem, to have cast away all his old fearfulness.

"Then, witness, let me warn you that you are not obliged to answer any question that may tend to criminate yourself."

"My lord," answered Richard Hare, with some emotion, "I wish to answer any and every question put to me. I have but one hope, that the full truth of all pertaining to that fatal evening may be made manifest this day."

"Look round at the prisoner," said the examining counsel. "Do you know him?"

"I know him now as Sir Francis Levison. Up to April last I believed his name to be Thorn."

"State what occurred on the evening of the murder, as far as your knowledge goes."

"I had an appointment that evening with Afy Hallijohn, and went down to their cottage to keep it"

"A moment," interrupted the counsel. "Was your visit that evening made in secret?"

"Partially so. My father and mother were displeased, naturally, at my intimacy with Afy Hallijohn; therefore I did not care that they should be cognizant of my visits there. I am ashamed to confess that I told my father a lie over it that very evening. He saw me leave the dinnertable to go out with my gun, and inquired where I was off to. I answered that I was going out with young Beauchamp."

"When, in point of fact, you were not?"

"No. I took my gun, for I had promised to lend it to Hallijohn while his own was being repaired. When I reached the cottage Afy refused to admit me; she was busy, and could not, she said. I felt sure she had got Thorn with her. She had, more than once before, refused to admit me when I had gone there by her own appointment, and I always found that Thorn's presence in the cottage was the obstacle."

"I suppose you and Thorn were jealous of each other?"

"I was jealous of him; I freely admit it. I don't know whether he was of me."

"May I inquire what was the nature of your friendship for Miss Afy Hallijohn?"

"I loved her with an honorable love, as I might have done by any young lady in my own station of life. I would not have married her in opposition to my father and mother; but I told Afy that if she was content to wait for me until I was my own master I would then make her my wife."

"You had no views toward her of a different nature?"

"None; I cared for her too much for that; and I respected her father. Afy's mother had been a lady, too, although she had married Hallijohn, who was but clerk to Mr. Carlyle. No; I never had a thought of wrong toward Afy I never could have had."

"Now relate the occurrences of the evening?"

"Afy would not admit me, and we had a few words over it; but at length I went away, first giving her the gun, and telling her it was loaded. She lodged it against the wall, just inside the door, and I went into the wood and waited, determined to see whether or not Thorn was with her, for she had denied that he was. Locksley saw me there, and asked why I was hiding. I did not answer; but I went further off, quite out of view of the cottage. Some time afterward, less than half an hour, I heard a shot in the direction of the cottage. Somebody was having a late pop at the partridge, I thought. Just then I saw Otway Bethel emerge from the trees, not far from me, and run toward the cottage. My

lord," added Richard Hare, looking at the judge, "that was the shot that killed Hallijohn!"

"Could the shot," asked the counsel, "have been fired by Otway Bethel?"

"It could not. It was much further off. Bethel disappeared, and in another minute there came some one flying down the path leading from the cottage. It was Thorn, and evidently in a state of intense terror. His face was livid, his eyes staring, and he panted and shook like one in the ague. Past me he tore, on down the path, and I afterwards heard the sound of his horse galloping away; it had been tied in the wood."

"Did you follow him?"

"No. I wondered what had happened to put him in that state; but I made haste to the cottage, intending to reproach Afy with her duplicity. I leaped up the two steps, and fell over the prostrate body of Hallijohn. He was lying dead within the door. My gun, just discharged, was flung on the floor, its contents in Hallijohn's side."

You might have heard a pin drop in court, so intense was the interest.

"There appeared to be no one in the cottage, upstairs or down. I called to Afy, but she did not answer. I caught up the gun, and was running from the cottage when Locksley came out of the wood and looked at me. I grew confused, fearful, and I threw the gun back again and made off."

"What were your motives for acting in that way?"

"A panic had come over me, and in that moment I must have lost the use of my reason, otherwise I never should have acted as I did. Thoughts, especially of fear, pass through our minds with astonishing swiftness, and I feared lest the crime should be fastened upon me. It was fear made me snatch up my gun, lest it should be found near the body; it was fear made me throw it back again when Locksley appeared in view a fear you understand, from which all judgment, all reason, had departed. But for my own conduct, the charge never would have been laid to me."

"Go on."

"In my flight I came upon Bethel. I knew that if he had gone toward the cottage after the shot was fired, he must have encountered Thorn flying from it. He denied that he had; he said he had only gone along the path for a few paces, and had then plunged into the wood again. I believed him and departed."

"Departed from West Lynne?"

"That night I did. It was a foolish, fatal step, the result of cowardice. I found the charge was laid to me, and I thought I would absent myself for a day or two, to see how things turned out. Next came the inquest and the verdict against me, and I then left for good."

"This is the truth, so far as you are cognizant of it?"

"I swear that it is truth, and the whole truth, so far as I am cognizant of it," replied Richard Hare, with emotion. "I could not assert it more solemnly were I before God."

He was subjected to a rigid cross-examination, but his testimony was not shaken in the least. Perhaps not one present but was impressed with its truth.

Afy Hallijohn was recalled, and questioned as to Richard's presence at her father's house that night. It tallied with the account given by Richard; but it had to be drawn from her.

"Why did you decline to receive Richard Hare into the cottage, after appointing him to come?"

"Because I chose," returned Afy.

"Tell the jury why you chose."

"Well, I had got a friend with me it was Captain Thorn," she added, feeling that she should only be questioned on this point, so might as well acknowledge it. "I did not admit Richard Hare, for I fancied they might get up a quarrel if they were together."

"For what purpose did Richard Hare bring down his gun do you know?"

"It was to lend to my father. My father's gun had something the matter with it, and was at the smith's. I had heard him, the previous day, ask Mr. Richard to lend him one of his, and Mr. Richard said he would bring one, as he did."

"You lodged the gun against the wall safely?"

"Quite safely."

"Was it touched by you, after placing it there, or by the prisoner?"

"I did not touch it; neither did he, that I saw. It was that same gun which was afterward found near my father, and had been discharged."

The next witness called was Otway Bethel. He also held share in the curiosity of the public, but not in equal degree with Afy, still less with Richard Hare. The substance of his testimony was as follows:

"On the evening that Hallijohn was killed, I was in the Abbey Wood, and I saw Richard Hare come down the path with a gun, as if he had come down from his own home."

"Did Richard Hare see you?"

"No; he could not see me; I was right in the thicket. He went to the cottage door, and was about to enter, when Afy Hallijohn came hastily out of it, pulling the door to behind her, and holding it in her hand, as if afraid he would go in. Some colloquy ensued, but I was too far off to hear it; and then she took the gun from him and went indoors. Some time after that I saw Richard Hare amid the trees at a distance, farther off the cottage, then, than I was, and apparently watching the path. I was wondering what he was up to, hiding there, when I heard a shot fired, close, as it seemed, to the cottage, and"

"Stop a bit, witness. Could that shot have been fired by Richard Hare?"

"It could not. He was a quarter of a mile, nearly, away from it. I was much nearer the cottage than he."

"Go on."

"I could not imagine what that shot meant, or who could have fired it; not that I suspected mischief and I knew that poachers did not congregate so near Hallijohn's cottage. I set off to reconnoiter, and as I turned the corner, which brought the house within my view, I saw Captain Thorn, as he was called, come leaping out of it. His face was white with terror, his breath was gone; in short, I never saw any living man betray so much agitation. I caught his arm as he would have passed me. 'What have you been about?' I asked. 'Was it you that fired?' He"

"Stay. Why did you suspect him?"

"From his state of excitement from the terror he was in that some ill had happened, I felt sure; and so would you, had you seen him as I did. My arresting him increased his agitation; he tried to throw me off, but I am a strong man, and I suppose he thought it best to temporize. 'Keep dark upon it, Bethel,' he said, 'I will make it worth your while. The thing was not premeditated; it was done in the heat of passion. What business had the fellow to abuse me? I have done no harm to the girl.' As he thus spoke, he took out a pocket book with the hand that was at liberty; I held the other"

"As the prisoner thus spoke, you mean?"

"The prisoner. He took a banknote from his pocket book, and thrust it into my hands. It was a note for fifty pounds. 'What's done can't be undone, Bethel,' he said, 'and your saying that you saw me here can serve no good turn. Shall it be silence?' I took the note and answered that it should be silence. I had not the least idea that anybody was killed."

"What did you suppose had happened, then?"

"I could not suppose; I could not think; it all passed in the haste and confusion of a moment, and no definite idea occurred to me. Thorn flew on down the path, and I stood looking after him. The next was I heard footsteps, and I slipped within the trees. They were those of Richard Hare, who took the path to the cottage. Presently he returned, little less agitated than Thorn had been. I had gone into an open space, then, and he accosted me, asking if I had seen 'that hound' fly from the cottage? 'What hound?' I asked of him. 'That fine fellow, that Thorn, who comes after Afy,' he answered, but I stoutly denied that I had seen any one. Richard Hare continued his way, and I afterward found that Hallijohn was killed."

"And so you took a bribe to conceal one of the foulest crimes that man ever committed, Mr. Otway Bethel!"

"I took the money, and I am ashamed to confess it. But it was done without reflection. I swear that had I known what crime it was intended to hush up, I never would have touched it. I was hard up for funds, and the amount tempted me. When I discovered what had really happened, and that Richard Hare was accused, I was thunderstruck at my own deed; many a hundred times since have I cursed the money; and the fate of Richard has been as a heavy weight upon my conscience."

"You might have lifted the weight by confessing."

"To what end? It was too late. Thorn had disappeared. I never heard of him, or saw him, until he came to West Lynne this last spring, as Sir Francis Levison, to oppose Mr. Carlyle. Richard Hare had also disappeared had never been seen or heard of, and most people supposed he was dead. To what end then should I confess? Perhaps only to be suspected myself. Besides, I had taken the money upon a certain understanding, and it was only fair that I should keep to it."

If Richard Hare was subjected to a severe cross-examination, a far more severe one was awaiting Otway Bethel. The judge spoke to him only once, his tone ringing with reproach.

"It appears then, witness, that you have retained within you, all these years, the proofs of Richard Hare's innocence?"

"I can only acknowledge it with contrition, my lord."

"What did you know of Thorn in those days?" asked the counsel.

"Nothing, save that he frequented the Abbey Wood, his object being Afy Hallijohn. I had never exchanged a word with him until that night; but I knew his name, Thornat least, the one he went by, and by his addressing me as Bethel, it appeared that he knew mine."

The case for the prosecution closed. An able and ingenious speech was made for the defence, the learned counsel who offered it contending that there was still no proof of Sir Francis having been the guilty man. Neither was there any proof that the catastrophe was not the result of pure accident. A loaded gun, standing against a wall in a small room, was not a safe weapon, and he called upon the jury not rashly to convict in the uncertainty, but to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt. He should call no witnesses, he observed, not even to character. Character! for Sir Francis Levison! The court burst into a grin; the only sober face in it being that of the judge.

The judge summed up. Certainly not in the prisoner's favor; but, to use the expression of some amidst the audience, dead against him. Otway Bethel came in for a side shaft or two from his lordship; Richard Hare for sympathy. The jury retired about four o'clock, and the judge quitted the bench.

A very short time they were absent. Scarcely a quarter of an hour. His lordship returned into court, and the prisoner was again placed in the dock. He was the hue of marble, and, in his nervous agitation, kept incessantly throwing back his hair from his forehead the action already spoken of. Silence was proclaimed.

"How say you, gentlemen of the jury? Guilty, or not guilty?"

"GUILTY."

It was a silence to be felt; and the prisoner gasped once or twice convulsively.

"But," said the foreman, "we wish to recommend him to mercy."

"On what grounds?" inquired the judge.

"Because, my lord, we believe it was not a crime planned by the prisoner beforehand, but arose out of the bad passions of the moment, and was so committed."

The judge paused, and drew something black from the receptacle of his pocket, buried deep in his robes.



"Prisoner at the bar! Have you anything to urge why sentence of death should not be passed upon you?"

The prisoner clutched the front of the dock. He threw up his head, as if shaking off the dread fear which had oppressed him, and the marble of his face changed to scarlet.

"Only this, my lord. The jury, in giving their reason for recommending me to your lordship's mercy, have adopted the right view of the case as it actually occurred. The man Hallijohn's life was taken by me, it will be useless for me to deny, in the face of the evidence given this day, but it was not taken in malice. When I quitted the girl, Afy, and went to the cottage for my hat, I no more contemplated injuring mortal man than I contemplate it at this moment. He was there, the father, and in the dispute that ensued the catastrophe occurred. My lord, it was not wilful murder."

The prisoner ceased, and the judge, the black cap on his head, crossed his hands one upon the other.

"Prisoner at the bar. You have been convicted by clear and undoubted evidence of the crime of wilful murder. The jury have pronounced you guilty; and in their verdict I entirely coincide. That you took the life of that illfated and unoffending man, there is no doubt; you have, yourself, confessed it. It was a foul, a barbarous, a wicked act. I care not for what may have been the particular circumstances attending it; he may have provoked you by words; but no provocation of that nature could justify your drawing the gun upon him. Your counsel urged that you were a gentleman, a member of the British aristocracy, and therefore deserved consideration. I confess that I was much surprised to hear such a doctrine fall from his lips. In my opinion, you being what you are, your position in life makes your crime the worse, and I have always maintained that when a man possessed of advantages falls into sin, he deserves less consideration than does one who is poor, simple, and uneducated. Certain portions of the evidence given today (and I do not now allude to the actual crime) tell very greatly against you, and I am sure not one in the court but must have turned from them with abhorrence. You were pursuing the daughter of this man with no honorable purpose and in this point your conduct contrasts badly with the avowal of Richard Hare, equally a gentleman with yourself. In this pursuit you killed her father; and not content with that, you still pursued the girl and pursued her to ruin, basely deceiving her as to the actual facts, and laying the crime upon another. I cannot trust myself to speak further upon this point, nor is it necessary that I should; it is not to answer for that, that you stand before me. Uncalled, unprepared, and by you unpitied, you hurried that unfortunate man into eternity, and you must now expiate the crime with your own life. The jury have recommended you to mercy, and the recommendation will be forwarded in due course to the proper quarter, but you must be aware how frequently this clause is appended to a verdict, and how very rarely it is attended to, just cause being wanting. I can but enjoin you, and I do so most

earnestly, to pass the little time that probably remains to you on earth in seeking repentance and forgiveness. You are best aware, yourself, what your past life has been; the world knows somewhat of it; but there is pardon above for the most guilty, when it is earnestly sought. It now only remains for me to pass the sentence of the law. It is, that you, Francis Levison, be taken back to the place from whence you came, and thence to the place of execution, and that you be there hanged by the neck until you are dead. And may the Lord God Almighty have mercy on your soul!"

"Amen!"

The court was cleared. The day's excitement was over, and the next case was inquired for. Not quite over, however, yet, the excitement, and the audience crowded in again. For the next case proved to be the arraignment of Richard Hare the younger. A formal proceeding merely, in pursuance of the verdict of the coroner's inquest. No evidence was offered against him, and the judge ordered him to be discharged. Richard, poor, illused, baited Richard was a free man again.

Then ensued the scene of all scenes. Half, at least, of those present, were residents of, or from near West Lynne. They had known Richard Hare from infancy they had admired the boy in his pretty childhood they had liked him in his unoffending boyhood, but they had been none the less ready to cast their harsh stones at him, and to thunder down their denunciations when the time came. In proportion to their fierceness then, was their contrition now; Richard had been innocent all the while; they had been more guilty than he.

An English mob, gentle or simple, never gets up its excitement by halves. Whether its demonstration be of a laudatory or a condemnatory nature, the steam is sure to be put on to bursting point. With one universal shout, with one bound, they rallied round Richard; they congratulated him; they overwhelmed him with good wishes; they expressed with shame their repentance; they said the future would atone for the past. Had he possessed a hundred hands, they would have been shaken off. And when Richard extracted himself, and turned, in his pleasant, forgiving, loving nature, to his father, the stern old justice, forgetting his pride and pomposity, burst into tears and sobbed like a child, as he murmured something about his also needing forgiveness.

"Dear father," cried Richard, his own eyes wet, "it is forgiven and forgotten already. Think how happy we shall be again together, you, and I, and my mother."

The justice's hands, which had been wound around his son, relaxed their hold. They were twitching curiously; the body also began to twitch, and he fell upon the shoulder of Colonel Bethel in a second stroke of paralysis

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### THE DEATH CHAMBER.

By the side of William Carlyle's dying bed knelt the Lady Isabel. The time was at hand, and the boy was quite reconciled to his fate. Merciful, indeed, is God to dying children! It is astonishing how very readily, when the right means are taken, they may be brought to look with pleasure, rather than fear, upon their unknown journey.

The brilliant hectic, type of the disease, had gone from his cheeks, his features were white and wasted, and his eyes large and bright. His silky brown hair was pushed off his temples, and his little hot hands were thrown outside the bed.

"It won't be very long to wait, you know, will it, Madame Vine?"

"For what, darling?"

"Before they all come. Papa and mamma, and Lucy, and all of them."

A jealous feeling shot across her wearied heart. Was she nothing to him? "Do you not care that I should come to you, William?"

"Yes, I hope you will. But do you think we shall know everybody in Heaven? Or will it be only our own relations?"

"Oh, child! I think there will be no relations, as you call it, up there. We can trust all that to God, however it may be."

William lay looking upward at the sky, apparently in thought, a dark blue, serene sky, from which shone the hot July sun. His bed had been moved toward the window, for he liked to sit in it, and look at the landscape. The window was open now, and the butterflies and bees sported in the summer air.

"I wonder how it will be?" pondered he, aloud. "There will be the beautiful city, its gates of pearl, and its shining precious stones, and its streets of gold; and there will be the clear river, and the trees with their fruits and their healing leaves, and the lovely flowers; and there will be the harps, and music, and singing. And what else will there be?"

"Everything that is desirable and beautiful, William; but, what we may not anticipate here."

Another pause. "Madame Vine, will Jesus come for me, do you think, or will He send an angel?"

"Jesus has promised to come for His own redeemed for those who love Him and wait for Him."

"Yes, yes, and then I shall be happy forever. It will be so pleasant to be there, never to be tired or ill again."

"Pleasant? Ay! Oh, William! Would that the time were come!"

She was thinking of herself of her freedom though the boy knew it not. She buried her face in her hands and continued speaking; William had to bend his ear to catch the faint whisper.

"And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

"Madame Vine, do you think mamma will be there?" he presently asked. "I mean mamma that was."

"Ay, ere long."

"But how shall I know her? You see, I have nearly forgotten what she was like."

She leaned over him, laying her forehead upon his wasted arm, and burst into a flood of impassioned tears. "You will know her, never fear, William; she has not forgotten you."

"But how can we be sure that she will be there?" debated William, after a pause of thought. "You know" sinking his voice, and speaking with hesitation "she was not quite good; she was not good enough to papa or to us. Sometimes I think, suppose she did not grow good, and did not ask God to forgive her!"

"Oh, William!" sobbed the unhappy lady, "her whole life, after she left you, was one long scene of repentance, of seeking forgiveness. Her repentance, her sorrow, was greater than she could bear, and"

"And what?" asked William, for there was a pause.

"Her heart broke in it yearning after you and your father."

"What makes you think it?"

"Child, I know it!"

William considered. Then, had he been strong enough, he would have started up with energy. "Madame Vine, you could only know that by mamma's telling you! Did you ever see her? Did you know her abroad?"

Lady Isabel's thoughts were far away up in the clouds perhaps. She reflected not on the possible consequences of her answer, or she had never given it.

"Yes, I knew her abroad."

"Oh!" said the boy. "Why did you never tell us? What did she say? What was she like?"

"She said" sobbing wildly "that she was parted from her children here; but she should meet them in Heaven, and be with them forever. William, darling! all the awful pain, and sadness, and guilt of this world will be washed out, and God will wipe your tears away."

"What was her face like?" he questioned softly.

"Like yours. Very much like Lucy's."

"Was she pretty?"

A momentary pause. "Yes."

"Oh, dear, I am ill. Hold me!" cried out William, as his head sank to one side, and great drops, as large as peas, broke forth upon his clammy face. It appeared to be one of the temporary faint attacks that overpowered him at times lately, and Lady Isabel rang the bell hastily.

Wilson came in, in answer. Joyce was the usual attendant upon the sick room; but Mrs. Carlyle, with her infant, was passing the day at the Grove; unconscious of the critical state of William, and she had taken Joyce with her. It was the day following the trial. Mr. Justice Hare had been brought to West Lynne in his second attack, and Barbara had gone to see him, to console her mother, and to welcome Richard to his home again. If one carriage drove, that day, to the Grove, with cards and inquiries, fifty did, not to speak of the foot callers. "It is all meant by way of attention to you, Richard," said gentle Mrs. Hare, smiling through her loving tears at her restored son. Lucy and Archie were dining at Miss Carlyle's, and Sarah attended little Arthur, leaving Wilson free. She came in, in answer to Madame Vine's ring.

"Is he off in another faint?" unceremoniously cried she, hastening to the bed.

"I think so. Help to raise him."

William did not faint. No; the attack was quite different from those he was subject to. Instead of losing consciousness and power, as was customary, he shook as if he had the ague, and laid hold both of Madame Vine and Wilson, grasping them convulsively.

"Don't let me fall! Don't let me fall!" he gasped.

"My dear, you cannot fall," responded Madame Vine. "You forget that you are on the bed."

He clasped them yet, and trembled still, as from fear. "Don't let me fall! Don't let me fall" the incessant burden of his cry.

The paroxysm passed. They wiped his brow, and stood looking at him; Wilson with a pursed up mouth, and a peculiar expression of face. She put a spoonful of restorative jelly between his lips, and he swallowed it, but shook his head when she would have given him another. Turning his face to the pillow, in a few minutes he was in a doze.

"What could it have been?" exclaimed Lady Isabel, in an undertone, to Wilson.

"I know," was the oracular answer. "I saw this same sort of an attack once before, madame."

"And what caused it?"

"Twasn't in a child though," went on Wilson "'twas in a grown person. But that's nothing, it comes for the same thing in all. I think he was taken for death."

"Who?" uttered Lady Isabel, startled.

Wilson made no reply in words, but she pointed with her finger to the bed.

"Oh, Wilson, he is not so ill as that. Mr. Wainwright said this morning, that he might last a week or two."

Wilson composedly sat herself down in the easiest chair. She was not wont to put herself out of the way for the governess; and that governess was too much afraid of her, in one sense, to let her know her place. "As to Wainwright, he's nobody," quoth she. "And if he saw the child's breath going out before his face, and knew that the next moment would be his last, he'd vow to us all that he was good for twelve hours to come. You don't know Wainwright as I do, madame. He was our doctor at mother's; and he has attended in all the places I have lived in since I went out to service. Five years I was maid at Mrs. Hare's. I came here when Miss Lucy was a baby, and in all my places has he attended, like one's shadow. My Lady Isabel thought great guns of old Wainwright, I remember. It was more than I did."

My Lady Isabel made no response to this. She took a seat and watched William through her glasses. His breathing was more labored than usual.

"That idiot, Sarah, says to me today, says she, 'Which of his two grandpapas will they bury him by, old Mr. Carlyle or Lord Mount Severn?' 'Don't be a calf!' I answered her. 'D'ye think they'll stick him out in the corner with my lord?he'll be put into the Carlyle vault, of course,' It would have been different, you see, Madame Vine, if my lady had died at home, all properMr. Carlyle's wife. They'd have buried her, no doubt, by her father, and the boy would have been laid with her. But she did not."

No reply was made by Madame Vine, and a silence ensued; nothing to be heard but that fleeting breath.

"I wonder how that beauty feels?" suddenly broke forth Wilson again, her tone one of scornful irony.

Lady Isabel, her eyes and her thoughts absorbed by William, positively thought Wilson's words must relate to him. She turned to her in surprise.

"That bright gem in the prison at Lynneborough," exclaimed Wilson. "I hope he may have found himself pretty well since yesterday! I wonder how many trainfuls from West Lynne will go to his hanging?"

Isabel's face turned crimson, her heart sick. She had not dared to inquire how the trial terminated. The subject altogether was too dreadful, and nobody had happened to mention it in her hearing.

"Is he condemned?" she breathed, in a low tone.

"He is condemned, and good luck to him! And Mr. Otway Bethel's let loose again, and good luck to him. A nice pair they are! Nobody went from this house to hear the trialit might not have been pleasant, you know, to Mr. Carlyle; but people came in last night and told us all about it. Young Richard Hare chiefly convicted him. He is back again, and so nicelooking, they sayten times more so than he was when quite a young man. You should have heard, they say, the cheering and shouts that greeted Mr. Richard when his innocence came out; it pretty near rose off the roof of the court, and the judge didn't stop it."

Wilson paused, but there was no answering comment. On she went again.

"When Mr. Carlyle brought the news home last evening, and broke it to his wife, telling her how Mr. Richard had been received with acclamations, she nearly fainted, for she's not strong yet. Mr. Carlyle called out to me to bring some waterI was in the next room

with the baby and there she was, the tears raining from her eyes, and he holding her to him. I always said there was a whole world of love between those two; though he did go and marry another. Mr. Carlyle ordered me to put the water down, and sent me away again. But I don't fancy he told her of old Hare's attack until this morning."

Lady Isabel lifted her aching forehead. "What attack?"

"Why, madame, don't you know. I declare you box yourself up in the house, keeping from everybody, and you hear nothing. You might as well be living at the bottom of a coalpit. Old Hare had another stroke in the court at Lynneborough, and that's why my mistress is gone to the Grove today."

"Who says Richard Hare's come home, Wilson?"

The question the weak, scarcely audible question had come from the dying boy. Wilson threw up her hands, and made a bound to the bed. "The like of that!" she uttered, aside to Mrs. Vine. "One never knows when to take these sick ones. Master William, you hold your tongue and drop to sleep again. Your papa will be home soon from Lynneborough; and if you talk and get tired, he'll say it's my fault. Come shut your eyes. Will you have a bit more jelly?"

William, making no reply to the offer of jelly, buried his face again on the pillow. But he was grievously restless; the nearly worn-out spirit was ebbing and flowing.

Mr. Carlyle was at Lynneborough. He always had much business there at assize time and the Nisi Prius Court; but the previous day he had not gone himself, Mr. Dill had been dispatched to represent him.

Between seven and eight he returned home, and came into William's chamber. The boy brightened up at the well-known presence.

"Papa!"

Mr. Carlyle sat down on the bed and kissed him. The passing beams of the sun, slanting from the horizon, shone into the room, and Mr. Carlyle could view well the dying face. The gray hue of death was certainly on it.

"Is he worse?" he exclaimed hastily, to Madame Vine, who was jacketed, and capped, and spectacled, and tied up round the throat, and otherwise disguised, in her universal fashion.

"He appears worse this evening, sir, more weak."

"Papa," panted William, "is the trial over?"



"What trial, my boy?"

"Sir Francis Levison's."

"It was over yesterday. Never trouble your head about him, my brave boy, he is not worth it."

"But I want to know. Will they hang him?"

"He is sentenced to it."

"Did he kill Hallijohn?"

"Yes. Who has been talking to him upon the subject?" Mr. Carlyle continued to Madame Vine, with marked displeasure in his tone.

"Wilson mentioned it, sir," was the low answer.

"Oh, papa! What will he do? Will Jesus forgive him?"

"We must hope it."

"Do you hope it, papa?"

"Yes. I wish that all the world may be forgiven, William, whatever may have been their sins. My child, how restless you seem!"

"I can't keep in one place; the bed gets wrong. Pull me up on the pillow, will you Madame Vine?"

Mr. Carlyle gently lifted the boy himself.

"Madame Vine is an untiring nurse to you, William," he observed, gratefully casting a glance toward her in the distance, where she had retreated, and was shaded by the window curtain.

William made no reply; he seemed to be trying to recall something. "I forget! I forget!"

"Forget what?" asked Mr. Carlyle.

"It was something I wanted to ask you, or to tell you. Isn't Lucy come home?"

"I suppose not."

"Papa, I want Joyce."

"I will send her home to you. I am going for your mamma after dinner."

"For mamma? oh, I remember now. Papa, how shall I know mamma in Heaven? Not this mamma."

Mr. Carlyle did not immediately reply. The question may have puzzled him. William continued hastily; possibly mistaking the motive of the silence.

"She will be in Heaven, you know."

"Yes, yes, child," speaking hurriedly.

"Madame Vine knows she will. She saw her abroad; and mamma told her that what was it, madame?"

Madame Vine grew sick with alarm. Mr. Carlyle turned his eyes upon her scarlet face as much as he could get to see of it. She would have escaped from the room if she could.

"Mamma was more sorry than she could bear," went on William, finding he was not helped. "She wanted you, papa, and she wanted us, and her heart broke, and she died."

A flush rose to Mr. Carlyle's brow. He turned inquiringly to Madame Vine.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir," she murmured, with desperate energy. "I ought not to have spoken; I ought not to have interfered in your family affairs. I spoke only as I thought it must be, sir. The boy seemed troubled about his mother."

Mr. Carlyle was at sea. "Did you meet his mother abroad? I scarcely understand."

She lifted her hand and covered her glowing face. "No, sir." Surely the recording angel blotted out the words! If ever a prayer for forgiveness went up from an aching heart, it must have gone up then, for the equivocation over her child's deathbed!

Mr. Carlyle went toward her. "Do you perceive the change in his countenance?" he whispered.

"Yes, sir. He has looked like this since a strange fit of trembling that came on in the afternoon. Wilson thought he might be taken for death. I fear that some four and twenty hours will end it."

Mr. Carlyle rested his elbow on the window frame, and his hand upon his brow, his drooping eyelids falling over his eyes. "It is hard to lose him."

"Oh, sir, he will be better off!" she wailed, choking down the sobs and the emotion that arose threateningly. "We can bear death; it is not the worst parting that the earth knows. He will be quit of this cruel world, sheltered in Heaven. I wish we were all there!"

A servant came to say that Mr. Carlyle's dinner was served, and he proceeded to it with what appetite he had. When he returned to the sick room the daylight had faded, and a solitary candle was placed where its rays could not fall upon the child's face. Mr. Carlyle took the light in his hand to scan that face again. He was lying sideways on the pillow, his hollow breath echoing through the room. The light caused him to open his eyes.

"Don't, papa, please. I like it dark."

"Only for a moment, my precious boy." And not for more than a moment did Mr. Carlyle hold it. The blue, pinched, ghastly look was there yet. Death was certainly coming on quick.

At that moment Lucy and Archibald came in, on their return from their visit to Miss Carlyle. The dying boy looked up eagerly.

"Goodbye, Lucy," he said, putting out his cold, damp hand.

"I am not going out," replied Lucy. "We have but just come home."

"Goodbye, Lucy," repeated he.

She laid hold of the little hand then, leaned over, and kissed him. "Goodbye, William; but indeed I am not going out anywhere."

"I am," said he. "I am going to Heaven. Where's Archie?"

Mr. Carlyle lifted Archie on to the bed. Lucy looked frightened, Archie surprised.

"Archie, goodbye; goodbye, dear, I am going to Heaven; to that bright, blue sky, you know. I shall see mamma there, and I'll tell her that you and Lucy are coming soon."

Lucy, a sensitive child, broke into a loud storm of sobs, enough to disturb the equanimity of any sober sick room. Wilson hastened in at the sound, and Mr. Carlyle sent the two children away, with soothing promises that they should see William in the morning, if he continued well enough.

Down on her knees, her face buried in the counterpane, a corner of it stuffed into her mouth that it might help to stifle her agony, knelt Lady Isabel. The moment's excitement was well nigh beyond her strength of endurance. Her own child his child they alone around its deathbed, and she might not ask or receive a word of comfort, of consolation!

Mr. Carlyle glanced at her as he caught her choking sobs just as he would have glanced at any other attentive governess feeling her sympathy, doubtless, but nothing more; she was not heart and part with him and his departing boy. Lower and lower bent he over that boy; for his eyes were wet. "Don't cry, papa," whispered William, raising his feeble hand caressingly to his father's cheek, "I am not afraid to go. Jesus is coming for me."

"Afraid to go! Indeed I hope not, my gentle boy. You are going to God to happiness. A few years we know not how few and we shall all come to you."

"Yes, you will be sure to come; I know that. I shall tell mamma so. I dare say she is looking out for me now. Perhaps she's standing on the banks of the river, watching the boats."

He had evidently got that picture of Martin's in his mind, "The Plains of Heaven." Mr. Carlyle turned to the table. He saw some strawberry juice, pressed from the fresh fruit, and moistened with it the boy's fevered lips.

"Papa, I can't think how Jesus can be in all the boats! Perhaps they don't go quite at the same time. He must be, you know, because He comes to fetch us."

"He will be yours, darling," was the whispered, fervent answer.

"Oh, yes. He will take me all the way up to God, and say, 'Here's a poor little boy come, you must please to forgive him and let him go into Heaven, because I died for him!' Papa did you know that mamma's heart broke?"

"William, I think it likely that your poor mamma's heart did break, ere death came. But let us talk of you, not of her. Are you in pain?"

"I can't breathe; I can't swallow. I wish Joyce was here."

"She will not be long now."

The boy nestled himself in his father's arms, and in a few minutes appeared to be asleep. Mr. Carlyle, after a while, gently laid him on his pillow, and watched him, and then turned to depart.

"Oh, papa! Papa!" he cried out, in a tone of painful entreaty, opening wide his yearning eyes, "say goodbye to me!"

Mr. Carlyle's tears fell upon the little upturned face, as he once more caught it to his breast.

"My darling, your papa will soon be back. He is going to bring mamma to see you."

"And pretty little baby Anna?"

"And baby Anna, if you would like her to come in. I will not leave my darling boy for long; he need not fear. I shall not leave you again tonight, William, when once I am back."

"Then put me down, and go, papa."

A lingering embrace fond, lingering, tearful embrace Mr. Carlyle holding him to his beating heart, then he laid him comfortably on his pillow, gave him a teaspoonful of strawberry juice, and hastened away.

"Goodbye, papa!" came forth the little feeble cry.

It was not heard. Mr. Carlyle was gone, gone from his living child forever. Up rose Lady Isabel, and flung her arms aloft in a storm of sobs!

"Oh, William, darling! in this dying moment let me be to you as your mother!"

Again he unclosed his wearied eyelids. It is probable that he only partially understood.

"Papa's gone for her."

"Not her! II" Lady Isabel checked herself, and fell sobbing on the bed. No; not even at the last hour when the world was closing on him, dared she say, I am your mother.

Wilson reentered. "He looks as if he were dropping off to sleep," quoth she.

"Yes," said Lady Isabel. "You need not wait, Wilson. I will ring if he requires anything."

Wilson though withal not a badhearted woman, was not one to remain for pleasure in a sickroom, if told she might leave it. She, Lady Isabel, remained alone. She fell on her knees again, this time in prayer for the departing spirit, on its wing, and that God would mercifully vouchsafe herself a restingplace with it in heaven.

A review of the past then rose up before her, from the time of her first entering that house, the bride of Mr. Carlyle, to her present sojourn in it. The old scenes passed through her mind like the changing picture in a phantasmagoria.

Why should they have come, there and then? She knew not.

William slept on silently; she thought of the past. The dreadful reflection, "If I had not done as I did, how different would it have been now!" had been sounding its knell in her heart so often that she had almost ceased to shudder at it. The very nails of her hands

had, before now, entered the palms, with the sharp pain it brought. Stealing over her more especially this night, there, as she knelt, her head lying on the counterpane, came the recollection of that first illness of hers. How she had lain, and, in that unfounded jealousy, imagined Barbara the house's mistress. She dead! Barbara exalted to her place. Mr. Carlyle's wife, her child's stepmother! She recalled the day when, her mind excited by a certain gossip of Wilson's, it was previously in a state of fever bordering on delirium she had prayed her husband, in terror and anguish, not to marry Barbara. "How could he marry her?" he had replied, in his soothing pity. "She, Isabel, was his wife. Who was Barbara? Nothing to them?" But it had all come to pass. She had brought it forth. Not Mr. Carlyle; not Barbara; she alone. Oh, the dreadful misery of the retrospect!

Lost in thought, in anguish past and present, in selfcondemning repentance, the time passed on. Nearly an hour must have elapsed since Mr. Carlyle's departure, and William had not disturbed her. But who was this, coming into the room? Joyce.

She hastily rose up, as Joyce, advancing with a quiet step drew aside the clothes to look at William. "Master says he has been wanting me," she observed. "Whyoh!"

It was a sharp, momentary cry, subdued as soon as uttered. Madame Vine sprang forward to Joyce's side, looking also. The pale young face lay calm in its utter stillness; the busy little heart had ceased to beat. Jesus Christ had indeed come and taken the fleeting spirit.

Then she lost all selfcontrol. She believed that she had reconciled herself to the child's death, that she could part with him without too great emotion. But she had not anticipated it would be quite so soon; she had deemed that some hours more would at least be given him, and now the storm overwhelmed her. Crying, sobbing, calling, she flung herself upon him; she clasped him to her; she dashed off her disguising glasses; she laid her face upon his, beseeching him to come back to her, that she might say farewell to her, his mother; her darling child, her lost William!

Joyce was terrifiedterrified for consequences. With her full strength she pulled her from the boy, praying her to consider to be still. "Do not, do not, for the love of Heaven! My lady! My lady!"

It was the old familiar title that struck upon her fears and induced calmness. She stared at Joyce, and retreated backward, after the manner of one receding from some hideous vision. Then, as recollection came to her, she snatched her glasses up and hurried them on.

"My lady, let me take you into your room. Mr. Carlyle is come; he is just bringing up his wife. Only think if you should give way before him! Pray come away!"

"How did you know me?" she asked in a hollow voice.

"My lady, it was that night when there was an alarm of fire. I went close up to you to take Master Archibald from your arms; and, as sure as I am now standing here, I believe that for the moment my senses left me. I thought I saw a spectre the spectre of my dead lady. I forgot the present; I forgot that all were standing round me; that you, Madame Vine, were alive before me. Your face was not disguised then; the moonlight shone full upon it, and I knew it, after the first few moments of terror, to be, in dreadful truth, the living one of Lady Isabel. My lady, come away! We shall have Mr. Carlyle here."

Poor thing! She sank upon her knees, in her humility, her dread. "Oh, Joyce, have pity upon me! don't betray me! I will leave the house; indeed I will. Don't betray me while I am in it!"

"My lady, you have nothing to fear from me. I have kept the secret buried within my breast since then. Last April! It has nearly been too much for me. By night and by day I have had no peace, dreading what might come out. Think of the awful confusion, the consequences, should it come to the knowledge of Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle. Indeed, my lady, you never ought to have come."

"Joyce," she said, hollowly, lifting her haggard face, "I could not keep away from my unhappy children. Is it no punishment to me, think you, the being here?" she added, vehemently. "To see him my husband the husband of another! It is killing me."

"Oh, my lady, come away! I hear him; I hear him!"

Partly coaxing, partly dragging her, Joyce took her into her own room, and left her there. Mr. Carlyle was at that moment at the door of the sick one. Joyce sprang forward. Her face, in her emotion and fear, was of one livid whiteness, and she shook as William had shaken, poor child, in the afternoon. It was only too apparent in the welllighted corridor.

"Joyce," he exclaimed, in amazement, "what ails you?"

"Sir! master!" she panted; "be prepared. Master William Master William"

"Joyce! Not dead!"

"Alas, yes, sir!"

Mr. Carlyle strode into the chamber. But ere he was well across it, he turned back to slip the bolt of the door. On the pillow lay the white, thin face, at rest now.

"My boy! my boy! Oh, my God!" he murmured, in bowed reverence, "mayest Thou have received this child to rest in Jesus, even as, I trust, Thou hadst already received his unhappy mother!"



## CHAPTER XLIV.

### LORD VANE DATING FORWARD

To the burial of William Carlyle came Lord Mount Severn and his son. Wilson had been right in her surmises as to the restingplace. The Carlyle vault was opened for him, and an order went forth to the sculptor for an inscription to be added to their marble tablet in the church: "William Vane Carlyle, eldest son of Archibald Carlyle, of East Lynne." Amongst those who attended the funeral as mourners went one more notable in the eyes of the gazers than the rest Richard Hare the younger.

Lady Isabel was ill. Ill in mind, and ominously ill in body. She kept her room, and Joyce attended on her. The household set down madame's illness to the fatigue of having attended upon Master William; it was not thought of seriously by any one, especially as she declined to see a doctor. All her thoughts now were directed to the getting away from East Lynne, for it would never do to remain there to die; and she knew that death was on his way to her, and that no human power or skill not all the faculty combined could turn him back again. The excessive dread of detection was not upon her as it had been formerly. I mean she did not dread the consequences so much, if detection came. In nearing the grave, all fears and hopes, of whatever nature, relating to this world, lose their force, and fears or hopes regarding the next world take their place. Our petty feelings here are lost in the greater.

In returning to East Lynne, Lady Isabel had entered upon a daring act, and she found, in the working, that neither strength nor spirit was equal to it. Human passions and tempers were brought with us into this world, and they can only quit us when we bid it farewell, to enter upon immortality in the next.

When Lady Isabel was Mr. Carlyle's wife, she had never wholly loved him. The very utmost homage that esteem, admiration, affection could give was his, but that mysterious passion called by the name of love, and which, as I truly and heartily believe, cannot, in its refined etherealism, be known to many of us, had not been given to him. It was now. From the very night she came back to East Lynne, her love for Mr. Carlyle had burst forth with an intensity never before felt. It had been smoldering almost ever since she quitted him. "Reprehensible!" groans a moralist. Very. Everybody knows that, as Afy would say. But her heart, you see, had not done with human passions, and they work ill, and contrariness, let the word stand, critic, if you please, and precisely everything they should not.

I shall get in for it, I fear, if I attempt to defend her. But it was not exactly the same thing, as though she suffered herself to fall in love with somebody else's husband.

Nobody would defend that. We have not turned Mormons yet, and the world does not walk upon its head. But this was a peculiar case. She, poor thing, almost regarded Mr. Carlyle as her husband. The bent of her thoughts was only too much inclined to this. The evil human heart again. Many and many a time did she wake up from a reverie, and strive to drive this mistaken view of things away from her, taking shame to herself. Ten minutes afterward, she would catch her brain reveling in the same rebellious vision. Mr. Carlyle's love was not hers now, it was Barbara's. Mr. Carlyle did not belong to her, he belonged to his wife. It was not only that he was not hers she was another's. You may, therefore, if you have the pleasure of being experienced in this sort of thing, guess a little of what her inward life was. Had there been no Barbara in the case, she might have lived and borne it; as it was, it had killed her before her time, that and the remorse together.

There had been other things, too. The reappearance of Francis Levison at West Lynne, in fresh contact, as may be said, with herself, had struck terror to her heart, and the dark charge brought against him augmented awfully her remorse. Then, the sharp lances perpetually thrust upon her memory the Lady Isabel's memory from all sides, were full of cruel stings, unintentionally though they were hurled. And there was the hourly chance of discovery, and the never ceasing battle with her conscience, for being at East Lynne at all. No wonder that the chords of life were snapping; the wonder would have been had they remained whole.

"She brought it upon herself she ought not to have come back to East Lynne!" groans our moralist again.

Didn't I say so? Of course she ought not. Neither ought she to have suffered her thoughts to stray, in the manner they did, towards Mr. Carlyle. She ought not, but she did. If we all did just what we "ought," this lower proverb touching fruit defendu would go out as a dead letter.

She was nearer to death than she imagined. She knew, judging by her declining strength and her inner feelings, that it could not be far off; but she did not deem it was coming so very soon. Her mother had died in a similar way. Some said of consumption Dr. Martin did, you may remember; some said of "waste;" the earl, her husband, said a broken heart you heard him say so to Mr. Carlyle in the first chapter of this history. The earl was the one who might be supposed to know best. Whatever may have been Lady Mount Severn's malady, she to give you the phrase that was in people's mouths at the time "went out like the snuff of a candle." It was now the turn of Lady Isabel. She had no more decided disorder than the countess had had, yet death had marked her. She felt that it had, and in its approach she dreaded not, as she once had done, the consequences that must ensue, did discovery come. Which brings us back to the point whence ensued this long digression. I dare say you are chafing at it, but it is not often I trouble you with one.

But she would not willingly let discovery come, neither had she the least intention of remaining at East Lynne to die. Where she should take refuge was quite a secondary consideration, only let her get smoothly and plausibly away. Joyce, in her dread, was forever urging it. Of course, the preliminary step was to arrange matters with Mrs. Carlyle, and in the afternoon of the day following the funeral, Lady Isabel proceeded to her dressingroom, and craved an interview.

Mr. Carlyle quitted the room as she entered it. Barbara, fatigued with a recent drive, was lying on the sofa. She would scarcely take the notice.

"We shall be so sorry to lose you, Madame Vine. You are all we could wish for Lucy, and Mr. Carlyle feels truly grateful for your love and attention to his poor boy."

"To leave you will give me pain also," Madame Vine answered, in a subdued tone. Pain? Ay. Mrs. Carlyle little guessed at its extent. All she cared for on earth she should leave behind her at East Lynne.

"Indeed you must not leave," resumed Barbara. "It would be unjust to allow you to do so. You have made yourself ill, waiting upon poor William, and you must stay here and take a holiday until you are cured. You will soon get well, if you will only suffer yourself to be properly waited on and taken care of."

"You are very considerate. Pray do not think me insensible if I decline. I believe my strength is beyond getting up that I shall never be able to teach again."

"Oh, nonsense," said Barbara, in her quick way. "We are all given to fancy the worst when we are ill. I was feeling terribly weak, only a few minutes ago, and said something of the same sort to Archibald. He talked and soothed me out of it. I wish you had your dear husband living, Madame Vine, to support you and love you, as I have him."

A tinge of scarlet streaked Madame Vine's pale face, and she laid her hand upon her beating heart.

"How could you think of leaving? We should be glad to help reestablish your health, in any case, but it is only fair to do it now. I felt sure, by the news brought to me when I was ill, that your attention upon William was overtasking your strength."

"It is not the attendance upon William that has brought me into this state," was the quick answer. "I must leave; I have well considered it over."

"Would you like to go to the seaside?" exclaimed Barbara with sudden energy. "I am going there on Monday next. Mr. Carlyle insists upon it that I try a little change. I had

intended only to take my baby, but we can make different arrangements, and take you and Lucy. It might do you good, Madame Vine."

She shook her head. "No; it would make me worse. All that I want is perfect quiet. I must beg you to understand that I shall leave. And I should be glad if you could allow the customary notice to be dispensed with, so that I may be at liberty to depart within a few days."

"Look here, then," said Barbara, after a pause of consideration, "you remain at East Lynne until my return, which will be in a fortnight. Mr. Carlyle cannot stay with me, so I know I shall be tired in less time than that. I do not want you to remain to teach, you know, Madame Vine; I do not wish you to do a single thing. Lucy shall have a holiday, and Mr. Kane can come up for her music. Only I could not be content to leave her, unless under your surveillance; she is getting of an age now not to be consigned to servants, not to Joyce. Upon my return, if you still wish to leave, you shall then be at liberty to do so. What do you say?"

Madame Vine said "Yes." Said it eagerly. To have another fortnight with her children, Lucy and Archibald, was very like a reprieve, and she embraced it. Although she knew, as I have said, that grim Death was on his way, she did not think he had drawn so near the end of his journey. Her thoughts went back to the time when she had been ordered to the seaside after an illness. It had been a marvel if they had not. She remembered how he, her husband, had urged the change upon her; how he had taken her, traveling carefully; how tenderly anxious he had been in the arrangements for her comfort, when settling her in the lodgings; how, when he came again to see her, he had met her with his passionate fondness, thanking God for the visible improvement in her looks. That one injunction which she had called him back to give him, as he was departing for the boat, was bitterly present to her now: "Do not get making love to Barbara Hare." All this care, and love, and tenderness belonged now of right to Barbara, and were given to her.

But now Barbara, although she pressed Madame Vine to remain at East Lynne, and indeed would have been glad that she should do so, did not take her refusal at heart. Barbara could not fail to perceive that she was a thoroughly refined gentlewoman, far superior to the generality of governesses. That she was truly fond of Lucy, and most anxious for her welfare in every way, Barbara also saw. For Lucy's sake, therefore, she would be grieved to part with Madame Vine, and would raise her salary to anything in reason, if she would but stay. But, on her own score, Barbara had as soon Madame Vine went as not; for, in her heart of hearts, she had never liked her. She could not have told why. Was it instinct? Very probably. The birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, have their instincts, and so does man have his. Perhaps it was the unaccountable resemblance that Madame Vine bore to Lady Isabel. A strange likeness! Barbara often thought, but whether it lay in the face, the voice, or the manner, she could

not decide. A suspicion of the truth did not cross her mind. How should it? And she never spoke of it; had the resemblance been to any one but Lady Isabel she would have talked of it freely. Or, it may have been that there was now and then a tone in Madame Vine's voice that grated on her ear; a wrung, impatient tone, wanting in respect, savoring of hauteur, which Barbara did not understand, and did not like. However it may have been, certain it is that Mrs. Carlyle would not shed tears after the governess. Only for Lucy's sake did she regret parting with her.

These different resemblances and reflections were separately passing through the minds of the two ladies when their conference was over. Madame Vine at length rose from her chair to depart.

"Would you mind holding my baby for one minute?" cried Barbara.

Madame Vine quite started.

"The baby there!" she uttered.

Barbara laughed.

"It is lying by my side, under the shawl, quiet little sleeping thing."

Madame Vine advanced and took the sleeping baby. How could she refuse? She had never had it in her arms before; she had, in fact, scarcely seen it. One visit of ceremony she had paid Mrs. Carlyle, as in politeness bound, a day or two after the young lady's arrival, and had been shown a little face, nearly covered with lace, in a cradle.

"Thank you. I can get up now. I might have half smothered it, had I attempted before," continued Barbara, still laughing. "I have been here long enough, and am quite rested. Talking about smothering children, what accounts have we in the registrargeneral's weekly returns of health! So many children 'overlaid in bed,' so many children 'suffocated in bed.' One week there were nearly twenty; and often there are as many as eight or ten. Mr. Carlyle says he knows they are smothered on purpose."

"Oh, Mrs. Carlyle!"

"I exclaimed, just as you do, when he said it, and laid my hand over his lips. He laughed, and told me I did not know half the wickedness of the world. Thank you," again repeated Mrs. Carlyle, taking her child from Lady Isabel. "Is she not a pretty baby? Do you like the nameAnne?"

"It is a simple name," replied Lady Isabel; "and simple names are always the most attractive."

"That is just what Archibald thinks. But he wanted this child's to be Barbara. I would not have had it Barbara for the world. I remember his once saying, a long, long while ago that he did not like elaborate names; they were mouthfuls; and he instanced mine and his sister's, and his own. I recalled his words to him, and he said he may not have liked the name of Barbara then, but he loved it now. So we entered into a compromise; Miss Baby was named Anne Barbara, with an understanding that the first name is to be for use, and the last for the registers."

"It is not christened?" said Lady Isabel.

"Only baptized. We should have had it christened before now, but for William's death. Not that we give christening dinners; but I waited for the trial at Lynneborough to be over, that my dear brother Richard might stand to the child."

"Mr. Carlyle does not like christenings made into festivals," Lady Isabel dreamily observed, her thoughts buried in the past.

"How do you know that?" exclaimed Barbara, opening her eyes.

And poor Madame Vine, her pale face flushing, had to stammer forth some confused words that she had "heard so somewhere."

"It is quite true," said Barbara. "He has never given a christeningdinner for any of his children, and gets out of attending if invited to one. He cannot understand the analogy between a solemn religious rite and the meeting together afterward to eat and drink and make merry, according to the fashion of this world."

As Lady Isabel quitted the room, young Vane was careering through the corridor, throwing his head in all directions, and calling out,

"Lucy! I want Lucy!"

"What do you want with her?" asked Madame Vine.

"Il m'est impossible de vous le dire madame," responded he. Being, for an Eton boy, wonderfully up in French, he was rather given to show it off when he got the chance. He did not owe thanks for it to Eton. Lady Mount Severn had taken better care than that. Better care? What could she want? There was one whole, real, live French tutor and he an Englishman! for the eight hundred boys. Very unreasonable of her ladyship to disparage that ample provision.

"Lucy cannot come to you just now. She is practicing."

"Mais, il le faut. J'ai le droit de demander apres elle. Elle m'appartient, vous comprenez, madame, cette demoiselle la."

Madame could not forbear a smile. "I wish you would speak English sense, instead of French nonsense."

"Then the English sense is that I want Lucy and I must have her. I am going to take her for a drive in the pony carriage, if you must know. She said she'd come, and John's getting it ready."

"I could not possibly allow it," said Madame Vine. "You'd be sure to upset her."

"The idea!" he returned, indignantly. "As if I should upset Lucy! Why, I'm one of the great whips at Eton. I care for Lucy too much not to drive steadily. She is to be my wife, you know, ma bonne dame."

At this juncture two heads were pushed out from the library, close by; those of the earl and Mr. Carlyle. Barbara, also, attracted by the talking, appeared at the door of her dressingroom.

"What's that about a wife?" asked my lord of his son.

The blood mantled in the young gentleman's cheek as he turned round and saw who had spoken, but he possessed all the fearlessness of an Eton boy.

"I intend Lucy Carlyle to be my wife, papa. I mean in earnest when we shall both be grown up if you will approve, and Mr. Carlyle will give her to me."

The earl looked somewhat impassable, Mr. Carlyle amused. "Suppose," said the latter, "we adjourn the discussion to this day ten years?"

"But that Lucy is so very young a child, I should reprove you seriously, sir," said the earl. "You have no right to bring Lucy's name into any such absurdity."

"I mean it, papa; you'll all see. And I intend to keep out of scrape that is, of nasty, dishonorable scrapes on purpose that Mr. Carlyle shall find no excuse against me. I have made up my mind to be what he is a man of honor. I am right glad you know about it, sir, and I shall let mamma know it before long."

The last sentence tickled the earl's fancy, and a grim smile passed over his lips. "It will be war to the knife, if you do."

"I know that," laughed the viscount. "But I am getting a better match for mamma in our battles than I used to be."

Nobody saw fit to prolong the discussion. Barbara put her veto upon the drive in the pony carriage unless John sat behind to look after the driver, which Lord Vane still resented as an insult. Madame Vine, when the corridor became empty again, laid her hand upon the boy's arm as he was moving away, and drew him to the window.

"In speaking as you do of Lucy Carlyle, do you forget the disgrace reflected on her by the conduct of her mother?"

"Her mother is not Lucy."

"It may prove an impediment, that, with Lord and Lady Mount Severn."

"Not with his lordship. And I must do as you heard me say battle with my mother. Conciliatory battle, you understand, madame; bringing the enemy to reason."

Madame Vine was agitated. She held her handkerchief to her mouth, and the boy noticed how her hands trembled.

"I have learnt to love Lucy. It has appeared to me in these few months' sojourn with her, that I have stood to her in light of a mother. William Vane," she solemnly added, keeping her hold upon him, "I shall soon be where earthly distinctions are no more; where sin and sorrow are no more. Should Lucy Carlyle indeed become your wife, in after years, never, never cast upon her, by so much as the slightest word of reproach, the sin of Lady Isabel."

Lord Vane threw back his head, his honest eyes flashing in their indignant earnestness.

"What do you take me for?"

"It would be a cruel wrong upon Lucy. She does not deserve it. That unhappy lady's sin was all her own; let it die with her. Never speak to Lucy of her mother."

The lad dashed his hand across his eyes for they were filling.

"I shall. I shall speak to her often of her mother—that is, you know, after she's my wife. I shall tell her how I loved Lady Isabel—that there's nobody I ever loved so much in the world, but Lucy herself. I cast a reproach to Lucy on the score of her mother!" he hotly added. "It is through her mother that I love her. You don't understand, madame."

"Cherish and love her forever, should she become yours," said Lady Isabel, wringing his hand. "I ask it of you as one who is dying."

"I will promise it. But I say, madame," he continued, dropping his fervent tone, "what do you allude to? Are you worse?"



Madame Vine did not answer. She glided away without speaking.

Later, when she was sitting by twilight in the gray parlor, cold and shivering, and wrapped up in a shawl, though it was hot summer weather, somebody knocked at the door.

"Come in," cried she, apathetically.

It was Mr. Carlyle who entered. She rose up, her pulses quickening, her heart thumping against her side. In her wild confusion she was drawing forward a chair for him. He laid his hand upon it, and motioned her to her own.

"Mrs. Carlyle tells me that you have been speaking to her of leaving that you find yourself too much out of health to continue with us."

"Yes, sir," she faintly replied, having a most imperfect notion of what she did say.

"What is it that you find to be the matter with you?"

"I think it is chiefly weakness," she stammered.

Her face had grown as gray as the walls. A dusky, livid sort of hue, not unlike William's had worn the night of his death, and her voice sounded strangely hollow. It, the voice, struck Mr. Carlyle and awoke his fears.

"You cannot you never can have caught William's complaint, in your close attendance upon him?" he exclaimed, speaking in the impulse of the moment, as the idea flashed across him. "I have heard of such things."

"Caught it from him?" she rejoined, carried away also by impulse. "It is more likely that he"

She stopped herself just in time. "Inherited it from me," had been the destined conclusion. In her alarm, she went off volubly, something to the effect that "it was no wonder she was ill: illness was natural to her family."

"At any rate, you have become ill at East Lynne, in attendance on my children," rejoined Mr. Carlyle, decisively, when her voice died away. "You must therefore allow me to insist that you allow East Lynne to do what it can toward renovating you. What is your objection to see a doctor?"

"A doctor could do me no good," she faintly answered.

"Certainly not, so long as you will not consult one."

"Indeed, sir, doctors could not cure me, nor, as I believe prolong my life."

Mr. Carlyle paused.

"Are you believing yourself to be in danger?"

"Not in immediate danger, sir; only in so far as that I know I shall not live."

"And yet you will not see a doctor. Madame Vine, you must be aware that I could not permit such a thing to go on in my house. Dangerous illness and no advice!"

She could not say to him, "My malady is on the mind; it is a breaking heart, and therefore no doctor of physic could serve me." That would never do. She had sat with her hand across her face, between her spectacles and her wrappedup chin. Had Mr. Carlyle possessed the eyes of Argus, backed by Sam Weller's patent magnifying microscopes of double hextra power, he could not have made anything of her features in the broad light of day. But she did not feel so sure of it. There was always an undefined terror of discovery when in his presence, and she wished the interview at an end.

"I will see Mr. Wainwright, if it will be any satisfaction to you, sir."

"Madame Vine, I have intruded upon you here to say that you must see him, and, should he deem it necessary, Dr. Martin also."

"Oh, sir," she rejoined with a curious smile, "Mr. Wainwright will be quite sufficient. There will be no need of another. I will write a note to him tomorrow."

"Spare yourself the trouble. I am going into West Lynne, and will send him up. You will permit me to urge that you spare no pains or care, that you suffer my servants to spare no pains or care, to reestablish your health. Mrs. Carlyle tells me that the question of your leaving remains in abeyance until her return."

"Pardon me, sir. The understanding with Mrs. Carlyle was that I should remain here until her return, and should then be at liberty at once to leave."

"Exactly. That is what Mrs. Carlyle said. But I must express a hope that by that time you may be feeling so much better as to reconsider your decision and continue with us. For my daughter's sake, Madame Vine, I trust it will be so."

He rose as he spoke, and held out his hand. What could she do but rise also, drop hers from her face, and give it him in answer? He retained it, clasping it warmly.

"How should I repay youhow thank you for your love to my poor, lost boy?"

His earnest, tender eyes were on her blue double spectacles; a sad smile mingled with the sweet expression of his lips as he bent toward her lips that had once been hers! A faint exclamation of despair, a vivid glow of hot crimson, and she caught up her new black silk apron so deeply bordered with crape, in her disengaged hand, and flung it up to her face. He mistook the sound mistook the action.

"Do not grieve for him. He is at rest. Thank you thank you greatly for your sympathy."

Another wring of her hand, and Mr. Carlyle had quitted the room. She laid her head upon the table, and thought how merciful would be death when he should come.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### "IT WON'T DO, AFY!"

Mr. Jiffin was in his glory. Mr. Jiffin's house was the same. Both were in applepie order to receive Miss Afy Hallijohn, who was, in a very short period, indeed, to be converted into Mrs. Jiffin.

Mr. Jiffin had not seen Afy for some dayshad never been able to come across her since the trial at Lynneborough. Every evening had he danced attendance at her lodgings, but could not get admitted. "Not at home," was the invariable answer, though Afy might be sunning herself at the window in his very sight. Mr. Jiffin, throwing off as best he could the temporary disappointment, was in an ecstasy of admiration, for he set it all down to Afy's retiring modesty on the approach of the nuptial day. "And they could try to calumniate her!" he indignantly replied.

But now, one afternoon, when Mr. Jiffin and his shopman, and his shop, and his wares, were all set out to the best advantageand very tempting they looked, as a whole, especially the spiced baconMr. Jiffin happening to cast his eyes to the opposite side of the street, beheld his beloved sailing by. She was got up in the fashion. A mauve silk dress with eighteen flounces, and about eighteen hundred steel buttons that glittered your sight away; a "zouave" jacket worked with gold; a black turban perched on the top of her skull, garnished in front with what court milliners are pleased to term a "plume de coq," but which, by its size and height, might have been taken for a "coq" himself, while a white ostrich feather was carried round and did duty behind, and a spangled hair net hung down to her waist. Gloriously grand was Afy that day and if I had but a photographing machine at handor whatever may be the scientific name of the thingyou should certainly have been regaled with the sight of her. Joyce would have gone down in a fit had she encountered her by an unhappy chance. Mr. Jiffin, dashing his apron anywhere, tore across.

"Oh, it is you!" said Afy, freezingly, when compelled to acknowledge him, but his offered hand she utterly repudiated. "Really, Mr. Jiffin, I should feel obliged if you would not come out to me in this offensive and public manner."

Mr. Jiffin grew cold. "Offensive! Not come out?" gasped he. "I do trust I have not been so unfortunate as to offend you, Miss Afy!"

"Wellyou see," said Afy, calling up all her impudence to say what she had made up her mind to say, "I have been considering it well over, Jiffin, and I find that to carry out the

marriage will not be for myfor our happiness. I intended to write to inform you of this; but I shall be spared the troubleas you have come out to me."

The perspiration, cold as ice, began to pour off Mr. Jiffin in his agony and horror. You might have wrung every thread he had on. "Youdon't meantoimplythatyougivemeupMissAfy?" he jerked out, unevenly.

"Well, yes, I do," replied Afy. "It's as good to be plain, and then there can be no misapprehension. I'll shake hands now with you, Jiffin, for the last time; and I am very sorry that we both made such a mistake."

Poor Jiffin looked at her. His gaze would have melted a heart of stone. "Miss Afy, you can't mean it! You'd never, sure, crush a fellow in this manner, whose whole soul is yours; who trusted you entirely? There's not an earthly thing I would not do to please you. You have been the light of my existence."

"Of course," returned Afy, with a lofty and indifferent air, as if to be "the light of his existence" was only her due. "But it's all done and over. It is not at all a settlement that will suit me, you see, Jiffin. A butter and bacon factor is so veryso verywhat I have not been accustomed to! And then, those aprons! I never could get reconciled to them."

"I'll discard the aprons altogether," cried he, in a fever. "I'll get a second shopman, and buy a little gig, and do nothing but drive you out. I'll do anything if you will but have me still, Miss Afy. I have bought the ring, you know."

"Your intentions are very kind," was the distant answer, "but it's a thing impossible; my mind is fully made up. So farewell for good, Jiffin; and I wish you better luck in your next venture."

Afy, lifting her capacious dress, for the streets had just been watered, minced off. And Mr. Joe Jiffin, wiping his wet face as he gazed after her, instantly wished that he could be nailed up in one of his pickled pork barrels, and so be out of his misery.

"That's done with, thank goodness," soliloquized Afy. "Have him, indeed. After what Richard let out on the trial. As if I should look after anybody less than Dick Hare! I shall get him, too. I always knew Dick Hare loved me above everything on earth; and he does still, or he'd never had said what he did in open court. 'It's better to be born lucky than rich.' Won't West Lynne envy me! Mrs. Richard Hare of the Grove. Old Hare is on his last legs, and then Dick comes into his own. Mrs. Hare must have her jointure house elsewhere, for we shall want the Grove for ourselves. I wonder if Madame Barbara will condescend to recognize me. And that blessed Corny? I shall be a sort of cousin of Corny's then. I wonder how much Dick comes intothree or four thousand a year? And to

think that I had nearly escaped this by tying myself to that ape of a Jiffin! What sharks do get in our unsuspecting paths in this world!"

On went Afy, through West Lynne, till she arrived close to Mr. Justice Hare's. Then she paced slowly. It had been a frequent walk of hers since the trial. Luck favored her today. As she was passing the gate, young Richard Hare came up from the direction of East Lynne. It was the first time Afy had obtained speech of him.

"Good day, Richard. Why! you were never going to pass an old friend?"

"I have so many friends," said Richard, "I can scarcely spare time for them individually."

"But you might for me. Have you forgotten old days?" continued she, bridling and flirting, and altogether showing herself off to advantage.

"No, I have not," replied Richard. "And I am not likely to do so," he pointedly added.

"Ah, I felt sure of that. My heart told me so. When you went off, that dreadful night, leaving me to anguish and suspense, I thought I should have died. I never have had, so to say, a happy moment until this, when I meet you again."

"Don't be a fool, Afy!" was Richard's gallant rejoinder, borrowing the favorite reproach of Miss Carlyle. "I was young and green once; you don't suppose I have remained so. We will drop the past, if you please. How is Mr. Jiffin?"

"Oh, the wretch!" shrieked Afy. "Is it possible that you can have fallen into the popular scandal that I have anything to say to him? You know I'd never demean myself to it. That's West Lynne all over! Nothing but inventions in it from week's end to week's end. A man who sells cheese! Who cuts up bacon! Well, I am surprised at you, Mr. Richard!"

"I have been thinking what luck you were in to get him," said Richard, with composure. "But it is your business not mine."

"Could you bear to see me stooping to him?" returned Afy, dropping her voice to the most insinuating whisper.

"Look you, Afy. What ridiculous folly you are nursing in your head I don't trouble myself to guess, but, the sooner you get it out again the better. I was an idiot once, I don't deny it; but you cured me of that, and cured me with a vengeance. You must pardon me for intimating that from henceforth we are strangers; in the street as elsewhere. I have resumed my own standing again, which I periled when I ran after you."

Afy turned faint. "How can you speak those cruel words?" gasped she.

"You have called them forth. I was told yesterday that Afy Hallijohn, dressed up to a caricature, was looking after me again. It won't do, Afy."

"Ohooo!" sobbed Afy, growing hysterical, "and is this to be all my recompense for the years I have spent pining after you, keeping single for your sake!"

"Recompense! Oh, if you want that, I'll get my mother to give Jiffin her custom." And with a ringing laugh, which, though it had nothing of malice in it, showed Afy that he took her reproach for what it was worth, Richard turned in at his own gate.

It was a deathblow to Afy's vanity. The worst it had ever received; and she took a few minutes to compose herself, and smooth her ruffled feathers. Then she turned and sailed back toward Mr. Jiffin's, her turban up in the skies and the plume de coq tossing to the admiration of all beholders, especially of Miss Carlyle, who had the gratification of surveying her from her window. Arrived at Mr. Jiffin's, she was taken ill exactly opposite his door, and staggered into the shop in a most exhausted state.

Round the counter flew Mr. Jiffin, leaving the shopman staring behind it. What was the matter? What could he do for her?

"Faintheart of the sunwalked too fastallowed to sit down for five minutes!" gasped Afy, in disjointed sentences.

Mr. Jiffin tenderly conducted her through the shop to his parlor. Afy cast half an eye round, saw how comfortable were its arrangements, and her symptoms of faintness increased. Gasps and hysterical sobs came forth together. Mr. Jiffin was as one upon spikes.

"She'd recover better there than in the public shopif she'd only excuse his bringing her in, and consent to stop for a few minutes. No harm could come to her, and West Lynne could never say it. He'd stand at the far end of the room, right away from her; he'd prop open the two doors and the windows; he'd call in the maidanything she thought right. Should he get her a glass of wine?"

Afy declined the wine by a gesture, and sat fanning herself. Mr. Jiffin looking on from a respectful distance. Gradually she grew composedgrew herself again. As she gained courage, Mr. Jiffin lost it, and he ventured upon some faint words of reproach, of him.

Afy burst into a laugh. "Did I not do it well?" she exclaimed. "I thought I'd play off a joke upon you, so I came out this afternoon and did it."

Mr. Jiffin clasped his hands. "Was it a joke" he returned, trembling with agitation, uncertain whether he was in paradise or not. "Are you still ready to let me call you mine?"

"Of course it was a joke," said Afy. "What a soft you must have been, Mr. Jiffin, not to see through it! When young ladies engage themselves to be married, you can't suppose they run back from it, close upon the weddingday?"

"Oh, Miss Afy!" And the poor little man actually burst into delicious tears, as he caught hold of Afy's hand and kissed it.

"A great green donkey!" thought Afy to herself, bending on him, however the sweetest smile.

Rather. But Mr. Jiffin is not the only great donkey in the world.

Richard Hare, meanwhile, had entered his mother's presence. She was sitting at the open window, the justice opposite to her, in an invalid chair, basking in the air and the sun. This last attack of the justice's had affected the mind more than the body. He was brought down to the sittingroom that day for the first time; but, of his mind, there was little hope. It was in a state of half imbecility; the most wonderful characteristic being, that all its selfwill, its surliness had gone. Almost as a little child in tractability, was Justice Hare.

Richard came up to his mother, and kissed her. He had been to East Lynne. Mrs. Hare took his hand and fondly held it. The change in her was wonderful; she was a young and happy woman again.

"Barbara has decided to go to the seaside, mother. Mr. Carlyle takes her on Monday."

"I am glad, my dear, it will be sure to go her good. Richard"bending over to her husband, but still retaining her son's hand"Barbara has agreed to go to the seaside, I will set her up."

"Ay, ay," nodded the justice, "set her up. Seaside? Can't we go?"

"Certainly, dear, if you wish it; when you shall be a little stronger."

"Ay, ay," nodded the justice again. It was his usual answer now. "Stronger. Where's Barbara?"

"She goes on Monday, sir," said Richard, likewise bending his head. "Only for a fortnight. But they talk of going again later in the autumn."



"Can't I go, too?" repeated the justice, looking pleadingly in Richard's face.

"You shall, dear father. Who knows but a month or two's bracing would bring you quite round again? We might go all together, ourselves and the Carlyles. Anne comes to stay with us next week, you know, and we might go when her visit is over."

"Aye, all go together. Anne's coming?"

"Have you forgotten, dear Richard? She comes to stay a month with us, and Mr. Clitheroe and the children. I am so pleased she will find you better," added Mrs. Hare, her gentle eyes filling. "Mr. Wainwright says you may go out for a drive tomorrow."

"And I'll be coachman," laughed Richard. "It will be the old times come round again. Do you remember, father, my breaking the pole, one moonlight night, and your not letting me drive for six months afterwards?"

The poor justice laughed in answer to Richard, laughed till the tears ran down his face, probably not knowing in the least what he was laughing at.

"Richard," said Mrs. Hare to her son, almost in an apprehensive tone, her hand pressing his nervously, "was not that Afy Hallijohn I saw you speaking with at the gate?"

"Did you? What a spectacle she had made of herself! I wonder she is not ashamed to go through the streets in such a guise! Indeed, I wonder she shows herself at all."

"Richard, youyouwill not be drawn in again?" were the next whispered words.

"Mother!" There was a sternness in his mild blue eyes as he cast them upon his mother. Those beautiful eyesthe very counterpart of Barbara's, both his and hers the counterpart of Mrs. Hare's. The look had been sufficient refutation without words.

"Mother mine, I am going to belong to you in the future, and to nobody else. West Lynne is already busy for me, I understand, pleasantly carving out my destiny. One marvels whether I shall lose myself with Miss Afy; another, that I shall set on offhand, and court Louisa Dobede. They are all wrong; my place will be with my darling mother,at least, for several years to come."

She clasped his hand to her bosom in her glad delight.

"We want happiness together, mother, to enable us to forget the past; for upon none did the blow fall, as upon you and upon me. And the happiness we shall find, in our own home, living for each other, and striving to amuse my poor father."

"Aye, aye," complacently put in Justice Hare.

So it would be. Richard had returned to his home, had become, to all intent and purposes, its master; for the justice would never be in a state to hold sway again. He had resumed his position; and regained the favor of West Lynne, which, always in extremes, was now wanting to kill him with kindness. A happy, happy home from henceforth; and Mrs. Hare lifted up her full heart in thankfulness to God. Perhaps Richard's went up also.

One word touching that wretched prisoner in the condemned cell at Lynneborough. As you must have anticipated, the extreme sentence was not carried out. And, little favorite as Sir Francis is with you and with me, we can but admit that justice did not demand that it should be. That he had willfully killed Hallijohn, was certain; but the act was committed in a moment of wild rage; it had not been premeditated. The sentence was commuted to transportation. A far more disgraceful one in the estimation of Sir Francis; a far more unwelcome one in the eyes of his wife. It is no use to mince the truth, one little grain of comfort had penetrated to Lady Levison; the anticipation of the time when she and her illfated child should be alone, and could hide themselves in some hidden nook of the wide world; he, and his crime, and his end gone; forgotten. But it seems he was not to go and be forgotten; she and the boy must be tied to him still; and she was lost in horror and rebellion.

He envied the dead Hallijohn, did that man, as he looked forth on the future. A cheering prospect truly! The gay Sir Francis Levison working in chains with his gang! Where would his diamonds and his perfumed handkerchiefs and his white hands be then? After a time he might get a ticketofleave. He groaned in agony as the turnkey suggested it to him. A ticketofleave for him! Oh, why did they not hang him? he wailed forth as he closed his eyes to the dim light. The light of the cell, you understand; he could not close them to the light of the future. No; never again; it shone out all too plainly, dazzling his brain as with a flame of living fire.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### UNTIL ETERNITY.

Barbara was at the seaside, and Lady Isabel was in her bed, dying. You remember the old French saying, *L'homme propose, et Dieu dispose*. An exemplification of it was here.

She, Lady Isabel, had consented to remain at East Lynne during Mrs. Carlyle's absence, on purpose that she might be with her children. But the object was frustrated, for Lucy and Archibald had been removed to Miss Carlyle's. It was Mr. Carlyle's arrangement. He thought the governess ought to have entire respite from all charge; and that poor governess dared not say, let them stay with me. Lady Isabel had also purposed to be safely away from East Lynne before the time came for her to die; but that time had advanced with giant strides, and the period for removal was past. She was going out as her mother had done, rapidly unexpectedly, "like the snuff of a candle." Wilson was in attendance on her mistress; Joyce remained at home.

Barbara had chosen a wateringplace near, not thirty miles off, so that Mr. Carlyle went there most evenings, returning to his office in the mornings. Thus he saw little of East Lynne, paying one or two flying visits only. From the Saturday to the Wednesday in the second week, he did not come home at all, and it was in those few days that Lady Isabel had changed for the worse. On the Wednesday he was expected home to dinner and to sleep.

Joyce was in a state of frenzy next door to it. Lady Isabel was dying, and what would become of the ominous secret? A conviction, born of her fears, was on the girl's mind that, with death, the whole must become known; and who was to foresee what blame might not be cast upon her, by her master and mistress, for not having disclosed it? She might be accused of having been an abettor in the plot from the first! Fifty times it was in Joyce's mind to send for Miss Carlyle and tell her all.

The afternoon was fast waning, and the spirit of Lady Isabel seemed to be waning with it. Joyce was in the room in attendance upon her. She had been in a fainting state all day, but felt better now. She was partially raised in bed by pillows, a white Cashmere shawl over her shoulders, her nightcap off, to allow as much air as possible to come to her, and the windows stood open.

Footsteps sounded on the gravel in the quiet stillness of the summer air. They penetrated even to her ear, for all her faculties were keen yet. Beloved footsteps; and a tinge of hectic rose to her cheeks. Joyce, who stood at the window, glanced out. It was Mr. Carlyle.

"Joyce!" came forth a cry from the bed, sharp and eager.

Joyce turned round. "My lady?"

"I should die happily if I might see him."

"See him!" uttered Joyce, doubting her own ears. "My lady! See him! Mr. Carlyle!"

"What can it signify? I am already as one dead. Should I ask it or wish it, think you, in rude life? The yearning has been upon me for days Joyce; it is keeping death away."

"It could not be, my lady," was the decisive answer. "It must not be. It is as a thing impossible."

Lady Isabel burst into tears. "I can't die for the trouble," she wailed. "You keep my children from me. They must not come, you say, lest I should betray myself. Now you would keep my husband. Joyce, Joyce, let me see him!"

Her husband! Poor thing! Joyce was in a maze of distress, though not the less firm. Her eyes were wet with tears; but she believed she should be infringing her allegiance to her mistress did she bring Mr. Carlyle to the presence of his former wife; altogether it might be productive of nothing but confusion.

A knock at the chamber door. Joyce called out, "Come in." The two maids, Hannah and Sarah, were alone in the habit of coming to the room, and neither of them had ever known Madame Vine as Lady Isabel. Sarah put in her head.

"Master wants you, Miss Joyce."

"I'll come."

"He is in the diningroom. I have just taken down Master Arthur to him."

Mr. Carlyle had got "Master Arthur" on his shoulder when Joyce entered. Master Arthur was decidedly given to noise and rebellion, and was already, as Wilson expressed it, "sturdy upon his pins."

"How is Madame Vine, Joyce?"

Joyce scarcely knew how to answer. But she did not dare to equivocate as to her precarious state. And where the use, when a few hours would probably see the end of it?

"She is very ill, indeed, sir."

"Worse?"

"Sir, I fear she is dying."

Mr. Carlyle, in his consternation, put down Arthur. "Dying!"

"I hardly think she will last till morning, sir!"

"Why, what has killed her?" he uttered in amazement.

Joyce did not answer. She looked pale and confused.

"Have you had Dr. Martin?"

"Oh, no, sir. It would be of no use."

"No use!" repeated Mr. Carlyle, in a sharp accent. "Is that the way to treat dying people? Assume it is of no use to send for advice, and so quietly let them die! If Madame Vine is as ill as you say, a telegraphic message must be sent off at once. I had better see her," he cried, moving to the door.

Joyce, in her perplexity, dared to place her back against it, preventing his egress. "Oh, master! I beg your pardon, but it would not be right. Please, sir, do not think of going into her room!"

Mr. Carlyle thought Joyce was taken with a fit of prudery. "Why can't I go in?" he asked.

"Mrs. Carlyle would not like it, sir," stammered Joyce, her cheeks scarlet now.

Mr. Carlyle stared at her. "Some of you take up odd ideas," he cried. "In Mrs. Carlyle's absence, it is necessary that some one should see her! Let a lady die in my house, and never see after her! You are out of your senses, Joyce. I shall go in after dinner; so prepare Madame Vine."

The dinner was being brought in then. Joyce, feeling like one in a nervous attack, picked up Arthur and carried him to Sarah in the nursery. What on earth was she to do?

Scarcely had Mr. Carlyle begun his dinner, when his sister entered. Some grievance had arisen between her and the tenants of certain houses of hers, and she was bringing the dispute to him. Before he would hear it, he begged her to go up to Madame Vine, telling her what Joyce had said of her state.

"Dying!" exclaimed Miss Corny, in disbelieving derision. "That Joyce has been more like a simpleton lately than like herself. I can't think what has come to the woman."

She took off her bonnet and mantle, and laid them on a chair, gave a twitch or two to her cap, as she surveyed it in the pierglass, and went upstairs. Joyce answered her knock at the invalid's door; and Joyce, when she saw who it was, turned as white as any sheet.

"Oh, ma'am, you must not come in!" she blundered out, in her confusion and fear, as she put herself right in the doorway.

"Who is to keep me out?" demanded Miss Carlyle, after a pause of surprise, her tone of quiet power. "Move away, girl. Joyce, I think your brain must be softening. What will you try at next?"

Joyce was powerless, both in right and strength, and she knew it. She knew there was no help that Miss Carlyle would and must enter. She stood aside, shivering, and passed out of the room as soon as Miss Carlyle was within it.

Ah! there could no longer be concealment now! There she was, her pale face lying against the pillow, free from its disguising trappings. The band of gray velvet, the spectacles, the wraps for the throat and chin, the huge cap, all were gone. It was the face of Lady Isabel; changed, certainly, very, very much; but still hers. The silvered hair fell on either side of her face, like the silky curls had once fallen; the sweet, sad eyes were the eyes of yore.

"Mercy be good to us!" uttered Miss Carlyle.

They remained gazing at each other, both panting with emotion; yes, even Miss Carlyle. Though a wild suspicion had once crossed her brain that Madame Vine might be Lady Isabel, it had died away again, from the sheer improbability of the thing, as much as from the convincing proofs offered by Lord Mount Severn. Not but what Miss Carlyle had borne in mind the suspicion, and had been fond of tracing the likeness in Madame Vine's face.

"How could you dare come back here!" she abruptly asked, her tone of sad, soft wailing, not one of reproach.

Lady Isabel humbly crossed her attenuated hands upon her chest. "My children," she whispered. "How could I stay away from them? Have pity, Miss Carlyle! Don't reproach me. I am on my way to God, to answer for all my sins and sorrows."

"I do not reproach you," said Miss Carlyle.

"I am so glad to go," she continued to murmur, her eyes full of tears. "Jesus did not come, you know, to save the good like you; He came for the sake of us poor sinners. I

tried to take up my cross, as He bade us, and bear it bravely for His sake; but its weight has killed me."

The good like you! Humbly, meekly, deferentially was it expressed, in all good faith and trust, as though Miss Corny was a sort of upper angel. Somehow the words grated on Miss Corny's ear: grated fiercely on her conscience. It came into her mind, then, as she stood there, that the harsh religion that she had through life professed, was not the religion that would best bring peace to her dying bed.

"Child," said she, drawing near to and leaning over Lady Isabel, "had I anything to do with sending you from East Lynne?"

Lady Isabel shook her head and cast down her gaze, as she whispered: "You did not send me; you did not help to send me. I was not very happy with you, but that was not the cause of my going away. Forgive me, Miss Carlyle, forgive me!"

"Thank God!" inwardly breathed Miss Carlyle. "Forgive me," she said, aloud and in agitation, touching her hand. "I could have made your home happier, and I wish I had done it. I have wished it ever since you left it."

Lady Isabel drew the hand in hers. "I want to see Archibald," she whispered, going back, in thought, to the old time and the old name. "I have prayed Joyce to bring him to me, and she will not. Only for a minute! Just to hear him say that he forgives me! What can it matter, now that I am as one lost to the world? I should die easier."

Upon what impulse or grounds Miss Carlyle saw fit to accede to the request, cannot be told. Probably she did not choose to refuse a deathbed prayer; possibly she reasoned, as did Lady Isabel what could it matter? She went to the door. Joyce was in the corridor, leaning against the wall, her apron up to her eyes. Miss Carlyle beckoned to her.

"How long have you known of this?"

"Since that night in the spring, when there was an alarm of fire. I saw her then, with nothing on her face, and knew her; though, at the first moment, I thought it was her ghost. Ma'am, I have just gone about since, like a ghost myself from fear."

"Go and request your master to come up to me."

"Oh, ma'am! Will it be well to tell him?" remonstrated Joyce. "Well that he should see her?"

"Go and request your master to come to me," unequivocally repeated Miss Carlyle. "Are you mistress, Joyce, or am I?"

Joyce went down and brought Mr. Carlyle up from the dinnertable.

"Is Madame Vine worse, Cornelia? Will she see me?"

"She wishes to see you."

Miss Carlyle opened the door as she spoke. He motioned her to pass in first. "No," she said, "you had better see her alone."

He was going in when Joyce caught his arm. "Master! Master! You ought to be prepared. Ma'am, won't you tell him?"

He looked at them, thinking they must be moonstruck, for their conduct seemed inexplicable. Both were in evident agitation, an emotion Miss Carlyle was not given to. Her face and lips were twitching, but she kept a studied silence. Mr. Carlyle knit his brow and went into the chamber. They shut him in.

He walked gently at once to the bed, in his straightforward manner.

"I am grieved, Madame Vine"

The words faltered on his tongue. He was a man as little given to show emotion as man can well be. Did he think, as Joyce had once done, that it was a ghost he saw? Certain it is that his face and lips turned the hue of death, and he backed a few steps from the bed. The falling hair, the sweet, mournful eyes, the hectic which his presence brought to her cheeks, told too plainly of the Lady Isabel.

"Archibald!"

She put out her trembling hand. She caught him ere he had drawn quite beyond her reach. He looked at her, he looked round the room, as does one awaking from a dream.

"I could not die without your forgiveness," she murmured, her eyes falling before him as she thought of her past. "Do you turn from me? Bear with me a little minute! Only say you forgive me, and I shall die in peace!"

"Isabel?" he spoke, not knowing in the least what he said. "Are you are you were you Madame Vine?"

"Oh, forgiveforgive me! I did not die. I got well from the accident, but it changed me dreadfully. Nobody knew me, and I came here as Madame Vine. I could not stay away, Archibald, forgive me!"



His mind was in a whirl, his ideas had gone woolgathering. The first clear thought that came thumping through his brain was, that he must be a man of two wives. She noticed his perplexed silence.

"I could not stay away from you and my children. The longing for you was killing me," she reiterated, wildly, like one talking in a fever. "I never knew a moment's peace after the mad act I was guilty of, in quitting you. Not an hour had I departed when my repentance set in; and even then I would have retraced and come back, but I did not know how. See what it has done for me!" tossing up her gray hair, holding out her attenuated wrists. "Oh, forgiveforgive me! My sin was great, but my punishment was greater. It has been as one long scene of mortal agony."

"Why did you go?" asked Mr. Carlyle.

"Did you not know?"

"No. It has always been a mystery to me."

"I went out of love for you."

A shade of disdain crossed his lips. She was equivocating to him on her deathbed.

"Do not look in that way," she panted. "My strength is nearly goneyou must perceive that it isand I do not, perhaps, express myself clearly. I loved you dearly, and I grew suspicious of you. I thought you were false and deceitful to me; that your love was all given to another; and in my sore jealousy, I listened to the temptings of that bad man, who whispered to me of revenge. It was not so, was it?"

Mr. Carlyle had regained his calmness, outwardly, at any rate. He stood by the side of the bed, looking down upon her, his arms crossed upon his chest, and his noble form raised to its full height.

"Was it so?" she feverishly repeated.

"Can you ask it, knowing me as you did then, as you must have known me since? I never was false to you in thought, in word, or in deed."

"Oh, Archibald, I was madI was mad! I could not have done it in anything but madness. Surely you will forget and forgive!"

"I cannot forget. I have already forgiven!"

"Try and forget the dreadful time that has passed since that night!" she continued, the tears falling on her cheeks, as she held up to him one of her poor hot hands. "Let your

thoughts go back to the days when you first knew me; when I was here, Isabel Vane, a happy girl with my father. At times I have lost myself in a moment's happiness in thinking of it. Do you remember how you grew to love me, though you thought you might not tell it to me and how gentle you were with me, when papa died and the hundred pound note? Do you remember coming to Castle Marling? and my promise to be your wife and the first kiss you left upon my lips? And, oh, Archibald! Do you remember the loving days after I was your wife how happy we were with each other? Do you remember when Lucy was born, we thought I should have died; and your joy, your thankfulness that God restored me? Do you remember all this?"

Aye. He did remember it. He took the poor hand into his, and unconsciously played with its wasted fingers.

"Have you any reproach to cast to me?" he gently said, bending his head a little.

"Reproach to you! To you, who must be almost without reproach in the sight of Heaven! You, who were everlasting to me ever anxious for my welfare! When I think of what you were, and are, and how I quitted you, I could sink into the earth with remorse and shame. My own sin, I have surely expiated; I cannot expiate the shame I entailed upon you, and upon our children."

Never. He felt it as keenly now as he had felt it then.

"Think what it has been for me!" she resumed, and he was obliged to bend his ear to catch her gradually weakening tones. "To live in this house with your wife to see your love for her to watch the envied caresses that once were mine! I never loved you so passionately as I have done since I lost you. Think what it was to watch William's decaying strength; to be alone with him in his dying hour, and not to be able to say he is my child as well as yours! When he lay dead, and the news went forth to the household, it was her petty grief you soothed, not mine, his mother's. God alone knows how I have lived through it all; it has been to me as the bitterness of death."

"Why did you come back?" was the response of Mr. Carlyle.

"I have told you. I could not live, wanting you and my children."

"It was wrong; wrong in all ways."

"Wickedly wrong. You cannot think worse of it than I have done. But the consequences and the punishment would be mine alone, as long as I guarded against discovery. I never thought to stop here to die; but death seems to have come on me with a leap, like it came to my mother."

A pause of labored hard breathing. Mr. Carlyle did not interrupt it.

"All wrong, all wrong," she resumed; "this interview with you, among the rest. And yet I hardly know; it cannot hurt the new ties you have formed, for I am as one dead now to this world, hovering on the brink of the next. But you were my husband, Archibald; and, the last few days, I have longed for your forgiveness with a fevered longing. Oh! that the past could be blotted out! That I could wake up and find it but a hideous dream; that I were here as in old days, in health and happiness, your ever loving wife. Do you wish it, that the dark past had never had place?"

She put the question in a sharp, eager tone, gazing up to him with an anxious gaze, as though the answer must be one of life or death.

"For your sake I wish it." Calm enough were the words spoken; and her eyes fell again, and a deep sigh came forth.

"I am going to William. But Lucy and Archibald will be left. Oh, do you never be unkind to them! I pray you, visit not their mother's sin upon their heads! Do not in your love for your later children, lose your love for them!"

"Have you seen anything in my conduct that could give rise to fears of this?" he returned, reproach mingled in his sad tone. "The children are dear to me, as you once were."

"As I once was. Aye, and as I might have been now."

"Indeed you might," he answered, with emotion. "The fault was not mine."

"Archibald, I am on the very threshold of the next world. Will you not bless me will you not say a word of love to me before I pass it! Let what I am, I say, be blotted for the moment from your memory; think of me, if you can, as the innocent, timid child whom you made your wife. Only a word of love. My heart is breaking for it."

He leaned over her, he pushed aside the hair from her brow with his gentle hand, his tears dropping on her face. "You nearly broke mine, when you left me, Isabel," he whispered.

"May God bless you, and take you to His rest in Heaven! May He so deal with me, as I now fully and freely forgive you."

What was he about to do? Lower and lower bent his head, until his breath nearly mingled with hers. To kiss her? He best knew. But, suddenly, his face grew red with a scarlet flush, and he lifted it again. Did the form of one, then in a felon's cell at Lynneborough, thrust itself before him, or that of his absent and unconscious wife?

"To His rest in Heaven," she murmured, in the hollow tones of the departing. "Yes, yes I know that God has forgiven me. Oh, what a struggle it has been! Nothing but bad feelings, rebellion, and sorrow, and repining, for a long while after I came back here, but Jesus prayed for me, and helped me, and you know how merciful He is to the weary and heavyladen. We shall meet again, Archibald, and live together forever and ever. But for that great hope I could hardly die. William said mamma would be on the banks of the river, looking out for him; but it is William who is looking for me."

Mr. Carlyle released one of his hands; she had taken them both; and with his own white handkerchief, wiped the deathdew from her forehead.

"It is no sin to anticipate it, Archibald, for there will be no marrying or giving in marriage in Heaven: Christ said so. Though we do not know how it will be, my sin will be remembered no more there, and we shall be together with our children forever and forever. Keep a little corner in your heart for your poor lost Isabel."

"Yes, yes," he whispered.

"Are you leaving me?" she uttered, in a wild tone of pain.

"You are growing faint, I perceive, I must call assistance."

"Farewell, then; farewell, until eternity," she sighed, the tears raining from her eyes. "It is death, I think, not faintness. Oh! but it is hard to part! Farewell, farewell my once dear husband!"

She raised her head from the pillow, excitement giving her strength; she clung to his arm; she lifted her face in its sad yearning. Mr. Carlyle laid her tenderly down again, and suffered his wet cheek to rest upon hers.

"Until eternity."

She followed him with her eyes as he retreated, and watched him from the room: then turned her face to the wall. "It is over. Only God now."

Mr. Carlyle took an instant's counsel with himself, stopping at the head of the stairs to do it. Joyce, in obedience to a sign from him, had already gone into the sickchamber: his sister was standing at the door.

"Cornelia."

She followed him down to the diningroom.

"You will remain here tonight? With her?"

"Do you suppose I shouldn't?" crossly responded Miss Corny; "where are you off to now?"

"To the telegraph office, at present. To send for Lord Mount Severn."

"What good can he do?"

"None. But I shall send for him."

"Can't one of the servants go just as well as you? You have not finished your dinner; hardly begun it."

He turned his eyes on the dinnertable in a mechanical sort of way, his mind wholly preoccupied, made some remark in answer, which Miss Corny did not catch, and went out.

On his return his sister met him in the hall, drew him inside the nearest room, and closed the door. Lady Isabel was dead. Had been dead about ten minutes.

"She never spoke after you left her, Archibald. There was a slight struggle at the last, a fighting for breath, otherwise she went off quite peacefully. I felt sure, when I first saw her this afternoon, that she could not last till midnight."

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### I. M. V.

Lord Mount Severn, wondering greatly what the urgent summons could be for, lost no time in obeying it, and was at East Lynne the following morning early. Mr. Carlyle had his carriage at the stationhis close carriageand shut up in that he made the communication to the earl as they drove to East Lynne.

The earl could with difficulty believe it. Never had he been so utterly astonished. At first he really could not understand the tale.

"Did shedid shecome back to your house to die?" he blundered. "You never took her in? I don't understand."

Mr. Carlyle explained further; and the earl at length understood. But he did not recover his perplexed astonishment.

"What a mad act to come back here. Madame Vine! How on earth did she escape detection?"

"She did escape it," said Mr. Carlyle. "The strange likeness Madame Vine possessed to my first wife did often strike me as being marvelous, but I never suspected the truth. It was a likeness, and not a likeness, for every part of her face and form was changed except her eyes, and those I never saw but through those disguising glasses."

The earl wiped his hot face. The news had ruffled him no measured degree. He felt angry with Isabel, dead though she was, and thankful that Mrs. Carlyle was away.

"Will you see her?" whispered Mr. Carlyle as they entered the house.

"Yes."

They went up to the deathchamber, Mr. Carlyle procuring the key. It was the only time that he entered it. Very peaceful she looked now, her pale features so composed under her white cap and hands. Miss Carlyle and Joyce had done all that was necessary; nobody else had been suffered to approach her. Lord Mount Severn leaned over her, tracing the former looks of Isabel; and the likeness grew upon him in a wonderful degree.

"What did she die of?" he asked.

"She said a broken heart."

"Ah!" said the earl. "The wonder is that it did not break before. Poor thing! Poor Isabel!" he added, touching her hand, "how she marred her own happiness! Carlyle, I suppose this is your wedding ring?"

Mr. Carlyle cast his eyes upon the ring. "Very probably."

"To think of her never having discarded it!" remarked the earl, releasing the cold hand. "Well, I can hardly believe the tale now."

He turned and quitted the room as he spoke. Mr. Carlyle looked steadfastly at the dead face for a minute or two, his fingers touching the forehead; but what his thoughts or feelings may have been, none can tell. Then he replaced the sheet over her face, and followed the earl.

They descended in silence to the breakfastroom. Miss Carlyle was seated at the table waiting for them. "Where could all your eyes have been?" exclaimed the earl to her, after a few sentences, referring to the event just passed.

"Just where yours would have been," replied Miss Corny, with a touch of her old temper. "You saw Madame Vine as well as we did."

"But not continuously. Only two or three times in all. And I do not remember ever to have seen her without her bonnet and veil. That Carlyle should not have recognized her is almost beyond belief."

"It seems so, to speak of it," said Miss Corny; "but facts are facts. She was young and gay, active, when she left here, upright as a dart, her dark hair drawn from her open brow, and flowing on her neck, her cheeks like crimson paint, her face altogether beautiful. Madame Vine arrived here a pale, stooping woman, lame of one leg, shorter than Lady Isabel and her figure stuffed out under those sacks of jackets. Not a bit, scarcely, of her forehead to be seen, for gray velvet and gray bands of hair; her head smothered under a close cap, large, blue, double spectacles hiding the eyes and their sides, and the throat tied up; the chin partially. The mouth was entirely altered in its character, and that upward scar, always so conspicuous, made it almost ugly. Then she had lost some of her front teeth, you know, and she lisped when she spoke. Take her for all in all," summed up Miss Carlyle, "she looked no more like Isabel who went away from here than I look like Adam. Just get your dearest friend damaged and disguised as she was, my lord, and see if you'd recognize him."

The observation came home to Lord Mount Severn. A gentleman whom he knew well, had been so altered by a fearful accident, that little resemblance could be traced to his

former self. In fact, his own family could not recognize him: and he used an artificial disguise. It was a case in point; and reader I assure you it was a true one.

"It was the disguise that we ought to have suspected," quietly observed Mr. Carlyle. "The likeness was not sufficiently striking to cause suspicion."

"But she turned the house from that scent as soon as she came into it," struck in Miss Corny, "telling of the 'neuralgic pains' that affected her head and face, rendering the guarding them from exposure necessary. Remember, Lord Mount Severn, that the Ducies had been with her in Germany, and had never suspected her. Remember also another thing, that, however great a likeness we may have detected, we could not and did not speak of it, one to another. Lady Isabel's name is never so much as whispered among us."

"True: all true," nodded the earl. And they sat themselves down to breakfast.

On the Friday, the following letter was dispatched to Mrs. Carlyle.

"MY DEAREST I find I shall not be able to get to you on Saturday afternoon, as I promised, but will leave here by the late train that night. Mind you don't sit up for me. Lord Mount Severn is here for a few days; he sends his regards to you.

"And now, Barbara, prepare for news that will prove a shock. Madame Vine is dead. She grew rapidly worse, they tell me, after our departure, and died on Wednesday night. I am glad you were away.

"Love from the children. Lucy and Archie are still at Cornelia's; Arthur wearing out Sarah's legs in the nursery.

"Ever yours, my dearest,

"ARCHIBALD CARLYLE."

Of course, as Madame Vine, the governess, died at Mr. Carlyle's house, he could not, in courtesy, do less than follow her to the grave. So decided West Lynne, when they found which way the wind was going to blow. Lord Mount Severn followed also, to keep him company, being on a visit to him, and very polite, indeed, of his lordship to do it condescending, also! West Lynne remembered another funeral at which those two had been the only mourner that of the earl. By some curious coincidence the French governess was buried close to the earl's grave. As good there as anywhere else, quoth West Lynne. There happened to be a vacant spot of ground.

The funeral took place on a Sunday morning. A plain, respectable funeral. A hearse and pair, and mourning coach and pair, with a chariot for the Rev. Mr. Little. No pallbearers



or mutes, or anything of that showoff kind; and no plumes on the horses, only on the hearse. West Lynne looked on with approbation, and conjectured that the governess had left sufficient money to bury herself; but, of course, that was Mr. Carlyle's affair, not West Lynne's. Quiet enough lay she in her last restingplace.

They left her in it, the earl and Mr. Carlyle, and entered the mourningcoach, to be conveyed back again to East Lynne.

"Just a little stone of white marble, two feet high by a foot and a half broad," remarked the earl, on their road, pursuing a topic they were speaking upon. "With the initials 'I. V.' and the date of the year. Nothing more. What do you think?"

"I. M. V.," corrected Mr. Carlyle.

"Yes."

At this moment the bells of another church, not St. Jude's, broke out in a joyous peal, and the earl inclined his ear to listen.

"What can they be ringing for?" he cried.

They were ringing for a wedding. Afy Hallijohn, by the help of two clergymen and six bridesmaids, of which you may be sure Joyce was not one, had just been converted into Mrs. Joe Jiffin. When Afy took a thing into her head, she somehow contrived to carry it through, and to bend even clergymen and bridesmaids to her will. Mr. Jiffin was blest at last.

In the afternoon the earl left East Lynne, and somewhat later Barbara arrived at it. Wilson scarcely gave her mistress time to step into the house before her, and she very nearly left the baby in the fly. Curiously anxious was Wilson to hear all particulars as to whatever could have took off that French governess. Mr. Carlyle was much surprised at their arrival.

"How could I stay away, Archibald, even until Monday, after the news you sent me?" said Barbara. "What did she die of? It must have been awfully sudden."

"I suppose so," was his dreamy answer. He was debating a question with himself, one he had thought over a good deal since Wednesday night. Should he, or should he not, tell his wife? He would have preferred not to tell her; and, were the secret confined to his own breast, he would decidedly not have done so. But it was known to three others to Miss Carlyle, to lord Mount Severn, and to Joyce. All trustworthy and of good intention; but it was impossible for Mr. Carlyle to make sure that not one of them would ever, through any chance and unpremeditated word, let the secret come to the knowledge of

Mrs. Carlyle. That would not do, if she must hear it at all, she must hear it from him, and at once. He took his course.

"Are you ill, Archibald?" she asked, noting his face. It wore a pale, worn sort of look.

"I have something to tell you, Barbara," he answered, drawing her hand into his, as they stood together. They were in her dressingroom, where she was taking off her things. "On the Wednesday evening when I got home to dinner Joyce told me that she feared Madame Vine was dying, and I thought it right to see her."

"Certainly," returned Barbara. "Quite right."

"I went into her room, and I found that she was dying. But I found something else, Barbara. She was not Madame Vine."

"Not Madame Vine!" echoed Barbara, believing in good truth that her husband could not know what he was saying.

"It was my former wife, Isabel Vane."

Barbara's face flushed crimson, and then grew white as marble; and she drew her hand unconsciously from Mr. Carlyle's. He did not appear to notice the movement, but stood with his elbow on the mantelpiece while he talked, giving her a rapid summary of the interview and its details.

"She could not stay away from her children, she said, and came back as Madame Vine. What with the effects of the railroad accident in France, and those spectacles she wore, and her style of dress, and her gray hair, she felt secure in not being recognized. I am astonished now that she was not discovered. Were such a thing related to me I should give no credence to it."

Barbara's heart felt faint with its utter sickness, and she turned her face from the view of her husband. Her first confused thoughts were as Mr. Carlyle's had been that she had been living in his house with another wife. "Did you suspect her?" she breathed, in a low tone.

"Barbara! Had I suspected it, should I have allowed it to go on? She implored my forgiveness for the past, and for having returned here, and I gave it to her fully. I then went to West Lynne, to telegraph to Mount Severn, and when I came back she was dead."

There was a pause. Mr. Carlyle began to perceive that his wife's face was hidden from him.

"She said her heart was broken. Barbara, we cannot wonder at it."

There was no reply. Mr. Carlyle took his arm from the mantelpiece, and moved so that he could see her countenance: a wan countenance, telling of pain.

He laid his hand upon her shoulder, and made her look at him. "My dearest, what is this?"

"Oh, Archibald!" she uttered, clasping her hands together, all her pent up feelings bursting forth, and the tears streaming from her eyes, "has this taken your love from me?"

He took both her hands in one of his, he put the other round her waist and held her there, before him, never speaking, only looking gravely into her face. Who could look at its sincere truthfulness, at the sweet expression of his lips, and doubt him? Not Barbara. She allowed the moment's excitement to act upon her feelings, and carry her away.

"I had thought my wife possessed entire trust in me."

"Oh, I do, I do; you know I do. Forgive me, Archibald," she slowly whispered.

"I deemed it better to impart this to you, Barbara. Had there been wrong feeling on my part, I should have left you in ignorance. My darling, I have told you it in love."

She was leaning on his breast, sobbing gently, her repentant face turned towards him. He held her there in his strong protection, his enduring tenderness.

"My wife! My darling! now and always."

"It was a foolish feeling to cross my heart, Archibald. It is done with and gone."

"Never let it come back, Barbara. Neither need her name be mentioned again between us. A barred name it has hitherto been; so let it continue."

"Anything you will. My earnest wish is to please you; to be worthy of your esteem and love, Archibald," she timidly added, her eyelids drooping, and her fair cheeks blushing, as she made the confession. "There has been a feeling in my heart against your children, a sort of jealous feeling, you can understand, because they were hers; because she had once been your wife. I knew how wrong it was, and I have tried earnestly to subdue it. I have, indeed, and I think it is nearly gone," her voice sunk. "I constantly pray to be helped to do it; to love them and care for them as if they were my own. It will come with time."

"Every good thing will come with time that we may earnestly seek," said Mr. Carlyle.  
"Oh, Barbara, never forget never forget that the only way to ensure peace in the end is to strive always to be doing right, unselfishly under God."

***Free***editorial 