THE GILDED AGE.
LONDON:
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE
LONDON EDITION.

In America nearly every man has his dream, his pet scheme, whereby he is to advance himself socially or pecuniarily. It is this all-pervading speculativeness which we have tried to illustrate in "The Gilded Age." It is a characteristic which is both bad and good, for both the individual and the nation. Good, because it allows neither to stand still, but drives both for ever on, toward some point or other which is a-head, not behind nor at one side. Bad, because the chosen point is often badly chosen, and then the individual is wrecked; the aggregation of such cases affects the nation, and so is bad for the nation. Still, it is a trait which it is of course better for a people to have and sometimes suffer from than to be without.
PREFACE TO THE LONDON EDITION.

We have also touched upon one sad feature, and it is one which we found little pleasure in handling. That is the shameful corruption which lately crept into our politics, and in a handful of years has spread until the pollution has affected some portion of every State and every Territory in the Union.

But I have a great strong faith in a noble future for my country. A vast majority of the people are straightforward and honest; and this late state of things is stirring them to action. If it would only keep on stirring them until it became the habit of their lives to attend to the politics of the country personally, and put only their very best men into positions of trust and authority! That day will come.

Our improvement has already begun. Mr. Tweed (whom Great Britain furnished to us), after laughing at our laws and courts for a good while, has at last been sentenced to thirteen years' imprisonment, with hard labour. It is simply bliss to think of it. It will be at least two years before any governor will dare to pardon him out, too. A great New York
judge, who continued a vile, a shameless career, season after season, defying the legislature and sneering at the newspapers, was brought low at last, stripped of his dignities, and by public sentence debarred from ever again holding any office of honour or profit in the State. Another such judge (furnished to us by Great Britain) had the grace to break his heart and die in the palace built with his robberies when he saw the same blow preparing for his own head and sure to fall upon it.

MARK TWAIN.

THE LANGHAM HOTEL,
LONDON, Dec. 11th, 1873.
PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

This book was not written for private circulation among friends; it was not written to cheer and instruct a diseased relative of the author's; it was not thrown off during intervals of wearing labour to amuse an idle hour. It was not written for any of these reasons, and therefore it is submitted without the usual apologies.

It will be seen that it deals with an entirely ideal state of society; and the chief embarrassment of the writers in this realm of the imagination has been the want of illustrative examples. In a State where there is no fever of speculation, no inflamed desire for sudden wealth, where the poor are all simple-minded and contented, and the rich are all honest and generous, where society is in a condition of
primitive purity and politics is the occupation of only the capable and the patriotic, there are necessarily no materials for such a history as we have constructed out of an ideal commonwealth.

No apology is needed for following the learned custom of placing attractive scraps of literature at the heads of our chapters. It has been truly observed by Wagner that such headings, with their vague suggestions of the matter which is to follow them, pleasantly inflame the reader's interest, without wholly satisfying his curiosity, and we will hope that it may be found to be so in the present case.

Our quotations are set in a vast number of tongues; this is done for the reason that very few foreign nations among whom the book will circulate can read in any language but their own; whereas we do not write for a particular class or sect or nation, but to take in the whole world.

We do not object to criticism; and we do not expect that the critic will read the book
before writing a notice of it. We do not even expect the reviewer of the book will say that he has not read it. No, we have no anticipations of anything unusual in this age of criticism. But if the Jupiter, who passes his opinion on the novel, ever happens to peruse it in some weary moment of his subsequent life, we hope that he will not be the victim of a remorse bitter but too late.

One word more. That is—what it pretends to be—a joint production, in the conception of the story, the exposition of the characters, and in its literal composition. There is scarcely a chapter that does not bear the marks of the two writers of the book.

S. L. C.

C. D. W.
THE GILDED AGE.

CHAPTER I.

Nibiwa win o-dibendan aki.

Eng. A gallant tract
Of land it is!

Meercraft. 'Twill yield a pound an acre:
We must let cheap ever at first. But, sir,
This looks too large for you, I see.

UNE, 18—. Squire Hawkins sat upon the pyramid of large blocks, called the “stile,” in front of his house, contemplating the morning.

The locality was Obedstown, East Tennessee. You would not know that Obedstown stood on the top of a mountain, for there was nothing about the landscape to indicate it—but it did: a mountain that stretched abroad over whole counties, and rose very gradually. The district
was called the "Knobs of East Tennessee," and had a reputation like Nazareth, as far as turning out any good thing was concerned.

The Squire's house was a double log cabin, in a state of decay; two or three gaunt hounds lay asleep about the threshold, and lifted their heads sadly whenever Mrs. Hawkins or the children stepped in and out over their bodies.

Rubbish was scattered about the grassless yard; a bench stood near the door with a tin wash basin on it and a pail of water and a gourd; a cat had begun to drink from the pail, but the
exertion was overtaxing her energies, and she had stopped to rest. There was an ash-hopper by the fence, and an iron pot, for soft-soap boiling, near it.

This dwelling constituted one-fifteenth of Obedstown; the other fourteen houses were scattered about among the tall pine trees and among the corn-fields in such a way that a man might stand in the midst of the city and not know but that he was in the country if he only depended on his eyes for information.

"Squire" Hawkins got his title from being postmaster of Obedstown—not that the title properly belonged to the office, but because in those regions the chief citizens always must have titles of some sort, and so the usual courtesy had been extended to Hawkins. The mail was monthly, and sometimes amounted to as much as three or four letters at a single delivery. Even a rush like this did not fill up the postmaster's whole month, though, and therefore he "kept store" in the intervals.

The Squire was contemplating the morning. It was balmy and tranquil, the vagrant breezes were laden with the odour of flowers, the murmur of bees was in the air; there was everywhere that suggestion of repose that summer woodlands bring to the senses, and the vague, pleasurable melancholy that such a time and such surroundings inspire.
Presently the United States mail arrived, on horseback. There was but one letter, and it was for the postmaster. The long-legged youth who carried the mail tarried an hour to talk, for there was no hurry; and in a little while the male population of the village had assembled to help. As a general thing, they were dressed in homespun “jeans,” blue or yellow—there were no other varieties of it; all wore one suspender and sometimes two—yarn ones knitted at home,—some wore vests, but few wore coats. Such coats and vests as did appear, however, were rather picturesque than otherwise, for they were made of tolerably fanciful patterns of calico—a fashion which prevails there to this day among those of the community who have tastes above the common level and are able to afford style.
Every individual arrived with his hands in his pockets; a hand came out occasionally for a purpose, but it always went back again after service; and if it was the head that was served, just the cant that the dilapidated straw hat got by being uplifted and rooted under, was retained until the next call altered the inclination; many hats were present, but none were erect and no two were canted just alike. We are speaking impartially of men, youths, and boys. And we are also speaking of these three estates when we
say that every individual was either chewing natural leaf tobacco prepared on his own premises, or smoking the same in a corn-cob pipe. Few of the men wore whiskers; none wore moustaches; some had a thick jungle of hair under the chin and hiding the throat—the only pattern recognized there as being the correct thing in whiskers; but no part of any individual’s face had seen a razor for a week.

These neighbours stood a few moments looking at the mail carrier reflectively while he talked; but fatigue soon began to show itself and one after another they climbed up and occupied the top rail of the fence, hump-shouldered and grave, like a company of buzzards assembled for supper and listening for the death-rattle. Old Damrell said:

“Tha hain’t no news ’bout the jedge, hit ain’t likely?”

“Cain’t tell for sartin; some thinks he’s gwyne to be long toreckly, and some thinks ’e hain’t. Russ Mosely he tole ole Hanks he mought git to Obeds tomorrer or nex’ day he reckoned.”

“Well, I wisht I knowed. I got a prime sow and pigs in the cote-house, and I hain’t got no place for to put ’em. If the jedge is a gwyne to hold cote, I got to roust ’em out, I reckon. But tomorrer’ll do, I ’spect.”
THE NEWS FROM THE FORKS.

The speaker bunched his thick lips together like the stem-end of a tomato and shot a bumble-bee dead that had lit on a weed seven feet away. One after another the several chewers expressed a charge of tobacco juice and delivered it at the deceased with steady aim and faultless accuracy.

"What's a stirrin', down 'bout the Forks?" continued Old Damrell.

"Well, I dunno, skasely. Ole Drake Higgins he's ben down to Shelby las' week. Tuck his crap down; couldn't get shet o' the most uv it; hit warn't no time for to sell, he say, so he foch it back agin, 'lowin' to wait tell fall. Talks 'bout goin' to Mozouri—lots uv 'ems talkin' that away down thar, Ole Higgins say. Cain't make a livin' here no mo', sich times as these. Si Higgins he's ben over to Kaintuck n' married a high-toned gal thar, outen the fust families, an' he's come back to the Forks with jist a hell's-mint o' whoop-jamboree notions, folks say. He's tuck an' fixed up the ole house like they does in Kaintuck, he say, an' tha's ben folks come cler from Turpentine for to see it. He's tuck an' gawmed it all over on the inside with plarsterin'."

"What's plarsterin'?"

"I dono. Hit's what he calls it. Ole Mam Higgins, she tole me. She say she warn't gwyne to hang out in no sich a dern hole like a
hog. Says it's mud, or some such kind o' nast-
ness that sticks on n' kivers up everything.
Plarsterin', Si calls it."

This marvel was discussed at considerable
length, and almost with animation. But pre-
sently there was a dog-fight over in the neigh-
bourhood of the blacksmith shop, and the visi-
tors slid off their perch like so many turtles and
strode to the battle-field with an interest border-

ing on eagerness. The Squire remained, and
read his letter. Then he sighed, and sat long
in meditation. At intervals he said:

"Missouri. Missouri. Well, well, well,
everything is so uncertain."

At last he said:

"I believe I'll do it. A man will just not
bea. My house, my yard, everything around
SQUIRE HAWKINS'S HOUSE.

me, in fact, shows that I am becoming one of these cattle—and I used to be thrifty in other times."

He was not more than thirty-five, but he had a worn look that made him seem older. He left the stile, entered that part of his house which was the store, traded a quart of thick molasses for a coonskin and a cake of beeswax to an old dame in linsey-wolsey, put his letter away, and went into the kitchen. His wife was there, constructing some dried apple pies; a slovenly urchin of ten was dreaming over a rude weather-vane of his own contriving; his small sister, close upon four years of age, was sopping corn-bread in some gravy left in the bottom of
a frying-pan and trying hard not to sop over a finger-mark that divided the pan through the middle—for the other side belonged to the brother, whose musings made him forget his stomach for the moment; a negro woman was busy cooking, at a vast fire-place. Shiftlessness and poverty reigned in the place.

“Nancy, I’ve made up my mind. The world is done with me, and perhaps I ought to be done with it. But no matter—I can wait. I am going to Missouri. I won’t stay in this dead country and decay with it. I’ve had it on my mind some time. I’m going to sell out here for whatever I can get, and buy a waggon and team and put you and the children in it and start.”

“Anywhere that suits you, suits me, Si. And the children can’t be any worse off in Missouri than they are here, I reckon.”

Motioning his wife to a private conference in their own room, Hawkins said: “No, they’ll be better off. I’ve looked out for them, Nancy,” and his face lighted. “Do you see these papers? Well, they are evidence that I have taken up Seventy-five Thousand Acres of Land in this county—think what an enormous fortune it will be some day! Why, Nancy, enormous don’t express it—the word’s too tame! I tell you, Nancy——”

“For goodness sake, Si——”
A PRIVATE CONFERENCE.

"Wait, Nancy, wait—let me finish—I’ve been secretly boiling and fuming with this grand inspiration for weeks, and I must talk or I’ll burst! I haven’t whispered to a soul—not a word—have had my countenance under lock and key, for fear it might drop something that would tell even these animals here how to discern the gold mine that’s glaring under their noses. Now all that is necessary to hold this land and keep it in the family is to pay the trifling taxes on it yearly—five or ten dollars—
the whole tract would not sell for over a third of a cent an acre now, but some day people will be glad to get it for twenty dollars, fifty dollars, a hundred dollars an acre! What should you say to" [here he dropped his voice to a whisper and looked anxiously around to see that there were no eavesdroppers], "a thousand dollars an acre!

"Well you may open your eyes and stare! But it's so. You and I may not see the day, but they'll see it. Mind I tell you, they'll see it. Nancy, you've heard of steamboats, and may be you believed in them—of course you did. You've heard these cattle here scoff at them and call them lies and humbugs,—but they're not lies and humbugs, they're a reality, and they're going to be a more wonderful thing some day than they are now. They're going to make a revolution in this world's affairs that will make men dizzy to contemplate. I've been watching—I've been watching while some people slept, and I know what's coming.

"Even you and I will see the day that steamboats will come up that little Turkey river to within twenty miles of this land of ours—and in high water they'll come right to it! And this is not all, Nancy—it isn't even half! There's a bigger wonder—the railroad! These worms here have never even heard of it—and when they do they'll not believe in it. But it's
another fact. Coaches that fly over the ground twenty miles an hour—heavens and earth, think of that, Nancy! Twenty miles an hour. It makes a man's brain whirl. Some day, when you and I are in our graves, there'll be a railroad stretching hundreds of miles—all the way down from the cities of the Northern States to New Orleans—and its got to run within thirty miles of this land—may be even touch a corner of it. Well, do you know, they have quit burning wood in some places in the Eastern States? And what do you suppose they burn? Coal!” [He bent over and whispered again:] "There's whole worlds of it on this land! You know that black stuff that crops out of the bank of the branch?—well, that's it. You've taken it for rocks; so has everybody here; and they've built little dams and such things with it. One man was going to build a chimney out of it. Nancy, I expect I turned as white as a sheet! Why, it might have caught fire and told everything. I showed him it was too crumbly. Then he was going to build it of copper ore—splendid yellow forty per cent. ore! There's fortunes upon fortunes of copper ore on our land! It scared me to death, the idea of this fool starting a smelting furnace in his house without knowing it, and getting his dull eyes opened. And then he was going to build it of iron ore! There's
mountains of iron ore here, Nancy—whole mountains of it. I wouldn’t take any chances, I just stuck by him—I haunted him—I never let him alone till he built it of mud and sticks like all the rest of the chimneys in this dismal country. Pine forests, wheat land, corn land, iron, copper, coal—wait till the railroads come, and the steamboats! We’ll never see the day, Nancy—never in the world—never, never, never, child. We’ve got to drag along, drag along, and eat crusts in toil and poverty, all hopeless and forlorn—but they’ll ride in coaches, Nancy! They’ll live like the princes of the earth; they’ll be courted and worshipped; their names will be known from ocean to ocean! Ah, well-a-day! Will they ever come back here, on the railroad and the steamboat, and say, ‘This one little spot shall not be touched—this hovel shall be sacred—for here our father and our mother suffered for us, thought for us, laid the foundations of our future as solid as the hills!’"

“You are a great, good, noble soul, Si Hawkins, and I am an honoured woman to be the wife of such a man”—and the tears stood in her eyes when she said it. “We will go to Missouri. You are out of your place here, among these groping dumb creatures. We will find a higher place, where you can walk with your own kind, and be understood when you
speak—not stared at as if you were talking some foreign tongue. I would go anywhere, anywhere in the wide world with you. I would rather my body should starve and die than your mind should hunger and wither away in this lonely land.”

“Spoken like yourself, my child! But we’ll not starve, Nancy. Far from it. I have a letter from Eschol Sellers—just came this day. A letter that—I’ll read you a line from it!”

He flew out of the room. A shadow blurred the sunlight in Nancy’s face—there was uneasiness in it, and disappointment. A procession of disturbing thoughts began to troop through her mind. Saying nothing aloud, she sat with her hands in her lap; now and then she clasped them, then unclasped them, then tapped the ends of the fingers together; sighed, nodded, smiled—occasionally paused, shook her head. This pantomime was the elocutionary expression of an unspoken soliloquy which had something of this shape:

“I was afraid of it—was afraid of it. Trying to make our fortune in Virginia, Eschol Sellers nearly ruined us—and we had to settle in Kentucky and start over again. Trying to make our fortune in Kentucky he crippled us again, and we had to move here. Trying to make our fortune here, he brought us clear down to the ground, nearly. He’s an honest
soul, and means the very best in the world, but I'm afraid, I'm afraid he's too flighty. He has splendid ideas, and he'll divide his chances with his friends with a free hand, the good, generous soul, but something does seem to always interfere and spoil everything. I never did think he was right well balanced. But I don't blame my husband, for I do think that when that man gets his head full of a new notion, he can out-talk a machine. He'll make anybody believe in that notion that'll listen to him ten minutes—why I do believe he would make a deaf and dumb man believe in it and get beside himself, if you only set him where he could see his eyes talk and watch his hands explain. What a head he has got! When he got up that idea there in Virginia of buying up whole loads of negroes in Delaware and Virginia and Tennessee, very quiet, having papers drawn to have them delivered at a place in Alabama and take them and pay for them, away yonder at a certain time, and then in the meantime get a law made stopping everybody from selling negroes to the south after a certain day—it was somehow that way—mercy, how the man would have made money! Negroes would have gone up to four prices. But after he'd spent money and worked hard, and travelled hard, and had heaps of negroes all contracted for, and everything going along just right, he couldn't get
the laws passed, and down the whole thing tumbled. And there in Kentucky, when he raked up that old numskull that had been inventing away at a perpetual motion machine for twenty-two years, and Eschol Sellers saw at a glance where just one more little cog-wheel would settle the business, why I could see it as plain as day when he came in wild at midnight and hammered us out of bed, and told the whole thing in a whisper with the doors bolted and the candle in an empty barrel. Oceans of money in it—anybody could see that. But it did cost a deal to buy the old numskull out—and then when they put the new cog-wheel in they'd overlooked something somewhere, and it wasn't any use—the troublesome thing wouldn't
sorry enough Eschol Sellers is in Missouri, now, but I was glad when he went. I wonder what his letter says. But of course it's cheerful; he's never down-hearted—never had any trouble in his life—didn't know it if he had. It's always sunrise with that man, and fine and blazing, at that—never gets noon, though—leaves off and rises again. Nobody can help liking the creature, he means so well—but I do dread to come across him again; he is bound to set us all crazy, of course. Well, there goes old widow Hopkins—it always takes her a week to buy a spool of thread and trade a hank of yarn. Maybe Si can come with the letter, now."

And he did:

"Widow Hopkins kept me—I haven't any patience with such tedious people. Now listen, Nancy—just listen at this:

"'Come right along to Missouri! Don't wait and worry about a good price, but sell out for whatever you can get, and come along, or you might be too late. Throw away your traps, if necessary, and come empty-handed. You'll never regret it. It's the grandest country—the loveliest land—the purest atmosphere—I can't describe it; no pen can do it justice. And it's filling up, every day—people coming from everywhere. I've got the biggest scheme on earth—and I'll take you in; I'll take in every friend I've got that's ever stood by me, for there's enough for all, and to spare. Mum's the word—don't whisper—keep yourself to yourself. You'll see! Come!—rush!—hurry!—don't wait for anything!'

"It's the same old boy, Nancy, just the same old boy—ain't he?"

"Yes, I think there's a little of the old sound
about his voice yet. I suppose you—you'll still go, Si?"

"Go! Well, I should think so, Nancy. It's all a chance, of course, and chances haven't been kind to us, I'll admit—but whatever comes, old wife, they're provided for. Thank God for that!"

"Amen," came low and earnestly.

And with an activity and a suddenness that bewildered Obedstown and almost took its breath away, the Hawkinses hurried through with their arrangements in four short months, and flitted out into the great mysterious blank that lay beyond the Knobs of Tennessee.
CHAPTER II.

Toward the close of the third day's journey the wayfarers were just beginning to think of camping, when they came upon a log cabin in the woods. Hawkins drew rein and entered the yard. A boy about ten years old was sitting in the cabin door with his face bowed in his hands. Hawkins approached, expecting his footfall to attract attention, but it did not. He halted a moment, and then said:

"Come, come, little chap, you mustn't be going to sleep before sundown."

With a tired expression the small face came up out of the hands,—a face down which tears were flowing.

"Ah, I'm sorry I spoke so, my boy. Tell me—is anything the matter?"

The boy signified with a scarcely perceptible gesture that the trouble was in the house, and
made room for Hawkins to pass. Then he put his face in his hands again and rocked himself about as one suffering a grief that is too deep to find help in moan or groan or outcry. Hawkins stepped within. It was a poverty-stricken place. Six or eight middle-aged country people of both sexes were grouped about an object in the middle of the room; they were noiselessly busy, and they talked in whispers when they spoke. Hawkins uncovered and approached. A coffin stood upon two backless chairs. These neighbours had just finished disposing the body of a woman in it—a woman with a careworn, gentle face that had more the look of sleep about it than of death. An old lady motioned toward the door and said to Hawkins in a whisper:

"His mother, po' thing. Died of the fever, last night. Tha warn't no sich thing as saving of her. But it's better for her—better for her. Husband and the other two children died in the spring, and she hain't ever hilt up her head sence. She jest went around broken-hearted like, and never took no interest in anything but Clay—that's the boy thar. She jest worshipped Clay—and Clay he worshipped her. They didn't 'pear to live at all, only when they was together, looking at each other, loving one another. She's ben sick three weeks; and if you believe me that child has worked, and kep'
the run of the med’cin, and the times of giving it, and set up nights and nussed her, and tried to keep up her sperits, the same as a grown-up person. And last night when she kep’ a sinking and sinking, and turned away her head and didn’t know him no mo’, it was fitten to make a body’s heart break to see him climb onto the bed and lay his cheek agin hern and call her so pitiful and she not answer. But bymeby she roused up, like, and looked around wild, and then she see him, and she made a great cry and snatched him to her breast and hilt him close and kissed him over and over agin; but it took the last po’ strength she had, and so her eyelids begin to close down, and her arms sort o’ drooped away and then we see she was gone, po’ creatur. And Clay, he—Oh, the po’ motherless thing—I cain’t talk about it—I cain’t bear to talk about it.”

Clay had disappeared from the door; but he came in, now, and the neighbours reverently fell apart and made way for him. He leaned upon the open coffin and let his tears course silently. Then he put out his small hand and smoothed the hair and stroked the dead face lovingly. After a bit he brought his other hand up from behind him and laid three or four fresh wild flowers upon the breast, bent over and kissed the unresponsive lips time and time again, and then turned away and went out of
the house without looking at any of the company. The old lady said to Hawkins:

"She always loved that kind o' flowers. He fetched 'em for her every morning, and she always kissed him. They was from away north somers—she kep' school when she fust come. Goodness knows what's to become o' that po' boy. No father, no mother, no kin folks of no kind. Nobody to go to, nobody that k'yers for him—and all of us is so put to it for to get along and families so large."
Hawkins understood. All eyes were turned inquiringly upon him. He said:

"Friends, I am not very well provided for, myself, but still I would not turn my back on a homeless orphan. If he will go with me I will give him a home, and loving regard—I will do for him as I would have another do for a child of my own in misfortune."

One after another the people stepped forward and wrung the stranger's hand with cordial good will, and their eyes looked all that their hands could not express or their lips speak.

"Said like a true man," said one.

"You was a stranger to me a minute ago, but you ain't now," said another.

"It's bread cast upon the waters—it'll return after many days," said the old lady whom we have heard speak before.

"You got to camp in my house as long as you hang out here," said one. "If tha hain't room for you and yourn my tribe'll turn out and camp in the hay-loft."

A few minutes afterward, while the preparations for the funeral were being concluded, Mr. Hawkins arrived at his waggon leading his little waif by the hand, and told his wife all that had happened, and asked her if he had done right in giving to her and to himself this new care? She said:

"If you've done wrong, Si Hawkins, it's a
wrong that will shine brighter at the judgment day than the rights that many a man has done before you. And there isn't any compliment you can pay me equal to doing a thing like this and finishing it up, just taking it for granted that I'll be willing to it. Willing? Come to me, you poor motherless boy, and let me take your grief and help you carry it."

When the child awoke in the morning, it was as if from a troubled dream. But slowly the confusion in his mind took form, and he remembered his great loss; the beloved form in the coffin: his talk with a generous stranger who offered him a home; the funeral, where the stranger's wife held him by the hand at the grave, and cried with him and comforted him; and he remembered how this new mother tucked him in his bed in the neighbouring farm house, and coaxed him to talk about his troubles, and then heard him say his prayers and kissed him good-night, and left him with the soreness in his heart almost healed and his bruised spirit at rest.

And now the new mother came again, and helped him to dress, and combed his hair, and drew his mind away by degrees from the dismal yesterday, by telling him about the wonderful journey he was going to take and the strange things he was going to see. And after break-
CHAPTER III.

"Babillebalou! (disoit-il) voici pis qu’antan. Fuyons! C’est, par la mort bouf! Leviathan, descript par le noble prophete Mois en la vie du saict home Job. Il nous avallerons tous, comme pilules. ... Voy le cy. O que tu es horrible et abominable! ... Ho ho! Diable, Satan, Leviathan! Je ne te peux voir, tant tu es ideux et detestable."

Whatever the lagging, dragging journey may have been to the rest of the emigrants, it was a wonder and delight to the children, a world of enchantment; and they believed it to be peopled with the mysterious dwarfs and giants and goblins that figured in the tales the negro slaves were in the habit of telling them nightly by the shuddering light of the kitchen fire.

At the end of nearly a week of travel, the party went into camp near a shabby village which was caving, house by house, into the hungry Mississippi. The river astonished the children beyond measure. Its mile-breath of water seemed an ocean to them, in the shadowy twilight, and the vague riband of trees on the further shore the verge of a continent which surely none but they had ever seen before.

"Uncle Dan’l" (coloured), aged 40; his wife, "aunt Jinny," aged 30, "Young Miss" Emily
Hawkins, "Young Mars" Washington Hawkins, and "Young Mars" Clay, the new member of the family, ranged themselves on a log, after supper, and contemplated the marvellous river and discussed it. The moon rose and sailed aloft through a maze of shredded cloud-wreaths; the sombre river just perceptibly brightened under the veiled light; a deep silence pervaded the air, and was emphasized, at intervals, rather than broken, by the hooting of an owl, the baying of a dog, or the muffled crash of a caving bank in the distance.

The little company assembled on the log were all children (at least in simplicity and broad and comprehensive ignorance), and the remarks they made about the river were in keeping with the character; and so awed were they by the grandeur and the solemnity of the scene before them, and by their belief that the air was filled with invisible spirits and that the faint zephyrs were caused by their passing wings, that all their talk took to itself a tinge of the supernatural, and their voices were subdued to a low and reverent tone. Suddenly Uncle Dan'l exclaimed:

"Chil'en, dah's sumfin' a-comin'!"

All crowded close together and every heart beat faster. Uncle Dan'l pointed down the river with his bony finger.

A deep coughing sound troubled the stillness,
away toward a wooded cape that jutted into the stream a mile distant. All in an instant a fierce eye of fire shot out from behind the cape and sent a long brilliant pathway quivering athwart the dusky water. The coughing grew louder

"Chil'en, dah's sumpin' a-comin'!"

and louder, the glaring eye grew larger and still larger, glared wilder and still wilder. A huge shape developed itself out of the gloom, and from its tall duplicate horns dense volumes of smoke, starred and spangled with sparks, poured out and went tumbling away into the farther darkness. Nearer and nearer the thing came,
till its long sides began to glow with spots of light which mirrored themselves in the river and attended the monster like a torchlight procession.

“What is it! Oh, what is it, Uncle Dan'l!”

With deep solemnity the answer came.

“It's de Almighty! Git down on yo' knees!”

It was not necessary to say it twice. They were all kneeling, in a moment. And then while the mysterious coughing rose stronger and stronger, and the threatening glare reached farther and wider, the negro's voice lifted up its supplications:

“O Lord, we's ben mighty wicked, an' we knows dat we 'zerve to go to de bad place, but good Lord, deah Lord, we ain't ready yet, we ain't ready—let dese po' chil'en hab one mo' chance, jes' one mo' chance. Take de ole niggah if you's got to hab somebody.—Good Lord, good deah Lord, we don't know whah you's a gwyne to, we don't know who you's got yo' eye on, but we knows by de way you's a comin', we knows by de way you's a tiltin' along in yo' charyot o' fiah dat some po' sinner's a gwyne to ketch it. But, good Lord, dese chil'en don't b'long heah, dey's f'm Obedstown whah dey don't know nuffin, an' you knows, yo' own sel, dat dey ain't ' sponsible. An' deah Lord, good Lord, it ain't like yo' mercy, it ain't like yo' pity, it
ain't like yo' long-sufferin' lovin'-kindness for to
take dis kind o' vantoge o' sich little chil'en as
dese is when dey's so many ornery grown folks
chuck full o' cussedness dat wants roastin'
down dah. Oh, Lord, spah de little chil'en,
don't tar de little chil'en away f'm dey frens,
jes' let 'em off jes' dis once, and take it out'n de
ole niggah. Heah I is, Lord, heah I is! De'
ole niggah's ready, Lord, de ole——"

The flaming and churning steamer was right
abreast the party, and not twenty steps away.
The awful thunder of a mud-valve suddenly
burst forth, drowning the prayer, and as sud-
denly Uncle Dan'l snatched a child under each
arm and scoured into the woods with the rest of
the pack at his heels. And then, ashamed of
himself, he halted in the deep darkness and
shouted (but rather feebly):

"Heah I is, Lord, heah I is!"

There was a moment of throbbing suspense,
and then, to the surprise and the comfort of the
party, it was plain that the august presence had
gone by, for its dreadful noises were receding.
Uncle Dan'l headed a cautious reconnoissance
in the direction of the log. Sure enough "the
Lord" was just turning a point a short distance
up the river, and while they looked the lights
winked out and the coughing diminished by
degrees and presently ceased altogether.

"H'wsh! well now dey's some folks says dey
ain't no 'ficiency in prah. Dis chile would like to know whah we'd a ben now if it warn't fo' dat prah? Dat's it. Dat's it!"

"Uncle Dan'l, do you reckon it was the prayer that saved us?" said Clay.

"Heah I is, Lord, Heah I is!"

"Does I reckon? Don't I know it! Whah was yo' eyes? Warn't de Lord jes' a comin' chow! chow! chow! an' a goin' on terrible—an' do de Lord carry on dat way 'dout dey's sumfin don't suit him? An' warn't he a lookin' right at dis gang heah, an' warn't he jes' a reachin' for 'em? An' d'you spec' he gwyne to

vol. 1.
let 'em off 'dout somebody ast him to do it? No indeedy!"

"Do you reckon he saw us, Uncle Dan'l?"

"De law sakes, chile, didn't I see him a lookin' at us?"

"Did you feel scared, Uncle Dan'l?"

"No sah! When a man is 'gaged in prah, he ain't fraid o' nuffin—dey can't nuffin tetch him."

"Well what did you run for?"

"Well, I—I—mars Clay, when a man is under de influence ob de sperit, he do-no what he's 'bout—no sah; dat man do-no what he's 'bout. You mout take an' tah de head off'n dat man an' he wouldn't scasely fine it out. Dah's de Hebrew chil'en dat went frough de fiah; dey was burnt considable—ob coass dey was; but dey didn't know nuffin 'bout it—heal. right up agin; if dey'd ben gals dey'd missed dey long haah (hair); maybe, but dey wouldn't felt de burn."

"I don't know but what they were girls. I think they were."

"Now mars Clay, you knows bettern dat. Sometimes a body can't tell whedder you's a sayin' what you means or whedder you's a sayin' what you don't mean, 'case you says 'em bofe de same way."

"But how should I know whether they were boys or girls?"
“Goodness sakes, mars Clay, don’t de Good Book say? ’Sides, don’t it call ’em de he-brew chil’en? If dey was gals wouldn’t dey be de she-brew chil’en? Some people dat kin read don’t ’pear to take no notice when dey do read.”

“Well, Uncle Dan’l, I think that—— My! here comes another one up the river! There can’t be two!”

“We gone dis time—we done gone dis time, sho’! Dey ain’t two, mars Clay—that’s de same one. De Lord kin ’pear ebberywhah in a second. Goodness, how de fiah and de smoke do belch up! Dat mean business, honey. He comin’ now like he fo’got sumfin. Come ’long, chil’en, time you’s gwyne to roos’. Go ’long wid you—ole Uncle Daniel gwyne out in de woods to rastle in prah—de ole nigger gwyne to do what he kin to sabe you agin.”

He did go to the woods and pray; but he went so far that he doubted, himself, if the Lord heard him when He went by.
CHAPTER IV.

"Seventhly, Before his Voyage, He should make his peace with God, satisfy his Creditors if he be in debt; Pray earnestly to God to prosper him in his Voyage, and to keep him from danger, and, if he be sui juris, he should make his last will, and wisely order all his affairs, since many that go far abroad, return not home. (This good and Christian Counsel is given by Martius Zeilerus in his Apodemical Canons before his Itinerary of Spain and Portugal.)

Early in the morning Squire Hawkins took passage in a small steamboat, with his family and his two slaves, and presently the bell rang, the stage plank was hauled in, and the vessel proceeded up the river. The children and the slaves were not much more at ease after finding out that this monster was a creature of human contrivance than they were the night before when they thought it the Lord of heaven and earth. They started, in fright, every time the gauge-cocks sent out an angry hiss, and they quaked from head to foot when the mud-valves thundered. The shivering of the boat under the beating of the wheels was sheer misery to them.

But of course familiarity with these things soon took away their terrors, and then the voyage at once became a glorious adventure, a
royal progress through the very heart and home of romance, a realisation of their rosiest wonder-dreams. They sat by the hour in the shade of the pilot house on the hurricane deck and looked out over the curving expanses of the river sparkling in the sunlight. Sometimes the boat fought the mid-stream current, with a verdant world on either hand, and remote from both; sometimes she closed in under a point, where the dead water and the helping eddies were, and shaved the bank so closely that the decks were swept by the jungle of overhanging willows and littered with a spoil of leaves; departing from these "points" she regularly crossed the river every five miles, avoiding the "bight" of the great bends and thus escaping the strong current; sometimes she went out and skirted a high "bluff" sand-bar in the middle of the stream, and occasionally followed it up a little too far and touched upon the shoal water at its head—and then the intelligent craft refused to run herself aground, but "smelt" the bar, and straightway the foamy streak that streamed away from her bows vanished, a great foamless wave rolled forward and passed her under way, and in this instant she leaned far over on her side, shied from the bar and fled square away from the danger like a frightened thing—and the pilot was lucky if he managed to "straighten her up" before she drove her nose into the oppo-
"Jim," said George, looking straight ahead, watching the slightest yawning of the boat and promptly meeting it with the wheel, "how'll it do to try Murderer's Chute?"

"Well, it's—it's taking chances. How was the cotton-wood stump on the false point below Boardman's Island this morning?"

"Water just touching the roots."

"Well, it's pretty close work. That gives six feet scant in the head of Murderer's Chute. We can just barely rub through if we hit it exactly right. But it's worth trying. She don't dare tackle it!"—meaning the Amaranth.

In another instant the Boreas plunged into what seemed a crooked creek, and the Amaranth's approaching lights were shut out in a moment. Not a whisper was uttered now, but the three men stared ahead into the shadows, and two of them spun the wheel back and forth with anxious watchfulness, while the steamer tore along. The chute seemed to come to an end every fifty yards, but always opened out in time. Now the head of it was at hand. George tapped the big bell three times, two leadsmen sprang to their posts, and in a moment their weird cries rose on the night air and were caught up and repeated by two men on the upper deck:

"No-o bottom!"
"De-ep four!"
"Half three!"
"Quarter three!"
"Mark under wa-a-ter three!"
"Half twain!"
"Quarter twain——!

Davis pulled a couple of ropes—there was a jingling of small bells far below, the boat's speed slackened, and the pent steam began to whistle and the gauge-cocks to scream.

"By the mark twain!"
"Quar-ter-her-er-less twain!"
"Eight and a half!"
"Eight feet!"
"Seven-an-a-half!——"

Another jingling of little bells and the wheels ceased turning altogether. The whistling of the steam was something frightful, now—it almost drowned all other noises.

"Stand by to meet her!"

George had the wheel hard down and was standing on a spoke.

"All ready!"

The boat hesitated—seemed to hold her breath, as did the captain and pilots—and then she began to fall away to starboard and every eye lighted.

"Now then!—meet her! meet her! Snatch her!"

The wheel flew to port so fast that the spokes blended into a spider-web—the swing of the boat subsided—she steadied herself——

"Seven feet!"

"Sev—six and a half!"

"Six feet! Six f——"

Bang! She hit the bottom! George shouted through the tube:

"Spread her wide open. Whale it at her!"

Pow—wow—chow! The escape-pipes belched snowy pillars of steam aloft, the boat ground and surged and trembled—and slid over into——

"M-a-r-k twain!"

"Quarter her——"
“Tap! tap! tap!” (to signify “Lay in the leads.”)

And away she went, flying up the willow shore, with the whole silver sea of the Mississippi stretching abroad on every hand.

No *Amaranth* in sight!

“Ha-ha, boys, we took a couple of tricks that time!” said the captain.

And just at that moment a red glare appeared in the head of the chute and the *Amaranth* came springing after them.

“Well! I swear!”

“Jim, what is the meaning of that?”

“I'll tell you what's the meaning of it. That hail we had at Napoleon was Wash Hastings, wanting to come to Cairo—and we didn’t stop. He's in that pilot-house, now, showing those mud turtles how to hunt for easy water.”

“That's it! I thought it wasn't any slouch that was running that middle bar in Hog-eye Bend. If it's Wash Hastings—well, what he don't know about the river ain't worth knowing—a regular gold-leaf, kid-glove, diamond breastpin pilot Wash Hastings is. We won't take any tricks off of him, old man!”

“I wish I'd a stopped for him, that's all.”

The *Amaranth* was within three hundred yards of the *Boreas*, and still gaining. The “old man” spoke through the tube:

“What is she carrying now?”
to the floating wreck and took off the dead, the wounded, and the unhurt—at least all that could be got at, for the whole forward half of the boat was a shapeless ruin, with the great chimneys lying crossed on top of it, and underneath were a dozen victims imprisoned alive and wailing for help. While men with axes worked with might and main to free these poor fellows, the Boreas's boats went about, picking up stragglers from the river.

And now a new horror presented itself. The wreck took fire from the dismantled furnaces! Never did men work with a heartier will than did those stalwart braves with the axes. But it was of no use. The fire ate its way steadily, despising the bucket brigade that fought it. It scorched the clothes, it singed the hair of the axemen—it drove them back, foot by foot—inch by inch—they wavered, struck a final blow in the teeth of the enemy, and surrendered. And as they fell back they heard imprisoned voices saying:

"Don't leave us! Don't desert us! Don't, don't do it!"

And one poor fellow said:

"I am Henry Worley, striker of the Amaranth! My mother lives in St. Louis. Tell her a lie for a poor devil's sake, please. Say I was killed in an instant and never knew what hurt me—though God knows I've neither scratch nor
bruise this moment! It's hard to burn up in a coop like this with the whole wide world so near. Good-bye, boys—we've all got to come to it at last, anyway!"

The Boreas stood away out of danger, and the ruined steamer went drifting down the stream an island of wreathing and climbing flame that vomited clouds of smoke from time to time, and glared more fiercely and sent its luminous tongues higher and higher after each emission. A shriek at intervals told of a captive that had met his doom. The wreck lodged upon a sandbar, and when the Boreas turned

the next point on her upward journey it was still burning with scarcely abated fury.

When the boys came down into the main
saloon of the *Boreas*, they saw a pitiful sight and heard a world of pitiful sounds. Eleven poor creatures lay dead, and forty more lay moaning, or pleading, or screaming, while a score of Good Samaritans moved among them doing what they could to relieve their sufferings; bathing their skinless faces and bodies with linseed oil and lime water, and covering the places with bulging masses of raw cotton that gave to every face and form a dreadful and inhuman aspect.

A little wee French midshipman of fourteen lay fearfully injured, but never uttered a sound till a physician of Memphis was about to dress his hurts. Then he said:

"Can I get well? You need not be afraid to tell me."

"No—I—I am afraid you can not."

"Then do not waste your time with me—help those that can get well."

"But——"

"Help those that can get well! It is not for me to be a girl. I carry the blood of eleven generations of soldiers in my veins!"

The physician—himself a man who had seen service in the navy in his time—touched his hat to this little hero, and passed on.

The head engineer of the *Amaranth*, a grand specimen of physical manhood, struggled to his feet a ghastly spectacle and strode toward his
brother, the second engineer, who was unhurt. He said:

"You were on watch. You were boss. You would not listen to me when I begged you to reduce your steam. Take that!—take it to my wife and tell her it comes from me by the hand of my murderer! Take it—and take my curse with it to blister your heart a hundred years—and may you live so long!"

And he tore a ring from his finger, stripping flesh and skin with it, threw it down and fell dead!

But these things must not be dwelt upon. The Boreas landed her dreadful cargo at the next large town and delivered it over to a multitude of eager hands and warm southern hearts—a cargo amounting by this time to thirty-nine wounded persons and twenty-two dead bodies. And with these she delivered a list of thirty-six missing persons that had drowned or otherwise perished at the scene of the disaster.

A jury of inquest was impannelled, and after due deliberation and inquiry they returned the inevitable American verdict which has been so familiar to our ears all the days of our lives—

"Nobody to blame." *

* The incidents of the explosion are not invented. They happened just as they are told.—The Authors.
CHAPTER V.

WHEN the Boreas backed away from the land to continue her voyage up the river, the Hawkinses were richer by twenty-four hours of experience in the contemplation of human suffering and in learning through honest hard work how to relieve it. And they were richer in another way also. In the early turmoil an hour after the explosion, a little black-eyed girl of five years, frightened and crying bitterly, was struggling through the throng in the Boreas’s saloon calling her mother and father, but no one answered.—Something in the face of Mr. Hawkins attracted her and she came and looked up at him; was satisfied, and took refuge with him. He petted her, listened to her troubles, and said he would find her friends for her. Then he put her in a state-room with his children and told them to be kind to her (the adults of his party were all busy with the wounded) and straightway began his search.
LITTLE LAURA.

It was fruitless. But all day he and his wife made inquiries, and hoped against hope. All that they could learn was that the child and her parents came on board at New Orleans, where they had just arrived in a vessel from Cuba; that they looked like people from the Atlantic States; that the family name was Van Brunt and the child's name Laura. This was all. The parents had not been seen since the explosion. The child's manners were those of a little lady, and her clothes were daintier and finer than any Mrs. Hawkins had ever seen before.

As the hours dragged on the child lost heart, and cried so piteously for her mother that it seemed to the Hawkinses that the moanings and the wailings of the mutilated men and women in the saloon did not so strain at their heart-strings as the sufferings of this little desolate creature. They tried hard to comfort her; and in trying, learned to love her; they could not help it, seeing how she clung to them and put her arms about their necks and found no solace but in their kind eyes and comforting words. There was a question in both their hearts—a question that rose up and asserted itself with more and more pertinacity as the hours wore on—but both hesitated to give it voice—both kept silence and waited. But a time came at last when the matter would bear delay no longer. The boat had landed, and the dead and
the wounded were being conveyed to the shore. The tired child was asleep in the arms of Mrs. Hawkins. Mr. Hawkins came into their presence and stood without speaking. His eyes met his wife's; then both looked at the child—and as they looked it stirred in its sleep and nestled closer; an expression of contentment and peace settled upon its face that touched the mother-heart; and when the eyes of husband and wife met again, the question was asked and answered.

When the Boreas had journeyed some four hundred miles from the time the Hawkinses joined her, a long rank of steamboats was sighted, packed side by side at a wharf like sardines in a box, and above and beyond them rose the domes and steeples and general architectural confusion of a city—a city with an imposing umbrella of black smoke spread over it. This was St. Louis. The children of the Hawkins family were playing about the hurricane deck, and the father and mother were sitting in the lee of the pilot house essaying to keep order and not greatly grieved that they were not succeeding.

"They're worth all the trouble they are, Nancy."

"Yes, and more, Si."

"I believe you! You wouldn't sell one of them at a good round figure?"
“Not for all the money in the bank, Si.”

“My own sentiments every time. It is true we are not rich—but still you are not sorry—you haven’t any misgivings about the additions?”

“No. God will provide.”

“Amen. And so you wouldn’t even part with Clay? Or Laura?”

“Not for anything in the world. I love them just the same as I love my own. They pet me and spoil me even more than the others do, I think. I reckon we’ll get along, Si.”

“Oh, yes, it will all come out right, old mother. I wouldn’t be afraid to adopt a thousand children if I wanted to, for there’s that Tennessee Land, you know—enough to make an army of them rich. A whole army, Nancy! You and I will never see the day, but these little chaps will. Indeed they will. One of these days it will be ‘the rich Miss Emily Hawkins—and the wealthy Miss Laura Van Brant Hawkins—and the Hon. George Washington Hawkins, millionaire—and Gov. Henry Clay Hawkins, millionaire!’ That is the way the world will word it! Don’t let’s ever fret about the children, Nancy—never in the world. They’re all right. Nancy, there’s oceans and oceans of money in that land—mark my words!”

The children had stopped playing, for the
moment, and drawn near to listen. Hawkins said:

"Washington, my boy, what will you do when you get to be one of the richest men in the world?"

"I don't know, father. Sometimes I think I'll have a balloon and go up in the air; and sometimes I think I'll have ever so many books; and sometimes I think I'll have ever so many weather-cocks and water-wheels; or have a machine like that one you and Colonel Sellers bought; and sometimes I think I'll have—well, somehow I don't know—somehow I ain't certain; maybe I'll get a steamboat first."

"The same old chap!—always just a little bit divided about things.—And what will you do when you get to be one of the richest men in the world, Clay?"

"I don't know, sir. My mother—my other mother that's gone away—she always told me to work along and not be much expecting to get rich, and then I wouldn't be disappointed if I didn't get rich. And so I reckon it's better for me to wait till I get rich, and then by that time maybe I'll know what I'll want—but I don't now, sir."

"Careful old head!—Governor Henry Clay Hawkins!—that's what you'll be, Clay, one of these days. Wise old head; weighing old head! Go on, now, and play—all of you. It's a prime
lot, Nancy, as the Obedstown folk say about their hogs."

A smaller steamboat received the Hawkinses and their fortunes, and bore them a hundred and thirty miles still higher up the Mississippi, and landed them at a little tumble-down village on the Missouri shore in the twilight of a mellow October day.

The next morning they harnessed up their team, and for two days they wended slowly into the interior, through almost roadless and uninhabited forest solitudes. And when for the last time they pitched their tents, metaphorically speaking, it was at the goal of their hopes, their new home.

By the muddy roadside stood a new log cabin, one storey high—the store; clustered in the neighbourhood were ten or twelve more cabins, some new, some old.

In the sad light of the departing day the place looked homeless enough. Two or three coatless young men sat in front of the store on a dry-goods box, and whittled it with their knives, kicked it with their vast boots, and shot tobacco-juice at various marks. Several ragged negroes leaned comfortably against the posts of the awning and contemplated the arrival of the wayfarers with lazy curiosity. All these people presently managed to drag themselves to the vicinity of the Hawkins' waggon, and
there they took up permanent positions, hands in pockets and resting on one leg; and thus anchored they proceeded to look and enjoy. Vagrant dogs came wagging around and making inquiries of Hawkins's dog, which were not satisfactory, and they made war on him in concert. This would have interested the citizens, but it was too many on one to amount to anything as a fight, and so they commanded the peace, and the foreign dog furled his tail and took sanctuary under the waggon. Slatternly negro girls and women slouched along with pails deftly balanced on their heads, and joined the group and stared. Little half-dressed white boys, and little negro boys with nothing whatever on but tow-linen shirts with a fine southern exposure, came from various directions and stood with their hands locked together behind them and aided in the inspection. The rest of the population were laying down their employments and getting ready to come, when a man burst through the assemblage and seized the new-comers by the hands in a frenzy of welcome, and exclaimed—indeed almost shouted:

"Well, who could have believed it! Now is it you sure enough—turn around! hold up your heads! I want to look at you good! Well, well, well, it does seem most too good to be true, I declare! Lord, I'm so glad to see you! Does your whole soul good to look at you! Shake
hands again! Keep on shaking hands! Goodness gracious alive. What will my wife say?—Oh yes indeed, it's so!—married only last week—lovely, perfectly lovely creature, the noblest woman that ever—you'll like her, Nancy! Like her? Lord bless me you'll love her—you'll dote on her—you'll be twins! Well, well, well, let me look at you again! Same old—why bless my life it was only just this very morning that my wife says, 'Colonel'—she will call me Colonel spite of everything I can do—she says 'Colonel, something tells me somebody's coming!' and sure enough here you are, the last people on earth a body could have expected. Why she'll think she's a prophetess—and hanged if I don't think so too—and you know there ain't any country but what a prophet's an honour to, as the proverb says. Lord bless me—and here's the children, too! Washington, Emily, don't you know me? Come, give us a kiss. Won't I fix you, though!—ponies, cows, dogs, everything you can think of that'll delight a child's heart—and——. Why how's this? Little strangers? Well, you won't be any strangers here, I can tell you. Bless your souls we'll make you think you never was at home before—'deed and 'deed we will, I can tell you! Come, now, bundle right along with me. You can't glorify any hearth stone but mine in this camp, you know—can't eat any-
body's bread but mine—can't do anything but just make yourselves perfectly at home and comfortable, and spread yourselves out and rest! You hear me! Here—Jim, Tom, Pete, Jake, fly around! Take that team to my place—put the waggon in my lot—put the horses under the shed, and get out hay and oats and fill them up! Ain't any hay and oats? Well get some—have it charged to me—come, spin around, now! Now, Hawkins, the procession's ready; mark time, by the left flank, forward—march!"

And the Colonel took the lead, with Laura
astride his neck, and the newly-inspired and very grateful immigrants picked up their tired limbs with quite a spring in them and dropped into his wake.

Presently they were ranged about an old-time fire-place whose blazing logs sent out

rather an unnecessary amount of heat, but that was no matter—supper was needed, and to have it, it had to be cooked. This apartment was the family bed-room, parlour, library, and kitchen, all in one. The matronly little wife of the Colonel moved hither and thither and in
the "rag" carpeting of the country. Hawkins put up the first "paling" fence that had ever adorned the village; and he did not stop there, but whitewashed it. His oil-cloth window- curtains had noble pictures on them of castles such as had never been seen anywhere in the world but on window-curtains. Hawkins enjoyed the admiration these prodigies compelled, but he always smiled to think how poor and cheap they were, compared to what the Hawkins mansion would display in a future day after the Tennessee Land should have borne its minted fruit. Even Washington observed, once, that when the Tennessee Land was sold he would have a "store" carpet in his and Clay's room like the one in the parlour. This pleased Hawkins, but it troubled his wife. It did not seem wise, to her, to put one's entire earthly trust in the Tennessee Land and never think of doing any work. Hawkins took a weekly Philadelphia newspaper and a semi-weekly St. Louis journal—almost the only papers that came to the village, though Godey's Lady's Book found a good market there and was regarded as the perfection of polite literature by some of the ablest critics in the place. Perhaps it is only fair to explain that we are writing of a bygone age—some twenty or thirty years ago. In the two newspapers referred to lay the secret of Haw-
kins's growing prosperity. They kept him informed of the condition of the crops south and east, and thus he knew which articles were likely to be in demand and which articles were likely to be unsaleable, weeks and even months in advance of the simple folk about him. As the months went by he came to be regarded as a wonderfully lucky man. It did not occur to the citizens that brains were at the bottom of his luck.

His title of "Squire" came into vogue again, but only for a season; for, as his wealth and popularity augmented, that title, by imperceptible stages, grew up into "Judge;" indeed it bade fair to swell into "General" by-and-by. All strangers of consequence who visited the village gravitated to the Hawkins Mansion and became guests of the "Judge."

Hawkins had learned to like the people of his section very much. They were uncouth and not cultivated, and not particularly industrious; but they were honest and straightforward, and their virtuous ways commanded respect. Their patriotism was strong, their pride in the flag was of the old-fashioned pattern, their love of country amounted to idolatry. Whoever dragged the national honour in the dirt won their deathless hatred. They still cursed Benedict Arnold as if he were a personal friend who had broken faith but a week gone by.
CHAPTER VI.

十年前事幾翻新

Mesu eu azecháhet
Washkebemáti sitaking,
Náwuj behegandáguže
Manwábegonig edush wen.

We skip ten years and this history finds certain changes to record.

Judge Hawkins and Col. Sellers have made and lost two or three moderate fortunes in the meantime and are now pinched by poverty. Sellers has two pairs of twins and four extras In Hawkins's family are six children of his own and two adopted ones. From time to time, as fortune smiled, the elder children got the benefit of it, spending the lucky seasons at excellent schools in St. Louis and the unlucky ones at home in the chafing discomfort of straightened circumstances.

Neither the Hawkins children nor the world that knew them ever supposed that one of the girls was of alien blood and parentage. Such difference as existed between Laura and Emily
is not uncommon in a family. The girls had grown up as sisters, and they were both too young at the time of the fearful accident on the Mississippi to know that it was that which had thrown their lives together.

And yet any one who had known the secret of Laura’s birth and had seen her during these passing years, say at the happy age of twelve or thirteen, would have fancied that he knew the reason why she was more winsome than her school companion.

Philosophers dispute whether it is the promise of what she will be in the careless schoolgirl, that makes her attractive, the undeveloped maidenhood, or the mere natural, careless sweetness of childhood. If Laura at twelve was beginning to be a beauty, the thought of it had never entered her head. No, indeed. Her mind was filled with more important thoughts. To her simple school-girl dress she was beginning to add those mysterious little adornments of ribbon-knots and ear-rings, which were the subject of earnest consultations with her grown friends.

When she tripped down the street on a summer’s day with her dainty hands propped into the ribbon-broidered pockets of her apron, and elbows consequently more or less akimbo; with her wide Leghorn hat flapping down and hiding her face one moment and blowing
straight up against her forehead the next and making its revealment of fresh young beauty; 

with all her pretty girlish airs and graces in full play, and that sweet ignorance of care and that atmosphere of innocence and purity all about her that belong to her gracious time of life, indeed she was a vision to warm the coldest heart and bless and cheer the saddest.

Wilful, generous, forgiving, imperious, affectionate, improvident, bewitching, in short—was Laura at this period. Could she have remained there, this history would not need to be written.
But Laura had grown to be almost a woman in these few years, to the end of which we have now come—years which had seen Judge Hawkins pass through so many trials.

When the judge's first bankruptcy came upon him, a homely human angel intruded upon him with an offer of $1,500 for the Tennessee Land. Mrs. Hawkins said take it. It was a grievous temptation, but the judge withstood it. He said the land was for the children—he could not rob them of their future millions for so paltry a sum. When the second blight fell upon him, another angel appeared and offered $3,000 for the land. He was in such deep distress that he allowed his wife to persuade him to let the papers be drawn; but when his children came into his presence in their poor apparel he felt like a traitor and refused to sign.

But now he was down again, and deeper in the mire than ever. He paced the floor all day, he scarcely slept at night. He blushed even to acknowledge it to himself, but treason was in his mind—he was meditating, at last, the sale of the land. Mrs. Hawkins stepped into the room. He had not spoken a word, but he felt as guilty as if she had caught him in some shameful act. She said:

"Si, I do not know what we are going to do. The children are not fit to be seen, their clothes
are in such a state. But there’s something more serious still.—There is scarcely a bite in the house to eat.”

“Why, Nancy, go to Johnson——”

“Johnson, indeed! You took that man’s part when he hadn’t a friend in the world, and you built him up and made him rich. And here’s the result of it. He lives in our fine house, and we live in his miserable log cabin. He has hinted to our children that he would rather they wouldn’t come about his yard to play with his children—which I can bear, and bear easy enough, for they’re not a sort we want to associate with much—but what I can’t bear with any quietness at all, is his telling Franky our bill was running pretty high this morning when I sent him for some meal—and that was all he said, too—didn’t give him the meal—turned off and went to talking with the Hargrave girls about some stuff they wanted to cheapen.”

“Nancy, this is astounding!”

“And so it is, I warrant you. I’ve kept still, Si, as long as ever I could. Things have been getting worse and worse, and worse and worse, every single day; I don’t go out of the house, I feel so down; but you had trouble enough, and I wouldn’t say a word—and I wouldn’t say a word now, only things have got so bad that I don’t know what to do, nor where to turn.”
And she gave way and put her face in her hands and cried.

"Poor child, don't grieve so. I never thought that of Johnson. I am clear at my wits' end. I don't know what in the world to do. Now if somebody would come along and offer $3,000 —Oh, if somebody only would come along and offer $3,000 for that Tennessee Land——"

"You'd sell it, Si!" said Mrs. Hawkins, excitedly.

"Try me!"

Mrs. Hawkins was out of the room in a moment. Within a minute she was back again with a business-looking stranger, whom she seated, and then she took her leave again. Hawkins said to himself, "How can a man ever lose faith? When the blackest hour comes,
Providence always comes with it—ah, this is the very timeliest help that ever poor harried devil had; if this blessed man offers but a thousand I'll embrace him like a brother!"

The stranger said:

"I am aware that you own 75,000 acres of land in East Tennessee, and, without sacrificing your time, I will come to the point at once. I am agent of an iron manufacturing company, and they empower me to offer you ten thousand dollars for that land."

Hawkins's heart bounded within him. His whole frame was racked and wrenched with fettered hurrahs. His first impulse was to shout—"Done! and God bless the iron company, too!"

But a something flitted through his mind, and his open lips uttered nothing. The enthusiasm faded away from his eyes, and the look of a man who is thinking took its place. Presently, in a hesitating, undecided way, he said:

"Well, I—it don't seem quite enough. That—that is a very valuable property—very valuable. It's brimful of iron ore, sir—brimful of it! And copper, coal—everything—everything you can think of! Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll reserve everything except the iron, and I'll sell them the iron property for $15,000 cash, I to go in with them and own an undivided interest of
NEARLY CAUGHT.

one-half the concern—or the stock, as you may say. I'm out of business, and I'd just as soon help run the thing as not. Now, how does that strike you?"

"Well, I am only an agent of these people, who are friends of mine, and I am not even paid for my services. To tell you the truth, I have tried to persuade them not to go into the thing; and I have come square out with their offer, without throwing out any feelers—and I did it in the hope that you would refuse. A man pretty much always refuses another man's first offer, no matter what it is. But I have performed my duty, and will take pleasure in telling them what you say."

He was about to rise. Hawkins said:

"Wait a bit."

Hawkins thought again. And the substance of his thought was: "This is a deep man; this is a very deep man; I don't like his candour; your ostentatiously candid business man's a deep fox—always a deep fox; this man's that iron company himself—that's what he is; he wants that property, too; I am not so blind but I can see that; he don't want the company to go into this thing—Oh, that's very good; yes, that's very good, indeed—stuff! he'll be back here to-morrow, sure, and take my offer; take it? I'll risk anything he is suffering to take it now; here—I must mind what I'm about.
What has started this sudden excitement about iron? I wonder what is in the wind? Just as sure as I'm alive this moment, there's something tremendous stirring in iron speculation"—(here Hawkins got up and began to pace the floor with exciting eyes and gesturing hands)—"something enormous going on in iron, without the shadow of a doubt, and here I sit mousing in the dark and never knowing anything about it; great Heaven, what an escape I've made! This underhanded mercenary creature might have taken me up—and ruined me! but I have escaped, and I warrant me I'll not put my foot into——"

He stopped and turned toward the stranger, saying:

"I have made you a proposition—you have not accepted it, and I desire that you will consider that I have made none. At the same time my conscience will not allow me to——. Please alter the figures I named to thirty thousand dollars, if you will, and let the proposition go to the company—I will stick to it if it breaks my heart!"

The stranger looked amused, and there was a pretty well-defined touch of surprise in his expression, too, but Hawkins never noticed it. Indeed, he scarcely noticed anything or knew what he was about. The man left; Hawkins flung himself into a chair; thought a few mo-
ments, then glanced around, looked frightened, sprang to the door——

"Too late—too late! He's gone! Fool that I am!—always a fool! Thirty thousand—ass that I am! Oh, why didn't I say fifty thousand?"

He plunged his hands into his hair and leaned his elbows on his knees, and fell to rocking himself back and forth in anguish. Mrs. Hawkins sprang in, beaming:

"Well, Si!"
“Oh, con-found the con-founded—con-found it, Nancy. I’ve gone and done it, now!”
“Done what, Si, for mercy’s sake!”
“Done everything! Ruined everything!”
“Tell me, tell me, tell me! Don’t keep a body in such suspense. Didn’t he buy, after all? Didn’t he make an offer?”
“Offer? He offered $10,000 for our land, and—”
“Thank the good providence from the very bottom of my heart of hearts! What sort of ruin do you call that, Si?”
“Nancy, do you suppose I listened to such a preposterous proposition? No! Thank fortune I am not a simpleton! I saw through the pretty scheme in a second. It’s a vast iron speculation!—millions upon millions in it! But fool as I am I told him he could have half the iron property for thirty thousand—and if I only had him back here he couldn’t touch it for a cent less than a quarter of a million!”

Mrs. Hawkins looked up white and despairing:
“You threw away this chance, you let this man go, and we in this awful trouble? You don’t mean it, you can’t mean it!”

“Throw it away? Catch me at it! Why, woman, do you suppose that man don’t know what he is about? Bless you, he’ll be back fast enough to-morrow.”
“Never, never, never. He never will come
back. I don't know what is to become of us. I don't know what in the world is to become of us."

A shade of uneasiness came into Hawkins's face. He said:

"Why, Nancy, you—you can't believe what you are saying?"

"Believe it, indeed? I know it, Si. And I know that we haven't a cent in the world, and we've sent ten thousand dollars a-begging."

"Nancy, you frighten me. Now could that man—is it possible that I—hanged if I don't believe I have missed a chance! Don't grieve, Nancy, don't grieve. I'll go right after him. I'll take—I'll take—what a fool I am!—I'll take anything he'll give!"

The next instant he left the house on a run. But the man was no longer in the town. Nobody knew where he belonged or whither he had gone. Hawkins came slowly back, watching wistfully but hopelessly for the stranger, and lowering his price steadily with his sinking heart. And when his foot finally pressed his own threshold, the value he held the entire Tennessee property at was five hundred dollars—two hundred down and the rest in three equal annual payments, without interest.

There was a sad gathering at the Hawkins' fireside the next night. All the children were present but Clay. Mr. Hawkins said:

"Washington, we seem to be hopelessly fallen,
hopelessly involved. I am ready to give up. I do not know where to turn—I never have been down so low before, I never have seen things so dismal. There are many mouths to feed; Clay is at work; we must lose you also, for a little while, my boy. But it will not be long—the Tennessee land——”

He stopped, and was conscious of a blush. There was silence for a moment, and then Washington—now a lank, dreamy-eyed stripling between twenty-two and twenty-three years of age—said:

“If Col. Sellers would come for me, I would go and stay with him a while, till the Tennessee land is sold. He has often wanted me to come, ever since he moved to Hawk-eye.”

“I’m afraid he can’t well come for you, Washington. From what I can hear—not from him, of course, but from others—he is not far from as bad off as we are—and his family is as large, too. He might find something for you to do, maybe, but you’d better try to get to him yourself, Washington—it’s only thirty miles.”

“But how can I, father? There’s no stage or anything.”

“And if there were, stages require money. A stage goes from Swansea, five miles from here. But it would be cheaper to walk.”

“Father, they must know you there, and no
doubt they would credit you in a moment, for a
little stage ride like that. Couldn’t you write
and ask them?”

“Couldn’t you, Washington—seeing it’s you
that wants the ride? And what do you think
you’ll do, Washington, when you get to Hawk-
eye? Finish your invention for making window-
glass opaque?”

“No, sir, I have given that up. I almost
knew I could do it, but it was so tedious and
troublesome I quit it.”

“I was afraid of it, my boy. Then I suppose
you’ll finish your plan of colouring hen’s eggs
by feeding a peculiar diet to the hen?”

“No, sir. I believe I have found out the
stuff that will do it, but it kills the hen; so I
have dropped that for the present, though I can
take it up again some day, when I learn how to
manage the mixture better.”

“Well, what have you got on hand—any-
thing?”

“Yes, sir; three or four things. I think
they are all good and can all be done, but they
are tiresome, and besides they require money.
But as soon as the land is sold——”

“Emily, were you about to say something?”
said Hawkins.

“Yes, sir. If you are willing, I will go to
St. Louis. That will make another mouth less
to feed. Mrs. Buckner has always wanted me to come."

"But the money, child?"

"Why I think she would send it, if you would write her—and I know she would wait for her pay till—"

"Come, Laura, let's hear from you, my girl."

Emily and Laura were about the same age—between seventeen and eighteen. Emily was fair and pretty, girlish and diffident—blue eyes and light hair. Laura had a proud bearing and a somewhat mature look; she had fine, clean-cut features, her complexion was pure white, and contrasted vividly with her black hair and eyes; she was not what one calls pretty—she was beautiful. She said:

"I will go to St. Louis, too, sir. I will find a way to get there. I will make a way. And I will find a way to help myself along, and do what I can to help the rest, too."

She spoke it like a princess. Mrs. Hawkins smiled proudly and kissed her, saying in a tone of fond reproof:

"So one of my girls is going to turn out and work for a living! It's like your pluck and spirit, child, but we will hope that we haven't got quite down to that yet."

The girl's eyes beamed affection under her mother's caress. Then she straightened up, folded her white hands in her lap, and became a
splendid iceberg. Clay's dog put up his brown nose for a little attention, and got it. He retired under the table with an apologetic yelp, which did not affect the iceberg.

Judge Hawkins had written and asked Clay to return home and consult with him upon family affairs. He arrived the evening after this conversation, and the whole household gave him a rapturous welcome. He brought sadly needed help with him, consisting of the savings of a year and a half of work—nearly two hundred dollars in money.
It was a ray of sunshine which (to this easy household) was the earnest of a clearing sky.

Bright and early in the morning the family was astir, and all were busy preparing Washington for his journey—at least all but Washington himself, who sat apart, steeped in a reverie. When the time for his departure came, it was easy to see how fondly all loved him, and how hard it was to let him go, notwithstanding they had often seen him go before, in his St. Louis schooling days. In the most matter-of-course way they had borne the burden of getting him ready for his trip, never seeming to think of his helping in the matter; in the same matter-of-course way Clay had hired a horse and cart; and now that the good-byes were ended he bundled Washington's baggage in and drove away with the exile.

At Swansea Clay paid his stage fare, stowed him away in the vehicle, and saw him off. Then he returned home and reported progress, like a committee of the whole.

Clay remained at home for several days. He held many consultations with his mother upon the financial condition of the family, and talked once with his father upon the same subject, but only once. He found a change in that quarter which was distressing; years of fluctuating fortune had done their work; each reverse had weakened the father's spirit and
impaired his energies; his last misfortune seemed to have left hope and misfortune dead within him; he had no projects, formed no plans—evidently he was a vanquished man. He looked worn and tired. He inquired into Clay's affairs and prospects, and when he found that Clay was doing pretty well and was likely to do still better, it was plain that he resigned himself with easy felicity to look to the son for a support; and he said, "Keep yourself informed of poor Washington's condition and movements, and help him along all you can, Clay."

The younger children, also, seemed relieved of all fears and distresses, and very ready and willing to look to Clay for a livelihood. Within three days a general tranquillity and satisfaction reigned in the household. Clay's hundred and eighty or ninety dollars had worked a wonder. The family were as contented now, and as free from care as they could have been with a fortune. It was well that Mrs. Hawkins held the purse—otherwise the treasure would have lasted but a very little while.

It took but a trifle to pay Hawkins's outstanding obligations, for he had always had a horror of debt.

When Clay bade his home good-bye and set out to return to the field of his labours, he was
conscious that henceforth he was to have his father's family on his hands as pensioners; but he did not allow himself to chafe at the thought, for he reasoned that his father had dealt by him with a free hand, and a loving one all his life, and now that hard fortune had broken his spirit it ought to be a pleasure, not a pain, to work for him. The younger children were born and educated dependents. They had never been taught to do anything for themselves, and it did not seem to occur to them to make an attempt now.

The girls would not have been permitted to work for a living under any circumstances whatever. It was a southern family, and of good blood; and for any person except Laura, either within or without the household to have suggested such an idea would have brought upon the suggester the suspicion of being a lunatic.
CHAPTER VII.

"Via, Pococia! when she's run and gone
And dead, and dead, then will I fetch her again
With aqua vitae, out of an old hoghead!
While there are less of wine, or drags of beer,
I'll never want her! Coin her out of cobwebs,
Dust, but I'll have her! raise wool upon egg-shells,
Sir, and make grass grow out of marrow bones,
To make her come!"  

B. Jonson.

Bearing Washington Hawkins and his fortunes, the stage-coach tore out of Swansea at a fearful gait, with horn tooting gaily and half the town admiring from doors and windows. But it did not tear any more after it got to the outskirts; it dragged along stupidly enough, then—till it came in sight of the next hamlet; and then the bugle tooted gaily again and again the vehicle went tearing by the houses. This sort of conduct marked every entry to a station, and every exit from it; and so in those days children grew up with the idea that stage-coaches always tore and always tooted; but they also grew up with the idea that pirates went into action in their Sunday clothes, carrying the black flag in one hand and pistolling people with the other, merely because they were so represented in the pictures—but these
illusions vanished when later years brought their disenchanting wisdom. They learned then that the stage-coach is but a poor, plodding, vulgar thing in the solitudes of the highway; and that the pirate is only a seedy, unfantastic "rough," when he is out of the pictures.

Toward evening, the stage-coach came thundering into Hawkeye with a perfectly triumphant ostentation—which was natural and proper, for Hawkeye was a pretty large town for interior Missouri. Washington, very stiff and tired and hungry, climbed out, and wondered how he was to proceed now. But his difficulty was quickly solved. Colonel Sellers came down the street on a run, and arrived panting for breath. He said:

"Lord bless you—I'm glad to see you, Washington—perfectly delighted to see you, my boy! I got your message. Been on the look-out for you. Heard the stage horn, but had a party I couldn't shake off—man that's got an enormous thing on hand—wants me to put some capital into it—and I tell you, my boy, I could do worse, I could do a deal worse. No, now, let that luggage alone; I'll fix that. Here, Jerry, got anything to do? All right—shoulder this plunder, and follow me. Come along, Washington. Lord, I'm glad to see you! Wife and the children are just perishing
to look at you. Bless you, they won’t know you, you’ve grown so. Folks all well, I suppose? That’s good—glad to hear that. We’re always going to run down and see them, but I’m into so many operations, and they’re not things a man feels like trusting to other people, and so somehow we keep putting it off. For-

![Attempting Corner in Specie](image)

- tunes in them! Good gracious, it’s the country to pile up wealth in! Here we are—here’s where the Sellers’s dynasty hangs out. Dump it on the doorstep, Jerry—the blackest niggro in the State, Washington, but got a good heart—
mighty likely boy, is Jerry. And now I suppose you've got to have ten cents, Jerry. That's all right—when a man works for me—when a man—in the other pocket, I reckon—when a man—why, where the mischief is that portmonnaie!—when a—well, now that's odd—Oh, now I remember, must have left it at the bank; and b'George, I've left my check-book, too—Polly says I ought to have a nurse—well, no matter. Let me have a dime, Washington, if you've got—ah, thanks. Now clear out, Jerry, your complexion has brought on the twilight half an hour ahead of time. Pretty fair joke—pretty fair. Here he is, Polly! Washington's come, children!—come now, don't eat him up—finish him in the house. Welcome, my boy, to a mansion that is proud to shelter the son of the best man that walks on the ground. Si Hawkins has been a good friend to me, and I believe I can say that whenever I've had a chance to put him into a good thing I've done it, and done it pretty cheerfully, too. I put him into that sugar speculation—what a grand thing that was, if we hadn't held on too long!"

True enough; but holding on too long had utterly ruined both of them; and the saddest part of it was, that they never had had so much money to lose before, for Sellers's sale of their mule crop that year in New Orleans had been
a great financial success. If he had kept out of sugar and gone back home content to stick to mules it would have been a happy wisdom. As it was, he managed to kill two birds with one stone—that is to say, he killed the sugar speculation by holding for high rates till he had to sell at the bottom figure, and that calamity killed the mule that laid the golden egg—which is but a figurative expression and will be so understood. Sellers had returned home cheerful but empty-handed, and the mule business lapsed into other hands. The sale of the Hawkins property by the Sheriff had followed, and the Hawkins's hearts been torn to see Uncle Dan'l and his wife pass from the auction-block into the hands of a negro-trader and depart for the remote South to be seen no more by the family. It had seemed like seeing their own flesh and blood sold into banishment.

Washington was greatly pleased with the Sellers's mansion. It was a two-story-and-a-half brick, and much more stylish than any of its neighbours. He was borne to the family sitting room in triumph by the swarm of little Sellerses, the parents following with their arms about each other's waists.

The whole family were poorly and cheaply dressed; and the clothing, although neat and clean, showed many evidences of having seen long service. The Colonel's "stovepipe" hat
was napless and shiny with much polishing, but nevertheless it had an almost convincing expression about it of having been just purchased new. The rest of his clothing was napless and shiny, too, but it had the air of being entirely satisfied with itself and blandly sorry for other people's clothes. It was growing rather dark in the house, and the evening air was chilly, too. Sellers said:

"Lay off your overcoat, Washington, and draw up to the stove and make yourself at home—just consider yourself under your own shingles, my boy—I'll have a fire going in a jiffy. Light the lamp, Polly, dear, and let's have things cheerful—just as glad to see you, Washington, as if you'd been lost a century and we'd found you again!"

By this time the Colonel was conveying a lighted match into a poor little stove. Then he propped the stove door to its place by leaning the poker against it, for the hinges had retired from business. This door framed a small square of isinglass, which now warmed up with a faint glow. Mrs. Sellers lit a cheap, showy lamp, which dissipated a good deal of the gloom, and then everybody gathered into the light and took the stove into close companionship.

The children climbed all over Sellers, fondled him, petted him, and were lavishly petted in
return. Out from this tugging, laughing, chattering disguise of legs and arms and little faces, the Colonel’s voice worked its way and his tireless tongue ran blithely on without interruption; and the purring little wife, diligent with her knitting, sat near at hand and looked happy and proud and grateful; and she listened as one who listens to oracles and gospels, and whose grateful soul is being refreshed with the bread of life. By-and-by the children quieted down to listen; clustered about their father, and resting their elbows on his legs, they hung upon his words as if he were uttering the music of the spheres.

A dreary old hair-cloth sofa against the wall; a few damaged chairs; the small table the lamp stood on; the crippled stove—these things constituted the furniture of the room. There was no carpet on the floor; on the wall were occasional square-shaped interruptions of the general tint of the plaster which betrayed that there used to be pictures in the house—but there were none now. There were no mantel ornaments, unless one might bring himself to regard as an ornament a clock which never came within fifteen strokes of striking the right time, and whose hands always hitched together at twenty-two minutes past anything and travelled in company the rest of the way home.

“Remarkable clock!” said Sellers, and got
up and wound it. "I've been offered—well, I wouldn't expect you to believe what I've been offered for that clock. Old Gov. Hager never sees me but he says, 'Come, now, Colonel, name your price—I must have that clock!' But, my goodness, I'd as soon think of selling my wife. As I was saying to —— silence in the court, now, she's begun to strike! You can't talk against her—you have to just be patient and hold up till she's said her say. Ah—well, as I was saying, when—she's beginning again! Nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, twen —— ah, that's all.—Yes, as I was saying to old Judge——go it, old girl, don't mind me.—Now how is that?—isn't that a good, spirited tone? She can wake the dead! Sleep? Why you might as well try to sleep in a thunder-factory. Now just listen to that. She'll strike a hundred and fifty, now, without stopping,—you'll see. There ain't another clock like that in Christendom."

Washington hoped that this might be true, for the din was distracting—though the family, one and all, seemed filled with joy; and the more the clock "buckled down to her work," as the Colonel expressed it, and the more insupportable the clatter became, the more enchanted they all appeared to be. When there was silence, Mrs. Sellers lifted upon Washington a face that beamed with a childlike pride, and said:
"It belonged to his grandmother."

The look and the tone were a plain call for admiring surprise, and therefore Washington said—(it was the only thing that offered itself at the moment:)

"Indeed!"

"Yes, it did, didn't it, father!" exclaimed one of the twins. "She was my great-grandmother—and George's too; wasn't she father? You never saw her, but Sis has seen her, when Sis was a baby—didn't you, Sis! Sis has seen her most a hundred times. She was awful deef—she's dead now. Ain't she, father!"

All the children chimed in now with one general Babel of information about deceased—nobody offering to read the riot act or seeming to discountenance the insurrection or disapprove of it in any way—but the head twin drowned all the turmoil and held his own against the field:

"It's our clock, now—and it's got wheels inside of it, and a thing that flutters every time she strikes—don't it, father! Great-grandmother died before hardly any of us was born—she was an Old-School Baptist and had warts all over her—you ask father if she didn't. She had an uncle once that was bald-headed and used to have fits; he wasn't our uncle, I don't know what he was to us—some kin or another I reckon—father's seen him a thousand times
—hain't you, father! We used to have a calf that et apples and just chawed up dishrags like nothing, and if you stay here you'll see lots of funerals—won't he, Sis! Did you ever see a house afire? I have! Once me and Jim Terry——"

But Sellers began to speak now, and the storm ceased. He began to tell about an enormous speculation he was thinking of embarking some capital in—a speculation which some London bankers had been over to consult with him about—and soon he was building glittering pyramids of coin, and Washington was presently growing opulent under the magic of his eloquence. But at the same time Washington was not able to ignore the cold entirely. He was nearly as close to the stove as he could get, and yet he could not persuade himself that he felt the slightest heat, notwithstanding the isinglass door was still gently and serenely glowing. He tried to get a trifle closer to the stove, and the consequence was, he tripped the supporting poker and the stove-door tumbled to the floor. And then there was a revelation—there was nothing in the stove but a lighted tallow candle!

The poor youth blushed and felt as if he must die with shame. But the Colonel was only disconcerted for a moment—he straight-way found his voice again:
"A little idea of my own, Washington—one of the greatest things in the world! You must write and tell your father about it—don't forget that, now. I have been reading up some European scientific reports—friend of mine, Count Fugier, sent them to me—sends me all sorts of things from Paris—he thinks the world of me, Fugier does. Well, I saw that the Academy of France had been testing the properties of heat, and they came to the conclusion that it was a non-conductor or something like
that, and of course its influence must necessarily be deadly in nervous organizations with excitable temperaments, especially where there is any tendency toward rheumatic affections. Bless you I saw in a moment what was the matter with us, and says I, out goes your fires! —no more slow torture and certain death for me, sir. What you want is the appearance of heat, not the heat itself—that's the idea. Well how to do it was the next thing. I just put my head to work, pegged away a couple of days, and here you are! Rheumatism? Why a man can't any more start a case of rheumatism in this house than he can shake an opinion out of a mummy! Stove with a candle in it and a transparent door—that's it—it has been the salvation of this family. Don't you fail to write your father about it, Washington. And tell him the idea is mine—I'm no more conceited than most people, I reckon, but you know it is human nature for a man to want credit for a thing like that."

Washington said with his blue lips that he would, but he said in his secret heart that he would promote no such iniquity. He tried to believe in the healthfulness of the invention, and succeeded tolerably well; but after all he could not feel that good health in a frozen body was any real improvement on the rheumatism.
CHAPTER VIII.

"When the boat is thynne, as of seruysse,
Nought replenished with grete diercrite
Of mete & drinke, good chere may then suffice
With honest talkyng——"

The Book of Curtsey.

"Mammon. Come on, sir. Now, you set your foot on shore
In Novo Orbe; here's the rich Peru:
And there within, sir, are the golden mines,
Great Solomon's Ophir!——"

B. Jonson.

The supper at Colonel Sellers's was not sumptuous, in the beginning, but it improved on acquaintance. That is to say, that what Washington regarded at first sight as mere lowly potatoes, presently became awe-inspiring agricultural productions that had been reared in some ducal garden beyond the sea, under the sacred eye of the duke himself, who had sent them to Sellers; the bread was from corn which could be grown in only one favoured locality in the earth and only a favoured few could get it; the Rio coffee, which at first seemed execrable to the taste, took to itself an improved flavour when Washington was told to drink it slowly and not hurry what should be a lingering luxury in order to be fully appreciated—it was from the private stores of a Brazilian
nobleman with an unrememberable name. The Colonel's tongue was a magician's wand that turned dried apples into figs and water into wine as easily as it could change a hovel into a palace and present poverty into imminent future riches.

Washington slept in a cold bed in a carpetless room and woke up in a palace in the morning; at least the palace lingered during the moment that he was rubbing his eyes and getting his bearings—and then it disappeared and he recognised that the Colonel's inspiring talk had been influencing his dreams. Fatigue had made him sleep late; when he entered the sitting-room he noticed that the old hair-cloth sofa was absent; when he sat down to breakfast the Colonel tossed six or seven dollars in bills on the table, counted them over, said he was a little short and must call upon his banker; then returned the bills to his wallet with the indifferent air of a man who is used to money. The breakfast was not an improvement upon the supper, but the Colonel talked it up and transformed it into an oriental feast. By-and-by, he said:

"I intend to look out for you, Washington, my boy. I hunted up a place for you yesterday, but I am not referring to that, now—that is a mere livelihood—mere bread and butter; but when I say I mean to look out for you I mean some-
thing very different. I mean to put things in your way that will make a mere livelihood a trifling thing. I’ll put you in a way to make more money than you’ll ever know what to do with. You’ll be right here where I can put my hand on you when anything turns up. I’ve got some prodigious operations on foot; but I’m keeping quiet; mum’s the word; your old hand don’t go around pow-wowing and letting everybody see his k’yards and find out his little game. But all in good time, Washington, all in good time. You’ll see. Now there’s an operation in corn that looks well. Some New York men are trying to get me to go into it—buy up all the growing crops and just boss the market when they mature—ah I tell you it’s a great thing. And it only costs a trifle; two millions or two and a half will do it. I haven’t exactly promised yet—there’s no hurry—the more indifferent I seem, you know, the more anxious those fellows will get. And then there is the hog speculation—that’s bigger still. We’ve got quiet men at work” [he was very impressive here], “mousing around, to get propositions out of all the farmers in the whole west and northwest for the hog crop, and other agents quietly getting propositions and terms out of all the manufactories—and don’t you see, if we can get all the hogs and all the slaughter houses into our hands on the dead quiet—
“Whew! it would take three ships to carry the money.—I’ve looked into the thing—calculated all the chances for and all the chances against, and though I shake my head and hesitate and keep on thinking, apparently, I’ve got my mind made up that if the thing can be done on a capital of six millions, that’s the horse to put up money on! Why, Washington—but what’s the use of talking about it—any man can see that there’s whole Atlantic oceans of cash in it, gulfs and bays thrown in. But there’s a bigger thing than that, yet—a bigger—”
"Why, Colonel, you can’t want anything bigger!" said Washington, his eyes blazing. "Oh, I wish I could go into either of those speculations—I only wish I had money—I wish I wasn’t cramped and kept down and fettered with poverty, and such prodigious chances lying right here in sight! Oh, it is a fearful thing to be poor. But don’t throw away those things—they are so splendid, and I can see how sure they are. Don’t throw them away for something still better, and, maybe, fail in it! I wouldn’t, Colonel. I would stick to these. I wish father were here, and were his old self again—oh, he never in his life had such chances as these are. Colonel, you can’t improve on these—no man can improve on them!"

A sweet, compassionate smile played about the Colonel's features, and he leaned over the table with the air of a man who "is going to show you," and do it without the least trouble:

"Why, Washington, my boy, these things are nothing. They look large—of course they look large to a novice, but to a man who has been all his life accustomed to large operations—shaw! They’re well enough to while away an idle hour with, or furnish a bit of employment that will give a trifle of idle capital a chance to earn its bread while it is waiting for something to do; but—now just listen a moment—just let me give you an idea of what we old veterans of
commerce call 'business.' Here's the Rothschild's proposition—this is between you and me, you understand——"

Washington nodded three or four times impatiently, and his glowing eyes said, "Yes, yes—hurry—I understand——"

——"for I wouldn't have it get out for a fortune. They want me to go in with them on the sly—agent was here two weeks ago about it—go in on the sly" [voice down to an impressive whisper now], "and buy up a hundred and thirteen wild cat banks in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois and Missouri—notes of these banks are at all sorts of discount now—average discount of the hundred and thirteen is forty-four per cent.—buy them all up, you see; and then all of a sudden let the cat out of the bag! Whiz! the stock of every one of those wild cats would spin up to a tremendous premium before you could turn a handspring—profit on the speculation not a dollar less than forty millions!" [An eloquent pause, while the marvellous vision settled into W.'s focus.] "Where's your hogs now? Why, my dear innocent boy, we would just sit down on the front door-steps and peddle banks like lucifer matches!"

Washington finally got his breath, and said:

"Oh, it is perfectly wonderful! Why couldn't these things have happened in father's day?"
And I—it's of no use—they simply lie before my face and mock me. There is nothing for me but to stand helpless and see other people reap the astonishing harvest."

"Never mind, Washington, don't you worry. I'll fix you. There's plenty of chances. How much money have you got?"

In the presence of so many millions, Washington could not keep from blushing when he had to confess that he had but eighteen dollars in the world.

"Well, all right—don't despair. Other people have been obliged to begin with less. I have a small idea that may develop into something for us both, all in good time. Keep your money close, and add to it. I'll make it breed. I've been experimenting (to pass away the time) on a little preparation for curing sore eyes—a kind of decoction, nine-tenths water and the other tenth drugs that don't cost more than a dollar a barrel; I'm still experimenting; there's one ingredient wanted yet to perfect the thing, and somehow I can't just manage to hit upon the thing that's necessary, and I don't dare talk with a chemist, of course. But I'm progressing, and before many weeks I wager the country will ring with the fame of Eschol Sellers's Infallible Imperial Oriental Optic Liniment and Salvation for Sore Eyes—the Medical Wonder of the Age! Small bottles fifty cents, large ones a dollar."
Average cost, five and seven cents for the two sizes. The first year sell, say, ten thousand bottles in Missouri, seven thousand in Iowa, three thousand in Arkansas, four thousand in Kentucky, six thousand in Illinois, and say twenty-five thousand in the rest of the country. Total, fifty-five thousand bottles; profit clear of all expenses, twenty thousand dollars at the very lowest calculation. All the capital needed is to manufacture the first two thousand bottles—say a hundred and fifty dollars—then the money would begin to flow in. The second year, sales would reach 200,000 bottles—clear profit, say, $75,000—and in the meantime the great factory would be building in St. Louis, to cost, say, $100,000. The third year we could easily sell 1,000,000 bottles in the United States and—"

"O, splendid!" said Washington. "Let's commence right away—let's—"

"—1,000,000 bottles in the United States—profit at least $350,000—and then it would begin to be time to turn our attention toward the real idea of the business."

"The real idea of it! Ain't $350,000 a year a pretty real—"

"Stuff! Why what an infant you are, Washington—what a guileless, short-sighted, easily-contented innocent you are, my poor little country-bred know-nothing! Would I go to all that trouble and bother for the poor crumbs"
a body might pick up in *this* country? Now do I look like a man who—does my history suggest that I am a man who deals in trifles, contents himself with the narrow horizon that hems in the common herd, sees no further than the end of his nose? Now you know that that is not me—couldn’t be me. *You* ought to know that if I throw my time and abilities into a patent medicine, it’s a patent medicine whose field of operations is the solid earth! its clients the swarming nations that inhabit it! Why, what is the republic of America for an eye-water country? Lord bless you, it is nothing but a barren highway that you’ve got to cross to get to the true eye-water market! Why, Washington, in the Oriental countries people swarm like the sands of the desert; every square mile of ground upholds its thousands upon thousands of struggling human creatures—and every separate and individual devil of them’s got the ophthalmia! It’s as natural to them as noses are—and sin. It’s born with them, it stays with them, it’s all that some of them have left when they die. Three years of introductory trade in the orient, and what will be the result? Why, our headquarters would be in Constantinople, and our headquarters in Further India! Factories and warehouses in Cairo, Ispahan, Bagdad, Damascus, Jerusalem, Yedo, Peking, Bangkok, Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta! Annual
income—well, God only knows how many millions and millions apiece!"

Washington was so dazed, so bewildered—his heart and his eyes had wandered so far away among the strange lands beyond the seas, and such avalanches of coin and currency had fluttered and jingled confusedly down before him, that he was now as one who has been whirling round and round for a time, and, stopping all at once, finds his surroundings still whirling and all objects a dancing chaos. However, little by little the Sellers’s family cooled down and crystallized into shape, and the poor room lost its glitter and resumed its poverty. Then the youth found his voice and begged Sellers to drop everything and hurry up the eye-water; and he got his eighteen dollars and tried to force it upon the Colonel—pleaded with him to take it—implored him to do it. But the Colonel would not; said he would not need the capital (in his native magnificent way he called that eighteen dollars Capital) till the eye-water was an accomplished fact. He made Washington easy in his mind, though, by promising that he would call for it just as soon as the invention was finished, and he added the glad tidings that nobody but just they two should be admitted to a share in the speculation.

When Washington left the breakfast table he
could have worshipped that man. Washington was one of that kind of people whose hopes are in the very clouds one day and in the gutter the next. He walked on air, now. The Colonel was ready to take him around and introduce him to the employment he had found for him, but Washington begged for a few moments in which to write home; with his kind of people, to ride to-day's new interest to death and put off yesterday's till another time, is nature itself. He ran up stairs and wrote glowingly, enthusiastically, to his mother about the hogs and the corn, the banks and the eye-water—and added a few inconsequential millions to each project. And he said that people little dreamed what a man Colonel Sellers was, and that the world would open its eyes when it found out. And he closed his letter thus:

"So make yourself perfectly easy, mother—in a little while you shall have everything you want, and more. I am not likely to stint you in anything, I fancy. This money will not be for me, alone, but for all of us. I want all to share alike; and there is going to be far more for each than one person can spend. Break it to father cautiously—you understand the need of that—break it to him cautiously, for he has had such cruel hard fortune, and is so stricken by it, that great good news might prostrate him more surely than even bad, for he is used to the bad but is grown sadly unaccustomed to the other. Tell Laura—tell all the children. And write to Clay about it if he is not with you yet. You may tell Clay that whatever I get he can freely share in—freely. He knows that that is true—there will be no need that I should swear to that to make him believe it. Good-bye—and mind what I say: Rest perfectly easy, one and all of you, for our troubles are nearly at an end."

Poor lad, he could not know that his mother would cry some loving, compassionate tears over
his letter and put off the family with a synopsis of its contents which conveyed a deal of love to them but not much idea of his prospects or projects. And he never dreamed that such a joyful letter could sadden her and fill her night with sighs, and troubled thoughts, and bodings of the future, instead of filling it with peace and blessing it with restful sleep.

When the letter was done, Washington and the Colonel sallied forth, and as they walked along Washington learned what he was to be. He was to be a clerk in a real estate office. Instantly the fickle youth's dreams forsook the magic eye-water and flew back to the Tennessee Land. And the gorgeous possibilities of that great domain straightway began to occupy his imagination to such a degree that he could scarcely manage to keep even enough of his attention upon the Colonel's talk to retain the general run of what he was saying. He was glad it was a real estate office—he was a made man now, sure.

The Colonel said that General Boswell was a rich man and had a good and growing business; and that Washington's work would be light and he would get forty dollars a month and be boarded and lodged in the General's family—which was as good as ten dollars more; and even better, for he could not live as well even at the "City Hotel" as he would there, and yet
the hotel charged fifteen dollars a month where a man had a good room.

General Boswell was in his office; a comfortable looking place, with plenty of outline maps hanging about the walls and in the windows, and a spectacled man was marking out another one on a long table. The office was in

the principal street. The General received Washington with a kindly but reserved politeness. Washington rather liked his looks. He was about fifty years old, dignified, well preserved and well dressed. After the Colonel took his leave, the General talked a while with Washington—his talk consisting chiefly of instructions about the clerical duties of the place. He seemed satisfied as to Washington's ability
to take care of the books, he was evidently a pretty fair theoretical book-keeper, and experience would soon harden theory into practice. By-and-by dinner-time came; and the two walked to the General's house; and now Washington noticed an instinct in himself that moved him to keep not in the General's rear, exactly, but yet not at his side—somehow the old gentleman's dignity and reserve did not inspire familiarity.
CHAPTER IX.

"Quando ti vedi per la prima volta,
Parco che mi s'apri in il paradiso,
E venissano gli angoli a un per volta
Tutti ad apporsi sopra al tuo bel viso,
Tutti ad apporsi sopra il tuo bel volto,
M'incatenasti, e non mi so'ancor sciolti."

"Yemohmi hoko, himak 8 yakni illeppot immi ha ch'i b'ho."

"Tajma kitiornaminut innëiizinmerame, iakkkene sinikbingmun illièj, annerningardjunilo siurdliminut piok."

Mos. Agi. Siurdl. 49.32.

WASHINGTON dreamed his way along the street, his fancy flitting from grain to hogs, from hogs to banks, from banks to eye-water, from eye-water to Tennessee Land, and lingering but a feverish moment upon each of these fascinations. He was conscious of but one outward thing, to wit, the General, and he was really not vividly conscious of him.

Arrived at the finest dwelling in the town, they entered it and were at home. Washington was introduced to Mrs. Boswell, and his imagination was on the point of flitting into the vapoury realms of speculation again, when a lovely girl of sixteen or seventeen came in. This vision swept Washington's mind clear of its chaos of

VOL. I.
glittering rubbish in an instant. Beauty had fascinated him before; many times he had been in love—even for weeks at a time with the same object—but his heart had never suffered so sudden and so fierce an assault as this, within his recollection.

Louise Boswell occupied his mind and drifted among his multiplication tables all the afternoon. He was constantly catching himself in a reverie—reveries made up of recalling how she looked when she first burst upon him; how her voice thrilled him when she first spoke; how charmed the very air seemed by her presence. Blissful as the afternoon was, delivered up to such a revel as this, it seemed an eternity, so impatient was he to see the girl again. Other afternoons like it followed. Washington plunged into this love affair as he plunged into everything else—upon impulse and without reflection. As the days went by it seemed plain that he was growing in favour with Louise,—not sweepingly so, but yet perceptibly, he fancied. His attentions to her troubled her father and mother a little, and they warned Louise, without stating particulars or making allusions to any special person, that a girl was sure to make a mistake who allowed herself to marry anybody but a man who could support her well.

Some instinct taught Washington that his present lack of money would be an obstruction,
though possibly not a bar, to his hopes, and
straightway his poverty became a torture to
him which cast all his former sufferings under
that head into the shade. He longed for riches
now as he had never longed for them before.

He had been once or twice to dine with
Colonel Sellers, and had been discouraged to
note that the Colonel’s bill of fare was falling off
both in quantity and quality—a sign, he feared,
that the lacking ingredient in the eye-water still
remained undiscovered—though Sellers always
explained that these changes in the family diet
had been ordered by the doctor, or suggested
by some new scientific work the Colonel had
stumbled upon. But it always turned out that
the lacking ingredient was still lacking—though
it always appeared at the same time that the
Colonel was right on its heels.

Every time the Colonel came into the real
estate office Washington’s heart bounded and his
eyes lighted with hope, but it always turned out
that the Colonel was merely on the scent of
some vast, undefined landed speculation—al-
though he was customarily able to say that he
was nearer to the all-necessary ingredient than
ever, and could almost name the hour when
success would dawn. And then Washington’s
heart would sink again, and a sigh would tell
when it touched bottom.

About this time a letter came, saying that
Judge Hawkins had been ailing for a fortnight, and was now considered to be seriously ill. It was thought best that Washington should come home. The news filled him with grief, for he loved and honoured his father; the Boswells were touched by the youth's sorrow, and even

the General unbent and said encouraging things to him.—There was balm in this; but when Louise bade him good-bye, and shook his hand and said, "Don't be cast down—it will all come out right—I know it will all come out right," it
seemed a blessed thing to be in misfortune, and the tears that welled up to his eyes were the messengers of an adoring and a grateful heart; and when the girl saw them and answering tears came into her own eyes, Washington could hardly contain the excess of happiness that poured into the cavities of his breast that were so lately stored to the roof with grief.

All the way home he nursed his woe and exalted it. He pictured himself as she must be picturing him: a noble, struggling young spirit persecuted by misfortune, but bravely and patiently waiting in the shadow of a dread calamity and preparing to meet the blow as became one who was all too used to hard fortune and the pitiless buffetings of fate. These thoughts made him weep, and weep more broken-heartedly than ever; and he wished that she could see his sufferings now.

There was nothing significant in the fact that Louise, dreamy and distraught, stood at her bedroom bureau that night, scribbling "Washington" here and there over a sheet of paper. But there was something significant in the fact that she scratched the word out every time she wrote it; examined the erasure critically to see if anybody could guess at what the word had been; then buried it under a maze of obliterating lines; and finally, as if still unsatisfied, burned the paper.
When Washington reached home, he recognized at once how serious his father's case was. The darkened room, the laboured breathing and occasional moanings of the patient, the tip-toeing of the attendants, and their whispered consultations, were full of sad meaning. For three or four nights Mrs. Hawkins and Laura had been watching by the bedside; Clay had arrived, preceding Washington by one day, and he was now added to the corps of watchers. Mr. Hawkins would have none but these three, though neighbourly assistance was offered by old friends. From this time forth three-hour watches were instituted, and day and night the watchers kept their vigils. By degrees Laura and her mother began to show wear, but neither of them would yield a minute of their tasks to Clay.—He ventured once to let the midnight hour pass without calling Laura, but he ventured no more; there was that about her rebuke when he tried to explain, that taught him that to let her sleep when she might be ministering to her father's needs, was to rob her of moments that were priceless in her eyes; he perceived that she regarded it as a privilege to watch, not a burden. And he had noticed, also, that when midnight struck, the patient turned his eyes towards the door, with an expectancy in them which presently grew into a longing but brightened into contentment as soon as the
door opened and Laura appeared. And he did not need Laura's rebuke when he heard his father say:

"Clay is good, and you are tired, poor child; but I wanted you so."

"Clay is not good, father—he did not call me. I would not have treated him so. How could you do it, Clay?"

Clay begged forgiveness and promised not to break faith again; and as he betook him to his bed, he said to himself, "It's a steadfast little soul; whoever thinks he is doing the Duchess a kindness by intimating that she is not sufficient for any undertaking she puts her hand to, makes a mistake; and if I did not know, it before, I know now that there are surer ways of pleasing her than by trying to lighten her labour when that labour consists in wearing herself out for the sake of a person she loves."

A week drifted by, and all the while the patient sank lower and lower. The night drew on that was to end all suspense. It was a wintry one. The darkness gathered, the snow was falling, the wind wailed plaintively about the house or shook it with fitful gusts. The doctor had paid his last visit and gone away with that dismal remark to the nearest friend of the family that he "believed there was nothing more that he could do"—a remark
which is always overheard by some one it is not meant for and strikes a lingering half-conscious hope dead with a withering shock; the medicine phials had been removed from the bedside and put out of sight, and all things made orderly and meet for the solemn event that was impending; the patient, with closed eyes, lay scarcely breathing; the watchers sat by and wiped the gathering damps from his forehead while the silent tears flowed down their faces; the deep hush was only interrupted by sobs from the children, grouped about the bed.

After a time,—it was toward midnight now—Mr. Hawkins roused out of a doze, looked about him and was evidently trying to speak. Instantly Laura lifted his head and in a failing voice he said, while something of the old light shone in his eyes:

"Wife—children—come nearer—nearer. The darkness grows. Let me see you all, once more."

The group closed together at the bedside, and their tears and sobs came now without restraint.

"I am leaving you in cruel poverty. I have been—so foolish—so short-sighted. But courage! A better day is—is coming. Never lose sight of the Tennessee Land! Be wary. There is wealth stored up for you there—"
wealth that is boundless! The children shall hold up their heads with the best in the land, yet. Where are the papers?—Have you got the papers safe? Show them—show them to me!"

Under his strong excitement his voice had gathered power and his last sentences were spoken with scarcely a perceptible halt or hindrance. With an effort he had raised himself almost without assistance to a sitting posture. But now the fire faded out of his eyes and he
fell back exhausted. The papers were brought and held before him, and the answering smile that flitted across his face showed that he was satisfied. He closed his eyes, and the signs of approaching dissolution multiplied rapidly. He lay almost motionless for a little while, then suddenly partly raised his head and looked about him as one who peers into a dim uncertain light. He muttered:

"Gone? No—I see you—still. It is—it is—over. But you are—safe. Safe. The Ten—"

The voice died out in a whisper; the sentence was never finished. The emaciated fingers began to pick at the coverlet, a fatal sign. After a time there were no sounds but the cries of the mourners within and the gusty turmoil of the wind without. Laura had bent down and kissed her father's lips as the spirit left the body; but she did not sob, or utter any ejaculation; her tears flowed silently. Then she closed the dead eyes, and crossed the hands upon the breast; after a season, she kissed the forehead reverently, drew the sheet up over the face, and then walked apart and sat down with the look of one who is done with life and has no further interest in its joys and sorrows, its hopes or its ambitions. Clay buried his face in the coverlet of the bed; when the other children and the mother
realized that death was indeed come at last, they threw themselves into each others’ arms and gave way to a frenzy of grief.
CHAPTER X.

Okařbiglo: "Kia pannigátit! Assarsara! umnut nevalinga-

Nōthah nuttaunes, natwontash
Kukkēftash, wonk yeuye
Wananum kummisinninnumog
Kah Koosh week pannuppu.

"La Giannetta rispose: Madama, voi dalla povertà di mio padre
togliendomi, come figliuola cresciuta m'avete, e per questo ogni vostro

ONLY two or three days had elapsed since the funeral, when something happened which
was to change the drift of Laura’s life somewhat, and influence in a greater or lesser
degree the formation of her character.

Major Lackland had once been a man of note
in the State—a man of extraordinary natural
ability and as extraordinary learning. He had
been universally trusted and honoured in his
day, but had finally fallen into misfortune;
while serving his third term in Congress, and
while upon the point of being elevated to the
Senate—which was considered the summit of
earthly aggrandizement in those days—he had
yielded to temptation, when in distress for
money wherewith to save his estate, and sold
his vote. His crime was discovered, and his
fall followed instantly. Nothing could reinstate
him in the confidence of the people, his ruin
was irretrievable—his disgrace complete. All
doors were closed against him, all men avoided
him. After years of skulking retirement and
dissipation, death had relieved him of his
troubles at last, and his funeral followed close
upon that of Mr. Hawkins. He died as he had
latterly lived—wholly alone and friendless.
He had no relatives—or if he had they did not
acknowledge him. The coroner’s jury found
certain memoranda upon his body and about
the premises which revealed a fact not sus-
pected by the villagers before—viz., that Laura
was not the child of Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins.

The gossips were soon at work. They were
but little hampered by the fact that the memo-
randa referred to betrayed nothing but the bare
circumstance that Laura’s real parents were un-
known, and stopped there. So far from being
hampered by this, the gossips seemed to gain
all the more freedom from it. They supplied
all the missing information themselves, they
filled up all the blanks. The town soon teemed
with histories of Laura’s origin and secret his-
tory, no two versions precisely alike, but all
elaborate, exhaustive, mysterious, and interesting,
and all agreeing in one vital particular—to wit,
that there was a suspicious cloud about her
birth, not to say a disreputable one.
Laura began to encounter cold looks, averted eyes, and peculiar nods and gestures which perplexed her beyond measure; but presently the pervading gossip found its way to her, and she understood them then. Her pride was stung. She was astonished, and at first incredulous. She was about to ask her mother if there was any truth in these reports, but upon second thought held her peace. She soon gathered that Major Lackland's memoranda seemed to refer to letters which had passed between himself and Judge Hawkins. She shaped her course without difficulty the day that that hint reached her.

That night she sat in her room till all was still, and then she stole into the garret and began a search. She rummaged long among boxes of musty papers relating to business matters of no interest to her, but at last she found several bundles of letters. One bundle was marked "private," and in that she found what she wanted. She selected six or eight letters from the package and began to devour their contents, heedless of the cold.

By the dates, these letters were from five to seven years old. They were all from Major Lackland to Mr. Hawkins. The substance of them was, that some one in the east had been inquiring of Major Lackland about a lost child
and its parents, and that it was conjectured that the child might be Laura.

Evidently some of the letters were missing, for the name of the inquirer was not mentioned; there was a casual reference to "this handsome featured aristocratic gentleman," as if the reader and the writer were accustomed to speak of him and knew who was meant.

In one letter the Major said he agreed with Mr. Hawkins that the inquirer seemed not altogether on the wrong track; but he also agreed that it would be best to keep quiet until more convincing developments were forthcoming.

Another letter said that "the poor soul broke completely down when he saw Laura's picture, and declared it must be she."

Still another said,

"He seems entirely alone in the world, and his heart is so wrapt up in this thing that I believe that if it proved a false hope it would kill him; I have persuaded him to wait a little while and go west when I go."

Another letter had this paragraph in it:

"He is better one day and worse the next, and is out of his mind a good deal of the time. Lately his case has developed something which is a wonder to the hired nurses, but which will not be much of a marvel to you if you have read medical philosophy much. It is this: his lost memory returns to him when he is delirious, and goes away again when he is himself—just as old Canada Joe used to talk the French patois of his boyhood in the delirium of typhus fever, though he could not do it when his mind was clear. Now this poor gentleman's memory has always broken down before he reached the explosion of the steamer; he could only remember starting up the river with his wife and child, and he had an idea that there was a race, but he was not certain; he could not name the boat he was on; there was a dead blank of a month or more that supplied not an item to his recollection. It was not for me to assist him, of course. But now in his delirium ut a/"
comes out: the names of the boats, every incident of the explosion, and likewise the details of his astonishing escape—that is, up to where, just as a yawl-boat was approaching him (he was clinging to the starboard wheel of the burning wreck at the time), a falling timber struck him on the head. But I will write out his wonderful escape in full tomorrow or next day. Of course the physicians will not let me tell him now that our Laura is indeed his child—that must come later, when his health is thoroughly restored. His case is not considered dangerous at all; he will recover presently, the doctors say. But they insist that he must travel a little when he gets well—they recommend a short sea voyage, and they say he can be persuaded to try it if we continue to keep him in ignorance and promise to let him see L. as soon as he returns.”

The letter that bore the latest date of all, contained this clause:

"It is the most unaccountable thing in the world; the mystery remains as impenetrable as ever; I have hunted high and low for him, and inquired of everybody, but in vain; all trace of him ends at that hotel in New York; I never have seen or heard of him since, up to this day; he could hardly have sailed, for his name does not appear upon the books of any shipping office in New York or Boston or Baltimore. How fortunate it seems, now, that we kept this thing to ourselves; Laura still has a father in you, and it is better for her that we drop this subject here for ever."

That was all. Random remarks here and there, being pieced together gave Laura a vague impression of a man of fine presence, about thirty-three or thirty-five years of age, with black hair and eyes, and a slight limp in his walk—it was not stated which leg was defective. And this indistinct shadow represented her father. She made an exhaustive search for the missing letters, but found none. They had probably been burned; and she doubted not that the ones she had ferreted out would have shared the same fate if Mr. Hawkins had not been a dreamer, void of method, whose mind was perhaps in a state of conflagration over
some bright new speculation when he received
them.

She sat long, with the letters in her lap, thinking—and unconsciously freezing. She
felt like a lost person who has travelled down
a long lane in good hope of escape, and, just
as the night descends, find his progress barred
by a bridgeless river whose further shore, if it
has one, is lost in the darkness. If she could
only have found these letters a month sooner!
That was her thought. But now the dead had
carried their secrets with them. A dreary
melancholy settled down upon her. An un-
defined sense of injury crept into her heart.
She grew very miserable.

She had just reached the romantic age—the
age when there is a sad sweetness, a dismal
comfort to a girl to find out that there is a
mystery connected with her birth, which no
other piece of good luck can afford. She had
more than her rightful share of practical good
sense, but still she was human; and to be
human is to have one's little modicum of
romance secreted away in one's composition.
One never ceases to make a hero of oneself
(in private) during life, but only alters the
style of his heroism from time to time as the
drifting years belittle certain gods of his ad-
miration and raise up others in their stead that
seem greater.
The recent wearing days and nights of watching, and the wasting grief that had possessed her, combined with the profound depression that naturally came with the reaction of idleness, made Laura peculiarly susceptible at this time to romantic impressions. She was a heroine now, with a mysterious father somewhere. She could not really tell whether she wanted to find him and spoil it all or not; but still all the traditions of romance pointed to the making the attempt as the usual and necessary course to follow; therefore she would some day begin the search when opportunity should offer.

Now a former thought struck her—she would speak to Mrs. Hawkins. And naturally enough Mrs. Hawkins appeared on the stage at that moment.

She said she knew all—she knew that Laura had discovered the secret that Mr. Hawkins, the elder children, Colonel Sellers and herself had kept so long and so faithfully; and she cried and said that now that troubles had begun they would never end; her daughter’s love would wean itself away from her and her heart would break. Her grief so wrought upon Laura that the girl almost forgot her own troubles for the moment in her compassion for her mother’s distress. Finally Mrs. Hawkins said:
OLD TIES UNRUPTURED.

"Speak to me, child—do not forsake me. Forget all this miserable talk. Say I am your mother!—I have loved you so long, and there is no other. I am your mother in the sight of God, and nothing shall ever take you from me!"

All barriers fell before this appeal. Laura put her arms about her mother's neck and said:

"You are my mother, and always shall be. We will be as we have always been; and neither this foolish talk nor any other thing shall part us or make us less to each other than we are this hour."

\[\text{\textendquote}\]
There was no longer any sense of separation or estrangement between them. Indeed their love seemed more perfect now than it had ever been before. By-and-by they went downstairs and sat by the fire and talked long and earnestly about Laura's history and the letters. But it transpired that Mrs. Hawkins had never known of this correspondence between her husband and Major Lackland. With his usual consideration for his wife, Mr. Hawkins had shielded her from the worry the matter would have caused her.

Laura went to bed at last with a mind that had gained largely in tranquillity and had lost correspondingly in morbid romantic exaltation. She was pensive the next day, and subdued; but that was not matter for remark, for she did not differ from the mournful friends about her in that respect. Clay and Washington were the same loving and admiring brothers now that they had always been. The great secret was new to some of the younger children, but their love suffered no change under the wonderful revelation.

It is barely possible that things might have presently settled down into their old rut and the mystery have lost the bulk of its romantic sublimity in Laura's eyes, if the village gossips could have quieted down. But they could not quiet down and they did not. Day after day
they called at the house, ostensibly upon visits of consolation, and they pumped away at the mother and the children without seeming to know that their questionings were in bad taste. They meant no harm—they only wanted to know. Villagers always want to know.

The family fought shy of the questionings, and of course that was high testimony—"If the Duchess was respectably born, why didn't they come out and prove it?—why did they stick to that poor thin story about picking her up out of a steamboat explosion?"

Under this ceaseless persecution, Laura's morbid self-communing was renewed. At night the day's contribution of detraction, innuendo, and malicious conjecture would be canvassed in her mind, and then she would drift into a course of thinking. As her thoughts ran on, the indignant tears would spring to her eyes, and she would spit out fierce little ejaculations at intervals. But finally she would grow calmer and say some comforting disdainful thing—something like this:

"But who are they?—Animals! What are their opinions to me? Let them talk—I will not stoop to be affected by it. I could hate—. Nonsense—nobody I care for or in any way respect is changed toward me, I fancy."

She may have supposed she was thinking of
many individuals, but it was not so—she was thinking of only one. And her heart warmed somewhat, too, the while. One day a friend overheard a conversation like this:—and naturally came and told her all about it:

"Ned, they say you don’t go there any more. How is that?"

"Well, I don’t; but I tell you it’s not because I don’t want to, and it’s not because I think it is any matter who her father was or who he wasn’t, either; it’s only on account of this talk, talk, talk. I think she is a fine girl every way, and so would you if you knew her as well as I do; but you know how it is when a girl once gets talked about—it’s all up with her—the world won’t ever let her alone, after that."

The only comment Laura made upon this revelation, was:

"Then it appears that if this trouble had not occurred I could have had the happiness of Mr. Ned Thurston’s serious attentions. He is well favoured in person, and well liked, too, I believe, and comes of one of the first families of the village. He is prosperous, too, I hear; has been a doctor a year, now, and has had two patients—no, three, I think; yes, it was three. I attended their funerals. Well, other people have hoped and been disappointed; I am not alone in that. I wish you could stay to dinner,
Maria—we are going to have sausages; and besides, I wanted to talk to you about Hawkeye and make you promise to come and see us when we are settled there."

But Maria could not stay. She had come to mingle romantic tears with Laura's over the lover's defection, and had found herself dealing with a heart that could not rise to an appreciation of affliction because its interest was all centred in sausages.

But as soon as Maria was gone, Laura stamped her expressive foot and said:

"The coward! Are all books lies? I thought he would fly to the front, and be brave and noble, and stand up for me against all the world, and defy my enemies, and wither these gossips with his scorn! Poor crawling thing, let him go. I do begin to despise this world!"

She lapsed into thought. Presently she said:

"If the time ever comes, and I get a chance, Oh, I'll——"

She could not find a word that was strong enough, perhaps. By-and-by she said:

"Well, I am glad of it—I'm glad of it. I never cared anything for him anyway!"

And then, with small consistency, she cried a little, and patted her foot more indignantly than ever.
CHAPTER XI.

Two months had gone by and the Hawkins family were domiciled in Hawkeye. Washington was at work in the real estate office again, and was alternately in paradise or the other place, just as it happened that Louise was gracious to him or seemingly indifferent—because indifference or pre-occupation could mean nothing else than that she was thinking of some other young person. Colonel Sellers had asked him several times to dine with him, when he first returned to Hawkeye, but Washington, for no particular reason, had not accepted. No particular reason except one, which he preferred to keep to himself—viz., that he could not bear to be away from Louise. It occurred to him, now, that the Colonel had not invited him lately—could he be offended? He resolved to go that very day and give the Colonel a pleasant surprise. It was a good idea; especially as Louise had absented herself from breakfast
that morning, and torn his heart; he would tear hers now, and let her see how it felt.

The Sellers family were just starting to dinner when Washington burst upon them with his surprise. For an instant the Colonel looked nonplussed, and just a bit uncomfortable; and Mrs. Sellers looked actually distressed; but the next moment the head of the house was himself again, and exclaimed:

"All right, my boy, all right—always glad to see you—always glad to hear your voice and take you by the hand. Don't wait for special invitations—that's all nonsense among friends. Just come whenever you can, and come as often as you can—the oftener the better. You can't please us any better than that, Washington; the little woman will tell you so herself. We don't pretend to style. Plain folks, you know—plain folks. Just a plain family dinner, but such as it is, our friends are always welcome, I reckon you know that yourself, Washington. Run along, children, run along; Lafayette,* stand off the cat's tail, child, can't you see what you're doing?—Come, come,

* In those old days the average man called his children after his most revered literary and historical idols; consequently there was hardly a family, at least in the West, but had a Washington in it—and also a Lafayette, a Franklin, and six or eight sounding names from Byron, Scott, and the Bible, if the offspring held out. To visit such a family, was to find oneself confronted by a congress made up of representatives of the imperial myths and the majestic dead of all the ages. There was something thrilling about it, to a stranger, not to say awe-inspiring.
come, Roderick Dhu, it isn’t nice for little boys
to hang on to young gentlemen’s coat tails—but
never mind him, Washington, he’s full of spirits,
and don’t mean any harm. Children will be
children, you know. Take the chair next to
Mrs. Sellers, Washington—tut, tut, Marie Antoi-
nette, let your brother have the fork if he wants
it, you are bigger than he is.”

Washington contemplated the banquet, and
wondered if he were in his right mind. Was
this the plain family dinner? And was it all
present? It was soon apparent that this was
indeed the dinner: it was all on the table: it
consisted of abundance of clear, fresh water, and
a basin of raw turnips—nothing more.

Washington stole a glance at Mrs. Sellers’
face, and would have given the world, the
next moment, if he could have spared her that.
The poor woman’s face was crimson, and the
tears stood in her eyes. Washington did not
know what to do. He wished he had never
come there and spied out this cruel poverty,
and brought pain to that poor little lady’s heart
and shame to her cheek; but he was there, and
there was no escape. Colonel Sellers hitched
back his coat-sleeves airily from his wrists as
who should say, “Now for solid enjoyment!”
seized a fork, flourished it, and began to har-
poon turnips and deposit them in the plates
before him:
"Let me help you, Washington—Lafayette pass this plate to Washington—ah, well, well, my boy, things are looking pretty bright now, I tell you. Speculation—my! the whole atmosphere's full of money. I wouldn't take three fortunes for one little operation I've got on hand now—have anything from the casters? No? Well, you're right, you're right. Some people like mustard with turnips, but—now there was Baron Poniatowski—Lord, but that man did know how to live!—true Russian, you know, Russian to
the backbone; I say to my wife, give me a Russian every time for a table comrade. The Baron used to say, 'Take mustard, Sellers, try the mustard,—a man can't know what turnips are in perfection without mustard,' but I always said, 'No, Baron, I'm a plain man, and I want my food plain—none of your embellishments for Eschol Sellers—no made dishes for me! And it's the best way—high living kills more than it cures in this world, you can rest assured of that. Yes, indeed, Washington, I've got one little operation on hand that—take some more water—help yourself, won't you?—help yourself, there's plenty of it. You'll find it pretty good, I guess. How does that fruit strike you?'

Washington said he did not know that he had ever tasted better. He did not add that he detested turnips even when they were cooked—loathed them in their natural state. No, he kept this to himself, and praised the turnips to the peril of his soul.

"I thought you'd like them. Examine them—examine them—they'll bear it. See how perfectly firm and juicy they are—they can't start any like them in this part of the country, I can tell you. These are from New Jersey—I imported them myself. They cost like sin, too; but, Lord bless me, I go in for having the best of a thing, even if it does cost a little more—it's the best economy in the long run. These are
the Early Malcolm—it's a turnip that can't be produced except in just one orchard, and the supply never is up to the demand. Take some more water, Washington—you can't drink too much water with fruit—all the doctors say that. The plague can't come where this article is, my boy!"

"Plague! What plague?"

"What plague, indeed! Why the Asiatic plague that nearly depopulated London a couple of centuries ago."

"But how does that concern us? There is no plague here, I reckon."

"Sh! I've let it out! Well, never mind—just keep it to yourself. Perhaps I oughtn't said anything, but it's bound to come out sooner or later, so what is the odds? Old McDowells wouldn't like me to—to—bother it all, I'll just tell the whole thing and let it go. You see, I've been down to St. Louis, and I happened to run across old Dr. McDowells—thinks the world of me, does the doctor. He's a man that keeps himself to himself, and well he may, for he knows that he's got a reputation that covers the whole earth—he won't condescend to open himself out to many people; but, Lord bless you, he and I are just like brothers; he won't let me go to a hotel when I'm in the city—says I'm the only man that's company to him, and I don't know but there's some truth in it, too,
because, although I never like to glorify myself and make a great to-do over what I am or what I can do or what I know, I don’t mind saying here among friends that I am better read up in most sciences, maybe, than the general run of professional men in these days. Well, the other day he let me into a little secret, strictly on the quiet, about this matter of the plague.

“You see it’s booming right along in our direction—follows the Gulf Stream, you know, just as all those epidemics do—and within three months it will be just Waltzing through this land like a whirlwind! And whoever it touches can make his will and contract for the funeral. Well, you can’t cure it, you know, but you can prevent it. How? Turnips! That’s it! Turnips and water! Nothing like it in the world, old McDowells says, just fill yourself up two or three times a day, and you can snap your fingers at the plague. Sh!’—keep mum, but just you confine yourself to that diet and you’re all right. I wouldn’t have old McDowells know that I told about it for anything—he never would speak to me again. Take some more water, Washington—the more water you drink the better. Here, let me give you some more of the turnips. No, no, no, now, I insist. There, now. Absorb those. They’re mighty sustaining—brimful of nutriment—all the medical
books say so. Just eat from four to seven good-sized turnips at a meal, and drink from a pint and a half to a quart of water, and then just sit around a couple of hours and let them ferment. You'll feel like a fighting cock next day."

Fifteen or twenty minutes later the Colonel's tongue was still chattering away—he had piled up several future fortunes out of several incipient "operations" which he had blundered into within the past week, and was now soaring along through some brilliant expectations born of late promising experiments upon the lacking ingredient of the eye-water. And at such a time Washington ought to have been a wrapt and enthusiastic listener, but he was not, for two matters disturbed his mind and distracted his attention. One was, that he discovered, to his confusion and shame, that in allowing himself to be helped a second time to the turnips, he had robbed those hungry children. He had not needed the dreadful "fruit," and had not wanted it; and when he saw the pathetic sorrow in their faces when they asked for more and there was no more to give them, he hated himself for his stupidity and pitied the famishing young things with all his heart. The other matter that disturbed him was the dire inflation that had begun in his stomach. It grew and grew, it became more and more insupportable.
Evidently the turnips were "fermenting." He forced himself to sit still as long as he could, but his anguish conquered him at last.

He rose in the midst of the Colonel's talk, and excused himself on the plea of a previous engagement. The Colonel followed him to the door, promising over and over again that he would use his influence to get some of the Early Malcolms for him, and insisting that he should not be such a stranger, but come and take pot-luck with him every chance he got. Washington was glad enough to get away and feel free again. He immediately bent his steps toward home.

In bed he passed an hour that threatened to turn his hair grey, and then a blessed calm settled down upon him that filled his heart with gratitude. Weak and languid, he made shift to turn himself about and seek rest and sleep; and as his soul hovered upon the brink of unconsciousness, he heaved a long, deep sigh, and said to himself that in his heart he had cursed the Colonel's preventive of rheumatism before, and now let the plague come if it must—he was done with preventives; if ever any man beguiled him with turnips and water again, let him die the death.

If he dreamed at all that night, no gossiping spirit disturbed his visions to whisper in his ear of certain matters just then in bud in the East
more than a thousand miles away that after the lapse of a few years would develop influences which would profoundly affect the fate and fortunes of the Hawkins family.
CHAPTER XII.

"Oh, it's easy enough to make a fortune," Henry said.
"It seems to be easier than it is, I begin to think," replied Philip.
"Well, why don't you go into something? You'll never dig it out of the Astor Library."

If there be any place and time in the world where and when it seems easy to "go into something" it is in Broadway on a spring morning, when one is walking city-ward, and has before him the long lines of palace-shops with an occasional spire seen through the soft haze that lies over the lower town, and hears the roar and hum of its multitudinous traffic.

To the young American, here or elsewhere, the paths to fortune are innumerable and all open; there is invitation in the air and success in all his wide horizon. He is embarrassed which to choose, and is not unlikely to waste years in dallying with his chances, before giving himself to the serious tug and strain of a single object. He has no traditions to bind him or
FOOTLIGHTS AND MUSIC.

guide him, and his impulse is to break away from the occupation his father has followed, and make a new way for himself.

Philip Sterling used to say that if he should seriously set himself for ten years to any one of the dozen projects that were in his brain, he felt that he could be a rich man. He wanted to be rich, he had a sincere desire for a fortune, but for some unaccountable reason he hesitated about addressing himself to the narrow work of getting it. He never walked Broadway, a part of its tide of abundant shifting life, without feeling something of the flush of wealth, and unconsciously taking the elastic step of one well-to-do in this prosperous world.

Especially at night in the crowded theatre—Philip was too young to remember the old Chamber's Street box, where the serious Burton led his hilarious and pagan crew—in the intervals of the screaming comedy, when the orchestra scraped and grunted and tooted its dissolute tunes, the world seemed full of opportunities to Philip, and his heart exulted with a conscious ability to take any of its prizes he chose to pluck.

Perhaps it was the swimming ease of the acting on the stage, where virtue had its reward in three easy acts, perhaps it was the excessive light of the house, or the music, or the buzz of the excited talk between acts, perhaps it was
With what pleasure everything, but for some reason while Polonius was at the theatre he had no words whatever on his mind and his ready answer was.

Dignified descent in pursuit and unadorned with the usual sentiment and high and mighty dialogue! Well there are always two sides, enough for the speakingdistrict! Do we not all like the nuns in Here who is sneaking round the right entrance, in vain to steal the pretty wife of his rich and tyrannical neighbour?
from the paste-board cottage at the left entrance? and when he advances down to the foot-lights and defiantly informs the audience that, "he who lays his hand on a woman except in the way of kindness," do we not all applaud so as to drown the rest of the sentence?

Philip never was fortunate enough to hear what would become of a man who should lay his hand on a woman with the exception named; but he learned afterwards that the woman who lays her hand on a man, without any exception whatsoever, is always acquitted by the jury.

The fact was, though Philip Sterling did not know it, that he wanted several other things quite as much as he wanted wealth. The modest fellow would have liked fame thrust upon him for some worthy achievement; it might be for a book, or for the skilful management of some great newspaper, or for some daring expedition like that of Lieut. Strain or Dr. Kane. He was unable to decide exactly what it should be. Sometimes he thought he would like to stand in a conspicuous pulpit and humbly preach the gospel of repentance; and it even crossed his mind that it would be noble to give himself to a missionary life to some benighted region, where the date-palm grows, and the nightingale's voice is in tune, and the bul-bul sings on the off nights. If he were good
enough he would attach himself to that company of young men in the Theological Seminary, who were seeing New York life in preparation for the ministry.

Philip was a New England boy and had graduated at Yale; he had not carried off with him all the learning of that venerable institution, but he knew some things that were not in the regular course of study. A very good use of the English language and considerable knowledge of its literature was one of them; he could sing a song very well, not in time to be sure, but with enthusiasm; he could make a magnetic speech at a moment’s notice in the class room, the debating society, or upon any fence or dry-goods box that was convenient; he could lift himself by one arm, and do the giant swing in the gymnasium; he could strike out from his left shoulder; he could handle an oar like a professional and pull stroke in a winning race. Philip had a good appetite, a sunny temper, and a clear hearty laugh. He had brown hair, hazel eyes set wide apart, a broad but not high forehead, and a fresh winning face. He was six feet high, with broad shoulders, long legs and a swinging gait; one of those loose-jointed, capable fellows, who saunter into the world with a free air and usually make a stir in whatever company they enter.
AN EXCELLENT LAW CLERK.

After he left college Philip took the advice of friends and read law. Law seemed to him well enough as a science, but he never could discover a practical case where it appeared to him worth while to go to law, and all the clients who stopped with this new clerk in the ante-room of the law office where he was writing, Philip invariably advised to settle—no matter how, but settle—greatly to the disgust of his employer, who knew that justice between man and man could only be attained by the recognised processes, with the attendant fees. Besides, Philip hated the copying of pleadings, and he was certain that a life of "whereases" and "aforesaid" and whipping the devil round the stump, would be intolerable.

His pen therefore, and whereas, and not as aforesaid, strayed off into other scribbling. In an unfortunate hour, he had two or three papers accepted by first-class magazines, at three dollars the printed page, and, behold, his vocation was open to him. He would make his mark in literature. Life has no moment so sweet, as that in which a young man believes himself called into the immortal ranks of the masters of literature. It is such a noble ambition, that it is a pity it has usually such a shallow foundation.

At the time of this history, Philip had gone to New York for a career. With his talent he
managed the _Atlas_—about taking the situation.

"Take it of course," says Gringo, "take anything that offers, why not?"

"But they want me to make it an opposition paper."

"Well, make it that. That party is going to succeed, it's going to elect the next president."

"I don't believe it," said Philip, stoutly, "it's wrong in principle, and it ought not to succeed, but I don't see how I can go for a thing I don't believe in."

"O, very well," said Gringo, turning away with a shade of contempt, "you'll find if you are going into literature and newspaper work that you can't afford a conscience like that."

But Philip did afford it, and he wrote, thanking his friends, and declining because he said the political scheme would fail, and ought to fail. And he went back to his books and to his waiting for an opening large enough for his dignified entrance into the literary world.

It was in this time of rather impatient waiting that Philip was one morning walking down Broadway with Henry Brierly. He frequently accompanied Henry part way down town to what the latter called his office in Broad Street, to which he went, or pretended to go, with regularity every day. It was evident to the most casual acquaintance that he was a man of
affairs, and that his time was engrossed in the largest sort of operations, about which there was a mysterious air. His liability to be suddenly summoned to Washington, or Boston, or Montreal, or even to Liverpool, was always imminent. He never was so summoned, but none of his acquaintances would have been surprised to hear any day that he had gone to Panama or Peoria, or to hear from him that he had bought the Bank of Commerce.

The two were intimate at that time,—they had been classmates—and saw a great deal of each other. Indeed, they lived together in Ninth Street, in a boarding-house there, which had the honour of lodging and partially feeding several other young fellows of like kidney, who have since gone their several ways into fame or into obscurity.

It was during the morning walk to which reference has been made that Henry Brierly suddenly said, "Philip, how would you like to go to St. Jo?"

"I think I should like it of all things," replied Philip, with some hesitation, "but what for?"

"Oh, it's a big operation. We are going, a lot of us, railroad men, engineers, contractors. You know my uncle is a great railroad man. I've no doubt I can get you a chance to go if you'll go."

"But in what capacity would I go?"
"Well, I'm going as an engineer. You can go as one."

"I don't know an engine from a coal cart."

"Field engineer, civil engineer. You can begin by carrying a rod, and putting down the figures. It's easy enough. I'll show you about that. We'll get Trautwine and some of those books."

"Yes, but what is it for, what is it all about?"

"Why, don't you see? We lay out a line, spot the good land, enter it up, know where the stations are to be, spot them, buy lots; there's heaps of money in it. We wouldn't engineer long."

"When do you go?" was Philip's next question, after some moments of silence.

"To-morrow. Is that too soon?"

"No, it's not too soon. I've been ready to go anywhere for six months. The fact is, Henry, that I'm about tired of trying to force myself into things, and am quite willing to try floating with the stream for a while, and see where I will land. This seems like a providential call; it's sudden enough."

The two young men, who were by this time full of the adventure, went down to the Wall Street office of Henry's uncle and had a talk with that wily operator. The uncle knew Philip very well, and was pleased with his frank enthusiasm, and willing enough to give him a
To his uncle he said that he had made an arrangement with some New York capitalists to go to Missouri, in a land and railroad operation, which would at least give him a knowledge of the world and not unlikely offer him a business opening. He knew his uncle would be glad to hear that he had at last turned his thoughts to a practical matter.

It was to Ruth Bolton that Philip wrote last. He might never see her again; he went to seek his fortune. He well knew the perils of the frontier, the savage state of society, the lurking Indians and the dangers of fever. But there was no real danger to a person who took care of himself. Might he write to her often and tell her of his life. If he returned with a fortune, perhaps and perhaps. If he was unsuccessful, or if he never returned—perhaps it would be as well. No time or distance, however, would ever lessen his interest in her. He would say good-night, but not good-bye.

In the soft beginning of a Spring morning, long before New York had breakfasted, while yet the air of expectation hung about the wharves of the metropolis, our young adventurers made their way to the Jersey City railway station of the Erie road, to begin the long, swinging, crooked journey, over what a writer of a former day called a causeway of cracked rails and cows, to the West.
CHAPTER XIII.

"What ever to say he tooke in his entente,
his langage was so fayer & pertynante,
yt semeth vnto manys hering
not only the worde, but veryly the thyng."
Caxton's Book of Curtesye.

In the party of which our travellers found themselves members, was Duff Brown, the great railroad contractor, and subsequently a well-known member of congress; a bluff, jovial, Bost'n man, thick-set, close shaven, with a heavy jaw and a low forehead—a very pleasant man if you were not in his way. He had government contracts also, custom houses and dry docks, from Portland to New Orleans, and managed to get out of congress, in appropriations, about weight for weight of gold for the stone furnished.

Associated with him, and also of this party, was Rodney Schaick, a sleek New York broker, a man as prominent in the church as in the stock exchange, dainty in his dress, smooth of speech, the necessary complement of Duff Brown in any enterprise that needed assurance and adroitness.
PRECAUTIONS AGAINST WATER POISONING. 159

It would be difficult to find a plenasanter travelling party, one that shook off more readily the artificial restraints of Puritanic strictness, and took the world with good-natured allowance. Money was plenty for every attainable luxury, and there seemed to be no doubt that its supply would continue, and that fortunes were about to be made without a great deal of toil. Even Philip soon caught the prevailing spirit; Harry did not need any inoculation, he always talked in six figures. It was as natural for the dear boy to be rich as it is for most people to be poor.

The elders of the party were not long in discovering the fact, which almost all travellers to the west soon find out, that the water was poor. It must have been by a lucky premonition of this that they all had brandy flasks with which to qualify the water of the country; and it was no doubt from an uneasy feeling of the danger of being poisoned that they kept experimenting, mixing a little of the dangerous and changing fluid, as they passed along, with the contents of the flasks, thus saving their lives hour by hour. Philip learned afterwards that temperance and the strict observance of Sunday and a certain gravity of deportment are geographical habits, which people do not usually carry with them away from home.

Our travellers stopped in Chicago long enough
to see that they could make their fortunes there in two weeks' time, but it did not seem worth while; the west was more attractive; the further one went the wider the opportunities opened. They took railroad to Alton, and the steamboat from there to St. Louis, for the change, and to have a glimpse of the river.

"Isn't this jolly?" cried Henry, dancing out of the barber's room, and coming down the deck with a one, two, three step, shaven, curled, and perfumed after his usual exquisite fashion.

"What's jolly?" asked Philip, looking out upon the dreary and monotonous waste through which the shaking steamboat was coughing its way.

"Why, the whole thing; it's immense, I can tell you. I wouldn't give that to be guaranteed a hundred thousand cold cash in a year's time."

"Where's Mr. Brown?"

"He is in the saloon, playing poker with Schaick, and that long-haired party with the striped trousers, who scrambled aboard when the stage plank was half hauled in, and the big Delegate to Congress from out west."

"That's a fine-looking fellow, that delegate, with his glossy black whiskers; looks like a Washington man; I shouldn't think he'd be at poker."

"Oh, it's only five cent ante, just to make it interesting, the Delegate said."
A GAME OF POKER MADE INTERESTING. 

"But I shouldn't think a representative in Congress would play poker any way in a public steamboat."

"Nonsense! you've got to pass the time. I tried a hand myself, but those old fellows are too many for me. The Delegate knows all the points. I'd bet a hundred dollars he will ante his way right into the United States Senate when his territory comes in. He's got the cheek for it."

"He has the grave and thoughtful manner of
expectoration of a public man, for one thing," added Philip.

"Harry," said Philip, after a pause, "what have you got on those big boots for; do you expect to wade ashore?"

"I'm breaking 'em in."

The fact was Harry had got himself up in what he thought a proper costume for a new country, and was in appearance a sort of compromise between a dandy of Broadway and a backwoodsman. Harry, with blue eyes, fresh complexion, silken whiskers, and curly chestnut hair, was as handsome as a fashion plate. He wore this morning a soft hat, a short cutaway coat, an open vest displaying immaculate linen, a leathern belt round his waist, and top-boots of soft leather, well polished, that came above his knees, and required a string attached to his belt to keep them up. The light-hearted fellow gloried in these shining encasements of his well-shaped legs, and told Philip that they were a perfect protection against prairie rattlesnakes, which never strike above the knee.

The landscape still wore an almost wintry appearance when our travellers left Chicago. It was a genial spring day when they landed at St. Louis; the birds were singing, the blossoms of peach-trees in city garden plots made the air sweet, and in the roar and tumult on the long river levée they found an excitement that
accorded with their own hopeful anticipations.

The party went to the Southern Hotel, where the great Duff Brown was very well known, and indeed was a man of so much importance that even the office clerk was respectful to him. He might have respected in him also a certain vulgar swagger and insolence of money, which the clerk greatly admired.

The young fellows liked the house and liked the city; it seemed to them a mighty free and hospitable town. Coming from the East they were struck with many peculiarities. Everybody smoked in the streets, for one thing, they noticed; everybody "took a drink" in an open manner whenever he wished to do so or was asked, as if the habit needed no concealment or apology. In the evening when they walked about they found people sitting on the door-steps of their dwellings, in a manner not usual in a northern city; in front of some of the hotels and saloons the side walks were filled with chairs and benches—Paris fashion, said Harry—upon which people lounged in these warm spring evenings, smoking, always smoking; and the clink of glasses and of billiard-balls was in the air. It was delightful.

Harry at once found on landing that his backwoods custom would not be needed in St. Louis, and that, in fact, he had need of all the re-
sources of his wardrobe to keep even with the young swells of the town. But this did not much matter, for Harry was always superior to his clothes. As they were likely to be detained some time in the city, Harry told Philip that he was going to improve his time. And he did. It was an encouragement to any industrious man to see this young fellow rise, carefully dress himself, eat his breakfast deliberately, smoke his cigar tranquilly, and then repair to his room, to what he called his work, with a grave and occupied manner, but with perfect cheerfulness.

Harry would take off his coat, remove his cravat, roll up his shirt-sleeves, give his curly hair the right touch before the glass, get out his book on engineering, his boxes of instruments, his drawing-paper, his profile paper, open the book of logarithms, mix his India ink, sharpen his pencils, light a cigar, and sit down at the table to "lay out a line," with the most grave notion that he was mastering the details of engineering. He would spend half a day in these preparations without ever working out a problem or having the faintest conception of the use of lines or logarithms. And when he had finished, he had the most cheerful confidence that he had done a good day's work.

It made no difference, however, whether Harry was in his room in a hotel or in a tent, Philip soon found, he was just the same. In
camp he would get himself up in the most elaborate toilet at his command, polish his long boots to the top, lay out his work before him, and spend an hour or longer, if anybody was looking at him, humming airs, knitting his brows, and “working” at engineering; and if a crowd of gaping rustics were looking on all the while it was perfectly satisfactory to him.

“You see,” he says to Philip one morning at the hotel when he was thus engaged, “I want to get the theory of this thing, so that I can have a check on the engineers.”

“I thought you were going to be an engineer yourself,” queried Philip.

“Not many times, if the court knows herself. There’s better game. Brown and Schaick have, or will have, the control for the whole line of the Salt Lick Pacific Extension, forty thousand dollars a mile over the prairie, with extra for hard-pan—and it’ll be pretty much all hard-pan I can tell you; besides every alternate section of land on this line. There’s millions in the job. I’m to have the sub-contract for the first fifty miles, and you can bet it’s a soft thing.”

“I’ll tell you what you do, Philip,” continued Harry, in a burst of generosity, “if I don’t get you into my contract, you’ll be with the engineers, and you just stick a stake at the first ground marked for a depot, buy the land of
the farmer before he knows where the dépôt will be, and we'll turn a hundred or so on that. I'll advance the money for the payments, and you can sell the lots. Schaick is going to let me have ten thousand just for a flyer in such operations.

"But that's a good deal of money."

"Wait till you are used to handling money. I didn't come out here for a bagatelle. My uncle wanted me to stay East and go in on the Mobile custom-house, work up the Washington end of it; he said there was a fortune in it for a smart young fellow, but I preferred to take the chances out here. Did I tell you I had an offer from Bobbett and Fanshaw to go into their office as confidential clerk on a salary of ten thousand?"

"Why didn't you take it?" asked Philip, to whom a salary of two thousand would have seemed wealth, before he started on this journey.

"Take it? I'd rather operate on my own hook," said Harry, in his most airy manner.

A few evenings after their arrival at the Southern, Philip and Harry made the acquaintance of a very agreeable gentleman, whom they had frequently seen before about the hotel corridors, and passed a casual word with. He had the air of a man of business, and was evidently a person of importance.
A VALUABLE ACQUAINTANCE MADE. 167

The precipitating of this casual intercourse into the more substantial form of an acquaintanceship was the work of the gentleman himself, and occurred in this wise. Meeting the two friends in the lobby one evening, he asked them to give him the time, and added:

THE PERSON OF IMPORTANCE.

"Excuse me, gentlemen—strangers in St. Louis? Ah, yes—yes. From the East, perhaps? Ah, just so, just so. Eastern born myself—Virginia. Sellers is my name—Eschol Sellers. Ah—by the way—New York, did you say? That reminds me; just met some gentle-
men from your State a week or two ago—very prominent gentlemen—in public life they are; you must know them, without doubt. Let me see—let me see. Curious those names have escaped me. I know they were from your State, because I remember afterward my old friend Governor Shackleby said to me—fine man, is the Governor—one of the finest men our country has produced—said he, ‘Colonel, how did you like those New York gentlemen?—not many such men in the world, Colonel Sellers,’ said the Governor—yes, it was New York he said—I remember it distinctly. I can’t recall those names, somehow. But no matter. Stopping here, gentlemen—stopping at the Southern?”

In shaping their reply in their minds, the title “Mr.” had a place in it; but when their turn had arrived to speak, the title “Colonel” came from their lips instead.

They said yes, they were abiding at the Southern, and thought it a very good house,

“Yes, yes, the Southern is fair. I myself go to the Planter’s, old, aristocratic house. We Southern gentlemen don’t change our ways, you know. I always make it my home there when I run down from Hawkeye—my plantation is in Hawkeye, a little up in the country. You should know the Planter’s.”

Philip and Harry both said they should like to see a hotel that had been so famous in its
day—a cheerful hostelrie, Philip said it must have been where duels were fought there across the dining-room table.

"You may believe it, sir, an uncommonly pleasant lodging. Shall we walk?"

And the three strolled along the streets, the Colonel talking all the way in the most liberal and friendly manner, and with a frank open-heartedness that inspired confidence.

"Yes, born East myself, raised all along, know the West—a great country, gentlemen. The place for a young fellow of spirit to pick up a fortune, simply pick it up, it's lying round loose here. Not a day that I don't put aside an opportunity, too busy to look into it. Management of my own property takes my time. First visit? Looking for an opening?"

"Yes, looking around," replied Harry.

"Ah, here we are. You'd rather sit here in front than go to my apartments? So had I. An opening, eh?"

The Colonel's eyes twinkled. "Ah, just so. The whole country is opening up, all we want is capital to develop it. Slap down the rails and bring the land into market. The richest land on God Almighty's footstool is lying right out there. If I had my capital free I could plant it for millions."

"I suppose your capital is largely in your plantation?" asked Philip.
offered did not suit him; he motioned the box away, and asked for some particular Havannas, those in separate wrappers.

"I always smoke this sort, gentlemen; they are a little more expensive, but you'll learn, in this climate, that you'd better not economise on poor cigars."

"Not that."

Having imparted this valuable piece of information, the Colonel lighted the fragrant cigar with satisfaction, and then carelessly put his fingers into his right vest pocket. That movement being without result, with a shade of disappointment on his face, he felt in his left vest pocket. Not finding anything there, he looked up with a serious and annoyed air, anxiously
slapped his right pantaloons pocket, and then his left, and exclaimed,

"By George, that's annoying. By George, that's mortifying. Never had anything of that kind happen to me before. I've left my pocket-book. Hold! Here's a bill, after all. No, thunder, it's a receipt."

"Allow me," said Philip, seeing how seriously the Colonel was annoyed, and taking out his purse.

The Colonel protested he couldn't think of it, and muttered something to the bar-keeper about "hanging it up," but the vendor of exhilaration made no sign, and Philip had the privilege of paying the costly shot; Colonel Sellers profusely apologising and claiming the right "next time, next time."

As soon as Eschol Sellers had bade his friends good-night and seen them depart, he did not retire to apartments in the Planter's, but took his way to his lodgings with a friend in a distant part of the city.
CHAPTER XIV.

Pulchra duæ inter sita stat Philadelphia rivos;
Inter quos duo sunt millia longa via.
Delawar his major, Sculki minor ille vocatur;
Indis et Suevis notas uterque diu.
Hic plateas mensur spatiiis delineat aquis,
Et domui recto est ordine juncta domus.

T. Makin.

Vergin erat fra lor di già matura
Verginità, d’altri pensieri e regi,
D’alta belta; ma sua belta non cura,
O tanta sol, quant’ onestà seu fregi. Tasso.

The letter that Philip Sterling wrote to Ruth Bolton, on the evening of setting out to seek his fortune in the west, found that young lady in her own father’s house in Philadelphia. It was one of the pleasantest of the many charming suburban houses in that hospitable city, which is territorially one of the largest cities in the world, and only prevented from becoming the convenient metropolis of the country by the intrusive strip of Camden and Amboy sand which shuts it off from the Atlantic ocean. It is a city of steady thrift, the arms of which might well be the deliberate but delicious terrapin that imparts such a royal flavour to its feasts.

It was a spring morning, and perhaps it was
the influence of it that made Ruth a little restless, satisfied neither with the out-doors nor the in-doors. Her sisters had gone to the city to show some country visitors Independence Hall, Girard College, and Fairmount Water Works and Park, four objects which Americans cannot die peacefully, even in Naples, without having seen. But Ruth confessed that she was tired of them, and also of the Mint. She was tired of other things. She tried this morning an air or two upon the piano, sang a simple song in a sweet but slightly metallic voice, and then, seating herself by the open window, read Philip's letter.

Was she thinking about Philip, as she gazed across the fresh lawn over the tree tops to the Chelton Hills, or of that world which his entrance into her tradition-bound life had been one of the means of opening to her? Whatever she thought, she was not idly musing, as one might see by the expression of her face. After a time she took up a book; it was a medical work, and to all appearance about as interesting to a girl of eighteen as the statutes at large; but her face was soon aglow over its pages, and she was so absorbed in it that she did not notice the entrance of her mother at the open door.

"Ruth!"

"Well, mother," said the young student, looking up, with a shade of impatience.
"I wanted to talk with thee a little about thy plans."

"Mother, thee knows I couldn't stand it at Westfield; the school stifled me, it's a place to turn young people into dried fruit."

"I know," said Margaret Bolton, with a half-anxious smile, "thee chafes against all the ways of Friends; but what will thee do? Why is thee so discontented?"

"If I must say it, mother, I want to go away, and get out of this dead level."

With a look half of pain and half of pity, her mother answered, "I am sure thee is little interfered with; thee dresses as thee will, and goes where thee pleases, to any church thee likes, and thee has music. I had a visit yesterday from the society's committee by way of discipline, because we have a piano in the house, which is against the rules."

"I hope thee told the elders that father and I are responsible for the piano, and that, much as thee loves music, thee is never in the room when it is played. Fortunately father is already out of meeting, so they can't discipline him. I heard father tell cousin Abner that he was whipped so often for whistling when he was a boy, that he was determined to have what compensation he could get now."

"Thy ways greatly try me, Ruth, and all thy relations. I desire thy happiness first of all, but
apt to do at night. It was always a time of confidences.

"Thee has another letter from young Sterling," said Eli Bolton.

"Yes. Philip has gone to the far west."

"How far?"

"He doesn't say, but it's on the frontier, and on the map everything beyond it is marked 'Indians' and 'desert,' and looks as desolate as a Wednesday Meeting."

"Humph. It was time for him to do something. Is he going to start a daily newspaper among the Kick-a-poos?"

"Father, thee's unjust to Philip. He's going into business."

"What sort of business can a young man go into without capital?"

"He doesn't say exactly what it is," said Ruth, a little dubiously. "But it's something about land and railroads, and thee knows, father, that fortunes are made nobody knows exactly how, in a new country."

"I should think so, you innocent puss, and in an old one too. But Philip is honest, and he has talent enough, if he will stop scribbling, to make his way. But thee may as well take care of theeself, Ruth, and not go dawdling along with a young man in his adventures, until thy own mind is a little more settled what thee wants."
This excellent advice did not seem to impress Ruth greatly, for she was looking away with that abstraction of vision which often came into her grey eyes, and at length she exclaimed, with a sort of impatience,

"I wish I could go west, or south, or somewhere. What a box women are put into, measured for it, and put in young; if we go anywhere it's in a box, veiled and pinioned and shut in by disabilities. Father, I should like to break things and get loose."

What a sweet-voiced little innocent it was, to be sure.

"Thee will no doubt break things enough when thy time comes, child; women always have; but what does thee want now that thee hasn't?"

"I want to be something, to make myself something, to do something. Why should I rust, and be stupid, and sit in inaction because I am a girl? What would happen to me if thee should lose thy property and die? What one useful thing could I do for a living, for the support of mother and the children? And if I had a fortune, would thee want me to lead a useless life?"

"Has thy mother led a useless life?"

"Somewhat that depends upon whether her children amount to anything," retorted the sharp little disputant. "What's the good,
thee is starting out on a dangerous path. Is thy father willing thee should go away to a school of the world’s people?"

"I have not asked him," Ruth replied, with a look that might imply that she was one of those determined little bodies who first made up her own mind, and then compelled others to make up theirs in accordance with hers.

"And when thee has got the education thee wants, and lost all relish for the society of thy
friends and the ways of thy ancestors, what then?"

Ruth turned square round to her mother, and with an impassive face and not the slightest change of tone, said:

"Mother, I'm going to study medicine!"

Margaret Bolton almost lost for a moment her habitual placidity.

"Thee, study medicine! A slight, frail girl like thee, study medicine! Does thee think thee could stand it six months? And the lectures, and the dissecting rooms, has thee thought of the dissecting rooms?"

"Mother," said Ruth, calmly, "I have thought it all over. I know I can go through the whole, clinics, dissecting room, and all. Does thee think I lack nerve? What is there to fear in a person dead more than in a person living?"

"But thy health and strength, child; thee can never stand the severe application. And, besides, suppose thee does learn medicine?"

"I will practise it."

"Here?"

"Here."

"Where thee and thy family are known?"

"If I can get patients."

"I hope at least, Ruth, thee will let us know when thee opens an office," said her mother, with an approach to sarcasm that she rarely indulged in, as she rose and left the room.
Ruth sat quite still for a time, with face intent and flushed. It was out now. She had begun her open battle.

The sightseers returned in high spirits from the city. Was there any building in Greece to compare with Girard College? was there ever such a magnificent pile of stone devised for the shelter of poor orphans? Think of the stone shingles of the roof eight inches thick! Ruth asked the enthusiasts if they would like to live in such a sounding mausoleum, with its great halls and echoing rooms, and no comfortable place in it for the accommodation of anybody? If they were orphans, would they like to be brought up in a Grecian temple?

And then there was Broad Street? Wasn't it the broadest and the longest street in the world? There certainly was no end to it, and even Ruth was Philadelphian enough to believe that a street ought not to have any end, or architectural point upon which the weary eye could rest.

But neither St. Girard, nor Broad Street, neither wonders of the Mint nor the glories of the Hall where the ghosts of our fathers sit always signing the Declaration, impressed the visitors so much as the splendours of the Chestnut Street windows, and the bargains on Eighth Street. The truth is, that the country cousins had come to town to attend the Yearly Meet-
ing, and the amount of shopping that preceded that religious event was scarcely exceeded by the preparations for the opera in more worldly circles.

"Is thee going to the Yearly Meeting, Ruth?" asked one of the girls.

"I have nothing to wear," replied that demure person. "If thee wants to see new bonnets, orthodox to a shade and conformed to the letter of the true form, thee must go to the Arch Street Meeting. Any departure from either colour or shape would be instantly taken note of. It has occupied mother a long time, to find at the shops the exact shade for her new bonnet. Oh, thee must go by all means. But thee won't see there a sweeter woman than mother."

"And thee won't go?"

"Why should I? I've been again and again. If I go to Meeting at all I like best to sit in the quiet old house in Germantown, where the windows are all open and I can see the trees, and hear the stir of the leaves. It's such a crush at the Yearly Meeting at Arch Street, and then there's the row of sleek-looking young men who line the curbstone and stare at us as we come out. No, I don't feel at home there."

That evening Ruth and her father sat late by the drawing-room fire, as they were quite
first a more general culture, and fall in with thy wish that she should see more of the world at some large school."

There really seemed to be nothing else to be done, and Margaret consented at length without approving. And it was agreed that Ruth, in order to spare her fatigue, should take lodgings with friends near the college, and make a trial in the pursuit of that science to which we all owe our lives, and sometimes as by a miracle of escape.

That day Mr. Bolton brought home a stranger to dinner, Mr. Bigler of the great firm of Pennybacker, Bigler & Small, railroad contractors. He was always bringing home somebody, who had a scheme; to build a road, or open a mine, or plant a swamp with cane to grow paper-stock, or found a hospital, or invest in a patent shadbone separator, or start a college somewhere on the frontier, contiguous to a land speculation.

The Bolton house was a sort of hotel for this kind of people. They were always coming. Ruth had known them from childhood, and she used to say that her father attracted them as naturally as a sugar hogshead does flies. Ruth had an idea that a large portion of the world lived by getting the rest of the world into schemes. Mr. Bolton never could say "no" to any of them, not even, said Ruth again, to the
society for stamping oyster-shells with Scripture texts before they were sold at retail.

Mr. Bilger's plan this time, about which he talked loudly, with his mouth full, all dinner time, was the building of the Tunkhannock, Rattlesnake, and Youngwoman's-town railroad, which would not only be a great highway to the west, but would open to market inexhaustible coal-fields, and untold millions of lumber. The plan of operations was very simple.

"We'll buy the lands," explained he, "on long time, backed by the notes of good men; and then mortgage them for money enough to get the road well on. Then get the towns on the line to issue their bonds for stock, and sell their bonds for enough to complete the road, and partly stock it, especially if we mortgage each section as we complete it. We can then sell the rest of the stock on the prospect of the business of the road through an improved country, and also sell the lands at a big advance, on the strength of the road. All we want," continued Mr. Bigler, in his frank manner, "is a few thousand dollars to start the surveys, and arrange things in the legislature. There is some parties will have to be seen, who might make us trouble."

"It will take a good deal of money to start the enterprise," remarked Mr. Bolton, who
"Why, yes, Miss, of course, in a great enterprise for the benefit of the community there will little things occur, which, which—and, of course, the poor ought to be looked to: I tell my wife, that the poor must be looked to; if you can tell who are poor—there's so many impostors. And, then, there's so many poor in the legislature to
be looked after,” said the contractor, with a sort of a chuckle, “isn’t that so, Mr. Bolton?”

Eli Bolton replied that he never had much to do with the legislature.

“Yes,” continued this public benefactor, “an uncommon poor lot this year, uncommon. Consequently an expensive lot. The fact is, Mr. Bolton, that the price is raised so high on United States Senator now, that it affects the whole market; you can’t get any public improvement through on reasonable terms. Simony is what I call it, Simony,” repeated Mr. Bigler, as if he had said a good thing.

Mr. Bigler went on and gave some very interesting details of the intimate connection between railroads and politics, and thoroughly entertained himself all dinner time, and as much disgusted Ruth, who asked no more questions, and her father who replied in monosyllables.

“I wish,” said Ruth to her father, after the guest had gone, “that you wouldn’t bring home any more such horrid men. Do all men who wear big diamond breast-pins flourish their knives at table, and use bad grammar and cheat?”

“Oh, child, thee mustn’t be too observing. Mr. Bigler is one of the most important men in the State; nobody has more influence at Harrisburg. I don’t like him any more than
thee does, but I'd better lend him a little money than to have his ill-will."

"Father, I think thee'd better have his ill-will than his company. Is it true that he gave money to help build the pretty little church of St. James the Less, and that he is one of the vestrymen?"

"Yes. He is not such a bad fellow. One of the men in Third Street asked him the other day, whether his was a high church or a low church? Bigler said he didn't know; he'd been in it once, and he could touch the ceiling in the side aisle with his hand."

"I think he's just horrid," was Ruth's final summary of him, after the manner of the swift judgment of women, with no consideration of the extenuating circumstances. Mr. Bigler had no idea that he had not made a good impression on the whole family; he certainly intended to be agreeable. |Margaret agreed with her daughter, and though she never said anything to such people, she was grateful to Ruth for sticking at least one pin into him.

Such was the serenity of the Bolton household that a stranger in it would never have suspected there was any opposition to Ruth's going to the Medical School. And she went quietly to take her residence in town, and began her attendance of the lectures, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. She did not
heed, if she heard, the busy and wondering gossip of relations and acquaintances, gossip that has no less currency among the Friends than elsewhere because it is whispered slyly and creeps about in an undertone.

Ruth was absorbed, and for the first time in her life thoroughly happy; happy in the freedom of her life, and in the keen enjoyment of the investigation that broadened its field day by day. She was in high spirits when she came home to spend First Days; the house was full of her gaiety and her merry laugh, and the children wished that Ruth would never go away again. But her mother noticed, with a little anxiety, the sometimes flushed face, and the sign of an eager spirit in the kindling eyes, and, as well, the serious air of determination and endurance in her face at unguarded moments.

The college was a small one, and it sustained itself not without difficulty in this city, which is so conservative, and is yet the origin of so many radical movements. There were not more than a dozen attendants on the lectures all together, so that the enterprise had the air of an experiment, and the fascination of pioneering for those engaged in it. There was one woman physician driving about town in her carriage, attacking the most violent diseases in all quarters with persistent courage, like a modern Bellona in her war chariot, who was popularly supposed to
gather in fees to the amount of ten to twenty thousand dollars a year. Perhaps some of these students looked forward to the near day when they would support such a practice and a husband besides, but it is unknown that any of them ever went further than practice in hospitals and in their own nurseries, and it is feared that some of them were quite as ready as their sisters, in emergencies, to "call a man."

If Ruth had any exaggerated expectations of a professional life, she kept them to herself, and was known to her fellows of the class simply as a cheerful, sincere student, eager in her investigations, and never impatient at anything, except an insinuation that women had not as much mental capacity for science as men.

"They really say," said one young Quaker sprig to another youth of his age, "that Ruth Bolton is really going to be a saw-bones, attends lectures, cuts up bodies, and all that. She's cool enough for a surgeon, anyway." He spoke feelingly, for he had very likely been weighed in Ruth's calm eyes sometime, and thoroughly scared by the little laugh that accompanied a puzzling reply to one of his conversational nothings. Such young gentlemen, at this time, did not come very distinctly into Ruth's horizon, except as amusing circumstances.

About the details of her student life, Ruth said very little to her friends, but they had
reason to know, afterwards, that it required all her nerve and the almost complete exhaustion of her physical strength to carry her through. She began her anatomical practice upon detached portions of the human frame, which were brought into the demonstrating room—dissecting the eye, the ear, and a small tangle of muscles and nerves—an occupation which had not much more savour of death in it than the analysis of a portion of a plant out of which the life went when it was plucked up by the roots.
Custom inures the most sensitive persons to that which is at first most repellant; and in the late war we saw the most delicate women, who could not at home endure the sight of blood, become so used to scenes of carnage, that they walked the hospitals and the margins of battle-fields, amid the poor remnants of torn humanity, with as perfect self-possession as if they were strolling in a flower garden.

It happened that Ruth was one evening deep in a line of investigation which she could not finish or understand without demonstration, and so eager was she in it, that it seemed as if she could not wait till the next day. She, therefore, persuaded a fellow student, who was reading that evening with her, to go down to the dissecting-room of the college, and ascertain what they wanted to know by an hour's work there. Perhaps, also, Ruth wanted to test her own nerve, and to see whether the power of association was stronger in her mind than her own will.

The janitor of the shabby and comfortless old building admitted the girls, not without suspicion, and gave them lighted candles, which they would need, without other remark than "there's a new one, Miss," as the girls went up the broad stairs.

They climbed to the third story, and paused before a door, which they unlocked, and which
admitted them into a long apartment, with a row of windows on one side and one at the end. The room was without light, save from the stars and the candles the girls carried, which revealed to them dimly two long and several small tables, a few benches and chairs, a couple of skeletons hanging on the wall, a sink, and cloth-covered heaps of something upon the tables here and there.

The windows were open, and the cool night wind came in strong enough to flutter a white covering now and then, and to shake the loose casements. But all the sweet odours of the night could not take from the room a faint suggestion of mortality.

The young ladies paused a moment. The room itself was familiar enough, but night makes almost any chamber eerie, and especially such a room of detention as this where the mortal parts of the unburied might almost be supposed to be visited, on the sighing night winds, by the wandering spirits of their late tenants.

Opposite and at some distance across the roofs of lower buildings, the girls saw a tall edifice, the long upper story of which seemed to be a dancing-hall. The windows of that were also open, and through them they heard the scream of the jiggered and tortured violin, and the pump, pump of the oboe, and saw the moving shapes of men and women in
quick transition, and heard the prompter’s drawl.

"I wonder," said Ruth, "what the girls dancing there would think if they saw us, or knew that there was such a room as this so near them."

She did not speak very loud, and, perhaps unconsciously, the girls drew near to each other as they approached the long table in the centre of the room. A straight object lay upon it, covered with a sheet. This was doubtless "the new one" of which the janitor spoke. Ruth advanced, and with a not very steady hand lifted the white covering from the upper part of the figure and turned it down. Both the girls started. It was a negro. The black face seemed to defy the pallor of death, and asserted an ugly life-likeness that was frightful. Ruth was as pale as the white sheet, and her comrade whispered, "Come away, Ruth, it is awful."

Perhaps it was the wavering light of the candles, perhaps it was only the agony from a death of pain, but the repulsive black face seemed to wear a scowl that said, "Haven't you yet done with the outcast, persecuted black man, but you must now haul him from his grave, and send even your women to dismember his body?"

Who is this dead man, one of thousands who
died yesterday, and will be dust anon, to protest that science shall not turn his worthless carcass to some account?

Ruth could have had no such thought, for with a pity in her sweet face, that for the moment overcame fear and disgust, she reverently replaced the covering, and went away to her own table, as her companion did to hers. And there for an hour they worked at their several problems, without speaking, but not without an awe of the presence there, "the new one," and not without an awful sense of life itself, as they heard the pulsations of the music and the light laughter from the dancing-hall.

When, at length, they went away, and locked the dreadful room behind them, and came out into the street, where people were passing, they, for the first time, realized, in the relief they felt, what a nervous strain they had been under.
CHAPTER XVI.

While Ruth was thus absorbed in her new occupation, and the spring was wearing away, Philip and his friends were still detained at the Southern Hotel. The great contractors had concluded their business with the state and railroad officials and with the lesser contractors, and departed for the East. But the serious illness of one of the engineers kept Philip and Henry in the city and occupied in alternate watchings.

Philip wrote to Ruth of the new acquaintance they had made, Colonel Sellers, an enthusiastic and hospitable gentleman, very much interested in the development of the country, and in their success. They had not had an opportunity to visit at his place "up in the country" yet, but the Colonel often dined with them, and in confidence, confided to them his projects, and seemed to take a great liking to them, especially to his friend Harry. It was
true that he never seemed to have ready money, but he was engaged in very large operations.

The correspondence was not very brisk between these two young persons, so differently occupied; for though Philip wrote long letters, he got brief ones in reply, full of sharp little observations however, such as one concerning Colonel Sellers, namely, that such men dined at their house every week.

Ruth's proposed occupation astonished Philip immensely, but while he argued it and discussed it, he did not dare hint to her his fear that it would interfere with his most cherished plans. He too sincerely respected Ruth's judgment to make any protest, however, and he would have defended her course against the world.

This enforced waiting at St. Louis was very irksome to Philip. His money was running away, for one thing, and he longed to get into the field, and see for himself what chance there was for a fortune or even an occupation. The contractors had given the young men leave to join the engineer corps as soon as they could, but otherwise had made no provision for them, and in fact had left them with only the most indefinite expectations of something large in the future.

Harry was entirely happy, in his circum-
stances. He very soon knew everybody, from the governor of the state down to the waiters at the hotel. He had the Wall Street slang at his tongue's end; he always talked like a capitalist, and entered with enthusiasm into all the land and railway schemes with which the air was thick.

Colonel Sellers and Harry talked together by the hour and by the day. Harry informed his new friend that he was going out with the engineer corps of the Salt Lick Pacific Extension, but that wasn't his real business.

"I'm to have, with another party," said Harry, "a big contract in the road, as soon as it is let; and, meantime, I'm with the engineers to spy out the best land and the depot sites."

"It's everything," suggested the Colonel, "in knowing where to invest. I've known people throw away their money because they were too consequential to take Sellers' advice. Others, again, have made their pile on taking it. I've looked over the ground, I've been studying it for twenty years. You can't put your finger on a spot in the map of Missouri that I don't know as if I'd made it. When you want to place anything," continued the Colonel, confidently, "just let Eschol Sellers know. That's all."

"Oh, I haven't got much in ready money I
can lay my hands on now, but if a fellow could do anything with fifteen or twenty thousand dollars, as a beginning, I shall draw for that when I see the right opening."

"Well, that's something, that's something, fifteen or twenty thousand dollars, say twenty—as an advance," said the Colonel reflectively, as if turning over his mind for a project that could be entered on with such a trifling sum.

"I'll tell you what it is—but only to you Mr. Brierly, only to you, mind; I've got a little project that I've been keeping. It looks small, looks small on paper, but it's got a big future. What should you say, sir, to a city, built up like the rod of Aladdin had touched it, built up in two years, where now you wouldn't expect it any more than you'd expect a lighthouse on the top of Pilot Knob? and you could own the land! It can be done, sir. It can be done!"

The Colonel hitched up his chair close to Harry, laid his hand on his knee, and, first looking about him, said in a low voice, "The Salt Lick Pacific Extension is going to run through Stone's Landing! The Almighty never laid out a cleaner piece of level prairie for a city; and it's the natural centre of all that region of hemp and tobacco."

"What makes you think the road will go
there? It's twenty miles, on the map, off the straight line of the road?"

"You can't tell what is the straight line till the engineers have been over it. Between us, I have talked with Jeff Thompson, the division engineer. He understands the wants of Stone's Landing, and the claims of the inhabitants—who are to be there. Jeff says that a railroad is for the accommodation of the people and not for the benefit of gophers; and if he don't run this to Stone's Landing he'll be damned! You ought to know Jeff; he's one of the most enthusiastic engineers in this western country, and one of the best fellows that ever looked through the bottom of a glass."

The recommendation was not undeserved. There was nothing that Jeff wouldn't do, to accommodate a friend, from sharing his last dollar with him, to winging him in a duel. When he understood from Colonel Sellers how the land lay at Stone's Landing, he cordially shook hands with that gentleman, asked him to drink, and fairly roared out, "Why, God bless my soul, Colonel, a word from one Virginia gentleman to another is 'nuff ced.' There's Stone's Landing been waiting for a railroad more than four thousand years, and damme if she Shan't have it."

Philip had not so much faith as Harry in Stone's Landing, when the latter opened the
project to him, but Harry talked about it as if he already owned that incipient city.

Harry thoroughly believed in all his projects and inventions, and lived day by day in their golden atmosphere. Everybody liked the young fellow, for how could they help liking one of such engaging manners and large fortune? The waiters at the hotel would do more for him than for any other guest, and he made a great many acquaintances among the people of St. Louis, who liked his sensible and liberal views about the development of the western country, and about St. Louis. He said it ought to be the national capital. Harry made partial arrangements with several of the merchants for furnishing supplies for his contract on the Salt Lick Pacific Extension; consulted the maps with the engineers, and went over the profiles with the contractors, figuring out estimates for bids. He was exceedingly busy with those things when he was not at the bedside of his sick acquaintance, or arranging the details of his speculation with Colonel Sellers.

Meantime the days went along and the weeks, and the money in Harry's pocket got lower and lower. He was just as liberal with what he had as before, indeed it was his nature to be free with his money or with that of others, and he could lend or spend a dollar with an air
that made it seem like ten. At length, at the end of one week, when his hotel bill was presented, Harry found not a cent in his pocket to meet it. He carelessly remarked to the landlord that he was not that day in funds, but he would draw on New York, and he sat down and wrote to the contractors in that city a glowing letter about the prospects of the road, and asked them to advance a hundred or two, until he got at work. No reply came. He wrote again, in an unoffended business-like tone, suggesting that he had better draw at three days. A short answer came to this, simply saying that money was very tight in Wall Street just then, and that he had better join the engineer corps as soon as he could.

But the bill had to be paid, and Harry took it to Philip, and asked him if he thought he hadn’t better draw on his uncle. Philip had not much faith in Harry’s power of “drawing,” and told him that he would pay the bill himself. Whereupon Harry dismissed the matter then and thereafter from his thoughts, and, like a light-hearted good fellow as he was, gave himself no more trouble about his board-bills. Philip paid them, swollen as they were with a monstrous list of extras; but he seriously counted the diminishing bulk of his own hoard, which was all the money he had in the world. Had he not tacitly agreed to share with Harry
to the last in this adventure, and would not the generous fellow divide with him if he, Philip, were in want and Harry had anything?

The fever at length got tired of tormenting the stout young engineer, who lay sick at the hotel, and left him, very thin, a little sallow but

an "acclimated man." Everybody said he was "acclimated" now, and said it cheerfully. What it is to be acclimated to western fevers no two persons exactly agree. Some say it is a sort of vaccination that renders death by some malignant type of fever less probable. Some
regard it as a sort of initiation, like that into the Odd Fellows, which renders one liable to his regular dues thereafter. Others consider it merely the acquisition of a habit of taking every morning before breakfast a dose of bitters, composed of whiskey and assafoetida, out of the acclamation jug.

Jeff Thompson afterwards told Philip that he once asked Senator Atchison, then acting Vice-President of the United States, about the possibility of acclimation; he thought the opinion of the second officer of our great government would be valuable on this point. They were sitting together on a bench before a country tavern, in the free converse permitted by our democratic habits.

"I suppose, Senator, that you have become acclimated to this country?"

"Well," said the Vice-President, crossing his legs, pulling his wide-awake down over his forehead, causing a passing chicken to hop quickly one side by the accuracy of his aim, and speaking with senatorial deliberation, "I think I have. I've been here twenty-five years, and dash, dash my dash to dash, if I haven't entertained twenty-five separate and distinct earthquakes, one a year. The niggro is the only person who can stand the fever and ague of this region."

The convalescence of the engineer was the
signal for breaking up quarters at St. Louis, and
the young fortune-hunters started up the river
in good spirits. It was only the second time
either of them had been upon a Mississippi
steamboat, and nearly everything they saw had
the charm of novelty. Colonel Sellers was at
the landing to bid them good-bye.

"I shall send you up that basket of cham-
pagne by the next boat; no, no; no thanks;
you'll find it not bad in camp," he cried out as
the plank was hauled in. "My respects to
Thompson. Tell him to sight for Stone's. Let me know, Mr. Brierly, when you are ready to locate; I'll come over from Hawkeye. Goodbye."

And the last the young fellows saw of the Colonel, he was waving his hat, and beaming prosperity and good luck.

The voyage was delightful, and was not long enough to become monotonous. The travellers scarcely had time indeed to get accustomed to the splendours of the great saloon where the tables were spread for meals, a marvel of paint and gilding, its ceiling hung with fancifully cut tissue-paper of many colours, festooned and arranged in endless patterns. The whole was more beautiful than a barber's shop. The printed bill of fare at dinner was longer and more varied, the proprietors justly boasted, than that of any hotel in New York. It must have been the work of an author of talent and imagination, and it surely was not his fault if the dinner itself was to a certain extent a delusion, and if the guests got something that tasted pretty much the same whatever dish they ordered; nor was it his fault if a general flavour of rose in all the dessert dishes suggested that they had passed through the barber's saloon on their way from the kitchen.

The travellers landed at a little settlement on the left bank, and at once took horses for
the camp in the interior, carrying their clothes and blankets strapped behind the saddles. Harry was dressed as we have seen him once before, and his long and shining boots attracted not a little the attention of the few persons they met on the road, and especially of the bright-faced wenches who lightly stepped along the highway, picturesque in their coloured kerchiefs, carrying light baskets, or riding upon mules and balancing before them a heavier load.

Harry sang fragments of operas and talked about their fortune. Philip even was excited by the sense of freedom and adventure, and the beauty of the landscape. The prairie, with its new grass and unending acres of brilliant flowers—chiefly the innumerable varieties of phlox—bore the look of years of cultivation, and the occasional open groves of white oaks gave it a park-like appearance. It was hardly unreasonable to expect to see at any moment, the gables and square windows of an Elizabethan mansion in one of the well-kept groves.

Towards sunset of the third day, when the young gentlemen thought they ought to be near the town of Magnolia, near which they had been directed to find the engineers’ camp, they descried a log house and drew up before it to inquire the way. Half the building was store, and half was dwelling-house. At the door of
the latter stood a negress with a bright turban on her head, to whom Philip called,

"Can you tell me, auntie, how far it is to the town of Magnolia?"

"Why, bress you chile," laughed the woman, "you's dere now."

It was true. This log house was the compactly built town, and all creation was its suburbs. The engineers' camp was only two or three miles distant.

"You's boun' to find it," directed auntie, "if you don't keah nuffin 'bout de road, and go fo' de sundown."

A brisk gallop brought the riders in sight of the twinkling light of the camp, just as the stars came out. It lay in a little hollow, where a small stream ran through a sparse grove of young white oaks. A half-dozen tents were pitched under the trees, horses and oxen were corralled at a little distance, and a group of men sat on camp stools or lay on blankets about a bright fire. The twang of a banjo became audible as they drew nearer, and they saw a couple of negroes, from some neighbouring plantation, "breaking down" a juba in approved style, amid the "hi, hi's" of the spectators.

Mr. Jeff Thompson, for it was the camp of this redoubtable engineer, gave the travellers a hearty welcome, offered them ground room in his own tent, ordered supper, and set out a
small jug, a drop from which he declared necessary on account of the chill of the evening.

"I never saw an Eastern man," said Jeff, "who knew how to drink from a jug with one hand. It's as easy as lying. So." He grasped the handle with the right hand, threw the jug back upon his arm, and applied his lips to the nozzle. It was an act as graceful as it was simple. "Besides," said Mr. Thompson, setting it down, "it puts every man on his honour as to quantity."
Early to turn in was the rule of the camp, and by nine o'clock everybody was under his blanket, except Jeff himself, who worked awhile at his table over his field-book, and then arose, stepped outside the tent-door and sang, in a strong and not unmelodious tenor, the Star Spangled Banner from beginning to end. It proved to be his nightly practice to let off the unexpended steam of his conversational powers, in the words of this stirring song.

It was a long time before Philip got to sleep.
He saw the firelight, he saw the clear stars through the tree-tops, he heard the gurgle of the stream, the stamp of the horses, the occasional barking of the dog which followed the cook's waggon, the hooting of an owl; and when these failed he saw Jeff, standing on a battlement, mid the rocket's red glare, and heard him sing, "Oh, say, can you see?" It was the first time he had ever slept on the ground.
CHAPTER XVII.

"We have view'd it,
And measur'd it within all, by the scale:
The richest tract of land, love, in the kingdom!
There will be made seventeen or eighteen millions,
Or more, as't may be handled!"—The Devil is an Ass.

Nobody dressed more like an engineer than Mr. Henry Brierly. The completeness of his appointments was the envy of the corps, and the gay fellow himself was the admiration of the camp servants, axemen, teamsters, and cooks.

"I reckon you didn't git them boots no-when's this side o' Sent Louis?" queried the tall Missouri youth who acted as commissary's assistant.

"No, New York."

"Yas, I've heern o' New York," continued the butternut lad, attentively studying each item of Harry's dress, and endeavouring to cover his design with interesting conversation. "'N there's Massachusetts."

"It's not far off."

"I've heern Massachusetts was a ——— of a place. Les' see, what state's Massachusetts in?"
“Massachusetts,” kindly replied Harry, “is in the state of Boston.”

“Abolish’n, wan’t it? They must a cost right smart,” referring to the boots.

Harry shouldered his rod and went to the field, tramped over the prairie by day, and figured up results at night, with the utmost cheerfulness and industry, and plotted the line on the profile paper, without, however, the least idea of engineering, practical or theoretical. Perhaps there was not a great deal of scientific knowledge in the entire corps, nor was very much needed. They were making what is called a preliminary survey, and the chief object of a preliminary survey was to get up an excitement about the road, to interest every town in that part of the state in it, under the belief that the road would run through it, and to get the aid of every planter upon the prospect that a station would be on his land.

Mr. Jeff Thompson was the most popular engineer who could be found for this work. He did not bother himself much about details or practicabilities of location, but ran merrily along, sighting from the top of one divide to the top of another, and striking “plumb” every town site and big plantation within twenty or thirty miles of his route. In his own language, he “just went booming.”

This course gave Harry an opportunity, as he
said, to learn the practical details of engineering; and it gave Philip a chance to see the country, and to judge for himself what prospect of a fortune it offered. Both he and Harry got the "refusal" of more than one plantation as they went along, and wrote urgent letters to their eastern correspondents, upon the beauty of the land, and the certainty that it would quadruple in value as soon as the road was finally located. It seemed strange to them that capitalists did not flock out there and secure this land.

They had not been in the field over two weeks when Harry wrote to his friend Colonel Sellers that he'd better be on the move, for the line was certain to go to Stone's Landing. Any one who looked at the line on the map, as it was laid down from day to day, would have been uncertain which way it was going; but Jeff had declared that in his judgment the only practicable route from the point they then stood on was to follow the divide to Stone's Landing, and it was generally understood that that town would be the next one hit.

"We'll make it, boys," said the chief, "if we have to go in a balloon."

And make it they did. In less than a week, this indomitable engineer had carried his moving caravan over slues and branches, across bottoms and along divides, and pitched his tents in
the very heart of the city of Stone's Landing.

"Well, I'll be dashed," was heard the cheery voice of Mr. Thompson, as he stepped outside the tent door at sunrise next morning. "If this don't get me. I say, you, Grayson, get out your sighting iron and see if you can find old Sellers' town. Blame me if we wouldn't have run plumb by it if twilight had held on a little longer. Oh! Sterling, Brierly, get up and see the city. There's a steamboat just coming round the bend." And Jeff roared with
laughter. "The mayor'll be round here to breakfast."

The fellows turned out of the tents, rubbing their eyes, and stared about them. They were camped on the second bench of the narrow bottom of a crooked, sluggish stream, that was some five rods wide in the present good stage of water. Before them were a dozen log cabins, with stick and mud chimneys, irregularly disposed on either side of a not very well defined road, which did not seem to know its own mind exactly, and, after straggling through the town, wandered off over the rolling prairie in an uncertain way, as if it had started for nowhere and was quite likely to reach its destination. Just as it left the town, however, it was cheered and assisted by a guide-board, upon which was the legend "10 Mils to Hawkeye."

The road had never been made except by the travel over it, and at this season—the rainy June—it was a way of ruts cut in the black soil, and of fathomless mud-holes. In the principal street of the city, it had received more attention; for hogs, great and small, rooted about in it and wallowed in it, turning the street into a liquid quagmire which could only be crossed on pieces of plank thrown here and there.

About the chief cabin, which was the store and grocery of this mart of trade, the mud was more liquid than elsewhere, and the rude plat-
form in front of it and the dry-goods boxes mounted thereon were places of refuge for all the loafers of the place. Down by the stream was a dilapidated building which served for a hemp warehouse, and a shaky wharf extended out from it into the water. In fact a flat-boat was there moored by it, its setting poles lying across the gunwales. Above the town the stream was crossed by a crazy wooden bridge, the supports of which leaned all ways in the soggy soil; the absence of a plank here and there in the flooring made the crossing of the bridge faster than a walk, an offence not necessary to be prohibited by law.

"This, gentlemen," said Jeff, "is Columbus River, alias Goose Run. If it was widened, and deepened, and straightened, and made long enough, it would be one of the finest rivers in the western country."

As the sun rose and sent his level beams along the stream, the thin stratum of mist, or malaria, rose also and dispersed, but the light was not able to enliven the dull water nor give any hint of its apparently fathomless depth. Venerable mud-turtles crawled up and roosted upon the old logs in the stream, their backs glistening in the sun, the first inhabitants of the metropolis to begin the active business of the day.

It was not long, however, before smoke began
to issue from the city chimneys; and before the engineers had finished their breakfast they were the object of the curious inspection of six or eight boys and men, who lounged into the camp and gazed about them with languid interest, their hands in their pockets every one.

“Good morning, gentlemen,” called out the chief engineer, from the table.

“Good mawning,” drawled out the spokesman of the party. “I allow thist-yers the railroad, I heern it was a-comin’.”

“Yes, this is the railroad, all but the rails and the iron horse.”

“I reckon you kin git all the rails you want outen my white oak timber over thar,” replied the first speaker, who appeared to be a man of property and willing to strike up a trade.
“You’ll have to negotiate with the contractors about the rails, sir,” said Jeff; “here’s Mr. Brierly, I’ve no doubt would like to buy your rails when the time comes.”

“O,” said the man, “I thought maybe you’d fetch the whole bilin along with you. But if you want rails, I’ve got ’em, haint I, Eph?”

“Heaps,” said Eph, without taking his eyes off the group at the table.

“Well,” said Mr. Thompson, rising from his seat and moving towards his tent, “the railroad has come to Stone’s Landing, sure; I move we take a drink on it all round.”

The proposal met with universal favour. Jeff gave prosperity to Stone’s Landing and navigation to Goose Run, and the toast was washed down with gusto, in the simple fluid of corn, and with the return compliment that a railroad was a good thing, and that Jeff Thompson was no slouch.

About ten o’clock a horse and waggon was descried making a slow approach to the camp over the prairie. As it drew near, the waggon was seen to contain a portly gentleman, who hitched impatiently forward on his seat, shook the reins, and gently touched up his horse, in the vain attempt to communicate his own energy to that dull beast, and looked eagerly at the tents. When the conveyance at length drew up to Mr. Thompson’s door, the gentleman
descended with great deliberation, straightened himself up, rubbed his hands, and, beaming satisfaction from every part of his radiant frame, advanced to the group that was gathered to welcome him, and which had saluted him by name as soon as he came within hearing.

"Welcome to Napoleon, gentlemen, welcome. I am proud to see you here, Mr. Thompson. You are looking well, Mr. Sterling. This is the country, sir. Right glad to see you, Mr. Brierly. You got that basket of champagne? No? Those blasted river thieves! I'll never send anything more by 'em. The best brand, Roederer. The last I had in my cellar, from a lot sent me by Sir George Gore—took him out on a buffalo hunt, when he visited our country. Is always sending me some trifle. You haven't looked about any yet, gentlemen? It's in the rough yet, in the rough. Those buildings will all have to come down. That's the place for the public square, Court House, hotels, churches, jail—all that sort of thing. About where we stand, the deepo. How does that strike your engineering eye, Mr. Thompson? Down yonder the business streets, running to the wharyes. The University up there, on rising ground, sightly place, see the river for miles. That's Columbus river, only forty-nine miles to the Missouri. You see what it is, placid, steady, no current to interfere with navigation, wants
widening in places and dredging, dredge out the harbour, and raise a levee in front of the town; made by nature on purpose for a mart. Look at all this country, not another building within ten miles, no other navigable stream, lay of the land points right here; hemp, tobacco, corn, must come here. The railroad will do it, Napoleon wont know itself in a year."

"Don’t now evidently," said Philip aside to Harry. "Have you breakfasted, Colonel?"

"Hastily. Cup of coffee. Can’t trust any coffee I don’t import myself. But I put up a basket of provisions, wife would put in a few delicacies, women always will, and a half-dozen of that Burgundy, I was telling you of, Mr. Brierly. By the way, you never got to dine with me."

And the Colonel strode away to the waggon and looked under the seat for the basket.

Apparently it was not there. For the Colonel raised up the flap, looked in front and behind, and then exclaimed,

"Confound it. That comes of not doing a thing yourself. I trusted to the women folks to set that basket in the waggon, and it ain’t there."

The camp cook speedily prepared a savoury breakfast for the Colonel, broiled chicken, eggs, corn-bread, and coffee, to which he did ample justice, and topped off with a drop of Old Bourbon, from Mr. Thompson’s private store, a
brand which he said he knew well, he should think it came from his own side-board.

While the engineer corps went to the field, to run back a couple of miles, and ascertain, approximately, if a road could ever get down to the Landing, and to sight ahead across the Run, and see if it could ever get out again, Colonel Sellers and Harry sat down and began to roughly map out the city of Napoleon on a large piece of drawing paper.

"I've got the refusal of a mile square here,"
said the Colonel, "in our names, for a year, with a quarter interest reserved for the four owners."

They laid out the town liberally, not lacking room, leaving space for the railroad to come in, and for the river as it was to be when improved.

The engineers reported that the railroad could come in, by taking a little sweep and crossing the stream on a high bridge, but the grades would be steep. Colonel Sellers said he didn't care so much about the grades, if the road could only be made to reach the elevators on the river. The next day Mr. Thompson made a hasty survey of the stream for a mile or two, so that the Colonel and Harry were enabled to show on their map how nobly that would accommodate the city. Jeff took a little writing from the Colonel and Harry for a prospective share, but Philip declined to join in, saying that he had no money, and didn't want to make engagements he couldn't fulfill.

The next morning the camp moved on, followed till it was out of sight by the listless eyes of the group in front of the store, one of whom remarked, that "he'd be doggoned if he ever expected to see that railroad any mo'."

Harry went with the Colonel to Hawkeye to complete their arrangements, a part of which was the preparation of a petition to Congress
NATIVE EXPECTATIONS.

for the improvement of the navigation of Columbus River.
CHAPTER XVIII

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Bedda ag Idda.

—"I've us lo convinta qal ass, Que voill que m prendat a moiler. Qu'en aissi l'a Deus establida Per que not pot esser partida."—Roman de Jaufre.

Eight years have passed since the death of Mr. Hawkins. Eight years are not many in the life of a nation or the history of a state, but they may be years of destiny that shall fix the current of the century following. Such years were those that followed the little scrimmage on Lexington Common. Such years were those that followed the double-shotted demand for the surrender of Fort Sumter. History is never done with inquiring of these years, and summoning witnesses about them, and trying to understand their significance.

The eight years in America from 1860 to 1868 uprooted institutions that were centuries old, changed the politics of a people, transformed the social life of half the country, and wrought
so profoundly upon the entire national character that the influence cannot be measured short of two or three generations.

As we are accustomed to interpret the economy of providence, the life of the individual is as nothing to that of the nation or the race; but who can say, in the broader view and the more intelligent weight of values, that the life of one man is not more than that of a nationality, and that there is not a tribunal where the tragedy of one human soul shall not seem more significant than the overturning of any human institution whatever?

When one thinks of the tremendous forces of the upper and the nether world which play for the mastery of the soul of a woman during the few years in which she passes from plastic girlhood to the ripe maturity of womanhood, he may well stand in awe before the momentous drama.

What capacities she has of purity, tenderness, goodness; what capacities of vileness, bitterness, and evil. Nature must needs be lavish with the mother and creator of men, and centre in her all the possibilities of life. And a few critical years can decide whether her life is to be full of sweetness and light, whether she is to be the vestal of a holy temple, or whether she will be the fallen priestess of a desecrated shrine. There are women, it is true, who seem to be capable neither of rising much nor of falling much, and whom a
conventional life saves from any special development of character.

But Laura was not one of them. She had the fatal gift of beauty, and that more fatal gift which does not always accompany mere beauty, the power of fascination, a power that may, indeed, exist without beauty. She had will, and pride and courage and ambition, and she was left to be very much her own guide at the age when romance comes to the aid of passion, and when the awakening powers of her vigorous mind had little object on which to discipline themselves.

The tremendous conflict that was fought in this girl’s soul none of those about her knew, and very few knew that her life had in it anything unusual or romantic or strange.

Those were troubous days in Hawkeye as well as in most other Missouri towns; days of confusion, when between Unionist and Confederate occupations, sudden maraudings and bushwhackings and raids, individuals escaped observation or comment in actions that would have filled the town with scandal in quiet times.

Fortunately we only need to deal with Laura’s life at this period historically, and look back upon such portions of it as will serve to reveal the woman as she was at the time of the arrival of Mr. Harry Brierly in Hawkeye.

The Hawkins family were settled there, and
had a hard enough struggle with poverty and the necessity of keeping up appearances in accord with their own family pride and the large expectations they secretly cherished of a fortune in the Knobs of East Tennessee. How pinched they were perhaps no one knew but Clay, to whom they looked for almost their whole support. Washington had been in Hawkeye off and on, attracted away occasionally by some tremendous speculation, from which he invariably returned to Gen. Boswell’s office as poor as he went. He was the inventor of no one knew how many useless contrivances, which were not worth patenting, and his years had been passed in dreaming and planning to no purpose; until he was now a man of about thirty, without a profession or a permanent occupation, a tall, brown-haired, dreamy person of the best intentions and the frailest resolution. Probably however the eight years had been happier to him than to any others in his circle, for the time had been mostly spent in a blissful dream of the coming of enormous wealth.

He went out with a company from Hawkeye to the war, and was not wanting in courage, but he would have been a better soldier if he had been less engaged in contrivances for circumventing the enemy by strategy unknown to the books.

It happened to him to be captured in one of his self-appointed expeditions, but the federal
colonel released him, after a short examination, satisfied that he could most injure the confederate forces opposed to the Unionists by returning him to his regiment.

Col. Sellers was of course a prominent man during the war. He was captain of the home guards in Hawkeye, and he never left home except upon one occasion, when, on the strength of a rumour, he executed a flank movement, and fortified Stone's Landing, a place which no one unacquainted with the country would be likely to find.

"Gad," said the Colonel, afterwards, "the
Landing is the key to Upper Missouri, and it is the only place the enemy never captured. If other places had been defended as well as that was, the result would have been different, sir."

The Colonel had his own theories about war as he had in other things. If everybody had stayed at home as he did, he said, the South never would have been conquered. For what would there have been to conquer? Mr. Jeff Davis was constantly writing him to take command of a corps in the confederate army, but Col. Sellers said, no, his duty was at home. And he was by no means idle. He was the inventor of the famous air-torpedo, which came very near destroying the Union armies in Missouri, and the city of St. Louis itself.

His plan was to fill a torpedo with Greek fire and poisonous and deadly missiles, attach it to a balloon, and then let it sail away over the hostile camp and explode at the right moment, when the time-fuse burned out. He intended to use this invention in the capture of St. Louis, exploding his torpedos over the city, and raining destruction upon it until the army of occupation would gladly capitulate. He was unable to procure the Greek fire, but he constructed a vicious torpedo which would have answered the purpose, but the first one prematurely exploded in his wood-house, blowing it clean away, and setting fire to his house. The neighbours helped
him put out the conflagration, but they discouraged any more experiments of that sort.

The patriotic old gentleman, however, planted so much powder and so many explosive contrivances in the roads leading into Hawkeye, and then forgot the exact spots of danger, that people were afraid to travel the highways, and used to come to town across the fields. The Colonel’s motto was, “Millions for defence, but not one cent for tribute.”

When Laura came to Hawkeye she might have forgotten the annoyances of the gossips of Murphysburg and have outlived the bitterness that was growing in her heart, if she had been thrown less upon herself, or if the surroundings of her life had been more congenial and helpful. But she had little society, less and less as she grew older that was congenial to her, and her mind preyed upon itself, and the mystery of her birth at once chagrined her and raised in her the most extravagant expectations.

She was proud and she felt the sting of poverty. She could not but be conscious of her beauty also, and she was vain of that, and came to take a sort of delight in the exercise of her fascinations upon the rather loutish young men who came in her way and whom she despised.

There was another world opened to her—a world of books. But it was not the best world
of that sort, for the small libraries she had access to in Hawkeye were decidedly miscellaneous, and largely made up of romances and fictions which fed her imagination with the most exaggerated notions of life, and showed her men and women in a very false sort of heroism. From these stories she learned what a woman of keen intellect, and some culture joined to beauty and fascination of manner, might expect to accomplish in society as she read of it; and along with these ideas she imbibed other very crude ones in regard to the emancipation of woman.

There were also other books—histories, biographies of distinguished people, travels in far lands, poems, especially those of Byron, Scott and Shelley and Moore, which she eagerly absorbed, and appropriated therefrom what was to her liking. Nobody in Hawkeye had read so much or, after a fashion, studied so diligently as Laura. She passed for an accomplished girl, and no doubt thought herself one, as she was, judged by any standard near her.

During the war there came to Hawkeye a confederate officer, Col. Selby, who was stationed there for a time, in command of that district. He was a handsome, soldierly man of thirty years, a graduate of the University of Virginia, and of distinguished family, if his story might be believed, and, it was evident, a
man of the world and of extensive travel and adventure.

To find in such an out of the way country place a woman like Laura was a piece of good luck upon which Col. Selby congratulated himself. He was studiously polite to her, and treated her with a consideration to which she was unaccustomed. She had read of such men, but she had never seen one before, one so high-bred, so noble in sentiment, so entertaining in conversation, so engaging in manner.

It is a long story; unfortunately it is an old story, and it need not be dwelt on. Laura loved him, and believed that his love for her was as pure and deep as her own. She worshipped him and would have counted her life a little thing to give him, if he would only love her and let her feed the hunger of her heart upon him.

The passion possessed her whole being, and lifted her up, till she seemed to walk on air. It was all true, then, the romances she had read, the bliss of love she had dreamed of. Why had she never noticed before how blithesome the world was, how jocund with love; the birds sang it, the trees whispered it to her as she passed, the very flowers beneath her feet strewed the way as for a bridal march.

When the Colonel went away they were engaged to be married, as soon as he could make
certain arrangements which he represented to be necessary, and quit the army.

He wrote to her from Harding, a small town in the south-west corner of the state, saying that he should be held in the service longer than he had expected, but that it would not be more than a few months, then he should be at liberty to take her to Chicago where he had property, and should have business, either now or as soon as the war was over, which he thought could not last long. Meantime why should they be separated? He was established in comfortable quarters, and if she could find company and join him, they would be married, and gain so many more months of happiness.

Was woman ever prudent when she loved? Laura went to Harding, the neighbours supposed to nurse Washington who had fallen ill there.

Her engagement was, of course, known in Hawkeye, and was indeed a matter of pride to her family. Mrs. Hawkins would have told the first inquirer that Laura had gone to be married; but Laura had cautioned her; she did not want to be thought of, she said, as going in search of a husband; let the news come back after she was married.

So she travelled to Harding on the pretence we have mentioned, and was married. She was married, but something must have happened on
that very day or the next that alarm. Washington did not know then or after it was, but Laura bound him not to send of her marriage to Hawkeye yet, and to her mother not to speak of it. Whatever suspicion or nameless dread this was, tried bravely to put it away, and not let it her happiness.

Communication that summer, as may gined, was neither regular nor frequent at the remote confederate camp at Hardin Hawkeye, and Laura was in a measure sight of—indeed, everyone had troubles of his own without borrowing from his bours.

Laura had given herself utterly to her husband, and if he had faults, if he was selfish was sometimes coarse, if he was dissipated did not or would not see it. It was the part of her life, the time when her whole went to flood tide and swept away all Was her husband ever cold or indifferent? shut her eyes to everything but her self possession of her idol.

Three months passed. One morning husband informed her that he had been on South, and must go within two hours.

"I can be ready," said Laura, cheerfully. "But I can't take you. You must go to Hawkeye."
“Can’t—take—me?” Laura asked, with wonder in her eyes. “I can’t live without you. You said”—

“O bother what I said”—and the Colonel took up his sword to buckle it on, and then continued coolly; “the fact is, Laura, our romance is played out.”

Laura heard, but she did not comprehend. She caught his arm and cried, “George, how can you joke so cruelly? I will go anywhere with you. I will wait anywhere. I can’t go back to Hawkeye.”

“Well, go where you like. Perhaps,” continued he with a sneer, “you would do as well to wait here, for another colonel.”

Laura’s brain whirled. She did not yet comprehend. “What does this mean? Where are you going?”

“It means,” said the officer, in measured words, “that you haven’t anything to show for a legal marriage, and that I am going to New Orleans.”

“It’s a lie, George, it’s a lie. I am your wife. I shall go. I shall follow you to New Orleans.”

“Perhaps my wife might not like it!”

Laura raised her head, her eyes flamed with fire, she tried to utter a cry, and fell senseless on the floor.

When she came to herself the Colonel was
gone. Washington Hawkins stood at her bedside. Did she come to herself. Was there anything left in her heart but hate and bitterness, a sense of an infamous wrong at the hands of the only man she had ever loved?

She returned to Hawkeye. With the exception of Washington and his mother, no one knew what had happened. The neighbours supposed that the engagement with Colonel Selby had fallen through. Laura was ill for a long time, but she recovered; she had that resolution in her that could conquer death almost. And with her health came back her beauty, and an added fascination, a something that might be mistaken for sadness. Is there a beauty in the knowledge of evil, a beauty that shines out in the face of a person whose inward life is transformed by some terrible experience? Is the pathos in the eyes of the Beatrice Cenci from her guilt or her innocence?

Laura was not much changed. The lovely woman had a devil in her heart. That was all.
CHAPTER XIX.

Wie entwickeln sich doch schnelle
Aus der stürmigsten Empfindung
Leidenschaften ohne Grenzen
Und wie zärtlichste Verbindung?
Täglich wächst zu dieser Dame
Meines Herzens tiefe Neigung.
Und dass ich in sie verliebt sei,
Wird mir fast zur Überzeugung.  

Heine.

Mr. Harry Bierly drew his pay as an engineer while he was living at the City Hotel in Hawkeye. Mr. Thompson had been kind enough to say that it didn’t make any difference whether he was with the corps or not; and although Harry protested to the Colonel daily and to Washington Hawkins that he must go back at once to the line and superintend the layout with reference to his contract, yet he did not go, but wrote instead long letters to Philip, instructing him to keep his eye out, and to let him know when any difficulty occurred that required his presence.

Meantime Harry blossomed out in the society of Hawkeye, as he did in any society where fortune cast him and he had the slightest opportunity to expand. Indeed the talents of a rich
and accomplished young fellow like Harry were not likely to go unappreciated in such a place. A land operator, engaged in vast speculations, a favourite in the select circles of New York, in correspondence with brokers and bankers, intimate with public men at Washington, one who could play the guitar and touch the banjo lightly, and who had an eye for a pretty girl, and knew the language of flattery, was welcome everywhere in Hawkeye. Even Miss Laura Hawkins thought it worth while to use her fascinations upon him, and to endeavour to entangle the volatile fellow in the meshes of her attractions.

"Gad," says Harry to the Colonel, "she's a superb creature; she'd make a stir in New York, money or no money. There are men I know would give her a railroad or an opera house, or whatever she wanted—at least they'd promise."

Harry had a way of looking at women as he looked at anything else in the world he wanted, and he half resolved to appropriate Miss Laura, during his stay in Hawkeye. Perhaps the Colonel divined his thoughts, or was offended at Harry's talk, for he replied,

"No nonsense, Mr. Brierly. Nonsense won't do in Hawkeye, not with my friends. The Hawkins' blood is good blood, all the way from Tennessee. The Hawkinses are under the
weather now, but their Tennessee property is
millions when it comes into market."

"Of course, Colonel. Not the least offence
intended. But you can see she is a fascinating
woman. I was only thinking, as to this appro-
priation, now, what such a woman could do in
Washington. All correct, too, all correct. Com-
mon thing, I assure you in Washington; the
wives of senators, representatives, cabinet officers,
all sorts of wives, and some who are not wives,
use their influence. You want an appointment?
Do you go to Senator X? Not much. You
get on the right side of his wife. Is it an
appropriation? You’d go straight to the Com-
mittee, or to the Interior office, I suppose?
You’d learn better than that. It takes a woman
to get any thing through the Land Office. I
tell you, Miss Laura would fascinate an appro-
priation right through the Senate and the
House of Representatives in one session, if she
was in Washington, as your friend, Colonel, of
course as your friend."

"Would you have her sign our petition?" asked the Colonel, innocently.

Harry laughed. "Women don't get any-
thing by petitioning Congress; nobody does,
that's for form. Petitions are referred some-
where, and that's the last of them; you can't
refer a handsome woman so easily, when she is
present. They prefer 'em mostly."
The petition, however, was elaborately drawn up, with a glowing description of Napoleon and the adjacent country, and a statement of the absolute necessity to the prosperity of that region and of one of the stations on the great through route to the Pacific, of the immediate improvement of Columbus River; to this was appended a map of the city and a survey of the river. It was signed by all the people at Stone's Landing who could write their names, by Colonel Eschol Sellers, and the Colonel agreed to have the names headed by all the senators and representatives from the state and by a sprinkling of ex-governors and ex-members of congress. When completed it was a formidable document. Its preparation and that of more minute plots of the new city consumed the valuable time of Sellers and Harry for many weeks, and served to keep them both in the highest spirits.

In the eyes of Washington Hawkins, Harry was a superior being, a man who was able to bring things to pass in a way that excited his enthusiasm. He never tired of listening to his stories of what he had done and of what he was going to do. As for Washington, Harry thought he was a man of ability and comprehension, but "too visionary," he told the Colonel. The Colonel said he might be right, but he had never noticed anything visionary about him.

"He's got his plans, sir. God bless my soul,
at his age, I was full of plans. But experience sobers a man, I never touch any thing now that hasn't been weighed in my judgment; and when Eschol Sellers puts his judgment on a thing, there it is."

Whatever might have been Harry's intentions with regard to Laura, he saw more and more of her every day, until he got to be restless and nervous when he was not with her. That consummate artist in passion allowed him to believe that the fascination was mainly on his side, and so worked upon his vanity, while inflaming his ardour, that he scarcely knew what he was about. Her coolness and coyness were even made to appear the simple precautions of a modest timidity, and attracted him even more than the little tenderesses into which she was occasionally surprised. He could never be away from her long, day or evening; and in a short time their intimacy was the town talk. She played with him so adroitly that Harry thought she was absorbed in love for him, and yet he was amazed that he did not get on faster in his conquest.

And when he thought of it, he was piqued as well. A country girl, poor enough, that was evident; living with her family in a cheap and most unattractive frame-house, such as carpenters build in America, scantily furnished and unadorned; without the adventitious aids of dress
or jewels or the fine manners of society—Harry couldn’t understand it. But she fascinated him, and held him just beyond the line of absolute familiarity at the same time. While he was with her she made him forget that the Hawkins’ house was nothing but a wooden tenement, with four small square rooms on the ground floor and a half story; it might have been a palace, for aught he knew.

Perhaps Laura was older than Harry. She was, at any rate, at that ripe age when beauty in woman seems more solid than in the budding period of girlhood, and she had come to understand her powers perfectly, and to know exactly how much of the susceptibility and archness of the girl it was profitable to retain. She saw that many women, with the best intentions, make a mistake of carrying too much girlishness into womanhood. Such a woman would have attracted Harry at any time, but only a woman with a cool brain and exquisite art could have made him lose his head in this way; for Harry thought himself a man of the world. The young fellow never dreamed that he was merely being experimented on; he was to her a man of another society and another culture, different from that she had any knowledge of except in books, and she was not unwilling to try on him the fascinations of her mind and person.
For Laura had her dreams. She detested the narrow limits in which her lot was cast; she hated poverty. Much of her reading had been of modern works of fiction, written by her own sex, which had revealed to her something of her own powers, and given her, indeed, an exaggerated notion of the influence, the wealth, the position a woman may attain who has beauty, and talent, and ambition, and a little culture, and is not too scrupulous in the use of them. She wanted to be rich, she wanted luxury—she wanted men at her feet, her slaves, and she had not—thanks to some of the novels she had read—the nicest discrimination between notoriety and reputation: perhaps she did not know how fatal notoriety usually is to the bloom of womanhood.

With the other Hawkins children, Laura had been brought up in the belief that they had inherited a fortune in the Tennessee Lands. She did not by any means share all the delusion of the family; but her brain was not seldom busy with schemes about it. Washington seemed to her only to dream of it, and to be willing to wait for its riches to fall upon him in a golden shower; but she was impatient, and wished she were a man to take hold of the business.

"You men must enjoy your schemes and your activity and liberty to go about the world,"

she said to Harry one day, when he had been talking of New York and Washington and his incessant engagements.

"Oh, yes," replied that martyr to business, "it's all well enough, if you don't have too much of it, but it only has one object."

"What is that?"

"If a woman doesn't know, it's useless to tell her. What do you suppose I am staying in Hawkeye for, week after week, when I ought to be with my corps?"

"I suppose it's your business with Colonel Sellers about Napoleon, you've always told me so," answered Laura, with a look intended to contradict her words.

"And now I tell you that is all arranged, I suppose you'll tell me I ought to go?"

"Harry!" exclaimed Laura, touching his arm and letting her pretty hand rest there a moment. "Why should I want you to go away? The only person in Hawkeye who understands me."

"But you refuse to understand me," replied Harry, flattered, but still petulant. "You are like an iceberg when we are alone."

Laura looked up with wonder in her great eyes, and something like a blush suffusing her face, followed by a look of languor that penetrated Harry's heart as if it had been longing. "Did I ever show any want of confidence in
you, Harry?" And she gave him her hand, which Harry pressed with effusion—something in her manner told him that he must be content with that favour.

It was always so. She excited his hopes and denied him, inflamed his passion and restrained it, and wound him in her toils day by day. To what purpose? It was keen delight to Laura to prove that she had power over men.

Laura liked to hear about life at the East, and especially about the luxurious society in which Mr. Brierly moved when he was at home. It pleased her imagination to fancy herself a queen in it.

"You should be a winter in Washington," Harry said.

"But I have no acquaintances there."

"Don't know any of the families of the congressmen? They like to have a pretty woman staying with them."

"Not one."

"Suppose Colonel Sellers should have business there; say, about this Columbus River appropriation?"

"Sellers!" and Laura laughed.

"You needn't laugh. Queerer things have happened. Sellers knows everybody from Missouri, and from the West, too, for that matter. He'd introduce you to Washington life quick enough. It doesn't need a crowbar to break
your way into society there as it does in Philadelphila. It's democratic, Washington is. Money or beauty will open any door. If I were a handsome woman, I shouldn't want any better place than the capital to pick up a prince or a fortune."

"Thank you," replied Laura. "But I prefer the quiet of home, and the love of those I know;" and her face wore a look of sweet contentment and unworldliness that finished Mr. Harry Brierly for the day.

Nevertheless, the hint that Harry had dropped fell upon good ground, and bore fruit an hundred fold; it worked in her mind until she had built up a plan on it, and almost a career for herself. Why not, she said, why shouldn't I do as other women have done? She took the first opportunity to see Colonel Sellers, and to sound him about the Washington visit. How was he getting on with his navigation scheme, would it be likely to take him from home to Jefferson City; or to Washington, perhaps?

"Well, maybe. If the people of Napoleon want me to go to Washington, and look after that matter, I might tear myself from my home. It's been suggested to me, but—not a word of it to Mrs. Sellers and the children. Maybe they wouldn't like to think of their father in Washington. But Dilworthy, Senator Dilworthy, says to me, 'Colonel, you are the man,
you could influence more votes than any one else on such a measure, an old settler, a man of the people, you know the wants of Missouri; you've a respect for religion too, says he, and know how the cause of the gospel goes with improvements.' Which is true enough, Miss Laura, and hasn't been enough thought of in connection with Napoleon. He's an able man, Dilworthy, and a good man. A man has got to be good to succeed as he has. He's only been in Congress a few years, and he must be worth a million. First thing in the morning when he stayed with me he asked about family prayers, whether we had 'em before or after breakfast. I hated to disappoint the Senator, but I had to out with it, tell him we didn't have 'em, not steady. He said he understood, business interruptions and all that, some men were well enough without, but as for him he never neglected the ordinances of religion. He doubted if the Columbus River appropriation would succeed if we did not invoke the Divine Blessing on it."

Perhaps it is unnecessary to say to the reader that Senator Dilworthy had not stayed with Colonel Sellers while he was in Hawkeye; this visit to his house being only one of the Colonel's hallucinations—one of those instant creations of his fertile fancy, which were always flashing into his brain and out of his mouth in
the course of any conversation and without interrupting the flow of it.

During the summer Philip rode across the country and made a short visit in Hawkeye, giving Harry an opportunity to show him the progress that he and the Colonel had made in their operation at Stone’s Landing, to introduce him also to Laura, and to borrow a little money when he departed. Harry bragged about his conquest, as was his habit, and took Philip round to see his western prize.

Laura received Mr. Philip with a courtesy and a slight hauteur that rather surprised and not a little interested him. He saw at once that she was older than Harry, and soon made up his mind that she was leading his friend a country dance to which he was unaccustomed. At least he thought he saw that, and half hinted as much to Harry, who flared up at once; but on a second visit Philip was not so sure, the young lady was certainly kind and friendly and almost confiding with Harry, and treated Philip with the greatest consideration. She deferred to his opinions, and listened attentively when he talked, and in time met his frank manner with an equal frankness, so that he was quite convinced that whatever she might feel towards Harry, she was sincere with him. Perhaps his manly way did win her liking. Perhaps in her mind, she compared him with Harry, and recog-
nized in him a man to whom a woman might give her whole soul, recklessly and with little care if she lost it. Philip was not invincible to her beauty nor to the intellectual charm of her presence.

The week seemed very short that he passed in Hawkeye, and when he bade Laura good-bye, he seemed to have known her a year.

"We shall see you again, Mr. Sterling," she said, as she gave him her hand, with just a shade of sadness in her handsome eyes.

And when he turned away she followed him with a look that might have disturbed his serenity, if he had not at the moment had a little square letter in his breast pocket, dated at Philadelphia, and signed "Ruth."

END OF VOL. I.