CORNELL UNIVERSITY
MAR 31 1927
LAW LIBRARY

413
Ms. 12

AN

AUTHENTIC LIFE

OF

JOHN C. COLT,

NOW IMPRISONED FOR

KILLING SAMUEL ADAMS,

IN NEW YORK,

ON THE SEVENTEENTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1841.

Fourth Edition.

BOSTON:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY S. N. DICKINSON.

1842.

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the Year 1842,
BY CHARLES F. POWELL,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THOSE who reflect and wish well to their fellow creatures, will not censure this attempt to exhibit a career fairly, from which most useful lessons and warnings may be drawn.

The work has been put together with haste. The chief object has been to tell the plain truth impartially.

It was at first intended to give the particulars of the late trial; but it would have occupied more time than can now conveniently be spared, to do so thoroughly. Besides, it seems almost superfluous, while the proceedings are recent enough to be in every one's remembrance. Should the present pages attract attention, however, those, and other points, may be added in a new edition.

BOSTON, July, 1842.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE THIRD EDITION.

IN the present edition of this biography is added some reflections on the preceding chapters, which touch upon the prevailing traits of Colt's character, and the supposed meditations of his mind after the committal of the deed for which he is convicted.

Allusion is also made to the error of concealment, and to the subsequent return of his self-reliance, which enables him, in a degree, to lighten up the gloomy hours of his imprisonment with useful industry in study, and correspondence.

At some future day, a digest will be made of the entire case, from the legal reports of his trial, and be embodied in this work.

INTRODUCTION.

WHAT can be more stirring than the sight of any human being on the very threshold which parts eternity from time? We feel as if such a position must have already divided our doomed fellow-creature from this world; and we look at him, and listen to him, as though he could already disclose to us secrets of the world unknown.

Some feeling of this sort may have mingled with my eagerness, when in New York a few months ago, to avail myself of an opportunity to visit JOHN C. COLT, in his prison there, shortly after the jury's verdict had pronounced him guilty of murder. But I must do myself the justice to add that curiosity alone was not my prompter. I had noticed the progress of his trial; I had read the various tales which had been circulated in reference to him; I had carefully watched all the anecdotes of his deportment; and all concurred to create an impression that there must be something in the man's character, and in the event for which he is condemned, not yet understood; and, possibly, not likely to be, until after he has suffered. I desired to judge of him with my own eyes and mind. I accompanied two gentlemen (one, an intimate friend of his, and another who had given testimony on his trial,) to his prison.

I confess it was not without a shudder that I gazed at the splendid Place of Expiation, which is termed here the Egyptian Tombs. Passing gate after gate, through quadrangles of galleried stone prison-houses, we ascended to a bridge crossing one of these squares, and the keeper paused at what appeared the iron shutter of a bow window. Unlocking it, he opened a second iron shutter within, and we bent, and made a long step over the high threshold —and we had entered the prisoner's cell.

Godwin, in one of his novels, describes the state of mind in which I fancied I might find the inmate of that cell: "This person

has, in supposition, entered the mournful portal through which all mortals must pass; he has shaken hands with Hope; he is satisfied that help is vain; he has dismissed the illusions of the world; the grave has opened its jaws to receive him; the muscles of his countenance are fallen; upon his eyeballs rests the sadness of a compelled resignation; he apprehends that he has done with all things sublunary, and persuades himself that they have no longer any beauty to his spirit. He believes that to him are ended the joys of sensation, of thought, of reflection, of a conscious being, admitted to mix once more in the activity, and hopes, and busy scenes of things below."

But to proceed.

The cell appeared to me some twelve or fourteen feet long, and about six or eight feet wide; the ceiling was high; the walls were naked; the light entered through a slit near the ceiling, at the end facing the door. On our left, as we went in, next the door, was a table; pretty much all the rest of that side of the room was occupied by a low, narrow bed; there were pegs for clothes upon the wall at our right hand, and just above the floor ran iron pipes for water and for heat.

We found the prisoner writing at the table, seated on the foot of the bed. I noticed a one-volume octavo edition of Goldsmith's works by his side. As the iron gates flew open, he rose. He was not chained. His dress was a neat morning dishabille; he wore slippers and a dressing-gown. He received us with a very affable smile, but not untinged with an expression of anxiety—handed one of us a chair, and waved the other two to a seat on the bed, observing that he would make no apologies about the scantiness either of space or furniture.

I noticed his appearance intently. In height he is about five feet eleven; he is firmly built, though slender. His head is large, his face oval, his complexion light, his hair profuse, light brown, and richly curling; his nose aquiline; his lips in silence always compressed; his eye of a dark brown hazel, lighting up in conversation, or in listening, with great expression. The prevailing characteristic of his countenance appears to be gentleness, and his bearing is courteous and manly. The tones of his voice are sweet and mild, but firm.

The conversation, by some accident, presently glanced upon the recent trial. The prisoner spoke of it calmly, and commented on the conclusion to which the jury had been led, as a mistake. He examined points in the evidence and pleadings, and earnestly praised the eloquence and skill of the Public Prosecutor, Mr. Whiting, and of some others, who had acted most unrelentingly

towards him. I was not a little astonished to hear a person, under such circumstances, treat an event of the deepest possible solemnity in its consequences to him, as a mere spectator. It struck me that in all he thought, there appeared an entire self-reliance, coupled with almost an incapability of admitting impressions from other minds into his. This is the effect of misanthropy; but misanthropy is churlish, and this man's manner is gracious and kind. Surely some events of his life must have created a spirit of distrust in him, without extinguishing an innate spirit of amiableness.

Something was said of a man who had murdered his wife; and he who alluded to the affair, pausing at the mention of the name,

"Adams," cried the prisoner.

Adams *was* the name. I thought the hesitation to mention it might have arisen from delicacy to the prisoner. I fastened my eyes on him as he spoke, but the name produced no effect whatever, nor did the subject. On the contrary, the prisoner entered into an earnest argument upon the proper definition both of the words homicide and murder.

The chat fell upon the curiosity excited by dreadful accusations; and it rested, for awhile, upon the crowds which the prisoner's late trial had attracted. He gave a vivid and somewhat satirical picture of the manner in which he had been persecuted by this morbid curiosity, and how adroitly he had been enabled to evade it. He had been placed at one window in the city hall, whence he could see the populace gazing intently on a person they mistook for him, in another; and discerning the evidences of guilt, not only in that person's face and manner, but even in the poor fellow's phrenological bumps! He had passed, on foot, through the crowd that was hurrying to and fro, jostling him to seek a glance at the monster, upon whom some of them even thought they could scarcely look without being turned into stone!

A bitter newspaper attack, for political effect, upon an estimable and blameless friend of his, being mentioned, he became more excited than by any other remark during the visit. He started up, exclaiming:

"The newspapers! *they* are the true mischief-breeders; *they* are the really unprincipled and remorseless murderers! By the pen there is more slaughter—and that of the most heartless and ferocious character—oh, infinitely more—than either by lead or steel! But I hope ******* don't mind it. From my soul I hope he will not suffer anything to provoke him to notice it; and, above all, that the slanderer's pen will not change a single heart or eye that he may value; for, of the numberless evils of newspaper corruption, the estrangements its reckless calumny produces are by far the most heart-withering."

There was an awful indication to me, in this outburst, of a secret love of approbation in the speaker, amounting, however hidden even from himself, to a disease. Chagrin at being deprived of it, although when in his regard unjustly, (which ought to have raised him above such uneasiness,) was here involuntarily betrayed; and all the philosophy which enabled him to bear other inflictions, that to other minds would have been infinitely worse, could not sustain him under this. I desire the reader not to lose sight of my inference, as I shall ask attention to it hereafter. The prisoner's earnest deprecation of any loss of control over himself, or just regard from others, in one he valued, under the goadings and malice of unmerited reproach, made me ponder deeply.

The most intimate of the three visiters touched sportively, and by accident, on some adventure wherein the prisoner had once in former times gained an object he desired by an ingenious "hoax," at which they had often laughed together.

"The least said of that the better," exclaimed he, seriously. "We may, in the exuberance of youthful spirits, think many things allowable, of which cooler reflection makes us heartily ashamed; and we are sure to hear of them again to our discomfiture, when we least expect it, and when their recurrence may become a bitter sting, perhaps a punishment. Nothing is safe but the plain truth; even the 'hoax' which appears harmless may prove greatly the reverse in its consequences, especially to our reputation for integrity, inasmuch as in its very nature, a 'hoax' leans to falsehood."

Perhaps the incident which awakened these sentiments was one which will be referred to hereafter, when the reader will be reminded of the remarks.

Observing the eye of one of our party resting on a thick quarto parcel, carefully enveloped, tied with tape, and sealed up, the prisoner observed: "Ah! there is a project in that parcel which some day will make John C. Colt known for what he really is. Not an author, publisher, nor printer, but will bless my memory for that project when once it goes into effect. Five years it has floated vaguely in my mind. Since I have been here, I have had leisure to think it over thoroughly, and to write it down so clearly that a child might understand it. I look upon those as precious papers."

The conversation becoming more excursive, fell upon some recent extraordinary escape from danger; and each had a story of his own perils and preservations to relate. It came to the prisoner's turn to speak:

"My life," said he, "has been five times ere this very imminently exposed, to say nothing of its frequent endangerment in hunting and horse-racing, where I was always rashly and foolishly

venturesome from boyhood upward, till I have had occupation of late years, to keep me at the desk." He then smiled and observed: "A stout young girl saved me, at five years of age, not from a watery grave, but from one somewhat like that of a British prince. I was with some other children, playing about, not a butt of wine, but a cider press, and drawing the juice of the apple out of a deep vat through straws. My footing gave way, and in I plunged, head foremost. When the noble girl got me out, my senses were gone, and she carried me home in her arms for dead.

"At about eight, when I was taken with a military mania, my mother's indulgence enabled me to rig out a little troop of boys. As one of my companions was helping me to load a cannon, several pounds of powder exploded and deprived both of us, for some weeks, of our eyesight. How we escaped with our lives was always a wonder.

"Between nine and twelve I had perils yet more frightful.

"Once, for instance, when jumping up and down on the ice, it gave way, and I fell through. I was swept by the current some sixty feet under a sheet of ice, into the open river. I there caught at the limb of a fallen tree, and drew myself upon the bank.

"Again; a favorite horse with which I was playing tricks, played a worse trick upon me. He tossed me from my throne upon his back, and kicked me so severely on the hip, that my wounds made me go for many weeks upon crutches.

"But the most awful of my encounters was a misunderstanding at Hartford with a buffalo. One arrived there in a caravan of animals. Never before having beheld a buffalo, I smuggled myself into a narrow passage, leading by a small door to an adjoining building. There I was, in front of the creature, and could command a complete view of its head. But as the buffalo faced me, so I faced the buffalo, which he took, not for admiration, but defiance, and forthwith plunged at me, nailing me fast against the passage-door between his horns. The principal keeper, who alone had special influence over my antagonist, chanced to be out of the way just then, and the others got alarmed, and began to belabor him with their clubs, which only excited him to glare more fiercely and pin me tighter. Great danger sometimes gives one great self-possession. Luckily it had this effect on me, young as I was; so I called to the people to withdraw and leave the buffalo to me, to settle the difficulty, which they very willingly did. I then patted the prairie hero, and stroked his neck, and talked soothingly to him, till, as if to consider what it all meant, he gradually unloosed his hold, and stepped slowly back; whereupon I stepped, with an equal pace, forward, keeping his eyes darkened till I saw a clear

chance for a bolt, when, springing aside, and exclaiming: 'You don't catch me there again, I tell you,' I vanished before my shaggy-throated friend of the wilderness could make up his mind what next he ought to do with me."

"You must have been terrified enough, as soon as you got out of the trouble, even if you were not while in it," replied one of us.

"There you mistake," answered he. "At first my peril gave me nerve; — afterwards, delight. Indeed, I believe I am fortunate enough to have as little fear in my composition, as most men. By the way," he observed, — turning to the visiter who had been a witness on his trial, — "I felt for you when I saw you on the stand. You ought never to permit yourself to be agitated. The only rule in this world, is, always to keep cool."

Said the other, — "It is not every one that Nature has endowed with the power to follow that rule. Perhaps your constitution may have made it impossible for you to fear."

"You are vastly in error," responded the prisoner. "If ever a creature was thoroughly frightened, I have been; but the result, I think you will own, ought to cure almost any body of terror, — as, I truly believe, it did me."

We all expressed a strong desire to hear what it was.

"When about fifteen," continued he, "I was a clerk in the Union Manufacturing Company's store, at Manchester, Connecticut. My elder, and companion clerk, who slept in the store with me, having gone upon a visit to his intended, did not seem to have heard the roosters crow; so, after reading till half-past twelve, by myself, I despaired of his return, and went up stairs to bed. Shortly after I had blown out my light, between sleeping and waking, I thought I heard steps below. I, of course, expected to see my companion enter; but, all at once, it struck me *that* could never be, because the keys were all inside. A startling thought came across me. Not a week before a store in a neighboring town had been broken open and robbed! Hark! — the footsteps again; one, two, three! — how distinct! Then a silence, as if the person stood still and was feeling his way about in the dark — then came another move. What was to be done? I must not stay quietly where I am and let the store be robbed. I shall have to strike a light. But no means of so doing are at hand. There are none nearer than the office below stairs. A few moments I pondered. I felt convinced that neither was the store in safety, nor was I. Come what may, I must face the midnight villain. At the stair-foot there are axe-helves. These are the nearest defensive weapons. My pantaloons and socks silently resumed, I crept cautiously down. I drew out one of the axe-helves with the least

possible noise, and placed myself in an attitude of defiance. The darkness was intense. Not an object could be discerned. Like a statue I stood; and was some minutes listening. At length a sound struck my ear. It was of steps in the back store. Cautiously I approached the entrance door. What can this mean? It is unbolted and stands ajar! I could never have omitted to fasten it ere I retired. The truth is clear now. It must have been opened by the robbers! I secured it firmly, and hearing no one about me, concluded that I held them imprisoned safe, there being no outlet on that side. I now obtained a light and examined the store from the basement to the attic. Every thing was in its accustomed place. The back store remained to be searched. Qualifying myself as well as possible for a stern encounter, I cautiously undid the door, looked in, and held my light carefully, lest some one should spring forward and puff it out and follow with a blow. Nothing appeared, so in I went. I sought through every bin and cask and other receptacle, — and the story of the Forty Thieves and the jars arose to my mind, and at every new peep I shuddered. Every fruitless glance, instead of relieving me, threw me into greater dread. The doubt and the suspense became intolerable. I almost wished for the relief of an attack. At last I re-entered the main store, and again I heard the footsteps; and I heard them, as before, distinctly, and in the back store. Springing back, I re-examined, but without avail. I re-closed the door and was receding, as the sound of the same footsteps returned and seemed approaching. I burst into the place once more, but all was still; and I turned to depart, when my light chanced to strike an object which moved under its beams; and I discovered at once the source of all my horrors; — a harmless little rabbit was jumping after me, as I moved away, and was attempting when discovered, as it had previously done on each disturbance, to hide underneath some casks. It belonged to a neighbor, and had found its way into the back store, to feast upon a pile of apples in a corner. I no longer looked upon the mountain in labor in the school book, as a fable.

"Yes, if ever a man experienced fear, I did upon this occasion; and it was some time before my nerves recovered from the shock. Why, happening to glance at my own face in a mirror that hung in the counting house, as I passed, I was even frightened at the effect of my own fright. Every hair on my head stood erect; and as I strove to smooth them down, felt stiff under my hand and prickly. The absurdity of the alarm got me so laughed at, that, from that moment forth, out of sheer shame, I believe, I have absolutely been afraid to fear."

We withdrew. I was strongly impressed with what I had heard

and seen. Though nothing had passed which would have excited even so much as attention in any ordinary case, yet in this it awakened, — with me, at least, — serious meditation and inquiry.

This man, exclaimed I to one companion, is a mystery. The mass look upon him as a monster. There is something about him entitling him to analysis of a different nature from any he has yet undergone. He appears to me to possess, as it were, two characters; — the one, inherent, — the other, superinduced by circumstances. Perhaps such is the case with all of us; but in all, the natural and the acquired character differ not so diametrically as in this man. He appears at once confiding, ardent and ingenuous, — yet concentrated and cold; — for, though so very communicative, yet is he evidently in general incommunicative of his engrossing thoughts, as if he had brought himself either to despise or distrust the very good opinion that he covets, and to avoid the openness to which he is predisposed. There must be a reason for it. I can almost fancy what the reason may be, for I have observed characters bordering on these anomalies before. Would I could learn something of his previous life, that I might ascertain how far its events justify the theory I have formed about him! If I am right, much that now puzzles the world in relation to him, and which is summarily got over by a sweeping charge of unmitigated depravity, would be unriddled.

"I think," observed the friend to whom I spoke, "that I can help you in this matter. I know much of the prisoner's history, and you shall hear it."

I have imbodied the relation given me by my friend, in the following chapters.

LIFE OF JOHN C. COLT.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN C. COLT'S parentage is of the highest respectability. English by descent, his paternal grandfather prided himself on a long line of ancestry, of which he retained a record upon an old silver tankard, still remaining in the family. This traces them back to John Coult, a British Peer; from whose son, — called in his time Sir John Colt the Great, — the Colt coat-of-arms was derived, in allusion to his having had three horses killed under him in a battle for his country, where in a fierce encounter, single-handed, his sword breaking, he seized another and won the victory. He sold his estate to resist Popery. His son, Sir Peter Colt, had a son, John Colt; who also had a son John Colt; which John Colt had, likewise, a son, John Colt; which John Colt, too, had a son, John Colt, born in Colchester, England. At eleven years of age, this son came to Hartford, Connecticut, where he died at the age of one hundred and five, leaving a son, John Colt, who was born at Hartford, Connecticut, in 1658, and died at the age of ninety-three, in Lyme, Connecticut, leaving a son by the name of Benjamin Colt, born in Lyme, Connecticut, in 1700, and who died at the age of fifty-six, leaving a son of the same name, who was settled in Hadley, Massachusetts, where his son, the present Christopher Colt, was born, who became the father of John C. Colt, the subject of this narrative.

Our subject, whose inclinings were, from the beginning, in opposition to everything aristocratic, used to smile at these reminiscences, and term them mere idle vanity. He would declare that he considered the legitimate source of family pride among his kindred, to consist in his paternal grandfather having been one of the best

farmers and iron manufacturers of Hadley; and, above all, in his having produced the first sythe ever made in Massachusetts.

Our subject's grandfather on the mother's side, was a merchant of great distinction at Hartford, Connecticut, by the name of John Caldwell. He made a large fortune in foreign trade;—has had his half a dozen vessels at a time in port, loading and unloading; is regarded by the old inhabitants as one of the early ornaments and benefactors of the city; and was formerly President of the Hartford Bank. After his retirement from business, however, his large fortune, the largest in the State, was lost through endorsements for his less successful sons and sons-in-law.

The mother of our subject was the eldest daughter of John Caldwell, after whom John C. Colt was named. Our subject was born at Hartford in 1810. He was the third child and the eldest son. Four brothers and one sister were born after him.

The father of our subject still lives, and has ever been known as one of the most respectable gentlemen in Hartford. The mother died many years ago. She was the last of fourteen children, whom a fond parent followed to the grave. Three sisters and one brother are dead, and three brothers are living. One of these is a promising young lawyer, and one is eminent as the inventor of repeating fire arms, and other improvements in the munitions of war; the third is a merchant, of considerable fortune.

The earliest years of our subject were distinguished for a certain joyousness of disposition, and for that activity which delights in air and freedom — in wild exposures to danger, and, in short, any thing for a frolic. There was a touch of ambition mixed up with all this; a desire to be at the head of whatever he undertook. This particularly disclosed itself in a scheme which his mother's indulgence enabled him to accomplish. She gave him the means, when only eight years old, to accoutre a miniature military company, of which he took command. It has been already stated how near he was to losing his life by the explosion of his powder magazine.

Though docile, and liked by all his seniors, he uniformly sided with children of his own age, and having got the credit of recklessness, if there was a flogging to be given, and any doubt as to where it ought to fall, it invariably was bestowed on him. Our subject never complained, but the injustice of the infliction often dwelt for a moment in his mind, and he sometimes fancied that the subtlety of his playmates rather encouraged the mistakes by which he was persecuted on their account, and they escaped. Is there not in this the embryo of a deeper distrust in later days?

It was thought expedient to tame this volatile spirit, which was always requiring the rod, by study under a grave master. At nine

years of age our subject was sent to the Reverend Daniel Huntington, of Hadley, Massachusetts, to learn the dead languages.

Strange is the mistake of certain parents and teachers, violently to thwart the natural tendencies of children, whenever they happen to be of a cast to them incomprehensible. Knowledge must be conveyed by these same parents or teachers in the self-same way that they themselves received it, although there may be no conformity of genius and disposition between the new learner and the former; whereas systems of instruction are like the body's food, — what will nourish one may poison another. By the common blunder in this regard, a child that requires freedom and motion must be immured and chained, and thus broken into study, instead of having the very air he loves filled with information, and then sending him forth to revel in it, and to receive the study with his revels. The consequence is, such a child hates the prison which restrains his body, but only stimulates the taste for liberty in his mind, sometimes even to licentiousness.

Our subject was uneasy under confinement, and hated the languages, from their association with the school desk. His enjoyments became entirely disconnected with his duties. His schoolmates looking up to him as their leader out of school, he never brought himself to care for the same supremacy within. Consequently, the only distinction he attained during his year at the Rev. Mr. Huntington's, was that of ringleader in all mischief. At swimming, skating, horse-racing, hunting, and fishing, he was ever foremost. For daring he was remarkable; so much so, that his interference in a dispute always put an end to it; but, though often called upon as an arbiter, he was never known himself to get into a quarrel. Only one instance of retaliation for some trick which had been played upon him by a schoolmate, is related of our subject.

A large slate inkstand, with two apertures for ink, on either side, stood upon his desk, newly filled. He had discovered that by blowing into one aperture he could raise the ink in the other. He desired the boy to blow very gently on one side, which he did, bending down for the purpose, — whereupon our subject blew into the other with all his might, bespattering the offender and his clothes, in a way which brought from the whole school a laugh that communicated its contagion to the teachers, and put them as well as the object of the joke into so merry a mood, that once, for a wonder, the young humorist was spared a flogging.

Yet there are persons, who even at a puerile prank like this, will shrug their shoulders, and turn up their eyes, and cry, — "Ah, that boy will come to no good. If he can be so artful at nine years of age, what will he prove at nine and twenty!" — and the

injustice of such a misconstruction will sink deep into the mind even of a child, and turn back the fine flow of youthful spirits, and of the tide of generous feeling, and lay the foundation even in life's dawn, of permanent distrust and perhaps misanthropy.

We cannot name the school or schools to which our subject was sent, from the end of his year at the Rev. Mr. Huntington's, till he reached the age of twelve. But such particulars are unnecessary. Our business is to exhibit the developement of his character, and the circumstances which appear to have acted upon it.

It is probable that he had instructers of unphilosophical and bounded views; wedded to narrow systems and prejudices, and teaching upon the Procrustes plan of forcing every variety of mind to their own mode, not accommodating their mode to every variety of mind.

A fine writer on education has remarked, — "The youth respecting whom I should augur most favorably, is he in whom I observe some useless luxuriance, and some qualities which terrify while they delight me. The most abundant endowments will one day assume a regularity and arrangement, which endowments in the next degree inferior are unable to attain."

But the "useless luxuriance," the "qualities which terrify while they delight," do not appear to have been thus appreciated by the New England guardians of our subject's boyhood. They were visited upon him as inexpiable sins; an absurdity which the intuition of children as to character made obvious to his companions, who soon began to side with him in his distaste for such misjudging masters. Hence, the school became more and more irksome to him while he became more and more attached to the scholars. With, them he was the directing spirit of all sorts of frolic and fun. But there was nothing vicious in his sportfulness. He had already been taught to play cards by some of his elder comrades, who delighted in them clandestinely, and he was a proficient: but cards never, either then or at any future time, gave him any pleasure: on the contrary, he took a dislike to them from the beginning, in common with all other games of chance, and only indulged when his assistance was indispensable to make up a party. There was too much confinement for him even in sports, when sedentary. The free and open canopy of heaven over his head, and stirring adventures, sometimes exhibiting the sagacity and forecast of maturer years, were his luxuries. At this juncture, he once risked his own life, to save a younger brother from drowning.

A circumstance frivolous enough in itself, but not so in its effects upon our subject's reputation among the more prim of that region, grew out of the entire divorcement between the sympathies of the boys and their elders, to which we have alluded.

Boys, from time immemorial, have been very slow to be convinced of the immorality of robbing apple orchards. This was the case with a party of the urchins who clustered around our subject. They were among a neighbor's trees, upon one of which he and a companion had mounted. "Old P****** is coming!" shouted the chaps below, whereupon our subject slipped down and escaped; but his partner, less agile, was intercepted by "Old P******'s" horsewhip, wherewith he was most unmercifully belabored.

The victim, however much he might have deserved the severity, began to think it too bitter for the offence, and shrieked loudly and frightfully, but without touching the heart of the punisher.

Our subject, hearing the cries, rushed back with a cudgel, and peremptorily commanded the old man to desist. Astonished at the boy's energy, "Old P******" paused involuntarily, and began an angry parley.

In the midst of the altercation, two gentlemen came up. The condition of the old man's victim attracted their attention, and they presently agreed with our subject, that, though his comrade had been in fault, yet that mercy from the stronger ought ever to temper justice. But "Old P******" was the more exasperated by the criticism; and as in his infuriation he was about to re-exercise his whip, the gentlemen wrested it from him, and made him take to his heels for safety, — of course, amid the triumphant hootings of the young plunderers.

As might have been expected, the affair did not rest here. The boys resolved to improve the first chance that should offer, to tantalize the common enemy; and it was not long before they found one.

"Old P******" had a favorite horse that grazed in the fatal orchard. It was a source of revenue to him, especially on militia muster days; and he cultivated its mane and tail with edifying care, that the commanding officer might show off upon the charger to advantage; for all which patriotic public services he regularly obtained on such occasions a fee of five dollars, which, in the country, is a tolerably important affair.

The boys watched their time, and just before the parade, contrived to accumulate a vast supply of burdock burrs, and to drive the horse into a pen yard; whereupon, surrounding the animal, they pelted its tail and mane, till both became entirely filled with burrs.

On the morning of parade, great indeed was the consternation of "Old P******" when his courser was brought out to be caparisoned. The burrs would not come away, so the hair of both tail

and mane must; and the five dollars were lost, and the officer was compelled to seek a new Bucephalus.

"Old P******" horsewhipped no more boys; but the fine trait of character spontaneously exhibited by our subject's daring self-exposure for his friend against such odds, being entirely overlooked, there were many who could not get over their horror at the boy who could rob an apple-tree, and then, not only add insult to injury of the owner, but pursue malice against the man, even to the persecution of his innocent horse.

Even thus it chances, that misapprehension may arise early and pursue a character through life, gathering new strength with new injustice. "Often," observes a great writer, "a mere gayety of humor, sporting in thoughtless sallies, will fix a sting that neither time nor all the healing arts of wisdom and virtue, shall be able to cure."

CHAPTER II.

In the course of the term we have been describing, great changes occurred at our subject's home in Hartford. His mother died* and his father became embarrassed. It is probable that the difficulty of interesting our subject in his school studies, and his hankering for a more active sphere, combined with these changes to induce the transfer of him to an uncle's house, in Vermont, for a year, to learn farming. It was a most acceptable revolution in his affairs. He had already acquired some experience of agricultural life, from having been suffered to seek upon a neighboring plantation, when at school, for an insight into the duties of a farmer's boy.

When our subject went to his uncle at Burlington, he was twelve years of age. The old gentleman was agreeably surprised at his excellent qualities. To apply the phrase of an acute investigator of the human mind, he "had cast the slough of sedentary confinement; he had resumed that elasticity of limb which his fetters had suspended. His eyes sparkled; he bounded over the sod, as the young roe over the mountains. His moments of restraint being gone, the boy had become himself again." On the 19th of December, 1823, his uncle thus describes him, in homely country phrases, to his family:—"We had a very heavy fall of snow here last week; and it gave me an excellent opportunity of trying what

* Mrs. Sarah Caldwell Colt, the mother of our subject, died in 1821, aged 40.

John was made of. On Friday our neighbors turned out in mass, to break out the roads. We had hitched to our snow-drag thirteen yoke of oxen, and two horses on the lead. I placed John on the old sorrel ahead; 'and now,' says I, 'you must lead the way.' 'Well,' says he, 'I'll do it; only give me a stick to touch up a little.' The snow was drifted in many places from seven to ten feet high, and, I assure you, that it was a confounded tight place to put a boy on the lead horse. But I knew the old sorrel was used to it, and never missed a foot. John went it in the best manner, hallooing like an Indian. It just suited him. The old sorrel threw him over her head five times in going over the hill, but, nothing daunted, he mounted again, and away they went as before. I'll tell you what, John is made of good stuff, and you need not give yourself any uneasiness about him. He likes to have his own way rather too much, but then he is always more than half right, and where's the harm in giving him a little play? He is as kind-hearted a fellow as ever was; and, take him all round, I never saw a better boy in all my life."

Our subject now made friends in every direction. He had one among the dumb creation, singularly and deservedly attached to him. A visiter who had seen a pet lamb hobbling after him, and sometimes taken up and carried in his arms to relieve the little cripple, — told the story of this friend.

Going out one cold winter morning to feed his uncle's sheep, our subject found a stray lamb frozen to the ground in the snow, and nearly dead. He told his uncle. Orders were given for one of his men to kill it. Our subject implored for the lamb, but in vain. When the man came in with a stick to despatch it, he stood over the little sufferer, and protested he would be killed himself sooner than let the lamb be killed. The uncle coming up at the time, our subject renewed his entreaties, and was told, "Well, you foolish fellow, take the lamb to yourself, and do with it as you like." He flew for an axe, carefully cut the little creature from the snow, put it into a basket rendered comfortable with straw and a blanket, and carried it to the house; where, after some six weeks' nursing, it became hardy enough for removal to the stables, and throve well, though, from its once frozen feet, always a cripple.

His year of labor on his uncle's farm, whom he never names but as "the best of men," was the happiest of his life. And ere it ended, a singular change came over him. He grew most eager to improve his mind. He had found cause to blush, more than once, at his want of knowledge upon matters with which many of his age were familiar, and which he had thrown away the opportunities of acquiring. His ambition and his curiosity were excited.

An essayist remarks: "There are some admirable traits of character that are almost inseparable from the youth of a person destined hereafter to play an illustrious part upon the theatre of mankind. The first of these is curiosity. His mind may be expected to be incessantly at work, pursuing inquiries, accumulating a knowledge, observing, investigating, combining. His curiosity, however, may frequently be found to be an obstinate, self-willed principle, opening veins of its own choosing, wasting itself in oblique, unprofitable speculations, and refusing to bring its energies to bear upon a pursuit pointed out to it by another."

The remark in the last clause of the sentence, had been, till now, precisely applicable to our subject; but now the observation in part of the earlier clause was becoming more pertinent. "The obstinate, self-willed principle," had begun to "open veins of its own choosing," and in its own time and its own way.

Our subject was again at school. He was as solicitous to excel, as he had previously been reluctant even to try. His application was intense. Instead of his prescribed lesson of two or three pages for a recitation, he would possess himself of eight or ten. In nine months he was ahead of all his fellow students. The rapidity of his acquirements and his power of retaining and applying whatever he acquired, gained him universal praise.

Other changes had in the meanwhile arisen in his family, which presently forced his pursuits and prospects into a new and unexpected direction.

CHAPTER III.

The father of our subject had again married. His affairs had improved; but, having a large family, he had thought it expedient to take a partner for their guardianship and that of his establishment.

The own sister of our subject's father had resided fifteen years under his roof, and the children had ever looked up to her and loved her as a mother. A new queen of the little realm was very likely to be as distasteful to her as to her departed sister's offspring. Even without reason, there *will* be such repugnances in such cases.

The stepmother in question is represented as having been some five-and-thirty years of age, the daughter of a very worthy and wealthy mechanic. She had, we learn, seen little of society; but

is said to have been notable, and what the New Englanders term "quite an energetic woman." For high, or fashionable life, she is considered as having entertained no predilection.

We have said enough to enable the reader to infer what consequences might have been expected from the introduction of a paramount influence so novel into a family which had been reared upon a system not likely to be acceptable to the power that now prevailed.

It had, of course, become the duty of the new stepmother to regulate her household.

Our subject evinced a strong desire to obtain a presentation for the military school at West Point. But his stepmother had made up her mind about him, and how he ought to be disposed of; and she concurred with the father, or, perhaps, was his first prompter, in objecting to the son's wish. Thwarted in this aspiration, he now entreated to be entered at Captain Partridge's Military Institute; but the second request, if possible, was more strenuously resisted than the first. He next pressed to be sent to college; but here, again, the new dynasty at home interposed an inexorable veto.

And here for an instant let us pause in our story, to remark that discolored representations of those incidents — whose blamelessness, as we have stated them without embellishment, will now be obvious to all, — had evidently warped our subject's natural guardians from a true estimate of him; impelling them to look askance and with suspicion at all he said or did. Not a few readers, in reverting to this point of our narrative, after they shall have gone through the whole, will exclaim: "How sagaciously the lad foresaw the career wherein he might have shone! but prejudice had intruded, and how could such a mere boy contend against such odds?" It seems to have been thought certain he would turn out badly, if not forced aside from any course he might select for himself. Shrewdly, indeed, says the moralist: "Calumny is doubly execrable and unmanly, when it attacks the first promising dawnings of youth. A man, sufficiently adult, has attained some strength, and can cope with it. He can plead his own cause. He has tried the passions of men, and the magic of undaunted truth; and uses both as tools, with the powers of which he is acquainted. Beside, a man must expect some time or other to encounter adversity; if he be hardly pressed upon, and unjustly dealt with, his case is indeed worthy of regret; but it is the lot of man, and the condition under which he was born. It is worse than this, when a weak and defenceless youth is made the butt of these attacks; it is more worthy of regret when he is refused the common period of probation, is maimed and dismounted at the very entranceof the course,

and sent to languish long years of a baffled existence, with his limbs already withered and shrunk up by the shocks of calumny. That individuals should be condemned unjustly, is that which ought not to be; that they should be condemned untried, not for what they have done, but for what we presume to foretell they will do, is an aggravation of the calamity.

No doubt both parents decided as they thought for the best; and, if there was any error on their part, it was only one of judgment. The more thrifty policy was now the most eagerly pursued in all the family arrangements, and a scheme presenting readier profit than either of the three proposed by our subject himself, supplanted them all.

At fourteen he was placed in a store belonging to the Union Manufacturing Company, at Marlborough, Connecticut.

Though so different from anything he had desired, our subject devoted himself assiduously to his duties, hoping he might earn his parents' consent to another change, should he petition for one thereafter. But his zeal only riveted him in the place to which he had been consigned against his will. At the end of a year he was considered to have entitled himself to promotion by the company, who transferred him to another, and the most extensive of their establishments. He was made their agent's assistant bookkeeper at Manchester. It was in vain that he intimated his desire to prepare himself for a profession. His parents had concluded for him to remain where he was till the age of twenty-one.

The interval between his age at that time and twenty-one seemed interminable. As if to aggravate his discontent, chance threw Rollin's Ancient History in his way and he devoured it. The illustrious heroes and sages of the olden time were perpetually in his presence. His fancy glowed with longings for a sphere in which he might display Greek and Roman valor, and exercise Greek and Roman fortitude.

Our subject's father had been apprized of his son's uneasiness. Having occasion to visit New York, he thought the treat of a glance at the great city might quiet the lad; and so he made him the companion of his excursion. Only affection could have prompted such a step; but it affords a new evidence that the father, with all his worth, erred in judgment regarding the right course towards his children, and especially towards this one.

Our subject saw New York for the first time. It seemed to him a paradise. When he returned, he had recovered his wonted cheerfulness; the gayety of his childhood had come back to him; but, instead of that devotedness to study and to duty, for which he had been recently conspicuous, all the freaks and follies of his first

school days were acted over again. Six weeks passed thus; at the expiration of which, our subject was missing. Inquiry was awhile fruitless; but at length it came out that the man least suspected about the premises, and one with whom he had ever been in special favor, had conducted him, after sunset, to a stage route, and that he must long ere then have reached the empire city.

It is obvious that our subject's main hope must have been to find some means of gaining the sort of education and profession which he had fruitlessly attempted to obtain through his natural protectors. The small profits of his year's clerkship seemed all-sufficient for every purpose till he could earn a fresh supply. Probably he did not give up his dream of West Point, for we next find him in an Albany steamer, eyeing that post.

On this wild trip to Albany, he chanced to become acquainted with a person by the name of B******. The stranger was self-introduced, being prepossessed in favor of our subject by his appearance and manners. The young traveller, delighted, soon told his story. The two were forthwith intimate.

Most fortunate was the accident, in some respects, for our subject. B****** had seen much of the world; perhaps, at some time, may have suffered from its insincerities; and, in showing and explaining vices and vicious places, added the whole truth and a warning. By a special Providence the youthful adventurer thus seemed preserved through the worst scenes unscathed; and, while his curiosity was satisfied, his Mentor enriched every hour with a moral.

Our subject had now been nearly four weeks absent. At this juncture a friend of his father chanced to meet him with B****** at the hotel, and a caution followed, and an assertion that B****** was a common gambler, and his society a disgrace. The youth was indignant. So far from encouraging him to associate with gamblers, B****** had shown him several of them, enabled him to judge of their allurements; but had invariably so pictured to him the horrors of their wretched lives of fraud and folly, that he could not think of them without a shudder. He told his friend, pertly: "It would be well for you, sir, were you yourself but half as wise and good as B******."

At this time our novice was not aware that B****** had, even as part of an evening's amusement in fashionable life, years before, indulged in games of chance, though he had scrupulously shunned them, under any circumstances, ever since; but even when informed of this, it did not swerve him from a resolution which the contrast between what he had heard and what he had experienced, stamped upon his mind indelibly, namely: always to believe that

the common hue and cry which so often blasts a reputation is stirred up rather by the thirst for mischief than the love of truth; and, therefore, instead of at once destroying the accused, as it is too apt to do, should only stimulate to a severer scrutiny of the accuser and of the accusation. There is some depth in the moral, which gives it the advantage over the received system, whereby the victim is first destroyed, and, when beyond the reach of praise or persecution, honored and pitied as a martyr.

It may be proper to add that the sequel has borne out our subject's favorable estimate of B******, who has since then become the husband of a lady of wealth and high standing and accomplishments, with whom he has for some years maintained and adorned an exalted rank in the best society.

Our subject had begun to discover that it was not the purse of Fortunatus which he had brought with him. His resources were beginning to dwindle. Meanwhile, his father wrote to him in New York, recommending his return to the store; but against this the son argued earnestly, notwithstanding the state of his supplies. After a letter or two, a promise was made to him that he should be allowed to fit himself for college, and subsequently be enabled to receive a college education. This being in entire accordance with his most earnest longings, he repaired with alacrity to an academy which had been agreed upon for him in a town near Hartford.

Here our subject resumed his classical studies vigorously. He labored night and day, and astonished every one with his progress. Three months had glided away insensibly, though not unprofitably, —when, at the quarter's close, he was surprised by a mandate from his father, requiring his return home in the next mail stage.

It was, of course, promptly obeyed.

CHAPTER IV.

Already have we touched upon certain changes in government at the home of our subject. We have mentioned the introduction of a step-mother there; and that she was the utilitarian in family principle, and the disciplinarian in family practice. We have also mentioned that the children over whom she happened to be placed, had been reared with habits and notions of a different order. A step-mother's vocation, where there are any offspring nearly grown, is by no means enviable, even if her tastes and aims

are in entire accordance with those to which the children she must adopt have been accustomed; but where the difference is radical, discomfort can scarcely be avoided, no matter how adroit the management.

Our subject was now sixteen. From the time he lost his mother, he had never dwelt at home. A recall, abrupt as his present one, was by no means calculated to bring him back with a light heart. But even had his predisposition been more favorable, the changes he was destined to encounter surely were enough to make him very wretched.

The family circle, once so happy, had been broken by death; and uncongenial influences had exiled one of the survivors, and seemed to have blighted the rest.

His father's sister, the cherished aunt who had taken his mother's place, was gone to die among strangers. The grave had closed over his youngest brother, and a sister of eight years old, and his eldest sister, a girl of remarkable elegance and amiableness. Four years our subject's senior, she was considered as strongly resembling him in looks and disposition. She was the betrothed of E. B. Stedman, Esquire, a gentleman of fortune and respectability, who will return upon our pages presently. During the six months which preceded this sister's dissolution, her lover watched daily by her side, and, as will be seen, continued the evidences of his affection by kind offices to those dear to her, after she had gone down to the tomb. She, and the then surviving sister, had received their education from Miss Huntley, since still more celebrated as Mrs. Sigourney. Her death was touchingly mourned by that sweet poetess, in the following verses, entitled "THE BURIAL OF THE YOUNG."

THERE was an open grave, — and many an eye
Looked down upon it. Slow the sable hearse
Moved on, as if reluctantly it bore
The young, unwearied form to that cold couch
Which age and sorrow render sweet to man.
— There seemed a sadness in the humid air,
Lifting the long grass from those verdant mounds
Where slumber multitudes.

— There was a train
Of young, fair females, with their brows of bloom
And shining tresses. Arm in arm they came
And stood upon the brink of that dark pit,
In pensive beauty, waiting the approach
Of their companion. She was wont to fly
And meet them, as the gay bird meets the Spring,
Brushing the dew-drop from the morning flowers,
And breathing mirth and gladness. Now she came
With movements fashioned to the deep-toned bell: —

She came with mourning sire, and sorrowing friend,
And tears of those who at her side were nursed
By the same mother.

Ah! and one was there,
Who, ere the fading of the Summer rose,
Had hoped to greet her as his bride. But Death
Arose between them. The pale lover watched
So close her journey through the shadowy vale,
That almost to his heart, the ice of death
Entered from hers. There was a brilliant flush
Of youth about her, — and her kindling eye
Poured such unearthly life, that hope would hang
Even on the Archer's arrow, while it dropped
Deep poison. Many a restless night she toiled
For that slight breath which held her from the tomb,
Still wasting like a snow wreath, which the Sun
Marks for his own on some cool mountain's breast,
Yet spares, and tinges long with rosy light.
—— Oft o'er the musings of her silent couch,
Came visions of that matron form, which bent
With nursing tenderness, to soothe and bless
Her cradle dream: and her emaciate hand
In trembling prayer she raised, that He who saved
The sainted mother, would redeem the child! —
Was the orison lost? Whence then that peace,
So dove-like, settling o'er a soul that loved
Earth and its pleasures? Whence that angel smile
With which the allurements of a world so dear
Were counted and resigned? that eloquence
So fondly urging those whose hearts were full
Of sublunary happiness, to seek
A better portion? Whence that voice of joy
Which from the marble lip in life's last strife
Burst forth, to hail her everlasting home?
— Cold reasoners! be convinced. And when ye stand
Where that fair brow and those unfrosted locks
Return to dust, — where the young sleeper waits
The resurrection morn, — O, lift the heart
In praise to Him, who gave the victory.*

The removal of our subject's aunt, and the loss of one brother and two sisters, left but five in his father's family; consisting of himself, of the only surviving daughter, a lovely girl then just eighteen, and of three younger brothers.

The standing of our subject in the estimation of his step-mother, had evidently been established prior to his recall. It had no doubt influenced the objections to his various plans. When, recently, he was permitted to pursue a course more to his taste, it had probably caused the sudden interdict upon that course. The opinion of him whence these movements arose, had emanated from mistake and misrepresentation. Subsequent occurrences were by no means calculated to work any change; they were more likely to confirm the

* See Note A.

mis-judgment. For example: If, when almost an infant, he had been unruly; if then he had taken a sly revenge upon one of his comrades, by squirting ink over him and spoiling a suit of clothes; and later in his boyhood had assisted in robbing an orchard, and was about to beat its owner, upon whom he was unable to wreak revenge, and so vented his malice upon his unoffending horse; had he not done worse as he grew older and ought to have known better? Had he not ran away from his store and got intimate with a common gambler and corrupter of morals, in New York? He had resisted every wise plan for his good, always trying to supplant what his real well-wishers proposed, by some visionary scheme of his own. He must be sobered.

In pursuance of this policy, no sooner had our subject regained his long-forsaken home, than every effort was made to overcome his resolve that he would obtain an education, if possible. The superior profits of returning to the store at Marlborough were set before him. When it was found that he was not to be convinced against his will, he was warned to dismiss extravagant expectations; was lectured upon the necessity of not rendering himself a burden upon his parents, and informed that all he could ever expect them to expend upon him in any way, was exactly such and such a sum in total, no more. At length it was determined that if he must devote himself to study, he should have a teacher at home, where he could be looked after.

No doubt there was sound good sense in these prudential arrangements; aware, as was the step-mother, that some twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars, and the yearly salary of thirteen hundred more, though a fortune quite sufficient for a respectable establishment in a city like Hartford, would dwindle to a pittance if ever it should become divided as the sole dependence among a family like that of her husband. He, on the other hand, thought only of his new companion's excellent qualities; and felicitating himself on having acquired so discreet and vigilant a guardian for his children and for his and their best interests, acquiesced, passively, in whatever she decreed.

Our subject and the surviving sister whom we have mentioned, were the only members of the household, old enough to think or speak for themselves. It was scarcely to be expected that either of them could appreciate their step-mother's forecast. The sister, especially, might naturally be mortified at finding herself cut off from indulgences and opportunities of seeing and being seen, which were freely granted to other young ladies by parents, even sometimes of inferior standing; and our subject, much as he writhed under his own privations, writhed still more under those of his sis-

ter, separated at once, as she was, from the counsels of their affectionate aunt, and the enjoyments of other young ladies of her age and rank. Of all beneath the father's roof, this pair, alone, could thoroughly sympathize with each other. The girl, though sensitive, was proud; and though she felt deeply, she felt in silence. She comforted her brother when she saw him twitted and misunderstood; and he himself endeavored to bury chagrin in devotedness to study.

There might have been injustice in the impression of both these young persons that their step-mother's remarks and exactions were unkind; but it is at the same time always unfortunate, in such cases, when an irksome policy fails to be divested, by some regard to temper and circumstances, of aught which makes it sting.

In the midst of this state of silent estrangement, the young lady is, either directly or indirectly asked whether, being old enough to take care of herself, she ought not rather to earn her livelihood, than to be thinking about dress and frivolous parties, and so on. And then follow remarks on the narrow means of the establishment, and how a girl of her abilities should really have too much self-respect to allow herself to remain a charge upon so small a fortune, when other girls can make fortunes of their own.

Though sound and unexceptionable reasoning, it could not be so understood by her to whom it was addressed, and still less by our subject, "when thus set down." He was cut to the very soul by what he regarded as an indignity to his only remaining sister. Her silence, while her heart was breaking, touched him more thrillingly than any words could have done. He had no power to interfere; but, if the want of means were the pretext for urging his sister forth to a life of labor, he was resolved that he himself would no longer make those so termed small means smaller. He resolved forthwith to quit his father's house, and never more to be indebted to him or his for a support.

We have said that Mr. Stedman, the gentleman to whom our subject's elder sister had been affianced, would shortly return upon our pages. We now recur to him for the purpose of mentioning that to him out subject unbosomed himself without reserve. As Mr. Stedman had been almost an inmate in the family, there remained scarcely any thing to be explained to him. He placed fifty dollars in his young friend's hands, exclaiming: "Should you ever need assistance, let me know; and while I have a dollar, I'll divide it with you."

His sister was the only one, excepting Mr. Stedman, to whom our young adventurer disclosed his resolution. They parted sadly, and they met no more.

CHAPTER V.

The sudden disappearance of our subject from his father's house, would naturally cause much clamor against him. No one beneath the paternal roof could fully understand the cause, excepting his sister; and the very confidence reposed in her, made her afraid to speak for him, lest she should betray more than might be prudent. Hence, he was freely denounced by all the gossips, male and female; and his younger brothers were instructed to hold him in brotherly contempt.

Meanwhile our subject had found his way to Baltimore. He was seventeen, — almost penniless, and entirely unfriended, when he arrived there. But it was not long before he found employment as a teacher of mathematics in a ladies' seminary; to which he soon added further occupation as assistant in a high-school.

The young instructer was daily forming friends, and growing more and more in favor. This was at the time when Jackson and Adams were rival candidates for the Presidency, and every head and tongue was in a blaze with politics. At the hotel where our subject resided, some of his associates would often gather in one of those public rooms, which are frequented in such establishments by persons who like to discuss great men and measures. Another inmate of the hotel, an elderly canal contractor by the name of Everett, often appeared on these occasions, and took part in the debates. One evening our subject chanced to enter in the midst of a sharp argument between the old gentleman and some half a dozen violent and clamorous opponents. Ever on the alert to fight for the weaker side, especially when warred against by odds, the young teacher took up the cudgels for the almost discomfited contractor, and conquered. Hence they became personally acquainted, and, meeting constantly, grew quite intimate.

One day the old canal contractor invited our subject to go out with him, and examine what is called the "deep cut," a few miles from Baltimore, on the road to Washington.

While running over this extensive job, which had then only been surveyed, the young teacher amused himself by taking off the numbers of feet down to the level, as marked by the engineers. Learning how much a yard Mr. Everett was to receive for excavation, he readily calculated the sum to which he would be entitled for the entire job, placing it in its different forms of supposition that there would be a certain portion rock, loose stone, gravel, hard-pan and loose earth.

The old gentleman appeared much struck with this spirit of observation and celerity at figures. Though among the first who had put a spade into the great Erie canal, at New York, and though in the canal business he had made a fortune, yet all his computations had been formed slowly and roughly in the head; and he now felt the value of such power of producing them swiftly and with exactitude on paper.

After their return, Mr. Everett informed our subject that he had one of the most extensive jobs of the canal on the north branch of the Susquehanna offered to him. He could not be in both places at once; — he therefore invited his young friend to take charge of it, and offered him a very handsome salary.

The good fortune was so entirely unexpected, that it for a moment struck the young teacher dumb with wonder and delight. But after some consideration, having expressed his earnest thanks, he added, that never having even so much as seen either a railroad or a canal, he felt himself utterly unqualified for the undertaking, which, therefore, he must decline. But Mr. Everett again and again resumed the subject. Spiriting him up to self-confidence, the canal contractor declared that he himself would take all risks, and go the young man must. At length, after giving proper instructions, the contracter placed eight hundred and fifty dollars in our subject's hands, and with a "Good by," — "Let me hear from you, my son," and "God bless you!" — the young adventurer started in his new and unexpected pursuit. Speaking of this strange chance to a friend, — "I had little confidence," exclaimed he, "in my ability to do the commission justice; but I had the most fixed determination to devote my whole soul to the honor and interest of my excellent employer; and I could not but exult proudly and gratefully in contrasting the coldness and detraction and opposition I had ever encountered in my birth-place and my home, with the generosity and faith of strangers."

His destination was at a place called Longshores, about fifteen miles below Wilkesbarre, on the north branch of the Susquehanna. He found the surrounding country mountainous and quite a wilderness. No move had been made to start the works. The engineers had only driven a few stakes to mark the spot where they were to be commenced. A spur of the mountain juts there to the river's side. The contract was for three quarters of a mile. Along the river, and into the water, there was to be built with stone, an apron eighteen feet wide; and thereupon a wall twenty-two feet high; to constitute the first foundation of the canal. For this end, the side of the mountain had to be pulled down and many

other incumbrances removed. Every species of obstacle and labor entered into the stupendous work.

Though tall, and with the aspect of one-and-twenty, the Hercules of this toil was then but just eighteen. In less than ten days, his sheds were built, his tools all purchased and delivered, and thirty men at work; and, in less than a month, a hundred. They were divided into bands of from twelve to twenty, each with its foreman, or leader.

The section was universally pronounced the best managed on the line, and our subject was its sole master, except in one instance, and the only one which proved a failure, and which happened thus:

He was a favorite with every engineer, excepting one; and this one, having taken offence at some advice he proffered, resolved at the earliest opportunity to thwart "the stripling" as he termed him, and such an opportunity presented itself ere long, as follows:

Our subject having thoroughly examined the margin of the river which was to receive the work, objected to a spot of about two hundred yards, as being of a soil too springy and moving to sustain a massive wall of two-and-twenty feet in height for any length of time. He was persuaded that it must be swept off by any strong freshet, and advised that the cut should be made further into the bank. The engineer in question would not be persuaded; so this part of the work stood still till Mr. Everett came. On hearing the objections, he admitted their force; but the engineer, persisting, appealed to higher powers; and the wall arose on the frail foundation and was carried away by the first rush of the swollen stream, and was afterwards re-erected precisely as "the stripling" had, in the first instance, counselled.

Seven months employed in this enterprise enabled our subject to restore Mr. Stedman's fifty dollars, and to retain two hundred. The most difficult part of the work intrusted to him was finished, and what remained to be done was in a train which required no special care. It was now December. The cold had become unusually bitter. The duties required exposure to every kind of weather, from day-break to night-fall, and our subject's health began to suffer. His recent occupations and his success in them, strengthened his desire for such acquirements as might better qualify him either for an engineer or for a teacher; and he resolved to devote the sum he had earned to a winter's study. His old friend the contractor urged him to remain upon a higher salary, but his plan was settled; and they parted, with mutual regret and an affectionate farewell.

CHAPTER VI.

Our subject hastened to Wilmington, Massachusetts, and placed himself under the tuition of President Fisk, late of the Wesleyan College, Middletown, Connecticut.

We have omitted for some time to speak of the young adventurer's family affairs.

The sister whom we last named had lost no time in disembarrassing the paternal fortune of the cost of her support, and had provided herself with employ away from home. Her communications with her brother were constant; but she never named her own affairs, and he imagined she was happy;—or at least as nearly so as circumstances would permit. Her reserve had been dictated by a desire not to dishearten her brother, by adding the sting of her sorrows to what he himself was suffering.

Suddenly, however, he ceased to hear from his darling sister. He had now been some months at the University. At length came the appalling explanation of her silence.

The uncomplaining but high-spirited and acutely sensitive girl, took a morbid view of her doom to labor, and regarded it as humiliating, till at length her fortitude and her mind gave way, and she sought refuge in self-destruction. The silence which had surprised her brother was explained. It was the silence of the grave.*

Our subject's very soul was paralyzed. He flung aside his books, forsook his college. His ambition was quenched. Of the future he felt reckless. The word "home" filled him with bitterness. He resolved to quit his country, and pass the rest of his days in some foreign land. But how should he get there? He had not one hundred dollars in the world, and his friends were not likely to assist him in such a project;—they would not comprehend the feelings which prompted it.

In this distracted mood, his eye rested on a Navy Department Order in a newspaper, to prepare the Frigate Constitution for a Mediterranean cruise. The idea of the Mediterranean, and its classic shores and waters, and of so fine a ship, excited his imagination. Could any opportunity more eligible arise for escaping from the native land which had now become to him so desolate?

He hurried to Norfolk. How was he to get attached to the Constitution? He was resolved to embark, even should he obtain no better place than that of cabin boy.

Among the chance acquaintances formed by our subject at Nor-

* Sarah Ann Colt died from taking arsenic, in 1829, at the age of twenty-one.

folk, there was one who had a few weeks previously left the Post Office Department and a lucrative salary, in Washington. This person had entered the service as a Marine, and was destined for the Mediterranean cruise of the Constitution. He was a man of intelligence. He said there were many such in his corps. He represented the duties as light; — the most irksome of them being to stand guard daily for a prescribed number of hours.

Our subject was pleased with this man's conversation. He was dazzled by the expectations it excited. He thought that, at the most, three or four months would land him on a foreign shore. The scene would then be changed, and his perturbed spirit more calm. By that time, he could judge and act more understandingly.

We now find our subject enlisted as a Marine, and anxiously awaiting the departure of the Constitution for a Mediterranean cruise.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE was something bordering on delirium in the last step taken by our subject. So there was in a project which he thought it would promote. He purposed going to Constantinople, — thence to Alexandria, — thence to Calcutta, — thence to Canton; — crossing the Pacific and returning homeward through South America. But he had never taken into calculation his want of money and resources even where he was known; and how still more hopeless his condition was likely to prove among foreigners in far distant climes. Nor had the restraint which would be imposed on him in his new vocation ever suggested itself.

He was now involved beyond recall; and he began to awaken to the realities of his situation.

The entire change in his daily food was the first dissipator of his dreams. The gentleman's son had heard nothing of the coarse fare of the marine. Still, the novelty of the scene and of the society, diverted his attention from his sorrows. He gained a deep insight into life through the narratives of a corps made up of every description of character, mostly foreign, — there were French, and there were Germans, and there were English and Irish. Numbers of them had seen battles, and bore scars, and took infinite pride in telling their escapes and exploits. These were invariably the leaders of hoaxes and coarse frolics of every sort; and if, as they termed it, they could "get a green-horn in hockelty," they were

enraptured. Their sports were uncouth enough, — sometimes, to the growl of a base viol, they would dance; part of them putting on their shirts outside of their ordinary dress, to represent themselves as the belles of the assembly: — sometimes, they invited the jack-tars to join them in a general masquerade, where they would raise a sham row, in which it was invariably contrived for the marine to come off best, and to get the sailor grotesquely tied up with his own ropes; — and sometimes they would congregate around a would-be hero, and decoy him into a vainglorious recital of the wonders he had achieved, in battles fought long ere he was born, — which, after being listened to with mock interest and admiration, were rounded off with an exposure and a general laugh.

The only trouble our novice came near encountering during his term of service, happened the very first night he went on duty. The officer of the day taking his rounds, approached the new sentry's post and as lightly as possible, thinking, it would seem, from his being so quiet, to surprise him sleeping. It was very dark, and he could not distinguish who was coming. Demanding the countersign, it was not so given as to be fully caught. The young sentry raised his musket a little, and then sharply bringing it down upon his hand, so as to make the welkin ring, advanced a step and shouted, "Out with it!" in a tone stentorian enough to be heard half-way across the Navy Yard. The pass word was given, and the officer went on. The next day our subject was told that such freaks would not answer; but as he was only a recruit, and this the first offence, he would be let off for once.

As the excitement which had led him among these scenes began to die away, our subject ceased to feel any interest in this sort of life; — indeed, it had already begun to look, not only like a waste of time, but a waste of powers and chances. With this rising distaste, came a violent fever. He was some weeks in the Hospital. When sufficiently recovered to venture out, he found that the Constitution had departed for the Mediterranean, and that every comrade for whom he cared, had left the station.

He began to consider how he was to get over his thraldom. He had enlisted for a specified term. He could only be set free by a regular discharge. There seemed but one course. — He wrote a long letter to the Captain in command, soliciting a discharge.

The officers of the station had already obtained glimpses of our subject's information and capabilities. The letter confirmed these favorable impressions; but it only increased the desire to retain him. He was promised advancement to the station of Sergeant Crisp, whose term of service was about to expire. Accordingly, he was directed to assist the Sergeant in his duties, which consisted princi-

pally in the superintendence of dealing out rations and clothing, and in copying letters and other writings at the Colonel's office. He availed himself of the opportunity which this afforded, to repeat his petition for a discharge; but he was told that it could only come from Colonel Henderson, the superior officer at Washington.

Col. Anderson, however, then Commandant of the station, and whom our subject always honored as one of the best of men, from time to time questioned him upon his family and his objects, and the cause of his enlisting; but, upon these points, there was no satisfaction ever given to any inquirer.

The good Colonel offered him many indulgences; and, among them, liberty to draw his rations, and to board out of the barracks; but his heart was set on freedom; he coveted nothing short of it.

In the conversations to which we have referred, our young marine had gathered what the Colonel had taken him to be; and what sort of person was supposed to be his father.

He had been induced to look upon his detention as irregular; having been told that no enlistment of any one under age could be sustained by law. — But there were only two avenues for escape; — desertion, or a suit. — He would not attempt the one, and he had not the means nor the patience for the other. As, however, he thought his discharge kept from him by a wrong, he resolved to seek the shortest cut to it by a stratagem. It was as follows:

Having possessed himself of the Colonel's fancied discoveries regarding him and his family, he shaped a letter in accordance with them, from an imaginary parent. It was replete with solicitude for his beloved son, and with touching supplications that the dear truant might be restored to those whom his absence had rendered wretched. It is said to have represented that the name of John C. Colt, under which the lad had enlisted, was an assumed one; and the name signed by the pretended father was Alexander Hamilton, and the address Ware Village, Massachusetts. Our subject sent this epistle to a friend in Massachusetts, explaining his actual situation, and entreating him to make a copy and forward it through the Post Office, as directed, to Colonel Anderson, Commander of the Gosport Marine Station, at Norfolk, Virginia.

About three weeks subsequently, our subject was summoned to the Colonel's quarters.

"Well, young man, I have received a letter from your father. He wishes me to give you your discharge, and to send you home. Would you like to go?"

"Why, Sir, I think I should."

"I cannot do this myself. I shall have to send this letter to Washington."

The return mail brought the authority required. In about a week the regular packet was to sail for New York, and when the day for its departure arrived, our subject was again sent for by the Colonel. After much kind advice, the discharge was given, and our subject took his leave, after three months' service,—eleven days and two nights of which he had been on duty, and more than half the rest of the time upon the sick list in the Hospital.

When the first flush of giddy triumph at the success of this stratagem had passed away, some compunction came over our subject for having put, even what he thought circumstances rendered an innocent delusion, upon so worthy a man. But the adventure of the marines had begun, as it ended, in madness. His real sentiments on the means he employed to get over it, are probably contained in the remarks against "a hoax" already quoted in our Introduction; and doubtless he very early resolved to make the consequences only a warning and incentive to a steadier and a wiser course thereafter.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was necessary for our subject now to seek some employ which would supply him with immediate resources. It had evidently been his leading object to qualify himself at once for a teacher and a civil engineer. Experience had shown him that in either capacity he might expect to make reputation and money. But he had felt the disadvantage of his inadequate preparation for high and permanent success, in either, and he knew that it could only be repaired by a course of study so expensive as to be entirely out of the question in the reduced state of his finances. He was therefore compelled to direct his views to some other point.

There was a lawyer in New York of considerable standing, and related to our subject's family. He offered himself to the lawyer as a clerk, for one year, at a salary, and to enter himself as a law student. The offer was accepted. We now find him in the office of Dudley Selden, Esq., at New York, whose name, so creditably to his heart and talents, has been since connected with our subject's history.

Although he took his initiation as a student, our subject had no fixed purpose regarding that profession;—he assumed his present place to meet his immediate wants, and probably meant to defer any decision as to the future, until he could ascertain whe-

ther he possessed the peculiar aptitudes indispensable for success in the practice of law.

It was not long before Mr. Selden found himself agreeably mistaken about his kinsman, in whom he had been led to expect a wrong-head and an idler. On the contrary, he found the new student always the first at his office and the last to quit it. Every moment not engaged by his other duties, was devoted to study. Ere the year ended, he was familiar with Blackstone, Kent, and the statute laws of the State.

Meanwhile, the tragical end of our subject's sister, the circumstances of his own disappearance, and the entire absence of all information concerning him and his career, may have awakened some self-examination on the part of those who ruled at his father's, as to the discreetness of the course which they had pursued. Apparently, also, others discovered that even our subject had been "more sinned against than sinning." His re-appearance, and his installation at his relation's office, was consequently heard of with much satisfaction. He was invited back to his home affectionately. He could not, however, conquer his repugnance to visit a spot which had been to him the source of so much anguish. But with his friend, Mr. Stedman, he communicated freely. Appreciating his long-cherished aspiration to be qualified for a civil engineer, which would, of course, include qualification for a teacher, that gentleman, it was agreed, should assist him in obtaining a year's course of mathematics at the university of Vermont.

When, to his employer, at the expiration of his stipulated year, he announced his intention of making this remove, — "Your father has sent me one hundred dollars for you," observed Mr. Selden. "Give it back to him, with my thanks," replied our subject. He has said that he could not, even destitute as he was, bear to receive supplies from a fountain which had been sealed to his poor sister.

At the Vermont University our subject was an inmate at the house of President Marsh, to whom he became much attached. During his stay, he thoroughly mastered the theory of his designed profession. He also became distinguished in a debating society of the institution, the members of which had divided into two parties, respectively calling themselves the Regulars and the Practicals; the former supporting customs established in times past;— the latter, advocating accommodation of customs to the demands of times present. — It was the scope of the associates to oppose the institutions's old Phi Beta Kappa Society. — Our subject led the Practicals, and obtained a controlling influence in the elections; but he never permitted it to advance him personally. In his selections

for the tickets, however, his choice was invariably judicious; and in one of them he had the satisfaction of raising to the Presidency, his most particular friend in the establishment, Robert Trumble.

These points would seem frivolous, except as illustrations of character;—for which end alone, we offer them. They rendered our subject an unequalled favorite with his comrades, who greatly exulted in the success with which he led them on against the old Phi Beta Kappa.

So happy was he here, and so successful, that he would have striven to remain, but for an attack of bleeding at the lungs, which was pronounced symptomatic of consumption, that had carried off a sister and many of his relations on the mother's side. On this account he was advised to relax in his studies; to seek a less confining scene. But the occupation of an engineer was considered too full of severe exposure for him,—just then at least. Some other ought to be chosen.

An old friend happening to pass at the juncture, on his way to a trading expedition up the lakes, proposed flattering terms of partnership to him, which he accepted. This was in 1831.

Eighteen months in this pursuit, improved his health,—made him familiar with the great lakes and the surrounding country, and put him in possession of a supply of money.

The purse of our subject had thus become replenished, at the time when a great flood of emigration and a great spirit of speculation was pouring into Michigan. It was then a territory. Rapidly filling up, it must soon become a State. Our subject, weary of wandering, began to long for something like the quietness of an independent home;—to be settled down, in some pursuit which would confirm his returning health, and leave him leisure to complete his favorite studies. Wherever he went, he heard of Michigan. "It is the best place in the world," said every one, "to settle in." "To grow up with such a place," exclaimed many, "would, to any young man of enterprise and talent, be certain fortune and fame."

Our subject took leave of his partner and went to Michigan.

CHAPTER IX.

Our subject soon found a spot for sale at the government price in the new territory, which flattered his fancy with a realization of all the comforts and delights it had promised. At the head of

what is called Gooden's lake, on the river Raisin, then deeply within the wilderness, he came to a beautiful opening, variegated with clumps and small forests, as if by the most exquisite taste in landscape gardening, and at the northern extremity of which sparkled from fifteen to twenty acres of water, replete with excellent fish. Contiguous to this lake some hundred acres of land appeared to have been expressly fashioned for a pasture and a deer-park; and its vicinity seemed to abound in soil admirably adapted for all other purposes of farming.

Forthwith our subject purchased this paradise. After the practiced pioneer's manner, he began by cutting down the first tree; and then by preparing his log-hut.

But our adventurer had never taken into his calculation, the penalty which almost every pioneer is destined to pay for intruding upon nature's vast solitudes. Though the land he had selected was by no means ill chosen, better might have been found; and he had yet to learn that lakes like the one which had tempted his eye, and given such beauty to his seclusion, were avoided by the more instructed as prolific of disease. But this he presently did learn, and bitterly, from experience. When summer came on, he saw in all who resided in his neighborhood the ghastliness of ghosts. He had brought with him the seeds of one sickness, and he began now to suffer by the inroads of another. The bleeding at his lungs returned, and every alternate day came on, for one half hour, a shivering ague, and during the next, a burning fever. His strength of body forsook him, and he began to lose his strength of mind; and, for the first time, almost to despair.

His physicians assured him that he could have no hope of recovery but from a change of place and mode of life. What was he to do? Nearly all his means were invested in his recently acquired abode, which was so endeared to him by its beauty, and by the dreams it had kindled of the future, when he should be the great and the rich man of the new State, that he could not bear to think of parting with it. But he soon discovered that he must surrender either his new home or all chance of restoration to health.

He found the sacrifice heart-breaking, but being a question of life and death, he yielded to the necessity of making it. Steamboats daily brought emigrants to the State, in pursuit of such places, and he had scarcely wrung from himself his own consent one week, ere he had disposed of his place advantageously.

He had been advised for a while to abstain from all labor, and to make a voyage to the West Indies; but having long desired to see the southern part of his own country, he determined to leave for Cleaveland on the first good steamer, and proceed down through

the State of Ohio by the canal, thence to Cincinnati, and so on down the river to New Orleans.

With broken health and a heavy heart, he bade adieu to all the promised delights of his sylvan home in Michigan.

CHAPTER X.

Our subject gave his principal attention for some time to his health, which presently began to improve. He had not long quitted Michigan, ere the fever and ague left him. During the winter he visited all the Mississippi valley, Florida and Texas; and six months' travel revived his strength, but nearly emptied his pocket. When he returned from Texas to New Orleans, he was almost moneyless, and found a new effort indispensable to replenish his treasury.

He had been advised to direct his attention to mercantile pursuits; and had occasionally looked into the works on book-keeping, for the purpose of gathering some idea of the qualifications he would require. But his small experiment at Manchester and Marlborough, though in a line so very different, had not left him with any great love for such occupation. Still, the idea of seeking probationary employ in a commercial house, had more than once glanced through his mind.

When he regained New Orleans, however, he found the stirring season so far on the decline, that there appeared little, if any, probability of his obtaining that sort of occupation there for some time. In a very few months, the southern cities would be deserted, by not only business, but business-men.—What was to be done?—He would soon be in want, and could not wait.

He had learned something of chemistry. He had some adroitness in showing experiments. He had seen the effect of lectures thus illustrated. Perhaps, indeed, a city so fond of pleasure might not care much for science; but novelty in such a place is apt to be irresistible; and might not a novelty of some usefulness, find as much favor as those of none? At any rate, it was worth the trial.

Our subject prepared himself with lectures on chemistry; and then hired a fine hall for the purpose of giving them, in the American part of the city, at the corner of Camp and Poydras streets.

For three weeks he lectured there, with some praise, but very little patronage, and began to find himself in debt. How was he to procure emancpation?

The room he hired had been fitted up that season for masquerade balls, in opposition to those in the Creole quarter. These masquerades at a certain season are great affairs in New Orleans, especially among the French, some of whom looked with much distaste upon the American attempt at rivalry. Besides, the site was a stormy one, and experiment upon experiment at this species of entertainment there having only ended in riot, and sometimes, perhaps, bloodshed, after several failures, under several directors, at length the authorities had inexorably denied any further license for them. But though the walls bore the prints of pistol shots, the place had never been opened for a masquerade without producing profit.

It occurred to our subject to seek relief through this resource. He no sooner named his purpose to his friends, than all combined to represent it as replete with danger, especially to one so spirited as they knew him to be, even should he obtain leave. Still, he proceeded; and having satisfied the Mayor that he would be discreet, and see to the preservation of peace and order, a license was granted to him for one night.

Nothing but a stout heart and strong necessity could have sustained any one in such a resolution, under such circumstances. With our subject especially, there was the additional difficulty of an entire want of knowledge regarding the conduct of public amusements; above all, of this nature. But he gathered around him a secret police of his intimates, all prepared to repress any attempt at disturbance, and he himself appeared every where among the throng, winning confidence and good will by the impartiality of his civilities, and, by his firm and resolute deportment, commanding deference. The gang by whom the previous assemblies had been disturbed, appeared; but they presently found that though they would not be provoked, they were not feared, and seemed to honor the man who was bold enough to admit them without quailing, while he watched them without remission.

The satisfactory result of one night, led to a renewal of the license for five more in succession, when the masquerade season closed by law. Our subject found himself now out of debt, and with thirteen hundred dollars in his pocket. The heat having become intolerable, he returned up the Mississippi and the Ohio, resting at Louisville, in Kentucky, where he remained through the summer of 1834.

CHAPTER XI.

It may be remembered that our subject had distinguished himself in the debating society at Vermont, and had recently lectured in New Orleans. Perhaps these experiments may have encouraged him to expect success should he cultivate his talent as a public speaker.

It may also be remembered that his first profits after he started in life for himself were derived from teaching mathematics; and that he was always a pretty good accountant, and had lately looked into book-keeping, with reference to his scheme of entering with some merchant.

These views may have combined to concentrate his attention upon the study of book-keeping, either with the project to practice it, or to teach it, or to lecture on it,—one of the three, or all three together. Be it as it may, when at Louisville this summer, he devoted himself exclusively to the subject; and at last struck upon the idea of the new work illustrative of it, that has since become so well and so favorably known, and for which he now began to make collections and notes.

In the autumn, he formed a co-partnership in speculation, with Mr. Charles S. Marue, with whom he went to New Orleans. Though both were inexperienced in such matters, they contrived during their connection to realize some trifle beyond their expenses; but our subject kept his mind intent upon his scheme for a work and lectures on Book-keeping, and by the summer of 1835, had amassed all the requisite material. He found, however, that to publish the result of his labor would have been impracticable, as it must have covered, at least, fifteen hundred quarto pages. For students it would require condensation; and how was he to ascertain exactly what portion of it would suffice for their instruction?

The answer arose to him at once,—by teaching. He might, in watching the questions, and ascertaining the requirements, of some few classes, form a sufficient estimate of what was likely to satisfy any demand. Being thus directed by teaching to the suitable points for selection out of his large stock, to form an elementary volume, he could readily re-condense them into a bird's-eye glance, so as to form lectures.

All these objects he accomplished. At first he became a teacher of Book-keeping; presently afterwards a lecturer, and, in the meanwhile, went on with his preparations for the press. In these

pursuits he passed the summers of 1835, 1836 and 1837, in the West, — principally in Ohio and Kentucky ; devoting the winters to trade and speculation in the South. These were the most prosperous years of his life, and, perhaps, — with the exception of the year of labor on his uncle's farm, which has been already described in our second chapter, — approached nearer than any other to being happy ones.

His new pursuit threw him into a new circle, where, though the same passions were in action which are to be found in the highest sphere, they presented themselves in so plain a garb as must somewhat obscure their dignity from the ken of an unpracticed observer.

When we read in ancient biography, or history, or poetry, of one who springs forward to rescue another of inferior means of self-defence from personal peril, every heart warms, and we exclaim, honor to the hero ! — It is the ambition for this praise which armed the knights of ages somewhat less remote, and which excites the modern reader, in recalling their exploits, to cry, — oh, for the days of chivalry ! — And when eloquence arrays its magic against the persecution of helplessness, and philanthropy descends to the prison dungeon, or to the cells of squalid misery, to redeem the suffering from fortune's malice, we exclaim, — the Spirit of God is not yet extinct in the bosom of degenerate human nature!

But there are actions, emanating from the self-same principle, and entitled to the same character of applause with those which give fame to the hero and the philanthropist, but which, because performed in humbler spheres, and exercised in cases for which the sympathy is extremely limited, are listened to with a smile, and pronounced upon with a sneer.

In the unpretending circle of our subject at the present date of his story, jealousies were as rife as in the loftiest. The animosities which drive insects to war in the drop of water that must be almost miraculously enlarged even to enable us to discover its contents by the solar microscope, are not less active and deadly than those which armed the Titans.

While our subject was lecturing at Louisville, an itinerant writing master made his appearance there, with vast pretensions. A modest young man, who had been some time in the city, had obtained by his industry and sterling qualifications, very respectable encouragement ; but when the stranger came, and vaunted of his achievements, and displayed some eighteen or twenty, certainly unsurpassable specimens of his own work, to tempt employ, — the young man began to tremble, and with reason — for many of his pupils went over to the foe. Not satisfied with this, the intruder was ambitious to usurp the rest ; and he began a most wanton attack upon

his predecessor, with the amiable view, as it is phrased in those regions, of "running him out of the city," and so monopolizing the entire field. Our subject perceived that the odds were against the merit, — and he flew to the rescue of the weaker, because the worthier. The inflated assailant now turned ferociously upon his new antagonist, and published a violent tirade against our subject's system of Book-keeping; and on the same evening, by way of crowing over the supposed extermination of all competitors and criticism, he fills his windows with brilliant transparencies and inscriptions, and among them, "Terms for a course of Lessons, Ten Dollars:" — "I have taught upwards of twelve thousand:" — and so on. A satire, and an exposure by our subject, in the next newspaper, ended the war at once, and restored the failing business of the modest and ingenuous person, whom he had upheld against a reckless upstart. It was presently discovered that even the specimens by which this interloper had gained attention, were not his own, but had been left behind by a master of great talent, then recently deceased, whose name was Gad Ely. — The boys hooted the pretender through the streets, crying, "Fire-Light Humbug!" at his heels, — and he and his transparencies soon became invisible.

But an adventure of another description spread itself over the present three years of our subject's eventful history; and as it was rather out of the common order, and will take some little time in the telling, we will make it the subject of a distinct chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

The beautiful city of Cincinnati, was one of those in which a portion of the three sweet summers passed. Here there was an establishment which is still, we believe, in existence, known as "Frank's Museum." It belonged to a person possessing much taste for the fine arts, and acquirements seldom found in such a station. The collections, — the beautiful views from the galleries in front, — and the conversation of the owner, attracted our subject thither frequently. The owner's story, too, was full of interest. He was a Norwegian officer, banished from his native land in consequence of a revolutionary intrigue: taking refuge in ours, his indigence had forced him upon this mode of turning his talents to account, and, by degrees, he had created and accumulated an exhibition of great value.

There was an organ in this establishment, and sometimes crowds

would gather there to hear its music, aided by that of a sweet, rich, though somewhat melancholy and uninstructed voice. It was the voice of a female of one and twenty. Her form of the medium height, was perfectly symmetrical, though inclining to fulness. She had the foot of a Cinderella; and hands and fingers long and exquisitely turned. To a fine bust, she added a countenance stamped with the heroic; — the forehead broad and high, — the complexion animated and transparent, — the eye large, full, black and fiery; the hair very dark brown and luxuriant.

Our subject was enraptured by the beauty and manner of this girl, and found no difficulty in engaging her in conversation; probably in consequence of her knowing him to be a frequent visiter. But he was not satisfied with this. He felt assured there was something remarkable about her, and he did not rest till he learned her whole story.

She was the Norwegian's step-daughter. Although so young, she had already been twice wedded. Her father was a Kentucky slave-trader. He died young, leaving a widow and three daughters, of whom this was the eldest. A considerable fortune left by him to these children, soon disappeared, and the widow married the foreigner, whose misfortunes had established him in this Museum.

The girl's name was Frances Anne. At fifteen she had eloped with a gambler and married him. After two years of wandering in alternations from wretchedness to splendor, and from splendor back to wretchedness, finding her attempts fruitless to reclaim her partner from vices of which she had no suspicion until it was too late, she obtained a divorce by law, which was presently followed by a divorce by death. Shortly afterwards she met a young German of considerable wealth and rank. This person had neither much of her love nor even of her esteem; but her family thought so advantageous an opportunity for improving her condition ought not to be slighted, and persuaded her to become his wife. In three years of reckless luxury, her second husband's fortune being wasted, he was compelled to return to his parents in Germany for assistance, leaving her and their infant child behind to await the result of his mission. The parents were aristocratic, and on discovering that their son had married obscurely, reproachfully offered him his choice, either to remain under the paternal roof in affluence, renouncing all thoughts of America, and wife and child, — or with a pittance to depart to them for ever. He returned to America. Shortly after his arrival, his parents warned him by letter never to bring his American wife to Germany; for, "if he did, and should attempt to enter his father's mansion, though, perhaps, his wife might be permitted to remain in the kitchen, and he also to keep her company;

not a step higher should either of them ever stir." Kentucky blood could not endure this insult, and, having just lost their child, Frances banished her German, and never could be persuaded to suffer him in her presence. It was shortly after this second return to her mother that our subject met the girl; and Meir, her German husband, it was said, not long subsequently breathed his last.

There appears to have been a mutually favorable impression between Frances and our subject. Forthwith they met constantly. Their sufferings in many respects bore some resemblance. She riveted him by narratives of the strange, wild adventures she had experienced with her desperate first husband, and of her magnificence and misery with the second. He would sit with her, listening, entranced, as from the lofty piazzas of the Museum, which faces the vast quay of Cincinnati, they gazed upon the moving city of steamers, — the strangely fashioned flat and keel boats, — the ever bustling crowd thronging the area to the water's edge, — the gentle Ohio and its beautiful banks, — on the opposite Kentucky shore, the military station at Newport, — the picturesque city of Covington, and, in the far distance beyond, hills rising upon hills, and landscapes of varied loveliness.

There was passion in the devotedness of Frances, but it was passion silenced by doubt, though it could not be concealed. With unsurpassed capacity, she was imperfectly educated, and had sometimes seen not the best school of manners; but there was an innate self-respect and modesty about her which shrank from the public exhibition to which she was occasionally doomed for the purpose of promoting the attractions of the Museum. She shuddered to think of the rude familiarities to which it had led from beings called human, but brutalized by ignorance or drink. Her agony, as she would tell this, often made our subject tremble for the consequences to her life. He would encourage her to a more .independent course; but in encouraging and comforting her, he always scrupulously avoided the language of a lover; for deep as was his interest in her, he saw that it would be ruinous to give way to it. Such reflections might have preserved for our subject the power he retained over himself throughout this adventure. From its beginning to its end, he was the steady and the honorable friend of this unhappy girl; — counselled her as a brother; and aided her with his instructions and his purse. "I know," she would exclaim, "that I am not fit to become your wife; and it is happiness enough for me to be blest with your society, and to feel that you prize me as your truest friend." — Thus rolled away the time. When in the same city, they were constant visiters; when apart, as constant correspondents. It was obvious, however, to our subject, that the

girl, notwithstanding her declarations, intended to make him hers; and he was compelled to be ever on the alert to baffle the power of her involuntary and perhaps unconscious stratagems, and of her bewildering attractions.

This singular girl, with all her feminine softness and susceptibility, has been described by our subject as a person of the most extraordinary physical strength and activity; with which, when entirely out of the reach of all observation but his, she would delight in surprising him. In her little hands she would lift and extend at arm's length a weight of fifty-six pounds. She would hop eight feet; jump on a level ten feet and a half, and run like the antelope. On horseback, in a riding party, once, she challenged our subject for a race. At full speed, giving spur and rein to her horse, to the terror of all, she made the animal dash madly onward, till his strength was gone.

An adventure once occurred when she was riding alone with our subject, which has a touch of delirium in it, that, perhaps, may in part account for what will be related of her in the sequel.

They were out for a ride on the Ohio's banks. It was dusk. They had alighted at a brook where they were accustomed to let their horses drink, and they meant to rove till moon-rise. Some conversation came up about swimming. After awhile, cried Frances, suddenly, "No man can out-swim me," and a laughing challenge followed, which she accepted. Withdrawing to a thickly embowered spot at some distance, she presently disrobed, and while our subject stood pondering, he was suddenly aroused from his reverie, by a cry, "Come on! you flinch!" — the girl at the same time darting through the water at full speed. — Our subject made no further delay; met his fair antagonist midway across; and thrice they swam from bank to bank. In the clear starlight both were curvetting and dashing through the stream, when, as if for a moment's repose, Frances sprang to the bank, and stood there, — another Venus from the ocean foam, — as if entranced. Just then, came the bright moon gaily up, and she exclaimed, like one awakened from a dream, "Oh, forgive me, — I forgot!" — and plunged in again and hid her face under the waves. Presently she was on the opposite shore and dressed, and both had mounted their steeds and were on the way back to the city; but no reference was ever made on either part to what had just occurred.

While arming himself against her allurements, our subject seems to have cherished a romantic, but a most praiseworthy ambition to turn this enthusiast's genius and ardor into sources of purity and eminence for her. He thought it the first best step towards this object, to put her in the way of attaining pecuniary independence.

She could play tolerably, and had an admirable aptitude for music, but was entirely self taught. He obtained her a piano. He placed her under Mr. Nixon, the most accomplished professor in the West. In six months she earned by her proficiency, the first prize medal in a public examination of the pupils. She bade fair to possess herself presently of the power to earn a fortune by teaching.

Her gratitude was expressed in every possible attention, and many little presents wrought by her own hand; a guard-chain of her hair; a bead letter-case, and so on. Our subject sent ornaments and books to her; and urged upon her the importance of looking to her music for her livelihood. But, during his absence, a new and eccentric idea came over her. She thought of going on the stage.

Against this our subject remonstrated with the zeal and concern of a father.* He represented to her the precariousness of the pro-

[* Extract from a letter by John C. Colt, to Frances Anne Meir.]

"Dear Frances:

* * * * * * * * *

"You seem to be unhappy. You seem to run on from subject to subject as though you were half mad. Why, my dear girl, this will never do. It only tends to make you miserable, and it will sooner or later complete your ruin. Forget the past entirely. Read the books I left with you. Spend all your spare time in improvement. Exclude yourself for a while from the world, abandon old friends, and you will soon forget old and unhappy associations. Depend upon it, Frances, this is your best course. You need in many respects greatly to improve your education, and should you follow the advice I have so often given, you will be altogether happier than you now are and perhaps, more so than you have been in all your past life.

"Relative to what you say about turning actress, I do not think it an advisable course. However, you must do as you see fit. I should be very sorry to counsel you in any thing that would not tend permanently to promote your happiness. I have no doubt but that you would soon excel on the stage, as you may excel in anything that you attempt and persevere in. Upon the stage, you would soon find you are so sensitive, you could not forego the foul reproach that would be heaped upon you. Your past life has been so unfortunate that you would be set down from the commencement as a bad woman, and having no special protector; the breeze would increase as it flew, till you would be ranked among the worthless. No superiority of talents would save you from this. Your very excellences would be turned against you by surrounding and jealous opponents. At your first appearance on the stage, inquiries would be at once made, to know all about your past life. This would be heralded through the public prints, and, of course, as the world goes, if you have been once unfortunate, all your future life is to be considered exceptionable. Exposed as you must necessarily be in this profession, you would soon find that you would be set down as a ———. This once said, destroys your peace and happiness for ever. A man may outlive his misfortunes, but a woman never can, if publicly exposed.

"I do not write so, my dear girl, to abate your inclinations, or to sway you from any contemplated design; but I think you would do well to 'look before you leap.' Most actresses are at first driven to the stage by misfortune, or, when in youth, from discovering an uncommon genius, they are placed there too frequently by heartless parents, for the sake of gain. And although they remain through life as pure as the angels of heaven, they seldom escape reproach. Theatres are visited by persons who have but little knowledge of the world. They see plays exhibiting striking familiarities, and conclude if there is so much in front of the

fession; and, above all, the fatal misrepresentation to which, by the very fame she might acquire, she would be exposed through the untoward accidents of her life that would be dragged to view, and whereby she was rendered so difficult to be understood and appreciated by any but philosophic minds. He renewed his earnest advice for her to devote herself to her music, — both as a teacher and a composer, in the last of which she had already made several brilliant essays.

It may be that Frances was mortified at such a tone, and felt as though she were baffled and repelled; for she took no notice of some two or three letters. — Such, also, is the inconsistency of the human heart, that though it was our subject's aim to discourage her devotedness and passion, he was not a little piqued at her silence, — and showed that he was, — and showed it, too, more like a chagrinned lover than a mentor. — Being at Maysville, near Cincinnati, for a month, without a word from her, although assured that she

scene, the very devil must be behind it. They seem scarcely ready to believe their eyes — they applaud and go home; and judging others by the standard of their own barometer, they set the actress down to be as black a character, as the inclinings of their own passions would make them, had they but the opportunity, or were they removed from the restraints that artificial society has placed about them in the position they accidentally hold.

"I am fully aware, my dear girl, that things should not be so. But so they exist, and it is not in the power of any one to change this state of too general opinion. The rich and the fashionables set the lead in these views, and being fortunate themselves, they never possess true sympathy, and but little or no feeling for others. They look upon all beneath them as at fault, and although the poor may escape crime, they seldom escape censure. I remember a case that was related to me by an old friend which occurred a short time before I began to know much of the stage. I was in Philadelphia, and we went to Donaldson's cemetery, to see the gorgeous monument erected to the memory of Miss Missouri. This young girl was by nature endowed with superior genius, and if what I have heard of her be correct, she fell but little short of yourself in elegance of person. She was poor, and by advice of friends took to the stage. She exhibited at first such an uncommon degree of excellence that all were on the *tips* to know where she came from, what her parentage, etc. She was at once the theme of public praise and of private admiration. But the flower opening lovely to so warm a sun, was doomed to wither. It began to be rumored that she was the daughter of an unfortunate mother. The gentle whisper soon blew to a blast. The hurricane brushed over her short but brilliant career, leaving all desolate and a wreck. Her vaunted fame was blasted — she was alike accused of the infamy of her parent — she could not forego the charge — she pined — she died!"

"If such could not escape foul and unpardonable reproach, what, my dear girl, are you to expect, from the same tribunal, when you ask for bread, and at the same time ask to be considered respectable? Think these things over, Frances. God knows if I thought you would be happy in leading such a life, it would be to me a source of never-dying pleasure to promote that happiness as far as it comes within the reach of my humble capacity."

* * * * * * * * *

"Say no more about theatres. It puts me in a perfect chill to be forced to write such letters as this. Follow up your music, Frank, and all will be well. Depend upon it, all will be well.

Your friend, truly, and for ever, J. C. COLT."

was well, and in the latter city, which was so near,—our subject gathered the elegant little presents she had wrought, including a magnificent *bonnet de nuit*, and a silk portfolio of exquisite workmanship, containing all her musical compositions, and sent them to her, with a simple request for the return of his letters. "And yet," exclaimed he, in speaking of it, "I would almost as soon have parted with my soul."

Frances replied that she could not answer a letter of that nature. Our subject desired her to explain why, but not a word came in return.

When he got back to Cincinnati, though our subject had some difficulty in repressing his desire to visit Frances, he had remained there three days without doing so, when, to his surprise, he saw her enter his office.

She was perfectly calm. "I am very glad to see you," she cried. "I have brought back your letters."

Having been cordially welcomed, she began to unroll a package, from which she drew the beautiful velvet night-cap, holding it up so that our subject could see the glitter of its rich embroidery, and its motto, "Good night, Love!"—Opening it, she then commenced rearing aloft in her fingers, and dropping on the floor, gradually, its contents; consisting of the last so offensive letter, cut up into very fine strips; and all the jewelry she had ever received from our subject, including rings, brooches, chains, bracelets, and so on, pounded to very powder.

A mutual laugh settled this quarrel, and the couple passed the greater part of that day, and the entire day following, together.

It appears that when they last parted, Frances had either projected or had undertaken a boarding-house. She was asked if she was in want of any pecuniary aid, and she said she was not; but she seems presently afterwards to have applied to our subject for money, when he was at a distance and could not supply her. Possibly this may have been a mere device to try his devotedness or to elicit a letter. He expressed his regret that he had not the means she asked just at that moment; but that, on his return, if two or three hundred dollars could help her, they should be at her service; although he conceived that the object she had in view must fail, as he had always predicted to her it would; and that it was only by returning to her music, that she could become independent and happy.

Her friends remembered, afterwards, that all this time, she had been moody and desponding; had sometimes sought relief, in vain, from large quantities of medicine; took no food; kept herself secluded; paced the rooms till very late at night, and seemed perplexed and

undecided in everything she undertook. At last, she wrote for permission to join our subject in New York, which he declined giving. She received his letter on the 14th of November, 1838, when out for a walk. After reading it, she hurried with a distracted air, to the room of her brother-in-law. Her strange and confused questions alarmed him. Though confined by a racking head-ache, he felt it imperative upon him forthwith to rise and watch her motions. At half-past two, that afternoon, she flung herself on her bed, but not to sleep. Till four she seemed in a stupor, when she rallied, and calling her brother-in-law to her bedside, requested him not to go out that evening, for she was unwell. Her sister was startled. Frances desired her to be called into the room. She detained her brother-in-law and sister, in earnest conversation; eagerly watching every movement of either indicating an intention to withdraw, till, at length, the brother-in-law eluded her and brought a physician. Towards sunset she called another female to her bedside. She was at this time under great excitement. Her friends were applying poultices of mustard, and struggling in vain, to induce her to receive medicines. She complained that her eye-sight was failing, and begged that the female last mentioned would address our subject, from her dictation, as follows:

"You say right. I do not love you; for women love but once, and the idol I worship is beyond my reach; but still, I love him yet: but I am grateful for the many favors I have received from you, and the interest you have displayed in my welfare. I have pretended to love you dearly, but in my heart I did not. I have ever admired your talents and respected your person, but your two last letters were of such a nature as to kill even those feelings. You will never see me again: for, a few short hours, and I shall be in heaven. Forgive me, for I am dying now.

FRANCES."

This epistle was unaccountable to the bystanders, and they set it down as mere fever-dream incoherence; but, by the writer's character and the recent events of her career, it is readily to be understood. Woman's pride disowning to the last the baffled passion that she is even then betraying, and by which she is at the very moment expiring, speaks in every line.

The note being pencilled, Frances took leave of her friends. She appeared conscious of her situation, but entreated to be freed from the attempts for her relief, and repelled them forcibly. She said she knew the worst, and was not only ready to die, but willing. At between eleven and twelve that night, she seemed entirely to lose all perception of what was passing; she called in a

hurried, frenzied manner, for her brother-in-law and sister, but could not distinguish any one. She lingered in a state of stupefaction till the next afternoon, at two, when, after brief struggles, she ceased to breathe.

It was presently discovered that this extraordinary girl had taken one hundred and fifty grains of opium, upon receiving the last letter from our subject.*

CHAPTER XIII.

The three years just described, by teaching and lecturing during the summer in the West, and trading and speculating during the winter in the South, gained for our subject not only very considerable means, but universal respect.

The events, however, which have just been described, and their tragic ending, could not but have touched him deeply; nor the less, because endured in silence. There is evidently, in some portions of his subsequent conduct, a want of that strength of decision under temptation, especially of the nature he had last resisted, for which he had been remarkable before. That his spirit, though proud, was not proof against the shocks of which he was too proud to acknowledge the power, is evident from the whole course of his conduct after his sister's death, when he enlisted in the marines. But though probably shaken in a way somewhat similar now, he also appears wisely to have resolved to regain his equilibrium by the sovereign cure in all such cases, a monopolizing aim and constant occupation. Hence he devoted himself still more assiduously than ever to his book-keeping scheme, and, in the spring of 1838, his work being completed, he discontinued teaching, and put it to the press in Cincinnati.

Surely this was a well-devised enterprise in all its bearings. Our country's peculiar requirements bring multitudes of young men into commercial life, after very limited opportunities of previous instruction. To such it must be disheartening, and sometimes impossible, to dig a knowledge, almost indispensable to them, out of the sort of chaos in which it is said to have remained, notwithstanding the numerous attempts at conveying it more clearly. A superior system, so simplified and explained as to suit any capacity, would naturally spring into vast circulation, gathering as it should go. To enlarge upon the nature and the merits of the one achieved by our subject, is foreign to our present purpose. It would only clog and interrupt

* See Note B.

our narrative. It will be enough to mention that it was praised and patronized by those most competent to judge ; that it presently supplanted previous publications, and that, in three years, it passed through eight large editions, and is now used in upwards of two hundred seminaries. But we are in advance of our story. To return.

Our subject congratulated himself not a little upon what he had accomplished. "I have had an infinite deal of pleasure," writes he to a friend, "in all these labors, which I shall never regret, even should I fail to receive any credit for them, or remuneration for what I have gone through, in producing so entire a revolution in the mode of treating a theme so extensively important." He anticipated the adoption of his work, far and wide, and thence its providing him with a yearly increasing income for life. At the same time he continued to trade and to speculate at the trading season, and cherished a hope of ultimately realizing his early ambition to possess a farm of his own, which he would place somewhere in Kentucky or Missouri, as healthier than the region he had first selected—there, as he termed it, "to plant corn and plough politics ;" in other words, to become a substantial yeoman, earn popularity, and find his way into Congress.

In pursuing these aspirations, our subject was compelled to provide himself with coadjutors. While he himself moved about in one direction, to circulate, to explain, and to establish his work on book-keeping, in another direction he employed a person to carry on his trading and speculating.

It was not long before our subject discovered that he could not expect the promised results from his new speculation, within any reasonable period, unless by manœuvering. He must deal with booksellers, and booksellers must have time for sales, and further time for payments. Many of these booksellers, too, were themselves publishers, and they were readier to promote our subject's enterprise if he, in return, would promote some enterprise or enterprises of theirs. Besides, payments in stock of that nature could be made to him at once ; while, for payments in money, he would be required to wait, and to wait a long time, possibly ; indeed, perplexed as was the state of business generally, the credit might take away all chance of the cash. Our subject had grown accustomed to bartering, and he was rather pleased than otherwise, with a certain excitement attendant upon this fashion of dealing for his work.

The system in question presently threw a considerable supply of new publications into his hands by way of exchange. How was he to get rid of them ?

Sometimes, when a favorable point for a sale presented itself, he

could pack off a quantity thither and dispose of them by auction. But a central place of business was desirable. Suppose he should establish himself somewhere as a regular bookseller?

An opportunity for this purpose arose at Cincinnati. We consequently find him connected with a bookstore already established there—the very one at which his Book-keeping had been published, and where, of course, his merits must have been best understood.

Our subject's partner had just engaged in a showy and expensively illustrated work—a work which it must have cost, said a bookseller, some two thousand dollars to bring out. It was entitled, "An Inquiry into the Origin of the Antiquities of America; by John Delafield, junior; with an Appendix containing Notes, and a View of the Causes of the Superiority of the Men of the Northern over those of the Southern Hemisphere; by James Lakey, M. D." The author's connexions were said to be powerful and extensive, not only in our country, but in England. The work itself was supposed to be of a character to insure purchasers and popularity. With two such books as the Book-keeping and the Antiquities, each commanding readers of a different but a numerous class, it was thought that an establishment might prosper, almost without further resources; but the bookstore in question had many others.

It is evident that our subject, in forming this partnership, most particularly evinced a certain headlong spirit of entire confidence or none, which seems uniformly to have marked his dealings with others. He had not looked into the real state of the concern, as he ought to have done, nor had he secured himself against the consequences of possible miscalculation prior to his entering it. He soon found that the Antiquities did not sell. Indeed, nothing seemed to sell freely but the Book-keeping.

At this juncture, our subject appears to have been called away for awhile. We next find that his agent at New Orleans had speculated for him unwisely, and lost a considerable sum. On his return to Cincinnati, to his astonishment he discovered that his partner, in his absence, had sold off nearly his entire stock, and had incurred debts. It is not our province to inquire into the cause of this confusion. Our subject was much discomfited; but the difficulty appears to have been adjusted by a transfer to his separate account of about twenty-five hundred dollars of bills due, a note of his partner for fifteen hundred dollars, and seven hundred copies of the Antiquities—supplying, altogether, a hope of indemnification, though, even then, apparently, an exceedingly forlorn one.

With his usual promptitude, our subject now determined to try a larger field; especially as the "Antiquities," from which he still

looked for profit, struck him as better adapted for such a sphere than for Cincinnati. It was with a heavy heart that he contemplated the necessity for such a change; but there was no alternative, and he determined to take an office in New York, and there to carry on his business.

He established himself at No. 14, Courtlandt street, in April, 1839. By exertions in newspaper puffers, the Antiquities attained a gleam of success. His late partner was encouraged to believe that it might be turned to profitable account in England, especially as the author was so well connected there; and having some other hopes from that country, it was agreed that he should cross the ocean, which he did.

Our subject, in the meanwhile, urged on the circulation of his Book-keeping from his office in New York. When he had accumulated, by exchange, a stock of books, he would pack cases of them off to some point for auction sale, or for a fresh exchange, and thus kept his chances moving. He made his abode at his office, and lived in the most frugal manner; seldom visiting, and ever devoted to business. He performed not only the manual labor of packing, but all other duties of such an establishment; even, sometimes, that of a porter to convey packing-cases from the ware-room to the passage below, without assistance. The few friends who frequented his office, and who remember these particulars, and often, at the time, used to smile at the array of boxes and the profusion of paper strips, and the nails, and the hatchet or hammer, and other tools—and the master's appearance, stripped to his shirt and his sleeves rolled up, officiating as his own man—regarded him as a fine model for the imitation of his dandy brethren in trade, and as being nobly in contrast with most of the young dealers around, especially of those at all approaching him in personal attraction.

We have remarked that our subject seldom went into company. Even when he did, he was abstemious, not only through inclination, but necessity; for indulgence or excitement would bring on the spitting of blood.

Every one knows that there is a strange exultation felt by certain persons in gaining a triumph over what they consider as old-fashioned and puritanical resolutions; and nothing would more delight your jovial roisterer than to put a Quaker in a passion, or to make a deacon drunk. Some merry companions, of this humor, probably, got our subject out with them two or three times, after the present return of his to New York, and lured him into frolics over wine, the effect of which he felt the sooner from being so entirely unused to them. One day, unfortunately, he and an associate had

remained over the decanters so long that, beginning to be conscious of their influence, they resolved to sally forth to the Battery and walk it off; but, on arriving there, changed their course, as so often happens in such cases, for a tavern and punch, under which the companion soon proved incapable of removal, while our subject sought his own course, alone, to his office; but, still more bewildered by the effect of the air, he blundered into the entrance of the office of a lawyer, where he was found fumbling about in the dark, and beyond the power of giving a proper account of himself. He was put in the charge of an officer, and deposited in a police room to sleep himself sober; which, having done, his explanation was found to be satisfactory, and his mortification a more than adequate punishment for his indulgence in thoughtless company, ready to run any risk for what it calls an innocent amusement!

It has been thought proper to glance at this occurrence, for reasons which will appear in the sequel.

The times were darkening, and the debts and securities which had been made over to our subject, had not proved available. Nothing seemed to promise permanent advantage but his Book-keeping, and he determined to break up his camp in New York, and to push his publication in the West and South, where, possibly, he thought, some new openings might present themselves for other speculations. But nothing of the sort occurring that winter, he returned, on the summer following, to the North. He found his Book-keeping had there been quite productive; and with the means accumulated by it in that quarter during his absence, added to those which he brought back with him, he was induced to try a bookstore in Philadelphia, where we next find him, at the corner of Fifth and Minor streets.

The times, however, had grown still more inauspicious, and the small capital of our subject was no longer able to sustain him. After an experiment of six months, he found it expedient to close his establishment at Philadelphia, and to resume lecturing.

For this purpose our subject visited Boston, where he was warmly praised for his abilities as a lecturer, as the news journals and reviews of that city will show. While here he conceived the idea of establishing a Commercial Institute, in one of our great cities; but reserved the attempt to carry it into effect for a juncture less unpromising.

In Philadelphia, a female in humble life had become acquainted with our subject under circumstances which excited the gratitude, that, in ardent hearts, as all history proves, so often grows into the reckless idolatry of passion. Such arguments as the warm blood ever supplies, to blind us to the inevitable evils of irregularity, were

soon discovered, perhaps, on both sides; the girl had no rank in society which could be injured by giving way to her wild fondness, and the object of it only advanced her immediate interests, and had never deceived her with false hopes; for she was perfectly aware of his having long before resolved never to marry. Perhaps, too, he himself may have remembered the fate of the extraordinary female he had known at Cincinnati, and apprehension of similar consequences may have extenuated, in his mind, the omission of similar self-control. By these, or sophistries resembling these, both appear to have reconciled to themselves arrangements against which the laws of society ought to have proved a sufficient warning, because such laws are always founded on experience. But in the present instance, as in so many, not only past and present, but to come, the fruits of such experience being set at defiance, the experience itself re-arises in terrible majesty, proclaiming in a voice of thunder that it cannot be scorned with impunity. A result like this is here specially to be deplored, because the conduct of the parties towards each other, in every thing excepting the connection itself, has, from first to last, been estimable and exemplary.

But we are anticipating the order of events. To go back, then, to the point whence we departed.

The female of whom we speak, Caroline M. Hanshaw, became acquainted with our subject in August, 1840, at the house of Mrs. Stewart, where he visited, as she herself did. She was uneducated, and our subject even taught her to write. In January, 1841, she joined him in New York. The quarters of that city where they resided were not conspicuous ones, and they were there so privately, that scarcely any friend of our subject was aware of his being under such arrangements. The discreetness of their deportment at the two successive lodgings they took, first at the house of Captain and Mrs. Haff, and afterwards at No. 42 Monroe street, has been since declared solemnly in public testimony. Indeed, it has even been averred by responsible authority, that Caroline had so far recommended herself to the respect of our subject, and of all who knew her, that, whenever he could have gotten over his pecuniary embarrassments, it was his purpose to have made her his wife.

Our subject, meanwhile, held his acknowledged residence, first at No. 3 Murray street, and afterwards at the Granite Buildings, corner of Chambers street and Broadway. The latter place he hired as an office, of a teacher of writing and book-keeping, by the name of Wheeler, who occupied the apartment adjoining. He

had known our subject professionally in 1838, and received him as a tenant for a few weeks, on the 2d of August, 1841.

At the juncture to which we are now arriving, September, 1841, Caroline was expecting ere long to be a mother.

To return to our subject. His absorbing occupation during this last residence at New York, appears to have been the preparation of a new edition of his Book-keeping. A printer by the name of Samuel Adams, who was employed on previous impressions, had charge of the present one. It was to appear in two forms: the larger called the "Teachers' and Clerks' edition," the smaller, the "School edition."

On the 30th of August there was to be what is called a trade sale, at New York; and, on the 6th of September, another at Philadelphia. On these occasions new works go off in large quantities to the assembled dealers, who frequently buy from a sample, and pay either cash or bankable notes as soon as the goods are furnished, for which some two or three weeks are allowed.

It appears that the balance of an unadjusted account was claimed by Samuel Adams. The account was stated by him at $71.15, but only $55.80 of it was admitted by our subject; of whose property, at that very moment, stereotype plates, worth $500, were in the hands of Samuel Adams, besides unbound books worth as much more. It appears also that our subject was impatient about some delay on the part of this printer, in supplying the stock of books needed for realizing the proceeds of sales which had been effected to the trade. While there was hurrying on the one side and procrastinating on the other, a suspicion, on the 17th of September, 1841, was excited in the mind of Samuel Adams, that moneys expected by and belonging to our subject, and "promised," it is said, "by him to Samuel Adams, would be withheld."

Under the excitement of this suspicion, Samuel Adams went abrubtly to the office of our subject, who, perhaps, may himself not have entirely overcome his chagrin at the want of promptitude in supplying his work, to which we have already referred. It is on record under oath, that Samuel Adams, when he heard the remark that took him to our subject's room, "seemed surprised, and there was a great change of countenance;" and that a responsible person supposed it likely that Samuel Adams was going to our subject's office, "without doubt, to insult him."

Between three and four o'clock in the afternoon of Friday, the 17th of September, 1841, Samuel Adams entered the office of our subject.

Samuel Adams was seen no more; and, at two o'clock on Thursday, the 23d of September, 1841, John C. Colt was arrested for his murder.

REFLECTIONS

SUGGESTED BY THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

In some remarks introductory to the preceding chapters, I have mentioned the effect of an interview I had with the subject of them in his prison. I have also adverted to the monstrous tales which had been circulated about him, and to the apparent incompatibility of all which has been told of him, with aught which has been witnessed. Such extraordinary discrepancies betoken an extraordinary cause. In searching for what that cause could be, I then conjectured that events might have divorced him from the love of society, which, like all other love, can only be fastened by faith; and, in most tempers, by faith combined with a consciousness of being appreciated in return. When the sensitive are wrought to this state of distrust, it is apt to bring upon them a treatment which confirms them in the causes of it, until, sometimes, they become misanthropic, contemning all, and being themselves by all contemned. There is a strange malice even among the otherwise excellent—a sort of resentment through offended pride—which kindles a distaste for those who fail to seek us, or to encourage our approaches; till, at length, they now and then get to be cordially hated, without our even asking ourselves wherefore. No doubt, if the doggerel rhymer who has immortalized his malevolence against Doctor Fell,* could have examined his own bosom for the source,

* Alluding to the quaint old couplets:

"I do not like you, Doctor Fell,
The reason why, I cannot tell;
But this I know, and know full well,
I do not like you, Doctor Fell."

he would have discovered it to have originated in the way I name. The reluctance of our subject to mingle with the world may have exposed him to misconstructions and prejudices of similar derivation, whereby, perhaps, his own conduct has been not a little affected, and certain judgments upon his actions from the beginning of his course to its present awful juncture, warped from liberality.

I supposed, in the outset, that John C. Colt had, as it were, two opposite characters—the one natural, the other superinduced by circumstances. I sought, by the inquiry into his life which I have just detailed, for a knowledge of the circumstances which might thus have placed him in opposition with himself. I think I have gained the clue.

How important might be any one's career, however humble, to those who follow, if every victim to error or misfortune could be faithfully dissected by a moral anatomist, the seat of the disease explored, and the source of ruin made obvious.

It appears to me that the unfortunate subject of these pages proved himself, in boyhood, a person of ardor and ingenuousness; fond of society, predisposed to strong attachments, joyous, active, benevolent and confiding; but excessive in his thirst for the approbation of others and in his reliance on himself.

His innate love of society and his predisposition to strong attachments, are shown in the eagerness with which he threw himself among his schoolfellows, and the way in which he uniformly won their confidence. Forthwith they ever placed him at their head. At one time, he was their boy captain; at another, their party leader in college-lads' competitions. His generosity and affectionateness of disposition are conspicuous in the spirit with which, after having himself escaped peril, returning, he threw himself, for the invaders of the apple orchard, into the breach against the stronger and the vindictive—and, again, in his magnanimous relinquishment of the advantages of his great popularity among his brother students, in favor of others whom he raised to dignities soliciting his own acceptance. At a later period, how handsomely and how disinterestedly he sustained the persecuted writing-master against oppression! These were the qualities which ever rendered him the favorite of the miniature masses wherein he moved; and it was only with the masses that he ever seemed in his element; for, from the very beginning of his life, he appears to have acquired a disrelish for the exclusive and aristocratic, and only to have sought associations among the humble.

It may be fitting to advert to another favorable indication.

Women are pronounced unerring and intuitive judges of character. During the bustling and perplexed career of our subject,

three instances only appear in which he has been cast into any special communion with the other sex; and each of these produced entire devotedness. His sister, to whose sad story I have adverted, delighted in him to the last; the Cincinnati enthusiast—towards whom he conducted with an integrity and self-control which, in some ages and countries, would have been a sufficient title to immortal praise—perished by her idolatry. And, last of all, comes the Philadelphian, who still clings to him amidst the hideous storm, though well knowing that in striking him it must wither her—and whose deportment under circumstances the most unfavorable, and, at the same time, the most agonizing that a woman can encounter, even won the praise of her censors and of his prosecutors and judges.

How then has it happened that the attractive qualities which created these extraordinary attachments, should have brought so little happiness to their possessor, and have failed to wed him to their element, the world?

By a fatal mistake—I think it may be answered—of those intrusted with the management of his early years. They did not turn the indications from his taste for constant movement—from his delight in being surrounded by his playmates and standing by them, whether right or wrong—from his aptitude for particular studies and employments, and from his confidence in himself—to proper account. They were alarmed when they found he would only receive instruction of a special sort, and that only in his own way. They attempted to force such instruction as they chose, upon him, and to force it in their manner, instead of accommodating their selection and their method to his eccentricities of mind and temper. They only remembered that part of Solomon's precept, which commands a free use of the rod. They found that this failed, and that, spaniel-like, he could not love the better the more he was beaten—and, moreover, they had thus thrown away the opportunity of converting his thirst for approval to salutary uses. On the contrary, by continually disappointing it, they "first made him acquainted with the unsavoriness of an imbittered soul." "Let those of happier spirit know," says a philosopher, "that this imperious discipline is not the wholesome element of the expanding mind, and that the attempt to correct the mistaken judgments of the young by violent and summary dealing, can never be the true method of fostering a generous nature; in a word, that to make the child a forlorn and pitiable slave, can never be the way to make the man worthy of freedom, and capable of drawing the noblest use from it." But, instead of feeling this, mismanaging relations and teachers apparently twitted him "with bitterness of

remark and dryness of irony;" they despaired of him; "they multiplied experiments in proportion as they found him restive;" and, not having the sagacity to perceive "that there was nothing but ground for congratulation, where they found so much occasion for complaint," went on "in the exercise of their favorite discipline" of accusation and severe predictions. Oh that it might ever be remembered how dangerous it is, "particularly where you have to do with an innocent and inexperienced mind, hastily to impute a fault. We live in a great measure, almost all of us, in the opinions of others, especially of those we respect. While I am thought incapable of an error, I shall find it difficult to fall into one. Most of all, I shall be little disposed to regard with indulgence and favor that deviation which it is judged impossible I should ever commit. But, if you warn me, particularly in a tone which gives me credit for my frailty, you have already, in some measure, taken away my character. You have thrown down the barrier which seemed to set me at an insurmountable distance from vice and folly; you have removed me from that elevated ground, the possession of which is often the best security against dishonor."

Thus, through not being comprehended—thwarted early in his cherished aspirations for applause, was our subject thrown, from his longings for the esteem of others, upon a dependence less intangible. He felt how entirely those who considered themselves, and were considered, as his superiors, erred about him, and he substituted the approval of his own mind for that of observers who saw either falsely or feebly. Though such a resolution is an ingredient in the mightiest characters, it is pregnant with danger. He that puts himself out of the way of "being corrected in his" conclusions and "determinations by the collision of another, has almost always an overweening opinion of himself," says a great author; and such a person soon acquires the humor which prompted the hero of a romance to exclain, "Hence I belonged to no one; I hung loose upon society, or rather had never entered into its circumference; seldom, and then for a very short time, had I seen a friend, a creature that irresistibly called forth my sympathies and my confidence. I ran wild in the woods; I told no tale; I uttered no sound that partook of equal communication; every thought I harbored in my soul was a reverie; every passion was a monopoly, and fled from partnership as from a pestilence."

When this spirit was taking possession of our subject, he appears to have become enamored of ancient history and biography. He had already, by the paramount force of an inborn ruling passion, conquered the passion of fear—because it once deprived him of his own approbation and threw him open to his own ridicule, and he

would never expose himself to the same contempt from others. The absurdity of that alarm at a rabbit, which had blanched his cheek and stiffened his hair, had given him a stoical power over his nerves, ere he had read of Zeno or the Stoics. He soon filled his fancy with models from Greece and Rome. Endurance, Decision, Entire Self-Reliance, became his darling objects. He might say, with a similar enthusiast, "My creed was akin to that of Anaxarchus, of whom it is related that one of the Grecian tyrants having ordered him to be pounded in a mortar, he cried out under the execution, 'Beat on, tyrant! thou hast no power but on the case of Anaxarchus; himself thou canst not hurt.'" For he aspired to bring his energies to that state in which he could feel, like the inflexible hero of Horace, that

> "If the cracked orbs should split and fall,
> Crush him they would, but not appal."

Under these impulses, he earnestly desired leave to embrace a military career, but it was refused. Thwarted in every way, he finally determined to become his own master; and, under what circumstances? Surely the most honorable. The only intimate female friend he ever had of his own standing, his sister, was warned that she must seek her livelihood by her labors; and the brother disdained to accept support from a source which would not sustain a female, and that female his beloved sister. Appreciation, he thought, had been denied him. He resolved to conquer a reputation for himself; and, restricted in means, he was cast from expedient to expedient by misadventures; but, in whatever he did, still adhered to his favorite maxims, Endurance, Decision, Entire Self-Reliance.

Here I find an anomaly which only some abler investigator can explain. This man, I think, soon taught himself to despise the approval of others, yet never ceased, secrectly, though perhaps unconsciously and involuntarily, to gasp for it; he soon imagined that his self-approval would be a sufficient substitute, and yet it never satisfied him.

Let me in this connection remark that, throughout our subject's whole history, I find that, though he cultivated "Endurance" and "Decision," it was the "Endurance" and "Decision" of Roman and Grecian ages; and his "Entire *Self*-Reliance" bore no reference to that sublimer reliance which is the blessing and the hope of the Christian. Had he been lured to this last, would it not have given him that satisfaction which the one he preferred to it failed to give? Would he not have felt that there *is* an approval which can sustain us against the world, though it is neither from the world nor from ourselves that it can be derived.

Here again occurs the error of education. The religion of gentleness and mercy could not be impressed by an "oriental and unsparing" severity.

But this digression bears me from my point. I have only to review the character before me as I gather it from events. I must judge our subject by the standard of right and wrong that he seems to have prescribed for himself.

At the close of the last chapter, our subject was arrested on a charge of murder. A person with whom he had business, went abruptly and without warning to his room, under a gratuitous presupposition that our subject meant to wrong him, and was never more seen alive.

Let the reader consider, from the history hereinbefore related, what was likely to have been the effect upon him whom it describes, of an unexpected and unmerited imputation and a blow? It will be remembered that from the beginning to the end of his career, there is no intimation of his ever having been engaged in a brawl. But it will also be remembered that throughout his career rapidity and energy are his characteristics. He was tenacious and sensitive, and, though gentle, his fortitude had no foundation in Christian forbearance. A blow was likely to have provoked, from such a spirit, a blow in return.

Imagine such a temper as has been evinced by various occurrences described in the preceding pages, suddenly, from the momentary phrenzy to which he had been goaded by an attack, awakened by the sight of his antagonist unexpectedly prostrate before him, a corpse! What would be his reflections?

"This man, who came here a few minutes since, and insulted me, is dead—dead by my hand. I did not mean to kill him, but he is dead. He would have slain me, or he would have proclaimed a triumph over me, and he perished in the attempt at one or the other—neither of which could I have brooked. Shall I rush forth and proclaim the truth?"

"But, suppose I do?—will it be believed? Throughout my entire life I have been doomed to one series of misconstructions." And, to continue the ghastly scene in the language of a profound judge of the human heart, he might have proceeded in this strain: "My nature is ambition personified. All my habits have been those of self-reverence. I have felt that ardor and generosity of spirit, which, as I believed, made me capable of great things. I felt that inborn pride of soul, which, like an insurmountable barrier, seemed to cut me off from every thing mean, despicable and little. With all this pride, I could not endure the thought of a slur or an inglorious imputation, and, as is said of the ermine, I could die with

spite at the bare idea, that any thing sordid and vile should pollute the whiteness of my name. And now 'the thing which I feared is come upon me!' Is this to continue? Is this to cramp and control all my future efforts, and put an end to my aspiring thoughts forever? I cannot express the agonies of my soul!' 'I shall be a blasted branch — the tremendous gale of public disgrace will pass over all the buds of my promise, and I shall be nothing!' 'True, habitually I have shut myself up in the store-house of my own spirit; and intuitively I have expected no justice from the world, whether a wider or a narrower world, in the midst of which I lived. No matter! For a human creature to find his worst imaginations confirmed — imaginations, wantonly formed in all the luxuriance of a baffled spirit, to which, while bodied forth, the heart refuses its assent, and which seem conjured up in wilful determination to exceed the possibilities of an actual scene' —— 'to find these realized, I say, in their utmost extent' —— 'the fancy-formed rout of hell broke loose, seems to give to its sudden and perfect existence, a more exquisite pang.' ——— But, should I avow this deed, and suffer under a misconstruction of it for a while, all may perhaps be made clear, and 'my character receive the most ample vindication. Alas! vindication in these cases partakes of the same qualities, that Homer ascribes to prayer. Slander,

"Strong and sound of feet,
Flies through the world, afflicting men:"

but Vindication, lame, wrinkled and imbecile, forever seeking its object, and never obtaining it, follows after, only to make the person in whose behalf it is employed, more completely the scorn of mankind. The charge against me would be heard by thousands; the vindication by few. Wherever vindication comes, is not the first thing it tells of the unhappy subject of it, that his character has been tarnished, his integrity suspected; — that base motives and vile actions have been imputed to him; — that he has been scoffed at by some, reviled by others, and looked at askance by all? Yes; the worst thing I would wish to my worst enemy, is, that his character should be the subject of vindication! And what is the well known disposition of mankind in this particular? All love the scandal. It constitutes a tale that seizes upon the curiosity of our species; it has something deep, and obscure and mysterious in it; it is whispered from man to man, and communicated by winks, and nods, and shrugs, — the shaking of the head, and the speaking motion of the finger. But vindication is poor, and dry, and cold, and repulsive. It rests in detections, and distinctions,— explanations to be given of the meaning of a hundred phrases, and

the setting right whatever belongs to the circumstances of time and place. What by-stander will bind himself to the drudgery of thoroughly appreciating it? Add to which, all men are endowed to a certain degree with the levelling principle, as with an instinct. Scandal includes in it, as an element, that change of fortune, which is required by the critic from the writer of an epic poem, or a tragedy. The person respecting whom a scandal is propagated, is of sufficient importance, at least in the eyes of the propagator and the listener, to be made a subject for censure. He is found, or he is erected into, an adequate centre of attack; he is first set up as a statue to be gazed at, that he may afterwards be thrown down and broken to pieces, crumbled into dust, and scattered to all the winds of heaven.'"

Such, doubtless, may have been the spirit of the reflections upon the maddening sight over which the person thus harrowed by them was doomed to stand; and though many of them are quoted from a novel, it is from the novel of an author super-eminent for his searching glances into human nature; and the imaginary character in whose name he speaks, is pictured with a close resemblance to our subject in his qualities, his feelings, and his fate. No doubt this is the train of thought which would pass through any mind similarly constituted; — and, to what resolution in such an emergency, would it be likely to lead a person so unfortunate, and so distrustful?

It may be safely answered, — to the error of CONCEALMENT, — as seeming to afford the only chance of escape from being misjudged, should it be successful.

Here we have the ruling passion strong in the most trying extremity. The dread of being forever deprived of that very approbation, which, though felt to be so often "got without merit and lost without deserving," surmounted every other consideration to the last, — and made of him who yielded to it, a victim!

But I have somewhat anticipated the course of the story. Another chapter or two, will, ere long, be added, embracing all the circumstances of the trial that followed the arrest; at which point I paused for the present retrospection. It only remains for me to add, that, the moment the panic passed over, which produced one of those false steps, whereto, as has been hinted already, determinations seldom corrected by the collision of another are invariably prone, — our subject resumed his self-reliance, and has ever since been as actively and as industriously engaged in study, in plans of business, and in general correspondence, as though no exterminating thunder-cloud were darkening over him. It is said that his correspondence is extensive, and that great numbers of anonymous

letters have been written to him, some of them full of eloquence and sympathy, and all strongly in contrast with the spirit of the public press, the tone of which may naturally have been influenced by the manner in which the prisoner's fallen antagonist was connected in business among those intrusted with its direction; as well as by the tremendous error of concealment, into which he was misled by a morbid and misanthropic mistrust, emanating from previous events; for, as has been hinted by an able advocate in this matter, like Moses, when he concealed the slain Egyptian's body in the sand, he could not imagine fairness enough in the minds of those around him, to afford him the slightest hope that they were not certain to misconstrue an explanation. This error it is which has been his ruin; this error it is which almost renders it dangerous to utter what is known to be favorable truth of him; and yet, is it not an error which hundreds and hundreds commit daily, without such overwhelming temptation, and merely to escape from disapprobation or a laugh? But I have no desire to forestall impressions which every one ought to form entirely upon facts which have not yet been recapitulated in these papers. I would simply remark, that, though diffident and reserved in his general manners, and ever living in the world merely as a looker-on, and not mingling with many, still has our subject been sufficiently well known to accurate and impartial observers, — and still is he sufficiently remembered for deeds of liberality and benevolence, and for never amassing money for sordid purposes, — to render it extremely difficult to imagine how such a man could, in a twinkling, change into a monster; or how malice could arise, and especially without time for its being engendered, and in so kind a bosom, against one who presented no causes for it, and when there were no objects to secure by it. Surely these are presumptions that might outweigh the presumption from concealment, which now forms the evidence of malice. I grant that the entire case, as it will be detailed in the next chapter, or chapters, from the legal reports, is so entirely unprecedented, that no existing statute seems, in my view, to reach it; and some who judge of it now as perhaps it will be judged by all when too late, can feel that a frightful accident, and frantic mistakes following it, may create appearances so hideous as irresistibly to betray even the wisest and the best into conclusions less unrelenting than would have been formed could they have seen things as they really were.

Boston, *August*, 1842.

NOTES.

Note A. — Page 26.

* The same gifted authoress, Mrs. Sigourney, who wrote the lines quoted in Chapter IV., upon the death, at the age of nineteen, of Miss Margaret Colt, produced some elegiac verses upon an infant of the family, N. K. Colt, and they are so beautiful, that we cannot lose the present opportunity to repeat and to preserve them.

Death found strange beauty on that polished brow,
And dashed it out. There was a tint of rose
On cheek and lip; he touched the veins with ice
And the rose faded. Forth from those blue eyes
There spake a wishful tenderness, — a doubt
Whether to grieve or sleep, which Innocence
Alone can wear. With ruthless haste he bound
The silken fringes of their curtaining lids
Forever. There had been a murmuring sound
With which the babe would claim its mother's ear,
Charming her even to tears. The Spoiler set
His seal of silence.
But there beamed a smile
So fixed, so holy, from that cherub brow,
Death gazed, and left it there. He dared not steal
The signet ring of Heaven.

Note B. — Page 52.

The following letter from the brother-in-law of Frances Ann Meir, giving an account of her last moments, also transmitted the note inserted in Chapter XII., and which was written down with a pencil at her bedside, from her dictation. It is superscribed "J. C. Colt, Esq., New York City," and has a memorandum on the superscription, — "Received Nov. 17, 1838 J. C. C."

"Cincinnati, Nov. 6th, 1838.

"Sir:— Enclosed you will find the last words or sentiments of one who has left us to join the world of spirits. On the 4th of November, at noon, she was out walking in the city, and *received a letter from you.* After reading it she came

to my room in a hurried and apparently distracted manner; and asked me several confused and strange questions, which alarmed me. (At this time I was laboring under a severe attack of head-ache.) I immediately arose and watched her motions, and at half past two, P. M., she laid herself down to sleep. She did not go to sleep, but remained in a stupid state till about four P. M., when she aroused herself and called me to her bedside and requested me to remain at home for the evening, as she was unwell. At this time Susan became alarmed at her situation; and, by request of Frances, was called into the room to stay with her. She talked with both of us for some time, and would not let either of us leave her. I succeeded in getting out of the room, and called in a physician, fearing that she had used some means to hasten her dissolution, which, by entreaties and force we were unable to administer any medicine to counteract the effects of.

For several days she had been in a desponding mood, and had taken unusual quantities of salts, pills and calomel; had not ate her meals, kept herself secluded; would walk the rooms very late at night; did not appear decided in any thing she undertook;—all this was so apparent that it could not be mistaken by any of the family.

Toward evening, or night, she called Mrs. Lawton to her bedside, and dictated to her, as she complained her eye-sight failed her, what you find enclosed. She was at this time in a high state of excitement, as we were applying mustard poultices to her ankles, stomach, &c., but did not succeed in getting any thing down her throat, as she was determined to resist with her life. She took leave of us, and appeared perfectly conscious of her situation, and expressed herself willing and ready to die, and entreated us to desist from using any means by which to counteract the effects of what was then working or preying upon her. About eleven or twelve, P. M., she was perfectly unconscious of what was passing. She called on us both, in a hurried and frenzied manner, but could not distinguish any one. After that time, she lingered till the next day at two, P. M., and died with a few short struggles.

Thus you see we are bereft of one in health in the short space of twenty-four hours, and the last mournful duty and tribute of respect was paid to her this evening. I have deposited her remains in the Methodist vault, for future interment.

God grant her spirit a rest and place in the regions of eternal peace and happiness, sincerely prays and wishes one who could never but respect her.

We are all as when you left, with the exception of this calamity.

Respectfully yours. JOSEPH ADAMS, JR.