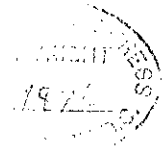


THE BLOODY JUNTO;

OR,

THE ESCAPE OF JOHN WILKES BOOTH.

A STORY CONTAINING MANY INTERESTING PARTICULARS
IN REGARD TO THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF
MRS. SURRETT AND OTHER SO-CALLED
CONSPIRATORS.



BY

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LITTLE ROCK, ARK:

WOODRUFF & BLOCHER, PRINTERS.

(Gazette Office.)

1869.

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1869, by

WOODRUFF & BLOCHER,

In the office of the Clerk of the District Court of the United States, for the Eastern District of Arkansas.

P R E F A C E .

BEFORE the perusal of the present volume is commenced, we desire to say that by the term *Yankees*, we do not wish to be understood as including the whole North, indiscriminately. There are many good and true conservative men and women in the North, whom it would be manifestly unjust to embrace in the charges adduced in the progress of our story. To such we willingly disclaim all intention of showing the least disrespect. We have exclusive reference to those vile, malignant traducers of the down-trodden South, who, not satisfied with gloating over the distressing prospects of a ruined country, are seeking to trample a brave, heroic, but defenceless people into the very dust of national degradation. To this class we have no apology whatever to make.

Lest we should be accused of plagiarism, we will here state that we have consulted a pamphlet entitled "The Life, Crime and Capture of John Wilkes Booth," written by a worshiper of the late Abraham Lincoln. In a few chapters we have taken some short paragraphs and sentences without the usual marks of quotation. We have done this not because we wished to appropriate another's literary property, but because these paragraphs, sentences, and in some instances parts of sentences, are so scattering, disconnected and interwoven with our own narrative, that to give credit by inverted commas at every quotation might distract our kind reader's attention. Besides this, we have taken the liberty more than once of arranging, correcting and modifying a sentence, in order to adapt it to the story, so that the original author would not recognize it as his, without an intimation. This little pamphlet has been published as a true history, and has long since answered its design; we feel, therefore, in making this use of its few pages, that we have not encroached upon the rights of authorship. Lest our readers should be misled by the length of this explanation, and induced to believe that we have quoted too freely, it is proper to say that if all the scattered extracts and disjointed sentences taken from the pamphlet were collected together, they would not cover more than *fifteen* pages of the present volume.

We desire further to say, that it is no easy task to write a really interesting story upon events of recent occurrence. The reason is obvious. Inconsistencies and errors are too easily detected when the reader is well acquainted with facts and localities. The farther back in the past the scenes of a story are dated, the less disposed will be the reader to question their accuracy, and to doubt their actual occurrence. Hence we are aware that the present volume details circumstances that may appear to the critical reader strangely at variance from the truth; but these inconsistencies will disappear in the course of time, when the lapse of years shall have somewhat obscured incidents well known by the present generation. But we deem it useless to offer apologies which, in a preface, are generally disregarded or misconstrued. We will let our readers form their own opinions of this work, written amid the cares and during the spare moments of a laborious profession.

THE AUTHOR.

Hickory Plain, Prairie County, Arkansas, 1868.

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THE BLOODY JUNTO.

CHAPTER I.

"Of all the passions which possess the soul,
None so disturbs vain mortals' minds,
As vain ambition, which so blinds
The light of them, that nothing can control,
Nor curb their thoughts who will aspire."

During the memorable war of 1861, a band of men, amounting to about forty in number, was assembled in a long, dark cellar in the building occupied as a boarding house by the unfortunate Mrs. Surratt. The reader cannot be ignorant of the fact that this building was located in the capital of the United States. The cellar had no outlets whatever, except a narrow door scarcely wide enough to admit the body of a large man. In broad daylight it was as dark nearly as midnight. It was, in many respects, most admirably adapted to the management of affairs requiring profound secrecy. For what this dismal apartment was originally intended, it is difficult to imagine. But whatever may have been the purpose of him who had it constructed, it is certain that it was occupied, as we have already mentioned, by an assembly of men called together for the accomplishment of objects with which we will hasten to acquaint the reader.

It will scarcely be necessary to mention that strictly secret societies, especially when they embrace only a very small part of the communities in which they may be organized, generally meet at night. That time, for very obvious reasons, is more favorable than daylight to the commission of crimes and deeds, and the transaction of affairs that demand concealment from public view. So, when the hour of ten o'clock at night had arrived, the assembly previously mentioned was seated silently awaiting the commencement of proceedings. Presently the narrow door was carefully locked, after a sentinel had been stationed outside to oppose the aggressions of prying eaves-droppers, and all other persons who might even by chance stumble innocently upon the entrance to this place of intrigue. After these precautions had been taken, one man rose from the crowd and walking to the upper end of this gloomy looking cellar, farthest from the door, seated himself and called the house to order after the manner of a political assembly in a country town. He seemed to be the presiding officer by virtue of a previous meeting.

"Gentlemen," said the chairman slowly

rising from his seat, "you recollect that when we last met a committee of five was appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws for our government, as soon as we became an organized body. To-night is the time appointed for the committee to report. I presume no other business is necessary, or could even properly come before us until we adopt some form of government to control our future action. The report of the committee, therefore, is the first business that claims attention to-night."

"I will state, Mr. Chairman," said another individual rising to his feet as soon as the presiding officer had re-seated himself, "that the committee is ready to offer a report. We have after mature deliberation drawn up a constitution, which I will now read, with your permission."

"I move, Mr. Chairman," spoke a third person, "that the whole of the constitution be read, and afterwards that each clause be acted upon separately by the meeting."

"I second the motion," came from two or three members at once. This motion was then put to the house, and unanimously adopted. After which the chairman of the committee read in a low but firm tone of voice the following

CONSTITUTION.

"We, whose names are hereunto attached, considering that in these troublous times men's lives and liberties are liable to be threatened and endangered by ambitious politicians; knowing that men in power during times of war do not scruple to disregard the rights of others, provided their own ambitious views can be advanced; believing that when once encroachments upon long-established rights begin to be made the government may be finally subverted; and believing further, that when such a state of political disorder exists, as is now but too evident in the management of national affairs, it is the privilege of communities, or portions thereof, to form combinations for their own protection; we, therefore, in order to mutually assist each other, to secure ourselves against the oppression of civil and military usurpations, and to resist the tendency of the present government of the United States towards a most galling despotism, do ordain this constitution for our future political guidance."

Such was the preamble to this remarkable instrument dignified by the name of a consti-

tution. Upon reflection, we feel satisfied that the reader will excuse us from copying the whole of this lengthy document, which covered a dozen pages of foolscap. We have quoted the preamble *verbatim et literatim*, that an idea of the nature of the compact into which these men entered may be formed. It was divided off into articles and sections, and went on to enumerate the powers and duties of the different officers, the number of whom was one president and five vice-presidents. Before these all misdemeanors and violations of the by-laws were tried. There was no appeal from their decision. No member who signed the constitution had a right ever to withdraw from the society. The penalty for an attempt to withdraw was death. It will be justly supposed that this was a dangerous clan with which to connect one's destiny.

We may here state that the idea of organizing such a society originated with a few disappointed politicians in Washington—men whose chief object was their own political aggrandizement. It was intended to enlarge the society until it should become a great party, and finally control the government of the United States. Sallust, I believe, makes the remark that in every state there are restless spirits, always ready for revolution and for resistance to the regularly constituted authority, for the sake of plunder and the natural love of political confusion. An assertion of this kind, true in the days of ancient Rome, was not the less so in the stormy times of 1861. No doubt there were persons in this society we are now describing as daring as those engaged in the conspiracy of Cataline. Seven or eight worn out office-seekers in the federal capital soon found adherents to advocate and adopt their views, until the number in favor of a permanent organization amounted, as we have already stated, to about forty.

The reader must not suppose that the society was composed of ignorant, simple-minded men, inveigled into a step which their consciences opposed. They were carefully selected, with the discrimination of a Napoleon Bonaparte, for known qualities and qualifications, and were generally men of education, unsuccessful in life for various causes which can be easily imagined. The majority was therefore ripe for any movement that promised a change in their conditions. We do not mean to say either that they were all ruffians and rogues. There may have been in the number a few honest men at least, who did not fully comprehend the objects of the society, or did not reflect upon the magnitude of the undertaking. Some three or four at any rate raised objections to the constitution; but as to their motives in so doing we leave the reader to form his own conclusion. As soon as the reading of the constitution was finished, one member rose to his feet. "Mr. Chairman," said he, "I have one or two objections to this strange document which the gentleman calls a constitution."

"I call the member to order," replied the chairman of the committee.

"I am not out of order," was the response. "He is certainly out of order, Mr. President."

"I claim my privilege, and insist upon it. The right of discussion is certainly recognized by this society."

"I insist upon it, Mr. President, that the member is out of order. Because, under the first motion made, it was decided that the constitution should be adopted or rejected clause by clause. The member has no right, therefore, to offer his objections to this instrument unless in accordance with that motion."

"I have the right to be heard," sternly exclaimed the first speaker.

"Mr. President," cried a new speaker springing with quickness to his feet, "I would like to suggest, that according to parliamentary usage the member is"—

"I have the floor, Mr. President," interrupted the first speaker.

"If it is to be put upon that ground," said the chairman of the committee, "I claim the floor, for"—

"I repeat, Mr. President, I have the floor," shouted the first speaker, "I claim my rights."

"Mr. President!" said member No. 3.

"Mr. President!" cried a new disputant.

"Order! order! order!" was now heard in all parts of the cellar.

"My God! gentlemen!" exclaimed the president stamping fiercely with his heel upon the floor, "come to order. You are nearly as unruly as the congress of the United States. Be seated, all of you, and I will decide who is entitled to the floor."

This command of the president restored silence and quiet, and all the members took their seats.

"Gentlemen," continued the president, "I will remark right here, that if you commence in this style to create confusion and disorder, the probability is we will never become organized. We have met here to act rather than to talk. But still every member has the right to express his opinions upon subjects under discussion, if he sees fit. All I have to say is, let it be done at the proper time and in the proper manner. Let there be no dissensions among us in the very beginning of our undertaking. I must further remind you that this is intended to be a secret society, and a very secret one too. But the way some of you have commenced, all of our proceedings will soon be heard above ground; and just at this particular juncture, when the writ of *habeas corpus* is suspended, a discovery of our meetings might lead to very unpleasant consequences. I must beg you, therefore, to suppress your voices as much as possible when you speak. The chair decides that under the first motion each clause of the constitution must be read separately and acted upon. Therefore the chairman of the committee will proceed to read each article."

"Mr. President," again cried the first speaker, "before we act upon this constitution, I have a motion to make."

"The gentleman is out of order," interrupt-

ed the president. "If the gentleman has objections to offer, let him wait till the first clause is read, and then he can have the floor."

"Very well," replied the speaker resuming his seat.

Quiet being now restored the preamble was read.

"Now, then," said the president, "if any member has anything to say, let him speak out. I would like to suggest, however, that gentlemen make short, concise speeches."

Thereupon the first speaker took the floor.

"Mr. President, I did not have much to say; and if I had not been so unceremoniously interrupted when I first rose I would not have occupied the attention of the house more than three minutes. But we appear to be such sticklers for rules that I was not allowed quietly to make a motion in regard to the manner in which the constitution should be adopted. Mr. President, I do not wish to see this constitution forced upon the society without giving each member time for reflection and mature deliberation. In some respects it is a most extraordinary document, and enunciates principles new and startling.—They are worthy of the pen of Machiavelli.

Sir, I cannot but doubt the propriety and expediency of recognizing such principles as rules of action. They may prove more detrimental to ourselves than to those whose ambition it is declared they are designed to curb. I object more to the preamble than anything else. It contains declarations over which I wish to ponder well before I attach my signature to this constitution. Let us not go into this thing rashly with our eyes shut. I say take time for thought. If then, after mature reflection, this instrument should be adopted for our government, no member can complain that 'snap judgment' was taken, and that he knew not what he was doing. I move, therefore, that we adjourn until to-night week."

"I second the motion," exclaimed a member.

"Gentlemen," said the president, "there is a motion to adjourn before the house. Has anyone objections to offer?"

"Mr. President," said the chairman of the committee, "I have only a very few remarks to make in opposition to the motion. I am sorry that in the very commencement of our proceedings members are found to raise so many objections, and to throw obstacles in the way of our complete and permanent organization. You, sir, have justly remarked that we have met here to act rather than talk. I am surprised that the gentleman who has just taken his seat should so strenuously oppose the adoption of this constitution. No one will pretend to deny that it is rather an unusual instrument, to say the least of it. But, sir, it is an old saying that desperate diseases require desperate remedies. This constitution contains nothing antagonistic to the genius of republican institutions. We live in times when we are liable to arrest at any moment; when our property is liable to confiscation; when our wives and children

are liable to be reduced to beggary, and ourselves can be made to pay the penalty of supposed treason. Is it a time, then, to hesitate about the formation of a society that promises security, and that proposes to check the downward tendencies of the general government? Sir, let us not halt between two opinions. But let us organize this very night, and immediately commence political operations. Delay is dangerous. When men once begin to vacillate, to waver in times of belligerent excitement, experience proves that fear will conquer them, and they will allow themselves to be overwhelmed by the dashing wave of wild fanaticism and political frenzy. Does the gentleman wish to have a constitution devoid of principle, a meaningless thing like those over which a debating society of school boys might squabble and wrangle? If he does, I do not; and I believe the majority of the members present will say that I am right. In an undertaking of this kind we must be guided by something else besides our own wills. If we do not, our meetings will all be child's play. For these brief reasons I shall vote against the motion for adjournment."

"Mr. President," replied the first speaker, "the gentleman does me injustice, if he supposes it is my intention to cast obstacles in the way of our organization. I have not opposed the adoption of this constitution. I made the motion not because I am opposed to this instrument *in toto*. I only want to give the members time for reflection. If, as the gentleman says, delay is dangerous, precipitation is very frequently connected closely with irretrievable ruin. It may be safely asserted that men never lose by deep, searching thought upon the consequences of measures designed to affect their condition in life. The constitution proclaims principles which may not be essential to the society. I say let us pause and reflect whether the means are adapted to the ends. I do not like the idea of surrendering, without some qualification or reservation, so many rights to a tribunal whose powers are so ill-defined that they can be construed into *ex post facto* laws, and in time to come can be turned against us. Before I attach my signature to the constitution let me think, let me see to what it may lead. With the present lights before me, if it is forced upon me to-night the instinct of self-preservation impels me to offer resistance to its adoption, at least those parts which appear to me objectionable."

At this juncture another member moved to where the chairman of the committee was sitting, whispered a few words into his ear, and then addressed the chair.

"Mr. President, I do not think there is any particular objection to the motion for adjournment. If the members have doubts in regard to the propriety of organizing to-night, it would be well enough, I think, to postpone the adoption of the constitution for a short time. We ought, by all means, to act with unanimity in this matter. Probably at our next meeting all the members will be better

satisfied, and we can then proceed in harmony, and adopt the constitution without a dissenting voice. Then in order to obtain a result so desirable, I will vote for the motion to adjourn."

This last little speech was delivered by a politician who had great influence in the society. Although short, it at once put an end to the controversy.

"Does any other member wish to speak on the motion?" asked the president.

No one manifested the least desire to prolong the discussion. The question was then put to the house and carried with scarcely any opposition, and the society accordingly adjourned.

Thereupon all the members withdrew, with the exception of the committee, which had drafted the constitution, and the president. These gentlemen, who were all politicians of about the fourth or fifth rate, remained. As soon as they saw the cellar cleared of all but themselves, they formed a circle around a table, and held a private caucus.

"Degroot," said the president, addressing the chairman of the committee, "I was a little astonished at your violent opposition to the motion for adjournment."

"Why so?" asked the chairman of the committee, whom we shall, hereafter, call by his proper name of Degroot. "Why so? I thought from what you intimated, that you were as much opposed to it as I was."

"I was, at first; but after a moment's reflection, when I saw that some little feeling against the constitution was arousing, I changed my mind. I thought you would surely see how the wind was blowing."

"I saw it very plainly," said politician No. 3.

"Well, never mind that," answered Degroot. "That is past; what to be done next is the thing to consider. To be, or not to be; that's the question."

"I think our way is marked out plain and clear," replied the president.

"What is that?" inquired Degroot.

"We have nothing to do but sound the members separately. If we find a majority opposed to this constitution, the committee had better have another drafted, containing pretty much the same principles, but more carefully worded. I do not believe, however, that the majority will be hostile to it. If Payne had kept his mouth shut, the business would have been completed before now. I did not, however, wish to see this instrument forced upon a grumbling, dissatisfied minority, that might hereafter become a source of trouble and annoyance to us."

"I was surprised at Payne's opposition," remarked politician No. 3.

"It will not amount to much," answered Degroot.

"Do you think he is safe?" inquired politician No. 4. "Can he be entrusted with the secrets of our society?"

"I do not have the least idea that Payne will attempt to betray us. He is a little stubborn, it is true, but with some persuasion and coaxing he will go with the majority. It would not take me by surprise if he should yet become

an ultraist in antagonism to Lincoln's administration." "I think you are mistaken there," quoth the president. Payne will oppose many of our proposed measures, which ought not to be discussed even. It may be well enough, though, to have some one in the society who will take the negative of every question. Stolid opposition sometimes makes measures work well; Payne is a sensible fellow. After the constitution is adopted, however, his talking will be of no great disadvantage to us; at least it cannot change our plans. But the real object of of the organization must be kept concealed from him as long as possible."

"There's the rub," said No. 4, "for how is that to be done?"

"He need not know anything about it until the time comes to act. He will then be so deeply implicated that he will not dare to play false. We will be masters of his destiny."

Degroot at this point changed the subject, and the whole party entered into a discussion as to who the officers should be in case the constitution should be adopted. These gentlemen all with commendable prudence declined the honor of becoming president of this secret cabal, thinking probably it might become a dangerous position in the event of discovery. Besides, for reasons known to themselves, they could control the action of the society more effectually by placing in the highest chair some one who was not a recognized politician. They made the selection before leaving the cellar. But we will not anticipate proceedings which belong more properly to the next chapter, and will be found therein.

CHAPTER II.

"Your oaths are past, and now subscribe your name,
That his own hand may strike his honor down
That violates the smallest branch herein."

The week following the last meeting of the society was a busy one with a portion of the members. According to the agreement entered into between the politicians whom we left holding a caucus on their own account, and for their own benefit, each member was to be sounded separately; in other words, his vote was to be recorded beforehand either for or against the constitution. Before the expiration of the week it was definitely known who were opposed to, and who were in favor of its adoption. Degroot, notwithstanding the fact that he seemed to undervalue Payne's hostility to the constitution, nevertheless thought it advisable to call on that individual, and find out what course he intended to pursue at the next meeting. He found Payne alone in his room, looking out of his window with a melancholy expression of countenance that indicated trouble and dejection. He seated himself and looked earnestly at Payne for some moments without, however, arriving at any conclusion in regard to the subject of his meditations.

"Why, Payne," said he at last, "you look as moody and melancholy as if you were on the point of bargaining for a passage across the river Styx. What is the matter?"

"You have guessed correctly," replied Payne with a mournful smile. "I was standing, in imagination at least, upon the banks of that same dreaded stream, engaged in an interview with Charon."

"You have probably been reading Dante?"

"I think you are 'a witch for guess,'" answered Payne in some surprise. "I confess that I am not altogether free from a disagreeable impression induced by a perusal of that author. But still I am not indebted exclusively to Dante for my unpleasant train of thought. For I was reflecting upon death before I opened his work."

Degroot's upper lip slightly curled with contempt, and a faint smile of derision played over his face at the folly of such meditations.

"Payne, you are acting like an old woman. I will answer you in the language of the great master of human nature:

"'Towards die many times before their death;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;

Seeing that death a necessary end
Will come when it will come.'"

"The mere act of dying," replied Payne, not noticing the severity of the quotation, or not considering its application as directed to himself, "the mere act of dying is nothing if that were all. But 'that something after death,'

"The undiscovered country from whose bourne
No traveller returns, puzzles the will."

"Dying of itself is quite easy, and may be very pleasant for aught I know to the contrary. But your great author says:

"To sleep! perchance to dream;—ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause; there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.'"

"You would better turn priest, Payne, if this is a fair specimen of your every-day thoughts. You are not fit for the jars and shocks of political life. But I'll tell you what; you are speculating about things, concerning which no true philosopher ever troubles himself. 'Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die.' That's my motto. I do not seek to make my life burdensome by the anticipation of evils I know not of. I try to enjoy the present, and let the future take care of itself, well assured that I will fulfill my destiny."

"You are an advocate of fatalism then?"

"No, the devil take that and all other isms. In a religious point of view I am an advocate of nothing. I never thought about such nonsense two minutes together in all my life. Whether there is any God or not, I don't know, and I don't care a continental. If there is such a being as the preachers describe, omnipotent, omniscient, and all that

kind of thing, he knows what he put me here for, and when I die he can dispose of me just as he pleases. I shall consider it no affair of mine. But while I do live I am master of my own actions, and I shall make the most of the world."

"You are an atheist, then?"

"No," replied Degroot with a frown, "I'm not an atheist, nor a Mahometan, nor a Catholic, nor a Methodist, nor a Baptist, nor a heathen. If you will class me though, I am a don't-care-a-d---n!"

"I think you could have used another term shorter and more appropriate in selecting your sect."

"What is that, pray?"

"You belong to the devil," and he burst into a loud laugh.

"I think you are inclined, Payne, to be facetious at my expense. But people who live in glass houses ought not to throw stones. How much better off are you than I am?" asked Degroot with some interest.

"None, sir, none whatever. We will both go down to Pluto sooner or later, unless the mere intellectual belief in the existence of Deity and a place of torment can secure my salvation. I am in hopes I will get credit for that much anyhow." And he laughed again.

"This is all nonsense, Payne. It will do for old women and priests to talk about. But I did not come here to enter into a discussion of theological points. I came to see you about our constitution, and to learn your reasons for opposing its adoption."

"Well, my reasons can soon be given; and they will not be much of a digression from the subject we were on, for they are very closely connected with it."

"What do you mean?" asked Degroot looking puzzled.

"I thought I gave my reasons before the society."

"Yes, so you did; but they were public reasons. Men's public acts are always controlled, or at least influenced by secret motives, which the world never knows. My experience has taught me that. Now I dare say that you were moved to this step by some other motive than that which you ostensibly acted from in the society."

"You seem to understand the general theories of human nature. Probably you can guess what my motives were?"

"No, I do not think I could, unless it was fear."

"I am," replied Payne drily, "doubtless as destitute of that prudent virtue, in the common acceptance of the word, as most men are. But since you want to know, what will you think when I tell you one of my motives was grounded on presentiment?"

"A presentiment indeed! Well that is strange!"

"I know you are disposed to ridicule such things. But, nevertheless, when I heard the preamble of the constitution read, by some strange mysterious operation, something like clairvoyance, I obtained a slight glimpse into futurity, and felt that that same consti-

What did that ignorant...?

Payne's answer about death?

tution would change the course of my destiny. As I remarked in the society, the instinct of self-preservation impelled me to offer resistance. Now you understand me, do you not?"

"No, I cannot say that I do."

"Well if you do not, I shall make no further explanation on the point. You are not the man to listen to them no how."

"I never heard you talk in this style before, Payne."

"No, I guess not."

"Is a presentiment," asked Degroot after a moment's pause, "is a presentiment all the reason you had for the course you pursued?"

"No, the constitution itself contains provisions and grants powers that are to my mind objectionable."

"Why so?"

"Well, in the first place, it asserts the right of communities to enter into combination against the government."

"For their own protection, though."

"It matters not about that. Individuals have no right to form societies in order to secure civil protection, when they have a government instituted for that purpose. If they are aggrieved, the only lawful remedy they have is an appeal to the ballot-box. You know this as well as I do."

"That kind of talk will do well enough in times of peace, when one can plant himself on the law, but it will not do where we have no government but the absolute will of an oligarchy. You certainly do not endorse Lincoln's administration?"

"Not by any means!"

"Then I see no reasonable grounds for your opposition."

"To tell you the truth," replied Payne, "I do not object so much to the principle. I have named as to some other things contained in this constitution."

"What are they?"

"The unlimited power it confers upon the officers, for one."

"And why is that so objectionable?"

"For the simple reason that I do not like to give any half-dozen men the right to take my life, if I do not see proper to obey all their unlawful behests."

"Payne, it is useless for us to discuss the subject. I thought you would see into our designs at once. But now I want you to tell me in plain terms what you are going to do. If you are so opposed to the constitution, you would better withdraw before it is adopted."

"Methinks that ought to be a hazardous experiment," answered Payne with a significant smile. "I will tell you, Degroot, exactly what I am going to do. If the majority adopts that instrument, I can stand it if they can."

"And you will be one of us, heart and soul!"

"I will obey the laws of the society. That is all you can require."

Degroot looked somewhat puzzled. He could not determine in his own mind whether Payne could be fully trusted or not. The

latter would have been regarded as a suspicious member, if he had not furnished evidence plain and palpable of his disaffection towards the government of the United States. There was, notwithstanding this, an air of mystery about him and his words which prevented Degroot from arriving at any definite conclusions. This curiosity was now aroused to know something more in regard to this strange individual. He accordingly changed the subject with abruptness.

"Payne, I don't think I ever asked you what your native state is."

"No, I believe not."

"Well, what is it?"

"Has the society anything to do with my nativity?"

"Of course not. Why do you ask such a question?"

"Because you seemed to connect it with the society."

"I merely changed the subject. The question is civil, is it not?"

"Civil enough," replied Payne, "but I do not choose to answer it."

"Why not?"

"I do not know that it is obligatory upon me to reveal my pedigree. But I will say to you that there is no one in this city who knows whence I came. No one ever will know. Besides this, my name is not Payne, either."

"What is it then?"

"I shall keep that secret also. No one need question me about it."

"I have heard some of our members hint," said Degroot fixing his gaze upon the other's face, "that you are a deserter from the confederate army."

"I give that the emphatic lie. I never had any connection whatever with the rebels, in any shape or form. Now, Degroot, ask me one more question in regard to this matter. I see what you are after. But you need have no fears concerning my fidelity. Though I cannot endorse everything done by the society, yet I am and will be true."

"I believe you, Payne. You are true grit; I know it."

After some further conversation the two men parted, and did not meet till the night appointed for the re-assembling of the society.

When the members were again collected in the gloomy cellar, there was not the same boisterousness in their proceedings as upon the former occasion. Each man took his seat in profound silence. Then the minutes of the preceding meeting were read and unanimously adopted. After which the regular business of the night was announced by the temporary president. When the preamble was read, no one stirred. Payne was present, but he sat with his head down and offered no objections. Several of the members seemed a little surprised, having expected a violent discussion to ensue. The President waited a short time, but no one seeming desirous to speak, the preamble was voted upon and adopted without a single dissenting voice. No article of the constitution met with any opposition until the oath intended

to be administered to each member was read. It was as follows:

"I ——— do solemnly swear, in the presence of God and these witnesses, without equivocation or mental reservation, that I will support all parts of this constitution, and will lend my influence in securing the faithful execution of its provisions; that I will abide by all the decisions made by the tribunal provided for within the constitution; and that I will discharge any duty assigned me by the said tribunal, however repugnant it may be to my feelings; and should I attempt to withdraw from the society, or betray any of its members, or prove delinquent in any manner, then I hereby consent to forfeit my life, according to whatever sentence may be passed by the aforesaid tribunal."

Such was the oath. No sooner, however, had the reader's voice ceased, than Payne arose to his feet. Several of the members drew a long breath, then all listened with profound attention.

"Mr. President: For the sake of harmony, I have kept silent thus far to-night. I have allowed several sections of the constitution to pass unchallenged and without notice. I dislike exceedingly to appear contrary and contentious when the utmost unanimity and harmony are required, and are indispensable to the successful accomplishment of our aims. But, sir, I feel impelled to raise my voice against the engraftment of the obligation just read upon the constitution. I cannot subscribe my name to it without great reluctance, and without a feeling of horror. What!

renounces the right of trial by jury—lays aside his claims to an appeal to the courts of justice established by the constitution of the United States; and place my life at the disposal of half a dozen men in possession of absolute, unlimited power? Sir, my nature revolts at the idea. It is antagonistic to all my notions of human liberty. It is utterly at variance with all the republican principles that have been instilled into my mind from the days of childhood. Who knows what the tribunal may consider offences? What kind of duties are meant? What constitutes delinquency? These are questions which ought to be thoroughly considered and settled before this broad, sweeping oath is adopted. Is it meant that I am to discharge every duty suggested by the whims and caprices of this tribunal, without my having any voice in the matter? Is it meant that I am to execute, without a murmur, each and every plan proposed, however repulsive to conscience and repugnant to the dictates of humanity? and then if I prove delinquent in sustaining the decisions of that tribunal, though they may be unlawful—abhorrent to every feeling and impulse of nature, my life is forfeit? If this be the meaning, gentlemen we would better beware. I repeat it, *beware!* The time will come when some of us, probably all of us, will regret that we subscribed our names voluntarily to this terrible oath. It is a dangerous power to be exercised by a few men. If we adopt it, all retreat will be

cut off. It will pull down the last bridge between us and civil society, and we will go forward, mark the prediction, until our doom is written in blood. Let us consider then what we do. Let us modify this oath. I move that we strike it out altogether."

Payne then paused, and looked around for a second to his motion; but there was silence, and his motion could not be entertained. He then slowly re-seated himself, with a sorrowful countenance, and resumed his former position.

At this moment, while all were sitting in solemn stillness, a noble looking man rose to his feet. His splendid form towered in that dismal cellar like some of the ancient semi-gods described by the bards of olden times. It was impossible not to gaze at him with admiration.

"Mr. President," said he, "I make no pretensions to oratory. Like Antony,

"I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth, No actions, nor utterances, nor the power of speech

To stir men's blood: I only speak right on."

"I say, then, let us not begin to waver and hesitate when we have come to the last article of the constitution. I was in hopes that no opposition would be offered to anything judged necessary by the committee for the government of our society. I have no objections to urge against taking the oath. I am perfectly willing to take it myself, and I hope others will follow the example. I think this oath is necessary. For if men are left to follow the bent of their own wills, nothing can be accomplished by a secret society. Let us then adopt the oath at once. There is need of haste:

"Let's take the instant by the forward top; For we are old, and on our quick'at decrees The inaudible and noiseless foot of time Steals, ere we can effect them."

"Sir, I call for the question."

There is nothing like a bold, resolute man in time of hesitation. How often have we seen a single individual, of stubborn will and fearless courage, sway the minds and control the passions of a vacillating multitude, and urge them on to the commission of deeds which they would have avoided had they been left free to struggle with their own doubts and unsteady thoughts. Vast mobs are very frequently goaded on to acts of frenzy, fury and madness by the nod of one brave, determined man. Sublime, exalted courage exercises a more absolute control, a more unlimited influence over the minds and hearts of men than any other quality possessed by human nature. It makes its mark in all the departments and avocations of life. It is something which all admire—all will submit to it; and all weaker natures are willing to be directed by it.

The words uttered by the last speaker, who was the assassin of Abraham Lincoln, were few and plain, but they came forth glowing from a fiery heart. All the members, if they now had any doubts, appeared to lay them aside. The effect of Payne's warning words of caution passed away like

a summer cloud, which had for a moment tarnished the light of heaven. Booth's earnest tone and manner of delivery, his radiant countenance expressive of fearless determination and contempt of danger, seemed to infuse some of his own daring courage into every heart. The question was eagerly called for; and the "yeas" were so loud and were so evidently in the majority, that the president did not deem it necessary to take the negative vote. The constitution was now adopted in all its parts.

Booth moved that all the members should sign the constitution with human blood; and this savage motion, under a fit of temporary enthusiasm, was carried by an overwhelming majority.

"Who will furnish the blood, gentlemen?" asked the president.

"I will!" cried Booth quickly springing to his feet. And he bared his polished arm, from which a sufficient quantity of blood for the purpose was drawn. Then each member, with a kind of desperation, walked to the table and signed his name with a pen dipped in the gore of John Wilkes Booth.

Payne was the last to sign. When his turn came, he coolly took the pen and then turned to the members:

"Gentlemen," said he, "I have offered some opposition to this constitution; but it is now adopted, and I shall support it with as much fidelity as any man in the house. I feel myself urged on by a power I cannot resist. I feel that I am a child of fate, and must travel the path of unalterable destiny. In proof of my faithfulness I now affix my name to the constitution of this bloody junto."

"The Bloody Junto!" cried Booth. "Yes, *Bloody Junto* let it be called. I move, Mr. President, that we adopt it as the name of this society. The *Bloody Junto!* It is an appropriate name." And accordingly this ugly title was duly acknowledged.

The members now held an election for permanent officers. Upon the first ballot every vote, with one solitary exception, was cast for John Wilkes Booth as president. Degroot and four others were elected vice-presidents. After which, the officers were all properly installed. Some other uninteresting business was transacted, and then the society adjourned until the next regular meeting.

CHAPTER III.

"His high, broad forehead, marble fair,
Told of the power he thought with;
And strength was in his raven hair—
But when he smiled a spell was there
That more than strength or power could
win."

A personage as notorious as ~~Booth~~, and whose name, although it may be covered with romantic infamy, will go down to posterity through the medium of history and fiction, requires at our hands something more than a mere passing notice. We shall therefore attempt to give, as briefly as possi-

ble, a short account of the origin and education of this strange, daring man. We feel satisfied that our reader will not demand an apology for this digression.

It is stated that the father of J. Wilkes Booth deserted the wife of his bosom in favor of a flower-girl. We know not that this report is true, or that it is false. If true, we are ignorant of the motives which induced him to take this step. It may be, in early life that he formed a temporary attachment to some fair daughter of Eve, and acting from impulse married her; and then in course of time discovered his mistake, and fled from his native country. Be this as it may, he quitted England, and brought a wife with him to America and settled in Baltimore. He was of Hebrew descent, and was an actor. This profession he seems to have willed to his children. Whatever may have been the faults of his first wife, it is certain that the tongue of calumny has not dared to speak against the second. She now resides in Nineteenth Street, New York. Her husband died while traveling westward, leaving her the care of six children. These were Junius Brutus, Edwin Forrest, John Wilkes, Joseph, and two girls. As the reader can be interested in the fate of only one of them, we will proceed with the history of John Wilkes.

Although Mrs. Booth's family was large for a widow, yet she attempted to educate her children. She had sufficient means for the purpose, if the children had made a proper use of the opportunities afforded them. But it appears that none of them, although they were ambitious, manifested any disposition to become distinguished in literature. John Wilkes, however enjoyed superior literary advantages, of which he did not avail himself to any considerable extent. During his school days he made the acquaintance of Fitzhugh Lee, who won Booth's admiration. Wilkes hated school. His fiery disposition could not endure the prison-like confinement to which every thorough scholar must submit. He loved the open air, and was very fond of going on hunting expeditions. We will now quote from a northern writer:

"He used to stroll off to fish, though that sort of amusement was too sedentary for his nature, but went on fowling jaunts with enthusiasm. In these latter he manifested that fine nerve and certain eye which was the talk of all his associates; but his greatest love was the stable. He learned to ride with his first pair of boots, and hung around the grooms to beg permission to take the nags to water. He grew in later life to be both an indurated and graceful horseman. Towards his mother and sisters he was affectionate without being obedient. Of all the sons Wilkes was the most headstrong indoors, and the most contented away from home. He had a fitful gentleness which won him forgiveness, and of one of his sisters he was particularly fond, but none had influence over him. He was seldom contentious, but obstinately bent, and what he willed he did in silence, seeming to discard sympathy or confidence. As a boy he was never bright,

except in a boy's sense; that is, he could run and leap well, fight when challenged, and generally fell in with the sentiment of the crowd. He therefore made many companions, and his early days all passed between Baltimore city and the adjacent farm.

"I have heard it said as the only evidence of Booth's ferocity in those early times that he was always shooting cats, and killed off almost the entire breed in his neighborhood. But on more than one occasion he ran away from both school and home, and once made the trip off the Chesapeake to the oyster fisheries without advising anybody of his family.

"While yet very young Wilkes Booth became an *habitué* at the theatre. His traditions and tastes were all in that direction. His blood was of the stage, like that of the Keans, Kembles, and the Wallacks. He would not commence at the bottom of the ladder and climb from round to round, nor take part in more than a few Thespian efforts. One night, however, a young actor, who was to have a benefit and wished to fill the house, resolved for the better purpose to give Wilkes a chance. He announced that a son of the great Booth of tradition would enact the part of *Richmond*, and the announcement was enough. Before a crowded place Booth played so badly that he was hissed. Still holding to his gossamer hopes and high conceit, Wilkes induced John S. Clarke, who was then addressing his sister, to obtain him a position in the company of the Arch Street Theatre, at Philadelphia. For eight dollars a week Wilkes Booth, at the age of twenty-two, contracted with William Wheatley to play in any piece or part for which he might be cast, and to appear every day at rehearsal. He had to play the *Courier* in Sheridan Knowles' *Wife* on his first night, with five or ten little speeches to make; but such was his nervousness that he blundered continually, and quite balked the piece. Soon after he undertook the part of one of the Venetian Comrades in Hugo's *Lucretia Borgia*, and was to have said in his turn:—

"Madame, I am Petruccio Pandolfo." Instead of which he exclaimed:

"Madame, I am Pondolfo Pet—Pedolfo Pat—Pantruchio Ped—; damn it, what am I?"

"The audience roared, and Booth, though full of chagrin, was compelled to laugh with them.

"The very next night he was to play *Dawson*, an important part in Moore's tragedy of *The Gamester*. He had bought a new dress to wear on this night, and made abundant preparation to do himself honor. He therefore invited a lady whom he knew to visit the theatre, and witness his triumph. But at the instant of his appearance on the stage, the audience remembering the Petruccio Pandolfo of the previous night, burst into laughter, hisses and mock applause, so that he was struck dumb, and stood rigid, with nothing whatever to say. Mr. John Delmar, to whose Stukely he played, was compelled, therefore, to strike *Dawson* entirely out of the piece.

"These occurrences nettled Booth, who protested that he studied faithfully, but that his want of confidence ruined him. Mr. Frederick, the stage-manager, made constant complaint of Booth, who, by the way, did not play under his full name, but as Mr. J. Wilkes; and he bore the general reputation of having no promise, and being a careless fellow. He associated freely with such of the subordinate actors as he liked; but being through Clarke, then a rising favorite, of better connections, might had he chosen advanced himself socially, if not artistically."

We quote no further from this northern writer, because in many respects he does Booth injustice, and casts some very severe and unjust reflections upon the southern people. "Give the Devil his due," is a vulgar maxim which should be a controlling principle in all contributions intended for the public. The character of Booth as drawn above is set forth by one who is deeply prejudiced, and whose assertions must therefore be taken with great caution. No man who worshiped Mr. Lincoln as "Our Savior" can do J. Wilkes Booth justice. We do not wish to be understood as offering an apology for the latter; but at the same time we confess that we do not feel such a holy veneration for the memory of a president who despised the south as to hand Booth down to posterity as a consummate villain, with no defence whatever for his crime. He might have thought, under mistaken notions of duty, that he was chosen to perform one of the bloody decrees of destiny. But whatever may be said of his deed and his motives, it cannot be denied that he was urged on by a powerful ambition. He was therefore no common murderer. He was possessed by a mad love of distinction, and by a crazy desire, like that of Lawrence when he attempted the life of Andrew Jackson, to rid the people of a tyrant. But we will proceed with the history.

It cannot be denied that Booth made repeated failures in northern theatres. Genius often fails in its first efforts. It will not be forgotten that Demosthenes was hissed when he attempted to declaim before his countrymen for the first time. A man of Booth's sensibility and diffidence would be likely to make considerable blunder upon his first appearance before an intelligent audience. The treatment he received at the hands of the northern people was not calculated to mitigate the disgrace of his failure. They hissed him; they laughed at him; and his sensitive mind felt their taunts and jeers keenly. He quitted Philadelphia in disgust and went to Richmond, receiving the offer of a respectable salary. Here his reception was quite different. He was now amongst a people who could make due allowance for the boyish errors of genius. Booth felt encouraged by the kind, flattering treatment he everywhere received. It was not long before he convinced the world that he was a second Garrick. He never forgot the southern people for their kindness. As a proof of it, when John Brown attempted the fool-hardy invasion of Virginia, in order to persuade

the negroes to rise and out their masters' throats, Booth left the theatre in a picked company for the scene of action. His company was selected to form guard around the scaffold when that hoary-headed assassin met his richly-deserved fate. Certainly no southern man can have any reason to execrate his memory for the part he took in that transaction.

When Booth again visited the north he went as an accomplished actor. His fame traveled on before him; and he acted before assemblies that were spell-bound by his inimitable exhibitions of human nature. He took rank among the first tragedians of the country. Fortune showered upon him her richest favors. He who had been spurned from the north for the unavoidable errors of youthful genius, now returned in a triumph that might have gratified the ambition of many a man of even loftier aspirations. He has established such a reputation, that the name of Shakspeare will go down to future generations coupled with that of J. Wilkes Booth.

As to Booth's personal appearance, through fear that we may be suspected of partiality, and of over-drawing the picture in order to add greater interest to a romantic story, we will venture to pen a short extract from his published life:

"None of the printed pictures that I have seen do justice to Booth. Some of the *cartes de visite* get him very nearly. He had one of the finest vital heads I have ever seen. In fact, he was one of the best exponents of vital beauty I have ever met. By this I refer to physical beauty in the Medician sense—health, shapeliness, power in beautiful poise, and seemingly more powerful in repose than in energy. His hands and feet were sizable, not small, and his legs stout and muscular, but inclined to bow like his father's. From the waist up he was a perfect man, his chest being full and broad, his shoulders gently sloping, and his arms white as alabaster, but hard as marble. Over these upon a neck which was its proper column rose the cornice of a fine Doric face, spare at the jaws and not anywhere over-ripe, but seamed with a nose of Roman model, the only relic of his half-Jewish parentage, which gave decision to the thoughtfully stern sweep of two direct, dark eyes, meaning to woman snare and to man a search warrant, while the lofty, square forehead and square brows were crowned with a weight of curling jetty hair, like a rich Corinthian capital. His profile was eagleish, and afar his countenance was haughty. He seemed throat full of introspections, ambitious self-examinings, and eye-strides into the future, as if it withheld something to which he had a right."

From the above description of Booth's exterior, material beauty, it might with reason be supposed that he was a dangerous character for the female sex to deal with; especially since the licentiousness of stage actors is a well established fact, which no man will attempt to dispute. Even in the ordinary intercourse of society, Booth's personal beauty

was sufficient to attract the fancy of any woman of ungoverned susceptibilities. But when he appeared upon the stage robed in the fictitious splendor of personated royalty, when his fine shape could be displayed to greater advantage by candle-light, and his elegant form could be seen dilating under the influence of assumed emotions, he was absolutely irresistible. The admiration of the audience was transferred from the defunct *Richard* to the living, breathing Booth. The women were bewitched; their modesty was temporarily prostrated; and their hearts, for a time, revolted from the allegiance due in another quarter. Many a sly wife has wished to act the part of Lady Anne, in order to bestow a real affection, in disguise, upon Booth the personator of Gloster. Many a maid, raised into the "upper circles" by the apeish conventionalities of northern aristocracy, has cursed in her young and tender heart the law that places stage actors outside the pale of respectable society. Booth was absolutely persecuted by the northern women. They sent him bouquets, perfumed notes, photographs, and begged the favor of an interview. When he was about to leave Boston, after he had fulfilled an histrionic engagement, the hotel at which he was staying was besieged by flippant New England women, assembled to see Don Juan, realized in the person of John Wilkes Booth, take his departure. Whether their motives can be traced to uncontrollable curiosity or not, no southern woman, laying claim to the least respectability, would have thus overstepped the barriers of true modesty and feminine delicacy.

But Booth did not yield to their solicitations; he fled from temptation, and was then an exception to the general rule in regard to stage players. The following story is vouched for by northern writers:

A Philadelphia girl saw Booth upon the stage, and became deeply enamored of him. Then she commenced the usual process of intrigue by sending him bouquets, her photograph, and then a *billet doux*. Booth, not as many men would have done, paid no attention to her advances. But the infatuated girl wrote again and again to him, and entreated him to visit her. He at last yielded to her importunities, and following the directions given in one of the notes found himself in a fashionable house belonging to one of the Philadelphia aristocracy. When the girl made her appearance in the parlor he was surprised to find his bold correspondent a beautiful, lovely young creature in her "teens." She appeared before him blushing with conscious shame at the thought of her illicit familiarity with an actor.

"I certainly am mistaken," said Booth in great surprise, "you are not the lady who sent for me?"

"I am the one, Mr. Booth," she replied in a trembling half-whisper. "But I don't want you to misconstrue my intentions."

Booth gazed at the innocent Diana in perfect astonishment. He saw that she was completely maddened by the intensity of her

love. Then a sentiment of pity swelled in his heart, and his youthful vanity was changed into sorrow.

"I know not, Miss —, what your intentions are; but this much I will say to you in advance, beware of actors. They are to be seen, not to be known."

"Mr. Booth, I— I— love you!"

"Perhaps you do, but I do not love you; and there is an end of the matter. And now let us part in peace. The time will come when you will wonder at your folly. Good bye!"

"Mr. Booth, do not leave me thus. Give me one token of your regard. Promise me to come back again!"

"I will not," said Booth with sternness. "Remember who you are, and do not forget that Wilkes Booth is a conscientious man." So saying, he seized his hat and fled like Joseph of Egypt from the reach of temptation.

Such in brief was John Wilkes Booth, the president of the Bloody Junto. Like all other men, he had his faults and failings. No one would expect to find any high degree of morality in a stage player. But Booth was not as destitute or virtue as Mr. Lincoln's canonizers would make posterity believe. He certainly had it in his power to scatter shame and sorrow wherever he went; but if any of his victims are to be found, their degradation can be traced to their own enticing persistency, rather than to efforts on his part to cast a single blemish upon retreating virtue. He was mild, gentle and winning in his manners. There was an easy, simple familiarity in his address that would at once win confidence and friendship. But he ought not to be held responsible for the effect which the transcendent beauty of a perfect form, the elegance of his unassuming demeanor, and the natural sensibility of a warm heart would have upon the weaker but more sensitive portion of mankind. We feel justified in concluding the present chapter of this story in a sort of semi-apologetic manner, because the subject of it is in no condition to vindicate his motions or his course of action before an impartial world.

CHAPTER IV.

"In life how weak, how helpless is a woman! Soon hurt, in happiness itself unsafe, And often wounded while she plucks the rose: So properly the object of affliction, That Heaven is pleased to make distress become her, And dresses her most amiably in tears."

Several weeks had elapsed since the Bloody Junto had become a permanent organization. The society met every Saturday night, and transacted its business with such profound secrecy that the detective police of Washington had not the slightest suspicion that a disloyal cabal clandestinely discussed the measures of the general government in a dark cellar with an air of authority. Degroot attended the meetings of the junto regularly,

and was quite an active member. Indeed, he seemed to have no other business. Hence, he was placed on nearly all the important committees that were appointed. Upon all questions discussed by the society concerning the administration, from some unknown cause he evinced a particular, a most inveterate hostility towards Mr. Lincoln. He appeared to be actuated by personal motives in his deep hatred. But why he was so bitter against the chief magistrate, he never chose to reveal.

Degroot was a miserable, a wretched man. There was something in his countenance and in his movements that told to the most casual observer he was ill at ease. But few would have guessed the nature of the feeling that was preying on his heart. What it was will be revealed to our patient reader in due time.

Late one Saturday night, after the adjournment of the Bloody Junto, Degroot took his way homeward. Moving a few hundred yards up the street upon which Mrs. Surratt's house was situated, he pursued a straight course for about half a mile. Then after several more windings and turnings he found himself in front of a dingy-looking house in a certain part of the city. We are not precise in describing the particular locality, because it would add no interest whatever to our story. Suffice it to say it was a dingy-looking dwelling, containing only two small rooms. No sign of a fence or paling was around it. The yard, or what had been intended should be a yard, showed its abhorrence of the vegetable kingdom by presenting a surface as barren as the public road which ran hard by. Neither flower nor shrub appeared to relieve the desolate aspect of this home of wretchedness and sorrow. Its whole exterior appearance indicated plainly to the passers by that this was the abode of poverty and want. Degroot opened the rickety door, that constituted but slight protection against the hostile invasions of wind or rain, and entered without ceremony. The inside of the dwelling presented an appearance of more comfort than was promised by the outside view. The rough floor, if nothing else could be said in its favor, was cleanly swept; at least as much so as its broom-resisting surface would allow. In one corner stood a rude bedstead, the blotches and scratches of which were partially concealed by a threadbare spread that hung almost to the floor. Although it bore evidences of faithfulness to its trust, yet its owner could not be accused of having been sparing of soap and water; for no marks of real filth were visible upon its time-honored threads. Half drawn from under the larger stead was a trundle-bed, upon which reposed a child of five or six summers. He was a beautiful boy, pale and thin though, whose subdued, humble expression, even in sleep, would affect a tender nature painfully, and moisten the eye with a tear. Poor child! Even on that young brow disease and want had already affixed their seals. The face of the pitiable littlesleeper wore an air of touching, thought-

ful melancholy, thoughtful far beyond his years, induced by the lesson of poverty which he had to learn before he could make known his childish desires. But leaving the little boy for the present, we will proceed.

A half-dozen rugged chairs, a soiled washstand, a very plain centre table, or what served in the place of one, and an old clock that ticked with a creaking noise, as if wearied with the monotonous and endless task of marking time, constituted the only remaining articles of furniture that decorated Degroot's home. Seated at the table was a woman bending over some needle work. She appeared to be about thirty years of age, though in fact she was younger than that by several years. But it was no difficult matter to see that severe labor and corroding care had made, and still were making, great ravages upon her fragile form. Yet, in despite of the physical and mental torture she was undergoing, she was truly handsome. In her youth she must have been very beautiful, and very fair to look upon. Her hair, rather inclined to a dark color, and still not positively black, lay smoothly parted upon a pale, high forehead, at the base of which two full, deep-blue eyes looked out in mournful tenderness. The prevailing expression of her face was, however, calculated to arouse a sentiment of pity rather than any other emotion. She was somewhat under the medium height, but her figure was elegantly though delicately formed. When Degroot entered she was sewing rapidly upon a beautiful, flashy dress, whose brilliant hues and fine texture proved that it was not intended to be worn by the humble person whose fairy fingers were flying up and down its close-fitting seams. Occasionally a single tear would drop down on the work before her and disappear amid the bright colors that formed a strange contrast to all their shabby surroundings. She made no halt when Degroot entered, but after casting a quick glance at the door to assure herself of his identity, silently plied her needle, moving her hand possibly more swiftly to conceal her emotion. Degroot seated himself without a word. But after the lapse of several minutes, he asked for whom the work was intended.

"For Mrs. Surratt," was the reply.

"Indeed! Where did you become acquainted with her?"

"I am not acquainted with her. I was hunting work, and called at her house and got this."

"You did not give her your true name?" asked Degroot, manifesting a considerable degree of interest.

"I did not. She required no name."

"I am glad you did not, Mina. The discovery of the relation existing between us at this moment would interfere very materially with my plans for the future. Hereafter, I wish you to give any other but your true name."

The poor woman, though she knew not to what plans he had reference, was evidently hurt and astonished at this last remark; but she made no answer, nor asked any questions.

Only another tear fell like a shining gem upon the gay colors: it meant a great deal.

"How much money have you got, Mina?" asked Degroot after a short period of silence, in which a thousand tormenting thoughts seemed to be racing across the distressed woman's mind.

"Only five dollars," was her reply.

"Very well: I will want it to-morrow."

The pent up emotions could no longer be contained within their barriers, and the lady burst into tears at his coldness of manner and his apparent indifference to the state of slavery to which she was reduced. Degroot did not seem at all surprised at this manifestation of feeling, but he spoke not until his wife, for such she was, had nearly ceased to weep.

"What is the matter, Mina?" he said in the same tone.

"Percy," said she, pointing to the trundle-bed and speaking as if the effort were painful, "you see that poor, sick child lying there? You needn't look so cross, I know you care very little for him; I've been convinced of that a long time. But I've been working unusually hard to save money to buy medicine for him. He needs it, and must have it."

"I don't believe there is anything the matter with him, Mina. It is all in your prolific imagination."

"The poor boy has been diseased for several years. You always have refused to see it; but I knew it. It grows plainer every day. The little thing has been getting rapidly worse ever since you sent him out in the rain after chips. Your treatment of him hurt him as much as anything else. You spoke unkindly and roughly, and it almost broke his heart. Percy, do not treat him so again," she continued while her eyes were filling with tears. "He will not be in your way much longer. O, what would become of my poor boy if I should happen to die? Who would take care of him? who would furnish him his scanty bread and clothing? It grieves me to think of it. God grant I may see him buried!" And she wept afresh.

"You need not discuss the probability of either event," replied Degroot coldly. "You will both live long enough."

"May be too long for you, Percy," said she, displaying a more stubborn spirit of disputation than she had ever shown before.

"May be too long for you. I can no longer blind myself to the fact that the presence of both of us is disagreeable to you." The husband slightly started. "For the last month or two you have been growing colder in your treatment of me. It was not always so, Percy. Seven years ago you thought me, and you told me, I was an angel. I was simple enough to believe that you really thought so. I felt that my happiness would be safe in your keeping; and I deserted my home for you. I thought you loved me, Percy, and I was happy."

"I did love you, Mina," interrupted Degroot.

"Yes; but do you love me now?" she ex-

claimed in some little wildness of manner that appeared to surprise Degroot considerably. "Say, Percy, do you love me now?"

"Of course I do."

"Your words and acts," replied the wife with a mournful shake of the head, "your words and acts, Percy, are strangely at variance. If you do, you have a poor way of showing it?"

"Men are not by nature as enthusiastic in love matters as women are. 'Scenes' are insipid and contemptible among married people," remarked Degroot with an air of *sang froid* that only confirmed his wife's allegation.

"You are not treating me right, Percy; but I could endure it if you would only show some little affection for our poor child."

"I have not time for such things, Mina. I care enough for the boy, but I cannot devote my whole time to him. I have something else to think about."

"What have you to think about of so much importance, Percy? I never see any results of your thoughts. I work none the less hard on account of them. In fact, I believe you would do well to quit thinking so much about schemes and engage in some kind of labor, and thus help to support your family. I feel that I am over-taxing my powers. A little assistance on your part, Percy, would not come amiss."

This last remark was made in a very timid, hesitating manner, as if she were afraid of wounding his feelings. A frown darkened Degroot's face, but it quickly disappeared. He was too shrewd to show much anger when it could possibly avail nothing. Assuming therefore an air of injured innocence, he spoke as if deeply hurt by her suggestion. "My schemes have failed, Mina, but not through mismanagement on my part. If Lincoln had been true to his promises, I would this very night be worth several thousand dollars. But he has deceived me, and I can now only await the development of other plans."

"Give up politics," said the wife with some tenderness. "If Lincoln deceived you, have no more to do with him; but seek some honest employment that will be certain to remunerate you."

"And what would that be?"

"You have a polished education. It seems to me you could find employment anywhere. Suppose," said she thoughtfully, "that you open a school."

"Open the —. Not I."

"Why not, Percy? It is an honorable profession, and you could follow it until something better should offer."

"It may be honorable enough, but it does not suit me."

"Oh, Percy, I wish you would do it! We could then gain a decent and respectable living, and we might be so happy. Just think what our condition is. I am forced to work very hard for the support of our family; and a very shabby appearance we make. But I would not mind this, Percy, if you would only do something to help us along."

"I am trying now, Mina, to do something. If all things work well," said he, turning his face from his wife, "I will be a wealthy man before many more months roll away."

"I have not much confidence in your schemes, Percy. I have been so often disappointed by them."

"It was not my fault."

"It does not matter whose fault it is. You have never realized anything from politics. It appears to me that your ill success ought to convince you, by this time, you are not in your sphere."

"Let us have no more of it, Mina. I do not want to hear it. Women cannot comprehend political operations; neither can they be made to understand the cause of failures in life. So let us have no more of it. I know what I ought to do."

The poor wife sighed, and then bowed her head upon her hand in uncomplaining obedience. It was useless to resist the stolid will of her despotic husband; and she must endure with patience what she could not remedy. But Mrs. Degroot's case was not such a very uncommon one. It was only one out of ten thousand others, similar in nearly all respects. The number of women thus controlled and oppressed by the inexorable despotism of tyrannical husbands, and who bear it in uncomplaining silence, will never be known till their constancy and faithfulness are proclaimed at the last day from the great book of accounts. Then surely will they receive their reward, who have sacrificed their own inclinations to the selfish government of another; and have passed through life enduring, suffering, and laboring with christian patience and resignation. Women, at the best, encounter but a series of trials, vexations and disappointments. Dearly does she pay the price of Eve's folly, displayed in her ready yielding to the dictates of an ungovernable curiosity. By that single act of disobedience, mother Eve has entailed upon all her fair daughters a weight of misery and shame that men cannot appreciate. Woman is almost utterly deprived of the numberless gratifications of taste and passion which the rougher sex enjoy to the full extent of human nature. Does she possess ambition? What department of life opens its broad, dazzling fields to her aspiring mind? Every feeling of her noble nature revolts from the bloody invitations to enter the lists with those engaged in national butchery and carnage; and she can never therefore feel those high, lofty, god-like emotions induced by the gory display of daring courage upon the battle-field. Does she love power? She comes in contact at every step with some rude, rougher master spirit, that by its iron energy bears down her delicate organization; and like the slender reed in a storm she must yield to a breath of the lordly intellect, the stronger, stubborn mind, or the defiant ambition of man, and retire disheartened from the unequal contest, or be left far behind in the mad struggle for power. Does she thirst for literary distinction? The way is beset with a thousand difficulties so repulsive to her natural modes-

ty; there are so many back-biting calumnies, so many sneers from envious mental mediocrity, that at last, sick at heart and wearied by her herculean effort in combatting long established prejudices, she shrinks back trembling into the shades of unassuming retirement, fades away like a tender flower, and "wastes her sweetness on the desert air." Sweet sufferer! be patient; "be faithful unto death;" a rich, glorious reward awaits thee in the better land.

Begging the reader's pardon for the foregoing digression, we must here give a short account of the woman who caused it. We must however begin with her husband.

Percy Degroot was about thirty-five years of age at the time our history commences. Ten years previously he completed his education at Yale College, an institution which takes the first rank in the United States. Concerning the education of his heart we say nothing, as his moral character will be developed in the course of these pages. He was a native of Connecticut. Soon after his graduation he repaired to Washington, having obtained through the influence of friends an important office in the war department. By some accident he formed the acquaintance of Miss Mina Eglantine, who lived in a town located in the southern portion of the Old Dominion. She was a most amiable young lady; but she was fascinated by Degroot's handsome appearance and his brilliant powers of mind, and in an evil hour she surrendered her heart and hand, and entrusted her happiness to his keeping. Although Miss Eglantine's motives were pure, Degroot's on the contrary were entirely mercenary; unless we may except a kind of spurious feeling of reciprocity engendered by the young lady's beauty, and the warm, ardent affection which she lavished upon him with all the fervor of a woman's holy nature. The unreserved confidence of a pure, trusting heart will produce in the breast of the meanest man a disposition to return the same feeling, though it may not be developed to the same degree. With the exception of a feeble sentiment of this character, no other emotion swelled in the bosom of Degroot. But Mina Eglantine was an heiress prospectively, as well as a belle. She was the only child of a wealthy merchant. Degroot, therefore, could very well afford to feign a passion he never felt, and endure the burden of a beautiful wife for the sake of eight or ten thousand a year. So Mina was metamorphosed by the usual process into Mrs. Degroot; and the day following her marriage, her husband received from the worthy father a present in the shape of twenty thousand dollars, which he valued much higher than the lovely object through whose instrumentality it was procured. Degroot, in anticipation of the vast fortune he was to receive at some future time, at once resigned his office and returned to his native state. He thought himself too much of a gentleman to labor, unless there was some actual, pressing necessity for such a course of action. In two or three years he squandered all he had; and to complete his

misfortunes, Col. Eglantine "broke," to use a popular term, and everything in the way of property was taken to liquidate his mercantile debts. Degroot was again thrown upon his own resources. He appealed to his friends; but they, having little confidence in his business capacities, were not so forward this time in finding him another sinecure. And now Mina's trials began. Her father was a ruined man pecuniarily; and no assistance whatever could be expected from this quarter. Her husband, unlike the majority of the New England yankees, would not disinter the bones of his departed ancestors and convert them into buttons, in order to procure "filthy lucre." Neither would he engage in the "wooden nutmeg" commerce. In this respect he was somewhat different from the other do-anything-for-a-dime New Englanders. This remarkable feature, this almost supernatural feature in the character of a native yankee cannot, however, be traced to any of those loftier feelings of personal dignity, pride and honor, that cause the chivalrous southron to despise the cunning little arts and practices which gain for our enlightened brethren of the civilized north a few paltry pence. The truth was, Degroot did not like this *peu et peu* kind of traffic. It was too slow for him. He became an office-hunter in earnest. He was after "fat offices." But he was, from some cause, unsuccessful in his plans. Mina was therefore forced to gain a living for the family by means of the needle. In this way she had supported them all for several years. Towards the latter part of 1864, Degroot removed to Washington, induced to such a step, it seems, by a promise of something from Abraham Lincoln. What the promise was, as we have already mentioned, he never discovered to anybody. Degroot's family lived in such obscurity in the capital, that it was not known by his most intimate associates he was a married man. He had another reason for not wishing to divulge his family relations, which reason will discover itself at the proper time.

Soon after the loss of her property, and with it her prospects, Mina observed a decided change in her husband's feelings towards herself. And in a short time after their removal to Washington, there was such a sudden and marked difference in his conduct that she could not but be aware that she was a positive nuisance in his sight. He was now moody and silent in her presence, rarely speaking unless he should be first accosted. Nothing she could do appeared to dispel the dark clouds by which he was completely surrounded. Mrs. Degroot became discouraged, disheartened, dejected, miserable. She had but one solitary consolation in the world, and that was her sickly boy. She labored for him with a tenderness which only a mother can feel. But notwithstanding all her troubles, she had never dared before the Saturday night previously mentioned, to communicate to her husband her suspicions concerning his faithlessness. What she said is known to the reader. This brief history brings us to a point from which we

must again proceed with our story. Be patient, kind reader!

The next morning was the Sabbath. Degroot, after partaking of a very plain breakfast prepared by his sorrowing wife, was about to leave home.

"Do not go to-day, Percy," said she with tender persuasion.

"I must, Mina," he replied coldly. I have business to attend to. Let me have that money."

Poor Mrs. Degroot looked troubled. It was a hard struggle between duty to her suffering child, and love for her worthless husband.

"Do you refuse, Mina?"

"You can take it," said she, "if you will only see Dr. Louvan, and get a little medicine for Clarence."

"Dr. Louvan?" exclaimed Degroot in unfeigned surprise. "Do you know him?"

"Only by character."

"Does he know you?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"You must be cautious, Mina. Do not let it be known under any circumstances that we are man and wife, if you value my regard. But now give me the money, I must be gone."

"Will you be sure to get the medicine Percy."

"Certainly I will."

At this moment little Clarence with a timid step advanced to where his father was standing, and said in a trembling voice:

"Pa, please bring me some medicine so I can get well. Ma says it will make me well."

Mrs. Degroot's eyes filled with tears.

"Percy, the child, unlike other children, does not ask for sweetmeats, but begs for medicine. If you care anything for him bring it."

Degroot took the money and left the house without saying a word. Little Clarence seated himself on the doorstep, and watched his unworthy progenitor till he was out of sight, and then turned to his mother.

"Ma, will he bring it?" he asked in a tone of voice that went like a jagged arrow to his mother's heart.

"I hope so, my child." She could not tell him yes.

"Ma, he don't care anything for me."

"What makes you think so, Clarence?"

"Because, he never is good to me. He always looks ugly at me. Just now he wouldn't speak to me. O, ma, if it wasn't for you I couldn't stand it!" And the little fellow threw his emaciated arms about his mother's neck, and cried with the bitterness of wounded feeling that was far beyond his years. The boy's mind was almost matured by poverty and sorrow. Mrs. Degroot's heart was full. Even the child had discovered his father's want of affection; and she did not think it proper to attempt to make him believe otherwise. She clasped the boy to her bosom in silence, and wept.

While the mother and son were thus engaged, the father was wending his way to one of those gambling hells that disgrace all large cities, and desecrate the holy Sabbath.

The church bells were ringing all around, and hundreds of clean, tidy children were flocking from all directions to the Sunday schools. All the business houses were closed, and thousands of people were endeavoring to lay aside worldly care and concentrate their thoughts for one day at least upon Him who holds the waters of the ocean in His hands. But Degroot loved not to dwell upon things of this character. The Sabbath was to him no more than any other day. He saw only the God of Mammon sitting over a fiery but concealed gulf, tempting him on and on, till he should lose his hold and plunge into the lake from whose burning billows there is no escape to the unrepented sinner.

That evening about dark Degroot returned home. As soon as he reached the door little Clarence again approached him.

"Pa, where is my medicine? Did you get it?"

"No. You need no medicine."

The child sank back upon a small stool, and bowed his head upon his little hands in disappointment touching to behold.

"May God forgive you, Percy!" She could say no more.

But we do not wish to parade too much grief before our reader. So we draw a veil over the scene that followed.

CHAPTER V.

"The man that trusts woman with a privacy,
And hopes for silence, he may as well expect it
At the fall of a bridge."

Another Saturday night had come, and the Bloody Junto was to meet again. Mrs. Degroot asked her husband to accompany her and her little boy to Mrs. Surratt's, in order to procure some more work. Degroot at first hesitated, but at last consented upon the condition that she would remain until he was ready to return, affirming that he had business that would detain him until ten or eleven o'clock. Mrs. Degroot had no idea that her husband was going to Mrs. Surratt's anyhow, nor did she have the most remote suspicion that he belonged to a secret society which met once a week in a dark cellar. Mrs. Surratt herself did not know for what purpose these men assembled under her house. The cellar had been rented from her, but to what use it was appropriated she was entirely ignorant. But she was soon called upon to act in the capacity of a regular member. For that very night upon which Degroot escorted his wife to Mrs. Surratt's, after the Bloody Junto had transacted its regular business, the name of the latter lady was proposed for membership. The proposition at first startled the members; no one was expecting such a thing, it seemed, nor had thought about it.

Payne asked if the constitution prescribed any qualifications as to sex, necessary to membership. Booth replied that the constitution contained nothing to prevent a woman's joining; but still the question was open to discussion.

"I am not going to make a speech, Mr. President," said Payne. "I wish merely to say that I do not like the policy of admitting women into a society as secret as this ought to be. I never knew a woman in my life who could keep a secret, unless it pertained to some bodily defect, the revelation of whose existence might mar her prospects of conquest. I thought the deficiency of the whole race in the power to retain things which ought not to be divulged, was known to everybody. As certain as we admit women, all our proceedings will be exposed. The question is so self-evidently one-sided, that it needs no discussion."

"The gentleman is very severe against the fair sex," remarked Degroot without rising to his feet. "I have known many women who could keep secrets, much better than men do."

"Is the gentleman a married man?" asked Payne.

Degroot slightly winced at this question; but he felt forced to reply, and he answered very positively:

"No, I am not."

"That accounts then for the gentleman's apparent ignorance in regard to the nature of the sex," said Payne.

"Since," said Degroot, "the gentleman is so pointed in his interrogations, I should like to ask if his assertions are based upon his own personal experience, or upon a theory deduced from mere hearsay."

"My individual experience has something to do with the matter; but whether I am married now, or have ever been, or ever expect to be, I do not choose to tell. I will, however, say that I had a sweetheart once, and she never could keep secrets. But whether I married her, or did not marry her, or she married me or somebody else, or did not marry at all, I do not think I will reveal upon the present or any future occasion."

"The gentleman is out of order," said the president. Payne took his seat.

"I proposed the name of Mrs. Surratt," said a member, "as I thought for very good reasons. This house belongs to her, and of course she cannot be ignorant of the fact that we are keeping our proceedings very secret. She may accidentally discover some of our doings; and she may attach more importance to them than they deserve. Then she may put her own construction upon our acts and our intentions, and report us to the government. Our whole band may then be arrested as rebels, and tried for high treason. Let her be admitted, and let her curiosity be gratified, and we need apprehend no trouble on her account. I know her to be a discreet and prudent woman. Besides, we have done nothing yet which it would be dangerous for a woman to know. I presume that we will do nothing that a prudent woman might not know."

"The gentleman is mistaken in that," replied Payne. "I foresee that this society will become what its name imports—a bloody junto. The history of this society will be marked by scenes of bloodshed that no wo-

man can witness in silence. Mark the prediction."

"To what scenes of bloodshed does the gentleman allude?" asked another member. "I thought the society took its name from the simple fact that the constitution was signed with blood; and not that it was intended to become an institution of murder. I think, therefore, the gentleman has put the wrong construction upon the object of our organization."

"I alluded," said Payne, "to no specific act. But I know from the very nature of man that where unlimited power is conferred upon him, it will be abused and perverted to deeds of gore. It cannot be denied that this society is a despotism in miniature, and all despotisms are bloody."

"Both the gentlemen are out of order," interrupted Booth. "We are not discussing any question concerning the nature of our organization or its destiny. Shall Mrs. Surratt be admitted? That's the question."

"Mr. President," said another member, "it seems to me we are striking in the dark. We do not know that Mrs. Surratt would join if she should be elected. Besides, does she hold to our political opinions?"

"It will be best," replied Booth, "to take the vote upon her admission first; because she might be rejected. If she should be elected and refuse to join, there will be no harm done. I can, with no hazard at all, vouch for her principles, as several others can. I would like to add, furthermore, that I think she will make an invaluable member. It strikes me that we may possibly need the services of a discreet woman. There are some things which can be done by a woman without exciting suspicion, which a man could not do at all. In case we should need a female character, I do not know of a more suitable person than Mrs. Surratt."

This last remark of Booth's settled the question at once. Mrs. Surratt was elected by an overwhelming majority. There was only one vote recorded against her admission. A committee of one was appointed to wait upon her immediately, and report forthwith. It was intended that she should be initiated that very night. The committee accordingly left the cellar, and asked to see Mrs. Surratt in her parlor. The member waited a few moments, and then a stout, short, thick lady entered the parlor. She was neither very handsome, nor very ugly. Her appearance was such as not to excite any particular admiration or disgust. Her face was round and enlivened by two large, soft, gray eyes. Her complexion was fair, and withal, she was just such a woman as any one may frequently meet with. This was Mrs. Surratt. Previously to the war, she was living about ten miles from Washington at a village called Surrattsville, from her own name. Her husband had founded this village by establishing a fine hotel at a cross-road. He died, and left the property to his wife, who carried on the business for some time, but with no great success. Soon after the commencement of the war, she rented out the hotel and

removed to Washington with her son and daughters. But this has passed into history; and we will proceed.

"You are aware, Mrs. Surratt," said the member changing the conversation from common-place topics, "that a society of some description meets in your cellar every Saturday night."

The lady assented by a slight inclination of the head.

"You must further know that it is a secret society."

"I know nothing about that," replied Mrs. Surratt. "I rented the cellar some time ago, but since then I have never troubled myself about the purpose to which it was appropriated. That is no affair of mine."

"I have been appointed, Mrs. Surratt, to acquaint you with our designs, and to inform you that you have been elected a member of our society."

"I have!" exclaimed Mrs. Surratt in the utmost surprise.

"Yes, Ma'am, you have."

"What for?" asked the lady opening wide her eyes in extreme astonishment.

"Well, you profess no partiality for Mr. Lincoln, or his oppressive administration, do you?"

Mrs. Surratt hesitated to answer; because in those dark days treachery was as common as swindling and falsehood.

"You need not fear to talk plainly with me, Mrs. Surratt. You know who I am. I could not betray you if I would."

"I have never spoken to you, Mr. Winthrop, concerning politics. It is dangerous to reveal all one's thoughts in these bloody times. We hardly know our friends from our enemies."

"A very good friend of yours told me that you are almost a rebel."

"Who said that?"

"John W. Booth."

"Mr. Booth told you?" said Mrs. Surratt, blushing at the mention of his name.

"Yes, Ma'am."

"When did he tell you?"

"This very night—a few moments ago—and in the presence of the whole society at that."

"What connection has Mr. Booth with this society?"

"He is president."

"Did he approve of my election?"

"Certainly he did. If he had not approved it in advance, it is very doubtful whether you would have been elected or not."

"I acknowledge that I disclosed my political sentiments to him. I presume he has not misrepresented me."

"You are willing to join then?"

"Not until I know something more definite about it."

"What do you wish to know?"

"Well, what is the object of the society?"

"In a word, to oppose the administration of Lincoln."

"By what means?"

"By any lawful means that will impair the influence of his party."

"What would I be expected to do? What is required of me?"

"Very little. You will have to take our oath of fidelity, and sign the constitution. After that, you need not attend another meeting, unless you desire to."

"Are there any ladies already in it?"

"None."

"Then I will not join," said Mrs. Surratt with firmness.

"Why not, Mrs. Surratt?"

"For a very plain and obvious reason."

"What is that? I do not see it!"

"Do you think it consistent with the dignity of a respectable woman to attach herself to a society composed of men exclusively, with whom she is unacquainted? Would it add anything to her good character?"

"I do not think it would detract from it. You will not be required to act the part of a regular member. In fact, after to-night it will be entirely optional with you whether you attend another meeting."

"What do you want me to join for, then? If I never attend your meetings, I do not see that I can be of any use whatever!"

The member saw it would be of no use to dissemble. He must tell the whole matter, and let it be understood clearly.

"I have already told you, Mrs. Surratt, that we are a secret society. We want you to help guard our secrecy. This you can do more effectually by becoming a regular member, and understanding our objects fully. There are other ways I cannot mention now in which an intelligent lady like yourself can be servicable. Your friend Booth," continued Winthrop, who seemed to understand her partiality for that gentleman, "is very anxious that you should join. I do not think he would approve of any measure that would tend to injure your character."

Mrs. Surratt was pleased at this delicate flattery; and besides, like other women, she had a due share of curiosity. But the greatest motive with her was, that Booth desired her initiation. There could be no great harm in going once, she reasoned, and if she did not like the proceedings, or if she thought her modesty was compromised, she would attend no more. There was one thing, however, upon which she was determined, and that was, she would not go unaccompanied by a person of her own sex. Her fertile brain at once suggested an expedient by which she could retain her claims to feminine delicacy of feeling, and at the same time not incur the displeasure of Booth. But for that gentleman's connection with the society she would have promptly rejected the idea of joining.

"I will join upon one condition," at last said Mrs. Surratt.

"What is that?"

"There is a lady in my room now; if you will receive us both, I will join."

"Who is she?"

"Mrs. Eglantine."

"Do you know her to be of our faith?"

asked Winthrop after a moment's reflection.

"She is a native Virginian, and I suppose

from what I've heard her say that her sympathies are with the south; though I have not talked with her particularly on the subject. It can be easily ascertained in a few minutes to which side she leans."

"There is no use of saying anything to her yet. I must report to the society, and see what action will be taken in her case. Probably some of the members can answer for her." Saying which Winthrop returned to the cellar, and reported the result of his mission.

"Can any one vouch for Mrs. Eglantine's principles?" asked Booth.

"It is Mina," thought Degroot. "She has given her name as Eglantine, according to my instructions. This affair may work well; I may make something of it yet. I may entangle her in some way, and thus get shut of her. I do not absolutely hate Mina, but there is another whom I absolutely worship, and whom I might win but for present encumbrances. But possibly I may rid myself of her presence forever by telling her to be initiated into this society. It will furnish good grounds upon which to base an accusation against her fidelity, if it should be to my interest to do so. I do not believe she will join if she understands thoroughly what she is about, and is left to her own judgment. I hope she may conclude to do so. But I will soon see."

These thoughts flashed through the mind of Degroot during the half-minute of silence that followed Booth's question.

"Can any one vouch for Mrs. Eglantine's principles?" asked Booth.

"I can," said Degroot.

"So can I," exclaimed a voice at the farther end of the cellar.

Had a bomb-shell exploded at Degroot's feet he could not have been much more startled. He jumped half out of his seat, and was on the point of asking who it was that recommended his wife. But quickly remembering that he had made some assertions which he did not wish to contradict, he quietly settled down and concealed his surprise.

"I move then," said a member, "that we elect Mrs. Eglantine by acclamation." This was seconded, and no one seeming disposed to offer objections, the question was put to the house and carried; and the same committee appointed to inform the lady of her election.

Degroot obtained permission to retire for a short time, as he had his reasons for not wishing to be recognized by his wife, in case she should consent to be initiated. But before leaving the cellar, he ventured to examine hastily the persons in the neighborhood of his wife's voucher. Five or six members were sitting together at the farther end of the cellar, and he knew that one of these must be the man. There was only one of them with whom he was entirely unacquainted, and Degroot came to the conclusion that he was the person who had so kindly endorsed his own recommendation of his wife. He felt satisfied that none of the

others had formed the acquaintance of his wife; they did not so much as know he had a wife. Even if they did, how could they know her as Mrs. Eglantine? Having settled this much, the next mystery was, how could a person he had never seen before in his life be so well acquainted with Mrs. Degroot? There was a mystery about it that completely puzzled him. He took as close a survey of the stranger as good breeding would allow, and beheld a well formed man, about thirty-five or forty years of age. He owned long, black, luxuriant whiskers that seemed to grow from his very eyes, and hung down at least ten inches below his chin. His mouth could not be seen at all, so completely was it hidden by the heavy moustache. The head was covered with thick, dark hair, that hung down to the whiskers on both sides of the face, just in front of the ears. No part of his countenance was visible except the eyes, the forehead, and the large Roman nose. All that enlivened his physiognomy was two keen, yellow eyes, sunk deep under the high forehead, that rolled fiercely in their sockets as if chafing with the narrow limits nature had assigned. His frame was large and muscular; and the idea occurred to Degroot that he would be a dangerous antagonist to encounter, whoever he might be. The man was a perfect stranger to Degroot; he could not recollect ever having seen such a person anywhere in all his life. But how came he to know Mina, was the question, and so intimately as to vouch for her political principles? Mina must have a clandestine lover. Impossible! But he would be glad of it if she had. He could take the whiskered stranger by the hand, and wish him much joy with Mrs. Degroot. But there was no such good luck. Mina was too true for that. With such thoughts Degroot retired from the cellar.

While the members of the Bloody Junto had been considering the propriety of initiating Mrs. Degroot, *alias* Eglantine, Mrs. Surratt was with the latter lady; and notwithstanding that she had been requested by Winthrop to say nothing about the matter until he should return from the cellar, she was exercising her own judgment, and revealing what she thought proper. We must however say, in justice to Mrs. Surratt, she was talking thus in order to discover the politics of Mrs. Eglantine, rather than from any feeling of restless impatience to communicate a great secret, and thereby magnify her own importance. We may observe, *en passant*, that the last clause of the previous sentence contains the principal reason why secrets are kept afloat, flying upon confidential whispers from one ear to another. One likes to be thought worthy of being entrusted with an important secret. But this is wandering considerably from the story.

No sooner had Winthrop fairly cleared the door, than Mrs. Surratt hastened to her own room, and opened a volley of small questions. She went at it with an air of condescension, as though she were doing the poor seamstress a favor by propounding questions which

would have been impertinent if they had been addressed to an equal.

"I believe, Mrs. Eglantine, you said that you were a native of Virginia?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"You are waiting for your husband to come for you?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Where is he?"

"In the city."

"What is his profession?"

Mrs. Degroot made no answer, and Mrs. Surratt saw that she had struck upon a tender chord.

"Is this your little boy?" quickly asked Mrs. Surratt.

"Yes, Ma'am."

"What is your name, child?" asked Mrs. Surratt kindly.

"Clarence," answered the child.

"Clarence Eglantine. That is a pretty name."

"No, Ma'am: Clarence Degroot," said the little fellow looking earnestly at his blushing mother, who felt as if she could crawl into the very earth and hide herself. Her emotion did not escape Mrs. Surratt, who however attributed it to the wrong cause; for she said pityingly:

"You are not the first one in this city that has been betrayed and deserted."

"You are very much mistaken," said Mrs. Degroot with a show of virtuous indignation, "if you think I belong to that class. I am poor, but I am honest; and I am lawfully married. The boy has a middle name, if that is what you are judging by."

"I beg your pardon," said Mrs. Surratt. "I see I was doing you injustice. But how long have you been living in the city?"

"Only a few months."

"Where did you come from?"

"Connecticut."

"I thought you were a Virginian!"

"So I am; but my husband lived in Connecticut."

"Ah, yes, I see. What are your husband's politics?"

"I never talk politics with him."

"Every woman," said Mrs. Surratt incredulously, "is supposed to know her husband's political principles. In such times as these I do not see how you could be ignorant as to which side he leans."

"I never talk to him about such things."

"Which side do you sympathize with?" asked Mrs. Surratt bluntly.

"I have no time to sympathize with either. It keeps me busy to make bread."

"You are a southern woman. Of course, then, you would like to see the south triumph," said the persevering lady, attempting to force a political confession from her non-committal visitor.

"I do not know that it would do any good to answer the question."

"If you were a Lincolnite," said Mrs. Surratt with a steady gaze, "you would not hesitate to avow your principles. I know which side you sympathize with. I thought I could not be mistaken. I am a

southern woman myself. You may think I am very inquisitive, Mrs. Eglantine, but I have an object in view in asking you so many questions. And now, since I have found you out, I will tell you what I want."

"What?" said the astonished Mrs. Degroot.

"I want you to join our southern society, this very night!"

"Who, me?"

"Yes, you," said Mrs. Surratt, smiling at the frightened woman.

The conversation was at this point interrupted by a message from Winthrop, who sent for Mrs. Surratt, and requested that the other lady should accompany her into the parlor. Mrs. Degroot, not knowing for what purpose, followed Mrs. Surratt and was introduced to Winthrop, who briefly acquainted her with the existence, the nature and the object of the society, and then informed her of her election. Mrs. Degroot at first positively refused to join; but she was in the habit of yielding to a strong and despotic mind. So, urged by the combined persuasion of Winthrop and Mrs. Surratt, she at last agreed to follow the latter into the cellar, though acting in opposition to her better judgment. The magnificent promises of Winthrop so confused and dazzled the poor lady that she had consented almost before she knew it. We may add that during all this while Degroot was eavesdropping, and heard nearly every word uttered by the trio. He was satisfied with some things, and dissatisfied with others.

When Mina entered the cellar, she was much surprised to find that herself and Mrs. Surratt were the only females present. She had been under the impression that the society was composed mostly of ladies. This inference, however, was deduced from her own reasoning rather than from anything that Mrs. Surratt or Winthrop had said. She could not therefore charge them with having deceived her. But, anyhow, it was too late to retire now after having been once admitted. She glanced timidly at the faces in the cellar to see if her husband might be in the assembly; but she was soon satisfied that he was not present, and she trembled with extreme fear at the idea of doing what might not meet with his approbation. Amid her various emotions she heard very few words of the constitution, only certain portions of which were read. Then Booth informed the two ladies that they must subscribe their names with blood; and with a pen-knife he drew a few drops from his hand.

"The name of the society," said he, "is the Bloody Junto; its constitution must be signed with the blood of John Wilkes Booth—its president!"

"Mrs. Degroot shudderingly seized the pen, and with a trembling hand wrote the name, Mina Eglantine."

The ladies retired immediately after their initiation, both resolving in their hearts that this should be the last time they would ever attend a meeting of this bloody society. Degroot re-entered. He made a motion that thenceforward the members should wear

masks whenever they should meet. This prudent measure was adopted without opposition; and then the society adjourned.

Degroot soon afterwards went into the street near Mrs. Surratt's door, and made a signal which had been previously agreed upon. Mina left the room at once and joined her husband. As they were moving along homeward, a violent struggle of opposite feelings ensued in her breast. She felt like a guilty wretch who had violated her plighted faith, and was therefore unworthy of even Percy's cold, platonic affection. Should she confess all and beg his pardon, or should she keep the secret forever locked in her own heart, and never appear before the society again? It was a difficult question to decide. But while she was pondering, Degroot suddenly spoke.

"Mina, are you acquainted with a man by the name of Vanderbetterton?"

"I never heard the name before in my life," said Mina in surprise.

"The name may be assumed, after all. Probably then you may know a gentleman with long, black whiskers, keen, dark eyes, and thick hair of the same hue?"

"Percy, I do not know a man in the city except yourself. Why do you ask such a question?" said Mrs. Degroot with a fearful suspicion.

"Merely because I saw a person to-night who appeared to know you very intimately. I supposed him to be an old acquaintance of yours."

"I do not recollect ever having seen such a man as you have described. He must be mistaken."

Degroot said nothing more, and Mina could not talk for her bitter, conflicting reflections. So they moved on in silence. But neither one observed the long-whiskered man about whom they had been conversing, and who was following at a respectful distance. He however kept them in sight, until he saw them enter the dwelling previously described, then carefully noting its locality he suddenly wheeled and retraced his steps.

CHAPTER VI.

"She was like
A dream of poetry, that may not be
Written or told—exceedingly beautiful."

Upon the handsomest street in the capital of the United States there stood, and I presume still stands, one of those magnificent mansions that fill the rich with admiration, and the poor with envy. It frowned down upon the squalid beggar who chanced to pass before its colossal front with a haughty air that bade him in very intelligible language to accelerate his speed, and make his applications for alms in domiciles whose owners made less pretensions. The beggar reasoned, with some truth too, that the man who could expend vast sums in the erection of such towering edifices, had few soft places in his heart to which an unfortunate wretch might

direct a successful appeal. So he obeyed the silent admonition of the mute but proud object, and passed on, with many sorrowful reflections upon the folly of his fellow-creatures. The inside of the beautiful residence was decorated in a style corresponding to its splendid exterior appearance. In fact, everything about, around, above, beneath, all combined, produced in the mind of one unaccustomed to such sights of magnificence, an idea of earthly splendor and grandeur which he had fancied to exist only in the feverish imagination of wild dreamers. It reminded him of the fabled palace of Aladdin, erected by the power of oriental magic. But we wish to direct the reader's attention to one of the inmates, rather than the mansion itself, or any of its magnificent surroundings and decorations.

We feel it to be almost a useless undertaking to attempt a description of the person whom we are now about to introduce to our gentle reader. Imagine before you something like a fairy, or like some of those fanciful female deities with which the active, visionary minds of the ancient poets peopled every habitable locality, and over which they were supposed to exercise a kindly tutelage. According to the belief of the credulous Grecians and Romans there existed such beings as Nereids, Naiades, semi-Goddesses and demi-mortals, constructed somewhat upon the amphibious order; that is, they could dwell in heaven or earth without experiencing any of those inconveniences resulting from a change of latitude or element. They were soft, sylph-like creatures, combining in their mysterious natures the two contradictions of the ethereal and the material—floating along upon the sweet-scented zephyr that stole softly over the classic land of Homer and Virgil—or tripping gaily over the blue waves of the sea, which rolled, leaped and danced beneath their tiny feet, as if proud to become the watery vehicle of immortal nymphs. We read of them with feelings of wonder. We scarcely know whether to love the poor things as beautiful sweethearts, or fear them as passionless but tangible embodiments of celestial attributes. If, however, one is disposed to indulge a feeling of tenderness for Juno, Venus or even chaste Diana, he may calm his fears by the reflection that great Jupiter, in days of yore, visited the beauties of our globe, in violation of his marital fidelity; yea, the cunning Juan condescended upon one occasion to metamorphose his godly nature into the male of kine, and ran away with Europa clinging to his snowy white back by grasping his polished horns. Therefore, according to the *lex talionis*, we may fall in love with the subjects of mighty Jove, if the Thunderer pays any regard whatever to the golden rule.

We trust a false impression has not been made upon the reader's mind; for Flora Louvan did not belong to the class of fictitious creatures to whom we have alluded. She was neither Nereid, Naiad nor Goddess; but for want of suitable language with which

to convey a just idea of her incomparable beauty, we have likened her to a fairy or sea-nymph. We might with propriety say, speaking figuratively, or metaphorically, or allegorically, (or all three adverbs together,) she constituted the connecting link between these airy beings and mortal natures. If, however, she belonged at all to the former race, she was of the mischievous tribe; because she was smartly tinctured with vanity, and was disposed to jilt. We mean by all that we have been saying that Flora Louvan was a most splendid looking girl, in probably the last one of the "teens"—too good-looking to be accurately described. But if the reader desires a fuller or more minute description, we can only say that her classic head was ornamented with raven black hair; her eyes were of a deep hazel hue; her complexion was fair and clear. To add more would give no just idea of her peerless, vital beauty. It was purely physical though. It was not of that lofty and rare kind, that derives its chief attraction from a soul so large that it renders itself almost visible in the lineaments of the face, and shoots like an electric shock into the very hearts of those who scan its elegant temple of carnal clay. There are two kinds of beauty that differ very essentially—so much that one is the antipode of the other; the one appeals to the purer, holier nature of man; the other calls forth admiration intimately associated with what we can, at best, call by the qualified term of *human* passion, in contradistinction to that of the lower orders of creation. The one is of a metaphysical or pneumatological character, and leads to the contemplation of unity of hearts which not even icy death can interrupt, but which changing like the chrysalis casts off clogging mortality, and is removed beyond the confines of time to endure forever and forever; the other arouses an emotion of a temporary nature, that looks only to a union for this fleeting life, and is satisfied that the partnership should cease at the brink of the tomb. The one is spiritual; the other is bodily. The tender feeling which Miss Flora's beauty excited in the breasts of her numerous admirers must be placed in the category of the material. Hers was the beauty of a well executed statue; and with the exception of the eyes, her features looked as expressive in repose as in the hours of animation. She was above the medium height; but yet not so tall as to make one wish her less so. She was very slender; but still if her waist had been greater in circumference, one would have regretted it. And with this sorry description of her person, the reader must be contented.

Flora Louvan had been educated in Boston. Her father was by birth a yankee—a Bostonian. As far as schools in the south were concerned, he believed that "nothing good could come out of Nazareth." In fact, he had a contempt for everything southern in its character. Flora, therefore, must go to Boston; and to Boston she went. To this circumstance, then, of education might be

traced the defects of her character. For what had she learned of real value, of solid utility, in the puritanical town of Boston? What could she learn among a set of envious, *secretive*, money-making, pharisaical hypocrites, who would willingly become the abettors of any social or political revolution, that would work ruin to their neighbors and add an iota of "filthy lucre" to their blood-stained coffers? At the tender age of fifteen, Flora was sent to this self-constituted guardian of virtue and religion—the hell-born city of Boston. She remained there four years, and then returned to her parents an "accomplished young lady," with Boston honors budding thick upon her classic brow. She had been taught to despise honest labor, and to undervalue every principle of science that would not be made available in the acquisition of wealth. Her young heart had been trained to adore the God of Mammon. Her character was strongly marked with sickly ideas and spurious sentiments found in Boston novels. From the effect of this Boston training she became, like all yankee women, bold, flippant, ambitious, wild, rattling, and superficially brilliant. Such was this Boston-educated girl, just turning the corner of nineteen.

When Flora arrived at home, she at once took her social position in the so-called first circles of society. Many were her lovers; and many were the suitors for her hand; but she rejected all offers of marriage with a feeling of pride bordering on disdain. She at first loved nobody; but still she was proud of the homage paid to her superior beauty, and she reigned over her admirers with an agreeable despotism. But the fate of all jilts is known. Flora at last was captured against her own will. For one night at the theatre she beheld for the first time John Wilkes Booth. She thought she was charmed with his acting. She must see him again on the stage. So she went again, persuading herself that the strange fascination which was working mysteriously on her swelling heart was induced by Booth's inimitable performance. Again and again she attended the theatre, and each time came away more infatuated, more maddened. At last it was no longer possible to deceive herself. And it was with great reluctance that she acknowledged to her own heart that she was in downright love with a stage actor. Then ensued a struggle revolting to her pride. According to the creed of the circle in which she moved, actors were outcasts from respectable society. He belonged to the lowest class of society; she to the highest. He was her equal in no respect. A marriage therefore was impossible. What! after she had refused the offers of congressmen and officers of military distinction, accept a common stage-actor? The idea was preposterous. What must she do then? suppress the wild tumult of her heart? She could not. She understood the old saying, "familiarity breeds contempt." She would form the acquaintance of Booth, and then finding him destitute of all the accom-

plishments of refined society, her unfortunate attachment would be converted into contempt. So she commenced sending Booth bouquets; and at last the wished-for introduction was obtained. But her hope of a speedy relief from her disgraceful thralldom was soon blasted. For Booth was a man of the world, and thoroughly understood all those little arts by which one renders himself agreeable and entertaining. His address was as winning as that of an innocent maid. Her golden shackles were riveted; and after the first visit she was unhappy and dissatisfied with her ill success. To render her condition still more wretched, she thought she discovered in Booth indications of a return of her involuntary love. She therefore resolved to make use of this circumstance. She would completely conquer Booth's heart, and if she could not marry him, she would make him as miserable as she was herself. It was no herculean undertaking. Booth's susceptible heart was entirely won; but the conquest only sank the wretched girl deeper into the vortex of what she considered illegal love. She worshipped the man whom she wished to hate, with all the ardor that entirely absorbed all her thoughts and all her dreams. The intensity of her wild, uncontrollable emotion seemed to increase steadily, day by day, in despite of all her efforts to free herself from the meshes of an humbling affection. Booth made her an offer of marriage, but she neither accepted nor rejected him. She could not muster up resolution sufficient to send him promptly away, and thus put an end to the struggle. Such would have been the course of a purely virtuous heart.

Miss Louvan was in the strange condition just described when Mrs. Degroot called on her, a few days after the occurrences mentioned in the preceding chapter, in order to return some article of dress which she had finished. Flora was in the parlor, one of her admirers having just left.

"This is done very nicely," said Miss Louvan taking the garment. How much shall I pay you for it?"

"Two dollars, Ma'am."

"Two dollars! How long did it take you to finish it?"

"Four days."

"I should hate to work four days for two dollars. I would not do it."

"I have seen the time," answered Mrs. Degroot sorrowfully, "that I would not either—for ten times that amount."

"You have been in better circumstances then?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"How came you to be a seamstress?"

"My father was so unfortunate as to lose all his property, and in consequence I was forced to sew for a living."

"You were once wealthy."

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Tell me then," said Flora with a strange tone, "when you were in that condition if you ever loved?"

"Yes, Ma'am, I did."

"Were you miserable, or happy?"

"Very happy," answered Mrs. Degroot wondering at the question.

"Was your lover handsome?"

"Of course I thought so," was said with a little sad smile.

"Did you ever love anybody whom you wished to hate?"

"Never. I should think that would be impossible."

"May be so; but I have heard of such persons. In fact, continued Flora with a smile of concealed bitterness, "I know a young lady—a friend of mine, who is in that very condition. She appears to be the most wretched girl in the city. I scarcely know what advice to give her, though she has appealed to me. What would you advise her to do?"

"I should think it would be very easy to settle," answered Mrs. Degroot. "If the man is worthy of her affections, there is no reason why she should desire to hate; if he is not, then she would best have nothing to do with him."

"I have told her that, but she declares she has no control over her feelings. She loves in spite of herself."

"If she loves an unworthy man, she is very unfortunate."

"So I think. But tell me, do you ever visit the theatre?"

"No Ma'am, never."

"You have never seen John Wilkes Booth, then?"

"Who? Booth—the president of the Bloody? — She suddenly stopped.

"President of what?" asked Flora with awakened interest.

"Nothing, nothing," quickly answered Mrs. Degroot with a frightened air that told too plainly there was something.

"You said that Booth was president of something. What is it?"

Just then a servant entered the parlor, bearing a magnificent bouquet, which was handed to Miss Louvan. She received it with an air of indifference, and glanced at the card which was attached.

"Those are very beautiful flowers," remarked Mrs. Degroot, more for the purpose of diverting the conversation from the president of the Bloody Junto than from any desire to talk.

"Yes, but I am accustomed to such things. You may have this if you want it." She tossed the bouquet into Mrs. Degroot's lap. "But tear off the card if you please."

Mrs. Degroot did as she was bidden; but as she was unfastening the card what was her astonishment to behold the name of Percy Degroot, written in his well-known hand upon it. She turned so deadly pale that Miss Louvan noticed it, though she said nothing.

"Did Mr. Degroot send this?" asked the distressed woman after she had partially calmed her choking sensation. "Did he send you this?"

"To be sure he did. Why should he not? He is one of my adorers."

"Impossible!" cried Mrs. Degroot in a tone of agony.

"Impossible indeed!" said Flora scornfully.

"There is nothing impossible about it."

"Does he love you?" asked Mrs. Degroot with trembling energy.

"Ah! I see how it is," said Flora gazing earnestly at the pitiable wife. "But I will not tell you a word about Mr. Degroot until you inform me what Wilkes Booth is president of. Come now," continued Flora laughing, "that is a bargain. Tit for tat. I might tell you something very interesting. I know I could."

"How long have you known Mr. Degroot?"

asked the troubled wife, scarce hearing what the young lady was saying.

"Did I not tell you that I would reveal nothing unless you would return the favor? I will answer any question you may ask concerning Mr. Degroot, if you will answer mine in regard to Booth. I will make that bargain with you."

Mrs. Degroot was thus made to comprehend that she could learn nothing more respecting this unpleasant affair without a divulgence of all she knew in regard to the Bloody Junto. There was only one thing that prevented the poor lady from making a full revelation of the whole matter, and that was the connection she herself had with the society. It was not a matter of conscience with her. For when she was initiated, she was so confused that if she took any oath (which she did) binding her to secrecy, she did not remember a word of it. Therefore it was not the force of any moral obligation that kept her silent. She feared only for her own fair name.

"I will agree to it," at last said Mrs. Degroot, "if you will not ask me how I obtained my knowledge."

"Very well," replied Flora. "I care nothing about that. Come, begin; tell me what Booth is president of?"

"The Bloody Junto."

"The Bloody Junto! What in the name of conscience is that?"

"It is some kind of a society, political I believe."

"Do they murder people?"

"Not that I know of."

"What do they call it 'bloody' for then?"

"I reckon it is because they all sign their names with the blood of John Booth. It is all the reason I know."

"*Mon Dieu!*" said Flora with a horrified look. "*C'est un sanglant diable d'homme!* But what else?"

"That is about all I know."

"When does the society meet?" asked Flora.

"I do not know, Ma'am, unless it is Saturday nights."

"Where does it meet?"

"In Mrs. Surratt's cellar, I think."

"How came you to know anything about it?"

"I believe," said Mrs. Degroot, "you agreed not to ask me that question."

"So I did. I forgot: excuse me. But do you know anything else?"

"I believe not?"

"I am done," said Flora. "You can ask me any question you want to."

"Well then," said Mrs. Degroot with evident pain, "how long have you been acquainted with Mr. Degroot?"

"Some time; several months. I do not recollect exactly."

"Does he love you?"

"He says so; and I have no reason to doubt it."

"Do you love him?"

"Not I; not a monad. I say love him!"

"Do you think he loves you with a view to marriage?"

"Of course he does. With what other motive could he love me?" asked Flora frowning and straightening herself proudly.

"It might be," slowly answered Mrs. Degroot, "that he could not help it. But has he ever mentioned marriage to you?"

"As well as I can recollect he has. So many propose it, I do not try to remember who they are. I think Mr. Degroot has, though."

"Did you encourage him or give him any room to hope?"

"I neither encouraged, nor discouraged him."

Mrs. Degroot said not another word. She had heard enough. She could not tell Miss Louvan how near to her was the person about whom they were talking. She hastily arose and made for the door; but before she had fairly reached it Flora cried out to her to stop.

"Well, what?" asked the miserable wife absently.

"I want to know what makes you so deeply interested in Mr. Degroot?"

"Ask me no more questions," slowly and sorrowfully replied the wife. "I cannot answer now." And she hastened into the street, and walked homewards with a heart bursting with bitter emotions. As she moved along her thoughts were far absent from the busy, gay city, among whose giddy populace she felt herself to be an insignificant cipher.

She could not but contrast her present condition with what it had been during the clouded days of girlhood. She looked back through the vista of a decade of years and beheld herself a girl, happy and contented, with no desire ungratified and no want unsupplied. The god of wealth had showered upon her in magnificent profusion all the blessings that lie within reach of human power. But while she was gliding down life's gently flowing stream a man presented himself before her. He was gentle and winning; his soft, thrilling words of love fell upon her ear with music sweeter than that of Calypso and her nymphs. Her young heart yielded to the magic power of blind Cupid, and against her venerable father's advice she gave up all to the adored idol of her tender affections. Inexperienced child she knew not that there was such an ignoble

vice as deceit in the human heart. In her unsuspected, unsuspecting innocence, she could not penetrate the veil of smooth dissimulation, and there beheld in the place of the jolly god of virtuous passion the horrid demon of avarice. But now it was all plain enough. She had never been purely loved by the man whom she called husband. A breath of adversity had stripped her of worldly possessions, and the charm which had apparently kept her liege lord faithful was gone. The pleasing illusion with which she had long deceived herself was at last entirely dispelled. She knew that now she could not but be hated, despised, loathed. She was a slave—an unthanked slave. Bitter was the knowledge that a portion of the miserable pittance which she earned by severe labor, and which barely supported her family, was taken to purchase flowers for a vain, frivolous rival, who detested him. On account of this heartless jilt she, a lawful wife, was compelled to deny her legitimate name, and fear to claim a husband her own by law and right. For this dark-eyed belle of Washington she and her little boy would be abandoned. The thought was intolerable. She would leave him; she would take little Clarence, poor, sick child, and fly from the city forever.

Then thoughts of a different character began to steal into her mind. She commenced, woman-like, to make excuses for her worthless husband, at least to put the most charitable construction upon his actions. For was it not possible that Miss Louvan might be mistaken. It might be that Percy Degroot was deceiving the young lady thus in order to accomplish some of his plans, which a married man could not achieve. So anxious was she now to excuse him, and convince herself that Miss Louvan was mistaken, that she did not think what might be the nature of the schemes that would render necessary such an extraordinary mode of procedure. She thought that he surely could not mean to marry Miss Louvan with a legal wife existing in the city. She knew he was too shrewd for that. The more she reflected upon it, the more perplexed and troubled she was. She dared not mention what she had heard to Percy; it might make matters worse. It would be best, she thought, to wait awhile before she should fly from the city, and see if there might not possibly be some mistake in regard to the matter. Admitting what Miss Louvan had said to be true, according to her own account she cared nothing for Degroot; he might find it out ere long, be cured of his folly, and return to his lawful wife. So the poor woman resolved in silence to suffer, to endure amid the alternations of hope and doubt.

After Mrs. Degroot had been at home a few minutes another mystery occurred, which if not as disagreeable as that pertaining to her husband and Miss Louvan, was still more puzzling. For while she was arranging her needle work for the day, an errand boy suddenly popped in at the door, inquired if her name was Degroot, and being answered in

the affirmative, placed in her hand a letter, and then vanished as suddenly as he had entered. Mrs. Degroot carefully read the address to see that there was no mistake. She was not in the habit of receiving letters from any source, and she thought at first this might be intended for some other person. She was however soon satisfied; for she saw plainly enough her own name, Mina Degroot. There was no post-mark whatever to be discovered on the envelope. It must be then, she concluded, from some one in the city. It was therefore with considerable curiosity that she tore off the cover, and unfolded the half-sheet of foolscap which it concealed. Her astonishment was extreme when a one hundred dollar note in genuine greenback caught her eye. She quickly glanced at the bottom of the epistle to find out who might be the generous donor of such a valuable present, but she saw only the indefinite name of "friend" written in a bold, firm hand, as if the subscriber meant what he had penned. The chirography was strange to her, though it bore marks which she thought she had seen before; but at what time she did not remember. There were occasional strokes and turns of the letters that appeared familiar; they seemed to carry her back to the past in divergent paths, which at last faded entirely away. Taking it altogether, or analyzing it, she could gain no clue to the writer. The letter commenced by requesting her to entertain no scruples in regard to using the small sum enclosed, for it was given with the purest motives and intentions. "You will though," continued the benevolent writer, "be curious to know who it is that has the kindness to send unasked such a gift. I must be so cruel as to say your natural curiosity concerning the matter cannot be gratified at present, for reasons with which you are unacquainted, but which are palpable enough to me. It is sufficient to say I know that you need help. Use then what you find enclosed as freely and unhesitatingly as if it came from your own father. You would better not let your husband know that you have so much, or how you came by it. If you do, it will lead you into trouble. I am afraid your husband is not the being you think he is. There are not many women who will willingly believe they have married cold-blooded villains. I have seen enough to convince me that Degroot is not right. It gives me pain to write this, but I do it in order to put you on your guard. I fear that ere long you will see I have told the truth. In conclusion let me caution you to watch him closely, if you value your own safety."

Such was the short epistle that both puzzled and terrified Mrs. Degroot. Various were her suppositions and surmises, but after many thoughts, conflicting and afflicting, she was no wiser than if she had not conjectured at all. It was a profound mystery that set at defiance all her guesses. If she had not just had an evidence of Percy's—she knew not what to call it, she would unquestionably have attributed the writer's motives to that

very quality of which he had accused her husband, and would have rejected the gift with scorn. She greatly feared, anyhow, it might be some trick designed to compromise her reputation. So the perplexed lady knew not what to do; whether to make a candid confession to her husband, or heed the unknown writer's caution. Either course of action she felt would be fraught with danger; but she at last concluded it would be wisest and safest to wait in silence the development of future events.

CHAPTER VII.

"Our designs,
When once they creep from our own private
breasts,
Do in a moment through the city fly."

Mrs. Degroot had left Miss Louvan but a short time before John Wilkes Booth called to pay a morning visit. As soon as his shadow darkened the door Flora cast her eyes in that direction, and when she saw who the visitor was, she blushed in despite of her Boston education, which had taught her to maintain an appearance of composure under all circumstances. She appeared to be conscious of this outward demonstration of internal emotion, for the blush terminated in a slight frown, aimed however more at herself than the handsome form before her. She could not find it in her heart to manifest displeasure in the presence of Booth though, and both the blush and frown passed quickly away. Therefore she arose, extended her hand, and pleasantly said:

"Comment vous portez vous, Monsieur?"

"Tres bien, Mademoiselle. Je desire vous etes en bonne sante."

"Parlez vous Francais, donc?" asked Flora in surprise.

"Oui, Mademoiselle, un peu. J'apprends a dire, 'j'aime vous, quand je fus un garcon.'"

"I am afraid you are un coquet, Monsieur Booth," said Miss Louvan with a smile that would admit of various interpretations.

"No, I am not, Miss Flora; but even granting that I am, or may have been, yet I have never ventured to appear before you in that character."

"I suppose," said Flora speaking with seriousness, "that is what you say to all young ladies whom you wish to worship at the shrine of your commanding, your irresistible beauty."

"Let us dispense with silly flattery, my dear Miss Louvan. I am not half so vain as you seem to think I am; neither have I ever attempted in all my life to trifle with the feelings of a lady. No one can accuse me of such a crime. I have never tried to win the affections of any lady but yourself, and I have almost despaired of ever accomplishing that."

"Nil desperandum, Mr. Booth," said Flora gaily.

"I do not know how to take you Miss Flora," said Booth with a shade of disap-

pointment. "You turn the most holy of subjects into ridicule."

"I do not know how to take you either, Mr. Booth. For you talk of love with the solemnity of a preacher, and then go off and boast of the conquests you have made, if the poor women have been silly enough to believe you."

"That may be the case with some; but I never did it."

"Oh, no! That is what they all say in the presence of the 'dear angels;' but only let them get lively and communicative over the jolly bottle, then their vanity begins to unmask itself, and in midnight revels they loudly boast of the hearts they have conquered."

"Do you judge of our whole sex by what you have read or heard concerning the foibles of a few light-headed men? There is truth in what you say as regards that class of men. But then to attribute faults and crimes indiscriminately to a whole race which belong only to a small portion, is wrong in the premises. I know many ladies too, Miss Flora, that conquer hearts, as you say, for the sole purpose of trampling them under foot; but still I would not accuse your whole sex of cruelty and heartlessness, because a few act in this unjustifiable manner."

"You argue well, Mr. Booth," said Flora laughing. "Why didn't you make a lawyer?"

"That question is a digression from the subject, Miss Flora."

"Yes, but I want you to tell me why you didn't make a lawyer?"

"You are trying to make sport of me, Miss Flora."

"No, indeed! I am in earnest. I do want to know."

"Well, if you do, I can tell you in a word—simply because I had no taste for law. I would rather be a cat and cry *mew*, or be a dog and bay the moon, than to wade through Blackstone or Kent. The dry details of law would kill me outright. I would die in a fortnight of 'aforesaid.' I longed for something more exciting—something higher."

"Higher!" interrupted Flora in a tone of undisguised surprise.

"Yes, higher," replied Booth with a proud curl of the lip. "I understand your look of inquisitive surprise, Miss Flora. I know that you, with the rest of the world, look down with a feeling of scorn upon stage actors. I was well aware of what I would have to brave when I adopted the profession; but I had the moral courage to follow the bent of my inclination despite public opinion. I knew that I had a peculiar talent for this calling; I knew I would succeed, and I have succeeded. But as much as people may sneer at the idea, I maintain that it requires a higher order of talent to become a successful actor than a successful lawyer. The profession brings into exercise feelings, emotions, powers, which would place a lawyer, if he could command them, in the first rank in his avocation. There are peculiarities of character to assume upon the stage,

which only one class can do. Suppose a lawyer could control his feelings like an actor does, and enter into all the multiplied emotions of his clients, he would without doubt become an eminent pleader, and could sway the minds of a jury just as he pleased. But as I have said, there is only one class endowed with this great power of self-government. I belong to that class, Miss Flora," continued Booth with a flashing countenance that made the heart of the fair auditor throb violently, "I belong to that class, and I have made good use of the talent God has given me. Had I studied law I never would have found half the pleasures I have enjoyed as an actor—I mean intellectual pleasures. My life is spent principally in those higher regions of thought where only the 'favored few' are permitted to dwell. None but persons of the most exquisite sensibilities can soar aloft to those untrodden heights where angels bashful look.' Do you not think that for such noble pleasures I could afford to brave the contempt of the purse proud aristocracy? Do you think I would willingly resign such unalloyed joys to become a plodding pettifogger?"

"I do not know, Mr. Booth. I am ignorant of those supernatural joys of which you are speaking, as I belong to that humbler class who spend their life nearer to the earth than the moon."

"You are not as destitute, Miss Flora, of that higher order of sensibility as you sportively pretend. Those lustrous eyes of yours, whose every expression I love, sparkle more brilliantly from the influence of other emotions than the common-place, practical feelings of every-day life."

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Booth?" said Flora, pleased at the compliment.

"I mean, I have watched you while on the stage. I have read the emotions of your heart. I have carried you, yes, Mademoiselle, I have carried you without resistance into those very regions of which you pretend to be ignorant. On more occasions than one I have been so busy with your transportation that I quite forgot the audience. The interest you took has several times fired me up to even an unnatural ardor."

"I was not aware, Mr. Booth, you were paying so much attention to me."

"I know you were not. If you had been I might have been an unsuccessful pilot. For you would probably have resisted. I recollect a short time ago, when I was acting Hamlet, you went far above me into the clouds."

"Are you trying to persuade me to become an actress?" said Flora laughing.

"*Mon Dieu!* Heaven forbid! cried Booth with energy.

"The earnestness with which you exclaim against the idea, Mr. Booth, invalidates, somewhat at least, your testimony as to the exalting, ennobling effect the profession has upon character."

"How so, Miss Flora?"

"Why, if there are so many elevating pleasures pertaining to it, you ought to persuade

your friends, especially my unworthy self whom you profess to adore, to take the stage—merely for the intellectual enjoyment it affords."

"Yes," said Booth; "but these pleasures are purchased at the expense of renouncing at least a part of the world, and that very part in which you have been reared. It would be to you like entering a convent and taking the vows of a nun. You would never again be recognized as an equal by your present friends. You could not endure that, could you?"

"If I could not, how could you have the cruelty to ask my hand? For certainly I would be none the less frowned upon by my friends in the character of an actor's wife than if I were a veritable actress."

"But I intend to quit the stage."

"That would not alter the facts and acts of your past life. It would never be overlooked that you had been an actor."

"Such might be the case," replied Booth slowly and thoughtfully, "In England and other countries, in which the lines between the several classes of society are plainly drawn and recognized by legal distinctions. But in this great land there are no such artificial barriers thrown in one's way to eminence. No aristocracy but that of mind is acknowledged by the mass of the people subject to this government; and that is considerable encouragement to all who have political aspirations to gratify. The accidents and circumstances of birth and profession add nothing to, nor take anything from him who strives to rise. Consequently the greatest men have sprung from the humbler walks of life to honorable eminence. They had greater incentives to exertion. Roger Sherman rose from a shoemaker's bench; Henry Clay was a mill-boy; Daniel Webster was a school-teacher; Abraham Lincoln, you know, is derided by many as a 'rail-splitter'; Andrew Johnson was a tailor: in fact, the giant minds of America have sprung from the despised classes of society. After men have once achieved greatness and wealth, Miss Flora, and have raised themselves by their own talents and energies above the lowly avocations which they at first adopted to secure the means of existence, they are no longer regarded with feelings akin to contempt; but they are honored for the strength of character, the indomitable perseverance, the stolid, unyielding energy of purpose that removed the obstacles which opposed their onward, upward progress. I have already achieved one of the ingredients that constitute influence. I have made an ample fortune without anybody's assistance; but I am not yet satisfied. I feel," continued Booth rising and straightening his proud form, "that I was born for something great. I have not fulfilled my destiny. Something here," laying his hand on his heart, "urges me to abandon the profession of acting and accomplish what fate has marked out for me. I am persuaded that I will perform some great deed that will fill the earth with the name of John Wilkes Booth, and will furnish

consolation to all future actors for the world's scorn, in the reflection that Booth was an actor."

"What will that be, Mr. Booth," asked Flora with a beaming eye.

"I do not know yet," replied Booth, so full of his grand idea that occasionally he would seem to forget that he was in the presence of a witness. "I do not know yet. There is a wide field open, especially at the present time. I shall do something, I feel it, which will affect the destiny of this great nation, and thereby influence the prospects of the world. I see you smile, Miss Flora," he continued re-seating himself. "Well, this no doubt sounds like the wild raving of a maniac; but all I have to say is, you will see. Time will verify this extravagant prophecy. And now, I again ask you if you will allow me to lay my prospective honors at your feet, and beg you to share them?"

"I do not see how I could share anything so intangible, Mr. Booth," she said smiling.

"I think a positive answer is due me, Miss Flora."

"I think not, Mr. Booth. Wait till you achieve some of those great deeds of which you have been so eloquently speaking."

"When I make my words good, will you be mine?"

"Call on me when some of those great and astonishing events happen; then we will talk more about it."

"Good bye, then," exclaimed Booth suddenly rising to leave. Seizing her delicate hand he respectfully pressed it to his lips. "I will see you no more," said he "till a wreath of undying fame encircles my brow." And before Flora could make any reply, his dilating form was in the street.

Miss Louvan sat a considerable time after Booth left her lost in confused reflections. Perhaps she was again analyzing her turbulent feelings to discover the nature of her affection for the handsome actor. It was evident from the serious cast of her countenance that his wild conversation had made a deep impression on her heart; it was a deep impression whatever may have been its nature. She was in a strange, disagreeable frame of mind; and her situation was puzzling, perplexing, and bewildering to herself. We therefore cannot attempt to lay before the reader her conflicting thoughts and emotions.

After the lapse of an hour she arose, and donning her hat crossed the street and entered the residence of a lady friend, whom we must, for reasons which will be obvious in the course of this history, call Mrs. Coldheart, though that was not her true name. Flora could hardly assign any satisfactory reason even to herself for the course she was pursuing in calling upon this lady; not that there was anything in the call itself, but in the intent with which it was made. She was like a ship in a stormy sea without rudder or compass. She was first driven in this way, then that. Her violent love urged her to one course of action, then her pride pointed out another. She wanted to talk with Mrs. Coldheart about Booth, then she feared that

this lady might suspect more than she wished her to know. So half determined and half undecided as to what she should communicate, she made her way to the residence of Mrs. Coldheart, whom she found alone. Miss Louvan was such a frequent visitor that her appearance at this late hour excited no surprise in the mind of her friend.

We must here inform the reader that Mrs. Coldheart was a full blooded yankee woman, and possessed in an eminent degree all those bold characteristics that distinguish the northern from the southern lady. These peculiarities, induced by we know not what, (probably by climate and education,) are so plain and patent that they are noticed even by foreigners, who as a general thing are prepossessed in favor of the modest, unassuming daughters of the "sunny south." But as we have said, Mrs. Coldheart was strongly marked by those unenviable characteristics of the yankee race—flippancy, indelicate boldness, and a quick little air of pert smartness, so opposite to the calm, sober, staid dignity of Dixie's graceful women. It must not be inferred, however, that Mrs. Coldheart was deficient in intellectual qualifications. For she was a really brilliant woman—one of those splendid creatures of the frigid north, described by an abolition editor as abounding in elegant accomplishments. She was a politician, and an advocate of woman's rights; and this fact of itself, in the absence of other evidence, would settle the question of nativity. For any feminine believer in miscegenation, woman's rights, and all the multifarious *isms* which have flooded the world in latter days, can with perfect safety make affidavit before any respectable magistrate that her birth-place was in the *ismish* north somewhere. The probability is that she would not miss the truth more than one-sixth if she would locate her nativity in one of the New England states. For if such beings are ever found in the south, they are without doubt exotics, who have by some mishap straggled from the land of "wooden nutmegs." A native southern woman, who mounts a stump and clamors for the rights of her sex is, or rather would be, a most wonderful anomaly. At least such a spectacle never has, up to the present writing, disgraced this downtrodden country. Our earnest prayer is, "from all such, Good Lord deliver us."

Mrs. Coldheart was, then, a politician—and an abolitionist—and a follower of Lucy Stone. She was besides this a keen, shrewd plotter—an elegant *intrigante*. She was an invaluable coadjutor in an election—an elegant female fogleman, or bugleman. More than one election in some of the northern cities have been carried by her influence. But we are worried with describing her, if the reader is not with the description. Such as she was, we introduce her as the friend, in the common acceptance of the term, of Miss Louvan.

"Have you heard the news, Flora?" asked Mrs. Coldheart before the young lady could seat herself, after doffing her pretty, gay hat. "I have heard nothing of interest, Mrs.

Coldheart. What is it? Anybody to be married?"

"O, pshaw! no," with a toss of the head. "The rebels will soon be driven to their last ditch. Sherman is in South Carolina, sweeping everything before him, and the republicans have carried Buffalo."

"Where have they carried it to?" asked Flora, who did not care a groat for such things as town elections.

"Now come, Flora, you *petite vert oie*, none of your nonsense. You ought to rejoice over the glorious news. We will certainly whip the ragged rebels in less than three months, and the supremacy of the government will then be triumphantly vindicated. Then I want to see Jeff Davis hanged and every one of his followers with him."

"That would be a wholesale sort of a job, would it not, Mrs. Coldheart? and it would take a considerable quantity of hemp too," remarked Flora in a *nonchalant* tone of voice.

"I would take great pleasure in furnishing the rope," quickly said Mrs. Coldheart. "They are an accursed set, and deserve death, every sinner of them. I want to see them all hanged, and their property confiscated. Then I want the loyal Blacks, poor, suffering, ignorant creatures, comfortably settled upon the soil they once tilled as slaves. It makes my heart bleed to think of the mighty wrongs of this unfortunate race, who have been forced to cultivate cotton in those unhealthy swamps, and have their naked backs lacerated every night by the cruel lash. But, thank God, the fetters of galling bondage will soon be broken, and they will be a free and happy people. I want their heartless masters hanged, or if not, I want to see them reduced to slavery and serve those Africans who have been so mercilessly outraged. It is truly heartrending to think how much wealth those haughty southerners have coined out of the blood of the helpless Africans. Look there at that golden goblet which was sent by General Butler to Mr. Coldheart. The general wrote us that it was one out of two dozen which he had taken from a planter near New Orleans."

"Was that planter in the rebel army?" asked Flora.

"O, no. General Butler stated that he pretended to be a union man; but that one day his daughter came into the city with a *gray habillement de tete* displayed very conspicuously. He stated that she knew very well that gray was a color irreconcilable with loyalty. So he issued an order that her father's palace should be searched for contraband of war. The soldiers selected by the general himself who did the duty, brought him two dozen golden goblets and a great deal of silver plate, to pay for the young lady's offence. The general always was a friend to Mr. Coldheart, and he sent that one to him as a keepsake."

"What became of the others?" asked Flora.

"O, the general kept them, I suppose, for his own use. He served the rebels right. He comes up to my ideas of a military chieftain.

Why, he would not allow those wicked southern women to laugh in their own houses, if he suspected there was any disloyalty in their merriment. If they do laugh, they pay very dearly for it; because he immediately confiscates their property, or at least some portion of it. There is no telling how many fine piano fortes, and how much table furniture he sent north. He is now a very wealthy man, and made it all out of the wicked rebels. I am told that he once had nearly a pint of diamond rings which he took from the female rebels of New Orleans."

"*C'est un parfait larron, je crois,*" said Flora.

"Why, what is the matter, Flora?" asked Mrs. Coldheart in surprise. "You are not turning rebel, I hope."

"No indeed! but from all I can learn, your model hero is not much better than a common pickpocket."

"Dear me, how you talk!" cried Mrs. Coldheart with a slight frown. "You have been reading those vile calumnies heaped on the general by some of those copperhead newspapers. All who accuse General Butler of dishonesty, slander him grossly. He has done more to crush the rebellion than any other officer in the service. Just look how he had that impudent and daring Mumford executed for disloyalty."

"What did he do, Mrs. Coldheart?"

"O, I think he pulled down the United States flag from over his house, or something of that kind, for which he deserved death."

"Did not Mumford have the right to take down the flag, if the house belonged to him and the flag annoyed him?"

"Why, of course not. He was a very wicked rebel to insult thus the stars and stripes. General Butler treated him exactly right. But you may be sure they took down no more flags while he remained in New Orleans. He kept the wicked wretches straight. Those New Orleans beauties were more afraid of him than grim death itself."

"I do not blame them," replied Flora; "for Butler is a brute."

"Why, Flora, what in the world is the matter with you to-day?" asked Mrs. Coldheart astonished at the young lady. "You appear to be out of humor with everybody and everything. What is the matter, dear?"

"Nothing, Mrs. Coldheart, nothing; but I never could endure that beast Butler."

"Well, let us talk about something else, then. By the way, how did you like the performance of Booth the other night at the theatre?"

"Very well indeed!"

"Mr. Coldheart said he thought it was the finest histrionic performance he ever witnessed. Booth exceeded himself. Don't you think Booth is the prettiest man you ever beheld in your life?"

"He is very handsome," replied Miss Louvan, turning her head and looking out into the street.

"He is a dangerous man to ladies," continued Mrs. Coldheart. "I have heard of several young ladies who were desperately

smitten with him. They say he has disgraced quite a number; and some of them in high life, too. But what is the matter, Flora?"

"Matter, how, Mrs. Coldheart?"

"Why, you are blushing to your very neck. One might suppose from your appearance that you are in love with Booth."

"One might do me injustice then," answered Flora, who felt her face burning like fire. "What makes you blush so, dear?" asked Mrs. Coldheart gazing earnestly into the glowing countenance of the disturbed girl.

"I do declare, Flora, what is the matter? I never did see you look so strange."

"Why, Mrs. Coldheart," said Flora trying to laugh, "the way in which you are acting would plague any body. But I will tell you something on Mr. Booth, if you will promise me to keep it secret."

"Take care, Flora!" said Mrs. Coldheart shaking her head. "If you have been meddling with Booth, I pity you. I have understood that he has no mercy on young ladies. You need not believe anything he says if you have formed his acquaintance. I hope you are no ways entangled, dear."

"Do not give yourself any uneasiness on that score, Mrs. Coldheart," said Flora with a desperate kind of energy, and a feeling of jealousy mingled with revenge for the affront which she now supposed the actor had offered her. She all at once felt that Booth might be endeavoring to drag her down to ruin, and the thought maddened her before she could reflect. She determined, therefore, by way of revenge, to tell Mrs. Coldheart all she knew concerning the Bloody Junto, let the result be what it might. Indeed, she now had it to do in self-defence.

"Do not give yourself any uneasiness on that score," she said. "The matter to which I allude is no love affair. It is more dreadful than that."

"What in the name of heaven is it, dear?"

"I think Booth is engaged in a conspiracy against the government," said Flora with a curious expression, which Mrs. Coldheart did not appear to notice.

"In a conspiracy!" cried Mrs. Coldheart. "Dear me; how do you know?"

"I accidentally learned it. I intended to tell you about it; but you must keep it secret, at least a part of it anyhow."

"Yes to be sure; but you have told me nothing yet. What evidence have you that he is in a conspiracy?"

"All that I know is," replied Flora, speaking rapidly as if she wished to get through with it, "all that I know is there is a society called the Bloody Junto, that meets in Mrs. Surratt's cellar every Saturday night. It is a political organization, and from its ugly name, the place in which it assembles and the time, I drew the inference that it was a conspiracy. I called to talk with you about it; but when you commenced to accuse me of loving Booth, the very idea of such an absurd thing caused me to blush with shame," said Flora, offering this flimsy excuse for her reddened face. "But what do you think about this? What ought to be done?"

Mrs. Coldheart thought, and thought rapidly; but it did not, however, require much time for her active mind, so fertile in schemes and expedients, to arrive at a conclusion. Notwithstanding that she almost immediately resolved upon her course of action, she thought proper to keep it to herself, at least for the present. It was something which she could not reveal to Flora, or at least did not.

"Why nothing, Flora," replied Mrs. Coldheart to the last question, "if what you have told me is all you know. You might bring yourself into ridicule by reporting such a thing to the government. Because after all, it may be nothing more than a common club. You have nothing upon which to ground an accusation but your suspicion."

"May be not, Mrs. Coldheart; but I did not intend to move in this matter any how. I thought I would talk to you about it."

"It was well you did, dear. I am more experienced than you are. I would advise you to say nothing to any one about the affair until you can discover something more. Should you do that let me know. I shall not tell it, because I do not wish my name connected with scandalous affairs like that. I hope you have not mentioned it to any one else."

"No indeed, I have not," said Flora.

Mrs. Coldheart then abruptly changed the subject, and rattled away in her Yankee style for a short time until Miss Louvan took her departure. Flora, as soon as she was alone, and reflected upon what she had done, was sorry that she had so hastily betrayed Booth. She therefore did not feel the relief she expected from unburdening her mind to Mrs. Coldheart. Indeed, she was more wretched and gloomy. But it could not be helped now. Her talkative friend knew the secret; and Flora began to hope she would keep it as such. That act of Flora Louvan, that accidental blush which led her to a confession, probably changed the fate of the American nation.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Ambition hath one heel nail'd in hell,
Though she stretched her fingers to touch the heavens."

Our patient reader's attention must now be called to a remarkable man, whose influence was destined to give new tone to the Bloody Junto. We will call him Coldheart, by which he can at once be recognized as the husband of Miss Louvan's friend, mentioned in the foregoing chapter. We have now come to a point, gentle reader, at which some caution is necessary. For when living characters are mentioned in connection with dark deeds of blood and crime; when the due measure of punishment cannot be meted out for want of legal evidence, it becomes a delicate matter, yes, something more than a delicate matter, to call them by their true names. Suspicion in certain quarters has

and being in the way of the

sometime since directed public attention to a statesman high in office, who is perfectly innocent. It is not the first time that black calumny has selected a fair, unsullied character at which to hurl its poisoned shafts. We have no allusion whatever to that great statesman, whom the malice and hell-born hate of a few yankees have attempted to drag down because, nobly ignoring his personal injuries, he planted himself firmly upon the principles of constitutional liberty, and raised his giant arm to crush the rabid spirit of foul fanaticism, which was seeking to annihilate a large portion of the American nation. Therefore, reader, if you have that man in your "mind's eye" you are mistaken, and you will acknowledge it before you complete the perusal of this history. We ask you to make no guesses. Restrain your curiosity so far as to refrain from conjectures. All will be revealed in due time. You have read the story of Sostratus! If not, it is to this effect: Ptolemy in ancient times caused the tower of Pharos to be built for the benefit of mariners. A few years after its completion there appeared upon it no word nor mark to indicate that this prince had the least share in its erection. It seems, however, that Sostratus, the architect, in order to engross all the glory of the magnificent structure, carved his own name deep in the solid marble, and then covered it with lime upon which he engraved the name of Ptolemy. The lime in the course of years mouldered away, and Ptolemy's glory with it. The name of the villain to whom we have reference is likewise written upon a certain wall in Washington City. It is covered with lime for the present, but before this history draws to a close this lime will wear away, and the true name of the man that instigated the death of Abraham Lincoln will stand forth glaring in large, black letters. Reader, you will know ere long what this means.

Coldheart, then, was a government officer. He had considerable influence in the affairs of the government of the United States; but by what means he exercised this power cannot now be mentioned. Neither can we describe his personal appearance, nor his birthplace. But we are at liberty to say that he was a native-born yankee, and in addition to the ordinary peculiarities of that race, possessed a much higher intellect than the common herd, though a meaner heart. He was a keen, shrewd politician, whose great intellectual energies were not to be despised, especially in such bloody days as those of 1861. He had an ambition equal to that of Alexander or Cæsar, and would have preferred the position of "Monarch of Hell" to that of a Saint in Heaven. His heart was as cold as ice, and his foul blood crept freezing through his veins. His very eye looked at you with a cold, steady gaze, that spared all strangers, who might have any little official favors to ask at his hands, the usual pain and disappointment of denial; because the sense of obligation to such a man was more painful than his refusal. They generally were glad to be promptly denied

in order to rush from the tainted atmosphere which he breathed. How such a man ever happened to occupy the political position he did, we will leave to conjecture. But how a really brilliant, beautiful woman could ever gain her own consent to live upon terms of inmatrimonial intimacy with such a monster in human shape might be considered still more wonderful. And yet, after all, it is not a matter of great wonder, when we reflect that at times strange freaks and whims enter the heads of the fair sex. Women seem to have a particular fancy for oddities and eccentricities, and many are filled with admiration of dare-devils; not that they actually feel a warm sentiment of love for such creatures. That is almost an impossibility. We believe this remarkable caprice emanates from an unworthy vanity which feeds upon the idea of exercising control over monsters that the rest of the world fears. We can assign no other reason. Whether or not Mrs. Coldheart had been actuated by such a motive in her marriage, we pretend not to say. She may have loved her stoic-hearted husband for aught we know to the contrary. But whether she loved or hated him; whether she loved his intellect or his heart, we are not able to say. We know one fact; she did marry him, and under his training was not a whit inferior to him in some of the unenviable qualifications. What these were will be developed in the progress of our narrative.

On the night following the day of Miss Louvan's call, Coldheart and his wife were sitting close together in their sleeping apartment, conversing in a low tone that indicated a wish on their part not to be heard. Their earnest looks and gestures showed that they felt a deep interest in that which formed the subject of their *tete-a-tete*.

"I think," remarked Mrs. Coldheart "you might find it to your advantage. Now is the most favorable opportunity you will ever have to carry out our purpose. The rebellion is, without doubt, drawing to a close, and if the present government ever is to be overthrown, I am fully persuaded that now is the time. Changes and revolutions of this kind are more easily effected in times of war than of peace. The people are somewhat better prepared for them. They seem to desire and expect change, no matter what may be its nature. When once the car of revolution is set in motion, there is no telling where it may stop, nor how many turns it may make. There is one circumstance which is favorable to our scheme. I believe the majority of the people, at least the thinking class, are satisfied that man is incapable of self-government, and would be glad to see a respectable monarchy established. The rebels themselves can be made firm and staunch supporters of the throne by the adoption of a conciliatory policy. By guaranteeing to them slavery, when they will have no right to expect such a favor, and securing them in the possession of their property, they would fain surrender the principles of republicanism in favor of a solid, substantial monarchy."

"All this sounds very well, Mary," said

Coldheart with a grin, "but would it not look rather strange and inconsistent to keep the African race in bondage, after all our professions of philanthropy?"

"A kingdom, Mr. Coldheart, is not to be thrown away for such trifling considerations. I would be willing to keep enslaved a few thousand lazy negroes in order to become Queen of America. Queen of America, Mr. Coldheart! how grand it sounds! I can imagine how I would feel surrounded by Lords and Ladies, Dukes and Duchesses, Earls and Countesses, and so on. To be the centre of attraction, the observed of all observers' in such a galaxy of nobility as we could assemble in the north, is an honor and a prize worth a little sacrifice of political principle. There would be no sacrifice of moral principle; for as you know, I look upon Mr. Lincoln's proclamation of freedom as a grand piece of folly. The negroes would be much better off if they were left alone just as they are."

"There is no doubt of that, Mary. I have always thought so, though I am a professed abolitionist—*ex rei necessitate*, however, as the lawyers say. I could not have gotten into office without joining in the hue and cry against slavery. I was in the south before we were married, and remained there better than a year. I went full of prejudices against the institution, but returned divested of them all. I studied the practical workings of the system, and I am fully persuaded it is the only condition in which the negro can be made to benefit himself or any one else. I want the institution destroyed, however, because I envy and hate the aristocracy of slaveholders. I remember how they used to curse the yankees, and it has put a bitter feeling in my heart towards them. I want to see them pulled down. But it would not do to talk this way to anybody but you."

"No, certainly not, Mr. Coldheart. We are both abolitionists from motives of policy; and that is the whole truth." And they both laughed at the deception which they had been practicing for years. "But then, Mr. Coldheart," said the lady after her merriment had subsided, "when we are firmly established on the throne, we could for the sake of consistency emancipate the negroes and humble the slaveholders too."

"That might give rise to another rebellion in the south."

"What if it did, we could easily whip them into obedience."

"We are running ahead of the hounds," remarked Coldheart with a laugh. "We can settle questions like that after the new government is organized. You say Booth is president of this political society?"

"I was so informed by Flora Louvan."

"How did she obtain her information?"

"That she refused to tell, and I thought best not to manifest too much anxiety to know. She spoke of it though as if there was no doubt about it. I almost know from her actions that she is dead in love with Booth, and this is probably the reason why she did not make a full confession."

"Will she not blab this discovery to some one else, if she has not already done so?"

"Not she. She will be afraid to mention it. I persuaded her that by so doing she might stir up scandal, and bring herself into ridicule. No, no, you need not feel uneasy on account of Flora."

"You are a prudent woman, Mary," said the husband approvingly, "and I now doubt not that Flora will keep mum. But if she loves Booth so, how could she make an exposure that might bring him into danger?"

"There was something about her that I could not exactly understand. She seemed to be in a strange humor. Perhaps, as I am such a good friend, she concluded that I would keep it secret. In fact, she requested me to do so, and I promised her I would."

"It strikes me," said Coldheart, "that it will not be a bad idea, if she is in love with Booth, to encourage her in it. If it has no other effect, it will make her more communicative, at any rate. You must endeavor to get into her confidence."

"I believe I can do it, though I have cautioned her against Booth; and she may be disposed to be somewhat shy."

"You should not have done that."

"Well, I like Flora, and I did not wish her to get into trouble. But I can easily remedy all I said."

"There are obstacles mountain high in the way of this project," said Coldheart, recurring to the original direction of his thoughts.

"What are they?"

Coldheart turned his cold eye upon his wife's face, but he hesitated to disclose what was in his mind. He merely said "guess!"

"Let me repeat a little from Shakspeare," said she.

"Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised:—yet do I fear thy
nature;

It is too full o' the milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition; but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst
highly.

That wouldst thou holily: wouldst not play
false,

And yet wouldst wrongly win: Thou'dst
have, great Glamis,
That which cries, 'Thus thou must do, if thou
hast it.'

"Taking that, Mr. Coldheart, in connection with what followed, do you understand me, and did I understand you?"

"Are you prepared to act the part of that lady?" asked Coldheart.

"Can you play the part of her husband?"

"No, I cannot."

"But you can have it done."

"I see we understand each other, Mary," said Coldheart with a demoniac smile. "But this is a bold, dangerous game."

"I am aware of that, Mr. Coldheart. It may be very cleverly managed, though. I think I can see the way."

"How? What is it?"

"You must see Booth to-morrow," she replied thoughtfully, "but take care not to

commit yourself till you discover the metal and temper of this society. If it be really what its name imports, let Booth into your designs, and promise him a dukedom. Point out to him the difficulties in the way, and my word for it they will be obviated. A man of Booth's temperament will be very apt to be dazzled and carried away with titles of nobility and the honors pertaining to them. He is 'a fellow marked, quoted and signed' to do this deed. Instruct him to be liberal of promises to all who have the dirty work to perform. I believe you can easily win over the majority of the United States officers, by promises of earldoms and other honors of monarchies. In this large country there will be thousands of offices at the disposal of an emperor."

"This is the programme I was thinking of," interrupted Coldheart. "There is another idea occurs to me right here. I might meet with opposition from some genera, who may be would like the place himself which I am endeavoring to obtain."

"There is no danger of that," flippantly responded Mrs. Coldheart. "There is not a Bonaparte among them. Not one of them has nerve sufficient for such a hazardous enterprise. A promise of a dukedom would satisfy any of them, and win them over to the scheme."

"I am not so certain of that."

"I am though, Mr. Coldheart. There is not a dangerous man among them. This is the first war of such magnitude that has failed to furnish to the world a real hero. The rebels and federals both have brought forward men of clever genius, and of considerable military talent; but they are Lilliputians compared with Napoleon Bonaparte. The rebels, however, have come nearer producing a second Napoleon than we have, owing, I suppose, to the fact that they have endured more reverses, which always sharpen the intellects of men, and develop their mental resources. I have not the remotest idea, though, that there is a single union general who possesses the requisite courage, the stubborn energy for such a daring project. It requires a man of Spartan courage and Roman firmness to do this deed. Grant and Sherman have not the 'vaulting ambition' which is necessary in all great acts of revolution. Our friend General Butler will favor the scheme for a few thousand dollars and a little office of some kind."

Coldheart smiled at this estimate of Gen. Butler, but he knew it was just. "I will tell you what, Mary," said he, "you would make a good phrenologist, as well as a first rate diplomat."

"If I were only a man, I would show you what I could do. I could manage this business with ease, Mr. Coldheart."

"Yes, but I would rather have you a woman."

"Now, Mr. Coldheart," she suddenly said, "there is one circumstance which we have entirely overlooked."

"What is that?"

Her voice here sunk into such a low whis-

per that her words could only be distinguished by the husband. He replied to her in the same cautious tone, and they both conversed in whispers for several moments and then retired for the night. Reader could you suppose that heaven would permit this dual of wretches to fall asleep contemplating foul murder? Well, they did sleep as calmly as if innocence had fanned them into healthful forgetfulness, and 'tired nature's sweet restorer' closed their eyes, and these two monsters enjoyed sleep.

"Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's past."

The next morning, very early, Mrs. Coldheart was considerably surprised to receive a call from Flora Louvan. The lady had not risen when Flora rang at the parlor door. She requested to see Mrs. Coldheart without delay, on business of importance. Our elegant *intrigante* dressed herself as quickly as she possibly could, and hastened into the parlor, where she beheld her young friend looking pale and disturbed.

"*Mon Dieu!* Flora," cried Mrs. Coldheart in visible surprise, "what in the name of heaven is the matter, dear?"

"You are no doubt astonished to see me here so early, Mrs. Coldheart," said Flora calmly.

"Not so much surprised at that as to see you looking so badly. Are you not sick, dear?"

"I am in perfect health, Mrs. Coldheart; only I did not rest very well last night. This is the first morning that I ever rose so early in my life. What do you think? I have been up for two hours."

"I think you are sick, dear. Let me feel your pulse," she said rising and seizing her delicate hand. She stood half a minute counting the pulsations and then continued, "You have no symptoms of any approaching disease, except probably an *affection* of the heart."

"My heart is as sound as anybody's, Mrs. Coldheart."

"You are in love, Flora."

"No, I am not, either," replied the young lady while a deep blush mantled her melancholy face.

"What is the matter, then!" asked Mrs. Coldheart with emphasis.

"You want to know why I called so early?"

"Of course, dear. I feel some uneasiness about you. I want to know what troubles you, and counsel you, if I can."

"You recollect what I told you yesterday?"

"What, about the political society?"

"Yes," said Flora.

"Well, what about it?"

"Now don't laugh at me, Mrs. Coldheart, and I will tell you. Last night I had a dream. I thought I was sitting alone in our parlor, when Booth came all stained and reeking with blood. His face looked haggard, his eyes stared wildly, and his gar-

ments were torn in many places. He advanced up to where I was, and I can hear his stern voice ringing in my ears now. I can see him as he stood before me, holding up those bloody hands, and warned me. 'Flora,' said he, 'you have discovered something concerning my affairs, which it does not behoove you to know. See what you have done. See what we do with those who betray our secrets. Beware, young lady, beware how you use your tongue!' Saying this he vanished, and I awoke trembling all over. I laughed at myself for a frightened simpleton, and after awhile fell asleep again. The dream was however repeated with some additions. Booth this time entered my room, attended by several men, whom I never saw before. They were all covered with blood; they held up their crimson hands and stared as if they would look me through. 'Flora,' said Booth, 'you don't seem to believe in dreams; you are incredulous. I have brought witnesses. Look at us well.' Then I thought they all advanced to the bed where I was lying. I attempted to cry aloud, and the effort aroused me. But it was in vain that I endeavored to sleep. Whenever I shut my eyes, I could see those bloody men dancing around dead bodies, with their gory knives brandishing in the air. This is why I am here, Mrs. Coldheart."

"That was a horrible dream, Flora; but you say that you thought that Booth called you Flora?"

"Yes," replied Miss Louvan, thinking more of the dream than what she was saying.

"Is he in the habit of addressing you in that style?" questioned the lady with an earnest look. Miss Louvan at this interrogation blushed to the roots of her raven hair. She felt indignant and mortified that her friend had noticed this little circumstance, that she now saw indicated a degree of intimacy which she, in her troubled state of mind, had not thought of. She was vexed with herself at the exposure she had unwittingly made.

"No, Madam, he is not," replied Flora biting her pretty lip. "One cannot control dreams, I guess."

"Dreams," answered Mrs. Coldheart coolly, are often nothing but a continuation of the waking thoughts. Our wishes very frequently assume shape in sleep, and become pictures of realities we would desire to behold with our eyes open."

"What are you after, Mrs. Coldheart?" asked Flora recovering her self-possession.

"You are trying to make it appear that I am in love with Booth in spite of all I can say."

"No, Flora dear; I did not know that you were acquainted with him," said Mrs. Coldheart interrogatively.

"To be sure I am. He visits at our house sometimes."

"He does? and you have never mentioned this to me before."

"I did not think it worth mentioning, Mrs. Coldheart. There are numbers who call on me that I never mention nor talk about in any way. But that is neither here nor there.

I did not come here so unceremoniously to talk about Booth, nor any one else. Have you told that little circumstance, Mrs. Coldheart, about the society?"

"I have not thought of it since yesterday, dear," answered Mrs. Coldheart with a smile. "I did not look upon it as a matter of any importance, and I don't know that I ever should have thought of it again."

"I am glad you have not, Mrs. Coldheart. This dream, I acknowledge, disturbs me. I fear it is a foreshadowing of evil."

"Why, Flora, dear," said Mrs. Coldheart laughing, "you are becoming superstitious. You ate too much supper last night, dear. You have had an attack of *canchemar*; that is all. If you allow every ugly dream to trouble you that way, you will be miserable all your life. I have had thousands of the most horrid kinds, that frightened me very much during the night, but I never thought of them when morning came."

"I cannot reason myself out of my fear, Mrs. Coldheart. There is no use in talking about it. The dream has left an impression that cannot be eradicated. I don't want you ever to mention what I told you. This is what I came for. Promise me you will not."

"Certainly I will promise it, dear."

"Swear it, Mrs. Coldheart, swear it!" said Flora with great solemnity. "Here," continued Flora rising and seizing a beautifully bound book, "put your hand on this Bible and swear it."

"Why Flora," exclaimed Mrs. Coldheart in surprise, "you are going mad over this foolish affair."

"No, not mad, Mrs. Coldheart, but I will not be satisfied till you swear it on the Bible. I do this to impress it on your mind. I know you would not violate your oath."

"No, to be sure not; but I do not like to swear about trivial matters."

"This is no trivial matter to me, Mrs. Coldheart. It will be a great favor; I will feel grateful if you will swear it."

"Very well, dear," said the lady with concealed vexation. "I will do as you wish, to please you. I swear it then."

And Mrs. Coldheart placed her hand upon the Bible, and bound herself in the most solemn manner never to mention anything concerning the Bloody Junto. Flora appeared satisfied, and thanking her friend in terms of warmth that seemed utterly disproportionate to the importance of the affair, she returned home.

The reader may be somewhat surprised at the depravity of moral principle displayed in her course towards Flora Louvan. Perhaps an apology ought to be offered for the willful deception she had practiced; but we have found the mere semblance of an excuse, and we will give it, and let it pass for what it is worth. Charity demands that we should mention it. *She was a yankee woman!*

CHAPTER IX.

"But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill."

There was a dingy looking office, belonging to one of the government officials, situated in a certain part of Washington City, which must be allowed to pass, at present, "without a local habitation and a name." The floor furnished abundant evidence of the existence of a bad habit, indulged in so extensively by the large majority of Americans—including those supposed to be acquainted with Chesterfield. Reference is had of course to that filthy practice of chewing tobacco. There were copious stains of this abominable weed all around the large table that stood in the centre of the apartment. The table was hidden by a flannel covering that was so blotched with ink that the visitor was in doubt as to its original color. Several inkstands, of different sizes and shapes, were arranged along its whole length, on both sides, at convenient distances. Pens and papers lay all around, jumbled and mixed in promiscuous confusion. It was the office of Coldheart. This worthy, with the exception of a page, was alone. He had stepped in before his usual hour. He sat at the large table for a few moments in a thoughtful mood, then he snatched up a pen and hastily wrote the following words:

"Please call at my house, ——— street,
this afternoon at 2 o'clock."

This short note he sealed and directed to John Wilkes Booth. Then he picked up an old letter from the table.

"Come here, boy," said Coldheart to the page, who at once obeyed.

"To whom is this directed?" asked Coldheart showing the old envelop.

"I don't know, sir; can't read writing."

"Try, may be you can make it out."

"No, sir, I don't know the first letter."

"Well, if you do not, you will have to carry it to the postoffice," said Coldheart, slightly turning from the boy and adroitly exchanging the letter for the one which he had just finished. The page took it and disappeared.

Soon after which his clerks began to drop in and take their places at the table, where they all remained till the dinner hour arrived.

At the appointed time Booth called at the dwelling of Coldheart, in accordance with his request, and was politely and blandly received. After a few moments the actor was asked to walk into a private room. The door was locked by Coldheart and the window-blinds closed.

"You may wonder at these precautions, Mr. Booth," said the official, "but the matter which I wished to talk to you about is one that cannot be canvassed before company."

"Suit yourself about that, sir," answered Booth with unconcern. "I do not know what the business is to which you have reference."

"If you begin to talk in that style, Mr.

Booth," replied Coldheart, looking as though he desired to be understood without the intervention of words, "if you begin to feign ignorance in regard to the business, I fear I will have some difficulty in conveying my meaning."

"Feign ignorance, Mr. Coldheart! I do not understand you."

"I wish, sir," replied Coldheart smiling, "I wish it were possible that men could understand each other upon some points without using the customary vehicle of language."

"I do not know what the precise duties of your office are," said Booth, "but it seems to me there are few transactions of such a nature that they cannot be mentioned—especially by a man in your position."

"Yet there are some things which I could wish might be communicated by a look or a gesture, or any other method than words. But you are mistaken if you suppose this business has anything to do with the duties of my office. It pertains to your affairs."

If Booth understood the cunning politician, he did not choose to let it be known. He felt an instinctive aversion to Coldheart—a desire to flee from his presence rather than be admitted into his confidence. There was that in his would-be-familiar air—a hypocritical manifestation of friendship founded in nothing but glaring selfishness, which at once repelled Booth's sensitive heart. Our astute politician was so destitute of all the holier emotions of nature, that he had never clearly learned the language of honest hearts. Booth therefore could see that Coldheart's object, whatever it might be, sprang from the principle of self-interest. He suspected a snare, but still he determined to betray his suspicions by no outward demonstration.

"You will have to explain yourself more clearly," said the actor quietly. "I am no professed physiognomist, sir."

"You are an actor, Mr. Booth, and your profession must certainly require you to study the passions of the human heart. You must understand something of the art of heart-reading. Now see if you cannot guess to what I allude, when I tell you this delicate business concerns you."

"I am an actor by profession, it is true, Mr. Coldheart, but I know nothing pertaining to my avocation that could possibly require such an enigmatical method of communication."

"Suppose I say it does not pertain to your profession?"

"Then I am utterly in the dark, sir, and have no idea what you are aiming at."

"Do you study about nothing but your profession, and the circumstances directly connected with it?" asked Coldheart.

"Certainly I do, sir; but I know not that any person, private or official, has the right to question me about my thoughts, especially when he is not acquainted with them."

"I refer to your acts more than to your thoughts, Mr. Booth."

"Well then, I do not know that my acts are of such a heinous character that you could not mention them, if you should see

desire; neither are they of such importance as to warrant a private *inquisition*."

Coldheart looked a little disappointed, but he resolved to change his tactics and try a sudden, unexpected attack.

"Mr. Booth," said Coldheart fastening his eyes upon his auditor's face, "you are the president of the Bloody Junto."

Although Booth could not but suspect something of this sort, from Coldheart's mysterious manner, yet he was not prepared for this sudden and direct accusation. He therefore started slightly in despite of himself—influenced more however by apprehensions as to Coldheart's intentions than by surprise at his knowledge of the existence of this society. He was so busily engaged in guessing who it was that could have acted treacherously, and conjecturing to what use Coldheart might apply his knowledge, that he made no reply.

"Can you deny it, Mr. Booth?" asked Coldheart with a subtle smile.

This inquiry, together with the leering countenance of the man, angered Booth, who very frequently acted from impulse.

"If, sir," replied the actor with an angry flush, "you have looked me up with the expectation of extorting a confession from me, you are pursuing the wrong course. Yes, sir, I can deny it."

"I know you can, but you *will* not."

"Damnation!" cried Booth thrown off his guard, and jerking a small pistol from his side pocket, "am I a common slave or thief to be locked up and questioned in this style? Either explain yourself or open that door, or I might do a deed I would repent of afterwards. Where do you get the authority to imprison unsuspecting men in your own house, and force confessions from them? You are trying to get me into a difficulty, or to make a tool of me to get some one else in, and I might fall into your snare by answering either in the affirmative or negative. I will not answer your interrogations. Open the door, or by heaven, I will exercise the right of self-defence."

"Put up your weapon, Mr. Booth," calmly said Coldheart, partially satisfied with the success of his ruse. "There is no necessity for drawing it. You have misconstrued my intentions. You might know that if I wished to deal harshly with you, I would have pursued an entirely different course. I would have had you arrested, as I have ample testimony to justify that course."

"What testimony have you?" asked Booth, whose wrath was now subsiding.

"I know this; that you are president of a political society called the Bloody Junto, which meets every Saturday night in a dark cellar. Is it not so?"

"Granting it, what use do you intend to make of your knowledge?"

"I cannot tell you, unless you answer my questions."

"Very well, sir, proceed."

"Well then, in the first place, are you not president of this society?"

"You say you know that I am. Then proceed to an explanation, upon your own presumption that it is a fact."

"You will not answer directly, then?"

"Neither directly nor indirectly. I have heard of several men who have been entrapped in that style—men who were perfectly innocent; but they were imprisoned for months without a hearing."

"Admitting all that, Mr. Booth, I could have had you imprisoned in the same manner without giving you any warning."

"It is strange then," replied the actor, "that you will not tell me in plain terms what your object is. You claim to have the advantage of me, and yet do not appear entirely satisfied with it."

"Well, now, Mr. Booth," said Coldheart after a moment's reflection, "this interview is strictly confidential. You so understand it, do you not?"

"It can be so if you desire it."

"We must enter into an agreement, Mr. Booth, that nothing which passes between us on this occasion shall ever be revealed."

"I am willing, sir."

"Very well. Now I will be plain and brief. I have a project to propose to your society, which if it can be accomplished will redound to your advantage, and of all who engage in it."

"What is that, sir?" inquired Booth, when he saw that Coldheart paused and waited to be questioned.

"I do not feel willing to be more explicit without knowing something more definite as to the object of your organization."

"And I, Mr. Coldheart, am not at liberty to make any exposure of our secrets, unless you choose to become possessed of them lawfully."

"How will I do that?"

"Join the society, sir."

"But I can better accomplish the object by not attaching myself to the Junto. I might be detected; I might be betrayed."

"That is a risk we all have to run, sir. If men never hazard anything, they will never accomplish much."

"But you do not know how much I have at stake?"

"Fortunes," replied Booth deliberately, "are often gained and lost too by the turning of a card; and life itself is frequently staked upon less than the throw of a die. There are few great enterprises in which one or the other are not put in jeopardy."

"That may all be true, Mr. Booth; but your society appears to be peculiarly liable to be exposed. For I never made a single effort to ascertain its existence, and yet I learned it from mere rumor, just as we have common gossip or scandal, going the rounds upon reports carried from one to another. The same person who gave your name as president of the Bloody Junto, might and doubtless would give mine as a member."

"You have not learned anything of importance, it seems though," replied Booth. "You know not that I have ever attempted to con-

seal the fact that I occupy the position you have named. Can you tell me a single object of this organization?"

"Whether I can name a specified object or not, the name is sufficiently suggestive of its character. As soon as I heard its bloody name, I at once inferred that it differed from an ordinary society or club, and that its object was warlike. I do not know why, Mr. Booth, but somehow or other it reminded me of the days of Catiline."

"And yet," replied Booth good humoredly, "the society received its name from a mere fortuitous circumstance, and was not christened thus because the qualifying adjective was descriptive of its purposes. You see therefore how easily you were deceived in your supposition."

"It was a very unfortunate circumstance then, Mr. Booth; for the name of Bloody Junto is sufficient to arouse one's apprehensions and suspicions. Any one would naturally infer that its aim must be bloodshed," said Coldheart hoping to draw Booth out.

"I cannot help that," replied the actor. "I pretend not to control people's inferences. They can make any surmises they please, but when they come to act upon them, it is quite a different matter."

"Is there no way then, Mr. Booth, by which I can become acquainted with your objects and make my propositions, without going through the regular process of initiation? I am not willing to appear before a society of this character, with whose members I am entirely unacquainted. It would be a leap in the dark."

"Well," said Booth studying a moment, "I will tell you what we can do. If you feel so disposed, we can have a call meeting immediately, at which only myself and the necessary officers shall be present. It will never be known then by the other members that you have joined."

"I do not see how that could be."

"You will see if you are initiated."

"Would not I better wait till night?" asked Coldheart.

"I think not. You would be more liable to be seen by the other members."

"Have your own way then, Mr. Booth. I will trust to you."

"You agree to be initiated now?" asked Booth.

"Yes, I believe I will, upon the conditions you named."

"Now then, Mr. Coldheart," said Booth with firmness, "before starting, I will tell you plainly, that if you intend treachery it will be a dangerous game for you. You may ensnare me, but your life will be forfeited. I give you timely warning, and you venture with your eyes open."

"Do not be alarmed, Mr. Booth. I have no disposition to betray you. I am no informer nor detective, sir."

"Well, we understand each other now. Remain here then half an hour," said Booth rising, "till I can notify the officers. I will then return and pass by your house. You

must follow me as if unintentionally, and when you see me enter a house, you may know it is our place of meeting. Open the door promptly and come in."

Booth was gone considerably over an hour, and Coldheart began to grow restless and uneasy for fear the actor would not return at all. He had kept his eyes fixed up the street without a moment's intermission, and he felt certain therefore that Booth could not have passed unseen. Just as he was beginning to despair, he saw the proud form of the stage-player moving leisurely down the street. Coldheart seized his hat, stood in the door until Booth was about forty or fifty yards in advance, and then followed with a palpitating heart. The actor kept straight on till he reached the house of Mrs. Surratt. Coldheart opened the door as he had been directed and entered. He found Booth in the hall standing at the head of the stairway that led to the cellar. They both descended in silence till they reached the bottom of the steps, and Booth lighted a candle left on the outside for the benefit of the members, and had turned to enter, when the door suddenly opened and Mrs. Surratt appeared with a light in her hand. She drew back in apparent astonishment on beholding Coldheart, but quickly recovered herself.

"I had come down to see if the cellar needed cleaning," said Mrs. Surratt apologizing for her detection. "I thought it might need sweeping, as that operation has not been performed for two months."

"Thank you, Mrs. Surratt," replied Booth. "But let me introduce my friend Mr.,"—but he abruptly halted as if the name had escaped his memory.

"Mr. Coldheart," added Mrs. Surratt politely bowing, and relieving Booth as she thought from an embarrassing situation. She then hastened up the stairs, leaving the two men alone.

"How came that woman to know me?" asked Coldheart when they had entered the gloomy looking cellar.

"Why, sir," answered Booth smiling at the official's evident apprehension, "you are a public character. I suppose your face is perfectly familiar to many whom you never heard of. This is one of the misfortunes of greatness."

"What did you call her name?"

"Mrs. Surratt. She is a very respectable lady, sir, and is as discreet a member as the society can boast of."

"What!" exclaimed Coldheart manifesting some alarm, "you do not admit women, do you?"

"We have only two," answered Booth.

"Are you not afraid to trust them with your secrets?"

"If we had been, they never would have been initiated."

"I am very sorry I was recognized by her. I am afraid her desire to blab may get me into trouble. There are few women, Mr. Booth, that can appreciate the importance of a silent tongue."

"You appear to have a poor opinion of the

"fair sex," remarked Booth drily. "But you need have no fears of Mrs. Surratt. She is as prudent a lady as any I know of anywhere."

"Think you she will suspect my connection with this society?"

"I do. She is too shrewd to be deceived after seeing you here. She knows this apartment is appropriated to the use of the society, and that we enter here only upon business pertaining to it. But you need not be the least alarmed."

"Unfortunate! unfortunate!" muttered Coldheart to himself.

Just then one of the officers stepped in, and in a few moments another followed; then another, until the whole number of vice-presidents had assembled. They were severally introduced to Coldheart as they entered; that is, all with whom he was unacquainted. All things now being ready, the constitution was read to Coldheart, and he at his own request was allowed to affix a fictitious name.

"Now, Mr. Coldheart," said Booth when the official had laid down the pen reddened with the actor's blood, "you know the consequences of treachery?"

"Death!"

"Death!" replied Booth with an emphatic gesture.

"I understand it clearly," replied Coldheart.

"Very well, we must now proceed to business. As you are now entitled to all our secrets," continued the actor, "I will explain our plans without reservation. Our chief aim, as you must have conjectured, is opposition to Lincoln's administration, which we look upon as tyrannical and subversive of the principles of republicanism. The president of the United States appears to have no regard whatever for the constitution, but boldly violates its fundamental principles. The writ of *habeas corpus* has been suspended, and men have been imprisoned—men perhaps guilty of small offences, and some perfectly innocent, have been imprisoned for months at a time without any opportunity of answering to the suspicions against their loyalty. The territory of Virginia has been divided contrary to every sense of justice and law, and a new state established by her severance; and to add to the monstrosity of the act, her citizens have had no voice nor choice in the matter. It was done under the plea of 'military necessity.' Thus the long-established principle of state sovereignty that underlies our whole political structure has been destroyed at one fell blow. Proclamations, flagrantly unjust and glaringly inconsistent, have been promulgated from the White House, abolishing a certain species of property owned by a portion of the people, and explicitly recognized by the constitution, and even protected by legal enactments of congress. But I need not recount to one in your position the various usurpations of Abraham Lincoln. You cannot be ignorant of them. His whole administration has been one grand tragedy of systematic aggressions and encroachments upon

rights, the violation of which would have hurled a despot from his throne in the old world. Some of us observing the tendency of the government to absolute despotism, organized ourselves into a permanent body, with the express intention of offering resistance. We have discussed various plans by which to check the raging tide of political corruption that now threatens to engulf the entire liberties of the American people."

"May I interrupt you a moment?" asked Coldheart.

"Certainly," replied the actor. "Whenever I say anything that needs explanation, interrupt me if you desire information."

"I merely wished to ask," said Coldheart, "if this society has been organized for the purpose of aiding the present rebellion, or is its only design to purify the government? Are the leading rebels aware of the existence of the Bloody Junto?"

"There is no one outside of the city that knows anything concerning our movements," replied Booth. "No rebel belongs to the society. It is composed exclusively of conservative men, who are desirous of saving the government and restoring peace to the whole country. However, it is possible that it may be necessary to seek the aid of the insurgent leaders in the execution of some of our designs. But we have as yet made no overtures to them, and I do not know that we will. They could not assist us in the least, at present, in the scheme now before the society."

"What is the scheme?" asked Coldheart, who wanted no preliminaries.

"I am coming to that now," said Booth. "Finding it impossible to control the action of the government through the lawful medium of the ballot-box; finding it impossible to even influence its downward course by peaceable means, we have at last resolved to accomplish it by violence."

"By bloodshed?" asked Coldheart.

"No," answered Booth, "we do not propose to spill blood only in case of extreme necessity. We are discussing, and have been for some time, the propriety of capturing Lincoln, Johnson and the cabinet, shipping them south, and delivering them up to the Confederate authorities."

"Have you made arrangements with Davis to receive them?"

"I have already told you that Jeff Davis or any other rebel knows nothing whatever in regard to our enterprise," replied the actor.

"If I understand it clearly then," said Coldheart, "your object is simply to capture them and run them south, without any subsequent course of action marked out?"

"Exactly so. The society has agreed upon nothing beyond their capture, and securing them against rescue. The scheme is not fully matured yet. I do not know what will be done at our next meeting. I do not, however, apprehend much difficulty after those gentlemen are captured and securely incarcerated in a southern prison. Such a present

as Lincoln and his cabinet will no doubt be very acceptable to Jeff Davis."

"I doubt that very much," said Coldheart, "especially when offered in the style you propose; but waiving that for the present, how do you intend to accomplish the capture? I should think it would be a hazardous undertaking to seize eight or ten officers, all at the same hour, and transport them beyond the federal lines."

"I candidly acknowledge the project will be attended with some difficulty and even danger," said Booth. "But with proper management I have no doubt of its complete success."

"Please enter more into details," said Coldheart, "and inform me how you expect to capture Lincoln or any of his cabinet."

"I have a proposition to submit at our next meeting," remarked one of the vice-presidents, "in regard to that. It appears to me that the only practical solution of the problem is, to seize all the officers at the dead hour of night, when the city is buried in deep slumber. Let a band of men, large enough for the purpose, boldly enter their sleeping apartments, bind and gag them, and secrete them in some underground recess for a few days, until the commotion consequent upon their seizure has somewhat subsided; and afterwards, when quiet is restored, we can leisurely proceed with them to the south."

"I think," said another one of the vice-presidents, "it would be a better plan to run them out of the city upon the same night in which they are captured. It can be done then more easily than ever afterwards. For this daring proceeding will arouse the whole country, and in twelve hours everybody will be on the lookout. There will be sentinels posted upon every highway and by-way throughout the land. Every nook and corner in this city will be closely searched, and a man cannot move without having the eyes of a hundred police officers fastened upon him. Dangerous acts should be completed amid the confusion which they necessarily engender. I know where there is a cave within twenty miles of the city, whose existence is known only to three men, and I am one of them. The other two belong to the Junto. We could conceal our prisoners there for years, if we so wished, and nobody would have the slightest suspicion as to their whereabouts. I suggest this as the best course."

"Both plans are liable to objections, gentlemen," said vice-president No. 3. "If we ever make a halt, I fear the whole enterprise will miscarry, and we may lose our heads for our quixotic rashness. I am decidedly in favor of seizing the persons of the officials, and making forced marches with them until we reach the rebel lines. We must go straight ahead, with a force sufficient to fight our way through, if necessary."

"And in case it should become necessary, what force could you raise?" asked Coldheart smiling.

"A short explanation will have to be made upon that point," replied Booth to Cold-

heart's question. "There are two sets of members belonging to this society—the direct and indirect, I might properly call them. There are between forty and fifty members who belong directly to the Junto, and are with us and participate in all its proceedings; then there are about four hundred outsiders, who know nothing whatever concerning our affairs. They are hired to do our bidding, no matter what it may be. They are our soldiers, and can be relied on I think in case of emergency. We intend increasing the number, if it is thought advisable."

"With this force," chimed in vice-president No. 3, "well armed and equipped, we can easily make our way beyond the federal lines, before an effective system of pursuit can be instituted."

"We are burning daylight, gentlemen," interrupted Booth. "We did not meet here this evening to discuss our plans or to offer new ones, but to explain the nature and object of our organization to Mr. Coldheart. Is there any question you wish to ask?" he said addressing the official. "I believe I have told you all our schemes so far as developed. I understood you to say that you had a proposition to submit to the society?"

"Yes," said Coldheart with slowness, "but before I offer it, I desire to know if it can be kept entirely secret. It appears that some of your members have been guilty of blabbing."

"Please inform me, Mr. Coldheart," said Booth, "how you obtained possession of your knowledge of our proceedings?"

"I did not learn anything of importance in regard to your proceedings. I only know what I told you."

"Well, how did you find that out?"

"I suppose," replied Coldheart, "that in justice to the society I must tell, though I dislike very much to mention my wife's friends in connection with this matter. It was told to my wife by Miss Flora Louvan." And this unexpected reply caused Booth to blush violently; which circumstance was noticed by Coldheart and Degroot, by both of whom it was attributed to the just cause.

"Who told her?" quickly inquired the actor rising to his feet.

"You are too hard for me now," said Coldheart laughing.

"She does not seem to know much about it though," said Booth. "But nevertheless, I shall inquire into it."

"I think I can trace it up," replied Degroot. "I have my suspicions. I will try and report at the next meeting."

"Very well," replied Booth to Degroot. "I hope you will discover the traitor. But proceed, Mr. Coldheart, you need not fear exposure."

"I will submit my proposition to you, gentlemen, and you must lay it before the society," said Coldheart. "My name must not be connected with it. Will you agree to that?"

"I do not know that it makes any great difference. So go ahead, Mr. Coldheart,"

said Booth. And Coldheart cleared his throat, then lowered his voice, and proceeded deliberately though cautiously to unfold his dark and bloody scheme.

CHAPTER X.

"Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead; And I would have it suddenly performed. What say'st thou now? Speak suddenly, be brief."

"Gentlemen," said Coldheart to his small though attentive audience, "I will speak plainly concerning the scheme which has just been disclosed to me; and I say without hesitation, it appears to me infeasible. You seem to have undertaken a project without having any definite object in view. The consequence is, I see from the brief discussion which you have indulged in this evening, and to which I have listened attentively, vacillation and doubt already characterize your proceedings. When men undertake the accomplishment of great deeds, they must have a well-defined purpose—a fixed, steady aim before them; they must consider whether the means are adapted to the ends, or else abortion will be the inevitable result. I could scarcely tell from what I have heard what your real motives are; whether this is a movement against Lincoln and his cabinet, or against the government. You seem to confound the two, or rather to consider that Lincoln is the government. But you are in error; for Lincoln and his coadjutors do not constitute the government. You say you propose to restore peace to the whole country. That is truly a laudable object, and I wish it could be done. But, gentlemen, rest assured the mere capture of Lincoln and seven or eight officers will not bring about that desirable result. It would rather have a tendency to prolong the unfortunate struggle; for it will embitter still more the north against the rebels, and arouse a desire of revenge for the indignity offered to her legitimate representatives. I admire the boldness of the proposed manoeuvre, because it is evidence of a dashing spirit that shrinks from no danger. But still I do not see that a particle of good could possibly result from it. The seizure of Lincoln, Johnson and others would not stop the wheels of the government for twenty-four hours. Some other persons could immediately step into their places, and carry on the war probably with tenfold rigor and madness. The constitution, you know, provides that when both the highest officers are incapable of discharging their official duties from any cause, congress shall declare what officer shall act as president until the vacancy can be legally filled. So you must see clearly that the mere capture of Lincoln would not prevent the transaction of the regular government business."

"We do not expect to do that," said Booth. "We propose to capture Lincoln and his cabinet, deliver them up to Jeff Davis, and let him agree with them upon terms of peace."

"There is one thing you seem to have overlooked, gentlemen," replied Coldheart, "and that is that Lincoln is not the government of the United States. By capturing him you would merely vacate his office—only temporarily at that. If he were a king or an emperor, it might considerably alter the case."

"King or no king," added Degroot, "you cannot deny the fact that to-day he wields more power than the Czar of Russia."

"Granting all that," replied Coldheart, "still his term of office is limited, and when it expires he is no more than any other individual. There is an essential difference between republics and monarchies that you, in your impatient zeal, appear to ignore. If Lincoln were a king and should be captured or murdered, and no provisions had been made for the appointment of a successor, there would probably be general confusion in political affairs. Such circumstances, history informs us, have been the causes of long and bloody wars. But in republics, the government is the people—it emanates from the popular will. Certain offices are established by the people independent of any man, and persons are chosen to discharge the duties of them. The removal of these persons does not in the least affect the status of the office which they filled. Any vacancy can be remedied almost as soon as it occurs, and the affairs of government go smoothly on, as if no interruption had taken place. But then there are other difficulties in the way besides this. This man Davis, whose name you have several times called this evening, is one with whom I guess you are not very intimately acquainted. I served in the United States senate with him, and I think I understand his character. I am free to say I do not like the man; but then we must look at facts. My personal prejudices or dislikes cannot change stubborn facts. As much as I hate this haughty southron, I am bound to say he is a man of a nice sense of honor. I do not believe he would receive Lincoln if kidnaped in the way you propose. He would look upon it as unfair, and would release the prisoner without parole. I do not think I am mistaken in my estimate of his character. When I served with him in the senate, he was always open, fair and candid in his arguments. I never knew him to take the least advantage of his opponents in a discussion. He never mystified his speeches, nor attempted to sustain error with sophistry, even when he might have concealed weak points, and might have utterly confounded his adversaries. With truth and candor I can say that much for him. A man of this character, gentlemen, would not avail himself of the result of a successful conspiracy. To speak more emphatically, I believe Jeff Davis would scorn to do it. But even granting that he would agree to treat with Lincoln in the condition of a prisoner, do you suppose the people of the north would submit to terms forced upon an imprisoned executive, who would be but the reluctant mouth-piece of the confederate authorities? Suppose Lincoln, terrified by threats of per-

nonal violence, should issue an order to Grant requiring him to surrender his army to Lee, or to make a treaty acknowledging the independence of the rebellious states, would not that general, with the knowledge that the order came from a prisoner, be considered a fool or a maniac to regard it? When a man is forced into the position of a prisoner, he is to all intents and purposes in the grave, as far as the office he filled is concerned; his official power ceases from the very moment of his capture. Gen. Grant, in the case supposed, would undoubtedly obey Lincoln's successor. The capture of Lincoln would not of course carry off the office of president. If it would, then your premises might be more correct, your plan might work well, and you might accomplish the object you have in view. So, gentlemen, considering all the circumstances, weighing well all the arguments *pro* and *con*, I think you are bound to agree with me that your plan would result, in nothing by the capture of Lincoln and his cabinet, except probably the harm which might befall them and yourselves. I have endeavored to take a calm, sober, calculating view of the subject, and it appears to me in this light. But still I am open to conviction, if any of you can show me how to obviate the difficulties I have mentioned."

When Coldheart, with a triumphant smile, had finished these last remarks the officers all looked blue; for the official had spoken like a practical man of sound judgment, and his arguments carried reluctant conviction to their minds. They disliked to give up a scheme which they had been devising for several weeks, and which was now nearly ripe for execution. But still not one could offer a word in support of the cherished plan. They were surprised and even mortified that they had so blindly overlooked all these now patent obstacles which the far-seeing mind of Coldheart had grasped and comprehended at one glance. No man likes to have a project which he has matured, and which he thinks rests upon a firm foundation, overturned by a few well-timed strokes of common sense. Coldheart knew from the blank countenances of his auditors, and their grave silence, that they were completely nonplussed and ready to abandon their quixotic undertaking. He waited, however, for some one to reply.

"I acknowledge," at last said the impulsive actor, "without hesitation, that I now see the futility of our wild project. We have," he continued, addressing himself to the vice-presidents, "we have been striking in the dark; we have been looking altogether at the present, and have shut our eyes totally to the future. I confess I am willing to give up the project."

"I am not," replied Degroot, "unless something better can be substituted. We must do something. I have reflected on this scheme a great deal. I knew there were some objections to it; but then there are few projects that involve the use of violence that are not objectionable."

"This plan will not do," said another officer emphatically.

"Let us hear what Mr. Coldheart has to propose as a substitute," said Booth. "No doubt he can advise us what to do."

"Now comes the tug of war," said Coldheart smiling, proud that with a few well-chosen arguments he had in such a short space of time upset the plans of the society. "Now comes the tug of war; for I hardly know how to commence. But you might infer from what I have already said that I mean that Lincoln is not the only obstacle that blocks up the road to peace. If you want to apply the remedy you must lay the axe to the root of the tree. The evil lies farther back than Lincoln and his cabinet. If you wish to accomplish a deed that will have a decided effect, you must strike a blow at the government."

The officers seemed to be astonished upon hearing this proposition. They gazed at each other and at Coldheart, as if they did not comprehend him at all.

"I repeat, gentlemen," continued Coldheart with emphasis, "you must strike a blow at the government itself. There is where the evil lies. Now, allow me to make a prefatory remark or two before entering into a full explanation of my meaning. You must have observed the growing dissatisfaction of the people with a republican form of government. If you have not, I have. This is especially so in the southern states. Men in the north dare not utter publicly what they think, but I have conversed with numbers of intelligent men, and find a settled conviction in their minds of the incapacity of the human race, or any portion of it, for self-government. To be candid, I am of that opinion myself. Republican forms are adapted only to small communities, in which there is an identity of sentiment and interest. But when a republic begins to extend its boundaries, and begins to protect a multitude of interests that clash, its impotency to accomplish the supreme ends of government is very perceptible. The reason is obvious, and is founded in nature. Governments may control such a wide scope of territory, that really different nations, who have nothing in common, live under it. They are totally unacquainted with each others' manners and customs, and feel no more sympathy for each other than foreign people do. I need scarcely say that the differences between Alabamians or Mississippians and New Englanders are nearly as great as those that distinguish the French from the English, or the Russians from the Americans. Even in point of language there are at least two distinct dialects now spoken by southerners and northerners. The pronunciation is different, and there are numerous words peculiar to each section. In course of time, if our country should become much larger, I doubt not that those living at its opposite extremities will no more understand one another than do the Turks. There can be no such principle as patriotism under republican government, whose jurisdiction

covers a large extent of territory. One man cannot contain so large a country in his affections any more than a Mormon can love a dozen wives with that true devotion which should be lavished upon one. The consequence is, he loses sight of the majority of his fellow-subjects, and concentrates his patriotic feelings upon the particular locality with which his individual interest is identified. He feels rather an antipathy towards a portion of his fellow-citizens, for the advancement of whose interest he may imagine he is taxed. This conflict of opposing interests was without any doubt the cause of the present war. There is, indeed, an 'irrepressible conflict' between slave and free labor. I am aware, gentlemen, that these objections are more or less applicable to all governments, but they are doubly so to republics. There is another circumstance that has a tendency to alienate the affections of the people from a republican government, which I ought to mention. The chief magistrate is very apt to use the powers with which he is entrusted for the promotion of the party which elevated him to office, or to the advantage of the section from which he came. He cannot love the whole nation; he knows not the wants of many sections; his own constituency have urgent claims upon him; his time is short, and he must therefore use the power he enjoys for the interests of his friends, or he will be very unpopular. This certainly would not be the case if he were elected for life, which would be tantamount to making him a monarch. He would then feel that the whole nation was his, and he would desire to see all parts prosper. He would be the grand nucleus, to whom all could look for protection with confidence, and he could reconcile conflicting interests by the equal distribution of impartial justice. But we have not time to pursue this train of thought further. The history of all human governments attests the truth of my position.

"Now, gentlemen," continued Coldheart, advancing to a new point, "you cannot be so utterly ignorant of future events as not to see that the present rebellion is destined to a speedy termination. Its end is rapidly approaching. No man who indulges in speculations concerning the termination of the struggle, can have a doubt as to what the result will be. The rebellion will be put down. Everything is indicative of such a result. Well, granting it, what will be the condition of the country? Ten or twelve sovereign states will be conquered, forced back into the union, and compelled to exercise the functions of sovereignty. Was ever such an absurdity heard of? A free people, who by the very nature, by the very conditions of sovereignty, have a perfect right to elect their own form of government according to their own will and pleasure, are forced by a combination of sovereigns to discharge those duties required by the exercise of supreme power! It is contrary to all the received maxims of logic, philosophy—of nature itself. I cannot conceive of a greater political monstrosity. Why, the very act of coercion ne-

cessarily divides the states into inferiors and superiors. And whenever the line is drawn, which will soon be the case, there is the end of republican liberty in America."

"If such is your opinion, Mr. Coldheart," said Booth laughing, "how happens it that you are not acting with the so-called peace party?"

"Everything we say here," replied Coldheart, "is confidential of course. Were it otherwise, I would not speak thus freely. But it is necessary to be candid on the present occasion. It is true I belong to the abolition party, but I do not endorse everything done by the party. The peace party is right in some respects; but then a man must consult his own interests in political matters, as well as other things. I could not retain my present position and abandon my party. But, gentlemen, that is not the question with which we have to deal. I must speak of facts as they now actually exist however inconsistent they may cause me to appear. My party by the results of the war, will be forced into an anomalous position—a position antagonistic to all the principles they have hitherto professed. The government will be a despotism; it will be worse than a despotism; because it will be marked by all the evils and horrors of that form of government without a single one of its advantages. And now I can explain what I meant by telling you that a blow should be struck at the government. Since a monarchy is the best form of government for our people; since genuine republicanism is a myth; since we will be plunged into an abyss of inconsistency and confusion by attempting to reinstate the old constitution, I suggest that our present rotten political system be overthrown, and a strong government be established by the election of a king. I propose, furthermore, that the movement commence in this society. In a word, I propose that you strike down the government of the United States."

"That is more easily talked about than done, Mr. Coldheart," said Degroot. "But you will certainly not leave us in the dark. You have no doubt arranged all the details."

"I would do scarcely one-half of my work to propose a plan and not suggest means for its accomplishment," replied Coldheart. "I have studied out the whole thing, gentlemen, from Alpha to Omega; and it is not such a difficult achievement as might at first be supposed. As I have already said, the people have had their confidence in the stability of republican government considerably shaken. The rebels in six months will accept anything that will offer the least protection. Indeed, I expect the rebel states to be used as the chief instrumentality for the accomplishment of the scheme. For when the war ends they will have no room to hope for mercy. As soon as they are convinced that their cause is lost, we must seize the government, convert it into a monarchy, and guarantee slavery to the insurgents upon the condition that they assent to the proposed change, and support the throne with their arms. I doubt not in the least that they will accept the offer. We

will secure the co-operation of the army of the United States by holding out promises of dukedoms, and other privileges of monarchial nobility. Opposition outside of the army we will put down by force."

"Whom do you propose to make king?" asked Booth.

"That, gentlemen, is an honor to which I aspire," replied Coldheart. "I think it is due to me for originating the project. If you see proper to give it to me, I will say right here that the officers of this society shall have the first choice of royal favors under the new regime. You shall all be Lords, Earls, or whatever you may desire, and shall have magnificent estates to support your dignities. And now, gentlemen, what say you to the enterprise? I would like to hear your opinions?"

"I should prefer to hear something more about it," replied Booth, "before I give an answer."

"I do not know what more I could say," replied Coldheart. "I have laid the plan before you, and it remains with you to say whether it shall be executed or not. There is one difficulty in the way which, however, I need not mention till you determine to carry out the project. I must know though first, whether the ideas thus far advanced meet with your approbation."

"It is undoubtedly," said Degroot, "an enterprise of tremendous magnitude; nevertheless, I shall be willing to assist in its execution if I were certain that the result would be what Mr. Coldheart anticipates."

"I am willing to stake my life and fortune upon the result, gentlemen," replied Coldheart. "I will run a greater risk, and will lose more than any of you, if we fail. I back my judgment that far. When a man embarks all he has, I do not see what more could be expected."

"I am afraid, Mr. Coldheart," replied Booth, "you have somewhat misconstrued the sentiments of the people. I do not doubt, in the least, that there are many who have lost confidence in republicanism; but the great mass of the people, whose minds are thoroughly imbued with ideas of constitutional liberty, inculcated from the days of childhood, would I think become inveterate opponents of monarchy. Some, I know, are dissatisfied; but it is more on account of the abuse of the constitution, than of the deficiencies in our system of government."

"Not to appear self-opinionated," said Coldheart, who was always ready with an argument to advance his personal interests, "we will grant that your position is correct. Suppose that the mass of the people should favor republican liberty; still their opinions would amount to only negative opposition. You may talk, gentlemen, as much as you please about the great blessings of democracy; but after all governments are organized by a few men, and are conducted by a few men. Upon investigation, it would be found that the great majority of the people care nothing about the form of government instituted over them, provided they are not taxed too heavily

ly for its support, and are left free to follow the avocations of their choice and to enjoy the fruits of their labor. You all must know, from personal observation, that there are thousands of men upon election days whose votes can be changed half a dozen times before they are deposited in the ballot-box. This is because they have no fixed political principles. You have all heard them spouting about liberty, when in fact they had nothing but vague ideas in regard to its nature and object. You have heard angry discussions concerning the constitution, when both disputants did not understand the first principle, and had probably never read a word of the instrument in their lives. The fact is, the mass of the people in every country know little beyond the name of the government to which their allegiance is due. If they are only let alone, they do not care much whether the government is a republic or a despotism. So I think the opposition from the people will amount to nothing more than a few feeble murmurs, which will soon cease when they see our enterprise is an accomplished fact. But, gentlemen, I desire to know your opinions in regard to this matter. Are you willing to begin the movement?"

"As far as I am concerned," at length replied Booth, "I would be in favor of almost any plan that will restore peace to the country. I know I am sincere and honest in my motives. I would not be a party to any scheme that contemplates revolutionizing the government merely to advance my own personal interests—not even to secure the proudest title of nobility that monarchy can boast of. I acknowledge too that I have some ambition, but not so much as to destroy my patriotism. I simply want to see peace established, and would favor anything that would bring about such a result. I am tired of seeing the southern people oppressed—not that I am a rebel either. But I owe them a debt of gratitude for the little celebrity I have attained in the world, and the wealth I have acquired. When I was hissed from the stage in the north, I went south and was received with kindness, and encouraged. I love the great, magnanimous people of the south for the overflowing benevolence with which they encourage budding talent. I never met with anything but kicks and cuffs and blows from the north until after I had achieved success in the rebel states. I feel, therefore that I ought in some manner to repay the south for what she has done for me. And this, Mr. Coldheart, is my object. Your plan seems to me more practicable than the other, and doubtless would be more effective; yet if my object could be secured without attempting to revolutionize the government, I would much prefer it."

"So would I," answered Coldheart. "But I can think of no other that would accomplish the end proposed. Can any of you propose something better? If you can I will cheerfully give up my scheme."

"I have not the presumption to think I could propose anything better," said Booth.

"I believe," said Degroot, who was think-

ing of his prospective earldom, "I shall declare myself in favor of Mr. Coldheart's scheme, inasmuch as we have not fallen upon anything less objectionable. I vote therefore for adopting it at once, at least the part developed."

Each one of the other vice-presidents was then called on to record his opinion, and it was unanimously agreed that Coldheart's proposition should be approved.

"I go with the majority," said Booth when the other officers had voted.

"Well then, gentlemen," said Coldheart, "having agreed that the plan shall be executed, we must now notice the obstacles opposed to it. There is probably only one serious difficulty in the way, and if that can be obviated all the rest will be easy. There are several persons who will violently oppose this movement, because they will be losers by it. You can certainly guess to whom I allude?"

"We do not deal in conjectures in this society, Mr. Coldheart," said Booth. "If you are afraid to be plain and explicit, you would better remain silent. I am not going to try to guess at any man's meaning."

"Well, gentlemen, if I must be plain, I must. The persons to whom I have reference are Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson and William H. Seward. There are no others of whom I have any fears."

"What about them?" asked Degroot.

"They are in the way," responded Coldheart.

"I wish you would go on," said Booth with a frown. "Speak out plainly what you propose. We want no hints."

"I think I have been plain enough, gentlemen. The men are in the way, and must be gotten out before the plan can succeed. Is not that sufficiently clear?"

"How will you get them out of the way?" asked Degroot.

"Can none of you suggest a way?" inquired the crafty Coldheart.

"I will not," replied Booth.

"Nor I," responded all the officers.

"Gentlemen," said Coldheart, who saw that equivocation or evasion would be useless, "there is only one spot in the world in which secrets are never revealed, and in which all opposition to the manœuvres of human ambition entirely ceases. You know where that is?"

"We shall make no guesses, Mr. Coldheart," said Booth firmly.

"It is the grave," continued Coldheart, as if no interruption had been made, "and it is the only safe place for Lincoln, Johnson and Seward. Now you cannot possibly doubt what my meaning is."

"You mean that we shall murder them," said Booth.

"I did not exactly propose that" replied Coldheart speaking slowly and hesitatingly. "I merely remarked that the grave is the only safe place for them. 'Dead men tell no tales,' says an old proverb. I may add that they give no one trouble either. But can

any of you suggest any other means to get rid of them?"

"If I cannot," replied Booth, "I do not much like the idea of committing murder."

"There is something unpleasant about it, it is true," said Coldheart; "but when men are executed for crime and offences done to the people over whom they exercise a little brief authority, the case assumes a different aspect. War itself is nothing but wholesale murder—in the first degree. Lincoln in the present war has murdered more men than his own single life can atone for. If he has not directly plunged the bayonet into the breasts of innocent men, he has caused it to be done. He is, therefore responsible for all the blood which has been shed since the inauguration of the war. You, yourself, Mr. Booth, said that the present administration was a perfect despotism. If so, how is it wrong to remove that which has perverted and corrupted the government? How is it wrong to destroy a tyrant, and thereby restore peace to a distracted country? Can it be wrong to spill the blood of one man that no more widows' tears shall flow? Can it be wrong to sacrifice one man that no more orphans shall be made? How is it wrong to put one man in the grave, and thereby stop the public debt, which is already so large that the human mind can scarcely comprehend the magnitude of the figures that designate its amount? If for these reasons, gentlemen, and others of a similar character, which will occur to you, Lincoln deserves not to suffer the penalty of death as an expiation of his numerous crimes, I know of no tyrant in the dark ages of the world that was justly killed."

"If," said Booth, "if Lincoln could be tried and executed by due process of law, I would not have a word to say. For I believe the man is worthy of death; but I do not relish the idea of murder at all."

"Mr. Coldheart is right," suddenly exclaimed Degroot, raising his head from the table upon which he had been leaning for a few moments. "Mr. Coldheart is right. Lincoln ought to be put to death. If it cannot be done in one way, it should in another, law or no law."

"Johnson and Seward too," quickly added Coldheart.

"All of them, if necessary," responded Degroot with considerable energy. "By heaven, let them all go down together! I shall vote for Mr. Coldheart's plan *in toto*. Comrades let us adopt it. It is the thing."

"I am opposed to this violent measure, gentlemen," said Booth, "unless it is an absolute necessity. We ought to avoid bloodshed if possible."

"I have studied the whole affair thoroughly," replied Coldheart, "and I see no way to carry out the project otherwise. It is disagreeable to spill blood, but sometimes it cannot be helped. Lincoln and Johnson would contend for their rights; but if they are both destroyed, there will be no one to claim the presidency, and we will disperse congress

before a selection can be made. Seward also must be put out of the way, and then if the whole thing fails, my chances for the presidency are as good as any other man's. So no matter how the plan may work, you all will run very little risk."

"Well, gentlemen," said Booth, "if it must be done, I give in."

Accordingly it was then and there determined that Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson and William H. Seward should be duly executed.

"Your decision will not be revoked, gentlemen?" inquired Coldheart.

"There is not much danger of that," replied Degroot.

"When must we commence operations?" asked one of the vice-presidents.

"Not until the rebels see that their cause is lost, which will not take long. In the mean time I must consult with some of the army officers, and win them over to the project. I am acquainted with a great many who are under personal obligations to me for the positions they hold. I can count on them without a doubt. While I am attending to this, you can be preparing the society for the movement; but keep it a profound secret from all the other members until we can get everything ready. We would best say no more about the bloody part of the programme, until the time arrives to execute it; then let it be done with expedition and boldness. I suppose it is time to adjourn, gentlemen, it is late in the night."

Accordingly they all adjourned without further ceremony.

CHAPTER XI.

"All's to be fear'd where all is to be lost."

Notwithstanding Coldheart's confidence in the ultimate success of his bloody scheme, Booth thought it advisable to make arrangements for the escape of himself and confederates in the event of failure. Whether the project should be crowned with success or not, it was intended that those upon whom it would devolve to execute the sentence of death upon the three officers of the government already mentioned, should retire from public view to await subsequent events, and to avoid any unpleasant consequences resulting from the wrath of the immediate friends of those whose destiny was to be a bloody tomb. It was supposed, and justly too, that no member of the society could be prevailed upon to assassinate the highest officer of the government without having the means of escape within reach. Booth, therefore, went to Canada for this purpose—and not to confer with agents of the confederacy, as alleged by northern writers, at least by a portion of them. No stone has been left unturned to implicate the "so-called" rebels in the dark plot that culminated in an event which, we had like to have said, seems fore-ordained by an all-wise providence; but we cannot affirm this, because *Brutus* says it is not so, "and

Brutus is an honorable man." Rewards were offered for the apprehension of President Jefferson Davis, and other prominent "rebels" for complicity in a deed concocted by yankee ingenuity for the furtherance of yankee interests. It is stated, by northern men too, that a pardon was offered to the unfortunate Capt. Wirz, (who, we may be permitted to observe, was dragged from the bed upon which he was dying of disease, and made to expiate his supposed crimes upon the gibbet for the gratification of yankee malignity,) upon the condition that he should declare President Davis guilty of murder! "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" But thank Heaven! all yankee attempts of this character have failed of effect, and President Davis is to-day ten thousand times less guilty of Lincoln's murder than some of the professed loyalists and philanthropists who are clamoring so loudly for southern blood. Lincoln's gore reddens yankee men's hands, and not those of a poor, defenceless widow. But this is not exactly pertinent to the story.

The very day that Booth started to Canada, Coldheart called upon Mrs. Surratt. From his acts he did not appear to believe very strongly in woman's power to overcome that feeling which urges her to reveal all she knows concerning other people's secrets. Many men believe this disposition to unguarded loquacity a great fault in the opposite sex; but the truth is, it is an amiable quality, and one that does honor to the pure heart of noble woman. It will be found upon investigation and reflection that those who readily communicate all the secrets they know, however simple they may be deemed, generally possess an amiable, open, candid, ardent disposition—a heart that from its own innocence and want of suspicion perceives not the necessity of caution and secrecy in regard to anything. Jove save us from a secretive woman, feline by nature. We do not mean, however, to assert that the opposite of the proposition just advanced is true in all instances; and that those who are non-communicative have a certain phrenological development located a little above the ear, too full to be controlled by conscientiousness. In other words, we do not mean that non-committal persons will invariably violate that imperative scriptural injunction contained in the fifteenth verse of the twentieth chapter of Exodus, upon every favorable opportunity. But however this may be, Coldheart thought the members of the Bloody Junto a set of inexcusable ninnies for initiating women into their society. He therefore called upon Mrs. Surratt, as we have already stated; but what his object was, the reader can infer from the interview itself.

"You appear to have known me before, Mrs. Surratt," said Coldheart after the customary civilities had passed.

"I have seen you frequently, sir," was the lady's reply.

"May I ask where, Madam?"

"Yes, sir; I think I saw you about a week ago in company with Mr. Booth, stand-

ing at my cellar door," said Mrs. Surratt with an arch smile.

"You are a member of the Bloody Junto, then?"

"How do you know that?"

"I was so informed by the proper authority."

"And who is the 'proper authority?'" asked the lady.

"In this case it was the president of the society."

"Who is that?" inquired Mrs. Surratt with an air that would have caused Coldheart to doubt her connection with the Junto had he not been posted by Booth.

"You certainly cannot be ignorant of that personage, Mrs. Surratt."

"I am a know-nothing, Mr. Coldheart," was rejoined with a shrewd smile. A know-nothing in more senses than one.

"It is well to be cautious, Mrs. Surratt; but there is no need of it on this occasion."

"Why is there not?"

"Do you not suspect that I am a member of the same secret society to which you belong?"

"I have my ideas about things, Mr. Coldheart," said Mrs. Surratt.

"Have you received no information to that effect?"

"Whether I have or not, you do not have the right to question me in this style. If you are a member of a secret society and suspect me of belonging to it, I suppose there are means of recognition that might be employed."

"To what modes do you allude, Mrs. Surratt?"

"I refuse to answer questions of that character," replied the lady.

"What kind, then, will you answer?"

"O" said Mrs. Surratt.

"T" replied Coldheart with some reluctance.

"N"

"U"

"J"

"TO"

"JUN"

"JUNTO," said Coldheart concluding the test. "Now, Mrs. Surratt, I will test you, if you have no objection."

"Very well sir, proceed."

"L"

"A" promptly responded Mrs. Surratt.

"B"

"C"

"O"

"BAL."

"CA"

"CABAL," concluded Mrs. Surratt.

"Five in mine," continued Coldheart.

"Five in mine," answered Mrs. Surratt.

"Ten in both," concluded Coldheart.

The numerical test the reader will readily perceive had reference to the number of letters which composed the two words.

"Now, Mrs. Surratt," continued Coldheart, "we can talk freely. I have something to say to you about this society."

"Very well, Mr. Coldheart, I am ready to listen."

"Have you heard any of the members speak of my relations to this society?"

"I have not."

"Have you heard any allusions to the call meeting at which I was present about a week ago? You recollect the time probably?"

"Yes, sir. I have heard no allusion to it by any person."

"Some of the members board with you, do they not?"

"Yes, sir; but they rarely speak of the society, except when I question them."

"Do they communicate their proceedings to you freely?"

"Sometimes they do."

"Do you attend the meetings regularly?"

"I have never attended but one; and that was when I was initiated."

"You do not seem to take much interest in politics?"

"Very little, sir. It is out of my sphere."

"Do you ever talk with persons outside of the society concerning the existence of the Junto?"

"To be sure not."

"Have you ever mentioned my name to any one?"

"Not as a member of the Junto."

"I hope you will never mention it, Mrs. Surratt, in connection with the society. You know I occupy a conspicuous political position. Any indiscretion on the part of the members might involve me in serious difficulties, and endanger you, in fact all who belong to the Junto. You might be arrested and tried for treason against the government. You cannot use too much caution."

"No one in the society doubts my fidelity, Mr. Coldheart."

"Neither do I doubt it, Mrs. Surratt. I wished merely to advise you to be on your guard. Persons very frequently speak inadvertently before they think, and thereby expose affairs that ought to be kept secret. I trust you will not take offence at being reminded of the binding nature of the obligation which you took. An oath is a solemn thing, Mrs. Surratt."

"I am aware of that, sir."

"There is need of great caution, Mrs. Surratt," continued Coldheart. "This movement, if it should be discovered, would be regarded as a conspiracy, and all detected would, I fear, suffer the extreme penalty of the law. We ought therefore to use all the means in our power to avoid discovery; and one of the means is, never to call my name in connection with the society. I want you, Mrs. Surratt, to solemnly promise me that you will never mention my name."

"What! Under no circumstances?"

"Under no circumstances, if it can be avoided, and never connected with the society. Those who are aware of my membership in the Junto have thought this the best course; and all but you have sworn never to call my name except as stated. Will you promise this?"

"If the rest have, I will."

"Well, the rest have."

"Then I promise also."

"You unconditionally pledge your solemn word?"

"For the good of the society I do. I never will mention it while I live."

Coldheart then took his departure. No sooner had he gone than Mrs. Surratt commenced reflecting upon the strange interview that had just terminated. She could not but now regret that she had so rashly agreed to the cunning official's request. She did not now doubt that Coldheart's sole object in exacting the promise concerning himself, was his own individual security. She thought he might be making arrangements for his own safety, in case the existence of the society should be discovered. His very countenance was indicative of deliberate villainy, and she had felt a strange sense of uneasiness in his presence. But her word was now solemnly pledged, and however much she might regret it, it could not be revoked. After a short time, spent in apparently painful thought, she seemed to come to a conclusion all at once, and lighting a candle she descended to the cellar. In one hand she carried a small pot of white-wash, and placing this together with the candle upon the table, she securely fastened the cellar door. But as this is not the proper place to reveal what she then and there did, we must leave her for the present, and hasten on to other events that now demand our attention.

CHAPTER XII.

"Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad."

"What did the society do last night?" asked Mrs. Coldheart of her husband one Sunday morning as they were sitting alone in their private parlor.

"Nothing," replied Coldheart. "There is no necessity for doing anything. According to the constitution the society is bound to meet every Saturday night, whether there is any business on hand or not. Were it not for this, it would be a good idea to dissolve until the time for action arrives. As matters now stand, the best thing we can do is to meet and do nothing."

"Is any one besides the officers acquainted with the plot?"

"No one, unless Mrs. Surratt has been informed of it. Sometimes I am fearful that she is aware of it."

"Is there any other lady belonging to the society?"

"There is another one, I believe, whom I have never seen, though."

"Do you know her name?"

"Mrs. Eglantine, I think."

"I never heard of her before; but does she know of your membership?"

"From what I can learn, she does not."

"How do you think it would do for me to join the society, Mr. Coldheart?"

"I would not have you do such a thing for the world."

"Why not, Mr. Coldheart? I could be of more service than these other two ladies, from your account."

"I am surprised at you, Mary," said Coldheart evincing some vexation. "This society is not designed for respectable women. Besides this, what do you wish to join for, when you know all the proceedings as fully as I do? If you belonged to it, you could be of no service whatever."

"Very well, Mr. Coldheart; if I could do no good, I assure you I don't care a whit about joining. But, pray, what good can these other ladies do?"

"None; they are in the way. The members were all great fools for admitting them at all."

"I don't wish to join, Mr. Coldheart, if that be your view of the case. But still I must be allowed to say that I don't believe in cramping the intellectual powers of woman by forever confining her to the parlor or the kitchen. Women are sometimes more skillful in both military and political affairs than men. As illustrations of this I can mention Semiramis, Beatrice, Queen Catherine, and Elizabeth, the best ruler that England ever had. History is full of examples, Mr. Coldheart, all going to demonstrate the fact that woman is the equal of man, in every respect. In point of literature, I can name hundreds such as Madam De Stael, Jane Porter, Felicia Hemans, and goodness knows how many others besides."

"There is no doubt, Mary," said Coldheart with a serious countenance, "that women excel us poor men in a thousand things; yes, I will venture to say in one thousand two hundred and fifty things. And rather than be very particular about the numbers, I would increase the figures to thirteen hundred things."

"Now, Mr. Coldheart, you are poking fun at me, as you always do whenever I broach the subject of the rights of our sex."

"No, no, Mary, I am in earnest."

"Well, now, Mr. Coldheart, don't you believe that women, since they are the equals of men, ought to be allowed the right of suffrage?"

"Certainly I do; if men could fill their places in the nursery."

"O pshaw! Mr. Coldheart, you are incorrigible. I shan't talk to you any more in regard to the rights of our sex."

"Have you discovered anything more about this love affair of Flora Louvan and Booth?" asked Coldheart, changing the subject without ceremony or apology.

"I believe the poor girl is nearly crazy about him," answered Mrs. Coldheart. "But she is ashamed of her passion, I almost know. I have done my best to draw her out on the subject, but she seems determined to keep the secret to herself. I know now, from what she said to me, that she is sorry she ever told me anything about the Junto. Poor creature! I can see that she is struggling hard to overcome her unhappy attachment."

"There is the danger," quickly said Coldheart. "Because if her feelings should happen to undergo a change in regard to Booth, and she should hate him, which is not impossible, she might betray him for spite. And I fear she knows more of the affairs of the society than we have supposed."

"I have thought of that Mr. Coldheart," said the wife, who never allowed anybody to out-foresee herself. "I have thought of that, and I was going to mention my fears on that score when you interrupted me."

"You must take care, Mary," continued Coldheart, "that such a catastrophe does not happen. You must encourage her to love Booth."

"I have been doing that, but she invariably scouts at the idea of such a thing."

"Can you not induce her to confess her partiality in some way?"

"I can make her betray her sentiments any time I wish, but she always bitterly denies her love for the actor. She will however be here again this evening, and I will try to make her confess."

The conversation of these two hypocrites was then suddenly changed to other matters, which were irrelevant to our story, and can therefore be of little interest to the reader. That morning they both attended church, and listened to a most instructive discourse upon the evils of southern slavery. In the course of the sermon bitter curses were heaped upon offending rebels for attempting to break down the "best government the world ever saw." Had the reverend gentleman officiating upon this occasion not been in the pulpit, and had the day not been the Sabbath, the casual passer-by might have mistaken the religious effort for a violent political harangue, so thickly was it interlarded with oaths. The northern stay-at-home ministers were pursuing this course, while chaplains in the yankee army were doing out still more contemptible tomfoolery to their thievish hearers, and asking the blessings of a just God upon stolen subsistence! But for the sake of American Christianity we must cease. Because we do not wish foreigners to discover the lamented truth that the ancient Pharisees and Sadducees, who were wont in days of yore to follow the Savior in order to prove him an impostor, have re-appeared in the world, by some unfortunate Pythagorean process of transmigration, and are to be met with in various sects all over the northern states, and especially in New England. Of course Coldheart and his amiable spouse returned home much edified by the religious discourse, and encouraged in their hatred of rebels.

Flora Louvan that Sunday afternoon visited Mrs. Coldheart, as the latter lady had said. The unsuspecting girl was totally unaware of the snare which her generous friend was so carefully preparing. Mrs. Coldheart had latterly appeared so open-hearted and had so adroitly changed her opinion of Booth, at least so in appearance, that Flora had been on the point several times of laying bare her heart to the inspection of her kind friend,

and asking her advice. But whenever she essayed to begin, something would seem to occur to interrupt her. And thus she had kept the state of her affections deep-buried in the silence of her own aching breast.

"You were not at church to-day, Flora?" said Mrs. Coldheart in a half deliberative, half inquiring tone.

"No, I felt indisposed this morning."

"What a pity! You don't know what a treat you missed. Who do you suppose officiated?"

"I have no idea who."

Well, you couldn't guess in a day. It was the notorious William Turncoat, of Tennessee. I never heard such a sermon in all my life. Why, he swore in the pulpit like a trooper. Among other things, he said he would fight the rebels till the place of torment should freeze over, and then he would fight them on the ice."

"The fighting he does is all very harmless, I guess," said Flora. "Tongue lashing is a poor weapon in times of war."

"I agree with you there, Flora. But that is the way Turncoat tries to keep up the excitement. I have no confidence whatever in the old sinner. He used to abuse the abolitionists more than he does the rebels now. I recollect the discussion he had several years ago in Philadelphia. At that time he was an ultraist in southern error, upon the subject of slavery. I understand he is one of the greatest cowards in all Tennessee. I am told that he used to carry one of his infant children in his arms whenever he appeared upon the streets to prevent some indignant citizen from giving him a public caning. His forte in politics and religion too, is slander. He seems to have studied nothing in his life but the vocabulary of profanity. He uses barbarous expressions in public which a drunken hack-driver would feel ashamed to utter in a common street quarrel."

"You say he was once a pro-slavery advocate?" inquired Flora.

"Why, to be sure he was, dear—the bitterest that could be found in the south. His audiences used to applaud and cheer him most vociferously in the pulpit for his abuse of abolitionists and republicans, just like some of the congregation did to-day for the curses he heaped upon the rebels, from whom he is a worthless renegade. Oh, I have not a particle of confidence in the miserable old deserter. He never would have come north, but he foresaw that the unionists would finally be successful. But I see you want the subject changed; and indeed we are throwing away time and wasting breath in talking about a common deserter like Turncoat. By the way, have you heard that Mr. Booth has moved to Canada?" asked Mrs. Coldheart with marked emphasis that was designed to have a special effect upon her fair listener.

"No," replied Flora with a start of surprise.

"Well, he has, without doubt."

"Not to live, has he?" inquired Flora manifesting more interest than she was aware of.

"I don't know exactly about that. But he

has gone there, and I know not when he will return. But what do you suppose caused him to go?"

"I have no idea," replied Flora frowning. "How should I?"

"Well, it was disappointment."

"Indeed!" said Flora assuming an air of indifference which, however, she was far from feeling. "Disappointment of what nature?"

"Love," replied Mrs. Coldheart.

"Well, I declare, that is interesting," said Flora, forcing a laugh whose spuriousness could not escape the keen eye of Mrs. Coldheart.

"Flora," continued the lady with assumed solemnity of manner, "you, least of any body, have a right to make light of Mr. Booth's disappointment. For you have not treated him altogether right."

"Who, I, Mrs. Coldheart, I?"

"Yes, Flora, you. Mr. Booth has been visiting at your house; he has addressed you, and you have given him reason to believe that you are a coquette."

Mrs. Coldheart made this assertion partly at a venture. From what she knew of the temperament of both parties, she guessed that something of the sort must have occurred. She was soon confirmed in this opinion by the sudden change in Flora's manner and look.

"You should not have treated Mr. Booth thus, dear," continued the crafty lady. "He is a nice gentleman, and is worthy of any lady in the city."

"Mrs. Coldheart," interrupted the young lady in a tremulous tone, "you know not what you are saying. I have never trifled with Mr. Booth."

"You have given him room to hope, though."

"Suppose I did."

"Then you did wrong, dear, if you had no intention of gratifying the hopes which you excited. You ought to have discarded him at once, if you could not return his affection."

"How know you that he ever felt any affection for me?"

"Never mind, dear, I do know. Mr. Booth has been visiting at our house; and if he does not love you truly, all my experience and observation are in vain."

Suppose he does, I am not responsible for that."

"Only to the extent that you encouraged him."

"You seem to take it for granted, that I have encouraged him."

"You must not deny it, Flora; you can't."

"Suppose," said Flora, "I should love him, what then?"

"Am I to understand that you do love him?"

"Suppose I did, what would you advise me to do?"

"I shall make no such supposition," replied Mrs. Coldheart, "unless it should be correct. I don't like to give advice upon doubtful premises."

"Then, Mrs. Coldheart," replied Flora,

while the hot blood mounted to her temples, "it is true. I speak it to my shame."

"Why have you never told me of this before, dear?"

"Because I was ashamed of it, Mrs. Coldheart. I have been trying to overcome it, but it seems that I cannot. Oh, Mrs. Coldheart, you cannot imagine what I have suffered in the last two or three weeks. I wanted to tell you, but I was ashamed."

"What were you ashamed of, dear?"

"The idea of my loving a stage actor. I, who have been wooed by generals and members of congress—the idea of my falling in love with an outcast from society, it is humiliating, Mrs. Coldheart."

"I don't see that it ought to be, dear."

"You don't, Mrs. Coldheart?"

"No, I don't. Why should it be humiliating?"

"Because, I am so far above him."

"Above him in what respect, Flora?"

"How you talk, Mrs. Coldheart! Why, social position, of course. We move in classes of society entirely different."

"Flora," calmly answered Mrs. Coldheart, who could talk like a philosopher, moral or mental, when it suited her purposes, "I have lived much longer in the world than you have, and my opinion is that earthly happiness should not be sacrificed to absurd notions of aristocracy. I cannot see that a drunken general, who probably owes his promotion to chance, is any better than Mr. Booth, who has achieved his fortune by his own talent and energy. War throws up to the surface many worthless characters that possess some few qualities peculiarly adapted to bloody times, and such rush forward to a kind of a temporary fame upon the current of stirring events. But when peace comes, and the occasion which has called them into notice has passed, they can no longer sustain themselves above the waters, and they would sink back to the obscurity from which they sprang, did they not flourish upon splendor borrowed from the grave of their departed military glory. I confess I have more respect for a man who raises himself to eminence in the calm days of peace, than for one who attains to transient notoriety in the turbulent times of war, when more brass than brains is necessary to success. Neither is a member of congress, who in all likelihood has worked himself into office by demagoguism or fraud, any better than Mr. Booth. Would you have married that clown of a Jack Jenks merely because he was a member of congress? Did the office ever polish the rudeness of his manners, or raise him even a single degree above Jack Jenks' original position in society? The truth is, I consider Mr. Booth above one half the members of congress. He is a much better, and much more sensible man than half of them. He commenced life under numerous disadvantages; but he has surmounted all opposing obstacles, and made a princely fortune by nothing but his talents. Wealth, dear, with most people, is the standard of aristocracy. Then in point of wealth, are you his supe-

rior! In respect to talent, are you above him? If you are, you have not yet shown it, dear. If Mr. Booth is wealthy, which can't be doubted, men will never trouble themselves to inquire by what means he obtained his fortune. He is honorable, high-minded, talented, and is admitted by every body to be the most handsome man in the city. What more do you want? What more could you desire? Besides all this, Mr. Booth has abandoned his profession, and is now turning his attention to politics. A man of his talents is bound to succeed at anything. It may not be a great while before he is a member of congress, which you appear to think such an exalted honor. If I am not greatly mistaken, it will not be a long time ere he will attain to a higher position than that."

"Am I to understand by all this that you advise me to marry Mr. Booth?"

"That is a question you ought to settle for yourself, dear. You should not be controlled by my advice, or any body else's. With whom would you be happiest? That is the question upon which to ponder. If your happiness is to depend upon the rank of your husband, marry a general or a statesman. But if you could be more happy with Mr. Booth than any body else, I should say marry him. That is all the advice I could give. I think in matters of this kind one's heart ought to be almost exclusively consulted. Without love there can be no happiness in matrimony; and love cannot be produced by wealth, rank or reason. I do not care how noble and how honorable and eminent a man may be, you can never reason yourself into that deep, lasting love for him which is indispensable to happy wedlock."

Flora remained silent; and Mrs. Coldheart having now accomplished her object, thought it most politic to let the young lady determine her own destiny. She was sufficiently shrewd not to commit herself positively, as it might be disagreeable to have the responsibility of the union thrust upon her shoulders hereafter. She had said enough to confirm Flora in her strange affection for the actor; and yet she had not been so explicit that she could not easily deny officious intermeddling, if any unpleasant consequences should result from her ambiguous advice. So Flora, deeply impressed with Mrs. Coldheart's words, returned home that evening in a much more happy frame of mind than she had experienced for many days. Confession had relieved her.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
"Not hew him as a carcase fit for hounds."

The first day of April, 1865, dawned upon a young nation struggling in the convulsions of despair and death. The Southern Confederacy was breathing its last. After innumerable hardships, privations and sufferings

—after a gallant, heroic resistance—after a long and bloody contest, sustained against overwhelming odds for four eventful years, the people of the south were at last forced to sacrifice the lacerated form of liberty upon the gory altar of northern despotism. General Hood, after the downfall of Atlanta, made an invasive demonstration on the state of Tennessee. The results of that ill-fated expedition are too well known. Many of that gallant army fell at Franklin and Nashville, and their mouldering bones lie buried beneath the reddened sod of a hotly contested field. A disorderly retreat was commenced, and Hood appeared in the northern part of Mississippi with the demoralized remains of a shattered, defeated, dispirited army. He remained a short time upon the Mobile and Ohio railroad, and then hastily proceeded towards Richmond, where the final catastrophe was to occur. In the meantime Sherman had made his desolating march through Georgia and South Carolina, and had driven the dejected confederates before him in confusion and discomfiture. The yankees had concentrated nearly all their forces around the confederate capital, consecrated by a hundred battles, and rendered sacred and classic by a thousand deeds of deathless fame. Richmond, proud old Richmond, still dear to the southern heart, was doomed to fall, and in April the blood-stained city was desecrated by the foul, polluted foot of a bitter foe.

Poor Richmond! how low art thou fallen. Thy soil, made holy by the outpourings of southern blood, and by the libations of women's tears, is marked by the sacriligious tread of a victorious adversary. The enemy's eye calmly looks in safety upon thy shell-torn bosom and fearful forts, from whose crimson tops the now trailing stars and bars once defiantly waved in the pale mien of a trembling foe. Thy martyred sons of liberty slumber thick around thee; and their graves are decorated by bereaved friends amid the sneers and taunts, the jeers and sullen murmurs of their grudging murderers. Thy honored chief, with his hoary hairs and his furrowed cheeks, lies manacled in a rock-ribbed prison, and sighs for the freedom of his native, down-trodden south. But yet, humbled city, art thou grand in wide spread ruin and desolation. The memory of thy disastrous struggle, hallowed by immortal deeds of valor, will float down the stream of time, till lost in the ocean of eternity!

The time to which Coldheart had been anxiously looking forward, had arrived. His prediction in regard to the downfall of the Confederate States was verified. Booth had been to Canada, and made arrangements for escape in that direction, should it become necessary; and Coldheart had been for several months preparing the officers of the United States army for his cherished project of overturning the government. Numbers of them—many more than we dare name, promised him their co-operation. It might be thought strange that men, who were about to emerge from a war ostensibly waged for the preservation of the union and the govern-

ment, would without much hesitation enter into a project for the subversion of republican institutions; but nevertheless such is the fact. It can however be readily accounted for by reference to the great national characteristic of the yankee race. The prominent feature that distinguishes the yankee from every other people, is avarice. This idiosyncrasy, which seems to be rooted and grounded in both their physical and mental constitution, was rendered palpably evident during the war of 1861. For when mercantile establishments in southern cities were feloniously and burglariously entered, magnificent articles of ladies' dressing were consumed to ashes, because the thievish rascals were too penurious to defray the cost of transportation to the "north." If however they had been guilty of only such tricks as these, the southern man might overlook some of their faults with a smile of contempt. But when they carry the principle of avarice to such an extent as to dishonor their own *dead* relations at that, for the sake of unrighteous gain, contempt is transformed into a feeling for which there is no adequate expression in the English, or any other language. Now to the proof. We take the following truthful extract from a letter dated Marksville, La., June 1, 1866. Have the patience to peruse it, kind reader:

"Accordingly Col. B——" (who had been a yankee officer in command of negro troops,) "was kindly nursed and every possible attention paid him; but his wound was a mortal one, and he died after lingering a few days. He was decently buried near the village, and there his remains reposed in quiet until a few weeks ago. His wife had learned by some means that he had been wounded and carried to Cheneyville, and some time ago she addressed a communication to the postmaster at that place, asking for information about her husband. Mr. Lausdell, a Baptist clergyman residing there, replied to her communication, giving her a full account of her husband's illness, death and burial. Mrs. B—— wrote again, expressing the deepest gratitude to those who had attended her husband in his last moments, and offering to remunerate them if they would accept any compensation.

"Some weeks ago, a man representing himself as the brother-in-law of the deceased called on Mr. Lausdell at Cheneyville, and requested that he would point out the grave of Col. B——, stating that he had come on the part of Mrs. B—— to remove the remains to the family burying ground in the north. The grave was pointed out, two negroes were hired for the work, and the body was soon raised from its resting place. To the great regret and extreme astonishment of his kind-hearted brother-in-law the body was in a state of almost perfect preservation, and Col. B——, with his martial robes around him, reposed in view of his dear relative almost precisely as he did the day he was committed to the bosom of mother earth. After a copious flow of tears, the brother-in-law reasoned that it would only lacerate anew

the wounded heart of the bereaved widow to gaze on the loved features of the dead, and that the expense of purchasing a new coffin and carrying the remains home would be entirely useless; so the dear creature made a flank movement on these difficulties that was truly amazing to the uncivilized rebels of Cheneyville. He actually employed his two contraband brothers to take the body to a stream near by, where the trio proceeded to cut all the flesh from the bones, which were then affectionately washed and laid in a small pine dry goods box, obtained from one of the merchants of the village. It was the intention of this radical saint to leave the flesh on the ground where he had butchered the body, and it was only the strong remonstrances of a gentleman present that finally induced him to replace it in the grave and cover it with earth.

"The shame of the whole transaction and the violence of the dirty wretch did not stop here. After he had nailed up his box of bones he offered his *confreeres* a dollar for their assistance, which they refused to accept, stating that they had been engaged in a dirty piece of work, and they must be well paid for it. They demanded twenty-five dollars each, but their yankee friend repudiated such a charge in holy horror, and his contraband brothers were compelled to have the bones seized by the constable. Finding that there was no escape, he finally paid the bill, and went on his way rejoicing amidst the universal contempt of his black friends as well as white non-sympathizers."

We do not doubt in the least the truth of the foregoing statement. It is strictly in keeping with the character of the direct descendants of the Puritans. It is but a species of the same niggardly economy that floods the south with paper-bottom shoes; that varnishes over defective furniture and ships it to the rebels; that mixes sand with sugar; that extracts the greater part of the lead from cedar pencils; that cheats rebel infants some way in the little toys they purchase; but we must pause—we blush to add anything else to the list. Like the priest who commenced to examine Don Quixote's library, we will pronounce judgment on them *en masse*; and we affirm that there is no article of northern manufacture in which fraud has not been practiced, if there was any possible chance to palm it off as genuine. Since the termination of the war the like was never seen nor heard of before. The truth is, the poor rebels are almost afraid to touch anything that comes in contact with yankee hands. It cannot therefore be wondered at that Coldheart should find among such people coadjutors and abettors. The time had now come when the officers of the army would be mustered out of service; they would again be thrown upon a level with other citizens, and must "eat bread in the sweat of their brows." The question would then very naturally arise, what they must do? Like the unjust steward mentioned in the New Testament, "they could not dig, and to beg they were ashamed." They

had tasted the sweets of power, and had led a lazy life of ease for four long years. Honest labor had become positively distasteful. Coldheart therefore offered money, and they grasped at it; he tendered promises of high positions, and they accepted the prospect. But whether or not they were actuated by such motives as these, at any rate a large number had promised to lend their assistance and influence to a conspiracy against the government of the United States. Our yankee friends may settle the question of incentives to suit themselves.

Just before the news of Gen. Lee's surrender electrified the city of Washington, Coldheart called upon Booth. It was Saturday morning, and the Bloody Junto was to meet that night as usual. Coldheart and the actor went again to the same room in which they had held their first interview.

"The time has come to strike, Mr. Booth," said Coldheart.

"Well?" answered the actor in that inquiring tone which conveys an intimation that the first proposition is understood, and that other information is desired.

"The rebels," continued Coldheart, "will be necessitated to yield in the course of a few days. They cannot possibly hold out a fortnight longer; and this, you know, is the time to which we have been looking forward. The designs of the society must be executed now or never."

"I know that," replied Booth, "but we have not arranged the details for the accomplishment of the scheme. In fact, I have not mentioned the subject since our first conference."

"What course of action do you propose in regard to the matter?"

"Indeed, I have formed no opinion concerning it."

"Have you no suggestion to make as to how the deed should be done?"

"None whatever," answered Booth. "It is not a question for me to determine."

"Some course of action will have to be agreed upon?" said Coldheart inquiringly.

"Yes, but I think it is expected that you will suggest the proper course to be pursued."

"Who expects this, Mr. Booth?"

"Well, sir, I do, for one."

"Do you speak for any one else?"

"Not directly, sir—only as far as I represent the society. But, according to our usages, it is always expected that the mover of a resolution, or a proposition of any kind, is prepared with all the details. So if you do not take the lead in this affair, it will probably go undone."

"Do you expect me to execute the deed myself?"

"I have not thought about that," replied Booth. "I know not who is to do the dirty work. As I have already told you, nothing has been resolved upon, beyond the mere determination to attempt the proposed scheme. I do not think, though, it will ever be mentioned in the society again unless you suggest measures for its accomplishment."

"Is it not probable that some of the officers

of the society might suggest such measures?"

"I think not, sir. If you are in earnest about this project," continued Booth, who was fully determined that Coldheart should commit himself, "your best plan is to go at it like you intended to accomplish it. If you begin to show signs of doubt and hesitation, the whole thing will miscarry."

"I am not vacillating, Mr. Booth, at all; but I do not think it is right to throw the whole responsibility upon me. I am not capable of carrying out the enterprise alone, if I were so disposed."

"That is not expected, Mr. Coldheart. Every man will do his part; I will do mine. But you proposed the general outlines of the plan to the society, and it devolves upon you to propose the details."

"This is a matter in which all of the members are interested; and I do not think it is quite fair to force the whole business upon me; but nevertheless, I can point the way to do the deed, if that is what is required."

"Very well, sir; I am ready to assist you."

"Then," answered Coldheart, "to make a long story short, the trio of criminals ought to go through the form of a trial, in order to secure to the execution of the scheme the semblance of official authority."

"I do not believe that I exactly understand you," said Booth.

"I mean," replied Coldheart, "that the three men alluded to ought to be regularly indicted and tried before the society just as felons are tried before the common courts of the country. Allow to the accused the privilege of trial by jury, and the benefit of counsel; in short, let the business be conducted as though the Junto were a legal tribunal, acting under the sanction of the constitution of the United States."

"You are surely jesting, Mr. Coldheart."

"No sir, I am not; this is no jesting matter. I mean precisely what I say."

"Why how, sir, can the defendants be put upon trial regularly in their absence?"

"That circumstance," said Coldheart, "is the only feature of the case that militates against the justice of the proceeding. If the accused could be present, there would be nothing lacking to render the proposed course proper and regular according to the laws of justice. But their absence must be attributed to themselves; we cannot be held responsible for that. It makes no real difference, however, for the result would be the same if they were present."

"What do you want them tried for, then?" inquired Booth. "A trial would be a farce if their condemnation is already a foregone conclusion."

"The trial is not designed for the benefit of the accused," said Coldheart, "because sentence has already been passed upon them, but it is merely to satisfy the members of the society, and quiet their conscientious scruples, if they should be burdened with any. If we go through the form of a trial, and the criminals are fairly condemned, which they will be, then the men whose duty it will be to perform the bloody deed, can

consider themselves as acting under the authority of the Junto, and not upon their individual responsibility. They will be mere instruments executing the behests of a tribunal to whose commands they are obliged to yield implicit obedience. Does it not occur to you that this would be the best course?"

"I have no objection to it," replied the actor. "It will, at least, be a convenient way to ascertain the strength of the opposition to the scheme. I will therefore agree to that. But after the verdict is brought in, and we know what it will be, what comes next?"

"Well, the next thing is for the judge to pronounce sentence."

"What next?"

"Why the sheriff must execute the sentence," replied Coldheart with a laugh.

"There's the rub," said Booth. "For we have no sheriff."

"Who has been your executioner heretofore?" inquired Coldheart with a merry twinkle.

"The d—ll!" replied Booth. "We have never had any use for one."

"I wish," continued Coldheart in his merry mood, "we could procure the services of that mysterious personage in the case before us. In the event of failure he could so easily make off with himself, and not be liable to pursuit. But, seriously, cannot we hire persons to do the job?"

"That depends altogether upon how it is to be done. If they are to be taken off by poison," continued Booth with a slight shudder, "we could without difficulty find executioners to undertake it for a trifle."

"That will never do," quickly interrupted Coldheart. "They must never be poisoned, because that would look too much like common assassination or murder. The men must be executed deliberately, boldly and publicly. We need a Brutus, a Ravallac, a Lawrence, or rather all three. Julius Cæsar was put to death in the most public part of Rome. Henry the IV was killed in the streets of Paris. Andrew Jackson's life was attempted in the capital of the United States. And in like manner must our sentence be carried out. Cæsar was destroyed not because he was loved less, but Rome more! Our trio must be put in the same category with the great Roman. They must die as ambitious tyrants, and not as martyrs. We must strike them down not in wrath, but in patriotism. We must destroy them in calmness, for the avowed purpose of bestowing honorable peace to the whole country, and let the people know our object. They will then offer little resistance to the contemplated change. The blow must be a bold one, to show that we are in earnest, and intend to accomplish our aims. Such is my idea; what is yours?"

"I concur in your opinion," replied Booth.

"Do you think," asked Coldheart, "we could find a Lawrence in the Junto?"

"I suppose so," was the reply. "We have a few very daring men."

"Would they volunteer to do this job?"

"No, I think not. Lots would have to be drawn."

"Well then," said Coldheart, "we will adopt that method of procuring executioners if you think it best."

"I am willing," responded Booth.

"The programme for to-night is settled then," said Coldheart. "I will make out an indictment this evening, and hand it to you before the society meets."

"You would better make out ordinary charges and specifications as for a court martial. The men will have to be tried by a military commission. At least that would be the safest. For if you select twelve jurors from the society, the felons might possibly be acquitted. According to our constitution they will have to be tried by the vice-presidents, anyhow; and it would probably be better not to attempt any other method."

"You are right, Mr. Booth. I am glad you have made the suggestion. I will then make out charges and specifications."

"The idea strikes me, Mr. Coldheart," said Booth thoughtfully, "that perhaps there may be no necessity for the execution of this bloody scheme if peace will be restored anyhow. I am of your opinion in regard to the early termination of the rebellion. When that transpires there will be peace, and that is all the object I have in view. I would rather not be accessory to unnecessary murder."

Coldheart was disappointed. He did not like the purity of the stage-player's motives. Booth was actuated by disinterested patriotism; and the official by exclusive selfishness. But Coldheart never hesitated for an argument. He understood Booth's character well, and knew to what principle he must appeal.

"You totally misunderstood me, Mr. Booth, if you inferred from what I said that I believed that peace would soon be established. When I spoke of the ending of the rebellion, I merely meant the demolition of the southern armies as organized bodies, and the destruction of the insurgent government. But really we will be farther from peace than ever. Of this I was fully convinced by the conference between the federal and rebel commissioners. Mr. Lincoln will never offer any terms of compromise to which the insurgents can agree without sacrificing every principle of honor. Their armies must soon be disbanded; but the war under a new aspect, a terrible aspect, will be renewed, and will be carried on in a spirit of demoniac rage and hate, that will produce a state of confusion, anarchy and horror beyond any conception of the human imagination. The rebels will form into guerrilla bands, Mr. Booth, and they will fight till extermination throws the pall of universal death over the southern land. The black flag will be hoisted, and then in God's name, sir, what a picture of horror will be presented! Our army will respect neither age nor sex. Hoary hairs will not secure trembling age from the bayonet. The wild shrieks of frightened women will be hushed in the stillness of bloody death. The unconscious infant's

brains will be dashed out before its mother's face:

"In a moment look to see
The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand
Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;
Your fathers taken by their silver heads,
And their most reverend heads dashed to the walls;
Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused
Do break the clouds."

"In short, sir, everything you have ever read or heard of in savage Indian warfare will be re-enacted in the southern states. Ought we then to shrink from sacrificing three insignificant men to prevent such scenes of horror and death? Is Lincoln's life of so much value, that the whole south must be converted into one vast, silent tomb, and every hill darkened with human corpses, and every foot of soil crimsoned with blood, and covered with bones? Shall he live, Mr. Booth, I ask you shall he live to become the author of such scenes of devastation and indescribable horror?"

"No, by the everlasting Gods, no!" cried Booth fiercely springing to his feet, and clinching his fists like a madman. "By Heaven, it shall not be. We will do the work this very night, Mr. Coldheart," he said, while his dark eye rolled in his head with savage ferocity. Coldheart had struck the chord that fired up his whole nature. He had been hesitating somewhat, but now his vacillation was all gone, and he was ready for the dark deed of murder.

"Pray be seated, Mr. Booth," said Coldheart, pleased at the actor's aroused ardor. "I am glad to see that you view this matter as I do."

"I never thought of the business in this light before," replied Booth.

"I am glad that you take a correct view of the situation, Mr. Booth; but we must attempt nothing rashly. The deed ought not to be done to-night. We must get everything ready, though, and strike when circumstances indicate the arrival of the proper time. We will not have to wait many days, in my opinion. Then I want to see the reign of terror expire. Peace to the whole country; honorable peace is my object, as well as yours. We will offer to the rebels terms to which they will cheerfully submit, and then a new era of unprecedented glory and prosperity will begin; and you, sir, will be honored and rewarded for contributing so much to the establishment of universal peace. The Bloody Junto will pass into history, and its president be handed down to future generations as one of the benefactors of the human race."

"I ask no reward," replied Booth. "God knows my motives are pure, and entirely separated from personal ambition."

Coldheart thought he had said enough. Booth was now wrought up to the proper degree of excitement. The two parted to meet that night, in order to give shape to the bloody destinies of the Junto.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Thou art come to answer
A stony adversary!"

On the night of April the 8th, 1865, the members of the Bloody Junto held their last regular meeting. Whether or not it had answered the purposes for which it was originally designed; whether or not the powers granted in its constitution had been perverted and applied to objects which, according to the intentions of its members, could not come within their scope, an event soon transpired that put an end to its existence. What the result might have been, uncontrolled by Coldheart's influence, there can be no plausible conjecture. There was a want of harmony among the members, as is usually the case in all assemblies in which free discussion is allowed, and this raised doubts in regard to nearly every important measure proposed. Some of the Juntonians had been dissatisfied with the action of the society, from its very organization. They were however in the minority. Payne was the leader of the opposition; and of all the members of the society he was the most remarkable, the most mysterious, the greatest, most incomprehensible enigma. He was in some respects like Byron's Lara—a dark, gloomy man, returning unknown to the spot of his nativity—wandering like a spectre amid the habitations of men, seeking no one's confidence and avoiding no one's hate; whose purposes none ever knew, whose thoughts none ever shared—appearing amid mirthful scenes of festivity, and in the house of mourning, with the same imperturbable aspect, as if beyond the control of human passion. In like manner came Payne to Washington City. What his true name was, no man knows to this day. All were equally ignorant of his politics and his religion. Why he attached himself to the Junto, none could tell. Why he should be opposed to Lincoln's administration, of which fact there was no doubt, and yet object to nearly every measure offered to retard its despotic tendency, was unknown to any. From his own declarations, he appeared to be urged on by some invisible power, against which he struggled in vain. He seemed to feel it his duty to resist; but when a question was decided against him he acquiesced, without a murmur, deeming it useless to strive contrary to the decrees of destiny. But who he was, whence he came, or what his business was—all was shrouded in impenetrable mystery. This man, such as he was, exerted some influence in the society; and had not Coldheart been added to the dominant party, he might have changed the events soon to be recorded.

"Gentlemen," said Booth so soon as the members had all taken their places, "you all know for what end this society was established; and you know what the result is. We have accomplished nothing for the advancement of our praiseworthy aims. We have been too timid, gentlemen; we have done too

much talking, and too little acting. The time has now come when we must act, if we ever intend to accomplish a single one of the objects we have had in contemplation. For the furtherance of our designs, it is thought necessary to put upon trial before our tribunal Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson and William H. Seward. Charges and specifications have been made out against these three individuals, which will now be read." And accordingly a member rose to his feet, and read the following charges and specifications in the case of Abraham Lincoln:

Charge Treason.

Specifications.—In this, that on or about the 13th day of April, 1861, certain ships laden with munitions of war, and commissioned by the said Abraham Lincoln, did appear in the vicinity of Fort Sumpter, belonging to the sovereign state of South Carolina, and threaten said fort in such a hostile manner as to provoke an attack by the garrison of the aforesaid fort, that the said Abraham Lincoln, considering this attack *insusceptible*, did declare war against South Carolina and certain other states of this union, and thereby did transcend the executive powers granted to him by the constitution of the United States; that having inaugurated an unjust war, he has carried it on for four years, in violation of the principles of common justice, contrary to the usage and laws of nations, to the detriment of republican institutions, and to the intentions of our forefathers; that he has repeatedly, and in diverse instances, disregarded the rights of citizens of this union; that, finally, his whole course of action for four years, has been such as to compel the meaning of our constitution directly applicable, that clause of the constitution of the United States contained in Art. 3, Sec. 3, which declares that "treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort."

Charges and specifications similar to the foregoing, but modified to suit the respective offices of the two men, were then read, in the cases of Andrew Johnson and William H. Seward.

These extraordinary documents were read in the midst of the deepest silence and amazement. It was the first intimation that the members had received of the proceedings, which were to constitute the sole business of this meeting. All those who thought, at once comprehended the intention implied by the several indictments. They knew the penalty of treason to be death; and they knew further that the defendants could be convicted, without any difficulty, before such a tribunal as the Bloody Junto. Others in the society did not at once foresee, from the nature of the charges, the consequences which must unavoidably follow a verdict of guilty. All, however, sat waiting with intense, breathless interest for further developments. As soon as the charges and specifications were through with, Booth asked if the counsel for the accused were present. Of

course he knew to the contrary; and no one replied.

"I would like to ask," at last said Payne rising to his feet, "if the accused themselves are present?"

"I should suppose not," replied Booth.

"Do you intend to have the accused tried in their absence, Mr. President?"

"Certainly," replied Booth. "The business of the society must not be interrupted on account of technicalities. We will not deprive the defendants of the benefit of counsel, though. If any member present desires to plead for the accused, he is at liberty to do so."

"Then, sir," said Payne, "I will volunteer my poor services."

"Very well," replied Booth. "I announce Mr. Denham as prosecutor."

This strange trial was then commenced. It was conducted regularly, however, like a court-martial, with the exception that the accused, who were most deeply concerned in the result, were not present. Two witnesses were introduced, who made affidavit to all the facts as set forth in the indictment. This of course was gone through with for the mere sake of form; because there was nothing depending upon the evidence that could be adduced in support of the charge. A thousand witnesses upon the opposite side would not have benefitted the accused in the least. The counsel for the defendant therefore made no attempt to introduce any rebutting testimony.

"Gentlemen," said Denham, the prosecutor, "it is unnecessary to enter into any extended remarks in prosecuting the case of Abraham Lincoln, since no evidence whatever has been brought forward in opposition to the charges and specifications. It would probably be nothing but simple justice on my part to submit the case and remain silent. For it must be palpable to every man in the house that Lincoln is guilty of treason within the meaning and intent of the constitution. It has been clearly proved that he has levied war against a portion of the states forming the union, and has prosecuted it for four years with a cruel, savage, relentless barbarity unprecedented in all time from Adam down to the present moment. We have read of the Goths and Vandals rising up in the might of undisciplined strength, coming down like an avalanche upon the old world, spreading destruction broadcast over kingdoms and empires, destroying the literature of centuries, and abolishing nearly all traces of civilization. We have read of the bloody wars of antiquity"

"Mr. President," interrupted Payne, "I take the liberty of calling the gentleman to order. He must confine himself to the indictment. We have nothing to do with the wars of antiquity; neither are we discussing the character of the present war. The question is simply, whether Abraham Lincoln is guilty of treason or not. According to our by-laws, no member can introduce into his speech matter irrelevant to the subject under

discussion. I therefore have the right to object to the train of thought, (I cannot call it reasoning,) which I see the prosecutor is going to impose upon this society, for the purpose of arousing prejudice and malice."

"Mr. President," resumed Denham, "it is well known to this society that the member who has so unceremoniously interrupted me, is addicted to the ungenerous habit of endeavoring to embarrass his opponent by illegitimate means. It seems to be a rudeness natural to him."

"Come to order, Mr. Prosecutor," said the president. "Personalities, especially personalities that tend to wound or insult the feelings, are strictly forbidden by the by-laws."

"I have no desire, Mr. President, to insult any one; but I do not like to be interrupted in such an unceremonious manner. I shall therefore submit the case. I do not consider a speech necessary anyhow. I may, however, reply to the defendant's speech."

"Mr. President," said Payne when Denham had taken his seat, "I have been unjustly accused by the prosecutor. I have never been in the habit of attempting to confuse my opponents in debate, in the manner he has said. But, sir, inasmuch as personalities are not allowed, I shall make no apology to the gentleman, nor offer any excuse in vindication of my conduct. Every man can put any construction upon that he pleases. I will proceed at once to the discussion of the question."

"I confess my surprise, Mr. President, at this extraordinary proceeding, though I am not at all surprised at its aim. I have for some time been expecting the concealed object of this society to be developed; but I did not think it would disclose itself in the shape which it now assumes. I have felt from the beginning that our career as an organized body would end in blood. I am thoroughly convinced of it to-night. I know what will be the final result of this remarkable trial; and I feel that it would be useless to enter my protest. But, sir, I object to the proceeding instituted to-night, from beginning to end. Even supposing that the charges and specifications are true in every particular—that Mr. Lincoln is guilty of treason, and that he has conducted the war in a spirit of merciless ferocity, as asserted in the indictment, I ask is this the tribunal to which he is amenable for his political conduct? From what source do we derive our authority to put men upon trial for their lives who owe no fealty to the Junto? I admit that, according to the agreement into which we all entered, the society can, with some semblance of legal right, hold me and other members responsible for our conduct, to a certain extent. The penalty for the violation of some of our laws is death; yet you know, sir, if we were to execute the penalty, it would be downright murder. Then if this be so—if it would be murder to put our own members to death, who may be guilty of misdemeanors that involve forfeiture of life, what could it be called to kill men over whom we can, by no possible construction of our constitution,

exercise the slightest jurisdiction? Would it not be assassination of the very worst character? Would it not be the very worst form that murder could possibly assume?"

"I must call the gentleman to order," interrupted Booth.

"Am I out of order, Mr. President?" asked Payne.

"It so appears to the chair. The question is not whether we have the power or the right to try Mr. Lincoln. It is too late to discuss that. He is now on trial, and it is our business merely to determine the measure of his guilt. Speakers must confine themselves to the question."

"I would confine myself strictly to the indictment, Mr. President, if the accused were present. But, sir, did you ever hear of a trial being conducted in the absence of the party most deeply interested, in an organized body that makes pretensions to be governed by written laws? Our constitution contains no provisions for such a proceeding as this. How can the trial proceed without a suspension, rather a subversion of the constitution? Where do we find anything in our constitution to warrant this course of action?"

"Since you are out of order," again interrupted Booth, "I will reply to the question you have asked. You believe in the golden rule, do you not?"

"To be sure I do, sir."

"Well then, we have the right to do unto him as he has done to others."

"I do not understand you, Mr. President."

"The constitution of the United States," replied Booth, "provides that all powers not delegated to the general government belong to the states or the people. Well, Lincoln has usurped these powers, and has committed many unjustifiable acts that were not prohibited by any clause of the constitution. Besides this, he has had persons executed without any trial at all, thus violating the established laws of the land. Now then, certain powers have been granted to the officers of this society; and all those not granted belong to the members. We have not usurped these reserved powers as Lincoln has done; but putting our construction upon our constitution, we have decided that he can be tried in his absence. It contains no clause that prohibits such a procedure. Therefore, taking the rule that Lincoln has adopted, he ought not to object to its application to himself. If he will not do unto others as he would be done by, we must do unto him as he actually does unto others. I hope the gentleman is answered."

"I either do not understand you, Mr. President, or it is the strangest perversion of the golden rule I ever heard. I cannot attempt to reply to you upon that point. But, sir, there is one fact which you appear to overlook. Lincoln is not answerable to this society for his actions. He has violated no law of the Junto—he owes it no allegiance; then I cannot see where we get the authority to try him for treason or anything else."

"I will not allow the propriety of our proceedings to be questioned," said the presiding

officer. "The time for the discussion of that point has passed. You must confine yourself to the charges and specifications."

"I want to know, Mr. President, if this society assumes to be the government of the United States?"

"That question is out of place, sir."

"Well then, I desire to know if congress is not the only legal power that can impeach the chief magistrate of the union?"

"If the gentleman is not going to speak upon the question now before us, and that alone, I must request him to take his seat," said Booth.

"Mr. President," continued Payne, who saw that he must adapt himself to the surrounding circumstances, "I contend that Abraham Lincoln is not guilty of treason, according to the constitution of the United States. Now sir, only look at a few facts. He was lawfully elected by a majority of the people to the position which he now fills. His elevation to the presidency gave offence to the southern states, and they seceded from the union. Was it not the plain duty of Mr. Lincoln to preserve the integrity of the union? Was it not his duty to avenge the insulted flag of his country? He has made no attempt to overthrow the government of the United States; but he has exercised the powers entrusted to him in opposition to the insurgents, who are levying war against the states of the union. The rebels are guilty of treason, if anybody is, and not Mr. Lincoln. Why sir, according to your mode of reasoning, if a mere handful of men in England should make an attempt to dethrone their Queen, and she should resist the attack against her government, she would be guilty of treason, would she? If any government in the world should offer opposition to aggressions made upon it, its supporters are guilty of treason, are they? Sir, such a conclusion would utterly destroy all human institutions. No form of government could exist. There would be universal anarchy and confusion throughout the entire world. Yet, sir, we are acting upon this very principle to-night—a principle that would destroy the existence of the Junto, if we should carry it out. For instance, suppose I should resolve to withdraw from this society, and reveal its secrets; could I accuse you of treason and a violation of the constitution if you should punish me? Yet this is precisely what we are doing to Mr. Lincoln. You have mentioned the golden rule, Mr. President, as a principle that controls your action in this case. I am willing to apply that rule and be governed by it. Do unto Mr. Lincoln as you would have him do unto you. If you would not be guilty of treason against the Junto by punishing me for offences, neither is Mr. Lincoln for the infliction of punishment upon the seceded states. All I ask of you is to act in this case according to the golden rule.

"It is allowed me, Mr. President to appeal to the better feelings of the gentlemen whose duty it is to decide this case. I desire to do this, very briefly, before I take my seat. I beseech you, gentlemen, let us do no murder. The Holy Bible says 'thou shalt not kill.' Obey that divine law, written by the fingers of God himself. Mr. Lincoln, we all know, is a simple-hearted old man, who in the ordinary course of nature will soon sink to the tomb. Gentlemen, stain not his tomb with his own heart's blood. He is a kind man, generous to a fault, and would not wound the feelings of a cur. He is not responsible for the present war, that has so long deluged the land in blood. He is a mere instrument in the hands of a great political party, and is borne along by the raging tide of fanaticism, in despite of himself. Let the old man live out his few days, then, and fulfill his destiny. He has brought the war to a successful termination. Peace will soon be restored to the country, and our society must then disband; it will have answered its aims. I entreat you then, in God's name, let us not confer everlasting infamy upon it by this deed of blood. The Junto is destined to figure in the history of the country; let its name, then, go down to posterity unstained, unspotted, and clothed in the white robes of purity and innocence."

Payne seated himself, bowing his head upon his hands, feeling that he had spoken to no purpose. It was a waste of words to address such an assembly.

"Has the prosecutor any remarks to make in reply?" inquired Booth.

"I believe not, Mr. President," answered Denham "I will submit the case."

Thereupon the vice-presidents retired into a private room above the cellar in order to agree upon a verdict. They were gone only a few moments. In fact a consultation was entirely unnecessary, as the verdict had already been pre-determined. The jury soon returned, and amid a solemn silence the verdict of "guilty" was distinctly pronounced by each one of the vice-presidents, as his name was called.

"Gentlemen," said Booth, "it now remains for me to pronounce sentence. There can be but one penalty for treason; and that is DEATH"

Not one word was spoken for several minutes after the delivery of this laconic, but bloody sentence. The breathing of the members could be plainly heard from one end of the cellar to the other. Though few could have been ignorant as to what the result would be, yet it had the effect upon them which is invariably felt on the announcement of the final departure of a friend whom we have been expecting to die. Let us be thoroughly convinced that death must come to a friend; yet when the "grim monster" bears his victim away to the dreadful necropolis of eternal silence, and the sorrowful tidings are announced to us, we are momentarily surprised. The promulgation of Lincoln's sentence did not, however, have this effect upon Degroot. He hated the president of the United States too deeply to feel a sentiment of sorrow or pity. At last he rose from his seat.

"Mr. President," said he, "I propose to

submit our action to the society, and see to what extent it will be endorsed."

"That would be advisable," said Booth. "Before voting upon it we will hear the opinions of the members. Has any member any remarks to make upon the course pursued by the vice-presidents?"

A short silence followed this question; but presently a man by the name of Davelier rose and addressed the chair.

"Mr. President; I have listened with great interest to the trial which has just ended; and I must say I am perfectly satisfied with the result. I have a word or two to say in support of the decision of our tribunal. But I wish first to make a short explanation, that will strip my argument of all appearance of mystery. Some years ago I was a preacher. This announcement may be astonishing to some of the members; but nevertheless, I was a minister of the gospel. I need not mention to what denomination I belonged. It is sufficient to say, I was considered by my brethren a consistent, pious preacher. I abandoned the calling for reasons which it would require too much time to relate. While I was a minister I studied the scriptures closely; but I devoted especial attention to the prophecies. It is a subject which is yet attractive to my mind. I do not think there was a minister in the whole church that could excel me in explaining the old prophets. But there is one passage which always puzzled me until very recently. I have studied over it for years; and have been worrying over it ever since I left the ministry. But to-night my convictions are confirmed. The passage to which I have referred is contained in Revelation, xiii chapter and 18th verse. It is as follows: 'Here is and 18th verse. He that hath understanding wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred, three-score and six.' The infamous character mentioned in this passage is Anti-Christ. Many attempts have been made, in the various ages of the world, to discover the number 666 in some monarch's name. I read in the history of Charles XII, c. Sweeden, that a certain monk endeavored to prove that Peter the Great was Anti-Christ. But the arguments which he adduced in support of his position were answered by another monk, who asserted that Peter could not be Anti-Christ, because the number 666 was not to be found in his name. Peter was so pleased with this refutation that he made the author Bishop of Rezan, and broke his slanderer upon the wheel.

"I mention this circumstance merely to show that interpreters of prophecy have been endeavoring to decipher this perplexing passage for several centuries. But they have all failed down to this time, because no man whom other circumstances marked out as Anti-Christ, has yet been found whose name contains the number 666. Anti-Christ has never appeared until recently. Abraham Lincoln, gentlemen, is that character. I repeat, he is the Beast alluded to in this passage. I am fully prepared to substantiate

my assertion. There are several circumstances in Revelation, which I have not time to name, that point out Lincoln as the Beast; but the strongest argument in favor of my position is, that his title contains the number 666. I will show this very briefly. Lincoln is called the 'Fourteenth Republican President.' These three words contain the number 666. To begin the proof: we will call fourteenth, 14. Taking the old Roman method of notation, we find in the word 'Republican' the three letters **LIC**, which according to our mathematical system stand for the number 151. The word 'President' contains the two letters **ID**, which stands for 501. Now add together 14, 151 and 501, and they exactly make the number 666. Abraham Lincoln is then, beyond a doubt, Anti-Christ; and the man who destroys him will find favor in the sight of God. I have traced out this remarkable prophecy further, and I find that Anti-Christ will be destroyed the 14th or 15th of the present month.

"I have said this much, Mr. President, to show that we ought not to hesitate or falter in our undertaking. Let not the man whose duty it may be to put the Beast to death shrink from the task, because he is the chosen instrument in the hands of the Lord for the accomplishment of a great prophecy. I assign this, Mr. President, as my principal reason for heartily endorsing the action of the vice-presidents."

This strange and startling speech of the reverend gentleman was received by the members with extreme wonder, mingled with slight emotions of awe, or more properly with feelings of superstition. It was so unexpected and novel, that with all its discrepancies it produced a powerful impression in favor of the bloody course proposed. Payne thought it necessary to reply.

"Mr. President," said he, "I never in all my life before heard such an unwarrantable misapplication of Holy Writ. I have listened with utter amazement at our minister's elucidation of a mysterious passage in the abstruse book of Revelation. I have read the Bible, Mr. President; I read it a great deal when I was a boy; and I tell you, sir, I was not permitted to mortal man to foresee it is the manner of the achievement of the prophecy. God has emphatically declared the mission of the scriptures is sealed. A prophet Daniel asked the Lord, when the prophecies would be fulfilled. What was the reply? 'Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.' Do you suppose the Lord would refuse to answer Daniel, a holy, inspired prophet, and afterwards, in the modern times of sin and iniquity, reveal himself to a back-slidden preacher? It is perfectly absurd. What is there in this gentlemen's spiritual conduct so acceptable to high Heaven, that God should alight his chosen prophets, and select this minister as the expositor of Revelation—a book, by the way, that no human being ever understood? The prophecies, sir, are so written that no

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"Mr. President; I have listened with great interest to the trial which has just ended; and I must say I am perfectly satisfied with the result. I have a word or two to say in support of the decision of our tribunal. But I wish first to make a short explanation, that will strip my argument of all appearance of mystery. Some years ago I was a preacher. This announcement may be astonishing to some of the members; but nevertheless, I was a minister of the gospel. I need not mention to what denomination I belonged. It is sufficient to say, I was considered by my brethren a consistent, pious preacher. I abandoned the calling for reasons which it would require too much time to relate. While I was a minister I studied the scriptures closely; but I devoted especial attention to the prophecies. It is a subject which is yet attractive to my mind. I do not think there was a minister in the whole church that could excel me in explaining the old prophets. But there is one passage which always puzzled me until very recently. I have studied over it for years; and have been worrying over it ever since I left the ministry. But to-night my convictions are confirmed. The passage to which I have referred is contained in Revelation, xiii chapter and 18th verse. It is as follows: 'Here is and 18th verse. He that hath understanding wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred, three-score and six.' The infamous character mentioned in this passage is Anti-Christ. Many attempts have been made, in the various ages of the world, to discover the number 666 in some monarch's name. I read in the history of Charles XII, c. Sweeden, that a certain monk endeavored to prove that Peter the Great was Anti-Christ. But the arguments which he adduced in support of his position were answered by another monk, who asserted that Peter could not be Anti-Christ, because the number 666 was not to be found in his name. Peter was so pleased with this refutation that he made the author Bishop of Rezan, and broke his slanderer upon the wheel.

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man can understand their application until they are fully accomplished. I make the assertion here to-night, and I defy contradiction, that every commentary which has made pretension to unfold the hidden import of prophecy, is a most egregious failure. Do you not recollect what an excitement there was about twenty years ago, or may be not so long as that, in regard to the end of time? But yet, in spite of Miller, the world stands, and revolves on its axis every day. And, sir, when its end does come, it will approach like a thief in the night, and no man will be able to foresee it.

"Now, Mr. President, I want to expose one or two inconsistencies of our learned parson. The whole of his elucidation is based upon what he calls Mr. Lincoln's title—'Fourteenth Republican President.' I will admit, for the present, that his conclusion is correct. But, sir, his premises are wrong; for anybody ought to know that Mr. Lincoln is the sixteenth president, and not the fourteenth. Franklin Pierce was the fourteenth president. Therefore he is Anti-Christ, and not Mr. Lincoln."

"Will the gentleman allow me to correct him?" asked Davelier.

"Yes sir," replied Payne.

"Mr. Lincoln," said Davelier, "is the 'Fourteenth President,' by election. There were two presidents who were never elected by the people, but came into office by reason of the death of the regularly elected chief magistrates. So my premises are right, sir."

"If this be so," continued Payne, "the prophets were very particular to notice the slight difference between a president by election, and a president by virtue of a constitutional law."

"They were devilish particular," flippantly interrupted the yankee parson, amid a burst of laughter from the whole house.

"Mr. President," continued Payne, "it is folly to argue in this style. Lincoln is no more Anti-Christ than our preacher is. Why sir, I can take the gentleman's own name, and by extracting from it five letters and arranging them in a certain way, I can make him out a very unenviable character. His name is Davelier—and a very pretty name, too, by itself. But I will first take out D, then E, then V, then I, then L; and you see it spells Devil. Now would I not do our scriptural friend gross injustice to conclude that he is the identical King of Torment, or that he is related to his Satanic Majesty, either by the bonds of consanguinity or by marriage, merely because his name contains these five unfortunate letters? Sir, you can take ten thousand names, and by perversions of this kind spell something scandalous or ridiculous. Our biblical friend is so strained for an argument to prop up his premises, that he cannot take the legitimate name of Abraham Lincoln, and work the mysterious number 666 out of it; but he must hunt up a far-fetched title, which perhaps applies as well to the fourteenth president of some forgotten republic of by gone ages.

"But this is all nonsense, Mr. President. I

desire to make a last appeal to the good sense, the reason of the members of this society. I entreat you, gentlemen, in God's name, not to commit this dark deed of shame and murder. It will be an everlasting disgrace to the people of America—a foul blot upon history that ages of time can never wipe away. The man who with a murderous instrument spills the blood of Abraham Lincoln will sink down to the shades of endless darkness, a miserable wretch, execrated by every civilized nation in the wide earth. He will never obtain Heaven's favor, as our clerical friend has told you; but he may be a fugitive from justice—a vagabond like Cain, in the earth, with the mark of a murderer engraved by the finger of God upon his bloody brow. He will find a resting place nowhere amid the habitations of men. The secret may be buried deep down in the dark recesses of his own trembling heart, but it will be a source of perpetual torment. Conscience will lash him, remorse will sting him, until death hurries him away to the city of the dead. The all-seeing eye of God will look down upon him from the Heavens in withering wrath, and frown upon his guilty soul till the burden of life will appear more insufferable than the gloomy prospect of eternal sleep or the horrors of never-ending hell. Murder, gentlemen, is dissimilar to all other crimes. A man may commit other offences, and may be severely punished by the hand of the law, and yet feel no compunctions of conscience. But murder brings its own punishment. For when a man reaches forth his hand and deliberately takes the life of his neighbor, where is the spot upon the face of this broad earth upon which he can again feel peace of mind? He may flee away to the mountains, where the foot of man has never trod, but he ever carries with him the painful, perpetual consciousness that he is guilty of an unpardonable crime. He can never for a single hour lay aside the memory of his terrible deed. When he closes his eyes to drown his harrowed senses in slumber, his blood-stained victim rises up before him and fixes its sunken eye upon the murderous, writhing heart. That pale countenance is forever reproaching him with his horrible sin. And thus the wretch lives on from day to day in unutterable misery, till his polluted soul goes down to the gloom of everlasting damnation.

"I beg you then, gentlemen, to beware what we do. But still, Mr. President, if after all I have said it is determined by the members of the society to execute this sanguinary sentence, I say in conclusion, I will not be false to my obligation to the Junto. I have done."

At the conclusion of Payne's speech, Coldheart rose from his seat, approached the president and whispered a moment in his ear. He wore a mask like all the other Juntonians, and was so disguised that he was recognized by nobody but Booth. What it was which he communicated was soon made known; for Booth immediately commenced to explain the real object to be achieved by

Lincoln's death. As the reader already knows what that object was, we will not worry his patience by a repetition of. Booth concluded his statement with an appeal to the members, designed to neutralize the effects of Payne's solemn warning; after which he promised magnificent rewards to all the Juntonians, in the event that the bloody scheme should be crowned with the desired success.

This explanation of Booth had a very decided and visible effect. The great ruling principle of the yankee character, to which all others are subordinate, was tempted. Here was an opportunity to replenish their empty coffers, or to augment them to overflowing if they were already full. Few full-blooded yankees can resist the temptation to make money, no matter how villainous and abject is the process by which it is to be acquired. Murder or treason loses all its iniquity and horror the very moment it can be made the means of propitiating the God of Wealth. Consequently, no sooner had Booth done speaking than a dozen members sprang to their feet all at once. Each was anxious to approve of the scheme of assassination; and out of the whole dozen not one offered to oppose the fool-hardy project of subverting the government of the United States. Payne saw it would be worse than useless to resist the tide of feeling now raised in support of the rash enterprise. He would bring down upon himself not only the contempt, but the suspicion of his associates. He therefore sat in gloomy silence, listening to the various expressions of opinion advanced by the members, who appeared to be suddenly inspired with exalted patriotism. When the question of sustaining the action of the vice-presidents was finally put to the house, the "ayes" were largely in the majority.

"Mr. President," said a member, "I now move, since it is growing late, and since Lincoln has had a fair trial and been legally condemned, and Johnson and Seward are equally as guilty as he is, that we proceed to vote upon their punishment. I move furthermore, that these two be put upon the black list with Abraham Lincoln."

"I second the motion," said another member.

"This motion was then put to the vote, and carried. Then after a short silence, Booth again spoke.

"Gentlemen," said he, "It has been determined to put the bell on the cat; the next thing to consider is, who is to do it? Will any one suggest a method by which the three criminals can be executed?"

Payne was in hopes that these last questions would bring the members of the society to their senses. He thought that when the danger of the deed should be placed directly before them, they might be disposed to reconsider their determination. But he was disappointed; for Degroot well understood those two brief lines of Addison's Cato:

"Conspiracies no sooner should he form'd
Than executed."

He knew the importance of striking while

the iron was hot; and he therefore at once submitted a proposition.

"Mr. President," said he, "I move that we draw lots for the performance of this business. We will put into a hat a ticket for each member present; upon three of them we will write the names of Lincoln, Johnson and Seward. Those who draw out the names shall execute the sentences, in any manner they think best. After the drawing, if they do not wish to be known, let the president appoint a place and a time for them to meet and consult."

This proposition was promptly seconded, and was carried. Then shortly afterwards the drawing commenced. Although Coldheart did not particularly fancy this arrangement, yet he was forced to take his chances, resolving, however, that if he should draw one of the unlucky tickets, he would get out of the difficulty somehow. It did not require a great while to draw forth all the tickets; and the members were soon in their seats again.

Booth then rose from his seat, and deliberately took off his mask. His countenance glowed with a strange, wild expression.

"Gentlemen," said he in a clear voice, "it devolves upon me to execute Abraham Lincoln. I care not who among you knows it; for I shall take his life in public. The other two who are to destroy Johnson and Seward will please meet me, next Monday morning, at nine o'clock, in this cellar." He then calmly resumed his seat.

The members of the Bloody Junto soon afterwards regularly adjourned. They never met again. For, before the next Saturday night, they were scattering to the four corners of the earth.

CHAPTER XV.

"Here's a large mouth indeed,
That spits forth death, and mountains, rocks
and seas;
Talks as familiarly of roaring lions
As maids of thirteen do of puppy dogs."

How the conspirators spent Sunday, the next day after their last meeting, we know not. But we do know it was a gloomy day in the Confederate States. For the noble army of Gen. Lee, covered with the glory of a four year's conflict, was forced by the terrible logic of disastrous events to disband, and bury their hopes and anticipations of liberty in the bloody dust. A scene occurred over which nations might have wept tears of blood. It was a heart-rending spectacle to behold thousands of veterans, who for years had faced death in every form, stack their arms, bow their heads, and pass under the conqueror's yoke. All was indeed lost. The confederacy was overthrown; and the insolent victor laughed in derision over its prostrate ruins. The southern veterans, with slow steps and tearful eyes, commenced to wend their homeward way, with the dismal prospect of confiscation, military despotism and national degradation before them. As

they marched from the scenes of their former glory, through the defeated south, they beheld the marks of savage desolation wherever the eye might chance to turn. Happy homes destroyed, fertile farms laid waste, and a thousand other grievous circumstances, that make the heart bleed, bore witness but too plainly to the ferocious character of the enemy. The 9th day of April, 1865, therefore, was a gloomy day in the downfallen confederacy. It is to be hoped that such another may never again roll up in the history of the unfortunate south. It was however a happy day for the jubilant yankees. Their hell born malice could now be gratified in perfect safety. The old lion was now breathing out his life, and every dastardly beast of the field could dishonor him with impunity. The formidable giant of secession lay bound in fetters of brass, and every sneaking poltroon of New England could vent his envenomed spleen upon his war-scarred form. Unlike the subjugated confederates, the yankees could return to their homes, flushed with victory, rejoicing over the wide-spread wreck their barbarity had made, and laden with the rich fruits of southern murder and robbery. May God pardon the hardened wretches and thieves! May God do this; for no southern man, with any sense of dignity and self-respect, can exercise the divine virtue of forgiveness towards men who deserve the deepest damnation of everlasting despair. We who dwell in the ruined south can pray for the yankee only in the language of good old David: "Set thou a wicked man over him; and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the stranger spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but prosecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart."

Reader, we would not be able to write this volume, if we could not occasionally give vent to our reasonable wrath against the enemies of the south. Confession is a relief to an overcharged heart, though it be charged with anger. We must therefore, now and then, give utterance to our feelings of Christian hate, that revolt from the confinement of submissive silence. We candidly acknowledge that it somehow has a soothing effect upon our turbulent breast—it produces a calm—it lulls to temporary sleep our wicked desire of revenge—and it brings about a

comfortable frame of mind, so that we can quietly resume the broken thread of our story.

Having now partially disburdened ourself of a small portion of our justifiable rage, that will frequently bubble up to the surface of thought in despite of all Christian efforts to keep it down, we will proceed to state that on Sunday evening, the 9th of April, 1865, Booth called on Coldheart by request of the latter. Thereupon the following colloquy ensued:

"Last night's work went off finely," remarked the government official, "much better than I expected. Money works wonders among our people, Mr. Booth. Did you notice what a commotion was aroused when you explained that the execution of our plan would enrich those engaged in it?"

"Yes sir. It was very easily perceived." "I believe the enterprise would have failed without a mention of that pecuniary circumstance. But what reward will you claim for your important service? With the present programme before us, you deserve something very handsome."

"Sir," replied Booth, "as far as I am concerned individually, I ask no reward. I flatter myself that I am controlled by a higher motive in this business than my own selfish interest. But, for reasons which I do not care to mention at present, I must claim under the royal government the title of Earl of Washington, and sufficient means to support my dignity. We can settle these things, however, afterwards. It, I mean the title, is a secondary consideration with me."

"You shall have what you claim, Mr. Booth. I shall take great pleasure in conferring it upon you. But, as you say, all these things can be settled after we overcome the difficulties now in the way. I suppose," continued Coldheart, "your mind has undergone no change since the closing scene of last night?"

Booth understood the allusion.

"I am not the man, Mr. Coldheart, to shrink from my duty. I generally go through with whatever I undertake. It has fallen to my lot to execute Lincoln, and I shall do it boldly and deliberately."

"I hope the other two may be as courageous as you are, Mr. Booth. Do you have any idea who they are?"

"None in the world, sir."

"How do you expect to accomplish this affair, Mr. Booth?"

"My part of it, if that is to what you allude, shall be done as I said last night, in public. I cannot consent to become an assassin. I will destroy Lincoln as a tyrant, before the whole world. I will not execute him in private, if I can avoid it."

"Then the opportunity you desire is close at hand; for I saw Mr. Lincoln this very morning, and he informed me that he would visit Ford's theatre next Friday night to contribute to the benefit of Miss Keene."

Booth was observed to start slightly at this information.

"Do you know, Mr. Coldheart, when Lincoln made up his mind to this?"

"Not precisely. I think not until to-day, though."

"He did not announce his intention till to-day?"

"No, I am certain of that."

"No one of our society knew it yesterday?"

"Certainly not. But why are you so particular in regard to that feature?"

"Because if no one knew it, Davelier's prophecy last night was rather remarkable. You recollect that he predicted Lincoln would be destroyed about the 14th or 15th. Next Friday will be the 14th."

"I was forcibly struck with Davelier's interpretation," said Coldheart, who saw that here was an opportunity to arouse Booth's enthusiasm to the very highest degree. "I am as much disposed to believe his prediction as any event that I ever heard foretold. According to the Bible, Anti-Christ must appear at some time, and I would as soon think it were Lincoln as any other tyrant. At any rate it would be difficult to disprove Davelier's assertion. And if it be true, you are fortunate in being selected by the Supreme Being as an instrument to execute the inscrutable designs of Providence."

"Next Friday night, then," said Booth with a strange wildness in his brilliant eyes, "I will give the death-blow to Anti-Christ, and claim my reward at the hands of Heaven. I always felt that it was my destiny to do something great and glorious; now I am convinced of it. In this deed, I will confer a favor upon God and man. I will destroy two characters in one—the devil and a tyrant. Heaven will then be under obligations to John Wilkes Booth."

"You speak nothing more than the truth, Mr. Booth. I look upon the business in that light. But, waiving this for the present, we must consider what arrangements to make for the seizure of the government as soon as the deed is performed. Will those whom you call the soldiers of the society do to rely upon? Some show of force will be necessary in order to intimidate all persons who may offer resistance to the measure. If I can hold the government for three days the whole plan will be successful; for then I can get all the aid I want from officers of the United States army. But, can I rely upon the Junto soldiers for that length of time?"

"I think they will be true, sir."

"Who will command them?"

"Winthrop is commander-in-chief."

"I suppose none of them are into the secret?"

"No sir. I fear, though, too many already know it. We will have to keep a close watch this week; and as you can have free access to Lincoln, I hope you will guard him vigilantly till he is delivered over to the executioner."

"I will attend to that," replied Coldheart, and if I discover that he is suspicious of what is brewing, I will inform you at once."

"Very well," said Booth. "When do you

wish to have a consultation with Winthrop?"

"I do not know that a consultation with him will be necessary. You can see him, can you not?"

"You would better talk with him yourself; he will have to obey your orders. I shall leave the city immediately after the execution, in order to escape the wrath of Lincoln's personal friends. I will go south, carry the news to the rebels, and prepare them for the proposed change in the government."

"That is a very good idea, Mr. Booth. Though I beg you not to mention my name in connection with this business, until the certainty of complete success may render it safe to reveal it."

"Fear not, Mr. Coldheart, I will be prudent."

"I am not afraid to trust you, sir. Please then, say to Winthrop, I would like to see him at my house to-morrow evening."

Booth and Coldheart then separated.

Sunday, the ninth day of April, passed away; and the confederacy was dead. Monday morning came; and it was known in Washington that the commander-in-chief of the southern forces had surrendered. This startling news caused various emotions among the conspirators. But it only rendered John Wilkes Booth more impatient to perform the deed which his fiery soul was burning to execute. He was fearful that the opportunity of acquiring immortal glory by doing his country and Heaven a service, might soon glide away. Therefore when the hour of nine arrived, he went, with a heart all aglow with morbid patriotism, and false religious fervor, to meet his accomplices. He hastily entered the cellar, according to agreement, and found it already occupied by two men. Booth felt somewhat disappointed as soon as he recognized them, and a transitory doubt, as to whether they could really be the lot-chosen executioners of Johnson and Seward, crossed his mind. But he was very soon satisfied that there was no mistake concerning this point.

"You are to execute whom?" said the actor addressing himself to Payne.

"William H. Seward."

"And will you do it?" inquired Booth in surprise.

"I will," replied Payne with astonishing coolness.

"What are you to do?" said Booth turning to Atzerott.

"Ish to kill Andrew Shonshon, py Got."

"You will not hesitate to do this?" inquired Booth, thoroughly disgusted with the filthy German.

"No, py Got; I will kill him tead ash to tevil: I vill, py Got. I shall ten pe Tuke of Ameriky—a tam pig man—mit mine pocket full o' monish."

"You are the last man in the society," said Booth again addressing Payne, "whom I should have selected for this business. From the decided stand you took against the measure, I was a little fearful you would

withdraw altogether from the Junto, and thereby bring us into trouble."

"You do not understand my character at all," replied Payne. "It is true I opposed the death of Lincoln, and I was in earnest in what I said. I am truly sorry that the society has seen fit to agree upon this bloody measure. But I said in my few remarks, that whatever might be the result of the trial, I would be true to my associates; and so I will. It has fallen to my share to put William H. Seward to death. I somehow expected this destiny. I felt from the beginning, yea, before we organized, that a duty unpleasant to perform awaited me. Time has at last revealed what that duty is; and I must steadily follow the course marked out by the finger of fate."

"My feelings, Payne, are quite different from yours in regard to this business. I am not at all sorry that the society has devised this measure; I am glad of it. We have seen tyranny and despotism flourish too long already. Lincoln has ruled this country for four years with a sceptre of steel. He has been guilty of usurpation after usurpation; he has committed crime after crime in the name of liberty, until our once bright red stripes look like bloody gashes on the face of Heaven. He ought to be destroyed, and I swear by the Gods above, he shall be. I will be the Brutus of America," continued the actor rising to his feet, while his proud form dilated with pseudo-patriotic emotion. "I will be the Brutus of America, and will prostrate modern Caesar to the dust. Methinks I can hear voices now calling on me:

"Brutus, thou sleepest; awake, and see thyself; etc. 'Speak, strike, redress! Brutus, thou sleepest; awake!'"

"Hear the voices of widows and orphans coming up from the blood-sprinkled south; crying aloud not for vengeance, but for peace. In God's name, they shall have it. The tyrant shall be destroyed. I will strike him down in his stronghold, and before all the hosts of his worshippers. I will bathe my hands in his blood: I will say as Brutus did:

"Stoop, Romans, stoop. And let us bathe our hands in Caesar's blood. Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords; Then walk we forth, even to the market place. And, waving our red weapons o'er our heads, Let's all cry Peace, Freedom and Liberty!"

"O, it will be a glorious deed: it will live forever in history and romance.

"How many ages hence Shall this our lofty scene be acted over, In states unborn, and accents yet unknown? How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport, That now on Pompey's basis lies along, No worthier than the dust? So oft as that shall be, So often shall the knot of us be call'd The men that gave our country liberty."

Booth spoke on in this strain with such pathos and wildness—quoting exciting passages from Shakespeare, till Atzerott could no longer contain himself. His Dutch sensibility was aroused; he had caught the ardor reflected from Booth's burning soul, and he

felt that he could throttle giants, and crush them beneath his feet.

"Py Got," cried the fussy German, "I will be the Cashish of America. I will plunge mine tagger in Shonshon's shaggy preast, and let hish tam soul out of im. Wat ish it Cashish say?—'Frents, Romans, countrymens and lovers, hear tem up speak.' No, tat ish not it. It ish sometin like tat; put it makesh no differensh: I vill cut te tam fool's plood out o' hish preast. I vill show im tere ish a Cashish—Brutus' brudder—in te land of liberty tat ish patriotic, and can poke te ploody tagger in hish tam sides. I vill set down on hish tead pody, and trink lager peer, ten I vill vash mine hants in hish ret plood, and vill holt tem up te pig crout: and say in te languidge of Shakespeare:—'Atzerott tid thish ploody teed,' py Got."

"Hurrah for Atzerott!" cried Booth, sinking into his chair and laughing as though his sides would split.

"Ten," continued the Dutchman, "te pig crout will cry out, 'long live Tuke Atzerott! long live Tuke Atzerott!'"

"Puke Atzerott, you mean," said Payne in disgust.

"No—Tuke Atzerott—Tuke of America, py Got,—mit mine fine coach and mine pockets full o' monish, and mine pretty Tukess in te coach mit me, py mine side; and when we goesh along te roat, te pig crows vill pow ter hets to ush; and I vill fling monish to em, and ten away we goesh te Tuke's Villa. Wen we gits te te hall, we vinds anoter pig crown of zervints and peoples; and we vlings more monish to em; and tey all vlings up tere hats, and criesh out 'long live te Tuke and te Tukess,' py Got. Ten I takesh te Tukess out o' te coach, and carrish im in ter mint castle, vere we'll be so happy ash te pig King and Queen. Yesh, py Got, I vill kill Andrew Shonson; I vill cut te tam fool's throat mit mine sharp tagger. Ash Hamlet says in Shakespeare, I vill

"Ten trip 'im, tat hish feets may kick at Heaven; And tat hish soul be ash tamn'd and plack Ash hell, where it goes to,' py Got."

At this mis-quotation and murder of Shakespeare, Booth burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. Even a smile stole across the stoical physiognomy of Payne, but it was rather a smile of contempt than of mirth. The personal appearance of the ignorant, gabbling German was sufficient to excite any decent man's disgust. His oval head was covered with dry, sandy hair, that did not reach to two ears, which were set so close to his chin that one might suppose the senses of tasting and hearing had been blended into one by the constant use of the jaws. His face was so yellow that the brownness of his uncropped beard did not materially darken it. This specimen of Germany was so filthy that Booth and Payne both felt that Mr. Johnson would be degraded to be murdered by such a man. Booth knew the fellow was a coward, and greatly feared that when the time for action should arrive the frightened German would fly for life. But the matter

was now settled, and he must rely upon Atzerott, such as he was.

"We must now agree upon a plan of action, gentlemen," said Booth, so soon as his merriment had subsided. "The executions ought all to take place at the same time, of course. Lincoln goes to the theatre next Friday night; and I propose to strike down the tyrant before the whole audience. Would it suit you and Atzerott," he said addressing Payne, "to discharge your duties at that time?"

"I know nothing to the contrary, so far as I am concerned," replied Payne. "Mr. Seward is sick, you know; but I suppose it will be as convenient to dispatch him then as any other time.

"What say you, Atzerott?"

"Py Got, any time will suit me."

"Gentlemen, I shall shoot Lincoln. What will be your method, Payne?"

"The knife," answered Payne with a sigh.

"And yours, Atzerott?" inquired Booth.

"Mine wat?"

"How will you kill Mr. Shonson?" asked Booth.

"Py Got," said Atzerott drawing from its sheath a long Bowie-knife and flourishing it over his head, "I vill cut hish tam preast mit tish. I vaitt till he pe asleep, ten me valks up to hish ped, and before he can say, 'quit Atzerott,' me plunge tish knife into hish pig preast and splits ter heart out of im; ten I rhuns away and hides till mine Takedom pe ready, py Got."

"Then gentlemen," said Booth, "that there may be unanimity of action, let the three executions take place at a quarter after ten."

"Agreed," responded the two accomplices; after which the trio of prospective murderers left the cellar, each to employ his time as he saw proper until Friday, unless an emergency should arise that would render another conference necessary. Booth went straight to the room of Mrs. Surratt, and in the course of the conversation which followed, he communicated the proceedings of the Junto's last meeting. He requested her to attend Ford's theatre the next Friday night, where he said she would see a real tragedy acted. This revelation was very imprudent on the actor's part as will be seen in subsequent chapters. He thought her a discreet woman, and gave her more credit for devotion to the interests of the society than she deserved; or, in other words, which more nearly express the truth, Mrs. Surratt was not the bloodthirsty creature that the yankees considered her to be. But we will let events themselves vindicate the traduced character of an injured woman.

CHAPTER XVI.

"All friendly trust is folly; ev'ry man Hath one, to whom he will commit as much As is to him committed."

The interview between Booth and Mrs. Surratt had scarcely terminated before Mrs. Degroot entered the apartment. The poor

seamstress looked the very picture of melancholy. There was a mournful expression in the soft blue eyes, which even a casual observer would have recognized as the natural result of corroding trouble. Little Clarence, who trotted at his mother's side, seemed to be but the visible physical embodiment of his mother's inward emotions and pangs of sorrow. The child looked not and acted not like other children. The boisterous gayety of heaven-blessed childhood, the restless wildness of healthful, smiling infancy, and a thousand other sinless charms, that throw around the first years of human life a halo of angelic brightness that lights up even the gloomy pathway of tottering age—all these appeared to be wanting in the disposition of Mrs. Degroot's son. The little fellow was really old in his actions and habits. He reminded one of a dwarf whose growth had been stunted by care, rather than by any failure of nature to develop the capacities of the physical condition. His appearance could be attributed to two causes: first, disease was preying on his vitals; second, by constant association with his sorrowful mother he had acquired, from a mere habit of imitation natural to youth, those shades of melancholy, which had settled upon her careworn brow. These two causes gave to the boy an air that touched the chords of sympathy in a beholder's breast in an unaccountable manner. His sad face, rendered pale by the white pencil marks of death, made an impression upon a close observer's heart, that would bring up an unbidden tear to the eye. It is, though, natural to pity an invalid child, with a tenderness of feeling that cannot be aroused at any other period of life by the same condition of ill health. There is an indescribable feeling of disappointment; there is a sorrowful conviction that the little innocent is clearly entitled to all the sympathy human nature can bestow. Poverty had little to do with this effect in the case of our young friend Clarence Degroot. Because latterly both he and his mother were neatly dressed; and there was nothing in the appearance of either to justify the conclusion that they were now suffering for the necessities of life. We must here state that Mrs. Degroot had received a regular monthly remittance of fifty dollars, since the reception of the mysterious letter containing a \$100 note. The source whence it came was utterly unknown to the poor lady, and though it puzzled her considerably, yet she looked upon the gift as emanating from Providence, and used it with gratitude. Notwithstanding this mysterious resource, she continued to ply the needle vigorously, and thus made a decent livelihood. It was the infidelity of her husband that caused Mrs. Degroot's heart to bleed. She was afraid of him. She dared not trust him with a knowledge of her mysterious wealth. The painful truth now forced itself upon her that she was an abomination in her faithless husband's sight. She feared even to appear conscious of his unfaithfulness, lest it might lead to an open rupture; and then there would be little

chance of reconciliation. She therefore endured her misery in submissive silence, hoping that time might convince her husband of his great folly, and that his own disappointment would produce a revulsion of feeling, and he would return to his first love. Yet even this vague hope was slight—barely sufficient to sustain her above the dark waves of black despair. To do herself justice, she ought to have fled from the base man, and have returned to her friends; but her womanly modesty revolted at the idea of such desertion, and at the thought of the scandal with which her fair name might be connected. She concluded, therefore, to endure the ills she had, rather than fly to others she knew not of.

We commenced this chapter with the statement that Mrs. Degroot entered the room of Mrs. Surratt, immediately after the departure of Wilkes Booth. Though the former lady had been at the house of the latter upon several occasions, to procure or return needle-work, it was the first time Clarence had accompanied her to this place since the night of her initiation into the Bloody Junto. Mrs. Surratt was painfully struck with the boy's appearance. The little fellow seated himself on a low chair, folded his emaciated hands across his knees, and looked into her face with his sad eyes, till the good lady felt her whole nature yearn towards the sickly child.

"Here child," said Mrs. Surratt taking a quarter from her purse, "go and buy you some candy."

Clarence took the money, and handing it to his mother said in a very heart-touching tone, that told a story of misery and privation.

"Ma, must I buy some medicine? I don't eat candy?"

"God bless the poor child!" cried Mrs. Surratt, while a tear moistened her eye; "what is the matter with him, Mrs. Eglantine?"

"I scarcely know; I fear it is consumption."

"Don't you have a physician to prescribe for him?"

"I have not had until recently. I have scarcely been able to buy medicine."

"Why didn't you let me know your situation?" said Mrs. Surratt. "I would have done anything before the little fellow should have suffered."

"I never like to obtrude my troubles upon my employers, Ma'am. I have found out they would much rather listen to something else."

"Hard-hearted wretches," said Mrs. Surratt, "that could look at this poor, weakly child, and not feel a desire to relieve him. Come here, my little man," continued the kind lady exhibiting a half-eagle, "take this and buy as much medicine, or anything else as you want, and when it gives out come back to me."

Little Clarence opened wide his lustrous eyes, looked at Mrs. Surratt, then at the shining metal, and then at his mother, who

was so overpowered with emotion that she could not utter a word.

"What will you do with it?" asked Mrs. Surratt looking at the puzzled boy.

"I'll give it to ma to buy medicine with."

"Is medicine all you think about?"

"Yes, Ma'am; I am trying to be well."

"What do you want to be well for?"

"So I can help ma work."

"Where is your father?"

"I don't know, Ma'am."

At this point of the dialogue Mrs. Eglantine began to show signs of uneasiness. Mrs. Surratt saw that it was a very unpleasant topic to the mother, and she had too much generosity to force it further.

This little episode, however irrelevant it may appear, had a bearing upon some of the prominent events that are to be now related. Trifles very frequently change the destinies of nations, as well as of individuals. It was an accidental remark that raised Robespierre from obscurity, made his bloody name a terror through the vine-covered land of *la belle* France, and handed it down to posterity, surrounded though it be with a dark circle of gory infamy. A spider's web saved the life of Mahomet, and thus made the Hegira an era in the annals of a powerful religious body. The mere cacklings of a goose, once in ancient times, overthrew the plans of a mighty army, and thereby turned the current of history aside. It was an accident that revealed to the wondering eye of man the hidden mysteries of the starry heavens, and gave to the science of astronomy a power that has demonstrated the omnipotence of God. In short, it will probably be found that all the great events of the world are produced by, if contemplated in the abstract, some unimportant circumstances.

Mrs. Surratt's heart was softened by merely looking at the bloodless countenance of Clarence Degroot; and her emotion gave rise to a train of thought that might not otherwise have been aroused. Booth had just left her, after disclosing the frightful programme of the Bloody Junto. Little Clarence now somehow reminded her of Mr. Lincoln's *petit* "Tad,"—the pet of the capitol, whom she had frequently seen frolicking about in childish hilarity. The innocent boy would soon be fatherless, and would shed the bitter tears of unadulterated grief over the mutilated form of a murdered parent. In fine, the whole panorama of the dark deed, with all its distressing accompaniments of horror, passed before her imagination—the terrible agony of the bereaved wife—the inconsolable grief of the mourning children—the deep-felt sorrow of the tearful north—all these gloomy circumstances went through the sensitive heart of Mrs. Surratt like streams embittered with the waters of Marah.

"Have you heard of the crime that is to be committed this week?" asked Mrs. Surratt.

"No, Ma'am, I have not. What is it?" said Mrs. Degroot in alarm.

"I suppose I can tell you, since you are a member of the society."

And Mrs. Surratt drew near to Mrs. Degroot and whispered in her ear:

"They are going to murder Lincoln and Johnson and Seward."

"Who is?" cried Mrs. Degroot in terror.

"They are—the Bloody Junto, I mean. I

learned it this morning, I was never more shocked in all my life."

"What are they going to do this for?" inquired Mrs. Degroot.

"I believe they are going to change the government into a monarchy."

"But why should they murder Mr. Lincoln to do this?"

"O, he is in the way, I suppose. They say he is a tyrant, and never will make peace with the south. They want to stop the war, and say they will have to kill these three in order to do it."

"But murder is wrong, Mrs. Surratt."

"Certainly it is; and I have been thinking if—it might not be avoided. I don't,"

continued Mrs. Surratt, when she saw that Mrs. Degroot was not going to make any reply, "I don't know any better way than to inform Mr. Lincoln of his impending danger."

"And expose the society?"

"No, no; that would be a difficult undertaking. But couldn't Mr. Lincoln and the other two be informed of their danger without giving any whys or wherefores?"

"Yes, Ma'am, I suppose so."

"Well then, suppose you inform them."

"Who, I?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Surratt. "I don't know any person that could perform the duty with less danger than you can."

"How do you mean, Ma'am?"

"Why, you could go to the White House as if in search of work. Nobody would suspect you. But I am known very well by many of the members; some of them board with me, and if I should be seen in the vicinity of Mr. Lincoln's dwelling, I fear I should be detected."

"Could you not write, Ma'am?" said Mrs. Degroot timidly.

"I know I could; but not without greater risk than you would run. I am so situated that I could not even write without arousing suspicion."

"But I never saw Mr. Lincoln," said Mrs. Degroot, "I wouldn't know him if I should see him."

"Do you know Johnson or Seward?"

"No, Ma'am; none of them."

"Why, you must have little curiosity," said Mrs. Surratt. "There are few people in this city that are not familiar with Lincoln's countenance. I can't imagine how you could be here so long and not have seen Mr. Lincoln."

"I've had so much else to think about, Ma'am, that I have had no time to form acquaintances."

"Don't you attend church? You might have seen Lincoln at church."

"I go to church nearly every Sabbath,

Ma'am," said Mrs. Degroot modestly, "but I always try to listen to the sermon."

"So do I," said Mrs. Surratt; "but that does not prevent the exercise of my eyes. I can see the whole congregation before services commence."

"Yes Ma'am," was all the response Mrs. Degroot made.

"Why, I wouldn't feel satisfied," continued Mrs. Surratt, "if I did not know the faces of Lincoln and his whole cabinet. I could never forget the long, lank form and cadaverous face of the president, if I should live a thousand years. I know even little Tad—Mr. Lincoln's son; and a nice boy he is, too."

"Yes Ma'am,"

"You know Mrs. Lincoln, don't you?"

"No Ma'am."

"Well I declare," said Mrs. Surratt with an air of disappointment. "Is it possible you have never seen even Mrs. Lincoln?"

"No Ma'am; I have never seen her—to know her."

"Well, I will tell you what you can do," said Mrs. Surratt. "You can write a short note to Mrs. Lincoln, and place it in her hands yourself. This will be the best plan. You can very easily find out the president's wife by going to the White House."

"But would they let me into the White House?"

"To be sure they would. The house belongs to the nation. You have as good a right to go there as anybody. If you will do this your fortune will be made. Mr. Lincoln, Johnson and Seward, all three will be under obligations to you, and will bestow a magnificent reward."

After awhile, when a little more persuasion had been used by Mrs. Surratt, Mrs. Degroot consented to warn the three officials of the mighty danger that hovered over their pathway. It was not any want of sympathy, or abhorrence of murder, that prevented her agreeing at once, without hesitation, to the humane proposition of Mrs. Surratt. A natural timidity of disposition—an inward shrinking from the idea of obtruding upon the great—an inclination opposed to self-encroachments upon her humble obscurity—and a sensitiveness in conflict with the thought of conspicuousness; all these were at war with the resolution which she finally had the courage to form. She returned home, and then commenced thinking what she should write to the president's wife and how she would deliver the letter. But before she took up her pen to begin the task which had been imposed, she thought of the propriety of consulting Degroot in reference to the matter. She soon, however, abandoned this idea. For latterly the worthless man had taken little pains to conceal the evidences of dislike towards herself and her child. Whenever he was at home, which was only at meal times and at night, his moody countenance was sufficient to repel all manifestations of affection that his sensitive wife might feel disposed to make. The con-

sequence was, there was no domestic happiness around the fireside of Percy Degroot. Could his injured wife have only glanced into his black heart, and there beheld the demon of hate, she would have trembled with horror and fright, and would have fled from her unhappy home. But she knew not the full measure of detestation that filled his breast; and she knew not the intensity of emotion, the soul-absorbing devotion, with which he worshipped at the shrine of Flora Louvan. His motives may at first have been associated with pecuniary calculations, but he had been led on by degrees, until now he could not, if he had desired it never so much, have wrenched her fair image from his throbbing heart. If there was any consideration that could have brought Degroot to his senses, and cooled down the ardor of his passion, it would have been the loss of her wealth. He had so much of the yankee in his nature that this was the only consideration that could possibly be efficient in aiding him to overcome the yearnings of his wicked love. But it was a settled fact that Flora was wealthy; she was angelically beautiful; she was accomplished in yankee style; and Degroot was maddened. His bosom was a fair picture of the torments which unrighteous ghosts may be supposed to endure. Not, though, that he was troubled by remorse of conscience; for he reasoned as the ungodly do, that passions had been implanted in the human heart by chance, or some other cause, he did not care what, and that he was not responsible for their development. He loved Flora Louvan; and he saw no reason why he should struggle against the pleasing passion. He hated his wife; and threw the responsibility upon the great First Cause, whatever it might be. Both these opposite impulses he encouraged, not caring whether it was right or wrong, according to any system of morals or laws. He abandoned himself unreservedly to his wild, wicked passion, which Flora encouraged from the mere promptings of thoughtless vanity. He proposed marriage; but she did not positively reject his suit. She encouraged him just sufficiently to make him believe he was the favored suitor, without committing herself so far that she could not at any time easily erase his name from the list of her lovers. Could the thoughtless girl have had any idea of the irreparable injury she was doing the unknown wife, an indignant rejection of Degroot would probably have followed. Flora would be forced to this course in order to preserve respectability in society. She was doing Mrs. Degroot not only a great injury, but was placing her life and that of her little boy in jeopardy. For Degroot had for sometime been devising ways and means to rid himself of all matrimonial encumbrances. Dark thoughts of murder very often crept into his heart, and he brooded over them in silence. These diabolical thoughts of felonious homicide became more frequent, and towards the spring of 1865 assumed the shape of a fixed, settled purpose.

Such was the state of Degroot's mind and

heart when his wife took up her pen on Monday, the 10th day of April, to betray the society, of which he was a prominent member. It was no wonder then that she quickly rejected the thought of consulting such a deliberate villain. She concluded to act upon her own individual responsibility, and accordingly began to write a letter of warning to Mrs. Lincoln. It did not require a great while to finish the short missive; but when it was completed she seemed not to like its contents, for she threw it into the scanty fire. She gazed at the burning sheet till its color became black, and then taking a homely poker crumbled the crisped paper into fragments. After which she gathered up her sewing, and judging from outward action seemed to have laid aside all thought of carrying into effect her praiseworthy resolution. That whole day she ceased not to ply the needle with diligence. Tuesday came, but she still continued at her work, and touched not the pen. Night drew near, but the undertaking had not been essayed. But on the next day, when the sun had crossed the meridian and was gradually declining to the western horizon, a sudden change marked her conduct. For she hastily threw down her work, turned to the rude table, and began to write. In a few moments she folded the sheet upon which she had written, rose from her seat, and telling little Clarence to remain at home until she should return, bent her steps towards the president's mansion. The whole city was alive with savage joy as she passed along the noisy streets. There was no longer any doubt of the complete success of the yankee army. All felt that the poor confederacy would soon sink down into the oblivion of things that were; and all rejoiced over the glorious prospect—the wide field of bloody ruin in which New England malignity could glut itself to bursting satiety. Their hearts swelled with national pride—their breasts heaved with patriotic emotion at the idea of American grandeur. They were American citizens; their mighty arms had carried destruction into the holy temple of southern liberty, and crushed the huge giant of secession. The poor maniacs ran wild with gratitude to the juggernaut of the north, and they promised a whole hecatomb of living rebels to the merciless God of Tophet. But Mrs. Degroot did not heed the swelling words, the vain boasts, and the drunken revels of the joyful yankees. She hastened along with trembling anxiety in the direction of the White House. When she was within sight of the palatial residence of the chief magistrate, she encountered Degroot and Wilkes Booth coming down the street. She now trembled violently in every limb; for the thought for the first time shot through her brain that her own husband might be one of the conspirators: she was almost overpowered. Degroot looked sternly at her as she passed, but luckily did not choose to recognize her. The poor lady was in no danger of recognition in the capacity of a wife from this quarter, if she had reflected for only an instant. After

gaining the distance of a few yards beyond the two men, she almost involuntarily turned her head to look back. A chilling shudder passed over her frame when she saw that they had stopped, and as she imagined were earnestly and narrowly watching her movements. Whether they were or not, she felt like her design was penetrated, and she was about to abandon her intention in the street and return home. But the conspirators suddenly moved off; and something prompted her to go forward, and on she went, traveling though more like a machine than a rational being bent upon the accomplishment of a benevolent purpose.

"Presently she reached the White House, and somehow instinctively or mechanically found her way to the handsome parlor where Mrs. Lincoln was receiving company. Without any regard to ceremony, she hastily entered the apartment, looking wild, bewildered, and confused. She felt her utter insignificance in that abode of grandeur and wealth, and manifested haste to retrace her steps.

"Which is Mrs. Lincoln?" whispered Mrs. Degroot in the ear of a splendidly dressed lady near the door.

"That," said the surprised lady pointing to the upper end of the apartment.

Mrs. Degroot then strode to a lady whom she supposed to be Mrs. Lincoln, and placed the letter in her hand, without a word of explanation; then turned and left the mansion. The lady to whom the letter had been given read it, and involuntarily sprang from her seat.

"Is anything the matter?" inquired Mrs. Lincoln kindly.

"No, no—nothing of importance; but you must excuse my abrupt departure." Saying which she left the parlor as unceremoniously and as rapidly as Mrs. Degroot had disappeared.

CHAPTER XVII.

"She's a woman to graceless treach'ry given:
A woman that would fain betray her friend,
And bring death upon him. Let her quickly die
The black death of traitors; and live no more,
To blab our secrets forth."

Coldheart was seated in his office, when a messenger from his wife appeared before him. A note was handed to the official, which requested him to come home without a moment's delay. The officer lost no time in obeying the summons; but snatching up his hat, he hastened to his residence, and went straight to his wife's room.

"What is the matter, Mary?" asked Coldheart.

"Why, I have unearthed a horrid piece of treachery, Mr. Coldheart."

"Indeed! What is it?"

"Read that, Mr. Coldheart, and thank your stars that I am so fortunate. It seems like the work of Providence."

Coldheart took the paper which she held out, and read as follows:

Mrs. LINCOLN: This is to inform you that Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Seward are to be murdered to-morrow night. There is a society existing in the city, and its members are sworn to destroy the government. I thought it my duty to tell you. Booth, the actor, is president of the society. I do not think, under the circumstances, that an apology is necessary for my giving you this timely information.

Your ob'dt servant,

MINA EGLANTINE.

April 13th, 1865.

"Where did you get this, Mary?" asked Coldheart with a terrified look.

"At the White House, to be sure."

"Did it reach its destination?"

"No indeed; and you may thank me for having called on Mrs. Lincoln this evening. It was a mere accident—hardly an accident either; if it was, it seems to have been directed by Providence. I was sitting near Mrs. Lincoln in her parlor a while ago, when a wild looking creature came striding in, and placed that note in my hands without saying a word. I suppose she mistook me for Mrs. Lincoln. She vanished from the parlor before I could unfold the treacherous document. As soon as I read it I left, and sent for you forthwith. Is it not lucky?"

"It is so, indeed. But the woman is a poor fool for signing her name to such a paper."

"Not so much fool either, Mr. Coldheart. She of course expected a reward for this important information, which she could not have received without signing her name or making herself known in some way. But this is no affair of ours. What are you going to do, Mr. Coldheart?"

"Do about what?"

"Why, about this letter."

"I will show it to Booth."

"Then what?"

"Why then I guess Mrs. Eglantine will hold her tongue hereafter."

"Murder?"

"That is not the proper term, Mary: a legal execution, if you please."

"How can it be done?"

"I do not know that it will be done at all. I only suppose so. She has wilfully violated the laws of the society, and I have every reason to expect that she will be severely dealt with."

"How can such a thing be kept secret, Mr. Coldheart?"

"Oh, very easy," replied the officer with a smile. "The Potomac is hard by; and there are some few rooks about too. It does not require much weight to sink a body below the surface. Then the Potomac tells no tales. It will watch over its charge in silence."

"But suppose inquiries should be made."

"Inquiries may be made; but they will be answered by echo, I guess," said Coldheart with a laugh.

"Well, that is settled then," said the lady. "Everything has worked admirably thus far. But suppose, Mr. Coldheart, there should be a failure in some part of the programme, or indeed in all of it, are you fully prepared to meet any emergency that may arise?"

"I have provided for every contingency that I thought might occur. If the whole project should fail, which is hardly probable, then I will be *in statu quo*. My connection with the society is known only to the officers and Mrs. Surratt, who I doubt not will keep it a profound secret. If we cannot overturn the government after the executions are accomplished, I will change my tactics slightly and make an effort to secure the presidency; my chances for the position are as good as any other man's, I think. To avert suspicion from myself, I will endeavor to implicate the rebels in the business. I will even accuse Jeff Davis of complicity, and procure witnesses to sustain the accusation. Prejudice is so bitter against him in the north, that the public mind will believe any kind of a story that may be fabricated. He will be tried, if he should be captured, by a court-martial, and he will certainly be hanged. Then the public will be satisfied, and I will be safe. There are several other prominent rebels whom I can implicate without any difficulty. There is Jacob Thompson, of Mississippi—one of the wealthiest of the slaveholding aristocrats. He is now in Canada. I will place him in company with Davis, and not give either of them time to refute the charges. My statement, I am sure, will be believed. The deed will be considered by the whole world as the last despairing act of a desperate, conquered people."

"But suppose, Mr. Coldheart, all three of these men should not be killed, how will that affect the scheme?"

"I can manage the business easily if Lincoln and Johnson are placed *hors du combat*. But if one of them should escape, I will have to be governed by circumstances altogether. I am very expert, you know, in getting out of difficulties. There is nothing more powerful than a brazen face and a slick, oily tongue. They rarely fail to carry a man through the world, even without brains. But I must go now and see Booth in reference to this matter."

"It will be attended to to-night, won't it?"

"I guess so. I shall have nothing to do with it. I will merely give this letter to Booth, and let him manage the business. From what I know of him, he will take prompt action."

Coldheart accordingly left his amiable, excellent spouse, and went in search of the actor. Booth was soon found without any great difficulty, as a system of secret communication had been established, by means of which the conspirators could be assembled in a very short space of time. The actor was not in his room when Coldheart called, but a note had been left on his desk, stating his whereabouts, in the event that any of the plan should have business with him. When

Booth read the letter of Mrs. Degroot, disclosing in a few words the nefarious scheme of assassination, he was at first very much startled; but his fears were soon dispelled when Coldheart explained to him that the villainous document had been fortunately intercepted.

"What course do you propose now?" asked Coldheart.

"There is but one," said Booth with a dark frown.

"And that is —?" said Coldheart, leaving the sentence half finished.

"Death," replied the actor firmly.

"That will evidently be safest."

"Certainly," replied Booth. "Dead men tell no tales."

"Nor dead women either," responded Coldheart with a laugh.

"True," said Booth; "though I dislike the idea of murdering women."

"Yes; but they must be dealt with like other members. This is a case of willful, premeditated breach of the law, in which not even the palliating circumstance of ignorance can be imputed to the author."

"To be sure not; for both the women were plainly told what would be the consequences of treachery. No excuse, therefore, palliative of Mrs. Eglantine's crime can be offered. She has knowingly violated the law, and now she must suffer the penalty."

"I am surprised, Mr. Booth, that you should have admitted women into this society. Some such result as has just happened might have been easily foretold by any ordinary judge of human nature. However, it is no use to talk about that now. The mischief is done, and we must now set to work to remedy it. I do not know that it would not be policy to bridle the tongue of this other one also."

"You mean Mrs. Surratt?"

"Yes."

"Do you propose to apply the same process of bridling to her as to Mrs. Eglantine? Is that your meaning?"

"I did not say that exactly," replied Coldheart with hesitation. "I know it is imprudent to entrust dangerous secrets to the keeping of women. These two women are now in possession of all our plans. The plain question then, Mr. Booth, is how can they be prevented from giving them to the public? How can they be silenced? You have agreed to dispose of one of them; now what shall be done with the other?"

"You have reference to the *grave*, Mr. Coldheart?"

"Well, what do you say to that remedy?"

"I cannot consent to apply it to Mrs. Surratt."

"Why?"

"Well, because she has not proven herself unworthy of her trust yet. I do not apprehend any danger of betrayal from that quarter. Besides, it is very unfair, Mr. Coldheart, to execute innocent members, when there is no ground for even the shadow of suspicion."

"Very well, Mr. Booth," replied Coldheart, who did not often insist upon severe mea-

asures, especially when he saw that they would meet with stolid opposition, "very well, I will leave it all to you: though I hope you may not be mistaken in the woman's fidelity."

"I feel disposed to trust her," replied Booth.

"Very good, sir; I shall offer no further opposition to your wishes. You are better acquainted with her than I am. It is possible she may be a very prudent woman; and I hope she is."

After this short conference, Booth sought the other officers of the Bloody Junto; and before the sun went down they were all collected in Mrs. Surratt's cellar. Here it was briefly determined to put Mrs. Eglantine upon trial, as soon as she could be arrested under cover of darkness. As Degroot was the only one of the officers who was acquainted with the woman's whereabouts, he agreed to become one of the two whose duty it was to effect the arrest. Indeed, for reasons which will be obvious, he preferred to assist in the forcible seizure of his wife.

That night Mrs. Degroot retired to her bed at the usual hour. The light was extinguished, and the shabby domicile in which the unfortunate seamstress dwelt was shrouded in obscurity. She waited not for her husband, who was in the habit of blundering in at the most unseasonable hours. The poor woman lay for some time thinking of what she had done that day, and what might result from the delivery of her communication to Mrs. Lincoln. Her conscience approved the act, and she felt a thrill of happiness at the thought that she had been made the instrument of preserving the president's life. But when she reflected what might happen to Booth and others—what a terrible commotion would follow her exposure of the schemes of the Junto—and that she would doubtless be called upon to face the whole society, and substantiate that which she had written—when she reflected upon all this, she trembled with extreme apprehension. If she could have looked forth from her resting place, and have beheld two human figures stealthily marching up to her door, she might have started up in affright and have fled for life. The two men, who will be at once recognized, stopped near the door, and seemed to listen for a moment. Presently one of them opened the rickety shutter, and boldly entered. Mrs. Degroot was under the impression that it was her husband; she knew his well-known foot-step, and therefore felt not the least alarm. The figure deliberately walked to the bed-side; and before Mrs. Degroot could move or speak, a gag was rudely thrust into her mouth, and she was quickly rendered incapable of calling for assistance. The seamstress struggled in vain, for the accomplice in this outrageous proceeding, rushed in as soon as she was gagged and the two ruffians bound her hands and feet. All the hope that Mrs. Degroot now had was that the men might be robbers; and that as soon as they had searched the house, she would be set at liberty. She felt assured

that it could not be Degroot; he would not have the baseness to treat his own lawful wife in this disgraceful manner. But the worst fears of the terrified lady were confirmed. For the men did not even strike a light; but they silently lifted her from the bed, and bore her out of the room. Poor little Clarence was left alone quietly sleeping, all unconscious that his mother had been taken from his side. This circumstance of leaving the boy utterly alone in the dark came very near detroning the senses of the distracted mother. She would have begged the ruffians to take the boy with her, but the organs of speech were powerless to act. She was borne a short distance up the road, and placed in a close carriage. The men got in with her, and the vehicle commenced whirling along with considerable rapidity. Suspicious of the most fearful character began to flash through the mind of Mrs. Degroot as she was borne into the city; and though she had no idea upon what grounds this outrageous proceeding had been instituted, yet she naturally attributed her arrest to the Junto. It did not once occur to her that the letter she had written to Mrs. Lincoln, had fallen into the hands of those for whom it was not intended.

The carriage now halted at Mrs. Surratt's, and the prisoner was hurriedly carried into the cellar, the door of which was quickly closed. So soon as the light revealed the forms of her captors, Mrs. Degroot eagerly scrutinized them. Although they were masked, yet she recognized in one of them her own husband. She knew his clothes, and his movements. Indeed he appeared to make no effort to conceal his identity. The wretched woman was horrorstricken. She was filled with such dread, that her faculties seemed to whirl, the light faded from view, a confused noise of footsteps rumbled an instant in her ear, and she lay in a state of temporary unconsciousness.

"She has fainted," cried a member.

"Bring water," said another.

Accordingly a cupful of water was dashed into the pale face of Mrs. Degroot, which had the effect of restoring her scattered senses. Upon her recovery, she glanced at the figures seated around the apartment. There were not more than twelve or fifteen members present, all of whom were masked except Booth, who looked upon this disgraceful scene with an expression difficult to understand. Except therefore from the enigmatical countenance of the actor, Mrs. Degroot could draw no inference from the looks of those present, as to the fate which awaited her. However she was not long kept in suspense. By order of the president a charge of treachery, followed by specifications, was read against Mina Eglantine.

"Guilty or not guilty, Mrs. Eglantine?" asked the presiding officer.

Of course no reply could be made by the gagged woman.

"Free her from the gag, gentlemen," ordered Booth.

"Never," quickly cried Degroot, in a

stern, energetic voice that went like a death-shock to the heart of the quivering, helpless victim. "There is no need of that, Mr. President," continued Degroot. "I know the woman well. I vouched for her political character when her name was presented for membership. I thought I was not mistaken in her principles, but I acknowledge she has deceived me. She is a willful traitress. There is no use asking whether she is guilty or not. If she has the exercise of her tongue, she will shriek aloud, and have the whole police of the city down upon us. I beg you, therefore, to allow the gag to remain."

Mrs. Degroot listened to these cruel words of her husband with emotions of indescribable wonder and agony. She had long suspected that Degroot entertained no sincere affection for her; but she never would have believed him capable of such moral turpitude, if ocular evidence had not been furnished. The brute had thrown off all disguise, and she saw his true character in all its hideous vileness and depravity. She was so astonished, mortified and pained by her husband's course, that as far as she herself was concerned she cared not what might be the consequences of the trial. All her fears were now for her invalid boy.

"If there is any danger of her raising an alarm," said Booth in answer to the request of Degroot, "It will probably be best not to remove the gag. "Would you scream, Mrs. Eglantine, if you were allowed to speak?"

The seamstress answered the question in the only way in which it was possible, with her hands tied behind her back. She shook her head so as to reply in the negative.

"Believe her not, Mr. President," again exclaimed Degroot. "If you do, she will betray us all the moment her tongue is free to act."

Mrs. Degroot cast upon her husband a pitiable look of reproach that would have mantled the cheek of a man of moral principle with a blush of shame; but if it had any effect upon the yankeish heart of Degroot, it only made him the more determined of availing himself of the opportunity that now offered, of breaking forth from his matrimonial shackles.

"She says she will not," replied the actor to Degroot.

"I care not what she says. I am better acquainted with her than you are. Where is that letter, Mr. President? That is sufficient evidence."

Booth produced a letter.

"Did you write this letter, Mrs. Eglantine?" asked Booth rising and holding the document to her face. Mrs. Degroot was extremely astonished to find that her letter had fallen into the wrong hands; but still she felt no disposition to deny her own handwriting, and she bowed her head affirmatively. Booth returned to his seat.

"Gentlemen," said Booth, addressing the officers, "she acknowledges the crime: what verdict will you render?"

"Guilty," replied those composing the tribunal.

"Gentlemen," said the president, "I want to ask the woman a few questions before I pass sentence. I shall make the sentence dependent upon her answers to a certain extent. There may be circumstances that may tend to extenuate her crime. At all events, it would be best to see. It is possible that she may have acted the part of an amanuensis, and merely have written what was dictated by other persons. Are there any objections to this course?"

Degroot strenuously opposed this measure, but he was overruled, and it was agreed that Booth should propose such inquiries as he thought proper. It was thought most prudent, however, not to remove the gag, but to free the right hand, and allow the prisoner to write answers to the interrogations that might be propounded.

"Who told you that Lincoln was to be murdered?" commenced Booth when all was ready?

"That question I will not answer," wrote Mrs. Degroot.

"You wrote this letter to Mrs. Lincoln?"

"I did."

"Did you give it to her?"

"I thought so, but must have made a mistake."

"Who dictated it?"

"I did."

"Did you have an accomplice in this affair?"

"I will not implicate others."

"What excuse can you offer in vindication of your unfaithfulness to the society?"

"I shall offer none."

"What reason had you for betraying us?"

"Duty."

"Have you a husband?"

Degroot felt rather uncomfortable when this inquiry was propounded, and he was mentally preparing his defence, when the answer was read.

"I have none that I would claim."

"Where is your husband?"

"I claim none."

Degroot felt a sentiment of beastly gratitude towards his gagged wife. He breathed more freely.

"Why do you not?" continued Booth.

"Because he has proved himself unworthy."

"Who is your protector?"

"Nobody."

"Have you no friends?"

"None but God," wrote the poor woman while the big tears rushed to her eyes, and rolled down upon the paper. Booth faltered. He was a human being, and an emotion of pity was stealing into his heart and was gradually mollifying the asperity of his judicial severity. He was not a man to persecute a helpless woman. But, under the influence of false convictions of duty, he choked down the bitter feelings of his warm nature, and continued the examination.

"Are you an informer, or a spy?"

"I am not."

"Did you join the society for the sole purpose of betraying us?"

"I did not."

"What then was your motive in joining?"

"To please others."

"Whom do you mean by others?"

"I mean the members of this society. I made no application for membership; I did not desire to join. They wanted me to join, and I did so to please them—not myself."

"Will you give the name of your accomplice in this business, if by that means you can secure your liberty?"

"I have no accomplice."

"You undertook to expose us upon your own responsibility, then?"

"I did."

"Why did you not betray us long before this?"

"My object was not to expose the society, particularly, but to save the life of President Lincoln."

"Are you an abolitionist in principle?"

"I am not."

"Why then do you profess such friendship for Lincoln?"

"I do not believe it is right to commit murder. I have no friendship for Lincoln. I would have warned any one else."

"What punishment do you anticipate for your crime?"

"I do not know."

Booth paused. During the short silence that followed Mrs. Degroot wrote a few words and handed them to the actor. While he was reading them she looked into his face with the tears rolling down her cheeks.

The words were as follows:

"I left a sick child at home alone in the dark. If I return no more, what will become of him? Who will take care of him if I am murdered? Spare me for the sake of my poor, friendless child."

Booth gazed at the weeping woman, and a keen pang shot through his heart. There are few men in an enlightened country, who are so destitute of chivalry and the refined emotions of higher civilization, as to hear unmoved the appeals of a woman in distress. Nevertheless there are some; but John Wilkes Booth was not one of them. He bowed his head upon the table; his heart yielded to the woman's tears; the rigor of his official dignity relaxed. There was a struggle between his feelings and what he conceived to be his duty; but mercy triumphed over the demands of false justice.

Booth could not pronounce the severe sentence which he promised Coldheart. Presently from some cause, he became violently ill. He raised his head, and his countenance was deathly pale.

"Gentlemen," said the actor, "I am sick. I must retire; I am not able to preside. Mr. Degroot will you occupy the chair?"

Booth accordingly retired from the cellar, leaving the case in the hands of his associates.

Degroot took the vacated chair, and ordered the hand of his wife to be re confined to its mate.

"It becomes my duty, gentlemen," said the new president, "to pronounce sentence upon the prisoner. According to our constitution, death is the only penalty of trea-

chery. Mina Eglantine must therefore be duly executed to-night at twelve o'clock."

Mrs. Degroot, upon hearing this sentence, sat as if petrified. She exhibited no external indications of surprise or agony. It was the resignation of despair. A short discussion then ensued upon the mode of her execution. It was however finally determined that the criminal should be strangled in the cellar, and the corpse should be conveyed to the Potomac, and sunk silently beneath its dumb waters. Lots were drawn for a couple of executioners in the same manner in which they had been selected for the assassination of Lincoln, Johnson and Seward. Then the members all began to withdraw, the light was extinguished, and the prisoner was left alone in thick darkness, gagged and bound, to await till the hour of midnight should seal her dreadful fate.

Reader! for Heaven's sake do not forget that these men were Yankees! There was no full-blooded southern rebel among them. They were all yankees—yankees "in deed and in truth."

CHAPTER XVII.

"No tale is told by yon dark river—
Its moveless tongue is dumb forever—
Thousands dead upon its bottom lie,
Yet, no word is breath'd to passers-by."

The city of Washington lay slumbering in darkness. Benevolent Morpheus had kindly closed the eyes of all except the dissipated, and those from whom a lashing conscience had driven "nature's sweet restorer." The sable Goddess of Night reigned supreme—and casting a sombre pall over the earth, rendered partially useless the organ of vision, and thus checked the miserly proclivities of any avaricious mortal that might be inclined to disregard the emblem of her authority, and encroach upon her lawful dominions. The clock tolled the hour of midnight just as two men rose from a bed in a room belonging to the boarding house of Mrs. Surratt. One of them proceeded to light a lamp, then turned a screw so as to render the flame almost invisible, and a dull, dusky appearance was given to everything in the apartment.

"The hour has come, Vanderbetterton," said one, whose name was Davelier, and who has been mentioned in a preceding chapter.

"Well?" was the laconic reply of the other.

"The deed must be done."

"Yes, of course."

"This is an ugly piece of work, I'll swear," said Davelier, shrugging his shoulders. "I do not fancy it at all."

"No, I suppose not."

"It does not suit my feelings nor sentiments," continued Davelier. "I was not raised up to such dirty jobs. On the contrary, I was taught to abhor murder from my very infancy. 'Thou shalt not kill,' was one of the first things I learned. My father, who was a pious and consistent minister of the gospel, taught me

never to destroy even an insignificant animal in mere wantonness. That identical doctrine I preached to others for ten years. I do not know that I was by nature so bitterly opposed to bloodshed; but I preached against murder so long, and associated with my good christian brethren so much, that probably the holiness reflected from them has somewhat affected the original inclination of my tastes and emotions. A man may become religious from habit. That was my case anyhow. I was a christian from habit and association. I was a Baptist minister, Vanderbetterton—I wish to Heaven you had a longer name: Why didn't you tack on a t y, or a n-e-s-s to it, and thereby have improved its euphony? But, as I was saying, I was a Baptist minister, and preached the doctrine of the impossibility of falling from grace. I thought it right; therefore I still have some hopes of Heaven."

"You do?"

"Yes; are you surprised at it?"

"No, no. But if you have hopes of Heaven, I was just thinking that the devil might have too."

"I know not what that gentleman's hopes and anticipations may be, as I am not very intimately acquainted with him. You may be authorized to speak for him, but I am not. I battled manfully against his kingdom of darkness for ten years, and I claim a small credit at the hands of Heaven for my meritorious services. There was no such thing as falling from grace in our church. But now, if I do this bloody deed, or am even accessory, I greatly fear for the result—the spiritual result. The truth is, Vanderbetterton, I don't relish this job at all."

"It is too late to talk about that now. Come, the hour is already passed."

"How is the deed to be performed?" asked Davelier.

"She's to be strangled, you know. There's a rope in the cellar for that purpose. This must be tied around the woman's neck and twisted till respiration is impossible."

"Good God! how horrible!"

"I've witnessed sights equally as horrible," coolly replied Vanderbetterton.

"Where, in God's name?" asked Davelier, who appeared disposed to postpone the bloody work as long as possible.

"In California. I've seen Indians skin their victims alive; and I've seen men roasted to death over slow fires."

"White men?"

"Yes, indeed; some of them were my acquaintances."

"Why did you not prevent it?"

"I couldn't, by Jove. There were twenty to one against us. But I have not time to tell the tale now. Roasting a man alive," continued Vanderbetterton, "is a horrible torture; but strangling is bad enough, though. It is true, the body is not mutilated as in skinning, but the countenance looks awful while the operation is performing. The eyes sometimes burst from their sockets, the veins swell until they become blue, and the face is perfectly black."

"God of Abraham!" cried Davelier, looking wildly at Vanderbetterton, "is that the way we have got to destroy our prisoner?"

"To be sure it is. That was the sentence."

"But can we not adopt some other less revolting to the common principles of humanity? Why can we not tie a rope to the victim's neck, and sink her in the river? We could see no death struggles then. Down, down she would go to the bottom, and there rest till the last trump shall summon her to give an account of the deeds done in the body. That would be a much more decent method than the other, and less repugnant to the heart."

"That may be so," replied Vanderbetterton thoughtfully, "but it is not the sentence. We are bound to obey the edicts of the Junto, ain't we?"

"Certainly; but what difference could it make to the society, just so the woman is executed. If I had thought about it, I would have proposed the method I have suggested, as a substitute for the horrible one adopted by Degroot."

"Degroot desired to make sure work of it," replied Vanderbetterton. "The victim might possibly escape if thrown into the Potomac."

"I do not see how she could."

"The rope might break, and she could then rise to the top and swim ashore, or something else might happen. No, no, that will never do. We must know that the criminal is dead. We must look into the livid countenance, and see that no muscle moves; we must feel the pulse and heart, and know that they have ceased to beat."

"How long will it require for the victim to cross the Jordan of death?"

"About ten or fifteen minutes, provided the rope is held tight. But come, we must delay no longer. Let us draw lots, and see who must perform the duty. It will take only one."

"I thought both of us were to go together," said Davelier.

"Yes; but if I've got the job to do, I don't want any one to be looking at me; and if you have it to do, I don't want to see you. It's no very agreeable sight to behold."

"I would rather both of us should go together. I could not do the work by myself."

"Well, you must take your chances. You have as fair a showing as I have. May be I will draw the unlucky card."

"And if you do, I need not go into the cellar?"

"No."

"And if I draw it, you will not go?"

"Certainly not; that's fair."

"Well, I will try it," said Davelier with a sigh.

Accordingly, Vanderbetterton cut two small papers of different lengths, and put them in his hat.

"Draw!" said he to Davelier. "The one who gets the longest paper must be the executioner."

They drew, and the shorter paper was found in Vanderbetterton's hands.

"My God!" exclaimed Davelier, "have I got it to do?"

"You have, without a doubt."

"I do not believe I can."

"You must though."

"I do not know how to go about it."

"I've told you already. Twist the rope around the victim's neck, and hold it there till she dies."

"Good God!" cried Davelier as he thought of the horrible scene he must witness. "I cannot do this sanguinary deed. How much will you take, Vanderbetterton, to fill my place?" eagerly asked the terrified man as this new idea struck him.

"Well, I don't know," said Vanderbetterton slowly, as if calculating, "how much will you give me?"

"I will give you five dollars."

"Vanderbetterton's heavy mustaches concealed from view the scorn and contempt with which his upper lip curled, at the idea of avoiding the crime of murder for the pitiful sum of five dollars. However, he expressed no surprise at the yankee preacher's estimate of the difference between money and murder.

"I'll take it," at last said Vanderbetterton.

"Here is your money then, and much good may it do you," said Davelier running his hand in his pocket and drawing forth a bill.

"Now," said Vanderbetterton, "do you remain here till I return. I may be gone half an hour, or perhaps not so long. It depends altogether upon circumstances. If the prisoner does not cling to life with too much tenacity, I will come back before that time. Otherwise, I will not be here so soon."

"Very well, I will stay. May Aaron's God go with you."

Vanderbetterton then left the yankee preacher to spend the time as he thought best, and leisurely proceeded to the cellar.

It was a short time after twelve o'clock, when Mrs. Degroot, who was suffering much pain from the confinement of her limbs, and the distension of her jaws, heard a slight clicking at the door. She trembled with terror; for she knew that the hour appointed for her to die had come. The door opened. She then heard it silently closed, and the bolt turned in the lock. In a moment a light dispersed the darkness, and she beheld the stalwart form of Vanderbetterton. He deliberately opened a large pocket knife, and advanced to where Mrs. Degroot was sitting. Hope died within the heart of the poor woman as she looked into the rugged countenance of her executioner. His huge whiskers so completely hid the expression of his face; that if there was any indication of mercy or pity, it was invisible. The feelings of the helpless prisoner may be better imagined than described, as Vanderbetterton halted immediately before her.

"Mina Degroot," said he, "do you know me?"

She eagerly looked into his face with joyful surprise; but she appeared somewhat disappointed, and sadly shook her head.

"I should think not, Mina, it has been

many years since we met. You were a little girl when I saw you last. I see you would speak, but hold till I explain. I have come to save you, Mina; but now when I free you from these ugly shackles you must make no noise. If you do, all will be lost, and we may both lose our lives. You understand me?"

She bowed her head.

Vanderbetterton then cut the cords with which she was bound, and took the gag from her mouth. Mrs. Degroot spoke not for some time, but waited until her pain had somewhat subsided.

"You say you do not know me, Mina?" inquired Vanderbetterton when he saw that the lady was recovering.

"I have been thinking," said she, "but I don't recollect ever having seen you. Probably if I knew your name, I could recall you."

"I am called John Vanderbetterton."

"My husband was asking me about that gentleman sometime since, but if I ever knew any person by that name, I have forgotten it."

"My true name, Mina, is Joseph Eglantine."

"My dear Uncle Joseph, sure enough," cried Mrs. Degroot springing up and throwing her arms around his neck. "Oh, how glad I am you have come. God knows how thankful I am." She wept tears of joy, such as are shed by those who step from death unto life.

"It was fortunate for you, Mina, that I belonged to this society; for I will save you from a bloody death, or lose my own life in the attempt."

"Let us go, then, Uncle Joseph. I left my little sick boy alone at home."

"Not yet, Mina, not yet. You must be patient. Your boy will not suffer; he will sleep till morning, won't he?"

"But if he should wake, and find himself alone in the dark, I am fearful he would go into spasms."

"You will have to risk that. You are not safe yourself yet. You must exercise patience. Sit down, and let's talk awhile. We must remain here in the cellar for nearly half an hour."

"I will do as you think best, Uncle Joseph; but tell me how you came here?"

"I had business in Virginia," replied Joseph Eglantine, "which required my attention, and I left California some months ago. I went to your father's, who was very uneasy about you, as he had not heard from you for two years. I at last agreed to hunt you up, and went to Connecticut, where you last lived, and there learned that you had moved to this city. I then came here, and accidentally discovered Degroot. I saw him at Mrs. Surratt's, and learned from an acquaintance that he was a single man. I at once supposed that you were dead; but my suspicions were aroused by a remark which I overheard Degroot make."

"Why did you not ask him where I was?"

"If I had, he would probably have placed

you beyond my reach. He might have anticipated the bloody event which was to have taken place to-night. From what I could learn from your father, I knew he was an unprincipled villain. So I determined to watch him. For that purpose I assumed the name of Vanderbetterton, and joined the Bloody Junto, of which I found out Degroot was a member. The very night your name was proposed for membership, he affirmed publicly that he was not a married man. I knew then that he was after some mischief, though at the time I could not divine his motives. The night after you were initiated I followed you home, and have not lost sight of you and Degroot since."

"Then it was you who sent me money?"

"Yes. I thought from the appearance of your dwelling you needed it. You married a black hearted villain, Mina—both a gambler and a forger."

"A forger, uncle?" inquired Mrs. Degroot in great surprise.

"Yes, a forger. He caused your father to break by forging his name to a check. He would have been prosecuted but for your sake. Rather than expose the husband of his only child, your father retired as a broken merchant. He never mentioned the matter, in order to save your feelings. But Degroot is guilty of other villainies besides this."

"I know it, uncle, I know it."

"He has sought your life," continued Joseph Eglantine, "not because he is such a stickler for the rules of the Bloody Junto, but merely to get you out of his way. Do you know he is paying his addresses to a lady in this city?"

"I suspected as much."

"Did you never ask him about it?"

"No, I was afraid. I trusted that Miss Louvan would discover that he was married, and that he would repent of his folly."

"You were too true to the faithless wretch; but never mind that now. What are you going to do in the future—I mean in regard to Degroot?"

"I don't know, uncle; what do you advise?"

"You don't know? Do you suppose he loves you?"

"No, I fear he hates me," said the lady with tears in her eyes.

"Then don't shed a single tear for him. He does not deserve it. You must leave him, Mina leave him forever."

"I will do it, Uncle Joseph. I would be afraid to live with him now."

"Don't dream about such a thing, Mina. You must leave him. We must quit Washington as soon as possible. You would never be safe in this city."

"I am ready to go any time; just as soon as I can get my boy."

"We must begin to make preparations, then. I must now explain the programme to you. You know I was sent here to kill you. I have an accomplice, but I've deceived him thus far. He is waiting for me now. He supposes that I am taking your

life. You will have to act the corpse, Mina. All you will have to do is to keep perfectly still. We have to take you to the river, according to the sentence pronounced by Degroot, and sink your body beneath the waves. You must not be frightened at anything that may be said or done. I could easily get rid of my accomplice, but I want him for a witness. Now keep quiet till I return. I will not be gone many minutes."

"One question more, before you go, uncle?"

"Well, what is it?"

"Are you engaged in this conspiracy against Mr. Lincoln?"

"No, I am not. I joined the Junto for the sole purpose of watching Degroot. I took no interest whatever in the proceedings of the society, save, so far as they had a bearing upon my individual designs."

"Are you not going to inform Mr. Lincoln of his danger?"

"No, Mina, I am not. I shall not place my life in jeopardy for Mr. Lincoln. This is a yankee plot teetotally—concocted by Mr. Lincoln's own people. If they want to put him to death, it's none of my business to prevent it. I shall, therefore, occupy neutral grounds in this matter."

"Did you blame me for what I did?"

"Not at all. If you thought it your duty to warn Lincoln, you did right; but I don't conceive it is my duty to run my head into a snare to save the life of a man, who has done nothing for four years but heap up coals of fire upon my native state, and murder my friends. If his own people look on him as a tyrant, and wish to kill him, they may do it for all I care."

Saying this Eglantine left the cellar and returned to Davelier, whom he found lying upon a bed.

"The deed is done," said Eglantine, as he entered the room.

"Is she dead?" asked Davelier.

"I should not like to be any more so, at present, than she is?"

"Did she manifest much terror at the prospect of entering the valley of the shadow of death?"

"Very little. I did n't give her much time to think about it."

"It is an awful thing to die, Vanderbetterton. I have been recalling some of the rousing sermons I used to preach to my congregations upon death. Sir, I could once draw a picture of the "grim monster" on the pale horse, that would frighten the most obdurate sinner. I was a good hand in a revival. There was nobody like 'Brother Davelier' when a grand charge was to be made upon the strongholds of the Lord's adversary. I could, single handed, chase a hundred, and put ten thousand to flight?"

"Well, we've no time to listen to one of your rousing sermons to-night. Our work is not finished yet. The body must be taken to the river. Do you have the carriage driven near the door. I can carry the corpse from the cellar. I need no assistance."

"I thank you for that, I never did like to handle the dead."

"Go on, then, I will excuse you."

The two separated, and Eglantine returned to the cellar, where he remained till the carriage was driven to the street door. Then taking his niece in his arms, he placed her in the vehicle. Davelier mounted the seat with the driver, who was a member of the Junto, selected for the purpose, and Eglantine got inside with the corpse. The carriage was leisurely driven to the Potomac, below the city, where there was a skiff in readiness. The body was then lifted out by Eglantine and deposited in the bottom of the little boat together with a bag of rocks.

"You go at this business, Vanderbetterton, like you were accustomed to it. I will swear, I never would take a corpse in my arms—especially one that I had made such myself."

"You have too much tongue, Davelier, and too little discretion. You ought not to talk out here. Are you going with me to the middle of the river?"

"I do not know. Do you want me to?"

"I don't care. You can do as you please. I have done the work alone thus far, and I can complete it."

"If it makes no difference with you, then," said Davelier, "I would rather remain on terra firma. If the boat should happen to upset, I fear I would drown, for I never learned to swim. My mother was so very careful of my health when I was a boy, that she never would allow me to wade in water. Consequently, I have always had some kind of a hydrophobia."

"Well, if you'll stop your gab, you may go with your hydrophobia. You need not wait for me," continued Eglantine, getting into the water craft. "I'll not return to the shore."

"Why, where are you going?" asked Davelier.

"Somebody must take the skiff back to town. I suppose I'll have it to do."

"Well, good bye, then. You are very accommodating. May the God of Peace bless thee, and save thee with an everlasting salvation."

The carriage wheeled and dashed up the road, leaving Vanderbetterton alone to bury the dead in a watery grave.

"Davelier's cowardice will save us the trouble of leaving the shore," remarked Eglantine in a few moments after the vehicle had disappeared. "Rise, Mina, and let's go. I will however leave this sack of rocks into the river, that there may be no trace of my treachery to the Bloody Junto."

Then there was a splash in the water, the stones sank quietly to the bottom, and Mina thanked God in her heart that it was not her destiny to follow them.

"There's no telling," remarked Eglantine, how many murdered persons repose at the bottom of this same river. But, thank God, Mina, you're not one of them. Come, let's leave."

"Where will you go, uncle?"

"After your boy. Then we must get away from Washington in 'double quick' time. We must be several miles off by day-break."

Without further delay they hastened to the residence of Mrs. Degroot, which they reached about three o'clock in the morning. When they arrived in sight of the house, Mina was somewhat frightened to discover a light shining through the window. She cautiously approached, having left her uncle on the roadside till she should return with Clarence. Going to the window she looked in, and beheld Degroot seated at a table busily engaged in examining a bundle of papers. Little Clarence lay quietly sleeping on the bed, just as his mother had left him. Mrs. Degroot waited for some length of time, hoping that her husband would shortly retire. But he kept reading and searching among the papers, without appearing to be in the least haste. Half an hour elapsed, and there being no prospect of her husband's leaving, Mina returned to her uncle, in order to consult in regard to what must be done.

"He is in the house, uncle."

"Who? Degroot?"

"Yes; and he seems to have no disposition to leave the house. What shall we do, uncle?"

"Degroot," said Eglantine slowly, after a moment's reflection, "is an unmitigated scoundrel. He richly deserves any treatment that he might happen to receive, no matter how severe it might be. Death is no more than he merits. I will therefore propose two courses of action, Mina, and you can decide which to adopt. I will advance boldly upon the villain, tell him to the floor before he can recognize me, and take the boy out of the house; or we must go to the country, where you can hide till I return for the child to-morrow."

"No, no; I don't want any fighting about it."

"Well, We must go to the country then."

"I don't like to leave Clarence," said Mrs. Degroot hesitatingly.

"You must decide one way or the other, Mina. If you say so, I'll go right into the house and bring the boy out."

"I'm afraid of that, uncle. Blood might be spilled."

"A good bleeding would not hurt Degroot; and as for myself, I'll run the risk. I would as soon face the vile wretch as not."

"I don't want you to run any risk, Uncle Joseph. If any accident should happen to you, I wouldn't know what to do. I expect, then, we'd better go to the country, and wait till morning. Do you think Clarence will be in any danger?"

"I hardly know, Mina. Degroot is villain enough to do anything that is mean; but it seems to me that if it were his intention to murder the child, he would have gone about it before now. I don't suppose he would wait for daylight to do that."

"I reckon he would hardly murder the poor child," said Mrs. Degroot with a slight shudder.

"Do you say go, then? We haven't much time to lose."

"I reckon so, uncle," she replied with great reluctance.

"Come ahead, then. We must be gone."

Mrs. Degroot sorrowfully turned her face from the light, and following her uncle was soon lost in the darkness.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Self murder, that infernal crime,
Which all the Gods love their thunders at."

Degroot sat up the whole night at the table, busied with his papers. Morning dawned, and found little Clarence buried in deep sleep. Just as the sun was casting his first rays upon the lofty spires of Washington City, Degroot rose from his chair, collected the documents into a bundle, and thrust them into a drawer. Then he washed his face and hands. After this, he turned to the rude mantle-shelf, and taking up a wine-glass he poured into it a few drops from a vial that he drew forth from his pocket; then to this mixture he added a small quantity of water.

"This will do the work," thought Degroot to himself. "I might have tried its virtue long ago, and have sent them both on together. I have been too tender-hearted. The job is only half finished, but this will complete the work, and then I will be a free man once more. To-day will I present myself before Flora Louvan. I will know my fate. I do not doubt in the least that my wishes will be crowned with success. I have loved her with an ardor bordering upon madness. I never loved before with such an intensity of emotion. I have loved her with a wildness that has driven me to the commission of crime. I have every reason to believe I will be accepted; for she returns my affection. What reason then could she have for rejecting my suit? Egad! She must be mine. It will never do to commit this crime for nothing. With Flora and seven or eight hundred thousands to accompany her, I can be happy the remainder of my life. She is a noble girl—so different from Mina. I never was happy with old Egiantine's daughter. She was always too weak in the intellect. There is no comparison between the two. Flora is a brilliant girl, whom it would be a sin not to love. I can no more help loving her than I can change my physical form, or my own nature. With my mental constitution I am positively compelled to bestow upon this magnificent paragon of beauty all the warmest affection of my heart. To see her, is to love her. I disclaim all responsibility for this state of affairs, or for any results that may hereafter follow. Old David had a gentleman murdered to get his wife, and I have not acted half as bad as he did; yet the lecherous old rascal went to Heaven. Heaven or hell, I would not draw straws for the difference, if I can call Flora Louvan my own. If there is such a being as a God, and he made me and im-

planted passions in my heart that produce certain results, he is responsible for all consequences. I leave him therefore to deal with me as he pleases. I do not care a —"

With these profane thoughts in his mind, Degroot approached the bed where his little boy was slumbering in unsuspecting innocence. He held the glass in his hand, and looked into the pale face of the invalid sleeper; but the picture of angelic loveliness which the child presented made no impression on his stubborn heart. He was too far gone in iniquity—too much maddened by his unholy passion to be moved even by the horrors of murder.

"Clarence," said Degroot, laying his hand on the boy and shaking him till he was awakened.

"Where is Ma?" said the child half rising and looking wildly around the apartment.

"She is gone out," replied Degroot. "Here is your medicine, Clarence; come, take it like a good child."

"Ma never gave me any like that. It's not the right color."

"Never mind about the color. Your mother left this for you to take. Get up, and swallow it down."

"Ma told me never to take medicine from anybody but her," replied the boy looking suspiciously at his father.

"Did she tell you not to take it from me?" asked Degroot with a frown.

"Yea sir, she did."

"I do not care. You must take it. Come, get up."

"Wait till ma comes back; then I'll take it."

"No, you must take it now. Rise."

"Where is ma?" asked the little fellow peeping out the window in terror.

"She has gone out, I told you. Come, get up; I will wait no longer."

"Oh pa," said the child crying piteously, "please wait till ma comes."

"Not another minute. Get up and take it, or I will whip you."

"Don't whip me, pa! Don't whip me!" cried the boy with terrified earnestness.

"Take the medicine then, and I will not whip you."

"Oh pa! I don't want to. Ma told me not to take it."

"Clarence," said Degroot, "you are a naughty boy. Does your mother teach you to do wrong? Does she tell you not to mind your parents?"

"I know she don't; but she told me not to take medicine from anybody but her."

"I will not stand it any longer," said Degroot, going to the fire place and picking up a strip of plank intended for kindling. "Now take it, or I will punish you."

"Oh, pa! I mus'n't."

Degroot sat the glass down, and lifting the crying child from the bed, struck him several blows. "I'll take it! I'll take it!" at last exclaimed Clarence. "Don't whip me any more. I'll take it!"

"Well," said Degroot taking up the glass, "swallow it down then."

"Is it bitter, pa?" asked the sobbing, trembling boy.

"No. It has no taste at all. Down with it."

Clarence thus forced by his inhumane father, drained the glass to the bottom.

"Now go to bed, if you want to, and sleep."

"Oh, where is my ma?" cried Clarence running to the door, and looking eagerly up and down the road.

"She will be back presently," said Degroot sternly. "Go to bed."

Clarence obeyed, and returned slowly to the bed. He lay down a few moments, then suddenly sprang up into a sitting posture. The father was watching him closely.

"Oh pa! it hurts! it hurts!" he cried laying his hand on his stomach. "Give me water! water!" he continued in the greatest agony.

"You must not make so much noise, Clarence," said Degroot handing him water. "Keep quiet; it will quit presently."

The boy threw himself back on the bed, clenched his teeth, and closed his lips firmly over them. But still the medicine did not appear to operate with the rapidity which Degroot desired; for taking the wine glass, he mixed another dose somewhat larger than the first. When, however, he again turned to the bed, such a marked change had come over the child's features, that he sat the glass down, and placed his hand upon the little sufferer's wrist to feel the pulse.

"Pa," said Clarence rousing up, "I'm so sleepy."

"Well, go to sleep then," replied the father.

"Oh my ma! Where is she?"

"She will be here after awhile. Go to sleep."

"Let me see her first."

"Keep still, Clarence. If you do not the medicine will make you sick. You must not talk."

The child obeyed. He said not another word, but looked piteously into his father's face. In a short time he was speechless. His eyes became set in his head. It was evident that the arrow of death had penetrated the heart. Degroot kept his fingers on the pulse, and watched the progress of the "grim monster" as he developed himself in the lineaments of his little son's countenance. The pulsations grew feebler and feebler, and then entirely ceased. The horrible deed was done. Poison had sapped the foundations of life, and Clarence was transformed into an angel. He lay sleeping in the beauty of that death which is but the beginning of eternal life.

"There is no earthly incumbrance now," thought Degroot rising. "Both are silent, and can never appear as witnesses against me. I regret the stern necessity that impelled me to the commission of this crime. But it is too late for repentance now, if I were so disposed. I must go and reap the fruits."

Degroot then broke open an old trunk be-

longing to his wife, and to his great joy found more than a hundred dollars, which Joseph Egiantine had sent to his niece.

"Egad!" said he, "this comes in the very nick of time. It will save me the trouble of trying to borrow. Who would have thought that Mina could accumulate such a snug sum. She was very deceitful never to tell me about it. I never had much opinion of her anyhow. However, I will not find fault now. *De mortuis nihil, nisi bonum.* She was very kind to leave me this substantial token of her affection. No thanks to her, though. This never would have fallen into my hands, had she been the least suspicious of the designs of the Bloody Junto."

After this, he pushed the trunk under the bed, threw a quilt over the corpse of little Clarence, and left the house. He took the road into the city, and stopped at the first barber-shop to which he came. Here he had himself decently shaved. The next manoeuvre was to make some additions to, or rather to replace some of his clothing. Then, with a swelling heart, he hastened to call on Flora Louvan. He rang the door bell, sent in his card, and in a short time the young lady made her appearance.

"You are early this morning, Mr. Degroot," said Miss Louvan with a radiant smile, after the customary salutations had been exchanged.

"That is your fault—not mine," replied Degroot.

"I do not understand you; how can that be?"

"Why, you are so attractive. I was irresistibly drawn towards you, just as the magnetic needle is attracted to the North Pole. If I were blind, I believe I could find you by the power of love alone."

"You are very much of a flatterer, Mr. Degroot."

"Far from it, Miss Flora. I meant exactly what I said. I am utterly miserable when not in your presence. For months past I have seen no peace. I love you with a madness that is excruciating. I can endure it no longer, and I have come to ask you to put an end to my suspense, my agony, by gratifying hopes which you have raised and encouraged."

"What mean you, Mr. Degroot?" asked Flora in apparent surprise.

"I mean, that I have come to ask you to be mine."

"Indeed?" said Flora without any of that blushing and charming confusion which usually follows a proposal.

"Have I not a right to ask that great boon?"

"To be sure you have; and I have an equal right to refuse it," replied Flora with a laugh that might be interpreted in more ways than one.

"You would have under certain circumstances, Miss Flora; but not after having so wrought upon my affections as to render life insupportable deprived of your presence."

"I am really much obliged to you for the

unmerited compliment, Mr. Degroot, but I am unaware of any intention to create in your mind an interest in my favor."

"Nevertheless," replied Degroot, not over-pleased with the young lady's manner, you have managed to enslave my heart."

"Managed, Mr. Degroot? I have practiced no arts, and employed no tactics to secure your affections."

"But yet," said Degroot with uneasiness, "I have loved you, and I have had good reasons to suppose that my feelings were reciprocated."

"Your reasons, I fear, would not stand the test of sound logic."

"Tell me," said Degroot turning a shade paler, "if I have been mistaken? Is it possible my affection has been thrown away? Is it possible that my emotions find no response in your heart? Have I loved in vain? Say not so, Miss Flora. Do not let me suppose, for one instant, that I have suffered ages of torturing suspense, all for naught."

"You might have relieved yourself of suspense long since, Mr. Degroot, by mentioning this subject earlier."

"In what way?" asked Degroot.

"You could have received a positive answer; and that, I believe, always ends suspense."

"True; but would the termination of my suspense have been the beginning of misery?"

"That would depend upon yourself!" replied Flora laughing.

"Do not mock me thus, Miss Flora, but tell me with candor what you mean?"

"Exactly what I say."

"Is my hope, then, destined to be blasted?"

"What hope, Mr. Degroot?" asked Flora with provoking coolness.

"The hope which I have so long cherished—the hope with which I have solaced myself until it has become a part of my nature—the hope that you will be mine. Am I to be disappointed?"

"If that is the hope to which you have reference, it rests upon a sandy foundation, Mr. Degroot."

"You will not be mine?"

"Never," replied Miss Louvan with firmness.

"Oh, do you really mean it?"

"Most assuredly I do."

"Then, in the name of common sense why have you deceived me so long? Why have you tantalized me with vain delusions? You have done wrong, Miss Flora," he exclaimed with reproachful energy. "You have done wrong to lure me into a maelstrom from which there is no escape."

"You do me injustice, Mr. Degroot," interrupted Miss Louvan, "by the use of such language. I have never made any effort to engage your affections; nor can I be held responsible for your hopes and anticipations. I have never even so much as hinted that your visits were agreeable."

"You never said they were disagreeable."

"I know I did not. I flatter myself that I have been too well raised to insult gentlemen who see proper to favor me with their calls.

There are others, besides yourself, that honor me with their company; but would it not be the height of impudence and presumption in me to tell them their absence would be pleasing, merely through fear that I might make conquests?"

"It would in ordinary, social intercourse," replied Degroot, "but when I addressed you in such a way that you could not possibly misunderstand my meaning, you did not manifest disapprobation. I, of course, thought that you encouraged my suit. I had a right, therefore, to suppose my addresses were not distasteful. You encouraged me, Miss Flora, and I loved you with madness."

"I never encouraged you, Mr. Degroot," replied Miss Louvan with dignity. "I cannot allow you to say so without denying it positively and emphatically. You can mention no expression of mine that ever was intended to make you believe that I regarded you with more favor than my other visitants."

"Your actions at least have induced me to believe that my suit would be approved. Your very silence, when I made a declaration of love, which I did more than once, signified acceptance. I could not construe it otherwise."

"That was your construction, not mine."

"Yes, but when you saw that I was in error, you should have dispelled it as soon as possible, and thereby saved me a bitter disappointment. This you would have done if you had had any regard for my feelings. But you did encourage me, Miss Flora, by your actions, by your very failure to promptly crush my budding affection. You knew that I loved you; for I frequently told you so. What would have been easier than for you to inform me that my emotion was useless? How much wretchedness you would have prevented. Why did you not do this? You have acted the coquette, Miss Flora," exclaimed Degroot stung to the quick by his rejection. "You have jilted me. You know not what you have done—what you have caused me to do. You have triumphed; you have crushed my heart; you have driven me to desperation. I do not care now what becomes of me. Life is a burden. But this victory will do you no good. Every coquette receives an adequate punishment. You are no exception to the rule, and you will come to no good. Mark it, you will come to no good."

"This is strange language from a gentleman, Mr. Degroot."

"I cannot help it, Miss Louvan. I am terribly disappointed. I have a right to reproach you with your extreme cruelty, and the unnecessary anguish you have caused."

"I cannot allow you to proceed further in this strain, Mr. Degroot, without entering my protest. I will not be responsible for your disappointment. I fear you belong to that unfortunate class of persons who are always construing a lady's friendship, if she should profess any, into a warmer sentiment towards themselves. If you do, you deserve to suffer for your presumption. I have treated you

as a friend—nothing more. But if, because I received your visits in kindness and familiarity, you were so vain as to suppose I was in love with you, you are mistaken; and the fault is your own. I do not love you, and never dreamed of such a thing. I cannot be justly blamed for that. I have a right to bestow my affection upon whom I please. I cannot suffer you, therefore, to throw the responsibility of your misfortunes on me. It is unkind in you."

"Your defence is but a lame one, Miss Flora. But you are like all coquettes. They entice to destruction, and then assume an innocence equal to the hypocrisy they have practiced. You now look astonished—like an angel charged with perjury. You put on an air of amazement at this *denouement*, which you could not but foresee. Ah, Miss Flora, throw off that disguise. You have been deceiving me all along. You are a consummate jilt; you have studied the coquette's art thoroughly. You have achieved a victory; you have conquered me. I acknowledge it. You have made me a desperate man."

"Oh, you have your senses about you, Mr. Degroot. You are not yet *non compos mentis*," replied Flora with a smile.

"You have transformed me into a murderer!" cried Degroot wildly.

"I was not aware of that," said Flora with calmness.

"You will force me to commit suicide," said Degroot rising.

"I have heard others talk in this grandiloquent style before. I think you will survive the disaster, sir."

"Perfidious Siren!" thundered Degroot, who had so far forgotten himself as to draw a pistol, "provoke me no longer, or I will send you on before me.—I have half a notion to take you down to the regions of Pluto."

While the discarded lover was thus raging, his form trembled with anger and frenzy, his eyes glowed with a wild brilliancy, and he looked like a madman. A complete change seemed to have taken place in Degroot's nature. The consciousness that he had committed murder, and all to no purpose, threw him off his guard, and he was reckless. Flora, in despite of her efforts to maintain her self-possession, became alarmed at his terrifying aspect. She could not but fear somewhat for her personal safety. To shriek aloud would only cause the assassin to hasten with the execution of his bloody purpose. She did not doubt that he intended to use the weapon on one of them. While Degroot was standing before her, with the pistol in his hand, seeming momentarily to hesitate what course to pursue, she was considering whether it would not be politic to spring to her feet and escape. She had made up her mind to try the experiment, when a shadow darkened the door, and then J. Wilkes Booth entered the parlor. The scene now rapidly changed; for Degroot suddenly thrust the weapon into its place, turned upon his heel, went at the top of his

speed into the street, and hurried along in the direction of his house. The acquaintances whom he chanced to meet stared at him as he went rushing by with undignified celerity, and some even accosted him, but the murderer paid no heed to the noisy world around him. Whatever might be the purpose he had in view, he moved like one determined upon its accomplishment. The world seemed to glide by him as he hurried on. The speed at which he was going soon brought him to his shabby residence. Entering, he glanced at the bed; but nothing had been disturbed. Little Clarence lay still and cold in the dread silence of that sleep which "knows no waking." But Degroot's business was not to attend to the dead. He hastened to the drawer in which the papers he had examined the preceding night were deposited. He seized the poker and stirred up the fire that had nearly died out, then threw the bundle upon the enlivened coals. He gazed at the burning mass, till the blaze ceased, and then covered the blackened fragments with glowing embers, that no trace of them might remain. Just as he had completed the destruction of his papers, Joseph Eglantine walked boldly into the room. The murderer appeared a little surprised to see him.

"What will you have?" said Degroot.

"I have come for the child of your wife," was the reply.

"There he is," said Degroot pointing to the bed, and seeming to have no curiosity in regard to Vanderbetterton or his purposes.

"You don't deny having a wife then?" inquired Eglantine eyeing him with sternness.

"No," replied Degroot with cool candor.

"You sentenced her to death last night."

"Yes," replied Degroot in the same tone.

"May I have the child?"

"Take him, sir, take him."

"He is your child?"

"Yes, but take him if you want to."

"Will you make no provision for his maintenance and education?"

"No."

"Why won't you?"

"Because he will not need it. Look at him."

Eglantine went to the bed, and uncovered the body; he laid his hand on the boy's face, but it was cold.

"He is dead?" said Eglantine in a hurried tone of inquiry.

"I think he is."

"You talk quite strangely, Mr. Degroot. This child was alive last night. What has caused his death?"

"I suppose he died for the want of breath."

"You have murdered him!" exclaimed Eglantine horror-stricken as this conviction seized upon his mind.

Before any reply could be made to the charge, Mina Degroot came walking swiftly into the apartment. She had been left by her uncle in the country, several miles from Washington. He had promised to go back for the boy, and to rejoin her at a certain

hour. But when he reached the city, he was necessarily delayed by the transaction of some business which he had forgotten. The hour expired, and Mrs. Degroot was watching the road with a mother's anxiety for the return of her uncle; but he came not. Another hour sped away, and then she became uneasy and restless. She could not keep still. Taking the road that led to the city, she traveled as she thought slowly along, with the intention of meeting Joseph Eglantine and her boy. She kept moving on, becoming more alarmed at every step. After awhile she came within sight of the city. Here she halted for only a quarter of an hour; but it seemed an age to her. She could endure the torturing suspense no longer. She had forgotten her uncle's injunction not to leave the house until he should come back. She feared that some dreadful accident prevented his return. All the instincts of maternity urged her to go forward. The horrible thought that Degroot might have murdered the boy, accelerated her speed. This agonizing suspicion drove all considerations of personal safety from her mind. The terrors of the Bloody Junto sank into insignificance. To save her boy was the only motive that now controlled her action. When she arrived at her house she heard voices inside, but she stopped not to listen. She merely glanced at the two men as she entered, and moved to the bed. But when she beheld the pale countenance of her darling child, her grief, horror and agony may be imagined by those who have witnessed such heart-rending scenes.

"Oh, Clarence, Clarence!" cried Mrs. Degroot, earnestly shaking the child, "wake up, darling. Speak to your mother. It is I, Clarence. It is your mother. Oh, he is dead! he is dead!" screamed the distracted mother in inconsolable anguish. "Oh, Uncle Joseph, he is dead! he is dead! what shall I do? Clarence, Clarence!" she cried gathering him in her arms, "wake up, darling. I have come after you. Speak to me, Clarence!"

At that moment the wine glass caught the eye of Joseph Eglantine, and the color of the liquid at once aroused his suspicions.

"You have poisoned the child!" he cried turning to Degroot.

"Oh, Percy, Percy, why did you do this?" exclaimed the weeping woman.

The murderer made no direct reply to this accusation; but he slowly rose from his seat, and turned his back upon his accusers.

"I have lived long enough," said he, talking more to himself than to any person in the room. "I would henceforth be a disgraced man. I might even swing from the gibbet, an accused felon. Kill me," he continued, facing Eglantine, "kill me. I am ready."

"Wretched murderer," said Joseph Eglantine sternly, "you deserve death, but I will let the law take its course."

"Kill me! kill me!" cried Degroot drawing his pistol.

"The hangman will do that job for you."

"Never, never!" exclaimed the murderer

fiercely. "The law shall be cheated of its victim. I will never stand upon a platform before that sea of human faces upturned to behold the criminal's death. I will rob the savage multitude of that pleasure. Mine, you want to be revenged, and you shall be. Here is my blood."

While Degroot was speaking he had been preparing the weapon for use, and by the time the last words had escaped his lips, he placed the muzzle against the centre of his forehead, and pulled the trigger. The contents were blown into his head, and he fell heavily to the floor. The murderer's lips slightly quivered, and the guilty soul of Percy Degroot had passed beyond the confines of mortality. Eglantine had made an effort to prevent the suicide, but he was too late. When he reached forth his hand the ball was in Degroot's brain.

Here we must leave Joseph Eglantine and his miserable niece. To trace their history further, though it might be interesting, would swell the present volume beyond its intended limits. We will simply state that they left the City of Washington as soon as circumstances would allow, and our kind reader must imagine the rest. There are many thrilling incidents connected with the Bloody Junto, which we have not the space to relate. Some of them have passed into history, and will be read by future generations with feelings of horror. But discarding all collateral incidents, except those that are necessary to a clear understanding of our story, we will hasten on.

CHAPTER XX.

"Then come the wild weather—come sleet or come snow.
We will stand by each other, however it blow;
Oppression and sickness, and sorrow and pain,
Shall be to our true love as links to the chain."

When last our attention was directed to J. Wilkes Booth, he had just entered the parlor of Dr. Louvan. He was considerably surprised to see Degroot standing in the floor, in the presence of Flora Louvan, with a pistol in his hand. Flora could not but exhibit some indications of uneasiness and alarm; and the actor was about to ask an explanation of the strange scene, when, as already stated in the preceding chapter, Degroot suddenly put up his weapon, and dashed out into the street.

"You were just in time to do me an important service," said Flora, after the murderer had disappeared, and she had somewhat recovered from her momentary fright. Hereupon followed an explanation, which would not be interesting to the reader to repeat, as it embraced only ground that we have already traveled over.

"I deem myself very fortunate, Miss Flora," said the actor after the young lady had finished her explanation, "to step in in at such a moment. It is so like a romance that you

must excuse my haste, when I tell you I must endeavor to make the *dénouement* interesting, at least as much so as is usual under circumstances of this character."

"*Qui est ce?*" inquired Flora, her gayety returning.

"You have often read, in romances of savage ruffians making attacks upon beautiful, but defenceless damsels?"

"To be sure I have. That is a picture which is a perfect *sine qua non* in all thrilling novels."

"But the picture would not be complete if a high-spirited, dashing beau did not rescue the lovely damsel."

"And then claim her hand as a reward for his great services," said Flora with a smile.

"Not so fast, Miss Flora. That would be quite ungenerous and cruel to the poor maid, unless the same romantic attachment should spring up in her heart, that induces the preserver of her life to claim the reward you have mentioned. The romance without that consideration would be imperfect. But when affection becomes reciprocal, then begins a most delightful story. You know the result."

"Certainly, the course of true love never runs smooth. So they undergo many grievous and tear-producing trials. Perhaps they are captured by merciless savages, and are tied to the stake two or three times to be burned, or some other disaster happens: then they finally escape."

"But what is the *finale*—the grand winding-up scene, without which no reader would think the story worth a perusal?"

"I know what you want me to say," replied Miss Louvan. "A most magnificent wedding is the conclusion."

"Now you have come to the point," said Booth. "I want that to be the record of our history, whose monotony has been slightly disturbed by the scene which has just transpired."

"You are in too much of a hurry, Mr. Booth," replied Flora gaily. "Your programme would end the story in the middle of the volume. We have not gone through any of the difficulties of the romance yet."

"In some romances, Miss Flora, the difficulties come after marriage. Our history at least, if the fates are auspicious, will begin with a marriage; and, no doubt, afterwards you will think it romantic enough."

"Why will I, Mr. Booth?"

"That I cannot yet disclose—at least, only in part," replied the actor changing his manner to one of more solemnity. "You recollect when I conversed with you last, I told you I was dissatisfied with my condition in life. I was thirsting for honorable distinction. My profession, it is true, has given me considerable notoriety, but I am not satisfied with eminence of that character. My ambition aims at posthumous fame. An actor, when he dies, is soon forgotten. His glory clings to him, and goes down to the grave with him. That does not suit the cravings of my soul. I want to live in the

memories of men, after my bones rest beneath the sod. My glory must not follow me like a shadow into eternity; it must remain in the earth to perpetuate my fame, when I can no longer increase it by action. I am therefore going to appear in history. The iron pen of truth shall trace my name in ineffable letters on the undying pages of time's ponderous volume. Before another month is added to the past, the name of John Wilkes Booth will be on every tongue throughout christendom. A deed will have been accomplished that will startle the political and social circles of all Europe and America. I will be the hero, not of an hour, but of an age."

Flora made no reply to these extravagant assertions: but she was not indifferent to the energetic voice that uttered the wild, maniacal words. There was an influence in its very intonations, that was more charming to her than the sweetest sounds of music.

"These honors," said Booth, after a pause, "I now ask you to share."

"Your honors are too far in the future, Mr. Booth," replied Miss Louvan, "to dazzle an unimaginative mortal like myself."

"Not so far as you might suppose," said the actor. "The sun will not rise again ere Washington City will be in a perfect commotion."

"Why? is mutiny brewing?"

"I can say to you that a great movement will begin to-night—a movement that will soon carry joy to thousands, yea millions of hearts, for it will bring peace to our bleeding country. I am the projector of this movement. It has been going on secretly for some time past, but the hour is nearly at hand when it will be made public. I am not permitted to reveal more than that, at present."

"And 'that' is all Greek to me," said Flora smiling.

"But it will all be disclosed before you are many hours older."

Then there followed a short silence, such as sometimes takes place when two awkward lovers lose their loquacity. The last remark, however, must not be thought applicable to Booth and Miss Louvan, both of whom were well versed in the arts of polite society. Their silence was but the natural pause precedent to a new paragraph.

Miss Flora," resumed Booth presently. "I must now ask you to decide my fate. Will you share my destiny? You know that I love you. There is no use of a repetition of that fact. You have had sufficient proof of it. Am I to be kept in suspense longer? That is the question."

"To be, or not to be, that is the question," said Flora sportively.

"We have had enough of this light talk, Miss Flora. I have asked you a serious question that ought to be answered seriously and promptly; and it must be answered so right now or never."

"Why so, Mr. Booth?"

"Because, if you discard me, or refuse to

give me a positive answer, either one way or the other, I shall leave Washington City this very night to return no more."

"Suppose I should answer affirmatively, what would be your course?"

"There will have to be an elopement."

"When?"

"To-night."

"What is the necessity for an elopement?"

"One good reason is, that your father would be opposed to our union."

"How do you know that?"

"I learned it from Mrs. Coldheart."

"Is that all the reason?"

"No; another is that my affairs may be so situated that I cannot return to Washington at all."

"And in that case——?"

"I will go to Europe."

"How do you like the arrangement?" said Booth, after a short pause, during which Flora seemed to be reflecting.

"I am not very well pleased with it," replied the girl decidedly.

"To what do you object?"

"The whole arrangement is objectionable. This great movement that you speak of, and which you say is destined to make you the hero of a world, appears to me rather suspicious. There is a mystery concerning it which you fear to explain to me. You talk sometimes like you had doubts about it yourself. But if the result is to be as you affirm, why not wait till it becomes an absolute certainty?"

"If I should, would you become Mrs. Booth?"

"*Oui, Monsieur,*" said Flora laughingly."

Booth looked astonished at the young lady who had answered his question in such a blind, wanton manner. No blush overspread her beautiful features, but her countenance was gay with laughter at Booth's seeming amazement.

"I scarcely know whether you understood the question or not," said the actor with an air of perplexity.

"Certainly I did, Mr. Booth."

"You must be jesting, then."

"No sir; I am in cold earnest. What is so astonishing about it?"

Booth was somewhat puzzled.

"You treat the matter with too much levity," he said at length.

"Do you want me to cry about it?"

"No, of course not."

"Do you want me to go into convulsions about it?" she archly inquired, and then laughed more than ever.

"I would rather you would do anything than laugh about it," said the actor. "It is nothing to laugh at."

"Very well. I can be as serious as a solemn sister of charity. I see you are disappointed. If you do not like my reply I will change it."

"Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won, I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay."

Now go on. What next?"

"That is for you to say," replied Booth.

"I have told you plainly how matters stand. We must be married this very day or proba-

bly not at all. The sooner the better, as far as I am concerned. I have much business to transact to-day, and I must therefore urge you to decide at once. If your decision is favorable to my wishes, the ceremony will be performed in the course of an hour. Then to-night we will leave the city."

"To return when?"

"That depends entirely upon circumstances. If the movement, of which I have been speaking, be successful, we will return in a short time, in a triumph at that. If by any mishap, though, it should not, we will go to Europe on a bridal tour. I have an abundance of wealth, and we can live in the old world in splendor. Whatever may be the result of to-night's work, I will be a hero. Of that you may be certain. Become mine then, Flora, in another hour, and we will fly from these blood-stained shores, or be equal to the very proudest in the land. I believe your father will have no cause to blush for his son-in-law. But in a fortnight from now he will be proud to own J. Wilkes Booth as a relative. If, however, I should be mistaken, we can be happy anyhow. Despite the world and the scorn of its self-inflated aristocrats, we can be happy. The consciousness of possessing your esteem and affection would be sufficient happiness for me in any clime, or under any circumstances; and if you feel half the affection for me that I do for you, we can be independent of the world, even should poverty scatter its thorns along our pathway. Will you agree to my proposition?"

"I have my doubts as to the propriety of such a course, Mr. Booth."

"You must decide one way or the other, Flora," said the actor showing a little disappointment. "My time is very pressing. I must know my doom right now."

It was fortunate for the actor that at this moment a third party appeared. The wiry, scheming Mrs. Coldheart joined the two lovers. She seemed to be a confidant of both parties. Thinking that it would be advantageous to the plans of the Bloody Junto, to unite Booth and Flora in the holy bonds of wedlock, her persuasions were now added to those of the actor. Miss Louvan did not readily accede to the proposition of Booth. There was a struggle between love and pride. She had gloomy forebodings in regard to the future; but she could not endure the thought of an eternal separation from the handsome actor. So she at last yielded her better judgment to that of Mrs. Coldheart, and consented to an elopement. The parties then separated. Flora and Mrs. Coldheart went to the house of the latter to prepare for the secret marriage. Booth soon made all necessary arrangements, and rejoined his affianced in the course of an hour, accompanied by a minister. And there, upon Friday, in the presence of only two witnesses, Miss Louvan gave her hand and heart to an actor. She was Mrs. J. Wilkes Booth.

CHAPTER XXI.

"He hastes him on with cautious heed—
Prepares to do the dreadful deed—
Then mounts upon his prancing steed,
And proudly rides away."

Immediately after the marriage ceremony, John Wilkes Booth left his beautiful bride to prepare for their flight, and proceeded leisurely down to Pumphrey's stable situated on C street, in the rear of the National Hotel. Here he engaged a couple of fine saddle-horses, promising to call for them in the middle of the afternoon. It was now about half past eleven o'clock. From the livery stable he went to the Kirkwood Hotel, on the corner of Pennsylvania avenue and Twelfth street, where calling for a card, and a sheet of note paper, he sat down and wrote upon the former as follows:

For Mr. Andrew Johnson:

I don't wish to disturb you; are you at home?

J. W. BOOTH.

"To this message," says a northern writer, "which was sent up by the obliging clerk, Mr. Johnson responded that he was very busily engaged. Mr. Booth smiled, and turning to his sheet of note paper, wrote on it. The fact, if fact it is, that he had been disappointed in not obtaining an examination of the vice-president's apartment and a knowledge of the vice-president's probable whereabouts the ensuing evening, in no way affected his composure. The note, the contents of which are unknown, was signed and sealed within a few moments. Booth arose, bowed to an acquaintance, and passed into the street. His elegant person was seen on the avenue a few minutes, and was withdrawn into the Metropolitan Hotel." Here taking his seat in a private room, he composed his paper,

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

"It not unfrequently happens when men's political designs are only partially accomplished, that their names are coupled with infamy, and their memories traduced, for the mere want of some vindication of their motives and conduct. The present paper, in the event of my failure to achieve all the purposes I have in contemplation, is intended to give to posterity a clear insight into the motives that prompted me to the commission of a bloody deed. To all those who may be disposed to cast reproach and obloquy upon my name and memory, I would say, extend sufficient charity as to believe I was controlled by principles of patriotism, and influenced by convictions of duty to a suffering people. Do this, and my act may stand upon the gory pages of history without any other defence or apology. Abraham Lincoln has tyrannized over the people of the United States for four long years. He has brought great calamities upon all classes of society, and caused millions to shed tears of bitter sorrow. In a word, his administration is characterized by a train of abuses and op-

pressions, such as no people would endure from a crowned head. I cannot but believe his death would lead to the immediate restoration of peace. He is a tyrant, and I have determined, after mature deliberation, but with the patriotism of a Brutus, to rid the country of his presence. I bear him no malice whatever. It is not the man at whom the blow is aimed, but the despot. Such in brief is my motive. If I am condemned, I shall at least carry with me the approval of my own conscience.

"I know how foolish I shall be deemed for undertaking such a step as I now have in view. On the one side, I have many friends and everything to make me happy; where my profession alone has gained me an income of more than twenty thousand dollars a year, and where my great personal ambition has such a wide field for labor. On the other hand, I can expect little from the south; a place now where I have no friends, except beneath the sod; a place where I must become a private soldier or a beggar. To give up all the former for the latter, besides my mother and sisters, whom I love so dearly, (although they differ so widely from me in opinion,) seems insane; but the God of truth and justice is my judge.

"Right or wrong, God judge me, not man. For be my motive good or bad, of one thing I am sure, the lasting condemnation of the north. I love peace more than life. I risk my own life to secure this great blessing to our distracted country. I have loved the union beyond expression. For four years have I waited, hoped and prayed for the dark clouds to break, and for a restoration of our former sunshine. To wait longer would be a crime. All hope for peace is dead. My prayers have proved as idle as my hopes; but God's will be done.

"Southern men! To you I owe a debt of gratitude. It was from you I received the first words of encouragement, after I had been hissed from the northern stage. It is for your sake, principally, that I hazard my personal safety, to secure to you the blessings of peace. If I should fall in my attempt to free you from the shackles of a galling despotism, call me not an assassin, as I think a portion of the north will. I once volunteered among the noble sons of Virginia, when John Brown endeavored to inaugurate a revolution, designed to exterminate the whites of the south. I stood near him as a guard, when he suffered the extreme penalty of the law, and paid the price of his folly. I allude to this not in a spirit of braggadocio, but simply to excite in your minds some sympathy for one who may go down to a grave reddened with his own heart's blood. Whether this should be the case or not, I may not soon have an opportunity of presenting to you the reasons by which I have been governed. I may become a wanderer upon foreign shores, and there may be none to palliate the 'so-called' crime of John Wilkes Booth. Do not traduce my name. If you can shed no pitying tear to my memory, do not at least join in the cry of

those who may endeavor to stigmatize me as a murderer. I leave my name and deed with you. If they revive no fond associations in your memories, let them remind you of the sacrifices I have made, in order to stay the tide of blood in your sorrowful south. Remember, if I fall, I die in that 'last ditch,' which the north has so long derided. Do this, and I am content.

J. WILKES BOOTH.

Having carefully sealed the foregoing document, Booth again appeared upon the street, and happened to meet with Clark, his brother-in-law. They both entered the hotel, and the actor drew a letter from his pocket.

"Clark," said he, "I am going to leave Washington to-night, and I have a request to make of you."

"Where are you going?" inquired Clark.

"I have business that will require me to be absent for a few days," replied the actor evasively, "perhaps two weeks. I may possibly be gone longer than that. But no matter about the length of time. I want you to take care of this paper for a short time. If by any accident I should not return at all, you are at liberty to open it."

"What is the matter?" asked Clark in surprise.

"Nothing at all," replied Booth calmly. "In these days one cannot see what a day may bring forth. I might," he continued with a smile, "be captured by the rebels, and boarded in the hotel at Andersonville! Or I might take a notion to go out west, or farther than that. If you hear anything of that sort, I want you to open this paper. But I want you to keep it ten days any how, whatever you may hear. If I get back in that length of time, you must return it to me unbroken."

"Why, what is in it?" asked Clark.

"That you will find out in due time."

"Is it your will?"

"No, no," replied Booth. "You will know soon enough—that is if I do not return in ten days."

"This is a strange movement, Wilkes," said Clark as if in doubt.

"No, it is not," said the actor. "But if you do not wish to do me this small favor, I will deposit the paper with some one else. It contains something that may be useful, if I do not return shortly."

"Oh, I can keep it for you," replied Clark, concluding that the document related to Booth's pecuniary affairs.

"Thank you. Let's go now and dine."

It was now about one o'clock, and the two sat down to dinner. Clark discovered nothing unusual in Booth's manner, or conversation. He was perfectly calm and composed, and chatted along with his accustomed ease and gaiety.

A short time after the meal was finished, Booth went to Pumphrey's livery stable, and calling for one of the horses which he had engaged, rode leisurely up F street, turned into an alley between Ninth and Tenth streets, and thence into an alley leading to the rear of Ford's Theatre, which fronts on

Tenth street, between E and F streets. Here he alighted, and deposited the animal in a small stable off the alley, which he had hired sometime before for the accommodation of a saddle horse that he had recently sold. Having done this, he entered the theatre where Spangler, the stage-carpenter, was at work.

"Good evening, Spangler," said Booth in an agreeable, familiar manner, as he advanced to where the workman was engaged.

"Good evening, Mr. Booth," replied Spangler, pausing and gazing at the well-dressed person of the actor admiringly.

"What's up now, Spangler? What is this box decorated with flags for?" inquired Booth looking at the festoons of "stars and stripes" that hung down from the front of the box.

"Why, this is the president's box. Didn't you know that Mr. Lincoln and lady are to attend to-night?"

"Indeed!" said the actor in a tone indicating that this was news to him.

"Yes, and Gen. Grant too."

"They are all to occupy this box?"

"I s'pose so."

"What is the play to-night?"

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

"It ought to be Macbeth," said Booth with a smile which Spangler did not understand. "That play would probably interest the president more than any other," he continued after a pause. "I should like to take a part in that play myself."

"I aint seen you on the stage in a long time," remarked the carpenter slowly resuming his work.

"No, Spangler, I have quit the stage."

"What have you done that for? I am sure you was doin' well."

"So I was," replied Booth picking up a gimlet, and while Spangler's back was turned boring into the door that closed the opening to the box prepared for Mr. Lincoln. "So I was. My income is now sufficient to enable me to abandon the profession of a stage-player, and I have done so. I am now trying something else. I am in the oil business, which is very profitable. Sometime ago I gave eighty dollars for a piece of oil land; how much do you suppose I am now offered for it?"

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

"Fifteen thousand dollars," said the actor.

"That was a lucky speculation," said the carpenter.

"It was so indeed," replied Booth still turning the gimlet, that was gradually making its way through the yielding wood. "Anything I turn my hand to seems to become profitable."

"Some people are born lucky" remarked the carpenter driving a nail, while Booth favored by the noise of the hammer rapidly worked the gimlet. When Spangler had struck the last blow Booth had made a small aperture through the door. Then drawing his pocket-knife he commenced, as if absently, to clear the orifice in order that he might have an unobstructed view of the interior of the box. Although Spangler was afterwards

sent to the penitentiary for six years upon the mere supposition that Booth could not have made the gimlet-hole without his knowledge and consent, yet the actor was so dextrous that Spangler did not observe that a gimlet or a knife had been used on the door. After talking with Spangler a short time, and having done all he thought necessary, Booth leisurely quitted the building.

He next returned to Pumphrey's livery stable, and calling for the other horse which he had engaged, rode at an easy gait to Coldheart's residence. This animal he deposited in a stable of the government official. Then going into the house, he remained there talking with Mrs. Coldheart and Flora till the shades of night began to appear.

All things were now ready for the execution of Abraham Lincoln.

CHAPTER XXII.

Now I will unclasp a secret book—
I'll read you matter deep and dangerous."

The sun had now nearly completed his western journey, and his golden beams were resting upon the domes of Washington City. Men hurried along the streets in order to finish the business of the day, that might have been neglected for the want of time. Fine officers, whose elegant persons were decorated with the blue uniform of the United States, strutted about with arrogance, but halted occasionally to let all have a full view of their magnificent forms—which view, they reasoned, could be best furnished by a stationary position. After halting a sufficient length of time to satisfy a reasonable curiosity, they would move forward to a new position for the accommodation of other admirers of blue relieved by stripes and bars of gilt. Gay ladies, ornamented with flashing silk and sparkling jewelry, some of which was stolen from the high-born dames and beauteous belles of the rebellious south, were seen promenading, when there was no danger of detriment to their arsenic-whitened complexions from the mild rays of the occidental sun. Momus and Bacchus were abroad, hard in hand. And why should they not be? The great and terrible rebellion was now throttled: and the temple of Liberty, around which the storms and tempests of half a century had howled, at last lay prostrate in wide-spread ruins. The south was covered with blood and bones, and her heroes consecrated every hill-top with libations of human gore. Orphans wept for bread, and widows mourned for lost husbands, from the wave-lashed coast of North Carolina to the confines of the "Lone Star" state. A broad band of frightful desolation, marked with the black traces of fire, stretched across the whole extent of a ruined, impoverished, conquered, mourning country. In many places bats flitted and owls hooted amid the deserted ruins of demolished towns and cities. Grass

grew green and fresh in the streets. The picture of military devastation that met the eye at every turn, caused the yankee heart to swell and throb with emotions of lofty pride and exalted patriotism. It was indicative of the tremendous power of the United States, whose proud emblem streaked with blood flapped defiantly in the breeze over scenes of wholesale murder and misery. It was indeed a subject worthy of rejoicing, and the yankees of Washington City slaughtered the "fatted calf" in honor of the downfall of the hated confederacy. Senseless idiots! Let them rejoice in blind folly till their joy shall be converted into mourning.

We must now turn to the president's mansion, where Lincoln happened to be sitting alone in his office. It was that hour which naturally brings up recollections of the past—at which memories of days gone by come thronging pensively into the mind. The hour of sunset—it divides light from darkness—it is saddening—it somehow typifies the gloom of death, and reminds man of the moment when the light of human life shall fade away, and he shall quietly pass to the realms of eternity. Such an hour was now telling out its sacred moments, and Mr. Lincoln sat seemingly buried in thought. What his reflections were on that evening, his last in this world, we know not. He may have been thinking of the mighty struggle that had just ended, or of matters entirely disconnected with his political duties. His thoughts may not have been evil—especially when softened by the effect of the hour to which we have alluded. We do not look upon Lincoln as a very bad hearted man. He never was popular in the south; but still he was not so destitute of moral principle, and of the tender, more elevated emotions of nature as some of our injured people appear to believe. We candidly confess that we have no respect for the memory of Abraham Lincoln. He never did anything in his whole life to endear him to our "confederate" nation in the south. On the contrary, he adopted a line of policy well calculated to render his name, in the southern mind, synonymous with despotism. Notwithstanding this, he was not systematically cruel. From all accounts, he was a man of great good humor, and of considerable sympathetic feeling. His exterior was rude and rough, yet a soul possessing some of the nobler qualities of humanity had taken up its abode in this unpolished habitation. No doubt Lincoln frequently felt compunctions of conscience, when he reflected upon the horrid havoc for which he was responsible. Yet, according to the southern view, he might have consoled himself with the thought that he was a mere instrument in the hands of a fanatical party. It would hardly be fair to hold him alone responsible for the great calamities which his policy brought upon the country. If Lincoln had been left to himself, with his medium intellect and pacific, mirth-loving nature, free from party pressure, we do not believe the disastrous war of 1861 would have been recorded on the pages of

history. He was, without a doubt, a man in whom the milk of human kindness flowed. Some anecdotes are told of his good nature, like the following for instance:

A gentleman visited the president one night in high dudgeon. He was a newspaper proprietor, and one of his editors had been arrested.

"Mr. Lincoln," he said, "I have been off electioneering for your re-election, and in my absence you have had one of my editors arrested. I won't stand it, sir. I have fought better administrations than yours."

"Why, John," said the president, "I don't know much about it. I suppose your boys have been too enterprising. The fact is, I don't interfere with the press much, but I suppose I am responsible."

"I want you to order the man's release to-night," said the applicant. "I shant leave here till I get it. In fact, I am the man who should be arrested. Why don't you send me to Capitol Hill?"

This idea pleased the president exceedingly. He laughed the other into a good humor.

"In fact," he said, "I am under restraint here and glad of any pretext to release a journalist."

So he wrote the order, and the editor got his liberty.

It must not be inferred that Mr. Abraham Lincoln was a devotee to literature. Few books were to be found in his office. Orpheus C. Kerr, and Artemus Ward were his favorites.

But we are guilty of an unnecessary digression. Begging the reader's pardon, we will resume the thread of the story.

As Mr. Lincoln was quietly sitting in his office, and the shadows were lengthening, and gradually fading away before the approach of the dusky queen of night, he heard voices on the outside of the apartment. In a moment afterwards a pair of small feet stole gently over the well-worn carpet, and a little girl stood at the president's side.

"Is this Mr. Lincoln?" inquired she.

"Yes, my child," replied the president kindly, "what can I do for you?"

"Here is a letter for you. Please read it now."

"Certainly I will," said Lincoln taking the letter.

The little girl waited till she saw the document unfolded, and the president's eyes riveted upon the written lines, then she noiselessly vanished from the room. The note was short. It merely stated that Mr. Lincoln was in danger, and requested him not to go to the theatre that night, promising to call the next day, and enter into fuller explanations. To it was attached the signature of Mary Surratt. She had heard that morning of the arrest of Mrs. Degroot, but not of the attempt to deprive her of life. She thought it now devolved upon herself to warn Lincoln or he would go unsuspecting into the snare laid for him. She had no desire to betray Booth or his accomplices; and she

deemed it sufficient merely to inform Mr. Lincoln that there was danger ahead, not doubting that he would be influenced by her timely warning. But what effect it had upon the president may be seen in the train of thought it aroused in his mind.

"This is about the twentieth or thirtieth time I have received secret warning of impending danger; but nothing has ever happened to me yet. I'm still alive and kicking. I was threatened with murder when I was elected president of the United States, and started to the capital. But I played a nice trick on the assassins, if there were really any. I slipped in, disguised so that my own mother would not have recognized 'honest old Abe.' Wouldn't it be a rich joke if I should be frightened from the theatre to-night and this very letter should be published tomorrow in the papers? Old Abe frightened from the theatre by a woman—a fictitious one at that. It would be a magnificent joke indeed. Who is Mary Surratt? It reminds me of Julius Cæsar, whose wife dreamed that he ought not to go to the senate. So it would be said that old Abe was frightened by an old woman's dreams, if it is a woman. It is probable that some of my friends are trying to make an April fool of me. I've got many such notes as this, and never been killed yet. I'll treat it with the contempt it deserves."

Accordingly the president took the note in his powerful hands, tore it into fragments and dismissed the matter from his mind.

Two hours afterwards Mr. Lincoln and Colfax, of Indiana, were sitting together in the same room. The president reached out his hand, took the walking-cane of the latter, and commenced rattling away in the following grandiloquent manner:

"I always used a cane when I was a boy. It was a freak of mine. My favorite one was a knotted beech stick, and I carved the head myself. There's a mighty amount of character in sticks. Don't you think so? Your man of energy of character carries a stout, heavy stick, and he puts it down with a vim, while your ring-fingered dandy, twirls a limber switch that wouldn't support the weight of a full grown rat. He carries it for ornament. You have seen these fishing poles that fit into a cane? Well that was an old idea of mine. Dogwood clubs were favorite ones with the boys. I s'pose they use 'em now. Hickory is too heavy, unless you get it from a young sapling. Have you ever noticed how a stick in ones hand will change his appearance? Old women and witches wouldn't look so without sticks. Meg Merriles understood that."

"That is a very sensible observation," said Colfax.

"I've always tried to study out the philosophy of small things like that," continued Mr. Lincoln. "There are a great many curiosities in small matters, Colfax. For instance did you ever observe that if you place two objects so as to form an angle of fifteen degrees on the retina, and close one of the eyes only one of the objects can be seen, although

both are directly before you? This was first noticed by Ben Franklin."

"Not Franklin," interrupted Colfax. "It was Sir David Brewster."

"Well, may be it was. I am not well posted in the works of philosophers. Anyhow, I saw it somewhere, and I've tested it frequently. Then there is another little experiment which anybody can try, that is very surprising and puzzling. If you cross two fingers and rub 'em on a bullet, it will feel like there are two bullets. Do you recollect who discovered that, Colfax?"

"Not exactly, but if you are fond of such things as that, I would refer you to Brewster's letters on natural magic."

"There are a great many little things curious and interesting, that can be found out without referring to works on magic, but they are noticed only by few persons."

"Unfortunately," said Colfax, "men do not have much time in this life to study the philosophy of nature."

"Yes they do, Colfax, that is to a certain extent. They are too indolent, or rather, are too greedy after 'filthy lucre,' to think about things that might gratify the intellect. They think more about food for the body than the mind. That is the great fault with the people of America. England is a long ways ahead of us in this respect. The English are more literary than we are; and they have more distinguished poets and historians than we do. I was very much pleased with Macaulay's 'Lay of the Last Minstrel.'"

"Macaulay's 'Lays of Ancient Rome' you mean."

"No, no," said Lincoln, "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

"Wasn't that the production of Scott?" asked Colfax, delicately.

"No, no; Scott wrote the 'Bride of Abydos.' You've got it mixed up Colfax, somehow. But wasn't it a little strange that Shakspeare never wrote a play about Napoleon Bonaparte. He was certainly more of a hero than Julius Cæsar."

"Good Heavens, Mr. Lincoln!" exclaimed Colfax, no longer able to control his surprise, "what are you talking about? Shakspeare was dead and buried before Bonaparte was ever thought of!"

"I know the old man was; but didn't one of his descendants write plays?"

"The law I no,—not that ever I heard of."

"Anyhow," said Lincoln, laughing, "I am reminded of a good anecdote that amused me very much the other day. There was a Dutchman lecturing on spiritualism, and a minister took up a notion that he would test the fellow's knowledge of the Testament. So he asked him if he knew who died to save sinners."

"Oh yes," quickly replied the Dutchman, "tat vas Cot."

"Not exactly," said the preacher. "It was Christ, the son of God."

"So-oh" cried Dutchman. "It vas vone of te poys, vas it? I always tought it vas te alt man."

"So, Colfax," said Mr. Lincoln, after a

hearty laugh, "I always thought that 'vone of te poys' might have written poetry after his daddy died. But I'm liable to make mistakes in these matters. I've never read poets like Scott, Byron, Allison, and so on much. I don't think they are suited to the feelings of old age. There is not much pleasure to be derived from these, after the ardor of youth has died out. I now read only such books as 'Milton's Paradise Lost, and 'Pollok's Night Thoughts.'"

"How long has it been since you read the 'Night Thoughts?'"

"Since I come to think about it," said Mr. Lincoln thoughtfully, "I believe it has been about ten years."

"I thought it must have been sometime ago," said Colfax.

"Why, Colfax? what made you think so?"

"Because you have forgotten the author."

"Who was the author?"

"It was not Pollok—it was Young."

"Did I say Pollok?"

"Most assuredly you did."

"Well, I meant Young. I'm not much of a hand at recollecting names—especially when my head gets to wool gathering. It makes no great difference about names, nohow. The rose would smell as sweet by any other name. If I can only get a good idea into my cranium, I don't care who is the author."

"Your excellency is right about that," said Colfax.

"Many persons," continued Mr. Lincoln, "spout about Shakspeare, Byron and Milton, and Jeffreys, and they couldn't give you a single idea advanced by any of these great poets. Don't you think so?"

"I am sure I do. There is no doubt of it."

"My forte, though, is politics, Colfax—not literature and science, I leave such things as that to Willis, Emmerson, and other northern writers."

"You leave out southern writers, I suppose," said Colfax.

"There are so few in the south, they're not worth mentioning."

"What is the reason of this, Mr. Lincoln? I have thought of it frequently. It can not be that there is want of talent."

"No, that isn't the reason. The scarcity of southern authors, is undoubtedly to be attributed to the great evil of slavery, which always retards the progress of civilization, and the advancement of literature. But apart from this there are other difficulties in the way of southern writers, and one of these is the strange disposition of the southern people to sneer at the literary efforts of their own men. There is such poor encouragement that writers soon become disgusted, and abandon the quill. Those people seem to prefer northern literature, even when it pours forth its bitterest invective and sarcasm against their cherished institutions. 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' was circulated more widely in the south than any novel that ever was written. Many answers were written to that book, but they all fell still-born from

the press. Our authors meet with more encouragement than those at the south. When a book is published here, the press blows it and puffs it, and thus the author is encouraged to try again. But in the south, when a young author comes out, his book is perhaps very severely criticised, and his faults so greatly satirized, that he becomes disheartened, and fears to adopt the profession of a writer. I don't know of a single southern man that has adopted authorship as a profession. He couldn't live at it, unless he should write for northern periodicals and papers. The southern press never holds out any inducements sufficient to procure regular contributors, and thus promote the development of talent. The consequence is that our magazines and journals are a long way ahead of the very best the south can afford. We have paid contributors who make a handsome living by their writings. But I expect better things of our southern brethren in the future. Slavery, that horrid incubus, which has always cramped southern talent, is now abolished, and the people will pay more attention to their moral and intellectual improvement. They will, no doubt, spend their money for something else besides negroes and mules."

"I do not know about the mules," said Colfax, with a grin, "but I do not think they will purchase many more negroes. Thank God, the vile traffic in human flesh is done with."

"Yes, we ought to be thankful for that, Colfax. I'm mighty sorry for our southern friends. They will all have to go to work now. The negro is free, and the white man will have to 'root hog, or die.'"

"That they will, and I'm glad of it."

"I feel sorry for them, Colfax. I can't help it. I know they have erred seriously, but that is like human nature, you know. They've done a heap of suffering since 1860, but may be it will teach them a good lesson. They won't try to secede from the union again. They're a heroic people, and have made some mighty hard fights. We ought to respect 'em for it. Because it's a proof that they're the true grit. In a few years from now they'll be as ready to fight for the honor and dignity of the United States as for their confederacy. I hate to see such a proud spirited people humbled; but I'll make it all right with them. They are expecting confiscation, and dreadful measures like that, but they'll be agreeably surprised. I'll pursue a course of policy that will soon restore our good old union to its original integrity. It will be established on a firmer basis; because the bone of contention is gone. We will indeed be one vast, powerful nation."

Just at this juncture Mrs. Lincoln came into the office.

"Are you going to the theatre with me, Mr. Lincoln?" said she.

"Do you want me to go?" inquired Lincoln good-humoredly.

"It is expected that you will attend, Mr. Lincoln."

"I guess I'll have to go, Colfax," said the president. "It's a mighty poor place for old people, but I'll go in order to redeem my promise. The time for such amusements with me has passed away. I'm getting too old to enjoy it. Are you going, Colfax?"

"No, I believe not."

"Well, you must excuse me, for leaving you so abruptly."

"Certainly I will," said Colfax, quitting the apartment.

They parted to meet no more on this side of eternity.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; ere to black Hecate's
summons
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy
hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be
done
A deed of dreadful note."

The lamps in Ford's Theatre were throwing a brilliant, pearly light upon the merry countenances of a host of lively yankees. All seemed to be extremely happy. The time had now come when the era of restored peace was to begin; and the great yankee Moloch of horrid despotism had trampled the crushed form of Liberty under his brazen heel, and his bloody altars could now be erected in the conquered south without fear or molestation. His sway was now completely established over all the length and breadth of the mournful confederacy, and there was none to dispute his right. All must now pay homage at the shrine of the Baal of Abolitionism. The Yankees at Ford's Theatre were unusually gay, jubilant and flippant. They were ready to laugh at everything uttered by the actors, intended to provoke mirth, whether it was worthy to produce that effect or not. Then they would shed tears when Miss Keene told them they ought to, although they might under other circumstances have been disposed to turn up their noses at her execrable wit. But they were determined to enjoy the play, if for no other purpose, to temper the violent emotions produced by the sudden termination of a calamitous war with circumstances of a neutralizing character. Without something to divert their minds from the political prospects of the country, their intolerable joy might have caused their blood-vessels to burst, and thereby have produced sudden death. There were hearts, however, in the smiling audience that did not partake of the general joy. There were persons there in whose minds thoughts of a far different character were playing. The nature of these thoughts, however, was not revealed by any external signs. These individuals were scattered about in the assembly in different parts of the crowded house; and although they appeared to be deeply interested in the play, yet in reality they heard little that was said. Our reader will know at once that they were members of the Bloody Junto.

Presently Mr. Lincoln and his lady entered. They were followed by Major Rathbone, of the provost marshal general's office, and Miss Harris, daughter of Senator Harris, of New York. They were received with great applause, manifested by stamping of feet, clapping of hands, and other demonstrations of approval and affection. Before entering the box prepared for his reception, Lincoln turned to the audience and bowed a courteous acknowledgment of the compliment paid him. Just at the moment of his arrival Mr. Hawks, one of the actors, performing the well-known part of Dundreary, had exclaimed:

"This reminds me of a story, as Mr. Lincoln says."

This was vociferously *encored* by the audience, and the actor was compelled to repeat the story for the benefit of Uncle Abraham. It certainly pleased the president, who laughingly turned to his wife and made a remark, which was not overheard. Poor fellow! it was the last sly thrust at his homely manners and his provincial bluntness that he ever heard in this lower world.

The box in which the president sat consisted of two boxes turned into one, the middle partition being removed, as on all occasions when a state party visited the theatre. The box was on a level with the dress circle, about twelve feet above the stage. There were two entrances—the door nearest to the wall having been closed and locked; the door nearest to the balustrades of the dress circle, and at right angles with it, being open, and left so after the visitors had entered. The interior was carpeted, lined with crimson paper, and furnished with a sofa covered with crimson velvet, three arm chairs similarly covered, and six cane-bottomed chairs. Mr. Lincoln seated himself comfortably in one of the arm chairs, and looked on the histrionic scene with an expression of interest. Sometimes a brief smile would play over his solemn face, and his iron like features would momentarily relax their sternness, whenever anything in the form of a good joke struck his fancy. Mrs. Lincoln was leaning forward with her elbows upon her husband's knees, and gazing at the actors with a woman's relish. Miss Harris sat next to her, and behind these was Major Rathbone. A servant stood at the door to prevent intrusions upon the distinguished visitors.

The play was pleasantly progressing, when suddenly there was a murmur near the audience door, as of a man speaking above his bound. He said:

"Nine o'clock and forty-five minutes!"

These words were reiterated from mouth to mouth until they passed the theatre door, and were heard upon the side-walk; but none knew what they meant except the conspirators.

J. Wilkes Booth now stepped to the door of Mr. Lincoln's box.

"This is the president's box," said the servant.

"I know it," replied Booth. "I wish to enter."

"What for?" inquired the servant.

"I have business with the president."

"Can't you wait till some other time? The president doesn't wish to be disturbed. Won't to-morrow do?"

"My business is of the utmost importance," replied Booth. "I must see him this very night—right now."

"Come in then."

The servant stepped to one side, and Booth entered. But inside he met with further opposition. Major Rathbone rose.

"Do you know upon whom you are intruding?" said he. "This is the president's box, and none are allowed to enter."

To this Booth made no reply, but merely glanced at the position of the parties, then hastily withdrew as if he had gone into the wrong box. Mr. Lincoln had partially turned his head to see what was causing the disturbance, but Booth had disappeared.

Directly a voice cried:

"Nine o'clock and fifty minutes!"

This also passed from man to man until it reached the street.

"Nine o'clock and fifty-five minutes!" said the same relentless voice, after the next interval, each of which narrowed to a shorter span the life of the unsuspecting president.

Ten o'clock here sounded, and conspiring echo said in reverberation:

"Ten o'clock!"

So creeping from lip to lip it went:

"Ten o'clock and five minutes!"

Here followed an interval.

"Ten o'clock and ten minutes!"

Another interval.

"Ten o'clock and fifteen minutes!"

Scarcely had the last words died away before Booth again appeared at the door of Lincoln's box. This time he halted not to be told that he was intruding. He fearlessly entered, while apparently sparks from the glowing fires of ambition and pseudo patriotism shot forth from his brilliant eyes. There was no resisting him. Rushing to where Lincoln sat, he leveled his arm and pulled the trigger of his pistol, a Deringer. A keen, quick report and a puff of white smoke—a close smell of powder, and the president's head dropped upon his shoulder: the ball was imbedded in his brain. Mrs. Lincoln screamed and Miss Harris shrieked; but Booth stayed not to watch the consequences of his deed. He dropped his pistol on the floor, and drawing a bowie-knife struck Major Rathbone, who opposed him, ripping through his coat from the shoulder down, and inflicting a severe flesh wound in his arm. He leaped then upon the velvet-covered balustrade at the front of the box, between Mrs. Lincoln and Miss Harris, and putting with both hands the flags that drooped on either side, dropped to the stage beneath. Arising and turning full upon the audience, he exclaimed in a loud, clarion-like voice, that reached to every part of the crowded house:

"SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS! VIRGINIA IS AVENGED!"

In another instant he had fled across the stage and behind the scenes. Colonel J. B. Stewart, the only person in the assembly who seemed to comprehend the deed which had been committed, climbed from his seat near the orchestra to the stage, and attempted to pursue the conspirator; but Booth's motions were almost as quick as thought, and he vanished like a spirit. Meeting Mr. Withers, the leader of the orchestra, just behind the scenes, he struck him aside with a blow, which however was not a wound; overturning Miss Jennie Gourlay, an actress, who came next in his path, he gained without further hindrance the back door previously left open, at the rear of the theatre; rushed through it; leaped upon the horse held by Mr. Spangler, and without vouchsafing that person a word of explanation, rode out through the alley leading into F street, and thence rapidly away.

After the lightning-like exit of Booth, a scene of indescribable confusion ensued. Miss Harris shrieked for water, and the full, horrible truth broke upon all—"The president is murdered!" Some women fainted, others uttered piercing screams, and cries for vengeance and unmeaning shouts for help burst from the mouths of men. Miss Laura Keane, the actress, proved herself in this awful time fully able to sustain a part in real tragedy. Pausing one moment before the footlights to entreat the audience to be calm, she ascended the stairs in the rear of Mr. Lincoln's box, entered it, took the dying president's head in her lap, bathed it with the water she had brought, and endeavored to force some of the liquid through the insensible lips. But all was useless, useless, useless. Lincoln was totally unconscious. He never uttered another word.

As soon as the confusion was partly overcome, and the crowd was dispersing, the form of the president was conveyed from the theatre to the residence of Mr. Peterson, on the opposite side of Tenth street. Here upon a bed, in a little hastily prepared chamber, it was laid, and attended by Surgeon-General Barnea, and other physicians. But Lincoln was beyond the reach of all human aid. His destiny was now fulfilled—the sand had all trickled to the bottom of the hour-glass, and the medical skill of all Yankeeedom could not restore his waning life. He lingered through that awful night, and breathed his last the next morning at twenty-two minutes past seven o'clock. Then yankees were mourning, and rebels were mourning: from different causes, however.

The one nation wept over the prostrate form of a single individual; the other over a ruined country, desolated by the mere nod of the man who now lay calm and cold, and who was not permitted to gaze longer upon the fields of carnage his folly had created.

Thus died Abraham Lincoln, the chief victim of the Bloody Junto.

While this frightful tragedy was enacting in the theatre, another equally as horrible

was transpiring at the residence of Secretary Seward. Payne deliberately rode to Mr. Seward's house, which was a solid three-story brick building, and was formerly the old Washington Club-house. There were no signs of trepidation discoverable in any of his movements. His countenance wore an expression of sad calmness rather than ferocity. He acted exactly like a man who was going to perform a disagreeable but a necessary duty. Considering himself a mere instrumentality under the control and guidance of destiny for the achievement of some hidden purpose, he rode leisurely along as if he were in no way responsible for the terrible deed in contemplation. And such may have been the case for aught any one knows to the contrary. It is not the province of mortals to decide upon the ways of Providence.

Payne's part in the tragedy was more remarkable and mysterious than Booth's, or any other man's who was engaged in the conspiracy. He appeared to act almost without motives, if such a thing is possible. Booth was partly controlled by a restless ambition, that was burning to achieve some deed of daring which would band down his name to undying immortality. Closely associated with this incentive was a strange combination of gratitude, pity and patriotism. He felt somewhat grateful to the southern people, who had offered him sympathy and encouragement when he was striving to subdue the difficulties that beset his youthful pathway; and he could not now but pity the unparalleled sufferings and privations they had endured in the contest for national existence. He was patriotic, so far as he wished to restore peace to both north and south, and prevent the further outpouring of blood. Even the miserable Atzerott was not without incentives. He was perhaps lured on by the hope of gain, and by the fact that he had become a very important personage in a grand scheme, whose execution would cause the whole world to reel with astonishment and horror. If his ambition was not as exalted as Booth's, yet he may have been governed by that principle to a certain extent. The dazzling prospect of becoming a Lord in a splendid monarchy, might have had no little to do with arousing his shrinking courage to the proper degree of murderous enthusiasm.

But Payne was uncontrolled by any motives of this character. He could not have acted from a principle of patriotism: if he had a country, none knew where it was. He was not ambitious; because he was studious to keep his identity wrapped in impenetrable obscurity: his very name is to this day unknown. He was not avaricious; because in all the transactions of the Bloody Junto, he opposed every scheme that appeared to promise wealth. Indeed, he offered resistance to nearly every measure proposed by the conspirators. But strange to relate, when the time for action came, and a deed was to be performed that was revolting to the human heart, Payne was the coolest, most determin-

ed man of all the members of the Junto. Aman is much braver and more daring when he acts before the eyes of his fellow men, than alone. This circumstance must have worked up Booth's feelings till he was temporarily super-human. But while he was enacting a tragical scene before hundreds of amazed faces, and was rendered more bold by this fact, Payne was alone discharging the bloody duty assigned him, with the *sang froid* of the coolest, most stubborn stoicism. Booth seemed to think, to calculate, and to plan; Payne struck—and with the merciless indifference of a machine. This will be seen in the manner in which he carried out the part of the programme allotted to him.

No sooner had he quietly hitched his horse in front of Seward's house, than he rang at the door. The summons was answered by a servant.

"I desire to see Mr. Seward," said Payne. "He is very sick," replied the servant. "No visitors are admitted."

"But I am a messenger from Dr. Verdi, Mr. Seward's physician. I have a prescription which I must deliver to him myself."

"My orders are positive to admit no visitors," said the servant.

"I can't help it," replied Payne. "Dr. Verdi instructed me to deliver a prescription to Mr. Seward, and I am a going to do it."

So without further parley he easily pushed the servant aside, and ascended the stairs. Moving to the right, he proceeded towards Mr. Seward's room, and was about to enter it when Mr. Frederick Seward appeared from an opposite doorway.

"Who are you?" demanded Mr. Frederick Seward.

"I am a messenger from Dr. Verdi, sir. I have come to see Mr. Seward."

"That you can't do. My father is in no condition to see any one."

"I know my business," said Payne. "I will see him."

"No, you shall not," replied Frederick firing up.

"We will see," calmly replied Payne, suddenly closing the controversy by striking Mr. Frederick a severe blow across the forehead with the butt of a pistol. This felled the young man senseless to the floor. No sooner was this hasty performance concluded than Major Seward, another and younger son of the secretary, emerged from his father's room. Payne had no desire to bandy words with any one. So he drew a knife, without speaking, and struck the Major several blows with it, rushing into the chamber as he did so; then after dealing the nurse a horrible wound across the stomach, he sprang to the bed upon which the secretary was lying, and stabbed him once in the face and neck. Mr. Seward arose convulsively, and fell from the bed to the floor. Payne thought he was dead. Turning and brandishing his knife anew, he walked from the room, passed the prostrate form of Frederick Seward in the hall, descended the stairs, remounted his horse, and rode away as if nothing unusual had happened. He traveled in an easy pace

till he had gotten to the suburbs of the city; and then quickened his speed to a full gallop. The lights in the city were fast fading from view, and the houses were becoming more and more scattered, as he went rushing away. He thought he was in the road Booth was to travel. They were to meet at a certain spot previously agreed upon. When he had reached the last house bordering upon the suburbs, he discovered that he had taken the wrong road. He now came to a halt, and after reflecting a moment, concluded to go through the woods and get into the right road. Suddenly turning his steed at right angles to the highway, he plunged the spur so deep into his side, that the animal sprang forward and unfortunately threw Payne to the ground, then darted off too swift to be pursued. Payne was in a dilemma; he knew not what to do, and like a confused man usually acts, at last did the very thing which he ought not to have done. His presence of mind seemed all at once to leave him. He hastily pulled off his coat, which was stained with blood, and threw it on the road-side. Then besmearing himself plentifully with dirt, and passing by a house picked up a spade that he accidentally stumbled on lying near the middle of the road. In this disguise he started back to the city, intending to pass himself off as a ditcher.

The performance of Atzerott in the tragedy was anything but creditable to himself. Absent from the impulsive Booth and the resolute Payne, and left alone to his own reflections, the perk little German appeared to place a lower estimate upon his prospective dukedom, with all its brilliant accompaniments, than he had formerly done. All day Friday he was seen loitering about the Kirkwood Hotel, occasionally strutting around with airs of importance which he could sustain only for a short time. For whenever the thought of what he was to do that night, would come creeping into his mind, the risk he would have to run was somewhat terrifying, and he felt disposed to shrink back into the natural nothingness, in which he was born, and in which he had heretofore lived. In the latter part of the afternoon he walked into the bar room of the Kirkwood Hotel, and while under the influence of a fit of transitory self esteem, approached the bar-keeper.

"I wants a room mit you to-night," said Atzerott with a toss of his empty head.

"Very well," replied the bar-keeper turning to his book in search of an unoccupied chamber. "You can get one."

"Ish not Mr. Shonson in tish hotel?"

"What Mr. Johnson, sir?"

"Mr. Andrew Shonson—the vice-president."

"Yes sir. He has a room here."

"I wants my room close to him," said Atzerott attempting to look proud. "He ish a vriend of mine. I was talk mit im many time when he lived in Greenville."

"I can put you in No. —. That is directly over Johnson's," said the bar-keeper

Why not take the room directly over Johnson's?

manifesting no curiosity to hear an account of the German's acquaintance with the vice-president.

"Dat will do," replied Atzerott. "I wants to talk mit him to-night. I knows he vill be glad to see me. It's pin long time since I talk mit Mr. Shonson. He pe von great man sir, an if he live, will pe te nex president. He ought to pe; for he loss mooch in dish war. Ish you pe acquainted mit Mr. Shonson?" he continued addressing the bar-keeper.

"No sir. I have not that honor." "Den I will introduce you to im some-time," said Atzerott patronizingly. "I knows you will like im mooch."

Atzerott suddenly ceased. He accidentally caught the eye of Major O'Bieme, of New York, fixed contemptuously upon him. The fussy German could not endure the gaze, and immediately "was himself again." He tucked down his head like a sheep-killing cur, and sneaked out of the room.

That night Atzerott retired at a very early hour to his chamber. Having closed the door, he drew a tremendous bowie-knife and a Colt's cavalry revolver, and after gazing at them awhile, and aiming the pistol at the bed-post to see if his nerves were steady, he deposited them between the mattresses of his bed. A little after nine o'clock he heard some one enter the chamber under his own, and he supposed it to be Mr. Johnson. This caused a violent throbbing in Atzerott's breast, and a cowardly trembling from head to foot. So he lay quaking upon his bed, fearing even to move, lest Johnson's ghost might discover him, and wishing he was any where rather than where he was. Atzerott had no idea of murder now. He would not have gone into Mr. Johnson's room for a hundred dukedoms. At last ten o'clock arrived, and half an hour afterwards Atzerott heard a great commotion in the street.—"President Lincoln is murdered?" fell upon his ear like a thunder clap. He started up from his bed in a fit of terror, and rushed down stairs, leaving his baggage and his murderous weapons. Gaining the street, he passed through the excited crowd, found safer quarters, and betimes the next morning he fled to his uncle's in Montgomery county.

Thus at least a part of the programme of the Bloody Junto was carried out *ad literam*. To the southern people the death of Abraham Lincoln appears to have been providentially ordered, to save an already ruined country from the lowest depths of political and social degradation. We know that such language as this will sound like blasphemy and sacrilege to yankees; but still it is believed by southern men that if Lincoln had lived, our condition would have been wretched in the extreme. We considered the president's murder, immediately after it occurred, a great calamity to the south. Because it was supposed that Andrew Johnson would be more of a radical in his policy than his predecessor, and that he would deal more harshly with his countrymen than the most rabid yankee could desire. It was remem-

bered that he had been grossly insulted in his own state, at the beginning of the war, and his name was for a long time used as a substitute for "traitor." It could not be expected, therefore, that he would overlook the injuries that he had received at the hands of his neighbors. He could have taken a revenge that would have gratified the bitterest malignity. He could have out-Heroded Lincoln, and it would have been in accordance with southern expectation. As events have happened, we cannot now but consider Andrew Johnson—a second Joseph banished by the decrees of Deity into a land of darkness for the political salvation of his brethren. Abraham Lincoln never would have taken the noble stand for constitutional liberty, which has exalted his successor and his administration in the eyes of all civilized nations. The former drank the sour milk of abolitionism from his very birth. He would therefore have forced negro suffrage upon the conquered south, and perhaps might have attempted to establish the odious doctrine of the social equality of races. Taking this view of the subject, it does seem to us that the finger of Providence is palpable in his timely removal. It occurred exactly at the right time. If it had taken place sooner, Johnson might have been committed, by the force of political circumstances, to a course of action opposed to his own better judgment; later he might have been compelled to carry out a disastrous system of policy, inaugurated by his predecessor. It might have been so far advanced that it could not have been changed without the greatest difficulty. We assert therefore that if Lincoln's death was not providential, it was a very strange, remarkable incident.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"He therefore wisely cast about,
All ways he could to ensure his throat—
And to the utmost do his best
To save himself, and hang the rest."

All that fearful night of Lincoln's death, Washington was in a most terrible uproar and commotion. As soon as it was fairly ascertained that the president was shot, the crowd broke from Ford's Theatre, and commenced scattering through the different streets. "The president is murdered!" "The president is shot!" cried thousands of voices, and on they rushed pell-mell in order to have the pleasure of spreading the news. After a short time they met with other crowds coming from different directions, exclaiming, "Secretary Seward has been assassinated!" "Secretary Seward has been killed in his bed!" Then a variety of inquiries and exclamations followed. The wildest excitement prevailed. Parts of the crowd went on with the combined news—"Mr. Lincoln and Seward have been murdered!" bawling it at the top of their voices. Presently all kinds of rumors were afloat. Suspicions of an organized conspiracy fastened upon the minds of the people, and they began to bawl out lusti-

ly, "Where is General Grant?" "Where is Secretary Stanton?" "Where are the rest of the cabinet?" "There's an insurrection in the city!" "We are attacked by the rebels!" "Mosby is upon us!" "To arms! to arms! to arms!" And they went flying through the city like gangs of frightened sheep.

Coldheart heard all these various, wild cries with a violently throbbing heart. He and his wife were sitting in their room by a very dim light. They were waiting impatiently and anxiously to hear that Winthrop had seized the presidential mansion with his force, and had taken possession of the government. He did not intend to proclaim himself emperor until he could see that the enterprise would be crowned with success. Presently a quick rap was heard upon the door.

"Who is that?" inquired Coldheart.

"It is I—Winthrop."

The door was very hastily opened, and Winthrop entered puffing and blowing as if he had been running a foot race.

"What news, Winthrop?" asked Colheart before his visitor could be seated.

"Bad enough, sir, bad enough."

"What in the name of heaven is the matter?"

"Our scheme has proved an entire failure—that's all."

"Why has it?"

"Well, sir, to be brief, one half of our force got drunk."

"That would make them the more desperate," interrupted Coldheart.

"They are beastly drunk," replied Winthrop with a long breath. "They are perfectly unmanageable. Not many can stand on their feet."

"What did you let them have whiskey for?"

"I did not know they had it."

"That is provoking," replied Coldheart, "but could you not act with the remainder? They might be sufficient."

"I thought so too, and I had concluded to take the White House. But a few moments since, as the news of Lincoln's death reached us, and a crowd of citizens came wildly tearing along the street, our soldiers joined in with them. There was no doing anything with them; they nearly all deserted me. So I left in order to report the result to you."

"Did any of them know why you had them under arms?"

"Not a solitary one of them."

"We are in no very great danger, then," said Coldheart.

"I am afraid we have missed the figure in keeping our design so profoundly secret from our soldiers," said Winthrop. "If they had known exactly what they were to do, they might have acted very differently. I almost know they would."

"That is very questionable, Mr. Winthrop. It would have been very dangerous in the event of failure. The wretches would betray us as quick as they would take a dram. As matters have turned out, it is a good thing they did not know it. It is always best to be on the safe side. But there is no

use talking of what might have been. Where is Johnson?"

"I do not know."

"He is living then?"

"I suppose so, or we would have heard of his death."

"That is bad, bad, bad," said Coldheart; "but do you not think you might gather up some of your men, and carry out the plan, yet?"

"I am afraid not. I do not know where to find one of them now. They are scattered all through the city. Besides, the police is rapidly collecting, and it would be a most hazardous experiment. I have had all the telegraph wires cut, and this will arouse suspicion that there is an organized band of insurrectionists in the city. The citizens will all be under arms, and in sufficient force to overpower the few of our fellows that I might find. We would all certainly be captured. No, no, Mr. Coldheart, I would not like to attempt such a thing. We have made the wrong start in the business somewhere or somehow, sir."

"Somebody has blundered grievously," said Coldheart bitterly as he saw all of his hopes tumbling to the dust. "I thought everything was working finely."

"I am sure I did all I could," replied Winthrop. "I was deserted by my company; I could not do the job alone."

"You have no time to lose, Mr. Coldheart," now spoke up the official's wife, who had been listening all the while with trembling curiosity. "You must take measures for your own safety. What are you going to do?"

"I expect we will have to abandon the project."

"I guess we will, sir," replied Winthrop. "We can do nothing else. I am very sorry we have failed; but there is no help for it."

"Winthrop," said Coldheart thoughtfully, "you must have this woman—Mrs. Surratt arrested."

"By whom? inquired Winthrop, "and how will I have it done?"

"By the police. All you will have to do, is simply to put the detectives on her track. I have a notion that she will endeavor to betray us. I have always been afraid of her. I never did like her feline looks. But she can't betray us easily, if she is hereif charged with complicity with Lincoln's murder. We can manage her much better in prison. You would best attend to this immediately."

"I guess I can have it done" replied Winthrop rising, "and I think myself it would be advisable."

"Please return as soon as you can," said Coldheart as his visitor was starting.

Accordingly, Winthrop took his departure to accomplish this iniquitous deed—an outrage upon a helpless, innocent, woman.

"Mr. Coldheart, what will you do?" inquired Mrs. Coldheart, in an excited tone, as soon as Winthrop had disappeared.

"Keep cool, Mary. I will get out of the difficulty. It is a most wretched failure,

though, and I am greatly vexed. Winthrop has caused the whole thing to miscarry. I understood from Booth that these fellows were a desperate set, ready for anything. If they are, their discipline is miserable. Winthrop is a poor general to allow his forces to get drunk, just at the time they were needed most. He is a pitiful commander."

"But that is not the question, Mr. Coldheart," interrupted his wife. "You will have to give up the scheme. Now I want you to tell me how you are going to get out of this difficulty. I am afraid you are in danger?"

"Well, I will implicate some of the prominent rebels, as I told you sometime ago, I would do. The time for that is very favorable too. The murder will be considered a desperate act of a despairing people. I will have Jeff Davis charged with it. The whole north will be disposed to believe the charge. They will want a good pretext to hang him anyhow. His life ought to be taken, but I do not believe it can be done upon a charge of treason. I will manage if he is captured to have him tried by a military commission, from which he will meet with no mercy. If he is tried by a civil tribunal, the proceeding will stultify nearly all the prominent politicians of the north. Because, whatever they may now say, however much they may now twist and turn, yet they all once advocated the right of self-government, and the doctrine of state supremacy. They would all, therefore, much prefer to deprive Davis of his life upon some other pretext than treason. I will have no difficulty in implicating him. There is also a fine opportunity of bringing in that rabid old secessionist Jacob Thompson, whom I bitterly hate. He was in Canada about the time Booth went there. So also was Clement Clay, and two other fellows by the names of Sanders and Tucker. It can be very naturally supposed that they were all agents of the rebel government, and that they were sent to Canada for the achievement of this very object. If they are captured, there is not the slightest doubt that they will be hanged; and so they will go, and the world will be better off. The public will not be satisfied unless some few victims are sacrificed to the manes of Mr. Lincoln. It might as well be Davis and Thompson as any body."

"But Booth, Mr Coldheart—if he is captured?"

"He will have to take care of himself. I can make it all right with him. A man of Booth's disposition and honor is not apt to expose his friends. He has sense enough to know that I could do him no good, if I were incarcerated in a dungeon. I will induce him to think that I will save him, if he will hold his tongue."

"You don't apprehend any danger, then?"

"Very little. I have been watching my points very closely, and have made preparations for this very result. Mrs. Surratt is the only one likely to betray me. No person will believe what she says, if she is imprison-

ed. It would be a very improbable tale for her to tell that I was the instigator of Lincoln's death. I can suborn witnesses to prove everything I want."

But, for the present, we must leave Coldheart and his wife concerting measures to save him from deserved death, and follow up the movement which he set on foot for the entanglement of an innocent woman. Winthrop, after quitting the government official, went in search of a vile creature who was both a member of the city police and of the Bloody Junto. This despicable wretch we will not drag forth from the purlieus of degradation, by mentioning a name that constituted the chief distinction which placed him above the brute creation, and in the order of humanity. It would turn our ink to gall to record it upon a decent page of history. Suffice it to say that he was one who would do any deed of infamy for a few pence. This loathsome creature "on the mere winking of authority" from Mr. Winthrop, hinted to some of the police officers that Mrs. Surratt was engaged in the conspiracy. The officers, glad of an opportunity to display their great zeal and immaculate loyalty in ferreting out treason, at once set out for Mrs. Surratt's residence. Arriving at the house, they very unceremoniously summoned the defenceless widow into their presence.

"You are Mrs. Surratt?" said one of the officers as the lady appeared.

"That is my name, sir."

"We have an unpleasant duty to perform, Madam."

"What is that?" inquired Mrs. Surratt with a trembling heart.

"We have come to arrest you."

"To arrest me!" cried the unprotected widow manifesting considerable alarm.

"What for? what have I done?"

"You are charged with a very serious offence, Madam."

"What is it?" exclaimed the lady in the greatest astonishment.

"It is not my business to tell you, Madam. You will know it at the proper time—soon enough, I guess."

"But I have the right to know it now," said Mrs. Surratt with firmness, but with womanly dignity. "No man can force me from my premises, sir, unless by authority of the law. You may be robbers for all I know. I expect you are."

"We are policemen, Madam. You might know it from our dress."

"That is no proof. Any one might assume the dress for wicked purposes. I shall resist the arrest, sir," she continued with spirit. "I will call for help. You can't drag me from my house without telling me what for. You have no authority for such a proceeding. You are thieves, and I won't be arrested by you."

"If you doubt my character, Madam," said the officer drawing a paper and handing it to her, "read that. It will satisfy you that I'm no impostor. Now," he continued when Mrs. Surratt had hastily read the document,

"you may as well quietly submit. It is a disagreeable duty, but I must perform it, nevertheless. If you will go peaceably with us, you shall be treated with the respect due to your sex. If not, we will have to carry you along by force."

"But can't you tell me what I am arrested for?"

"Tell her," spoke up another policeman. "I don't know that it makes any great difference."

"Well, Madam, if it will be any consolation to you, I will tell you. You are charged with being accessory to the murder of Mr. Lincoln."

"Gracious Heavens!" cried Mrs. Surratt overwhelmed with horror and surprise at this astounding accusation; and this ejaculation was all the poor woman could utter for several minutes. Her daughter Annie now came into the apartment, and noticing the look of terror depicted in her parent's face, inquired what was the matter.

"They accuse me of murdering Mr. Lincoln, Annie," said Mrs. Surratt in a tone indicating the impossibility and absurdity of such a thing.

"You, mother! Why, she hasn't been out of the house to-night," said Annie turning to the policeman.

"Your mother is accused of complicity," said the officer.

"Mother never thought of such a horrid thing," earnestly pleaded the affectionate daughter. "She's too good a woman for that."

"Come, Mrs. Surratt, We must be going," said the officer.

"Going where?" cried the frightened girl.

"Going to prison, Annie, to prison. They want to take your mother to a filthy prison."

"They shan't do it!" screamed Annie frantically throwing her arms around her parent's neck, and clinging to her with desperation. "You shan't take my mother to prison. Then she buried her face in Mrs. Surratt's bosom, and wept aloud.

"This is a nice scrape we've got into," said one of the policemen. "Let's take the old she rebel by force."

"Mrs. Surratt," spoke the officer, "you must terminate this interesting scene. We've got to do our duty; and if you won't go, we'll take you forcibly."

"Sir, you are mistaken in this business," said Mrs. Surratt after telling her sobbing daughter to be calm. "You surely don't mean me. You have got the wrong name. Why I never thought of murdering Mr. Lincoln in my life. What in the world would I want him killed for? He never did me any harm."

"He never done Jeff Davis any harm either," interrupted one of the sneaks, "yet I guess he wanted Mr. Lincoln killed. You're a rebel, Ma'am. I've heard of you afore to-night. I don't doubt but what you had a hand in murderin' the president."

"You are no gentleman, sir, to talk thus to a defenceless woman," said Mrs. Surratt.

"No lady 'ud a done murder neether, Madam," rejoined sneak.

"I wish you were as clear of murder as she is," sobbed Annie.

"This 'ere hand," replied sneak, "has got narching on it but rebel blood, Miss; and I wish it had a sight more. I don't keer how mean I'd a bin, I never 'ud a killed sich a good man as Mr. Lincoln, that was too kind to make a child cry. My fingers is just eeching to tie the rope round that old she rebel's neck. She ort to be burnt alive. Hanging's too good for her. But I guess she'll get what she deserves."

"Will you suffer that wretch to insult me thus?" said Mrs. Surratt to the officer.

"You'll be insulted worse'n that afore this is done with," replied sneak.

"Am I to be thus abused in my own house?"

"Come, Mrs. Surratt," said the officer, "are you going quietly with us, or not?"

"I had nothing to do with Mr. Lincoln's murder," replied Mrs. Surratt. "I don't see that you can make me go."

"Perhaps you didn't, Madam; but I am not the one to decide that question. If you are not guilty, you can easily prove your innocence. It is our duty to arrest you, and we must do it. If you don't wish to get up an unpleasant scene in your own house, you had better not resist. It will do you no good whatever. Will you go?"

"Where are you going to take me?"

"Where we usually carry law-breaking people."

"To a cell in the penitentiary," joined in sneak.

"Oh, God have mercy!" cried Mrs. Surratt clasping Annie to her bosom.

"You'd better begin to pray," said the sneaking policeman.

"Have I come to this? Is there none to protect a lonely widow? Will you, sir," continued Mrs. Surratt freeing herself from Annie, and wringing her hands in agony, "will you, sir, drag a respectable, innocent woman to that loathsome penitentiary? Have you no mother; no sister?"

"You should have conducted yourself, Madam, so as to have been above suspicion. It is the law that drags you to the penitentiary, not me. But I've fooled here long enough. You must go now, Madam. Decide quick whether you will go along peaceably or not."

"I suppose I can't help it," replied Mrs. Surratt, crying piteously at the revolting thought of the dark and gloomy penitentiary. Poor Annie wept as if her young heart would break; but the policemen were inexorable. Mrs. Surratt tried to comfort her; and told her to take care of the house till she returned; that as she was innocent, it would soon be found out, and she would come back next day. Then the unprotected widow made hasty preparations to quit her house.

When the policemen, with their prisoner, were turning to make their exit, a most grotesque figure suddenly appeared in the door.

He was a tall, giant-like looking man, and wore upon his unkempt head what might be called a flannel rag, rather than a cap. His whole dress was besmeared abundantly with dirt, and the original color of his hands could not be seen. Upon his shoulder he carried a spade. The policemen at first drew back in astonishment, as this startling apparition burst upon their sight; but when the figure in apparent confusion, attempted to withdraw, they recovered their equanimity. The man acted in such a manner as to arouse suspicion.

"Halt, sir!" exclaimed the police officer authoritatively.

The figure obeyed, and gazed at his opposers without speaking.

"Who are you?" demanded the officer.

"My name is Powell, sir."

"Where are you going?"

"I am a ditcher."

"But where are you going?"

"I have come to do some ditching for Mrs. Surratt," was the reply.

"Do you know this fellow, Mrs. Surratt?" inquired the officer.

"I never saw him before, that I recollect of."

"Did you engage him to do any ditching?"

"No sir, I did not."

"Come then, old fellow," said the officer, "that tale won't do. You must give a better account of yourself than that."

"You're a rare bird, I'll swar," remarked the sneak, after attentively surveying the overwrought disguise of Payne. "You're after some devilment, I guess. That elephant carcass o' yours ain't hid under them dirty rags for nothing. Where's your hat, Mr. Ragman?"

"I have none, sir."

"Where do you live?" inquired the police officer.

"Just where I find myself," said Payne coldly.

"That's a purty yarn, Mr. Vagabond," joined the sneak. "You're the dirtiest fellow ever I seen—dirtier than thar's any use fur. Let's see if the gent ain't in disguise," he continued, addressing the officer.

"So we will," replied the officer. "Come, Mr. Powell, walk into the bar-room, and wash your face and hands."

"And take a drink," sniggled the sneak.

Payne could not but do as he was ordered; so they went into the bar-room.

"Off with your coat, Mr. Goodplayer, and wash them hands."

"I shall not do it, sir," replied Payne standing like a statue. He had now recovered his presence of mind.

"I garney, he's game," exclaimed the sneak stepping back a pace, as if he did not relish the idea of coming in contact with Payne's dirty fist.

"What will you do then, Mr. Powell?" asked the officer mockingly.

"Nothing. You have seen proper to arrest me upon your own suspicion, and you may do whatever you think best."

"You are very independent, I declare."

"I am that independent, sir."

"I will have you searched."

"Search away, sir."

"Feel in his pockets," said the officer to the sneak.

The sneaking policeman accordingly did so, with caution, and soon drew forth a tooth-brush and a delicate pocket-knife.

"Ditchers don't carry sich tools as them," remarked the sneak holding up the implements. "They'd have no use for this 'ere little knife."

"A ditcher has as good a right to use a little knife as any one else, I should think," remarked Payne with a sneer. "I never knew before that the size of a man's knife was an indication of his character or his trade. But you may be more skillful phrenologists than other people."

"But the tooth-brush, Mistifer," flippantly said the sneak. "You're the fust ditcher ever I seen with one."

"That may be owing altogether to your raising," said Payne contemptuously.

"You're a keen old chap," quoth the sneak with a wink to his comrades.

"What did you tell that lie for, Mr. Powell, about having some ditching to do here?" inquired the officer, who began to think Payne was in reality what he professed to be.

"I did not say that I had any to do here. I was merely in search of work, and came to see if Mrs. Surratt had any to do."

"Why don't you hunt work in the day time? What are you prowling about after midnight for, when people are asleep?"

"That is my business," coolly replied Payne. "I do not know that the police is authorized to prescribe my hours of labor and rest."

"Turn him loose," said one of the policemen. "I guess he's an old ditcher sure enough. Let him go."

"Look here! look here!" suddenly exclaimed the sneak throwing back Payne's vest from his shoulder. "Blood, by George, blood!"

"It is blood indeed," remarked several of the policemen examining the exposed shirt.

"I'll bet he's one of the murderers!" cried the sneak.

"What say you to that, Mr. Powell?" quoth the officer.

"You are a set of fools," replied Payne coldly.

"Let's take the gent along," said the sneak. "He can't give a good account of his self. We'll put him in the penitentiary, and in a day or two maybe he can study out his history."

Accordingly the two prisoners were hurried off to the old penitentiary. Payne went like a true stoic. His temporary fear and confusion had been overcome, before his examination in the bar-room commenced, and his habitual calmness was re-assumed. To the questions of the policemen he made no reply. He had now become almost a machine without feeling or passion, and merely fulfilled what he regarded as the demands of his destiny: that is, he took no thought for the future, but moved blindly along, deter-

mined to make no effort to defend himself against any allegation. But Mrs. Surratt acted very differently. She behaved as any woman of delicacy and refinement would under such circumstances. What her emotions were when she was hand-cuffed and chained in that dark cell of the old penitentiary, the reader must imagine. We do not just now feel like describing the agony of this defenceless woman.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Bring thou to me this man of changing hue, He'll suit the aim and end that we've in view."

As soon as Winthrop ascertained that Mrs. Surratt had been arrested, he returned to Coldheart's, according to the request of that individual. There he remained till the next morning, and then another interview took place between this dual of worthy gentlemen.

"Are you acquainted with one Sanford Conover?" inquired Coldheart after some preliminary remarks.

"Slightly," was the reply. "I know him when I see him."

"I know him well," continued Coldheart. "I have had occasion for his services more than once, since I came into office. He is a keen, shrewd fellow too, and is as good a hand at procuring witnesses for any kind of a trial as I ever met with. He does not mind swearing to a lie himself, for a consideration. You must hunt him, Winthrop, at once. We will strike a bargain with him forthwith. If you will find him, I will try not to trouble you any more about this business."

Winthrop very readily agreed to this proposition; and in the course of the day he found Sanford Conover, whom he requested to call upon Coldheart.

"Well, Conover," said the official as that gent entered his office. "I have another job for you."

"I am always ready," quoth Conover, "if there is any pay in it."

"There is pay in the business I want you to transact. I will engage to remunerate you handsomely."

"If such be the case, you can count on me."

"I knew I could, when I sent for you."

"Let's hear the business," said Conover.

"You have no doubt heard of the arrest last night of Mrs. Surratt, and a fellow by the name of Payne?"

"Yes sir, I heard it this morning."

"They were arrested for complicity with the murder of Mr. Lincoln."

"So I understood."

"To my mind there is no moral doubt of their guilt, but the legal evidence, Conover, is not quite sufficient to sustain an indictment—that is, to the extent which the principles of justice demand—you understand?"

"I think I do," was the reply with a smile.

"This fellow Payne acted in a very strange manner last night. He professed to be a ditcher, but in his pocket was found a pen-knife."

"Dear me," said Conover, "a ditcher with a pen-knife?"

"And besides this, Conover, a tooth-brush!"

"I declare!" exclaimed the procurer of witnesses, who could clearly see what the official was driving at, "what use would a ditcher have for a tooth-brush?"

"None, of course. It is a perfect absurdity. Tooth-brushes and pen-knives are instruments that gentlemen use. These two implements of luxury found in Payne's possession, prove to my mind that he assumed a disguise. They were incompatible with the character he professed to be."

"Certainly," said Conover, chuckling in his sleeve.

"But the most conclusive evidence of his guilt, is the fact that there were spots of blood seen upon his shirt. This blood," continued Coldheart, "could not have come from his nasal organs. No man allows his nose to bleed upon his apparel, you know."

"Of course not."

"The guilty, Conover, ought not to escape the punishment due to their offences, on account of trivial technicalities and flaws in the proceedings of our tribunals of justice. But the sentiment of the nineteenth century is rather squeamish in regard to circumstantial evidence—especially when it dooms the criminal to suffer the most severe penalty known to the science of jurisprudence. The testimony of this character, as I have just shown you, is strong against Payne, and also Mrs. Surratt; but still, Conover, I would rather have something more substantial, which would completely overcome the conscientious scruples of the public. I want the testimony so strong that even their warmest friends will be content to mourn in silence—you understand?"

"Certainly I do, sir."

"The assassination of Mr. Lincoln was most atrociously wicked," continued Coldheart with assumed solemnity and sympathy. "Because the president was a good, kind hearted man."

"He was indeed, sir," chimed in Conover. "His untimely death is a burning disgrace to the American nation. All who had a hand in it deserve the most rigorous punishment."

"That they do," quoth Mr. Conover.

"I am satisfied that Mrs. Surratt and Payne are involved in this conspiracy against a good ruler's life, and I want them convicted. You understand that, Conover. You know what I want you to do."

Mr. Sanford Conover smiled grimly, and then bluntly replied:

"You want witnesses to sustain the indictment, which you will draw up."

"You are correct, Conover. Do you know of any such?"

"I can find them with the 'needful.'"

"You shall have it, of course. When can you be ready with the witnesses?"

"That depends altogether upon the amount of cash I may be able to control. If you deal that out sparingly, it may take some time. Not a great many gentlemen like to commit perjury for the mere fun of the thing. But with a liberal quantity of 'greenbacks' I can procure as many witnesses as you want, in a short time."

"How much will be required?"

"In the first place," replied Conover with deliberation, "A No. 1 must not be overlooked. The law of self-preservation demands that."

"Very well; how much for A. No. 1?"

"That individual's services are estimated at three thousand."

"And how much for the other witnesses?"

"Whatever I can get them at. You must foot the bill. This will be the best arrangement, if you want the business done expeditiously."

"I will agree to it, if the bill is not beyond all reason. You must endeavor to get them as cheap as possible."

"I will do that most assuredly. I will let you know the price of each witness, and you need not engage him, if you think it is too much."

"You must procure them at all hazards, Conover. I will not stand back on the item of money. You must let them know what they will be required to swear to, that there may be no wrangling afterwards."

"Is there anything else besides the guilt of Payne and Mrs. Surratt?"

"Oh, yes. Their testimony must convict Davis."

"What, sir! Jeff Davis?" exclaimed Conover in great surprise.

"Yes; and Jacob Thompson, and several other rebels implicated in the plot."

"The accusation against them is gratuitous, is it not?"

"No, no. I have received a hint—rather some evidence that implicates them. In fact, they are more guilty than the criminals now confined. Mrs. Surratt and Payne were mere tools in the hands of the rebels. Jeff Davis and Jacob Thompson were the instigators of this outrageous murder."

"What evidence have you to that effect, Mr. Coldheart?"

The official answered this pointed question evasively.

"We would better understand each other clearly, Mr. Coldheart, in regard to this affair," said Conover with a quiet smile. "In matters of this character that involve perjury—I use plain terms, sir—it is always best to have a free interchange of opinion. Do you desire me to find witnesses to swear to the guilt of Davis *in toto*, or do you want additional testimony to render the chain complete? I might easily find witnesses to establish some little facts that would be highly essential; but it will require a shrewd fellow to swear to the guilt of the conspirators *in toto*, and defy detection throughout. It becomes a pecuniary question you see, sir. It will take more money to bribe a man

to swear to the whole thing from beginning to end, than a few separate facts."

"You are right, Conover," said Coldheart reflectively. "It is impolitic to have misunderstandings when they can be avoided. I will be plain with you."

"It would be advisable, sir, if you want the business managed properly."

"I have no evidence against Mr. Davis, nor any other rebel—except, Conover, except my own convictions and suspicions."

"And they would not be taken in a court of justice."

"No. So you must find witnesses to sustain the whole thing. You see, Conover, it will never do to let the assassination of the president be saddled upon our people. It would be an eternal disgrace to us. I thought that it would be natural for the world to suppose that it is the last disgraceful act of the rebellion. My motives are pure and patriotic, you see."

"Yes, sir; and the plan is a good one. I think it will succeed."

"That depends upon you, Conover—upon the witnesses you get."

"Have no fear on that score, sir. I will do my duty."

"I believe you, and am willing to trust the matter in your hands."

The conversation was here changed to Judge Advocate General Holt. It may be improper to record what passed upon this subject, as there appear to be various opinions concerning the part the judge advocate played in the infamous plot to implicate Mr. Davis. Some assert that he was a mere "cats paw." Charity, perhaps, demands that we should take sides with these persons rather than with those who take the position that he was privy to it. But this is a matter for the public to decide. We will merely give some of the letters written by Holt, Conover, and others; and the reader can form his own opinion. In a short time after the interview between Coldheart and Conover, the following documents were written. They have gone into history, and their authenticity cannot be questioned:

MR. CONOVER:

Dear Sir: I have just parted with the party I thought would do to represent Lamar. He will go into the game and swear all that is wanted; but he places his price at a pretty high figure. He wants \$3,000, and says he won't sell his soul for less. You told me not to go above \$1,500, but the judge told me afterwards that if necessary I could go \$500 more. But even this is far below the mark. What am I to do! I have written the judge how the matter stands, and I hope you will urge him to come to the terms. Dick is a good fellow, and we can depend on him without fear, and he has the faculty liars need most—a mighty good memory. I hope to receive a message from you to-morrow, telling me to strike the

bargain. At any rate let me know how to act as soon as possible.

Truly yours,

WM. CAMPBELL.

MR. CONOVER:

Dear Sir: I have been trying to see you for several days, but hear that you are out of town. I shall leave this at station A, that you may get it as soon as you return. I am in great need of more money—my last investments did not pay, and I am dead broke, and so is Suevel. The Judge told me when I last saw him to communicate with him only through you, and I don't like to write him; but I must have money in a few days. Get him to send me \$500, for nothing less will be of any use to me. I wish I could get in bulk all I am to receive, and then I could get into safer business; but I suppose you are all afraid that if you should give me all in my hands at once, I could not be found when most wanted. I don't like to be suspected, but anything is better than being poor, so I will take what I can get; but of course not less than \$500. Don't keep me waiting again for God's sake, for I shall hardly be able to raise cock-tails and cigars till I hear from you.

Truly yours,

WILLIAM CAMPBELL.

MR. S. CONOVER:

Dear Sir: Since writing you and enclosing draft as requested, I have received a letter from Campbell, to which I replied this morning, mentioning the funds remitted to you for himself and Mr. Suevel, and asking him to see you. He does not know precisely where to find you, and I presume you have not his address, which is the Whitney House, corner of Twelfth street and Broadway. I hope you will place the funds in his hands with the least possible delay, as he seems to be greatly in need.

Very respectfully, your obd't serv't,

J. HOLT,

Judge Advocate General.

GENERAL:

I am glad to be able to report that I have succeeded beyond my expectations. Besides the parties I had in view, we can count on two, and perhaps four others, who will testify to all that may be required. After securing Harris, who will prove the most important witness we have yet had, he assured me that he had several friends in Harrisburg whom he was confident would assist us, and as the expense would not be great, I deemed it advisable to dispatch him at once to confer with them. He is discreet and shrewd, and no fears need be entertained of his blundering. I received a letter from him this morning, which I enclose, and this afternoon I shall set out to examine the parties he refers to. If satisfied that they will answer my purpose, I shall as soon as I can get them thoroughly posted come on with them. I am fearful if I engage all in hand, that my funds will not hold out, so that you had better send

me \$100 more, to be used if needed. Direct your letter simply to Philadelphia, as I put up from time to time where I find it most convenient to keep track of the witnesses already on hand.

Respectfully, your obd't serv't,

S. CONOVER,

To Brig. Gen. Holt, Judge Advocate.

The following is the letter referred to as being enclosed in the foregoing:

FRIEND CONOVER:

I saw Morgan the night before last, and he is ready to go up to his neck on the same conditions as myself. Herman and Ross have both gone to New York. We went yesterday to see two female friends of Morgan's whom he thought would back us. We felt of them cautiously, and I am satisfied they will swear to anything you want. One whose husband ran away from the draft to Canada, knows Clay, and is down on him like thunder, as he enlisted her husband for the rebel army, and sent him south, where he was killed. She has only been back from Canada a few months. She says that she has heard Clay say that he was going to have Lincoln put out of the way; and it may be true. At any rate, you have only to put in her mouth what you want her to swear, and she will spit it out in style. Their appearance is first rate, and if women will do, you can't get better ones. You better come right on and see them yourself. They are worth a trip here to see whether they will do or not. I am staying with Morgan, and will wait till I see or hear from you.

Truly,

M. N. HARRIS.

MR. S. CONOVER:

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 13th inst. has been received. Enclosed please find draft for \$150, which I suppose will be needed, from the number of witnesses you seem to have in hand. Sign the receipts and send them to me. Make all the haste you can; but do your work thoroughly, and do not lose sight of any witness you may deem important. Campbell has returned, having failed in his mission.

Very respectfully, your obd't serv't,

J. HOLT,

Judge Advocate General.

DEAR CONOVER:

I came in last evening, and have been all day endeavoring to find you. That villain Campbell has divulged the whole arrangement to Davis' friends, and will if possible be pushed before the committee. I have been sent on to assist you in getting him sweet again, so that he will stand by his story, or else keep out of the way. It must be done at any cost. I am prepared with the needful. Old 279 and No. 8 were at headquarters the day before yesterday, and are furious. We shall be well rewarded if we save their bacon. It must be done. Call the moment you receive this. I shall wait

till you come, for I can do nothing without you. I have also written for your old address.

As ever, yours,
M.

We have no comments to make upon the foregoing letters. They will show to the world the character of the man who presided at the trial of Mrs. Surratt, and the nature of the evidence adduced. We will now proceed to show how another remarkable document happened to make its appearance. When Coldheart had learned from Conover that sufficient testimony had been collected for the object to be attained, he had an interview with President Johnson, and told him that Jeff Davis and other rebels were implicated in the murder of Mr. Lincoln. President Johnson did not in the least doubt the official's word; whereupon he issued the following

PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS, It appears from evidence in the bureau of military justice that the atrocious murder of the late president, Abraham Lincoln, and the attempted assassination of the Hon. W. H. Seward, secretary of state, were incited, concerted and procured by and between Jefferson Davis, late of Richmond, Va., and Jacob Thompson, Clement C. Clay, Beverly Tucker, George N. Sanders, W. H. Cleary, and other rebels and traitors against the government of the United States, harbored in Canada;

Now, Therefore, To the end that justice may be done, I, Andrew Johnson, president of the United States, do offer and promise for the arrest of said persons, or either of them within the limits of the United States, so that they can be brought to trial, the following rewards: One hundred thousand dollars for the arrest of Jefferson Davis; twenty-five thousand dollars for the arrest of Clement C. Clay; twenty-five thousand dollars for the arrest of Jacob Thompson, late of Mississippi; twenty five thousand dollars for the arrest of George N. Sanders; twenty-five thousand dollars for the arrest of Beverly Tucker, and ten thousand dollars for the arrest of William C. Cleary, late clerk of Clement C. Clay.

The provost marshal general of the United States is directed to cause a description of said persons, with notice of above rewards, to be published.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set [L. S.] my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, the second day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred and sixty-five, and of the independence of the United States of America the eighty-ninth.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

It will be seen that the above proclamation, which at the time of its publication caused such feelings of indignation and mortification among all reasonable, conservative

men throughout the United States, was not really the work of Andrew Johnson, but of Coldheart. The president was imposed upon and acted honestly and sincerely, though he was in error. He soon discovered his grievous mistake, and in a short time declared the proclamation null and void. It was a virtual acknowledgment that he did not believe that these patriotic gentlemen, whose spotless character he had assailed at the instigation of others, were guilty. But these things belong to history. Therefore, begging the reader's pardon for this digression, which we thought necessary, we will proceed with the story.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"With smooth dissimulation skilled to every grace—
A devil's purpose with an angel's face."

Mrs. Surratt had now been confined in the penitentiary several days, and during all this time she had heard nothing whatever from the outside world. In vain had she questioned the sentinel that peeped through the iron grating into her dismal cell. He appeared to be both deaf and dumb. The wretched woman thus totally deprived of the sympathy and consolation of her friends, and cut off from all communication with her fellow-beings, fell into violent paroxysms of grief. She wept till her tears absolutely refused to flow, and till she became quiet from physical exhaustion. Her daughter, Annie, had entreated, every day, with the mournful eloquence of feminine grief, to be allowed to visit her parent, but the authorities were inflexible, and were unmoved by her earnest pleadings.

The fourth day of her incarceration Mrs. Surratt, on glancing at the face of the sentinel, who had just taken his position, was surprised to recognize one of the vice-presidents of the Bloody Junto. The discovery caused a thrill of joy; because she looked upon it as an indication that she was not entirely forgotten by her friends.

"You can speak to me, Mr. Gloster," said she. "I know you are not dumb."

"No Ma'am," replied Gloster, "but it wouldn't be prudent to talk."

"What are you doing here, then?" inquired Mrs. Surratt in a tone of reproach.

"Keep calm, Ma'am; you will know presently."

"I have been shamefully treated, Mr. Gloster; chained here for three days like a vile murderer, and allowed to talk with no one. I have done nothing, either, to be imprisoned. You are one of the guilty parties, Mr. Gloster, not I—a poor helpless woman."

"For God's sake hush, Ma'am, if you want to be saved."

"I will not hush, Mr. Gloster, till I know when I am to be let out of this vile den."

"If you will keep quiet, Ma'am, you will learn that presently."

"How will I, sir?"

"Mr. Coldheart is coming to see you di-

rectly. We are doing all we can for you. But don't say anything more to me till Mr. Coldheart comes."

Mrs. Surratt was gladdened by this intelligence, and she kept silent. She felt safe, and was now inclined to assume an *air resigne* for her insulted dignity. In the course of half an hour, Coldheart made his appearance and entered the cell. He greeted the female prisoner with assumed kindness of manner, which was returned by Mrs. Surratt with one of those reproachful looks peculiar to women alone.

"How are you fareing, Mrs. Surratt?" asked the official.

"That is a useless question," replied the prisoner. "You might know that no respectable lady could be contented in such a place as this, chained like a condemned felon. What have I been imprisoned for, Mr. Coldheart?"

"You can answer that question better than I can, Madam. Who arrested you?"

"Some impudent policemen."

"You know why, do you not?"

"I do not know why I was suspected. I was astonished as much as mortified, as I was an innocent member of the Bloody Junto: I accidentally learned that Mr. Lincoln was to be murdered—that is, I had it unofficially from a friend, and I—I—I—"

"You what, Mrs. Surratt?" said Coldheart looking searchingly in her face.

"I was very much startled to hear it," replied the prisoner, evidently changing the original sentence on the end of her tongue. "But I had nothing to do with his murder, Mr. Coldheart. I am in fact the most innocent member of the society. You knew all about it, Mr. Coldheart; you might have prevented it, if you had so wished. Then how does it happen that I am the only one who has been apprehended? How does it happen that you are free?"

"Perhaps I have been more prudent than you have."

"That can't be it, sir; because I have never mentioned the matter to any one outside of the Junto; and I don't see how I could have been suspected, even."

"I do not either, Madam, but it seems you have been."

"Why didn't you prevent my arrest, Mr. Coldheart? and why didn't you have me set at liberty sooner?"

"You are rather unreasonable, Mrs. Surratt. I did not hear of your imprisonment till last night."

"I don't see how you could have been ignorant of it. It is certainly known all over the city. It must be, before this time."

"You are mistaken about that, Madam. At any rate I never heard it till last night, and I resolved to see you as soon as I could get a trusty man to act as sentinel before your door. I could not do this till just a short time ago."

"I don't like the way I've been treated," continued Mrs. Surratt. "It is a disgrace to the authorities to suffer an innocent woman to be imprisoned so long for nothing. Here

I've been shut up, in chains, for four days in this filthy place, and allowed to see no one except a dumb guard. None of my friends have visited me, and I know there is something wrong. They couldn't get permission, Mr. Coldheart, I know they couldn't, or I would have seen some of them here."

"I do not know whether they tried, Madam."

"Whether they did or not, I want to know by what authority I am imprisoned?"

"You ought to know more about your arrest than I do," said Coldheart.

"What I want to know is, whether by the authority of the United States, or the Junto?"

"The United States, of course, Madam."

"How do you know this, Mr. Coldheart? I was arrested by some saucy wretches, that pretended to be policemen, but they may have been acting for the Bloody Junto. Mrs. Degroot was tried by the Junto, I have heard, and I've not seen her since. What became of her, Mr. Coldheart?"

"She betrayed her trust, Madam. You know what became of her as well as I do."

"I didn't know but what the same fate might be in store for me."

"Why? Are you guilty of a similar offence?"

"Have you any evidence that I am?"

"No, Madam; but you talk like you thought you deserved the same fate."

"I may, in your opinion, deserve it, Mr. Coldheart, if I am not released at once."

"What do you mean?" inquired the official.

"I won't stand this treatment, Mr. Coldheart," said Mrs. Surratt, manifesting some show of feminine anger. "If you don't set me at liberty, I may tell all I know about the Bloody Junto, and your connection with it."

"Would you have no regard for your oath, Madam?"

"Certainly I would in an ordinary way; but when it becomes a question of *oath or life*, I don't think I would hesitate long."

"How would a betrayal of me benefit you?" inquired Coldheart.

"Why you know I am innocent, Mr. Coldheart, and you are guilty. You would be arrested, and I would be set at liberty. That is how I would be benefited."

"You are very much mistaken, Madam, in your suppositions. If it should be known that there is a regular organization concerned in this matter, and that you belonged to it, which you would have to confess, I would not give the snap of my finger for your chances. Possibly you might cause my arrest, but that is very doubtful. And if you did, your own chances of escape would grow small by degrees, and beautifully less." You ladies have too little patience, Mrs. Surratt," continued the official with a grin that was intended for a bland smile. "Your situation is unpleasant, I have no doubt, but you must be patient."

"I don't like to be confined like a criminal, Mr. Coldheart."

"I know it must be mortifying to your feelings, Madam. No one likes to be incarcerated in a gloomy cell; but when we find ourselves in such an undesirable situation, we ought not to fall out with our friends, who are doing all they can to effect our release. You will be set at liberty as soon as it can possibly be done."

"Why, haven't you come to turn me out now?" exclaimed the prisoner in both surprise and alarm.

"No, Madam—not to-day—it cannot be done."

Mrs. Surratt's feelings of fear were now in the ascendancy, as this startling announcement sounded the death knell to her hopes of liberty. She had been all along under the impression that Coldheart had come to the cell for no other purpose. But when he informed her in plain terms that such was not his intention, the stronger feelings of her energetic nature yielded to the more timid emotions of women. She was seized with the most fearful apprehensions and suspicions.

"Is it possible, Mr. Coldheart?" said she with tears starting in her eyes.

"Unfortunately it is," was the reply.

"I don't understand this, Mr. Coldheart?"

"What is it you do not understand?"

"Why I can't be set at liberty, when you know I'm innocent."

"I can easily explain that, Madam. You see you have laid yourself liable to suspicion somehow, and that led to your apprehension. There was nothing but suspicion against you at first."

"And there is nothing now but that," said Mrs. Surratt.

"There you are mistaken again," replied Coldheart. "For I understood last night there was strong testimony against you."

"It is false, Mr. Coldheart—you know it," cried Mrs. Surratt indignantly.

"Please let me explain, Mrs. Surratt. I will admit that the testimony is false—I know it, as you say; and if the public only knew it as well as I do, you would be set at liberty forthwith."

"You ought to release me anyhow," said Mrs. Surratt interrupting, "in spite of the public, if you know I'm innocent."

"If I should," replied Coldheart, "I would lose my head—politically, I mean—and then I could be of no service to you whatever. But as I was saying, there is strong testimony against you, and the officers of the government seemed disposed to credit it; and worse than that—yet in order to do you a service—though it is harrowing to my conscience, I affect to believe it too."

"My Heavens! Mr. Coldheart, do you say this publicly? Are you trying to destroy my good character?"

"Please hear me through, Mrs. Surratt. I merely affect to believe it, I said. Of course I know such a belief is slanderous to you. But if I should assert in the face of the testimony that you are innocent, I would be suspected, and might myself be arrested; then I would be utterly powerless to lend you the

least assistance. I have not the slightest doubt that the witnesses will all be rejected, and your innocence will be established when your trial takes place."

"You don't mean that I've got to be tried for the murder of Mr. Lincoln?" cried Mrs. Surratt turning pale.

"I fear you will, Madam. At present I do not see how it can be avoided. I cannot totally disregard public opinion—consistently with my own safety and that of my friends—yourself among the number. But if you are tried you need not apprehend any danger."

"It's not the danger I'm looking to altogether, sir. I don't think I can be in any great danger, innocent as I am. But the idea of being dragged before a vulgar crowd—gazed at and pointed at as a wild brute—I can't stand it, Mr. Coldheart. My character will be gone; my friends will spurn me from their society; my children will be ashamed of their mother; I will be an outcast—Oh, sir, the thought is intolerable!"

"You look too much at the dark side of the picture, Mrs. Surratt," said the official, endeavoring to soften his voice into a sympathetic tone. "Because this trial will exalt you to something of a heroine in public estimation, by the complete vindication of your assailed character. It will furnish a glorious opportunity for the triumph of justice and truth over slanderous accusation and foul calumny. Instead of being an outcast from human society, you will come forth from this difficulty like 'gold tried in the fire,' and no one will rejoice at this happy result more than myself. But you must be patient, my dear Madam, and however gloomy your prospects may appear, do not think that I will desert you. Even if you should be condemned to death, of which there is a possibility—"

"Oh, my Heavens!" interrupted the prisoner, "you don't mean that?"

"I only said there was a possibility of it," continued Coldheart. "But something a little worse than that may happen. You may have to stand upon the scaffold with a rope round your neck."

"God pity me!" cried Mrs. Surratt in unutterable agony and terror. "Is there any probability of such an occurrence?"

"There is a possibility of it, Madam."

"And will you allow the proceeding to be carried to such an extent?"

"I may not be able to prevent it."

"Won't you allow them to execute me?" she asked with a shudder.

"Most assuredly not, Madam, unless you yourself deprive me of the power of saving you."

"How could I do that?"

"By not keeping silent. All I ask you to do is, to be dumb concerning the Bloody Junto, and I will save you even at the last moment. But if you ever expose the society and my connection with it, or attempt it, the act will place you beyond my control. Only let your tongue be moveless, and I solemnly

swear you shall be saved. If the rope is round your neck, and that is not an improbable circumstance—persons you know are frequently pardoned upon the scaffold in that very position; but still if you should be reduced to that fearful extremity, I swear to you on the Holy Bible you shall be saved. Only be silent, and never entertain the thought of revealing this secret. You recollect that you once swore, anyhow, that you would never mention my name in connection with the Junto?"

"And I never have," said Mrs. Surratt emphatically.

"And you never will?"

"No, I never will speak your name in connection with the Junto, while I live?"

"Very well," said Coldheart, "you need have no fears, no matter what happens. Your trial will take place in a day or two."

"Will I have to wear these chains till then?" asked Mrs. Surratt, who saw clearly that she would be forced to the trial.

"I am afraid you will, Madam. I must act in such a manner as to avoid suspicion, you know. I am doing evil that good may come. The chains do not hurt, do they?"

"Not much, but I don't like them—they are troublesome—and they hurt my feelings, Mr. Coldheart."

"Well never mind. The trial will take place soon, and they will be taken off. I will attend to it immediately. Now, Madam, I will not be able to have another interview with you—it might not be prudent. Let me warn you again to be wise and discreet—be on your guard. You may sometimes feel like betraying me; because all these circumstances which I have hinted at as possible, may occur. Whenever you may be so disposed, remember that I will come in at the last dark moment. Do not be the least alarmed—all will be well."

What reply could the poor, distressed, defenceless woman make? She was in the power of this man, and she knew it. She shuddered and trembled as he withdrew, and the iron door creaked upon its rusty hinges. The key was turned, and the prisoner was alone.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"If I shall be condemn'd
Upon surmises; all proofs sleeping else,
But what your jealousies await: I tell you,
'Tis rigor and not law."

One of the most disgraceful events ever recorded in the annals of jurisprudence, occurred in the United States, during the month of May, 1865. We can hardly imagine upon what plea of "military necessity," the radicals venture to justify the sham trial of Mrs. Surratt and others implicated in the murder of Abraham Lincoln. We are aware that very many disgraceful acts of the war, repugnant to all ideas of American liberty, and antagonistic to the principles of common justice, were vindicated upon this miserable subterfuge. But we did not think,

before we were furnished with ocular demonstration, that any set of men pretending to live under a democratic government, would attempt to deprive a citizen of the privilege of a trial by jury. Although we know not upon what plea our northern brethren justified their legal proceeding, yet we can conjecture why Payne and others were tried by a military commission.

It is known that the courts martial are severe and cruel in the extreme. Unlike the ordinary civil tribunals, that existed in the United States prior to the year 1861, they are restrained by no established laws; but their members are left perfectly free to act in accordance with their peculiar notions of equity. The administration of impartial justice is a secondary object. Indeed that consideration has nothing to do with the making up of the verdict. These courts are organized for the good of the army, and that alone. The will of their members is the only law by which their operations are limited. If it is thought that for the sake of discipline the army needs an example, the culprit, no matter what may be the nature of his offence, or what circumstances mitigate his alleged crime, may be certain that the rigor of his punishment will be commensurate with the object to be attained. Death is frequently adjudged as a penalty, when the offender is really entitled to an acquittal, or at least to only a reprimand. What care military officers, accustomed to the sight of bloodshed, for the lives of a few men, if they can render more efficient a demoralized army? They would hesitate no length of time to murder in cold blood a score or two of innocent soldiers, if by that means, an army could be made more submissive to the will of its despotic commanders. Any offender, who is to be tried by such a court, in order to know what may be his chances of escape from its bloody clutches, must endeavor to discover the purpose which its members have in view. Evidence is nothing—it weighs not a feather in the balance; it is always subordinate to the object to be accomplished by the victim's punishment.

It is therefore an easy matter to conjecture why Payne and Mrs. Surratt were tried by such a court. If Payne had been a soldier, charity might induce us to make some allowance for his trial, which was a sham and a disgraceful formality. But he was a citizen, and consequently was entitled to a fair and impartial hearing before a jury of his countrymen. Admitting however that Payne was a soldier, and was therefore subject to the flagrant despotism that makes military rule revolting to the better feelings of nature, what excuse can possibly be offered in vindication of Mrs. Surratt's trial by a court-martial? It will be admitted by every man, who is not a fanatic, or a stark fool, that she was not a soldier, and that she was not acting even in the capacity of one. There could be not the slightest doubt that she was clearly entitled to a privilege, which, never before the dark period of 1861, was denied to an American citizen. Reverdy Johnson

one of the ablest jurists that the United States can boast of, pleaded with all the eloquence he could master against this foul and outrageous proceeding; but he was addressing men whose opinions were already formed, and whose verdict was already made up concerning the accused in this affair. Judge Holt and his coadjutors were governed by the old principle—"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Somebody had murdered Abraham Lincoln, and as he was an important personage, it would require the blood of several victims to satisfy his manes. The northern mind was inflamed, and the angry passions of the Radicals were aroused to 212 degrees, Fahrenheit, and nothing but human gore could reduce their burning ardor to a point consistent with comfort.

Four persons were arraigned before the court over which Judge Holt presided, upon a charge of complicity with the murder of Abraham Lincoln. The first was a woman, who is now believed by all candid persons to have been perfectly innocent. This conclusion is arrived at upon the showing of the accusers themselves. The next was Payne, who looked upon the scenes transpiring around him with utter indifference—even with contempt. The multitude gazed at him as if he had been a wild beast. The scene reminded one of those lines of Bryant:

"Upon the market place he stood—
A man of giant frame,
Amid the gathering multitude
That shrink to hear his name;
All proud of step and firm of limb,
His dark eye on the ground—
And silently they gazed on him
As on a lion bound."

Next to Payne was Atzerott, the little German whom we have described in a preceding chapter, and whose natural timidity of disposition would scarcely have permitted him to murder a full grown chicken-snake. Add to these three a miserable boy by the name of Harold, and you have the four persons accused of conspiracy against the government of the United States. What Harold really had to do with the murder, it would probably puzzle the distinguished gentlemen who condemned him to tell. If there was any reliable evidence, beyond the mere fact that he was intimately acquainted with John Wilkes Booth, it does not appear. The fact just stated was however amply sufficient with men who acted upon the testimony which they did. We will not anticipate, but will allow the honorable gentlemen to speak for themselves.

The testimony nearly all of which had been procured by the industry of Conover, was taken by the court, and the four victims were remanded to their cells. The culprits were dumb struck by the astounding evidence evoked during the remarkable trial. Men whom they had never seen before, swore to statements, that filled the prisoners with extreme surprise. It was also evolved in the course of the proceedings that Jeff Davis and others previously named, were the chief instigators of the murder of Abraham Lincoln.

After the room was cleared the court proceeded to deliberate upon the guilt of the four culprits.

"Gentlemen," said the presiding officer, "are the prisoners guilty or not guilty of complicity with the murder of President Lincoln?"

"This fellow Payne," said Gen.—— "is charged with making an assault upon Secretary Seward, I believe?"

"That is one of the charges," replied Judge Holt.

"I do not think the testimony in his case is full and complete."

"It is mostly circumstantial evidence, but it is very strong."

"What evidence is it to which you attach so much importance?"

"Why," quoth Judge Holt with superior wisdom beaming from his countenance, "did you notice Payne's hands?"

"No, not particularly. What is remarkable about them?"

"They are as soft and white as a delicate girl's," said Judge Holt emphatically, proud that his legal acumen had enabled him to discover a clinching argument, which had seemingly escaped his associates.

"Well, suppose they were?"

"Why that one circumstance is utterly incompatible with the character he professes to be. When arrested by the policeman, he said he was a ditcher, and he carried a spade upon his shoulder to corroborate his statement. Now gentlemen," continued the Judge blandly, "did you ever know a workman of that profession to possess soft and white hands?"

"To be sure not," said one surprised that he had not thought of this before.

"That then," quoth Judge Holt, "is one very strong point. Besides this there are several other circumstances that render Payne's statement as to the nature of his avocation extremely improbable, yea impossible. This little pocket-knife," he continued holding it up, "was found upon his person. It is an instrument which could not be used in the department of a ditcher. It is an absurdity to suppose that a common workman could have the means to give two dollars for an implement that would be of no use whatever. I argue, gentlemen, judging from the appearance of this knife, it must have cost at least two dollars. I see it is manufactured by George Westenholm—one of the most celebrated cutlers in the world. It has had six blades, though two of them are gone. Nevertheless there are two empty jaws, and it is presumable that two blades were once riveted into them. There can be no reasonable doubt then that this knife once possessed six good and sound blades. From what we know of the price of such articles, it must have cost two dollars, or upwards. The conclusion then is unavoidable that no ditcher would have abstracted that amount from his limited capital, for the purpose of purchasing a luxury that could afford him no enjoyment. Such an act might reduce his family to beggary, or if he had no family, it

might so cripple his resources that he would not be able to procure the implements indispensable to his calling. This, then, is a very strong argument to oppose the assertion which Payne made, that he is a ditcher by trade."

"That is so," remarked a member, thoroughly convinced by the profundity of the Judge's reasoning."

"There is another circumstance, gentlemen," continued the Judge, "that is as equally strong and conclusive. This tooth-brush was taken from one of Payne's pockets. He must have purchased it too."

"Is it not possible, Judge," inquired a member, "that some person might have given it to him, or that he found it?"

"I have thought of that," replied General Holt, "because mercy requires us to give a prisoner the benefit of every doubt. But after mature deliberation, I have come to the conclusion that such could not have been the case. Either hypothesis is repugnant to the principles of sound logic, as I will show, if you will give me your attention."

The judge advocate here took a swallow of water, cleared his throat, and commenced to unfold his stubborn arguments. The other members with great respect "lent him their ears that they might hear."

"You know, gentlemen, that a tooth-brush, as well as a delicate pen-knife, is a luxury enjoyed principally by the more refined, the upper circles of society. The lower classes scarcely ever have such a regard for the preservation of their health, as to cleanse the organs of mastication at all. They are too careless and imprudent in this respect. But when they are sufficiently elevated to understand the necessity of cleansing these organs, which are attached by nature to the maxillary bones, they perform the operation with a fragment of linen or cotton fabric, suitable hardly for any other purpose, unless they have female children, to whom the fragments are often given for the decoration of those little images, that are in common parlance called 'dolls.' If that be the case, then the poor classes chew a switch, ordinarily black-gum, until the end is reduced to a fibrous condition, and this is used as a substitute for a brush. When a switch of this character is not convenient, they use the naked fingers of the right hand, and sometimes the left. These, gentlemen, are the habits of the poor classes, ascertained by actual observation. If Payne, then, was a ditcher, he could not have owned this brush. It is a most excellent one of the kind, and must have cost at least a dollar. I argue further, that Payne must have purchased this implement. Because tooth-brushes are not carried about like pocket-knives and tooth-picks. Americans, you all know, are accustomed to leave these articles in their rooms. This brush could not therefore have been lost. Hence the conclusion is irresistible that the prisoner could not have found it. It is equally illogical to suppose that any person gave the said brush to Payne. Because, if the brush had been used, no man of any delicacy of feeling

or any sense of propriety would offer to a friend an article saturated with human spittle. The idea of presenting a new tooth-brush to a friend is also preposterous. Any one who would afford to spare a dollar for the purchase of a present, would hardly offer a tooth-brush to a friend; because, gentlemen, that would be a direct insult. It would convey the insinuation that the presentee was filthy in his habits. So I arrive at the conclusion that Payne purchased this brush; and if he did, he is no ditcher. He has been found prevaricating at a very dangerous time, when it behooved every man to sail under true colors, if he knew himself to be in the right. I take it for granted that if he had not been implicated in the conspiracy, he would have made known his true character without hesitation or evasion. Add to all these circumstances that blood was found upon his under garments, and it amounts to *prima facie* evidence that the prisoner is one of the parties to the frightful tragedy. It must have been the gore of Secretary Seward. It has already been proved that John Wilkes Booth is the murderer of Abraham Lincoln, and he was the only person who committed the outrageous deed. Allow me, gentlemen, to apply the test of sound logic to this circumstance, and no reasonable doubt as to the guilt of Payne can arise in your minds. Blood was found upon Payne's shirt. Mr. Seward's blood was spilled by a savage and ferocious phlebotomist, not pretending to act in that capacity, however. It follows, therefore, that Payne is the identical phlebotomist who attempted the life of Secretary Seward. Now, gentlemen, put these circumstances together, and you see they constitute one of the strongest cases of circumstantial evidence on record. In all my legal experience I have never met with a case sustained by more reliable evidence of this character. What say you, then, gentlemen, to Payne's guilt?"

Of course after this lucid exposition of the case the members could not hesitate, and they all answered "guilty."

"Mrs. Surratt—guilty or not guilty?" asked the judge advocate.

"Guilty," was the response.

"And Atzerott?"

"Guilty."

"And Harold?"

"What's the charge against him?" inquired a member.

"He was undoubtedly an accomplice. He was Booth's particular friend, and of course knew all about this affair."

"Yes," said Gen.—— "they all belong to the same nest. Harold was caught in bad company; he was guilty I guess."

And all the other members echoed "guilty." Thus the prisoners were condemned.

"What punishment, gentlemen, will you inflict?" asked Judge Holt.

"What would you say, Judge?" asked the youngest member of the court.

"I would suggest *death by hanging.*" Accordingly it was so entered upon the books of this learned military tribunal. The sentence was approved by the higher military

authorities without delay, and the victims were allowed four days in which to prepare for eternity. Here we must be allowed to make a single reflection. It is frequently asserted by the radicals that the south is an unenlightened country, and they seek to sustain this assertion by reference to our former treatment of negroes. We beg leave to oppose southern barbarity, as exhibited in the trial of that cut-throat John Brown, to the superabundant mercy shown in the trial of Mrs. Surratt. Brown was not even entitled to a trial by the civil tribunals of the land. He deserved the fate of an outlaw. Nevertheless he was allowed an impartial hearing, and was not deprived of the benefit of counsel. No false witnesses testified in his case. He was condemned by a lawful jury, and thirty days granted him to prepare to give an "account of the deeds done in the body." After his execution, his remains were deposited in a decent coffin, and delivered up to his friends. Now "look on this picture—then on that."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"'Tis not the stoic's lessons got by rote. The pomp of words and pedant dissertations. That can sustain thee in that hour of terror: Books have taught cowards to talk nobly of it. But when the trial comes they stand aghast. Hast thou consider'd what may happen after it? How thy account may stand, and what to answer?"

Mrs. Surratt went through the trial without any great apprehension as to the final result. Mortification at being exposed to public gaze in the character of a criminal, was the predominant feeling in her heart. Her modesty was so shocked by the scenes through which she was compelled to pass, that she could take but little note of the trial. She was somewhat surprised at some of the witnesses, who made statements that she thought must appear palpably false to every unprejudiced mind; but this only made her rely more upon the promise of Coldheart, inasmuch as he had told her that these things would occur. She was induced to believe that the trial was a mere formality, and she was tired of the tedious proceedings. In a few hours, therefore, after its termination, the announcement of the sentence did not at first produce any great uneasiness, except that aroused by the reflection that she might be forced to complete the programme marked out by Coldheart. Thus far it had been carried out to the letter, and she began to think of receiving a pardon upon the scaffold. Then, after awhile, the suspicion gradually crept into her mind that Coldheart might probably prove a villain; and if so, there was no hope. She would have but a poor opportunity to expose his rascality and complicity with a rope around her neck; perhaps she might not be allowed to speak at all. This frightful thought occasioned her no little anxiety; and she counted the weary hours as they dragged along, hoping

that every moment would bring her the promised pardon, and thus spare her the mortification of the gallows scene, that Coldheart had referred to as a probability.

The second day after her trial, when her suspense began to change into real agony, and hope was beginning to tremble upon the verge of despair, the cell door suddenly swung open. Mrs. Surratt expected to see Coldheart enter, but she was grievously disappointed. In his stead a catholic priest, with a solemn mien, slowly moved into the narrow apartment. His very appearance filled the heart of Mrs. Surratt with emotions of an unpleasant nature. However, she smiled faintly, and endeavored to assume an air of cheerfulness, which she by no means felt. It was a vain effort. Human nature cannot deceive itself.

"I'm glad, good father," said Mrs. Surratt extending her hand, "that you too have not forgotten me. My friends are treating me badly. None have visited me, and I need company to help kill time."

"My daughter," said the priest, who did not wish her to mistake the object of his visit, "your time is short enough without any killing."

"I know it, father, but we poor mortals when we get into difficulties, need and wish for the consolation of our friends."

"One in your situation," replied the priest with great solemnity, "should seek comfort from another source. Friends cannot save us from death, nor offer consolation equal to that of our Holy Catholic Religion."

"That is true, Father Walter. I often think of it."

"But, my daughter," said the priest earnestly, "you should devote your whole thoughts to this subject—day and night. You will soon be called upon to travel the rugged path of death. Day after to-morrow you must ascend into the presence of the Holy Saints. Are you prepared for this trial, daughter?"

Mrs. Surratt trembled violently.

"You have been thinking of this, daughter?" said the priest seeing that the wretched prisoner was not disposed to reply.

"Oh, father, yes, but not seriously. I didn't believe my end to be that near."

"It is natural," said Father Walter, "to seek to deceive ourselves as long as possible with the illusions of hope, but I entreat you not to indulge in them. Let every hour, as it speeds away, be freighted with holy devotions. Do not idle away the few, fleeting moments you have to live. Confess your sins, my daughter, and let us pray that you may be forgiven."

"Oh, Father Walter," said Mrs. Surratt in anguish, "do not talk thus to me. I can't believe I'm going to die that soon."

"Why," answered the surprised priest, "you have surely heard your sentence. The authorities have certainly informed you that you are doomed to die. You will be executed day after to-morrow. You doubtless know this?"

"I don't believe it—I don't believe it. It's

a sham, good father," exclaimed Mrs. Surratt with a desperate effort of reason to confirm herself in the belief that such was the case.

Father Walter looked at the miserable woman with an expression of pity, while at the same time he was a little suspicious that she was becoming a maniac.

"It is an unpleasant, disagreeable truth to admit," he said at last. "I wish I could bid you hope; but to do so would be deceiving you. It is my solemn duty to say 'prepare to meet thy God.' Do not flatter yourself with the delusive hope that you can live longer than two or three days. While we are talking the span of your life is rapidly narrowing. Life is sweet, my daughter, but you must resign it to the God who made you."

"I won't, Father Walter—I won't die that soon," interrupted Mrs. Surratt in a fit of transient frenzy at the obstinacy of the priest, who she appeared to forget knew nothing of Coldheart's promise. "You don't believe I am guilty of the scandalous charge brought against me. You know I never committed that horrible crime, good father. I'm as innocent of it as the Holy Virgin, Father Walter. I can't believe that my friends, knowing this, will allow me to be put to death. No, they won't, good father."

"Your friends have no control over the case," remarked the priest.

"If they haven't, some of the officers of the government know that I was not concerned in the murder of Mr. Lincoln, and they won't suffer me to be executed. I was a friend to Mr. Lincoln, father—one of the best he had, and I warned him not to go to the theatre that night."

"You did!" exclaimed the astonished priest. "Is it possible you were privy to that foul murder?"

"I knew it several days before it occurred, and twice attempted to convey information to Mr. Lincoln. I persuaded a female friend to tell Mrs. Lincoln all about it, but she was detected somehow, and they arrested her, good father, and she has not been heard of since. After she failed I wrote to Mr. Lincoln myself, the very day the murder was committed, and I know he got the letter. I am innocent, good father."

While Mrs. Surratt was relating this, Father Walter looked perplexed, and he greatly feared that she was implicated in the plot.

"This is no time for prevarication," said he sternly. "Why did you not make these things known pending your trial? Do not try to deceive God, daughter, while you are almost in the presence of death."

"I'm speaking the truth, good father," said Mrs. Surratt firmly and earnestly. "The reason I did not make it known, was because I didn't think it was necessary. I didn't want to expose or embarrass those who have promised to save me."

"No one will save you, my daughter. You must not hug any such delusion to your

heart. You will find out your mistake when it may be entirely too late."

"I'm looking for my pardon every moment, father."

"All the pardon you will ever receive will come from above," said the priest pointing upwards solemnly.

"Father, father," cried Mrs. Surratt with something like childish energy, "don't try to make me believe so. I don't want to die so soon. I can't leave my children. Who will take care of them?"

"The fiat of law regards not the private relations of any individual," said the priest pityingly. "You have been condemned, daughter, and you must die. I deeply sympathize with you in your distress—I sympathize with your children in the bereavement they must soon sustain. But, daughter, attend to the interests of your immortal soul first. God, who, does all for the best, will take care of your children."

"Say not such cruel things, good father," begged poor Mrs. Surratt. "You would not talk thus if you knew all."

"What do you mean by these words?" asked the priest.

"Oh, father, advise me what to do," exclaimed Mrs. Surratt wringing her hands. "I'm wretched—I'm miserable, good father."

"I am trying to advise you to look to this," said the priest holding up a little cross, "but Satan seems to blind your eyes."

"I don't mean that, father. I want your advice in regard to another matter. Will you befriend me, good father?"

"Yes," replied the priest, seeing that the distressed woman was not disposed to listen to his spiritual advice.

"Father," said Mrs. Surratt sinking her voice to almost a whisper, "I've been promised a pardon. It was promised me before the trial came off, and that is the reason I made no defence. I was told that I'd be condemned to death, and pardoned afterwards."

"Who told you this, my daughter?"

"I'm forbidden to reveal that. I'm sworn not to mention his name. It was a man high in authority, though."

"You know that he has the power to procure your pardon?"

"I'm certain of it, father."

"When did he tell you that you would receive the pardon—I mean at what day subsequent to the trial?"

"He did not say exactly. He told me," continued Mrs. Surratt shudderingly, "that I might probably receive it on the scaffold, and bade me to fear nothing, even if the rope should be—"

"Placed around your neck," said the priest finishing the sentence for the choking prisoner.

"Yes, father—he said that."

"Why should he interest himself in your fate to such an extent?"

"Because he was engaged in the conspiracy, and he knew that I was aware of it—but you'll keep it secret, good father?"

"By this sacred cross I will, my daughter; confess freely."

Mrs. Surratt then related the particulars concerning her initiation into the Bloody Junto—with which our reader is acquainted. When she had told all that she deemed necessary, she said:

"What do you advise me to do, good father?"

The priest reflected several moments before he replied.

"You cannot mention the name of the officer who promised to save you."

"I obligated myself not to give his name in connection with this matter. It would not be right to violate my oath, would it?"

"You did wrong, my daughter, to bind yourself in any such a manner. You may depend upon it there is treachery intended. This officer, whoever he may be—I dislike to give you pain, my daughter—but he will have you executed. There is no confidence to be placed in any man who would commit murder for his own personal aggrandizement. It is my conviction that you may prepare to die."

"Oh, father, save me—save me from this horrid death!"

"I will do all I can," replied the priest shaking his head, "but I fear my efforts will all be fruitless."

"Why, father? You don't believe I'm guilty, do you?"

"No. I am satisfied of your innocence."

"Then, father," said Mrs. Surratt earnestly, "it's not right that I should be put to death. You won't allow it, will you?"

"This officer you spoke of," continued the priest, "is no friend of yours—I can see plainly enough. He is making a scape-goat of you, and you will find it out, but it will be too late. The knowledge of that fact will come upon you amid your death struggles."

"Holy Virgin, save me!" cried Mrs. Surratt terrified by the awful words of the priest. Then in another instant she fell to entreating.

"Oh father, father, tell me what to do. I don't want to die now. I'll expose this wicked man—shall I do it, good father?"

"I do not at present see how that would benefit you," replied the priest, who was too honest to deceive the poor woman. "The officer has every advantage of you. You have no witnesses, according to your own statement, to prove what you have said."

"Oh, good father, tell me then what to do?" cried poor Mrs. Surratt in perfect agony at the dismal prospect before her.

"I will investigate this affair," said the priest after a moment, "though I advise you to expect the worst, and to prepare accordingly. I firmly believe the intention is to put you to death, my daughter. It is an awful truth, but you should begin to face it squarely. You need not rely upon the promise of that officer—who is engaged in this iniquitous business. He will deceive you, as sure as you are now imprisoned."

"Then, father, if he does," said Mrs. Surratt, conquering the shrinking timidity which

she had heretofore shown, "if he does, I have one request to make. I want you to expose him after I am gone."

"How can I do that, my daughter?"

"I only swore that I'd never mention his name in connection with the Bloody Junto while I lived, good father; and I will not. If I'm executed, then my obligation ceases. The very day the officer persuaded me to this step, which I took without much reflection, I wrote his name on one of the walls of my cellar. After he left me, I got to studying about it, and I thought may be I'd done wrong. I had something like a presentiment that he was after no good. His name is written on the wall in large, black letters, and covered over with white-wash, which will easily come off."

"Did you anticipate any such events as have happened?" interrupted the priest.

"No, father, I anticipated nothing. I could not tell myself why I did it. The idea suddenly came into my head, and I seemed to be urged on by some invisible power."

"Strange, strange," muttered the priest. "On what part of the wall is the name written?" he inquired.

"About as high from the floor as my head, and half way between the two corners."

"Your request shall be granted, my daughter. I will furthermore see if I can discover some reliable evidence of your innocence, and if I do I will make it known."

Father Walter then took leave of Mrs. Surratt, and proceeded to the cell of Payne, whom he found leaning back in one corner against the walls. He was gazing listlessly at the ceiling, without any of those indications of troubled thought that might naturally be supposed to disturb one's equanimity in such a situation. No physiognomist could have guessed the nature of his reflections from the expression of his countenance. His face was somewhat grave, but its seriousness seemed to be of a negative character, proceeding from the mere absence of mirthful excitement. In short, his whole manner, whether assumed or not, was indicative of a mind at ease.

The priest spoke kindly as he entered, and Payne returned the salutation, but without changing his attitude in the least.

"I am a priest, my son," presently said Father Walter.

"Thank you for the information," replied Payne in the coldest tone imaginable.

"I have come to hear you confess," said Father Walter, who wished to broach the subject of his mission without delay.

"What for, good father?"

"You know you have to die."

"Yes, so do we all, sooner or later."

"But your time is probably very short."

"And yours too, good father."

"But the very day and hour of your death is fixed."

"So is yours, and every body else's."

"Why will you jest thus, my son," said the priest reproachfully, "when you know that you have not many hours to live?"

"I am not jesting, kind father. Consider-

ring the uncertainty of human affairs, you may die now before I do."

"That is true," replied the priest. "But you have been condemned by the law, and the hour of your execution is recorded."

"Why so I have been informed, good father."

"Are you ready then," inquired the perplexed priest, to meet death?"

"Suppose I should answer in the negative?"

"Then I will prepare you," said Father Walter.

"That would be a great kindness, good father, and would place me under lasting obligations. How will you do it?"

"You must confess your sins to me," said the priest.

"Agreed," replied Payne, "upon one condition?"

"What is that?"

"You must make a mutual thing of it?"

"I do not understand you, my son."

"Well, I will confess to you if you will confess to me. We will perform a mutual service for each other in that way."

At this Father Walter piously crossed himself, and began to lecture the prisoner for his blasphemy. Payne gazed at the priest as if he had been examining a wild beast of some strange character.

"I do not belong to your church, good father," said Payne quietly, when the priest had made a pause.

"What church do you belong to then?"

"None."

"Then, my son, you may as well take shelter under the wing of the Holy Catholic Church. You have no time to waste now with the various theories of the different denominations."

"Father," said Payne without the least change in his countenance, "how much will you charge by the yard to pray me out of purgatory?"

The priest appeared dumb-struck.

"Make it as cheap as you can, good father, continued Payne, as if he thought the priest was making the calculation in his own mind. "You see I might advance so far into the fiery regions as to make a cent or two on the yard a considerable item in the bill."

"My son you are very, very wicked."

"Why so, good father?"

"You are making sport of the Holy Catholic Religion."

"Why, do you not say mass for people in purgatory?" asked Payne in apparent surprise.

"Yes, to be sure we do."

"It is to accomplish good, is it not?"

"Certainly it is."

"You have pay for this, kind father?"

"The church must be sustained," meekly replied the priest.

"Very well," continued Payne. "I am willing to pay you as much as the job is worth. But what security will you give, good father, for the faithful performance of

your duty? After I am dead I cannot, you know, reach you through ordinary modes. I must therefore have approved security before I pay you for this service. Would it not do as well to have a policy of insurance, good father, guaranteeing that I will not enter purgatory at all? I should like an arrangement of this character much better than any other. What say you, father?"

"My son, you talk very strangely for a man who is to die."

"I see, father, you are not disposed to enter into a contract. Well, I have no other proposition to make. I can do my own praying. It is true I am poor, very poor, kind father, but the good book says I can buy without money or price."

"I will charge you nothing for absolution, my son."

"I suppose not, replied Payne now changing his manner somewhat. "I suppose not, provided I would make a suitable confession. You no doubt think that I am a vile murderer, and that my story would be extremely interesting, and would itself overpay the charge for absolution. It might also satisfy the consciences of the military judges who condemned me. They may have sent you for this very purpose. You may be an old-fashioned Jesuit, deputed to take my confession, and thereby complete the pitiful evidence brought forward in my trial; by the addition of something more substantial."

The priest reddened at this severe charge. "Your accusation is very unjust," said Father Walter with meekness.

"I shall make my confession to no man," continued Payne. "The truth is, good father, I have always had a perfect horror of the Catholic Church, from my very boyhood. My imagination was so affected by the 'Book of Martyrs,' that I can almost see the fires of Smithfield as they crackled around the bodies of stubborn heretics. I have been taught to hate your church, and I candidly acknowledge that I have no more respect for your robes, your beads and your crosses, than I have for the absurd rites of Jove or Bacchus. You need not frown, father. I care not that," snapping his fingers, "for the anathemas of both priesthood and laity of the Catholic Church. Just so you do not apply the cruel thumbscrew, nor break me on the wheel, nor throw me to ravenous beasts to be devoured, you may tongue-lash and excommunicate me till doomsday, if it will afford you any pleasure or benefit your church."

"You are incorrigible, my son, said Father Walter, without exhibiting the least anger. "I will resign you to Satan."

"Thank you, kind father. The probability is, I can compromise the matter with him in a manner more satisfactory to myself than with you, if you will not interfere with my transactions by saying mass for my soul. Let me have fair play, good father. It is all I ask."

Father Walter, seeing that nothing could be done with the strange prisoner, abruptly

quitted the cell, and Payne was again left in solitude to contemplate the gloomy prospects before him.

During all this time clergymen were in the respective cells of Atzerott and Harold. Both these miserable wretches had barely sense enough to comprehend the nature and consequences of death. They knew, from observation, that corpses were buried beneath the sod, and it was this state of darkness they feared more than the horrors of purgatory. But it might be debated whether they had any rational ideas as to the immortality of the human soul, and the import of eternity. They shed a quantity of tears, sufficient to induce any reasonable preacher into the belief that they were truly penitent. But if their emotions had been critically analyzed, it is highly probable that their putative sorrow for sin emanated from grief at the prospect of the silent tomb, and the horrible road they were forced to travel in order to reach it. We will not, however, detain the reader by a description of the sickening scenes that occurred in their cells. We will leave them, and proceed to details more interesting.

After his departure from the penitentiary, Father Walter called on Mr. Stanton, and requested the secretary to accompany him to the White House, stating that he believed Mrs. Surratt was innocent, and that she had written a letter of warning to Mr. Lincoln. They both proceeded to the president's office and searched closely, but no trace of the letter could be discovered. They then questioned Mrs. Lincoln, and all who might be supposed to know anything of the president's affairs; but no one had ever heard Mr. Lincoln make mention of such a document.

"I knew you were mistaken, Father Walter," said Mr. Stanton. "You have been duped by the prisoner."

"Sir, she is an innocent woman," replied the priest shaking his head.

"The court has determined otherwise, father, and it is not your province to reverse their decision. Mrs. Surratt has had a fair trial, and the proof against her was so strong that she attempted no defence whatever. This story about a letter she pretends to have written is all twaddle. Her acknowledgment of her privy of the assassination is additional proof of complicity. You have been deceived, good father, in regard to this matter."

"Mrs. Surratt has herself been deceived," replied the priest, "and those who did it will repent on their death-beds, if not before."

"You would better reserve these remarks, good father, for your sermons. They are not applicable to me. I have no control over Mrs. Surratt's destiny. I did not condemn her; neither is it my duty to acquit her."

"She will die an innocent woman," said the priest solemnly.

"You will stultify yourself before the public, father, if you talk thus."

"Still my belief in her innocence will be unshaken."

"I have no time to lose," said Secretary Stanton suddenly breaking off. "Go to Judge Holt, if you desire an investigation."

So saying the secretary went about his business, and Father Walter proceeded in search of the judge advocate general. But from this distinguished individual he met with nothing but insulting rebuffs. In short, all the efforts of the good father to procure some additional evidence of Mrs. Surratt's innocence, proved in vain, and he was at last forced to give it up in despair. His only duty now was to attend to the spiritual interests of the doomed woman. Accordingly the next day he applied to Secretary Stanton for a pass to visit the criminal.

"I shall have to refuse you, father," said the secretary.

"Why will you?" asked the priest in unfeigned surprise.

"Simply because you have taken upon yourself functions that do not legitimately belong to your calling. You seem to have been acting more the part of lawyer than priest. Instead of endeavoring to prepare the prisoner to die, you have been attempting to reverse a fate to which a just sentence has condemned her. You went about yesterday proclaiming Mrs. Surratt's innocence, thus seeking to turn the tide of public opinion against the lawful authorities of the government. Under these circumstances it would be imprudent to grant the small favor you ask, and I cannot do it."

"Is it possible you will deprive a dying woman of the consolations of religion?"

"I do not take that view of it, father," replied Secretary Stanton. "I am merely protecting the dignity of the government. If you had only discharged the duties that appertain exclusively to your holy profession, free communication with the prisoner would have been allowed you. But when you abandon your high calling, father, and assume another office, in the exercise of which you cast obloquy upon the legal courts, established by authority of the United States, it becomes my duty to prevent your interview with the prisoner. And however disagreeable the duty may be, I shall discharge it with firmness."

"I was in the discharge of the duties pertaining to my calling," replied Father Walter. "I heard Mrs. Surratt's confession, and was convinced of her innocence. My efforts, yesterday, in her behalf, were prompted by a christian desire to assist an injured, friendless woman. I would have done the same for any one of my flock."

"Attend to the eternal interests of your flock, good father," said the secretary with a slight but perceptible sneer, "and do not attempt to impede the progress of earthly justice."

"I ask only to be allowed that privilege," replied the priest humbly. "I wish to talk with the prisoner only in regard to religious matters."

"I will give you permission on one condition, father."

"Name it?" said the priest.

"You must correct the assertions you made yesterday, and hereafter express the opinion that Mrs. Surratt is guilty."

"Whether I believe it or not?"

"Yes, whether you believe it or not."

"Never! Never!" said the priest firmly. "I will not belie my own conscience, and slander the memory of an innocent woman."

"Then, father, I emphatically refuse your request."

"So be it," replied the priest with great solemnity. "Let God judge between us concerning this matter; and let this great sin be laid at the door of him to whom it belongs."

And Father Walter turned from the secretary of war, and with slow steps went his way with a sorrowful heart.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"No marble marks the spot where they lie,
Dofan'd, disgrac'd they were doom'd to die—
And there they sleep, alone in the vale,
Unmourn'd except by the wind's wild wail."

The fourth day from the trial had now dawned; and during this time, Mrs. Surratt had been left utterly alone, in a state of suspense and agony that no words can justly portray. Her daughter Annie had made various attempts to visit her distracted mother, but she was unsuccessful. The poor girl was rendered frantic by the repeated failures she had made; but nevertheless she was not deterred from making another, on the last day, both to see her only parent, and procure her pardon. A scene is said by northern writers to have taken place, that might have aroused the sympathy of the most obdurate heart. For the miserable girl, with eyes red and swollen from weeping, and with dishevelled hair, hastened early in the morning to the White House. Here she was met by General Muzzy, the president's military secretary. "I want to see Mr. Johnson," she said hurriedly.

"The president is indisposed to-day," replied General Muzzy kindly. "He cannot see any one."

"Let me see Mrs. Johnson, then."

"She too is ill."

"Where is Mrs. Patterson? can I see her?"

"She is also indisposed."

"Oh God!" screamed the poor girl, "are they all sick at once? Will no one help me? Oh, good sir," throwing herself upon her knees before General Muzzy, "please help me."

"My dear young lady," said Gen. Muzzy, raising her up and leading her to a seat, "what can I do?"

"Help me to intercede for my poor mother. Oh, sir, she had nothing to do with the murder of Mr. Lincoln. Everybody that is acquainted with her, knows that she was too good a woman to do such a horrid thing. She ain't guilty, and you oughtn't to let them

hang my poor mother. Oh, sir, I can't stand it, indeed I can't. It will kill me, if she is taken from me. Oh, Lord have mercy!" she exclaimed throwing herself at General Muzzy's feet, where she cried with all the bitterness of girlish agony. Then in a moment she sprang to her feet, and recommenced her heart-rending entreaties. Seizing the hand of General Muzzy, she eagerly looked into his face.

"Oh, sir, won't you help me?"

"God knows I would if I could," said General Muzzy, in whose heart the chords of sympathy were touched by the girl's deep distress.

"Oh, talk with Mr. Johnson, then," she exclaimed earnestly, "beg him to spare my innocent mother."

"The president is not able to converse about any kind of business," replied General Muzzy. "He is violently ill."

"Please see somebody then," begged poor Annie. "For Heaven's sake do something. I will lose my senses if you don't."

"I would do anything in the world that I could, consistently, to relieve your distress," replied General Muzzy. "Your mother has been tried lawfully, and sentenced; and I would be set down as an idiot if I should ask her release, without some evidence of her innocence upon which to base my petition. If I had such evidence, I would cheerfully exert myself to procure her pardon of the authorities. But without it, I do not feel like subjecting myself to the mortification of refusal at the hands of all I would approach upon the subject. If I can favor you in any other way, though, I will do so."

"Won't you let me see my mother before she dies?" asked Annie in a subdued, humble tone.

"Why, have you not been with her all the time?"

"No, sir. I have not spoken to her since she was arrested."

"Have you asked permission of any of the officers?"

"Yes sir, but I was refused every time."

"That is too bad," said General Muzzy, speaking partly to himself. "Stay here till I return. I will get permission for you to see your mother. I have no doubt this poor favor will be granted."

General Muzzy then hastened to the office of the secretary of war.

"Mr. Stanton, said he, "has Miss Surratt applied for permission to see her mother?"

"She has," replied the secretary.

"And you refused her?"

"I did."

"May I ask your reason for such a course?"

"Yes. I refused that the prisoner might have no possible chance of escape. I do not wish to have persons running to the cells and furnishing the criminals with implements with which to file off their chains, and circulating reports derogatory to the government of the United States. Here is old Father Walter, whom I permitted to visit Mrs. Surratt for the purpose of discharging his clerical duties—he has been bruiting it

about the city that she has been unjustly condemned, and the Lord knows what all. I conceived that my duty to the government required me to put a stop to such proceedings, which I have effectually done by prohibiting all intercourse with the prisoners. I regret the necessity which forced me to take this step. It is a severe measure, I acknowledge, but I am forced to it *ex rei necessitate*."

"It is a little too severe," replied General Muzzy. "I cannot perceive the necessity for such a course towards Mrs. Surratt. For God's sake, Mr. Stanton, give the poor child a permit to see her mother before she dies. If you do not, the public voice will pronounce it the most harsh, cruel and unjust treatment ever exercised towards any criminal. It will partake of the character of barbarism."

"Do you ask this as a personal favor, General Muzzy?"

"I will put it upon that ground, if necessary."

"I can grant it upon no other."

Very well, I shall take it as a personal favor."

"And besides this, I will hold you responsible for whatever may happen."

"Give me the permit, Mr. Stanton. I will run considerable risk to gratify a friendless orphan, whose tears have burnt a passage to my heart. I never could be satisfied, if she is denied this small favor."

Secretary Stanton, thus appealed to, could not refuse the permit without laying himself open to universal censure, and therefore complied with Gen. Muzzy's request.

While General Muzzy was interceding for Annie Surratt, that young lady was manifesting her agony in paroxysms of grief that greatly moved the hearts of all who happened to be in the vicinity of the White House. She threw herself upon the door-steps, and her wild, piercing screams of heart-breaking anguish penetrated the halls of the president's mansion. She implored the aid of all visitors in the melting language of frantic sorrow. Few who looked upon the wretched girl, the very embodiment of the wildest grief, went away from the White House without shedding a tear at the touching exhibition of filial affection. Indeed, the sight of this beautiful girl, bathed in the bitterest tears that human nature can shed, was sufficient to call forth the warmest sympathies of all passers-by. For the case is without a parallel in America since the landing of the Mayflower, unless we except the treatment of those poor women in New England who were burnt or drowned as witches, or put to death in some other barbarous manner, for the horrible crime of worshipping God according to the dictates of their own consciences. Those startling shrieks of Annie Surratt will ring in the ears of some, even upon their beds of death, and it may be, follow them down to the black regions of eternal despair!

It was nearly ten o'clock when General Muzzy handed to Miss Surratt the written

permit to visit her mother. There was no time to lose. Every fleeting moment was rapidly hurrying on the hour of death. Certain that lingering longer at the White House would be productive of nothing but disappointment, Annie hastened to the prison. Showing the permit, she was allowed to pass to Mrs. Surratt's cell. Upon entering a spectacle burst upon her sight that sent a pang of horror tearing through her trembling frame. Mrs. Surratt was sitting with her back to the wall. Her eyes stared wildly around, and her face was haggard and overspread with the pallor of death. When her daughter entered she made a slight movement with her feet, which caused the iron chains to rattle. The child cast one hurried glance at these rude manacles, which told too plainly the tale of suffering, disgrace and misery, then with a wild shriek that reverberated in the gloomy corridors of the penitentiary, fell shuddering into her mother's arms. It was a meeting too distressing to witness; and even the war-scarred sentinel brushed a tear from his eye, and turned his head away. Neither parent nor child spoke for some length of time. Grief like theirs was too deep to be uttered, except in the silence of that heart-breaking sorrow and anguish that feel the poverty of human language. When, however, the first paroxysms of grief had passed away, Annie broke the awful silence.

"Oh, mother! mother! mother! what shall I do?"

Mrs. Surratt was incapable of making any reply.

"Speak to me, mother," she piteously begged. "Say something to me. Let me hear your voice once more."

"God bless you, my poor child," sobbed Mrs. Surratt with a desperate effort to be calm. It was in vain. She could only clasp the daughter closer to her trembling breast, and bedew her face with a fresh outburst of scalding tears.

"Oh mother! will they murder you?" asked Annie with a shudder.

"I'm afraid they will, my daughter," replied Mrs. Surratt choking down her struggling emotions.

"Then I'll die too. I don't want to live if they kill you. Oh, I can't live without you."

"Annie, my child, you mustn't talk so. You must live to take care of your little sister."

"Oh, mother, it will kill the poor child. She does nothing but cry from morning till night. She hasn't eaten anything hardly for four days. She nearly goes into spasms."

At this harrowing intelligence Mrs. Surratt raised her hands imploringly to Heaven.

"Oh God!" she cried with emotions that seemed to rend her very heart, "protect my orphan children; and may they meet their mother in Heaven!"

"Oh, mother, we will! we will! and I hope it won't be long first."

"Annie," said Mrs. Surratt with comparative calmness, "you must try to train up your little sister as I have taught you. Let her kneel at your feet every night as you have done at mine, and say her prayers."

Take her to sabbath-school; tell her to be a good child and meet her mother in Heaven."

"Oh, mother, I can't bear to hear you talk so."

"I have not long to live, Annie, and you must listen to what I have to say."

"Oh mother," interrupted the sobbing daughter, "they surely won't hang you, will they? It would be a disgrace to the government to murder as good a woman as you are."

"Do not trust to that, my child. God sometimes permits men to do wickedness for the accomplishment of his own wise purposes. The innocent are often treated unjustly in this world. But everything happens for the best. My death, dear child, will ever be a warning to you to do what is right. Think of me often, then, and whenever you may be tempted to do wrong, recollect the dying words of your mother."

"Oh mother, you'll kill me to talk in this way."

"You will miss me sadly for awhile, continued Mrs. Surratt, "for none can fill a mother's place. But in the course of time you will learn to do without me, and will probably think of your mother as one who went down to a premature grave. Maybe you will forget me entirely."

"Never! never! Oh mother, how can you say so?"

"I know you think so now, my daughter; but God has wisely ordered that we shall not always mourn for departed friends, and it is right, too, that we shouldn't. But I want you sometimes to think of me, especially when you feel disposed to commit a wrong act. Don't forget in your prayers those who put your innocent mother to death. The Holy Bible commands us to pray for our enemies, and to forgive them, even as we hope to be forgiven. The time will come when the innocence of your mother will be talked of, and her enemies will be found out. They may be tried for the great injury they have done me; but do you pray for them, Annie, and forgive them in your heart, and God will certainly reward you. In short, be a good child, and you will meet your mother in Heaven."

"Holy Virgin, have mercy!" cried Annie clinging more closely to her parent.

"Annie," continued Mrs. Surratt after a short pause, "I want you to have me buried by your father's side."

The child lay moaning piteously in her mother's lap.

"Bring your little sister to our graves sometimes"—but the poor woman's feelings overcame her, and she could not complete the sentence.

"Oh, mother, please don't talk so."

"Will you do this, Annie?" inquired Mrs. Surratt when she could speak.

"Yes, mother; I'll do anything you wish."

Mrs. Surratt then spoke of the disposition of her little property—how it should be used so as to benefit her children. She occasionally shuddered while speaking, when she heard the sound of the hammers driving

nails into the scaffold erecting in the penitentiary yard. She knew that arrangements for her execution were making, and thoughts too horrible for description passed through her mind, as the sounds of the preparation penetrated to her dismal cell.

There was quite a contrast between the scenes transpiring within the narrow prisons, and those without. A considerable crowd of persons, whose contemptible curiosity to witness the death-struggles of a fellow-being had overcome all sense of shame, had bogged passes of the authorities, and were now assembled where the gibbet was erecting. Impertinent newspaper reporters, prying into everybody's face, listening at every word that might be dropped, and searching into every nook and corner for sensational items with which to fill their blank sheets, were looking eagerly about, note-book and pencil in hand, ready to take down every particle of intelligence as it occurred. In proof that their duty was well discharged, we notify the reader that the greater portion of the remaining part of the present chapter is taken from an account furnished to the press by a reporter who seems to have examined everything worthy of the least notice. We do not use quotation marks, for reasons obvious to searching critics.

Our reporter states that he entered a large, grassy yard, surrounded by an exceedingly high wall. On the top of this wall soldiers with muskets in their hands were thickly planted. The yard below was broken by irregular buildings of brick. Many officers sat at the windows of the central building, and looked awhile at the strange scene on the grassy plaza. On the left the long-barred, impregnable penitentiary rose. The shady spots beneath it were occupied by huddling spectators. Soldiers were filling their canteens at the pump. A face or two looked out from the barred jail. There were many umbrellas hoisted on the ground to shelter civilians beneath them. Squads of officers and citizens lay along the narrow shadow of the walls. The north side of the yard was enclosed on three sides by columns of soldiers drawn up in regular order, the side next to the penitentiary being short to admit of ingress to the prisoner's door; but the opposite column reached entirely up to the north wall.

Within this enclosed area a structure to be inhabited by neither the living nor the dead was fast approaching completion. It stood, gaunt, lofty, long. Saws and hammers made dolorous music on it. Men in their shirt sleeves were measuring it and directing its construction in a business way. Now and then some one would ascend its airy stair to test its firmness; others crawled beneath to wedge its slim supports, or carry away the falling debris.

Toward this skeleton edifice all looked with a strange nervousness. It was the thought and speculation of the gravest and the gayest.

It was the gallows.

A beam reached horizontally in the air,

twenty feet from the ground; four awkward ropes at irregular intervals dangled from it, each noosed at the end. It was upheld by three props, one at the centre and one at each end. These props came all the way to the ground, where they were morticed in heavy bars. Midway of them a floor was laid, twenty by twelve feet, held in its position on the farther side by shorter props, of which there were many, and reached by fifteen creaking steps, nailed on either side. But this floor had no supports on the side nearest the eye, except two temporary rods, at the foot of which two inclined beams pointed menacingly, held in poise by ropes from the gallows floor.

And this floor was presently discovered to be a cheat, a trap, a pit-fall.

Two hinges only held it to its firmer half. These were to give way at the fatal moment, and leave only the shallow and unreliable air for the bound and smothering to tread upon.

The traps were two, sustained by two different props.

The nooses were on each side of the central support.

Was this all?

Not all.

Close by the foot of the gallows four wooden boxes were piled upon each other at the edge of four newly excavated pits, the fresh earth of which was already dried and brittle in the burning noon.

Here were to be interred the broken carcases when the gallows had let loose its throttle. They were so placed as the victims should emerge from the goal door they would be seen near the stair directly in the line of march.

It was, a long waiting, and the roof of a high house outside the walls was seen to be densely packed with people. Others kept arriving, moment by moment; soldiers were wondering when the swinging would begin, and officers arguing that the four folks "deserved it, damn them!" Gentlemen of experience were telling over the number of such expiations they had witnessed. Analytical people were comparing the various modes of shooting, garroting and guillotining. Cigars were sending up spirals of soothing smoke. There was a good deal of covert fear that a reprieve might be granted. Inquiries were many and ingenious for whiskey, and one or two were so expectant that they fell asleep.

How much those four dying, hoping, cringing, dreaming felons were grudged their little gasp of life! It was to be a scene, not a postponement or a prolongation. "Who was to be the executioner?" "Why had not the renowned and artistic Isaacs been sent for from New York?" "Would they probably die game, or grow weak-kneed in the last extremity?" Ah, the gallows workmen have completed the job! "Now then we should have it."

Still there was delay. The sun peeped into the new-made graves, and made blistering hot the gallow's floor. The old pump made its familiar music to the cool plash

of blessed water. The grass withered in the fervid heat. The bronzed faces of the soldiers ran lumps of sweat. The file upon the jail walls looked down into the wide yard yawningly. No wind fluttered the two battle standards compelled to unfold their trophies upon this coming profanation. Not yet arrived. Why? The extent of grace had almost been attained. The sentence gave them only till two o'clock! Why are they so dilatory in wishing to be hung? Why not hurry up? What difference would a few moments make to the criminals?

Thus the crowd was wishing, and calculating, and mocking. Presently a scream, so loud, piercing and agonizing, burst upon their ears, that every one stopped short in astonishment. It was poor Annie Surratt. An officer, accompanied by Fathers Walter and Wigett and some soldiers, entered the cell to inform the miserable woman that her hour had come. The heart-broken Annie could not endure this, and she shrieked till the gloomy corridors rang. She clung to her mother with a wildness, with a frantic affection that melted all to tears. There was not a dry eye in that dismal cell, consecrated by the heart-rending parting of a mother and child. No person can envy the soldiers their feelings, who tore that weeping orphan from her mother's bleeding bosom. But the time had expired, and the stern voice of law must be obeyed. Mrs. Surratt was incapable of speech. She suffered herself to be pinioned in silence, while the dumb eloquence of hot, burning tears pleaded in vain with her executioners.

Oh, God! was there no help for this defenceless woman, bound and dressed for a murderer's gibbet?

The sullen answer from Judge Holt was "none." And he was sustained by the crushing power of the United States.

And now the most agonizing, pitiable, heart-touching incident that ever occurred upon American soil, transpired in that old penitentiary. Mrs. Surratt being firmly pinioned, the daughter was told to bid her mother farewell. But when Annie raised up her head, and saw her mother's wet face, and the cruel ropes around her arms, she was dumb-struck. The blood receded from her face, and left it as pale as marble; her eyes were motionless. Then with a groan of anguish, barely audible, but yet heard by the angels in Heaven, she sank into a state of insensibility. Mrs. Surratt lost all control over her feelings, and she too fell fainting into the strong arms of one of the soldiers.

"My God! I can't stand this," cried one of the soldiers rushing out of the building as if he were choking.

"Holy Virgin! What a scene of horror!" exclaimed Father Walter.

"May the saints not strike you dead on the spot!" said Father Wigett to the soldiers, and crossing himself devoutly.

The officer looked sternly at Father Wigett, and then said:

"This will never do. Take the young lady out, men."

And two soldiers raised up the senseless body of Annie Surratt, and carried it out of the cell. Then it was placed in a hack, and wheeled away to Mrs. Surratt's house. No effort was made to restore the grief-stricken child to her senses, and how long she lay in this condition is unknown. But the mother was soon restored by the application of the proper remedies. When she looked around, Annie was gone.

"Where is she?" asked the wretched woman.

"She has been sent home," replied the officer.

"Not to return?"

"You will see her no more in this life, my daughter," said Father Wigett.

"God's will be done!" said Mrs. Surratt.

"Come, Madam," said the officer, "the hour has come. Are you able to walk?"

"I am," replied the prisoner with the firmness of despair.

Then the procession to the gallows commenced.

Suddenly the wicket opened, the troops sprang to their feet, and stood at order arms, the flags went up, the low order passed from company to company; the spectators huddled a little nearer to the scaffold; all the writers for the press produced their pencils and note books.

First came a woman pinioned.

A middle aged woman, dressed in black, bonneted and veiled, walking between two bare-headed priests.

"One of these held against his breast a crucifix of jet, and in the folds of his blue-fringed sash he carried an open breviary, while both of them muttered the service for the dead.

Four soldiers with muskets at shoulder followed, and a captain led the way to the gallows.

The second party escorted a small and shambling German, whose head had a long white cap upon it, rendering more filthy his dull complexion, and upon whose feet the chains clanked as he slowly advanced, preceded by two officers, flanked by a Lutheran clergyman, and followed as his predecessor by an armed squad.

The third preacher and party clustered about a shabby boy, whose limbs tottered as he progressed.

The fourth walked in the shadow of a straight, high stature, whose tawny hair and large blue eye were suggestive rather of an ancient barbarian striding in his conqueror's triumph, than an assassin going to the gallows.

All these, captives, priests, guards and officers, nearly twenty in all, climbed slowly and solemnly the narrow steps; and upon four armed chairs, stretching across the stage in the rear of the traps, the condemned were seated with their spiritual attendants behind them.

The findings and warrants were immediately read to the prisoners by General Hart-

rafft in a quiet and respectful tone, an aid holding an umbrella over him meantime. These having been already published, and being besides very uninteresting to any body but the prisoners, were paid little heed to, all the spectators interesting themselves in the prisoners.

There was a fortuitous delicacy in their distribution, the woman being placed farthest from the social and physical dirtiness of Atzerott, and nearest the unblanched and manly physiognomy of Payne.

At first Mrs. Surratt was very feeble, and leaned her head upon alternate sides of her arm chair in nervous spasms; but now and then, when a sort of wail just issued from her lips, the priest placed before her the crucifix to lull her fearful spirit. All the while the good Fathers Walter and Wigett, murmured their low, tender cadences, and now and then the woman's face lost its deadly fear, and took a bold, cognizable survey of the spectators. She was probably looking for Coldheart; but that individual was not to be seen. It can never be known in this world how eagerly and anxiously the helpless woman expected to be redeemed from the dreadful rope that dangled before her.

Payne, the strangest criminal in our history, was alone dignified and self-possessed. He wore a closely-fitting knit shirt, a sailor's straw hat tied with a ribbon, and dark pantaloons, but no shoes. His collar, cut very low, showed the tremendous muscularity of his neck, and the breadth of his breast was more conspicuous by the manner in which the pinioned arms thrust it forward. His height, his vigor, his glare made him the strong central figure of this interesting tableau. The smooth hardness of his skin seemed like a polished muscle. He spoke no word; and not a single muscle quivered. He did not look abroad inquisitively, nor within intuitively. He had no accusation, no despair, no dreaminess. He was only looking at death as for one long expected, and not a tremor nor a shock stirred his long, stately limbs. Now and then he looked half pityingly at the woman, thus showing that he had not forgotten the sympathy and respect due to the sex, in this trying hour. Few who looked at him, forgetful of his supposed crime, did not respect him. The crowd was filled with admiration, and they were itching to know who he was, and whence he came. One individual, whose curiosity could not be restrained by the solemnity of the scene, asked to be gratified. "Payne," he exclaimed in a loud voice, "who are you? What is your true name?"

Payne cast his eyes slowly over the eager, upturned faces, and then replied in a clear voice:

"I am the child of FATE."

"What state are you a native of?" asked the "down-easter."

"FATE," replied Payne in a solemn tone.

"Did you stab Mr. Seward?"

"Not I. It was FATE."

And to every question propounded to this strange man by the curious yankees, there

was but one answer—"Fate." No confession did he make at any time; unless his reply to questions propounded upon the scaffold might be construed into such. He listened to what the ministers said with an indifference that would have done credit to a disciple of the school of Plato. He seemed to have no friend in the wide world, nor to care what might be men's opinions concerning his guilt or his innocence.

After General Hartwaut ceased reading, the spiritual attendants in behalf of Atzerott and Harold returned thanks to all who had shown them kindness—jailors and guards.

But Payne had nothing to say. He appeared to feel under no obligations to any one for kindness or favors. If he had received kind treatment, he knew it was similar to that of a merciless cannibal, who pampers the appetite of his victim, that his flesh may be more palatable. Payne had been fattening for the gallows, and his death struggles would fully compensate for any sacrifices that might have been made for his accommodation while in prison. Therefore he remained to the last a silent, immovable stoic.

The stage was still filled with people; the crisis of the occasion had come; the chairs were all withdrawn, and the condemned stood upon their feet.

The process of lying the limbs began.

It was with a shudder, almost with a blush, that a few of the more decent yankees saw an officer gather the ropes tightly three times about the robes of Mrs. Surratt, and bind her ancles with cords. It must have appeared to her at this moment that Coldheart was not going to redeem his solemn promise. She half fainted, and sank backward upon the attendants, her limbs yielding to the extremity of her terror, but uttering no cry, only a kind of sick groaning that was pitiable to hear.

Payne, with his feet firmly laced together, stood straight as one of the scaffold beams, and braced himself up so stoutly that this in part prevented the breaking of his neck.

Harold stood well beneath the drop, still whimpering at the lips, but taut, and short and boyish.

Atzerott, in his groveling attitude, while they tied him began to indulge in his old vice of gabbling. He evidently wished to make his finale more effective than his previous cowardly role, and perhaps was strengthening his courage with a speech, as we sometimes do of a dark night with a whistle.

"Shentlemens," he said with a sort of choke and gasp, "take ware!"

He evidently meant "beware," or "take care," and confounded them.

Again when the white death-cap was drawn over his face, he continued to cry out under it, once saying "Goot pye, shentlemens, who ish before me now;" and again "May ve meets in te nder world." Finally he drifted away with low, half intelligible oblations, as "Got help me," "Oh! oh!" and the like.

The mechanical preparations were clumsy and inartistic, and the final scenes of the execution, therefore, revolting in the extreme. When the death-caps were all drawn over the faces of the prisoners, and they stood in line in the awful suspense between absolute life and immediate death, a man at the neck of each adjusting the cord, the knot between the ears of each protruding five or six inches, and the cord was so thick that it could not be made to press tightly against the flesh.

So they stood, while nearly a thousand faces from window, roof, wall, yard and housetop gazed, the scaffold behind them still densely packed with the assistants, and the four executioners beneath, standing at their swinging beams. The priests continued to murmur prayers. The people were dumb, as if each witness stood alone, with none near by to talk to him.

This was an awful moment for Mrs. Surratt, who had better reasons for hope than any of the others. We can easily conjecture what thoughts were in her mind; for she shrieked out under the death-cap:

"My pardon! Oh where is my pardon?"

None in that breathless crowd understood the import of these last words of the half-dead woman, but Father Walter.

Scarcely were the words uttered before the great beams were darted against the props. The two traps fell with a slam. The four bodies dropped like a single thing, and in a few moments the horrible work of death was done.

It only remains for us to say that three of the bodies were applied for by the friends of the deceased, but they were peremptorily refused. Why, it would be difficult to tell. They were buried in the penitentiary yard; and there they sleep, to be no more disturbed till summoned to face their accusers before the tribunal of eternal justice.

Mrs. Surratt was now free from suffering, but how her wretched children spent the night following her execution—may God save us from ever knowing! Our imagination pictures two lone orphans in a silent, deserted house, clasped in each other's arms, and weeping with anguish which no human being could calm. They were motherless—they were friendless—they were almost un-pitied—and they could appeal for consolation only to Heaven.

God grant that such another revolting, heart-touching scene may never again transpire in the boasted "land of justice!"

CHAPTER XXX.

"Along the plain with watchful eyes,
He spurs his steed and swiftly flies."

When we last mentioned John Wilkes Booth, he had just vanished from Ford's Theatre, mounted his horse, and dashed away. We will now follow his motions.

He rode rapidly to the dwelling of Coldheart, and after hitching his animal at the

stable, where Flora's was ready bridled and saddled, he hurriedly entered the house. Going without ceremony into the parlor, he found our wiry official, his wife and Flora. In the countenance of the latter there was a strange expression of gloomy love. In her heart was a commotion resulting from the struggles of pride, shame, and wild affection. The clashing of these various passions gave to Flora the appearance of a rather pensive bride. Sometimes she appeared to repent the step she had taken, and once she burst into tears in spite of herself. Coldheart and his wife easily guessed at the state of her perturbed feelings, and they attempted to cheer her up. They inquired what was the matter, in order to induce her to talk, but she made no reply. She buried her face in Mrs. Coldheart's lap, and wept in a way that only women can understand. After a while she raised up her pretty face, and it looked quite sad and thoughtful. Coldheart and his wife then tried the effect of railery, but it was of no avail. Flora seemed to be in no humor for indulging in jests and jokes. Finding this course to be useless, they changed their tactics, and talked more seriously in regard to Booth, hinting vaguely concerning the bright wreaths of glory that would soon decorate his brow, and re-congratulating the young bride upon her good fortune in captivizing so promising a man. But Flora listened to all they said in a kind of sad silence, and seemed to be no ways affected by what she heard. Mr. and Mrs. Coldheart therefore felt relieved when the elegant form of John Wilkes Booth appeared at the door. Flora momentarily forgot everything but her unquenchable love, as she proudly looked at the handsome figure of the actor, upon whose countenance there now played a smile of triumph. Booth nodded to Coldheart, and said in a low tone:

"I have done my duty. All is right."

Then he turned to his blushing bride.

"Come, Flora," said he, "we must ride; be quick."

The beautiful young wife rose to her feet and hastily donned her hat. Then after kissing Mrs. Coldheart, and bidding the officer farewell, she and her husband went out at the back door. Booth went to the stable, brought the horses, then mounting they rode off at a moderate gallop. They traveled down the Potomac in complete silence. Flora addressed a question or two to the actor, but he requested her not to talk till they were out of the city. When the lights of Washington had all faded away in the rear, Booth came to a halt upon the banks of the river. He listened for an instant, then in obedience to what appeared to Flora to be a signal, a man emerged from the bushes.

"Is everything ready?" inquired Booth.

"Yes—all right," was the reply.

"It's here. I had hard work to get it though. What do you guess I paid for it?"

"I do not know."

"The enormous sum of three hundred dollars."

"Well never mind now what you paid for it. Will it carry two?"

"Oh yes—it will do that."

"Are our horses on the other side?"

"Yes, Jake has them. Jest fetch three whistles when you land, and he will bring them."

"Dismount," said Booth to Flora, "we must cross over."

"Where are you going?" inquired Flora.

"We have not time to talk now. Wait till we are safe on the other side; then I will explain all."

Flora did as she was directed, and Booth placed her in the boat, then giving up the horses to his accomplice, jumped into the fragile craft and pushed off from the shore. It was but the work of a few moments to land on the opposite side and give the signal. A man soon appeared with a couple of horses, and the actor and his wife once more dashed away. When they had gained the distance of about five miles from the Potomac, they slackened their speed to a gentle pace.

"Mr. Booth," said Flora at last, tired of the long silence which had been broken only by a few sentences, "I do not understand the meaning of this rapid flight."

"Did Coldheart tell you nothing in regard to our designs?" asked Booth.

"Not the first thing."

"I may as well tell you all, then, since Washington is in a wild commotion before this time."

"Why is it?" asked Flora.

"Because the government is overthrown."

"By the Bloody Junto?"

"Yes. But you knew all about the Junto, didn't you?"

"I knew there was such a society, and that you were president of it."

"Did it never occur to you what might be the object of that society?"

"I did not trouble myself much about it. I at first thought it was a conspiracy of some character; but afterwards I concluded it was none of my business; so I quit thinking about it."

"It was not exactly a conspiracy," replied Booth. "It was the germ of a great revolution, which has commenced this very night. The government of the United States is doubtless overthrown, and a monarchy is established in its place. The independence of the Southern Confederacy will be acknowledged in a few days, and then as the originator of this great revolution in politics I will be, dear Flora, the 'observed of all observers.'"

"What are you flying from then?" inquired Flora. "Why this unseemly haste? It does not square with my ideas of a bridal tour."

"Few bridal tours have ever been connected with such momentous events as ours," said the actor.

"To what particular events do you allude?"

"You ought to know," replied Booth with deliberation, "that no great revolution can progress without bloodshed. Its inception is generally marked with human gore. At

least that which commenced in Washington to-night was so characterized."

"But what has this to do with our flight?"

"Flora, if you were back at the city you would know that Abraham Lincoln is no more. I slew him in Ford's theatre."

"Great Heavens! you did?"

"I slew the wicked tyrant," said Booth with enthusiasm, "and have thus restored liberty to millions of human beings." And he went on to expatiate in glowing terms upon the magnitude of the tragical deed.

Flora knew not with what lofty emotions the breast of John Wilkes Booth was swelling. The naked, horrid truth stared her in the face that she was flying from her home in company with a fanatical murderer. The thought was staggering, but she managed to maintain both her physical and mental equilibrium. While her husband was explaining the results to be achieved by the Junto, she was deciding upon her future course of action. What should she do? Should she leave Booth and return to her home? What report could she make to her friends in Washington? How could she face them? Would she not be forever disgraced? Might not Booth be mistaken in his calculations concerning the recognition of the confederacy? Was he not an extravagant dreamer? Indeed, might he not be a madman? All these self-propounded questions, and others besides, rapidly rushed through her mind, but with the quick intuition of woman, she settled upon her line of policy. She was now the lawful wife of Wilkes Booth, and she loved him to madness. To separate from him would be worse than death. Her fixed determination was therefore to follow him, right or wrong, to whithersoever fate might lead. If Booth's plans should be successful, then all would be right; if not she would be disgraced whether she returned home or not. So the matter was settled, and Flora quietly addressed her husband.

"If you anticipate such brilliant results," said she, "from the execution of the designs of the Junto, why should you leave Washington at all?"

"As a matter of personal safety," replied Booth. "Whether our designs are successful or not, I would be in greater danger than any one else. Because I slew the tyrant publicly. Everybody knew who did it. Lincoln's friends might hunt me down. He has a goodly number in Washington, and I do not know that we will return there at all—at least not until Coldheart is firmly established on the throne."

"He is to be the king, is he?"

"Yes; that is the understanding."

"And what are you to be?"

"I can have any position I want. I thought the title of the Earl of Washington would suit me; but I will leave it to you, dearest, to select our position."

"Oh, that will do," said Flora hurriedly, as if this was an unpleasant topic.

"Flora," said Booth suddenly, "I have now to make a queer sort of a proposition to you."

"What is that?"

"I want you to dress in male attire."

"What for?"

To facilitate our flight."

"How will it have that effect?" inquired Flora in surprise.

"It will baffle our pursuers."

"What! are we pursued?"

"Not that I know of; but we might be, and I want to be on the safe side. If we should be pursued, we could be too easily traced, traveling as we now are. Two men cannot be as easily tracked up as a man and a woman."

"Very well," said Flora in a kind of half-despairing tone. "I will do as you wish. Where is the apparel?"

"Here, in my saddle-bags."

Booth then dismounted and assisted Flora to the ground. Then in a trice she was clothed *cap-a-pie* in a suit belonging to the actor. The garments were somewhat full, but this circumstance was remedied by Flora's ingenuity. The length of the pants was concealed in the boot-leg, which reached nearly to the knee. Her hair was hidden by a close-fitting cap. When this nocturnal toilet was completed, the young lady presented the appearance of a corpulent boy, with rather a small face. She could not but smile at the figure she would cut when the light would fully discover the oddity of her dress.

"This is a side-saddle, Mr. Booth," said Flora when about to remount. "It comports ill with my attire."

"That is so," replied Booth. "I did not think of that. However, I can remedy it," he continued after a brief pause. "I have a friend who lives not a great distance from here. We will go to his house and exchange."

They accordingly remounted, and rode along for sometime in silence. It was past midnight, and nature had thrown a pall of darkness over all sublimity things. A few scattering stars peeped forth timidly from their arched homes, but failed to shadow upon the ground the two forms of the fugitives as they paced along the highway. Flora's thoughts during this nocturnal ride in company with a confessed assassin, were anything but very pleasant. Yet she moved on with an energy resulting from a desire to place as great a distance as possible between herself and Washington. She felt that she was flying from disgrace.

Presently they came to the house which Booth had mentioned. All about it was still, dark, silent. The inmates were probably buried in deep, refreshing sleep. As they stopped at the yard gate, a furious cur came tearing out, and made the welkin ring with his fierce barking. It aroused the proprietor of the house, who advanced cautiously to where the vigilant canine watchman was baying his game.

"How are you, George?" said Booth as soon as his friend had reached the gate.

"Who is it?" said George.

"It is I—John Booth."

"Ah, John, how are you? Come, get down."

"We have no time," replied Booth. "The mischief is to pay in Washington. I am on the run."

"Why? What has been done?"

"Lincoln has crossed over Jordan."

"Ah, has he? Any one else?"

"I expect so, though I do not know positively."

"Who is with you?"

"A friend; do not be alarmed. George, we got a side-saddle by mistake, and I want you to exchange with me."

"You want a man's?"

"Yes."

"Well, you can take mine."

"Be in a hurry then," said Booth dismounting. "We must be several miles from here before sunrise."

The saddles were soon exchanged, and the fugitives again mounted and started off in the darkness. They had not, however gone fifty yards from the house before a serious accident happened. For Flora's horse from some cause suddenly became unmanageable, rearing and plunging so violently that she was thrown headlong to the ground. The animal stepped upon her leg, and the pain caused her to shriek aloud. Booth sprang from his own steed and rushed to her assistance, raising her from the earth, but she could not stand upon her wounded limb.

"Are you hurt much, Flora?" asked Booth anxiously.

"I am afraid my leg is broken," said she.

"I will carry you back to the house, then."

But at this moment Booth's friend, who had heard the shriek, came up leading the horse that had run back to the gate and stopped.

"What is the matter, John?" said he.

"My companion has broken his leg, I fear. How far is it to a surgeon's?"

"Doctor Mudd lives about a mile from here."

"On the road?"

"Yes; the first house you come to."

"Can you ride there, Flora?" said Booth.

"I can try it."

"Flora?" said George. "Your companion is a woman then?"

"Yes," replied Booth. "I have betrayed myself. But say nothing about this, George. She is in disguise."

"You need not fear me," replied the friend.

In a few moments, having exchanged horses, our fugitives started off again, and rode slowly till they reached the house of Dr. Mudd. Booth roused up the unfortunate physician, and stated what had happened. The Doctor invited them in, and hastened to examine Flora's wound. It was found that the limb was not broken, but only severely bruised, and the physician soon applied the proper remedies to prevent soreness. During the operation Flora endeavored to conceal as much as possible all the indications that

would betray her sex, and tried to keep her face hidden; but the Doctor was not to be so easily deceived.

"If you are not a woman in disguise," said he, after having done all that his professional duty required, "you have a most singular form."

This blunt remark was unexpected to the fugitives, and Booth fearing that Flora would be embarrassed, came to the rescue.

"Are you through, Doctor?" said he as if he had not heard the remark.

"Yes sir," replied Dr. Mudd still gazing at Flora. "But this is a woman."

"That is none of your business," replied the actor nettled at the close inspection with which his wife was honored.

"I'm afraid there's something wrong in this," quoth Dr. Mudd, without appearing to be moved by Booth's sharp tone.

"How much do I owe you for your services, sir?"

"Five dollars."

"Here is your money," said Booth presenting a bill. "Now you have done your duty, and I have done mine. There are no thanks due either party. Having received your pay, you have no right to demand your patient's secret."

"No, but this seems to be an extraordinary case—something rather unusual. It looks a little odd, perhaps a little suspicious, to see a lady traveling in disguise at midnight. I don't know what to make of it. I think I have a right to know who my patient is. I am entitled to an explanation."

"Do I owe you anything more?"

"No sir—not a cent."

"Well then, we are even. So, sir, good bye."

Booth and Flora then abruptly quitted the house, and pursued their journey. They were compelled to travel rather slowly for fugitives, but still the distance between them and Washington was gradually widening. So they rode along at an easy gait, and in less than an hour and a half reached the former tavern of Mrs. Surratt, which as the reader knows was situated in the little village called Surrattsville. It was now kept by one Lloyd, who although suspected by the yankees of complicity with the murder of Lincoln, according to their own showing knew nothing positive concerning the conspiracy. Some days previous to the assassination he had hidden a carbine or two in the house, but he was unaware of the purpose they were to serve. It appears that all who in any way aided the flight of Booth, though they did it in ignorance, were put upon trial for their lives. This probably is the first instance to be met with in the history of jurisprudence in which persons were tried for the mere fact of having seen a criminal, or having been acquainted with him. But it is not our province to comment.

Booth advanced to the tavern, aroused Lloyd, and asked for the arms which had been there deposited a few days before. Lloyd brought out a couple of carbines, but

Booth remarked that only one of them would be needed. When about to ride off, he said to Lloyd:

"Do you want to hear some news?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Is there any?"

"There is something quite interesting."

"What is it?"

"Lincoln is dead."

"You don't say so! When did he die?"

"To-night. But that is not all."

"What else?"

"I expect Seward followed in his tracks, and Johnson right after him."

"Why, what does all this mean?" asked Lloyd with wonder.

"I did the job for one of them."

"What did you do?"

"I killed the tyrant—Abraham Lincoln. You will hear all about it to-morrow."

After this confession, wheeling his horse, he and Flora continued their flight. They traveled leisurely without meeting with any other accident or incident worthy of note. When day-light dawned, a considerable space intervened between the fugitives and Washington City. Just as the sun was casting his first rays over the earth, enlivening all nature, Booth informed Flora that they must now quit the highway, remarking that he expected to receive news from Washington before advancing any farther south. Accordingly they took a path that turned to the left, with which the actor seemed to be acquainted, and following this about a mile they came presently upon a small framed house that was pleasantly, though lonesomely situated in the forest. As our business at present is not with long descriptions of rural scenery, we will not fatigue the reader's attention with such things. We will merely remark that the cottage was a good hiding place for persons who had no desire to see much company. Our two fugitives were hospitably received by the owner of this country retreat, whose name we forbear to mention. After partaking of a substantial repast, Flora retired to her chamber in order to sleep; but Booth did not appear to need slumber, at any rate he kept wide awake. Soon after his wearied wife fell into a deep sleep, he left the house, and taking the path which led to the highway, he went on foot till he came to a dark thicket about twenty steps from the narrow pathway. Turning aside he entered this, and was completely hidden from view, though he was in such a position that he could see any one who might chance to pass along. Here he remained till nearly eleven o'clock in the day, and no person had disturbed the deep silence of the forest. Presently, however, a horse's hoof was heard coming down the path, and the sounds resulting from its contact with the well-trampled earth indicated that the animal was in a rapid pace. In a moment more he was opposite the thicket in which Booth lay concealed, and the actor peeping forth discovered that the horse was mounted by the person for whom he was looking. Placing his hands up to his mouth

he made a signal that brought the horseman to a sudden halt, who looking all around and seeing nobody, answered the signal with a similar one.

"Come out here," cried Booth.

"The devil take thee for a witch," replied the horseman with a laugh. "Where are you hidden?"

"Come and see," said Booth.

He obeyed, and riding up to the thicket peeped in and saw the actor.

"What are you hiding from?" said he to Booth.

"I did not care to be seen by every passer-by. But come, Davelier, let us get farther from the road before we talk."

"I have had a hard ride of it," said Davelier, when they were about three hundred yards from Booth's hiding place, "and besides have had nothing to eat since supper last night, of which I partook very sparingly, I feel that I would fain fill myself 'with the husks the swine did eat,' but I should like just now to see a more palatable breakfast than that."

"Never mind your breakfast till you tell me the news."

"You have been to ——'s?" inquired Davelier, naming the owner of the cottage at which Booth and Flora had put up.

"Yes. He is at home. We will go there presently, and you can get some refreshments. But I want you to tell me what has taken place in Washington City. When did you leave?"

"About two hours before light; and I have traveled like a lightning express since."

"Well what was going on?"

"The angel of discord was troubling the pool considerably, and the whole city was in much of an uproar."

"Was Lincoln dead?"

"No, not exactly; but there is no doubt in my mind that Anti-Christ will expire some time to-day. You recollect that I predicted he would be destroyed yesterday or to-day; which circumstance proves clearly that his number is 666."

"Never mind that now," said Booth impatiently, "but tell me the news."

"Well, just ask such questions as will bring out what you wish to know, and I will answer as briefly as the nature of your interrogations will allow. Proceed."

"What about Seward and Johnson?"

"Seward is mortally wounded, from what I could learn. His nurse and two of his sons were also horribly mutilated, and one of them will hardly recover."

"And Johnson?"

"He was not injured in the least; at any rate I heard nothing said about him."

"Do you know whether Winthrop took possession of the White House?"

"I know he did not."

"What was the reason?"

"His forces were nearly all in a state of disgraceful inebriety."

"What! do you tell me that no attempt was made to seize the government?"

"None whatever."

"Curse the rascals," exclaimed Booth. "What did they mean?"

"I am sure I do not know."

"Well, go on," said Booth. "What else?"

"I am waiting for you to question me; but I can inform you that Mrs. Surratt is arrested, and Payne too."

"Indeed? When did that happen?"

"Directly after the taking off of Lincoln; but that is not all."

"Well, what else?"

"The police is on the watch for you."

"They are a set of fools to think I would remain in the city."

"Yes, but when they are convinced of the fact that you have left for parts unknown, what do you suppose they will do?"

"Try to find me, I guess."

"You are correct in your hypothesis. They will leave no stone unturned to find you, either. All of Lincoln's friends are terribly enraged by his premature decease. They will strain every nerve to discover his murderer."

"Do not call me a murderer," interrupted Booth.

"I mean," said Davelier quickly, "what they call you. Any how, if you do not act with great circumspection, you will unfortunately find yourself lodged in the same quarters with Payne and Mrs. Surratt."

"How did they happen to suspect Mrs. Surratt?" inquired Booth.

"I have not the most remote idea; but I think we would best devise some measures looking to our own safety. We can do Mrs. Surratt no good."

"We are in no immediate danger."

"That may be true; but none can guess what a day may bring forth. The whole country will be aroused, and everybody will be on the lookout for you."

"Let them catch me if they can."

"But I do not want them to apprehend me."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"I shall visit Canada for a short time, at least till I can see what may be the fruits of your deed. Afterwards, if I deem it compatible with my own personal safety, I will return to the United States, and probably resume my old calling. I enjoyed myself much better while I was a preacher than I ever have since. Somehow I always felt that I was under the special protection of the Lord, and that Heaven was indebted to me for my services."

"Have you plenty of money," interrupted Booth, "to pay your traveling expenses?"

"Sir," replied Davelier smiling, "if salt were worth a cent and a half per bushel, I could not purchase enough to preserve a snow bird. But this gives me no great uneasiness, though it is sometimes a little inconvenient to have one's treasury so provokingly empty. The old disciples, you know, were commanded to travel without scrip or purse, and I can follow their example. I can metamorphose myself into an itinerant Methodist

preacher, and gain a respectable living out of my fund of solemn piety."

"I had no idea you were so poor," remarked Booth.

"Few ministers of the gospel have been distinguished for the possession of great wealth, good brother," replied the vivacious Davelier. "I never expected to lay up an enormous treasure where thieves break through and steal, though I acknowledge that I was fool enough at one time to flatter my worldly ambition with the promise that I would be a Lord or a Duke under the new government. Like the credulous Sancho Panza, I hoped to be made the governor of a small island. However, when I get to Canada, if I can find a *parvenu* Lord, maybe I can get to be his *valet de chambre*."

"I will give you something," replied Booth "with which to support your new dignity. You have been a faithful member of the Bloody Junto, and deserve something for your trouble. I have money in Canada, and I will give you an order on my banker. The probability is, I will never go there. Here is a hundred dollars," handing two bills, "which will defray your expenses till you get beyond the limits of the United States."

"Blessings on you," exclaimed Davelier, "you have made me rich. Thanks, good brother, many thanks. I will ever remember you in my prayers. But," continued Davelier, noticing the solemnity of Booth's countenance, "I am not very particular about going to Canada. If you prefer it, I would as soon accompany you as not, if you will hurry up."

"No, no," replied Booth. "If I should be captured, and you were caught with me, death would be the inevitable consequence. I will never be taken alive, Davelier. I shall fight it out to the bitter end, whenever my pursuers come within reach. I can manage best alone. But let us go to the house. We have no time to lose."

Upon returning to the house of his friend, Booth found Flora still asleep. She had been much fatigued by the long, dark ride, and by her wound, as was evidenced by the sound sleep in which she was buried. The actor went to the bed and aroused her. Flora sprang up, and looked around in seeming astonishment; but in an instant, her senses returning, she comprehended the terrible realities of her position. She glanced into her husband's face, but with the quick perception of woman, at once knew that something was wrong. Booth's countenance was overshadowed with gloom too dark to be mistaken.

"What is the matter, Mr. Booth?" she asked tenderly.

"Flora," replied Booth solemnly, "will you ever forgive me?"

"What have you done?" she inquired in surprise.

"I have deceived you."

"How?" she asked, turning somewhat pale.

"Not intentionally, though, dearest. I

have been deceived and disappointed myself."

"You have heard from Washington, then?"

"Yes, and heard nothing at all encouraging. In a word, all is lost. I have slain the tyrant to no purpose, and am branded like a Cain."

"Are they pursuing you?"

"I think so. If not, they soon will be."

"Then let us be gone at once."

"What! will you follow a murderer?" exclaimed he.

"I am your wife, and your destiny shall be mine."

An expression of joyful pleasure overspread Booth's face.

"God bless your noble devotion!" exclaimed the actor kissing his blushing bride, "will you give up all for me?"

"All, all," replied Flora with a flashing eye. "I would die with you."

"I was going to propose, that for your safety we should separate."

"Never! never!" said Flora with wild energy. "I will not hear to it."

"Then let us travel. We may outstrip our pursuers."

Accordingly, in a few moments the horses were at the door, and our fugitives recommenced their flight.

Davelier soon afterwards started northward. He must have reached Canada in safety, as he has never been heard of since. But we must now turn our attention to other matters.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"The chase begins—the game's a-gair,
Pursued by many a yelping cur."

No criminal was ever pursued with as much relentless vigor, untiring energy, and indomitable perseverance as John Wilkes Booth. The police resources of the country were fully tested during this exciting man-hunt. In conjunction with the police force was a small army of detailed soldiers. Not less than fifteen thousand men were engaged in the search for one solitary stage actor, and all these were stimulated, besides the reputed incentives of patriotism, ambition and love of justice, by the prospect of magnificent pecuniary remuneration in the event of success. For rewards were offered for the apprehension of Booth, amounting to nearly a hundred thousand dollars. All the police forces of New York, Philadelphia, Richmond, and other cities too numerous to mention, swelled the distinguished detective ability of that of Washington. Yet all this grand parade for the capture of a single criminal, would have been a "much ado," without any results except chagrin, disappointment, and baffled rage, but for the sagacity of one individual—Col. Lafayette C. Baker, chief of the secret service. This distinguished personage, whose name will float down the stream of time for a few years, but will finally drift to the shore, possessed a very hard, grizzly, unprepossessing face. We will honor him with

a brief description, by merely saying that his hair and whiskers were as red as these ornaments ever get to be upon any human being. An inconsiderable forehead pinched itself into a hard knot directly over two searching eyes of spotted gray, that glared with the fierceness of a savage wolf. A terribly broad mouth showed itself when he spoke, between two long, insatiate jaws, that would have enhanced the value of a bloodhound.

This was Colonel Baker. He was absent from Washington when the assassination occurred. He returned however on the third morning, and was besought by Secretary Stanton to join the hue and cry against the escaped Booth. He found everything in a dreadful state of confusion. The whole territory of southern Maryland was scoured by vast bodies of men, treading upon each other's heels, and roving up and down, around and around, without plan or compass. Baker obtained from the war department all the information in its possession, which was very vague and indefinite. However, he immediately set about his task, and asked a detail of twenty-five men; then he drew down his coast survey maps. With that quick detective intuition amounting almost to inspiration, he cast upon the probable route and destination of the refugees, as well as the point where he would soonest strike them. Booth, he knew, would not keep along the coast, with frequent deep rivers to cross, nor indeed in any direction east of Richmond, where he was liable at any time to encounter the federal lines of occupation. But he would travel in a direct course from Bluff Point, where he would cross to East Tennessee, and this would take him through Port Royal, on the Rappahannock river, in time to be intercepted by the out-going cavalrymen.

When, therefore, twenty-five men under a lieutenant arrived at his office door, Baker placed the whole under control of two individuals, whom, as we have some regard for the refined tastes of our readers, we will designate by the euphemisms of Slang and Billings. To these worthies Colonel Baker said:

"Do not return until he is captured. Bring him dead or alive."

The party then set out in high glee at the prospect of a magnificent reward. Being now clothed with a little "brief authority," they ill-manneredly searched every house they came to, and questioned everybody, insulting many persons suspected of sympathy with the rebellion. If they denied having seen Booth, then they were flatly accused of lying, and were threatened with torture. But no trace of the actor was found till they came to the residence of Dr. Mudd, who declared that two persons had stopped at his house a night or two before, but that he did not know their names. While he was undergoing an examination by Slang, the house was diligently searched by several of the party. Presently one of them came out bringing a pocket-handkerchief in his hand.

"See here," said the fellow to Slang.

"What is it?"

"Look in the corner."

"Slang did so, and saw written in legible letters—J. W. Booth; then he turned to the puzzled Dr. Mudd.

"You say you did not know the names of the persons?"

"I do not know them," firmly declared the sincere physician.

"You are a liar!" thundered Slang, prefacing the last word with an ugly oath. "I've treed you, old fellow. What are you doin' with Booth's handkerchief?"

"As God is my judge," replied the astonished physician, "I never saw it before."

"Where did you find this, Jim?" inquired Slang.

"In Dr. Quack's office, here."

"A pretty story that, good doctor," continued Slang mockingly. "You never saw it before. O, come, sir, that won't begin to do."

"I speak the truth," replied Dr. Mudd energetically. "I never saw this article before. I suppose it must have been forgotten by Booth, if it was he. I never saw Booth in my life, and it may have been he for aught I know."

"Where is he now? Which way did he go?"

"I know not, sir."

"What was Booth doing at your house, you know-nothing rascal?"

"One of them had his leg injured, and I dressed the wound."

"You did, eh? So you've helped the felons to escape instead of arresting 'em."

"I did not know they were felons. I merely discharged my duty as a physician."

"Your duty?" thundered Slang with an oath. "I'll teach you a different duty from that. I'll bet you are as deep into the murder as Booth is. Get your horse, sir rebel, and come along. You're a prisoner."

It was in vain that Dr. Mudd pleaded his innocence. He was forcibly dragged from his house, with the wails of his terrified wife ringing in his ears. Forthwith he was sent back to Washington.

As we may not again have occasion to mention Dr. Mudd, we may here state incidentally that for the mere discharge of his professional duty in this particular instance, he was sent to the Dry Tortugas for life.* It was supposed by his judges that he ought to have known who Booth was; and knowing that, he ought also to have known Booth had committed murder; and knowing that, he ought to have delivered him up to the officers of justice. The yankees endeavored to force everybody into the position of detectives. Dr. Mudd's case stands not alone. One man, by the name of Claggert, they arrested and confined in jail, simply because a

* After the MS was placed in the hands of the publishers, Dr. Mudd was pardoned by President Johnson, and is now at home, impoverished by his misfortunes.

mail-carrier declared that Claggert must have seen Booth during his flight from the capital. The stage carpenter, Spangler, it will be recollected, was sent off in company with Dr. Mudd, because it was supposed that the gimlet hole could not have been perforated through the box door without his knowledge. It is not our province to comment upon the character of these proceedings, but we will hazard the prediction that our descendants will blush to acknowledge that their ancestors were so cruel, oppressive and regardless of common justice.

Our party of detectives was now rendered extremely hilarious and jubilant by the capture of Dr. Mudd, and the discovery of Booth's pocket-handkerchief. They felt sure they were on the right trail. So they commenced to scour the country for miles around Mudd's residence, assisted in the search by other detectives. But we will follow the motions of only Slang and his party. They took to the woods, deployed like a line of skirmishers, and peeped into every hollow log, and every other place in which it was possible for a human being to conceal himself. A short time after dark they came upon an old out-house, standing a solitary survivor of its fellows. Once there had evidently been several others to keep it company, but whoever had lived here had removed away, and his habitation with its surroundings had gone to decay, with the exception of this single, crazy building, which bore marks of by-gone days upon every part of it. It made one think of ghosts, rising up as it did, silent, and gloomy in a grass-covered yard, which formerly might have witnessed the gleeful sports of happy and mischievous urchins. It was now taken possession of by a gang of innocent, harmless sheep.

As our detectives approached this rickety building, one of them thought he discovered a light glimmering feebly through the gaping cracks, and whispered to his comrade that he believed somebody was in the house. Slang himself saw it about the same time, and he promptly passed an order along the line in a low voice to come to a halt. Here a brief consultation took place between himself and Billings, the result of which was a conclusion to surround the establishment, and gradually close in on all sides in the fashion of an ancient tinchel, driving the game to the centre. When they were about twenty steps from the building, Slang broke the silence.

"Surrender in there," bawled Slang in a peremptory tone.

To this demand the sheep returned no answer.

"I say, come out o' there," cried Slang in a louder voice.

This time there was a slight movement within, as of some one stepping upon a rattling floor.

"They're in there," said Billings to Slang, "I hear 'em."

"If you don't surrender pretty quick," exclaimed Slang, "we'll fire on you. You can't get away. We've got you entirely surround-

ed. I know you're in there; I saw your light."

"I see it now," said one of the party as he caught a glimpse of some fox-fire sticking to one of the logs.

Still no answer did the inmates return.

"Boys," resumed Slang *sotto voce*, "two of you go to the door."

None obeyed. The command was too general, and no one felt that the order was directed to himself; so each was waiting for his neighbor to move.

"By jingo, I'll go then. I ain't afraid," said Slang dismounting and giving his horse to one of the men, and walking towards the door with drawn sabre.

"Now I want——"

But before the sentence was completed, such a strange noise was heard within that he stepped backwards to the base of operations.

"The place is haunted!" shrieked one with his hair on end.

"My Lord! there's a ghost in there," cried another.

"Run, boys, run, the devil's in there!" exclaimed a third. In an instant a deadly fear came over the whole party, and wheeling their horses they commenced to fly for very life. Slang saw that this would never do; so taking after them he halloed as loud as he dared to:

"Halt, men! halt! What are you running from? There ain't no ghost. It's Booth! Are you goin' to let 'im git away, and lose that seventy-five thousand? Halt! or I'll have you shot for cowardice!"

The men by this time finding that no ghost was really after them, soon came to a halt and collected around their brave leader.

"You're a pretty set, I'll swear," said Slang angrily, "to run off just as the game was treed."

"Be jabbers, Captain," interrupted an Irishman, "the devil a bit could I stay, wid the ould boy riddy to dhrag me down to purgatory. I kin fight rebels, but not ghousts and devils, at all, at all."

"Form again," quickly said Slang, "and let's return."

The fellows, now a little ashamed of their dastardly conduct, reformed and returning again surrounded the house in which the noises could occasionally be heard. When everything was ready, Slang again challenged the inmates.

"Now I want you to surrender in there. I'm not a going to fool with you any longer. Will you surrender, or not?"

No reply was received to this question.

"Come round to the front, men," resumed Slang in a tone indicative of solemn determination and desperate energy.

"We'll try a volley of musketry on the stubborn rascals," joined in Billings; "that'll bring 'em to their senses."

"Ready!" ordered Slang when the command was in line.

Slang paused an instant to give the victims time to consider.

"Won't you surrender?" he asked again; but with no better success.

"Aim!"

Another pause succeeded.

"Fire!" thundered Slang in a terrible voice.

The murderous weapons belched forth sulphurous flames, and the deadly lead whizzed into the crumbling logs. In an instant, before the sound of arms had died away, a most tremendous rattling was heard inside, as if the whole building was tumbling in. Then a quick, heavy step was heard on the outside, then another, then another, following in rapid succession. The detectives seemed to think an army of giants was springing up out of the earth.

"They're gwine to charge us!" bawled one.

"I hear em formin'!" said another.

"Thim's no humans," said the Irishman. All —'s turned loose!"

This last observation completely demoralized the little command, and they all took to their heels.

The giants meantime ran round the house several times, making a thundering noise, and then broke off in the reverse direction. They had not gone far before several of them bleated most piteously. Slang and Billings were the only two who stood their ground.

"We've played the d—!" said Slang breaking out into a horse-laugh. "They are sheep."

"Listen at them cowardly dogs — how they're running. Let's after them, or they never will stop."

Accordingly the two detectives followed their retreating command as rapidly as possible. It was sometime, however, before the frightened horsemen were overtaken. But at last, when they thought that they were beyond the reach of immediate danger, they slackened their speed somewhat, and hearing the voices of Slang and Billings, who were attempting to rally their panic-stricken forces, they reluctantly came to a halt.

"Where is Lieutenant Dobbs?" asked Slang riding up.

"Here," answered a voice from the crowd.

"Lieutenant, I shall report you for cowardice, sir."

"You'll do wrong," whined Dobbs. "I was only keeping up with my men."

"Keeping up? What did you let them run so for?"

"I couldn't prevent it; they were off before I knowed it, and I followed to rally 'em."

"Men," said Slang, "if you're goin' to act this way, we never will catch Booth. I never saw such cowardly conduct in my life."

"We haven't come across Booth yet," interrupted a yankee. "Booth was not in that old haunted house."

"Haunted the —," said Slang contemptuously. "What do you think was in there?"

"Be jabbers, it was ould Nick, and his whoul family."

"It was a gang of sheep, your skeery fools. Now haint you fixed it?"

"Du tell!" exclaimed a yankee in wonder.

"You don't say so?"

"Yes, nothing but a gang of sheep, and you've been running from them like all — was after you. I'm ashamed of every one of you."

"So am I," chimed in Dobbs, whose courage had now returned.

"An sure you was wid us, Leftenant."

"If I was," replied Dobbs with an oath, "I was trying to bring you to a halt. If I hadn't followed, you never would 'a stop-ped."

"Be jabbers, you was before me."

"Dry up!" thundered Dobbs.

"Come, men," said Slang, "we've got no time to lose. Are you all here?"

"All but Tim O'Flaherty, and he wont stop this side o' Washington. Be jabbers, Tim niver could stand fire, but whin he hears fire arms off he puts for life, an there's no use to give 'im any ordher, barrin to 'double-quick' it fasher."

"Let's leave him then," said Slang. "Forward!"

So the little command, after this Quixotic adventure, pushed on in better spirits, and feeling glad that they had not invaded the headquarters of his Satanic Majesty. They now struck out for the residence of Dr. Mudd, which had temporarily become the centre of the search, and to which the various reports of the detectives were to be brought. But no sign of the fugitives had been discovered; so Slang and his party moved on, luckily for them following the footsteps of Booth, though they were unaware of it.

Before the pursuit came to an end, the party more than once provoked Slang to the utterance of profane language. For when they arrived at the very next house, after leaving Mudd's, and were about to surround it, a frightful *scare-crow* was seen in the garden, which the owner had placed there to prevent hares from attacking his vegetables. Some of our detectives soon saw this, and abandoning their position on the line, rushed to Slang.

"There's a ghost this time!" they cried. We saw it."

"You — fools, where?" asked Slang, going to the garden. When they got to the scare-crow, and examined it, Slang cursed the dastardly wretches till he was completely exhausted. But he evidently did wrong; because the men were totally unacquainted with the customs of the country. Few of them had ever been so far from the city before in their lives—especially at night.

They had constituted a portion of the provost guard while the bloody war was in progress. Therefore, it was unreasonable to expect them to act like veteran soldiers. At any rate, they did not so act, and Slang's patience was sorely tried before the light of day dispersed the hideous shades and aspects of night; especially was he vexed by another instance of very singular ignorance of

sylvan inhabitants. For as the party was approaching a house, deployed in line, they came to a small branch, meandering through a narrow but heavily timbered bottom. It so happened that a colony of owls had settled down here, and judging from their numbers, had lived in undisturbed tranquility. When our party of gallant detectives had nearly reached the stream, one of these nocturnal birds spoke out an astonishingly plain "who."

Instantly three-fourths of the detectives came to a breathless stand-still.

"Who-o-o?" cried the owl.

"Be jabbers, we are challenged," said the Irishman.

Then the challenge was repeated.

Houly Saints! he kin see a long ways. We'd better answer."

"Who-o-o?" shrieked the owl.

"Be jabbers, he's tongue-tied."

"Who-o-o? Who-o-o?"

"Answer, Mike," spoke one of the trembling detectives. "He's gitting angry, answer him."

"It's a friend, wid no countersign," bawled Mike.

"Who-o-o? Who-oo-ah?"

Be jabbers, its Mike O'Clannahan, thin."

"Who-o-o?" came from another direction.

"There's anither one—the twin brother; because they talk jist alike."

"Three or four owls now screamed out 'who?'"

"I've tould ye it's Mike O'Clannahan. Ain't you satisfied?"

At that moment half a dozen screams pierced the air, causing Mike's eyes to start from their sockets. Then these wild, unearthly shrieks were quietly followed by boisterous laughter, that appeared to come from all directions. The owls hooted, laughed and talked, high and low, and the detectives trembled from head to foot.

"My Lord! what do they mean?" said a quaking detective.

Before his comrades could return an answer, the voice of the owls was considerably increased by a concert of hoarse frogs from a pond hard by.

"Holy St. Patrick! we've rin slap into purgatory; and the foulks are all drunk, too," said Mike gathering up the reins of his bridle.

"I'm a gwine to leave here," cried a yankee starting off.

Then nearly all the detectives took to their heels, and went dashing and splashing through the branch, tearing through the brush, and paying no regard to the loud laugh of Billings, who could no longer contain himself after listening to Mike's conversation with the impertinent owls. Slang was at first a little amused, but his mirth was soon succeeded by a feeling strongly tinged with wrath.

"They're the d—st fools I ever saw," said he to Billings. "It's folly to think of capturing Booth with such a set. 'What's to be done?'"

All the reply he received was a violent

outburst of laughter from Billings, who slipped from his horse, and lay upon the ground roaring and rolling in convulsions of merriment.

"Look here," said Slang, "it's time to stop this nonsense."

"Well, I can't help it," replied Billings, when he could command his organs of speech. "It's enough to make a dog laugh, to hear that infernal Irishman talking to the owls."

"Mount!" exclaimed Slang sternly, "we must pursue the — rascals, or they'll desert us entirely."

And away they went thundering along the road after their terrified command. Although they traveled at almost a break-neck speed, they did not come up with the discomfited forces until sunrise. When daylight made it unsafe for ghosts and hobgoblins to render the night hideous with their horrible orgies, the wearied detectives all stopped at a farm house, and were quenching their thirst at the well. Some were washing their faces, and others combing their tangled hair; and others again jabbering flippantly about the night's adventures.

"Be jabbers, Captin'," said Mike as Slang came riding up, "I'm glad ye're safe. We wuz afeard the divils had thrapped ye. Oeh! there wuz a whoul host of them, to be shure."

"Of what, you ragged fool?" replied Slang, smiling grimly as he glanced at Mike's garments, which were somewhat tattered by his nocturnal flight.

"Well may ye call me ragged," quoth Mike dolefully scrutinizing his stringy apparel. "Bridget O'Clannahan will hardly recognize me, and the very childers will run from me."

"They won't run as fast as you did last night."

Be jabbers, Captin', I didn't run half as fast as I wanted to. I thought ould Nick's sodgers would nab me any how, afore I could retreat in good order. Did ye ever hear foulks wid sich curious voices? Be jabbers, they must 'ave bin vantroloquizers, the last one of them, or their length was outrageous high, because I could hear thim in the tra tops, and thim on the ground, whin they'd stoop afther us. Thim ugly serames an horrid laughs—oeh! be jabbers, I niver heerd the likes of thim before."

"And who do ye guess they wuz?" quoth Billings.

"Fath, I'd no likin' for an acquaintances wid the deaf gint."

"How do you know they were deaf."

"Bease, they all jabbered loud to acher ither, like they were hard o' hearin'; and whin they axed who I was, I answered at the top of my voice, but the devil a bit did they seem to hear for all that, an kep on axin' 'who,' widout givin' me time to answer thim. Be jabbers, whin they all got to scrambling 'who?' an the whoul set commenced to giggle and laugh at me, I thought they'd got some of the strong crathur among 'em."

"But what were you running fur?" said Billings. "They didn't trouble you."

"No, but they wuz preparin' to trouble us. Oeh! didn't ye hear thim all clumping togilher, and didn't you hear their dhrams in the woods?"

"Them was frogs, Mike."

"Not thim. I could hear their dhrams pat enough, and thim they'd step into the wather, like their feet wuz as broad as flat boats. Oeh! it wuz the infantry afther us, an the devil of a host wuz there, too."

"You — fool," said Slang, "they were frogs—frogs jumping into the water."

"And the others was owls," added Billings.

"Now don't you feel ashamed, you whole — set," said Slang, "to be caught running from owls and frogs? A pretty night's work you've made of it, haven't you? What a glorious report I can make to Col. Baker, you — cowards."

In this style Slang delivered a long lecture to his troops, some of whom really felt ashamed that they had shown the "white feather" so plainly. Others only laughed at what they now considered a good joke. It would do to laugh about when they should return to the city. The poor own-reared wretches scarcely knew the difference between bravery and cowardice. They merely thought that Slang and Billings were foolhardy for not joining them in the flight. Such a thing as regard for one's character, as far as military matters were concerned, had never entered into their heads. But we will have occasion to bring them forward again in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"On and on they steady fly,
Yet the hounds are drawing nigh."

It is now time to return to our fugitive bride and bridegroom, whom we left just as they were quitting the house of Booth's friend. They were compelled to lay by one whole day; and this delay gave their pursuers considerable advantage. However, on the next day, which was Monday, the flight was resumed. They traveled leisurely, in order to economize their own strength as well as that of their horses. Indeed, Booth seemed to apprehend no danger of capture, and acted not at all like he thought he was pursued. As they were pacing along quietly, Flora questioned Booth more particularly in regard to their ultimate destination.

"It will be best," said he, "to quit the United States."

"I think so myself; but what country are you going to?"

"What do you propose? I will leave it to you."

"La belle France," replied Flora with sparkling eyes.

"C'est mon choix," remarked Booth.

"I have always had a desire," replied Flora to see the vine-clad land of Lafayette. It appears to me that the French are more thoroughly impressed with rational ideas of true liberty than any other people. And as

their political sentiments approximate so nearly to ours, we would probably be more at home among them than with the English, who would be my second choice."

"I cannot agree with you," replied Booth, in regard to the political sentiments of the French; but still I would rather cast my lot among them than the English. Those old purse-proud, stiff Lords of England, I never could endure. I do not like the English anyhow. They are tyrannical and oppressive in their dispositions, and they think England is the headquarters of civilization, art and science. The way they have always kept Ireland down in degradation, has given me a decided dislike of the bigoted government of England. In France the people are more polite, more social than gruff old John Bull. I therefore cheerfully approve of the selection you have made; so to France we will go."

"What part?"

"You may make the choice yourself. It is indifferent to me."

"I should like Paris, I think."

"Very well then, let it be Paris."

"You seem to be very easily pleased," remarked Flora.

"My happiness depends more on you, dearest, than on the country we may go to. Clime and season can not have much effect on my mind in your presence. But, Flora, let me warn you not to anticipate too much happiness in Paris, or you will be disappointed."

"Why will I?"

"Because there is no spot like one's native land. As the old song says, 'there's no place like home.' I have no doubt we will sometimes sigh for the shores we have left, and look longingly to the United States. We can never identify ourselves with foreigners; we will feel that we are not of them, and that country is not ours. We can never renew in another land the pleasant associations which we have now severed. Do you recollect those beautiful lines of Montgomery?"

"Home, kindred, friends and country—these
Are ties which we never part;
From clime, or clime, or land and seas,
We bear them with us in our heart:
But oh! 'tis hard to feel resign'd,
When these must all be left behind!"

"You draw a rather gloomy picture," said Flora faintly smiling. "If such is to be our destiny, I regret the necessity that compels us to flee."

"So do I, now; but, dearest, you are not forced to go, as I am. You can remain if you so wish."

"Maybe you want me to remain, Mr. Booth, since you propose it so often."

"Nothing in the world could give me greater pleasure than your company during my life-long exile; but the very love I feel for you, makes me wish not to drag you down to what I fear will be my own gloomy destiny. If in the land of our adoption you are disappointed, I could not but look upon myself as the cause of your unhappiness. Consequently, that would make me feel

miserable. It would give me far more pleasure—I could be better satisfied to know that you would be happy in your native country, than to carry you broken-hearted into dismal exile."

"Do not talk to me about remaining, Mr. Booth. If you propose it again, I shall take it for granted that your ardent professions of undying affection are not to be relied on."

"Very well, I will not mention it any more. For if I should have to go alone, no tongue could express my wretchedness of heart. Flora, I fear I will be more happy than you. I love you with such inexpressible madness, that I can come nearer living upon emotions than you can."

"If you will always be thus affectionate," replied Flora with a radiant smile, "you need not give yourself any uneasiness on my account."

"I will always be thus," said Booth firmly.

"Nous verrons."

"Flora," said Booth after a short pause, "I expect I have drawn rather an unwarrantable picture of our future prospects. I was looking too much at myself when I spoke. I do not wish you to contemplate the 'dark side' altogether. What I meant is, that we must depend upon each other for happiness, and not upon external objects. In my present mood, I suppose I am rather disposed to look gloomily into the future, and you must make some allowances for my words. All the aspirations of my political ambition have been suddenly blighted. I had conceived great hopes of restoring peace and liberty to the United States, by the destruction of the tyrant, but I have ingloriously failed, and you cannot imagine how bitter is my disappointment. The love which I bore you entered deeply into my plans, and this circumstance makes my failure more hard to be borne. I expected to lay at your feet almost a crown, and I can offer you nothing but a—"

"A what, Mr. Booth?"

"I came very near saying a murderer's hand. But I will not say that. God knows I am no murderer in the common acceptation of that word."

"Never mind, Mr. Booth, we can still be happy if you have failed. I am persuaded that happiness is not confined exclusively to the circles of kings and queens, lords and ladies. You have talents, and very probably can find means to gratify your lofty ambition in the country to which we are going. But if you cannot, we can be happy anyhow."

"I am glad to hear you talk so."

"I should like to remain awhile in Paris—but," continued Flora breaking into a new strain, "can we not have two residences, like some of those proud old Lords—one in the city, and the other a country villa, situated in some romantic spot?"

"That will depend to some extent upon our means."

"Means?" said Flora, suddenly drawing out several brilliant diamonds and handing

them to Booth, "what do you suppose they are worth?"

"I do not know."

"Eight hundred thousand, only. My whole fortune is invested in them."

"You can go beyond me by three hundred thousand," said Booth exhibiting a bill of exchange for \$500,000, upon an English bank. "But adding both our fortunes together, we can live in regal splendor."

"And so we will," replied Flora.

Thus they continued to converse throughout the day, in regard to their future prospects, totally unaware of the danger that was now rapidly following in the wake of their flight.

Tuesday they pursued their journey, feeling comparatively safe, since they had heard nothing to disturb their equanimity. Wednesday, however, Flora seemed to be unusually depressed. Her gaiety of manner was all gone, and an expression of sadness had banished every trace of youthful buoyancy of spirit. Booth could not but observe the change which had come over her.

"What is the matter, Flora?" he asked.

"Why? Do you observe anything unusual?"

"Yes; your pretty face looks as solemn as a Pharisee's on fast-days."

"I was thinking," she replied absently.

"It must be something very serious."

"Yes, rather."

"What is it?"

"You will laugh at me if I tell you."

"No. I could not laugh at anything that gives you uneasiness."

"Well," answered Flora slowly, "I was troubled by a dream I had last night."

"Indeed? Are you a believer in dreams?"

"I cannot say that I am. But did you never have a dream that seemed to cling to you, and follow you like a spectre?"

"I do not recollect that I ever did. I never would suffer myself to be disturbed by such things as dreams. They are unreliable, of course."

"Certainly they are; but sometimes they make a deep impression on our minds, so vividly is the picture presented to our imaginations, that howmuchsoever we attempt to shake off the spell, we cannot free ourselves from it."

"I never was troubled with things of that kind. But what is the dream which has had such an unpleasant effect upon you? Maybe I can interpret it. I used to read dream-books when I was a boy."

"I dreamed about you once," said Flora, "and it proved true; that is why I am so disturbed."

"Your dream was in reference to me, then."

"In reference to both of us."

"Very well, let us hear it."

"I can tell it in a very few words; it is short and dismal. I dreamed that we were burned up alive."

"That is short, sure enough; but how did it happen?"

"I thought it was night, and we were sleeping at a strange house. After awhile I

heard some one shrieking 'fire' in my ears. I sprang up, awoke you, and then ran to the door, but it was locked, and no key could be found."

"Why did we not go out at the window?" said Booth with a quiet smile, which was unobserved by Flora.

"I thought we looked around for the window, but to our horror there was none. There was only one outlet to the room, and that was closed."

"I think I would have battered the door down then."

"I thought you did try that very thing. I dreamed that you seized a log of wood and dealt blows upon the door with the strength of a giant, but they seemed to have no more effect than if you had beaten upon the rock of Gibraltar with a handful of straws. Scarcely any sounds issued from your tremendous blows, but the log appeared to rebound noiselessly, as if it had possessed the property of elasticity."

"Why, you had an attack of incubus," exclaimed Booth.

"Of course I did; but what of that? You speak about it, Mr. Booth, like I was telling it as a reality," said Flora, a little vexed.

"No, no," replied Booth quickly, "but if it was only incubus, I hope you will attach no importance to it."

"It was so much like a reality—the picture was so vivid and lifelike, that I cannot overcome the impression it has made. Mon Dieu! methinks I can see those lapping, hissing flames now, as they whirled around the apartment, and seemed to be hunting after us like voracious cannibals."

"Well, did they find us?" inquired Booth half amused.

"They did."

Here Flora paused as if she were still gazing at the frightful picture.

"Well, what then?" asked Booth.

"They seized upon us, Mr. Booth," answered Flora, speaking rapidly as if the subject were painful, "they wrapped themselves around us, and our flesh crackled and blazed up, till nothing was left but our skeletons standing in the middle of the floor black horrid, smoking, but still *alive*."

"Somewhat *a la* Prometheus."

"Do not make sport of me, Mr. Booth, in that way," said Flora solemnly. "I have had dreams to come to pass very frequently."

"Why, Flora, I am afraid you are superstitious."

"Perhaps I may be. At any rate the dream has made a deep impression upon my mind, that I cannot get rid of."

"Do not think about it, dear. That is the best way to get rid of it."

"Few persons can control their thoughts to such an extent," replied Flora. "If I could think about what I pleased, I would have my mind under a very enviable discipline, to be sure."

"I told you," remarked Booth, seeing that Flora was really distressed, "that I would interpret your dream."

"Well?"

"Just reverse it—that is the rule. To dream of death is a sign that you will hear of a wedding. I suppose your dream then has reference to our own marriage."

"I have thought of a different interpretation from that."

"What is that?"

"The ship in which we sail may take fire. The door will then indeed be closed. There would be no escape from death. That is the most natural interpretation that suggests itself to my mind."

"If the ship takes fire," said Booth, "we can jump into the water."

"Then we would drown."

"Yes, but that is not your dream. We were to be burnt."

"I do not contend, Mr. Booth, that my dream will prove true to the letter, nor indeed, that it will come to pass at all. I only fear that it portends some dreadful calamity—perhaps death."

"O, pshaw, Flora," said Booth exhibiting intolerance, "I am astonished at you. It seems you are determined to believe that we will be unfortunate."

"I cannot help it, Mr. Booth."

"It is just as easy to put a favorable construction upon your dream, and regard it as a lucky omen. It is unwise to be anticipating evils that may never happen. If calamities are to overtake us, wait till they come. If we are even to die, as you will have it, I beseech you let us not commence dying now, and thus prolong our suffering. My motto is, 'enjoy the present, and let the future take care of itself.' There is sound philosophy in it, too. I will laugh at you about this dream when we get to France."

"I earnestly hope you may," said Flora with great solemnity.

The subject of the dream was then dropped, and Booth endeavored to remove its disagreeable impression by diverting Flora's mind from it. He only partially succeeded; for although Flora herself struggled hard to subdue her depression of spirits, yet the fiery offspring of the incubus would often rise up and assert its terrible sway over her thoughts. It haunted her, and the horrid demon could be exorcised only by stolid resolution, of which her feminine mind was incapable. So, very frequently through the day, Booth would find her silent, pensive and absent-minded.

Towards the close of the evening, they were suddenly overtaken by four men, who came into the road the fugitives were traveling, at right angles. It was a captain and three soldiers of Mosby's disbanded command, returning to their homes, after having seen the "last ditch" of the gory war. They were gallant, dashing, chivalrous horsemen, who had followed the far-famed Mosby through his brilliant series of guerilla victories. As they rode up, Booth entered into conversation with them, more for the purpose of diverting their attention from Flora, than from any desire to talk.

"Any news, gentlemen?" asked Booth.

"Nothing in particular," replied the cap-

tain. "I suppose you have heard of the murder of Lincoln?"

"Yes, I heard it; but do you think the report is reliable?"

"Oh, yes; there is no doubt about it. He died last Saturday."

"Have they found out who killed him?"

"It was a man by the name of Booth."

"Do you know whether he has been arrested or not?"

"No. But I heard that there were about ten thousand men after him. He will be captured unless he is a sharp traveler. However, if I had the start which they say he did, I would bid defiance to four times that many. They never would catch me."

"How would you prevent it?"

"Selim," said the captain patting his fine looking charger on the neck, "would attend to that. We have been in a great many close places, and never been captured yet."

"You are a confederate, I see," said Booth.

"Yes—a rebel."

"What command do you belong to?"

"Mosby's."

"Ah, Mosby was a dashing warrior."

"That he was. We do not meet his equal every day."

"Methinks," said Booth, "if I had killed Lincoln, I would hunt up Mosby's command, and place myself in their hands for safety."

"There was a time," replied the captain, "when we would have carried him through the federal army, if necessary, or lost every man we had. But that time is gone now."

"Why is it?" inquired Booth, who could barely conceal an expression of dangerous interest.

"Because, we are powerless now. Another reason is, we believe, at least I do, that Lincoln's murder at this particular time will prove a great calamity to the southern people."

"You do? Why so?"

"It will go harder with us defeated rebels. It will furnish our enemies with a pretext to wreak their vengeance upon the helpless south. I fear this event will place a worse man than Lincoln in the presidential chair. We have nothing to hope from Andy Johnson. He will be more bitter against us than Lincoln would, because he has personal wrongs to avenge. We cannot expect him to forgive the rough treatment he has received, and let this opportunity for the gratification of his revenge pass away."

"What do you think he will do?"

"He will confiscate all our property, and try to reduce us to a state of slavery. He will attempt to make the negro our equal."

"That will be very unjust," remarked Booth.

"So it will," answered the captain, "but it will not injure me."

"Why will it not?"

"Because I have no land; and then I am going to quit the country."

"Where are you going?"

"To Mexico."

"What will you do there?"

"I do not know yet. I will find something to do though. Anyhow, I cannot stay here in these conquered provinces."

"I feel sorry for the southern people," said Booth, "for I fear the state of affairs which you predict may become a reality. After all, though, Johnson may have the magnanimity to lay aside his prejudices, and may be a different man from what you anticipate. If so, we cannot conjecture what turn events may take. At any rate, let us hope for the best."

"You are not a rebel, are you?" asked the captain.

"No, not exactly. I am a conservative." "I thought you were dressed too fine for a rebel."

"I suppose the confederates were sometimes put to it for clothing," said Booth.

"Indeed were they. But we did not mind that so much as the leanness of our commissary department. Many a day have we lived on parched corn and acorns. All this, however, we could have endured without a murmur, if the independence of the confederacy had been gained. Indeed, we could have laughed over our hardships and long fasts."

"It is very grievous, no doubt," remarked Booth, "to be forced to yield after having suffered so many privations."

"So it is; but maybe some good may result from it."

By this time they had come to the house of a man by the name of Garrett. Here Booth announced to his confederate companions his intention of stopping for the night, as the sun was now nearly down. The confederates, however, preferred to go on, the captain remarking that he had an acquaintance who lived farther up the road. So they rode on, and Booth took the road that lead to Garrett's, which was several hundred yards from the one they had been traveling.

"Mr. Booth," said Flora as soon as the horsemen were out of hearing, "I am afraid we are too careless."

"Why so, dear?"

"Did not those men tell you we are pursued?"

"Yes, but I expected that."

"I fear we will be overtaken. We have traveled too slow."

"They will hardly overtake us; but could you travel faster?"

"Certainly, if I thought there was any danger of capture."

"I will tell you what we will do then. We will stop at this house, rest till after midnight, and make a big day's travel to-morrow. What do you say?"

"I am willing."

Accordingly they rode towards the house, but before they got to the gate Flora turned deadly pale.

"Mr. Booth!" she said, suddenly checking her horse.

"What is it, dear?" inquired the actor, noticing the pallor of her countenance.

Flora was gazing at the house before her with a wild expression of interest.

"Are you ill?" asked Booth in alarm.

"No, not ill."

"What is the matter then?"

"That is the very house I saw in my dreams!"

"Good Lord, Flora! is it possible you will let an idle dream trouble you so?"

"Yonder is the very room too. How strange! how strange!"

"Flora, are you crazy?"

"Let's not stay here, Mr. Booth, let's not stay here!" she exclaimed earnestly, abruptly turning her horse and riding off.

"Where are you going?" cried Booth.

"I am going to leave here. No good will happen to us if we stop at this place. Let us go somewhere else!"

Booth was forced to yield to this whim of his wife, and they kept on till they were about a mile from Garrett's house, not on the same road, however, which they had been traveling all day. It was dusk before they came to another residence, at which they tried to put up. The owner refused to entertain them for the night, affirming that he was not prepared to accommodate strangers. Booth then inquiring how far it was to the next house, was told that it was several miles; he was also informed that Garrett's was the only place anywhere near at which he could be entertained. The fugitives then turned and rode away.

"Flora," said Booth, "we will have to go back to that house. You are too foolish about that dream."

"You cannot see as I do, Mr. Booth, or you would not want me to stay there. I know I have been warned in a dream."

"What will we do then? We cannot stay in the woods."

"I would rather not stay in that house."

"Suppose," said Booth after a moment's reflection, "we go back to the house, have our horses fed, get supper, and not stay in the house? Do you object to that?"

"Where will we stay?"

"I do not know yet, but not in the house, if you are afraid."

"I will go, Mr. Booth, if you insist upon it; but I tell you something dreadful will happen to us before we leave."

"Come on then," said Booth laughingly. "I will show you that there is no truth in dreams."

In the course of half an hour they arrived at the house which they had so unceremoniously left. Here Booth called Garrett, who was an old man, out to the gate, and stated what he wanted.

"I am afraid," said Booth, "our horses may be stolen, and prefer to watch them. So if you will let us have some supper for ourselves and provender for our horses, we will not give you any further trouble."

Old man Garrett accordingly showed them to his barn, and then at Booth's request went after their supper, with which he soon returned.

"Mr. Booth," said Flora after they had partaken of the meal, "I never felt so strange

in all my life. I feel like this place was haunted."

"Why, you do not believe in ghosts too, do you?"

"No, but I have read of haunted houses."

"Only in novels."

"Admit that; still such stories have their influence on one's mind. But I am not talking about ghosts now. How do you account for my dream about this house, when I never saw it before?"

"You merely fancied this was the house after you saw it."

"There was no fancy about it. I knew the house the very moment I had a good view of it."

"Which room did you dream we were in?" asked Booth.

"The front room at this end."

"Look at the light shining through the window; the room you saw in your dream had no window in it. So that circumstance proves conclusively you have made a mistake."

"I only hope I have. But do not let us stay here long. I will feel miserable till we get away."

"We must rest till two o'clock, and then we will start."

After a short time they retired into the barn. Booth was soon buried in a deep sleep, but Flora was troubled. She felt that some great danger was hovering over her, and she could not close her eyes. At last she commenced crying, and wept till she was somewhat relieved. Then her thoughts began to scatter, and she gradually fell into an uneasy slumber. All about the gloomy barn was now dark and silent.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I."

"Hilloa!"

This was bawled out by Mike O'Clannahan at the gate of a small farm house that stood by the road-side. It was now Wednesday evening, and the party of pursuers were still after the fugitives. They would take it by turns in inquiring at the houses which they came to, for the murderer of Mr. Lincoln, and it was now O'Clannahan's turn.

"Hilloa!" thundered Mike the second time, hardly waiting for a reply to his first exclamation.

"Hilloa!" responded the proprietor of the cottage advancing to the gate.

"Have you seen anything of Walkes Booth traveling along here?"

"Listen at that fool," said Billings with a laugh.

But the blunt, straightforward question of the Irishman, developed intelligence which was rather unexpected by the detectives; for the farmer without any equivocation promptly replied:

"Yes, I have."

"Whin?" inquired Mike.

"This morning."

"Be jabbers, why didn't you catch the dirty spalpeen!"

"What for?" inquired the surprised farmer.

"Shure, an ye knowed that the ugly poltroon murdered Mr. Lincoln the last Friday night, and thin ran away, widout so much as sayin' 'good bye' to iny one? Oeh! we've had many a rake and a scratch through the briar thicket, wid ould Nick and his whole family tearing afther us! Captin' he continued as Slang rode up to the gate, "Be jabbers, I've arrested the spalpeen; and thim greenboks is mine."

"Who have you arrested?" asked Slang.

"Walkes Booth, shure."

"Where is he?"

"Be jabbers, he was seen this morning, shure."

"You're a fool!" said Slang angrily, modifying his assertion with an oath that did not add much to its euphony, except to military ears. Then he turned to the wondering farmer.

"You say you saw Booth?"

"To be sure I did."

"Are you certain it was Booth?"

"Just as certain as I could be about any body."

"How did you know it was Booth?"

"I've seen him several times in the theatre."

"Did you speak to him?"

"Yes, a few words were passed between us. He and another young gentleman stopped at the gate and asked for water, which I gave them."

"Which way did they go?"

"They kept that road, straight ahead."

"Were they riding fast?"

"No—not very."

"Didn't you know that they had murdered the president?"

"No; I had not heard it."

"You are a liar!" thundered Slang. "You can't make me believe that. You know all about it."

"I didn't know a word about it," exclaimed the thunderstruck farmer. "And if I had, I could not have arrested them; they were both armed with pistols, and Booth had a carbine."

"Bring him on, men!" ordered Slang.

"He's telling lies. He is one of the accomplices. Oh, come on, old fellow, you've got to go."

The farmer's protestations of innocence, and his entreaties, were of no avail. He was forced to accompany the pursuers; and off they all dashed like hounds, in hunters' phrase, on a warm trail. Finding that Booth was riding at a traveler's pace, they continued to inquire for him at every house, and heard of him more than once. Late in the evening they came to a negro cutting fuel, at the fork of the road where Mosby's men had by mere accident joined Booth.

"Hello, Mistifer," cried Slang, "how long have you been here?"

"All dis blessed day, Masser."

"Did you see two men pass by here to-day?"

"Yes, Masser, more dan dat."

"Did you see any with guns?"

"Yes sar. One cumd long wid a gun, and anoder boy wid 'im. Right here dey met four more comin' dat road, den dey all went long to-gedder."

"Were the four men armed?"

"No, Masser, but dey was sogers."

"What kind?"

"Federates, I reckon; dey had on gray cloze."

"He's got with some of the rebels, by —," said Slang. "Forward, men, we're on the right trail."

"Captin," shouted Mike, "ain't ye goin' to arrist this gentleman? Be jabbers, he must be one o' the 'complices. He's seen Booth."

"The blacks is all loyal," said Billings.

"Forward!" ordered Slang.

They arrived at Garrett's house without any further adventure, just as the last rays of the sun had disappeared from the tree-tops. Unluckily for them, Booth and Flora had left the house a few minutes previously, without having been seen by any of Garrett's family. The detectives then pushed on in hot pursuit after Mosby's men, whom they would soon have overtaken on the road, but for a delay which was very foolish under the circumstances. In the course of an hour, after they left Garrett's, Booth and Flora returned. Garrett said nothing about the pursuers, as he very naturally supposed that the actor and his wife belonged to the party. The pursuers had not gone more than a mile from the resting place of the fugitives, before they came to a halt in order to refresh themselves. If they had kept on they would have overtaken Mosby's men in less than twenty minutes. But it appears that this was a lucky party. Their very blunders seemed to put them on the right trail; and they kept on it not by their detective sagacity, but by a series of fortunate hap-hazards. Their very blustering airs, which would have made them unsuccessful detectives in a city, seemed to cause them to stumble along in a most wonderful manner upon Booth's track. It is highly probable that shrewd detectives would have been extremely puzzled, and might not have overtaken the fugitives at all. But our party went dashing along, hurry-scurry, pell-mell, stopping when they felt like it, and then taking almost any road, traveled till they became weary, halted, and afterwards pushed onward in the same uproarious manner. Our yankee friends professed to see in it the finger of Providence; but we think it sufficient to denominate it *lucky blundering*.

As we have already said, they came to a halt almost in sight of Mosby's men. They forced the farmer at whose house they were stopping to prepare supper for the whole party, after having impressed as much provender for their horses as they wanted. Although this unlooked-for invasion of his poultry yard, and this tax upon his larder seriously injured the poor farmer, not a par-

ticle of difference did it make with the detectives. They were privileged characters, and used their little authority with a despotism in a manner annoying to all who were so unfortunate as to come under its influence. Slang and Billings were the only two who were anything like detectives; but they had been reared in the city principally, and were not very skillful in that capacity in the woods. A short time after supper, these two worthies held a military consultation. It did not require the lapse of a great while for them to decide that it was best to go on immediately after the fugitives. So they went round to their command, nearly all of whom had dropped off to sleep, just as soon as their appetites were gratified, and aroused them by vigorous application of feet to their sides. They were all at last awakened, and made to understand that they must march. So they sullenly continued the pursuit. After traveling about three miles, they came to the house at which Mosby's men had put up. Having surrounded this, Slang and Billings, followed by a dozen trembling wretches, went blundering into the rooms, and at last entered that which contained the sleeping confederates.

"Surrender in here!" thundered Slang in a tone worthy of a full-grown general.

The rebels were quickly awakened by their terrible voice, and straightened up in their beds. There were only three of them.

"Be jabbers," said Mike making ready with his gun, "ye'd better give up quiet, Mr. Booth. If ye thries to shoot, ye're a dead man, by St. Patrick."

"Peace, babbling fool," said Slang. "They are unarmed."

"Och! an there's no knowing that, shure. They may have the murderous weapons concealed among the bed-cloaths. Better watch thim, Captin."

"What means this intrusion, gentlemen?" asked the confederate captain, nearly blinded by the sudden flash of a dark-lantern, which one of the detectives carried.

"We want you to surrender," said Slang in an emphatic tone.

"We have already done that, and been paroled," answered the captain.

"Have you no arms?"

"No—none at all."

"Where is the rest of your crowd?"

"There were only four of us. Here are three; the fourth is with our horses."

"Where is Booth?"

"Booth?" asked the astonished captain.

"Yes sir—Booth. He was with you."

"You are mistaken, sir," was the mild reply of the confederate.

"You're a liar!" exclaimed Slang, using his favorite expression.

But this time he met with a most unexpected reply. For the captain deliberately rose from his bed, and before any one was aware of his intentions, planted a blow in Slang's face that felled him to the floor. The two other rebels, guessing how matters would result, in a twinkling seized each a gun from the soldiers standing by. The captain also

did the same; and all this was accomplished so quickly, that the bewildered pursuers hardly knew how it was done, until the feat had been achieved. The three men thus suddenly armed began in an instant to make an aggressive movement.

"Och!" shrieked Mike, "don't shoot, good Mr. Rebel! We'll surrender. Here's my gun. Take it, so you don't shoot jist."

"And mine too!" exclaimed a half-dozen more.

"Stack them in the corner!" ordered the captain. "Be quick too."

"Be jabbers, that will we," said Mike, hurriedly dashing his gun into the corner as directed. "I niver could use the thickey spalpeen, nohow."

The other detectives who had happened not to enter the apartment, took to their heels, as soon as their leader struck the floor, and went rushing out of the house for very life. The panic was instantly communicated to those outside, who were startled by the terrible cry:

"The house is full of rebels!"

"Frightened by this alarming cry, all retreated disorderly to the distance of several hundred yards from the scene of action, leaving Slang and his men to fight it out, or surrender, as they might deem it most prudent. The confederate captain, finding himself master of the situation, and seeing no indications of further resistance, soon calmed his military ardor.

"Who is the commander of this party?" said he.

"He is," said Billings pointing to the crest-fallen Slang.

"Sir," said the captain addressing Slang, "I want you to explain yourself. We are rebels, legally paroled, returning peaceably to our homes, and not disposed to interfere with any body. It is true the south has been defeated; but I am not going to be personally insulted, when I have the power to defend myself. You asked where Booth is. I never saw the man in my life. If you are not satisfied with my reply, you can help yourselves. I am not going to be arrested for not having seen Booth. If that is the game, I would as soon fight it out right here as anywhere."

"Och! there's no use fighting about it, good Mr. Rebel," interrupted Mike. "We're not afther ye. It's Booth we're afther. We thought he was wid ye."

Here Billings entered into a brief explanation of matters, at the conclusion of which the captain told him that they had overtaken two men at the forks of the road, but that they had stopped at a house four miles back; whether it was Booth or not, he did not know.

While mutual explanations were taking place in the house, the lieutenant was rallying his men, after they had retreated to a safe distance from the spot where Slang had met with such a sad disaster. Having collected his little command, he marched to within a hundred yards of the house, and

ordered a volley to be fired at the roof, in order to let Mosby's men know what they might expect. As soon as the report was heard, Mike rushed from the room in hot haste.

"Quit shootin'," he bawled at the top of his voice, "we've all surrendered."

"Who did you surrender to?" cried out the lieutenant.

"To the ribils. Come up and surrender; they are all good gentlemen. You won't be kilt."

"How many rebels are there?"

"There's the whoul three of thim, be jabbers."

"What! You all surrendered to three men?"

"Be jabbers, did we. They're the very divil, ivery one of thim, and fight like blazes. Och! they laid the captin on his back afore he could ax thim to quit it. If we hadn't gived in quicker, we'd all 'a bin dead men, be jabbers, in a jiffy. We was glad of an opportunity so surrender. Ye'd better come and give up widout baing kilt at all."

The lieutenant was consulting with his men whether they should surrender or not, when Slang ordered them to advance. He and Billings had effected an amicable adjustment with Mosby's men. The three rebels kindly returned the arms they had captured, but fearing treachery, they saddled their horses, and left the yankees in possession of the battle-ground.

The detectives now retraced their steps, arriving in an hour at Garrett's. Leaving their horses at some distance from the house, in charge of two of their party, the remainder cautiously proceeded to dispose themselves so as to command all the outlets from the dwelling. These arrangements being completed, Slang, Billings, and several others went to the kitchen door, and rapped furiously. Presently an old man, *en dishabille*, undid the bolts, and stood on the threshold, peering shiveringly into the darkness. Slang seized him by the throat at once, and held a pistol to his ear.

"Who—who is it that calls me?" cried old Mr. Garrett.

"Where is them men that stay with you?" asked Slang. "If you tell a lie, you are a dead man, by—"

Garrett was so overawed and paralyzed that he stammered and shook, but said not a word.

"Go light a candle," cried Slang with an oath, "and be quick about it, too."

The trembling old man obeyed, and in a moment the imperfect rays flared upon his whitening hairs and bluishly pallid face. Then the question was repeated, backed up by the glimmering pistol.

"Where is them men?"

Garrett was so frightened by the threatening appearance of armed soldiers, that he had forgotten about the two in the barn. He held to the wall, and his knees smote each other.

"There are no men in the house," he at last stammered.

Just then sounds and whisperings were heard in the main building adjoining, and Slang strode to the door. A ludicrous instant intervened; the old man's modesty outran his terror.

"Don't go in there," he said feebly, "there are women undressed in there."

"D—n the women," cried Slang, "what if they are undressed? We shall go in if they haven't got a rag on."

Leaving the old man, Slang utterly regardless of what is due the fair sex bolted through the door, and stood in an assemblage of bare arms and night robes. His loaded pistol for a moment disarmed modesty of its delicacy, and substituted therefor feminine terror. Here he repeated his summons, and the half-light of the candle gave to his ugly countenance a more than bandit ferocity. But the women, thus rudely interrupted, were too much alarmed to make an intelligible reply. They all huddled together, and eyed Slang with horrible suspicion.

"You women," thundered Slang, "I want you to tell me whar these men is."

"What men?" asked one at last, trembling however from head to foot.

"Them men you've hid. Don't deny it. They're here in the house."

Before they could answer, a young man suddenly appeared as if he had arisen from the ground. The eyes of every body were turned upon him in a second. Though he blanched, he did not lack loquacity.

"Father," said he to the old man who had also entered the bed-chamber, "I guess they mean those men who are sleeping in the barn."

"Is that what you mean?" cried Garrett, as if he had suddenly comprehended their object. "There are two men in my barn, if that's what you are after. They came here about dark."

"I thought you knowed, you——," said Slang with an oath. "One of you," he continued turning to some of his men, "must stay here and guard these women and the old man."

"I'll stay," quickly cried half a dozen, anxious to perform this duty, and thereby avoid all personal hazard in the approaching conflict.

"Be jabbers, Captin'," begged Mike, "let me stay. I'm more daacent to remain wid famales than the others. Och! leddies, I was born a gintleman in ould Ireland, and niver insulted a lady since I was a baby. I will be as mannerly as any gintleman could be. Be jabbers, I'm the perlitio bhoy, leddies. I haven't looked at ye to-night."

"Hush,—— fool," interrupted Slang, "you shan't stay, you cowardly ens. Here, Dick Manigan, you stay."

Then all the rest, with cocked pistols at the young man's head, followed on to the barn. It lay a hundred yards from the house, the front door facing the west gable, and was an old and spacious structure, with

floors only a few inches above the ground level.

The detectives were stationed at regular intervals around it, and ten yards distant at every point; four special guards placed to command the door, and all with weapons in supple preparation, while Slang and Billings went directly to the portal. It had a padlock upon it, and the key of this Billings secured immediately. In the interval of silence that ensued, the rustling of planks and straw was heard inside, as of persons rising from sleep. Booth and Flora had been aroused.

"My dream, Mr. Booth, my dream!" she faintly whispered. "I knew I was warned. I hear several persons creeping outside. There is a light, too. We are overtaken."

"Keep quiet," replied Booth in a low whisper, "you may be mistaken."

But she was not, for Slang hailed:

"To the folks in this barn. I've a proposition to make: We are about to send in to you the son of the man who owns this barn. Either surrender to him your arms, and then give yourselves up, or we will set fire to the place. We mean to take you both, or to have a bonfire and shootin' match."

"I knew it, Mr. Booth," whispered Flora, "we will be burnt."

"Never," whispered Booth in reply between his grating teeth.

No reply was made to the proposal of Slang. The lad John Garrett, who was in deadly fear, was hebe pushed through the door by a sudden opening of it, and the door was then locked on the outside. As no yankee, who has the slightest regard for truth, will deny that this was an actual occurrence, it may not be amiss to suggest, that it certainly was very creditable to the bravery of Slang and his men, to force a little boy into a position from which they all shrank. Nothing is detracted from the disgrace of this circumstance by the consideration that the proportion of strength was largely in favor of the detectives. It was as twenty-five to two.

Young Garrett was heard to state his appeal in an undertone.

"Get out of here," cried Booth angrily.

At the same time he placed his hand in his pocket as for a pistol. A remonstrance followed, but the boy quickly slipped over the re-opened portal, reporting that his errand had failed, and that he dared not enter again. All this time the candle brought very foolishly from the house to the barn was burning close beside the two detectives, rendering it very easy for any one inside to have shot them dead. This observed, the light was suddenly and prudently blown out, and Slang took the dark lantern from one of the men and carried it. By this time the crisis of the position was at hand, and the pursuers began to exhibit variable inclinations, the majority to run away, a few to shoot Booth without a summons. The men at the back of the barn abandoned their several positions, and slipped off towards the

house. If Booth had only made a forward movement with boldness, there is little doubt that the whole party would have retreated in astonishing disorder. At the house near by, the females were seen collected in the doorway, and the necessities of the case provoked prompt conclusions. The summons was now repeated by Slang.

"You must surrender inside there. Give up your arms and appear. There is no chance for escape. We give you five minutes to make up your mind."

"Be jabbers, we'll give ye half an hour, if ye'll only surrender like gintlemen widout fitin'," exclaimed Mike O'Clannahan.

A bold, clarion reply came from within, so strong as to be heard at the house door.

"Who are you, and what do you want with us?"

"We want you to give up your arms, and be our prisoners," replied Slang.

"But who are you?" hallooed the same strong voice.

"That makes no difference," answered Slang. "We know who you are, and we want you. We have here fifty men, armed with carbines and pistols. You cannot escape, so you may as well give up."

"Plaze surrender, Mr. Booth," cried out Mike, "and save us the throuble of a bloody fight. We don't want to murder you alive."

There followed a long pause, and then Booth said:

"Captain, this is a hard case. Perhaps I am being taken by my own friends."

To this the detectives made no reply.

"Well, give us a little time to consider," said Booth.

"Very well," replied Slang. "Take time."

"Yis, be jabbers," quoth Mike confirming the stipulation, "take as much as ye want, jist so ye concludes to surrender."

"Dry up, you cowardly dog," interrupted Slang.

While the detectives were standing in solemn silence anxiously awaiting the result of the consultation, Booth and Flora were holding a whispered interview, that must have been peculiarly distressing to a young bride.

"Flora," he said, "what will you do?"

"What will you do?" she asked.

"I have deliberately made up my mind to escape or die."

"Then I will die with you."

"You need not do that," quickly said Booth. "You can surrender. They will not trouble you. But if I should surrender, it would be merely to die upon the gallows. I will fight then to the last."

"Then I will stand by your side," replied Flora in a tone of firmness that showed she had gained at least a temporary victory over the proverbial weakness of woman.

"I would rather you would not."

"What would you have me do then?"

"Surrender. No harm will come to you."

"Never, never! Do not persuade me."

"God bless you, my brave darling!" whispered the actor. "Kiss me once more."

And there in the darkness of that old barn, threatened by bayonets, he folded the feverish bride to his heart. The embrace seemed to infuse a more than human courage into his proud form. It maddened him, and if his pursuers could only have seen the fierce glare of his eye, indicative of the stern resolution of an inflexible spirit, the probability is that Booth would have outnumbered them in the combat. But they saw it not; and Slang at last hailed for the last time.

"Well, we've waited long enough," said he. "Surrender your arms and come out, or we'll fire the barn."

"Will you listen to a proposition, Captain?" asked Booth.

"Yes, what is it?"

"You say you have fifty men. Withdraw them one hundred yards from the barn, and we will come out and have a fair fight. Give us a chance for our lives. We will never be taken alive."

"We didn't come here to fight, but to capture you."

"No, be jabbers, we don't want to fight ye, Mr. Booth. Plaze give up like a good gintleman, as I know ye is, barrin that ye committed a little bit of a murder; but we don't want to fight ye for that."

"You must have a fight, boys, and a bloody fight," cried Booth, starting to the door with Flora at his side. "We will conquer or die."

"Och! I'll——" But Mike's tongue refused to act, and his legs started off with him. He was followed by several of the party.

"Come back!" thundered Slang, or I'll blow your——brains out."

"They are retreating," whispered Booth. Be courageous, dearest; we will whip them. My God! the door is locked!"

"And there is no window!" said Flora. "My dream! my dream!"

"Never mind," answered Booth. "I will knock the building down, or we will get out."

"Useless! useless!" said Flora now in despair.

But Booth rapidly reconnoitered the inside of the barn, and fortunately for him he found that a plank in the floor at the back end of the building was not fastened down. By raising this up he could crawl out without being seen by the enemy. So he called to Flora in an undertone, and then made a feint attack on the door, as if it had been his intention to batter it down. Then turning he whispered to Flora to follow him, and retreated towards the place of egress. But Flora, the powers of whose mind were now almost paralyzed by the apparent fulfillment of her dream, stopped suddenly in the middle of the barn. Booth supposing that she was close to him, commenced to crawl out. But ere his head was fairly outside, Billings slipped around to one side of the building, drew some loose straws through a crack, and lit a match upon them. They were dry, and blazed up in an instant, carrying a sheet of flame and smoke through the parted planks,

and heaving in a twinkling a world of light and heat upon the magazine within. The blaze shot up between Booth and Flora, and lit up the black recesses of the great barn till every wasp's nest and cobweb in the roof was luminous, flinging streaks of red and violet across the tumbled farm gear in the corner, plows, harrows, hoes, rakes and sugar mills, and making every separate grain in the high bin adjacent gleam like a mote of precious gold. They tinged the beams, the upright columns, the barricades, where clover and timothy, piled high, held toward the hot incendiary their separate straws for the funeral pile. We might remark, parenthetically, that old Mr. Garrett paid a rather high price for this bonfire, by the loss of his barn, grain, farming utensils, and so on—all on account of the pusillanimity of the pursuers, who did not dare to make a fair attack upon one man; but we will say nothing about this, as it does not particularly concern our story.

Poor Flora stood stone-still in the middle of the barn, confused, bewildered, gazing with superstitious awe and fright at the angry flames bursting up from the yielding straw. A strange species of fascination, mingled with despair, seemed to have rooted her to the spot where she stood. Upon her beautiful features there was a settled expression, evincing a despairing resignation to the terrible fate foreshadowed in her dream. She looked intently into the fire, perhaps searching for Booth. While in this attitude, one of the pursuers, Corbett by name, drew upon her the fatal bead. The ball struck her on the back of the neck, directly under the ear, passing quite through, and entering the planks on the opposite side. Flora with a shout fell headlong to the floor.

"He has shot himself!" cried Slang, unaware of the source of the report, and rushing in he grasped the arms of the supposed Booth, to guard against any feint or strategy. A moment convinced him that further struggle with the unresisting form was useless. Flora did not move, nor breathe, nor gasp, that is apparently. Billings and two men now engaged, and taking up the body, they bore it in haste from the advancing flame, and laid it without upon the grass, all fresh with heavenly dew.

"Water!" cried Slang, "bring water."

When this was dashed into her face, she revived a moment and stirred her lips. But the fire encroaching in hotness upon them, they moved her again, placing her at some distance from the barn.

While this tragedy was transpiring, Booth was struggling to force his body through the opening he had discovered, which was smaller than he at first supposed. It required some length of time to extricate himself from this difficulty. Fortunately for him the rear of the barn had been early abandoned in the action, and no one perceived him. Had the detectives discovered him making his way out, they would undoubtedly have killed him, while in a defenseless condition. He had heard the report of the gun and

Flora's shout, and his heart throbbod with fearful anxiety. But he made no pause. Turning the corner of the blazing barn, he saw Flora upon the ground, and the detectives standing around her. The sight aroused Booth till he was hardly human. His eyes were lustrous like fever, and swelled and rolled in terrible beauty, while his teeth grated like those of a wild animal. He wore the expression of one in a perfect frenzy. His gun having been left in the barn, he placed his hands upon the butts of his pistols; but he appeared to think these were insufficient for his purpose; he wanted a more wide-sweeping implement of destruction—one that could slay all his enemies at a single blow. And here we have another instance of the terrible strength and agility of the human body, when reason is temporarily prostrated, and its motions are controlled by a species of frenzied instinct, or by one intense, maddening thought. For the actor gathered up a long pole, whose weight under ordinary circumstances would have been an encumbrance to a very stout man, and wielded it with the ease of a Samson. With a bound, and with a wild, savage, deafening yell, that sounded more like the voice of a demon, or an enraged beast, he started towards his enemies. All this was done almost in a twinkling. The detectives merely caught one glance of the awful figure, advancing upon them with frightful rapidity, and then dropping their guns, betook themselves to inglorious flight. Not even Slang and Billings stood their ground; but every one of them traveled as rapidly as his feet could move, leaving the actor in undisputed possession of the field. It was well for them that Booth's attention was diverted to his fallen wife. Dropping the pole, he knelt down by Flora, who could now speak, but only in a whisper.

"Are you hurt badly, Flora?" he asked in a trembling tone.

"I am dying," she replied.

"God forbid!" he cried in perfect agony.

"Make your escape," she said feebly, "you can do me no good."

"Never! never! I shall die right here," he exclaimed, springing to his feet and seizing one of the carbines lying near by. But no enemy was visible. Flora motioned to Booth, and he again knelt at her side.

"Make your escape," she said. "You will be captured if you remain here. It is folly to fight against so many. Live and avenge my death. This is my dying request."

"Oh! that I should have brought you to this! You cannot forgive me."

"I do—there is nothing to forgive."

Booth now took Flora's hand in his, and as he looked into her pallid countenance, he wept with a bitterness proportioned to the remorse he felt for having brought this beautiful girl to such a bloody destiny. He could not now but be aware that her life was rapidly ebbing away. Suddenly Flora appeared to cease breathing. Booth spoke to her, but she made no reply. He thought she had breathed her last.

"Oh, God! dead! dead!" he cried rising to his feet. "I have brought thee to this! May Heaven forgive me! Flora," he continued, stooping and imprinting a last kiss upon her bloodless lips, "I will spend the remainder of my life in avenging thy death!"

Then he went to his horse, which was standing saddled in the stable. Hastily mounting, he rode off by the light of the burning barn, in a state of feeling beyond the conception of those who have not experienced similar trials; and we hope the number is few. No pen could justly describe the painful agony of John Wilkes Booth.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"There was a splash—down, down, he sank—The waters clos'd—and all was blank."

After Booth's departure, the detectives, who had witnessed his proceedings afar off, mustered up sufficient courage to return. They found that Flora was not yet dead. Indeed, she struggled hard with death, and her vitality evidenced itself almost miraculously. Now and then her heart would cease to throb, and her pulse would be as cold as those of the dead. Directly life would begin anew, the face would flush up effulgently, the eyes open and brighten, and soon relapsing, stillness reasserted, would again be dispossessed by the same magnificent triumph of life over mortality. Brandy was given to her, which revived her so greatly, that for a moment she was enabled to speak quite distinctly. Presently, during one of the transient flashes from darkness to life, Slang addressed her.

"What is your name?" asked he.

Her wild love for the actor caused her to utter a falsehood, even with horrid death before her.

"John Wilkes Booth," she replied.

"Who was the man with you?"

But Flora did not answer this question. Death deprived her of the power of articulation. Her jaw drew spasmodically and obliquely downward; her eye balls rolled toward her feet, and began to swell; lividness like a horrible shadow fastened upon her, and with a sort of gurgle and sudden check, she stretched her feet, threw back her head, and gave up the ghost. The detectives stood looking on in silence, till convinced that the work of death was done, then sewed her up in a saddle blanket, firmly believing it was the corpse of John Wilkes Booth. Although this may appear somewhat strange, it may be accounted for upon the supposition that the detectives were so much excited by the stirring events of the night, it did not occur to them to investigate the evidences of Booth's identity. None of them had ever seen the actor, and they would therefore be liable to make a mistake—especially considering the bewildering circumstances of the capture. Furthermore, it is highly probable that not a single one of the detectives was imbued with a particle of that refinement—that intensity

of exalted friendship, which would induce one friend to prove true to another, even to the "bitter end." Flora gave her name as Booth, and they, in the plenitude of selfishness, could not conceive how or why she should favor any person to the extent of propagating a falsehood amid the convulsions of death. However this may be, it is not our province to show why the deception was not detected. We will narrate events, and let those who believe that Booth was really killed in Garrett's barn, sneer at what they may deem inconsistencies, or absurdities, if they feel so disposed.

Before it was fairly light, the detectives commenced to make preparations for the return. One of the party was immediately dispatched to Washington to bear the glad tidings. A venerable old negro living in the vicinity had the misfortune to possess a horse. This horse was a relic of former generations, and showed by his protruding ribs that his provender had been issued in very scanty rations. He moved in an eccentric amble, and when put upon his speed was generally run backward. At every step his feet came to the ground like he was expecting the command to halt. To this old negro's excuse for a horse was harnessed a very shabby and absurd wagon, which rattled painfully at every obstacle that resisted its progress, and each part of it ran without any connection or correspondence with any other part. It had no tail-board, and its shafts were sharp as famine; and in this mimicry of a vehicle the supposed murderer was to be sent to the Potomac river, while the embalmed body of Abraham Lincoln was moving in state across the mourning north. The old negro geared up his wagon by means of a set of fossil harness, and when it was driven to Garrett's barn yard, they laid within it the senseless Flora. The corpse was tied with ropes, and made fast to the wagon sides. The two sons of Garrett were also taken along, despite the sobs and petitions of the old folks and women. So moved the cavalcade of retribution, with death in its midst, along the road to Port Royal. When the wagon started poor Flora's wound, till now scarcely dribbling, began to run anew. The blood fell through the cracks of the wagon, dripping upon the axle, and spotting the road with terrible wafers. It stained the planks, and soaked the blankets; and the old negro at a stoppage dabbled his hands in it by mistake; he drew back with a shudder and stifled expletive.

"Gor Amighty, dat'll neber come off in de world. It's murder's blood."

He wrung his hands in superstitious distress, looked imploringly at the commander of the party, and shuddered again.

"I wouldn't hab dat on me for tousand, tousand dollars."

However, the old negro was forced to push along. The progress of the team was slow, with frequent danger of shipwreck altogether; but toward noon the cortege filed through Port Royal, where the citizens came out to ask what was the matter, and why a

man's body, covered with sombre blankets, was going by with so great escort. They were told that it was a wounded confederate, and so held their tongues. The little ferry, again in requisition, took them over by squads, and they pushed from Port Conway to Bell Plain, which they reached in the middle of the afternoon. All the way the blood dribbled from the corpse in a slow, incessant, sanguine exudation. The old negro was here niggardly dismissed with two paper dollars, both counterfeit. The dead woman untied and cast upon the vessel's deck, steam gotten up in a little while, and the broad Potomac's shores saw this skeleton ship flit by, as the bloody sun threw gashes and bolts of unhealthy light along the silver surface.

When the detectives reached Washington, it was already reported, indeed it had been telegraphed all over the country, that the assassin of Mr. Lincoln had been killed. Consequently many persons, through motives of idle curiosity, desired to see the corpse, but fortunately for Col. Baker, they were refused. The body was taken to Baker's office, and no person but himself and Slang was present when the bloody blanket was removed. Col. Baker looked into the face of the corpse with surprise. Then he hastily jerked off the cap, which had not hitherto been disturbed. A tuck comb dropped upon the floor, and the long hair of a woman fell out at one side of the neck.

"Great God!" said Baker in horror, "you've killed a woman!"

There was an expression of blank astonishment in Slang's face.

"How did this happen?" asked Baker with a dark frown.

"I'm sure I thought it was Booth," replied Slang. "That was the name this person gave when dying. There were two of them; we shot this one, and the other made his escape. We didn't know who it was."

"That was Booth. Lord! Lord!" continued Col. Baker vexatiously, "you've fixed it. Why didn't you capture both of them?"

"We didn't try, we thought it was enough to get Booth."

And with this report of his underling the vexed Col. Baker had to content himself. Indeed, he cared not to hear more; the deed was accomplished, and it could not now be undone. What to do next, under the perplexing circumstances, was the question to settle.

Leaving Slang to remain with the corpse until he should return, Baker started to the office of Secretary Stanton, in order to hold a consultation. On the way, however, he met with Coldheart, who may be supposed to have been secretly anxious in regard to the startling results legitimately emanating from the action of the Bloody Junto. He asked if the corpse of Booth had arrived, and was answered in the affirmative. He then further asked to see the body; and Baker requested him to walk back to the office. Slang was sent out on some other business, and Coldheart and Baker were alone. The former was as much surprised as Baker

was, when he looked into the face of the corpse.

"Why this is not Booth," he exclaimed.

"It is!"

"Who is it?" inquired Baker.

"It is Flora Louvan. I know her well."

"What! The daughter of Dr. Louvan?"

"The same, without any doubt."

"She was caught with Booth, in this attire."

"Doubtless she ran away with him."

"Well, well, well!" said Baker scratching his fiery head in perplexity, "what is to be done?"

"Col. Baker," said Coldheart after a short pause, in which he had settled the question, "this must be kept secret."

"I agree with you there," replied Baker.

"Of course. It does not speak well for the intelligence of the captors. So you may as well not contradict the report that has been spread all over the country. It has been given out that Booth has been killed; act upon that supposed fact, and bury this body secretly. It will never be known. Besides, if Booth has escaped, you know the consequences—peculiarly, I mean."

"Yes sir," answered Baker with a grim smile.

"Very well; this is Booth, and the large rewards offered for his apprehension can be distributed without suspicion. Some of them were offered by private individuals, and they may be secured if this is Booth."

"I understand all that. But, sir, the legal evidence of his apprehension?"

"Never mind about that. The question of his death will, in all probability, never be discussed. If it should, you can have me for a witness, also this fellow Slang. You may be certain that Booth will never make himself known. He will not stop in the United States. Only put this corpse in some place where it can never be discovered, and all will be right. Be sure you let nobody else see the corpse. You understand?"

"I do sir. It shall be done as you have said."

"You see, Col. Baker, I am very solicitous for the honor of our government. If this circumstance should be known, all Europe would laugh at the idea of fifteen or twenty thousand men engaged in pursuing one person, and the result of their efforts should be the murder of a girl. It would look badly on the pages of history, sir."

"You are a prudent statesman," replied Baker flatteringly.

Coldheart having suggested this piece of prudent rascality, went about his business.

That night, which was the 27th of April, about twelve o'clock, Slang rapped at the door of Baker's office, according to previous agreement. The latter individual had so managed that all his assistants and attaches were absent, and he was alone with the corpse. As soon as Slang was fairly within doors, Baker addressed him:

"You know what you are to do to-night?"

"No sir, I don't."

"Well then," said Baker slowly, "its a

very secret service, indeed, and before we go about it, I have a few words to say to you."

Slang bowed his head.

"Do you know what would be the consequence," continued Baker, "if it should be found out that you have killed a woman?"

"I hadn't thought about it."

"Possibly you might be arraigned upon a charge of murder," said Colonel Baker to see if Slang could be terrified.

"I don't see how that could be," replied Slang. "It was done by mistake, and the woman's an accomplice anyhow."

"I do not care for that. It would be difficult to prove it. At any rate, it would place you in an embarrassing and awkward position. You would be liable to ridicule for having slain a woman."

"Yes, I s'pose so."

"But that's not all yet," continued Baker. "There is another circumstance which you will care for more than that."

"What is that?"

"If this is Booth's corpse, there is about seventy-five thousand dollars due you and your party."

"Yes, I know," said Slang eagerly.

"But if it's not Booth, you get nothing."

To this last remark Slang made no reply.

"But," continued Baker, "there is a way to secure the rewards, whether this is Booth's body or not."

"How, sir?" asked Slang with a brightening face.

"By simply swearing hereafter, if you should be called upon to do so, that you and your party killed Booth. Are you willing to do that?"

"Certainly I am."

"Very well," replied Baker, "place your hand on the head of the corpse."

Slang shudderingly did as he was directed.

"Now then," continued Baker, "do you solemnly swear that you will never tell where we are going to bury this body?"

"I do," answered Slang emphatically.

"And that you will never make an effort to get me into a difficulty about this affair?"

"I do."

"And that you will never throw out the least hint, or speak of this business without my permission?"

"I do."

"Very well," replied Baker, "that will do. You have now solemnly sworn to bury the secret forever in your breast. Keep a watch over your tongue. If you should violate your oath, it will be attended with danger to you; remember that."

"Don't fear me," replied Slang. "I'll be mum."

"Now let us to work," said Baker.

Then they took the bloody blanket, and carefully sewed up the corpse, which was placed in a little wagon, that had been provided by Baker for the purpose. Driving to the Potomac, they put the body into a small row boat, and carried it to the middle of the stream. Weights were fastened to the feet, and then it was heaved into the water, seen only by the sleepless eye of Deity.

The next day a newspaper reporter, who had hitherto kept up with the progress of events, asked Baker what he had done with the body.

"That is known," he answered, "to only one man living besides myself. It is gone. I will not tell you where. The only man who knows is sworn to silence. Never, till the great trumpeter comes shall the grave of Booth be discovered."

The waves of the Potomac rolled on, as ever, over the murdered Flora Louvan, and the public was satisfied with this bloody mockery of justice. Great rewards were distributed among the detectives, and the blood-thirsty yankees rejoiced that the crime of assassination had been nearly atoned for by the sacrifice of "life for life." This gory episode had its effect upon their minds, they were at first startled; then pleasantly excited; and soon they became indifferent. Lincoln was forgotten; justice was content; and they went on "buying and selling," as if nothing had occurred to divert their minds for a moment from the demands of traffic.

And where was John Wilkes Booth during all this time?

While the whole country was startled by the sudden "taking off" of Abraham Lincoln, and the interest connected with it was prolonged by the report of the bloody death of Booth, the actor was quietly wending his way southward. The pursuit was at once stopped. In a day or two after the murder of Flora, Booth heard of his own death, and taking advantage of the false rumor, he traveled without exciting the least suspicion. We will not attempt to trace his foot-steps to the point where he now is. He crossed the Mississippi at Helena, Arkansas, and here we lose sight of him. However, during the fall of 1866, a strange vessel was seen sailing in the neighborhood of the Dry Tortugas. It hoisted the Confederate flag, and threw a few shells at those in charge of the prison at that inhospitable place. I suppose it would be a difficult matter to make the yankees believe that this vessel was commanded by John Wilkes Booth, and that he was making a reconnaissance to see what might be the chances of rescuing the unfortunate Dr. Mudd. We will not try to make them believe it. They are fully persuaded that the actor is dead. Poor credulous souls! let them think so. The day may come when their thoughts may be changed. I know they would "turn up their noses" at this account; but that will not alter stubborn facts. They will endeavor to laugh people out of countenance, but that does not refute the fact that John Wilkes Booth still lives. They practiced the game of "bluff" upon Senator Davis, of Kentucky, who asked that some reliable evidence of Booth's death might be furnished. He stated that no official communication of the fact had ever been presented to the senate, and that he had heard it only as a street-rumor. He was laughed down, and there the matter dropped. The evidence never was produced, and never

will be. And such will be the success of every man who dares to raise the question of Booth's death. The yankees, unless some event occurs that will make it safe for Booth to reveal himself, will mystify this matter until the present corrupt generation shall have passed away. Hereafter, though, when the circumstances that now render investigation impossible, shall cease to control the motions of men, the iron pen of history will write the TRUTH upon its impartial pages.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"May the swords
And wings of fiery cherubim pursue him,
By day and night—snakes spring up in his
path—
Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth—the
leaves,
On which he lays his head to sleep, be strewed
With scorpions! may his dreams be of his
victims,
His wakening a continual dread of death!"

The great tragedy, in all its gory details, was now accomplished. Lincoln lay embalmed in a tomb, bedewed with the tears of many sorrowful yankees. We can truly say he was mourned with some degree of sincerity by the liberty-loving north. The corpse of Flora Louvan, supposed to be Booth, quietly rested upon the bottom of the Potomac. The bodies of Mrs. Surratt and the three men accused of complicity rested peacefully, a few yards from the old penitentiary. No one was permitted to disturb them for reinterment. Why, we cannot say. The great crime had been committed, the dignity of military law had been fully vindicated and the demands of justice satisfied. But a portion, at least, of the public was not satisfied. It could not be denied that Booth had assassinated Lincoln, and that he had accomplices, but somehow, when the turbulent passion of the hour had been cooled down by the outpouring of human blood, a conviction seized upon the minds of many that the poor widow had been wronged out of her life. This conviction was strengthened, when Father Walter published a letter, detailing Stanton's barbarity in refusing to grant him permission to discharge his ministerial duties towards the doomed woman. Then men began to suspect "foul play," and to regret that the temple of justice had been desecrated by savage judges, who, sustained by popular clamor, sacrificed the innocent to appease the manes of Abraham Lincoln. Even professed radicals expressed themselves repentant that the hurried trial had terminated in such a disgraceful manner. A considerable feeling of sympathy was aroused in favor of the injured woman, and people talked of the innocence of Mrs. Surratt, with the evidences of sincere sorrow in their eyes. But what could it all avail? Tears of blood could not restore the dead to life, nor return the mouldering mother to the heart-broken orphan. The horrible deed was recorded in the great book of Heaven, and poor Mrs. Surratt was beyond the reach of

hangman or traducer. Oh! in that last great day, when the spotless tribunal of Eternal Justice shall stand in solemn triumph over all human institutions, and the great I AM shall appear in the terrible majesty of an unerring judge, how many will quail to meet the glance of that murdered woman! The sins of the leaders, when not rebuked by the stern voice of the people, become the transgressions of the nation, and will be so regarded by Him, who metes out rewards and punishments with an unsparing hand. Look to it, therefore, ye howling fanatics, whose hands are stained with blood that appeals to high Heaven for vengeance.

One more allusion to this unfortunate woman, and then her name must go down to posterity linked with a dark crime that will ever attach to her memory a lively but melancholy interest.

In a certain chapter of this volume a reference was made to the story of Sostratus, and an intimation thrown out that the disguise would fall from Coldheart, and his true name be exposed to the gaze of the reader. We are aware that the reader expects the promise to be redeemed. We must be cautious, gentle reader! We are now treading, not upon "holy ground," but upon ground that cannot be described by any appropriate prefix. We ask you to keep your conclusions, deductions, and inferences to yourself, as you follow Fathers Walter and Wigett into the dark cellar under the residence of the deceased Mrs. Surratt. We must enter with feelings of solemnity, for orphans are in the building—poor, disconsolate orphans, down whose youthful cheeks tears of deep sorrow yet flow for a much injured mother. Let us not disturb their holy grief. Tread lightly in the footsteps of the two priests, who approach the cellar door in silence. Father Walter is now going to fulfill his pledge to Mrs. Surratt. The door swings open, and reveals to the view nothing but intense darkness. Then Father Walter goes above stairs, and in a few minutes returns with a light in his hand. The two ministers enter. The candle is placed upon the table, and struggles hard to disperse the darkness. The priests look around the apartment, and then at the walls.

"Did she mention any particular part of the wall whereon the name is written?" asked Father Wigett.

"She did not," was the reply. "I did not even ask her upon which one of the walls she wrote. I however conclude it must be the end wall. The deed was done secretly. She would therefore be likely to get as far from the door as possible."

"Your reasoning is plausible," said Father Wigett taking up the light. "Let us examine and see."

Then they approached the wall, and began to scrutinize it closely. Presently Father Walter, pointing with his finger, said:

"The white-washing seems to look fresher here than anywhere else. I presume this is the place."

"Let us see," quoth Father Wigett.

Then they began carefully to scratch off

the white-washing. This work continued for several minutes before any compensating result was obtained. Presently a little black speck appeared, proving that Father Walter was correct in his conjecture. In a short time a whole letter was uncovered. This letter showed clearly in what direction the name lay, and the two priests worked away diligently, well assured that the mystery would soon be transformed into a plain fact. They were not long in suspense; for the covering was now all removed, and there stood the name in large, black letters, one following after the other in very legible order. Reader, our promise is redeemed; *the plastering is all knocked off*. But let us proceed. The two priests paused, and looked at each other, not in astonishment, for they were prepared for the unfolding of the mystery; but they looked at each other in sorrow, both pitying the unfortunate woman, whose now cold hand had traced those same dark letters on the wall, and who had kept her word, pledged to an unmitigated villain, even unto death.

"If she had stabbed him," said Father Wigett pointing at the name, "she would have been the Charlotte Corday of America."

"There would have been no necessity of abolition, if she had," replied Father Walter. "It would have been a righteous deed."

"He is the greatest villain unchanged. Our daughter has been wronged grievously, and grievously may he repent it."

"She died an innocent woman; I never had the least doubt of that."

"Well, what is to be done?" asked Father Wigett after a pause. "Our daughter requested you to make this known."

"So she did; but I am thinking of the propriety of complying with the request."

"What! Shall we shrink from a sacred duty?"

"There is a question between duty and expediency," responded Father Walter.

"How so?"

"What would be gained by giving publicity to this circumstance?"

"Why," said Father Wigett, "the villain would be branded, and probably would be made to stand trial for murder."

"I am afraid not. If I thought so, I would not hesitate an instant to carry out the wish of our daughter in reference to this matter."

"What makes you doubt it?"

"The want of evidence."

"Are we not sufficient?"

"Verily not. This officer would prove that the whole thing was a plot against him, and that we put the name on the wall ourselves."

"I do not see how he could do that."

"He can do that in the same manner that he proved the guilt of our innocent daughter; that is, by false witnesses. The name on the wall would amount to nothing as legal testimony; and our mere oaths would not have a particle of weight before a court

composed of this man's creatures: which would certainly be the case. Besides, by manifesting such zeal in vindication of Mrs. Surratt's memory, we might place our own lives in jeopardy. The tables might be turned upon us, and we might be implicated in Lincoln's murder, and treated as she was."

"Well, what shall we do, than?"

"We can never secure a legal conviction in the world," replied Father Walter with a sigh. "This wicked man must find his condemnation in the moral judgment of the next generation, and those succeeding. His memory will, at sometime, be execrated by all good men throughout the world, without regard to politics, religion or color. Let us then record this circumstance, and keep it a secret, until in the United States men's minds are prepared for its reception. If that happen not in our day, we will hand it down through the Church, and let it go upon the pages of history, when the passions and prejudices of these wicked times shall have been crushed by the progress of stubborn truth. This is my suggestion."

"You are right," replied Father Wigett. "So let it be done. Cursed be this man's memory among all races and peoples till time shall be no more."

"May he enjoy no peace in this world," added Father Walter.

"May the afflictions of Job be his."

"But may he not have the hope of that man of patience?"

"May his fortunes all become calamities."

"May his joys be converted into sorrows."

"May his conscience lash him till he becomes a maniac."

"May he be poorer than Lazarus, and may there be none to pity him."

"May hunger and thirst, and all the ills of life attend him to his grave."

"And when he dies, may none weep for him."

"And when he goes down to purgatory, may none say mass for him."

"And when the last day comes, may he be cast body and soul into the lake that burneth with fire, forever and forever."

"Amen! amen!" concluded Father Wigett.

"Now let us destroy the name," said Father Walter.

This was accordingly done; then the two priests retired from the cellar, closed the door, and the apartment in which the Bloody Junto had met and planned the death of Abraham Lincoln, was left in the gloom of thick darkness. And there let it remain, closed and locked, till prostrate truth can rise up in its might and majesty, and reassert its claims with a prospect of success.

And now, kind reader, are you satisfied? Is the mystery sufficiently clear? Is our promise redeemed? We hope so. Those who have perused our story with critical attention and thought will lay aside this volume with a laudable curiosity fully gratified. Those, on the other hand, who have honored these pages with only a cursory glance, have no just grounds of complaint.

If such are disappointed, it is the inevitable result of hasty, careless reading. Therefore no apology is due. At any rate, gentle reader, whether our task is well or badly done, we must now part. Whether we have given the true solution of the great conspiracy or not, may never be known in this world. But rest assured that many circumstances recorded in this volume, will be investigated by a court that detects false testimony, and frowns it down. Ah! the Righteous Judge will come, clothed not in the blemished ermine of human law, but in the unspotted robes of Eternal Truth and Justice, and the muttering thunders of a greater than Sinai shall attest the awful dignity and majesty of His terrible tribunal. And the great White Throne will be seen, and He that sitteth on the throne, with the sun and the moon under His feet. All that we read in the Holy Bible, of God's appearing in the fire, and in the whirlwind, with the lightnings of Heaven playing around His overpowering countenance, will become fearful realities. Then in that day of wrath must the accusers of Mrs. Surratt stand before that awful face, and behold the overwhelming glory that passed before the mantled vision of the holy prophet in the cave of Mount Horeb. Then must hear their sentence those who groaned and mocked when poor Wirz fell from the scaffold, writhing in the agonies of an unde-

served death. Then may those call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the withering frown of God—those persons may do this, who shackled the tottering form of Jefferson Davis, and cast that noble, gray headed patriot, trembling with age, bowed down with the sorrows of a conquered country into a rock-ribbed prison. Ah! punishment, severe punishment in the form of retributive justice, may begin even in this lower world. Sin sometimes brings its own reward in this life. There is not a nation under the broad canopy of Heaven that deserves the tormenting consequences of iniquity more than that one now treading down the bleeding south. If the teachings of history are not in vain, and the laws of moral economy are not changed, the heavy hand of chastisement will soon be laid upon the north. Mark it, reader! punishment is near! The foreshadowings of calamities, that will fill every house with the wails of anguish, can almost be seen by the prefigurative light of coming events. Fire fell from Heaven and consumed ancient Sodom to ashes, for the wickedness of its people. The people of the north will escape a similar disaster, but they will suffer evils in another shape. Their punishment will come. And when it does, our only prayer is that God may remove righteous Lot from their midst!

THE END.

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