

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

James Fenimore Cooper

Table of Contents

<u>Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2</u>	1
<u>James Fenimore Cooper</u>	1
<u>CHAPTER I.</u>	1
<u>CHAPTER II.</u>	7
<u>CHAPTER III.</u>	12
<u>CHAPTER IV.</u>	19
<u>CHAPTER V.</u>	26
<u>CHAPTER VI.</u>	33
<u>CHAPTER VII.</u>	38
<u>CHAPTER VIII.</u>	44
<u>CHAPTER IX.</u>	50
<u>CHAPTER X.</u>	56
<u>CHAPTER XI.</u>	63
<u>CHAPTER XII.</u>	72
<u>CHAPTER XIII.</u>	77
<u>CHAPTER XIV.</u>	86
<u>CHAPTER XV.</u>	92
<u>CHAPTER XVI.</u>	97
<u>CHAPTER XVII.</u>	105
<u>CHAPTER XVIII.</u>	111

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- CHAPTER I.
- CHAPTER II.
- CHAPTER III.
- CHAPTER IV.
- CHAPTER V.
- CHAPTER VI.
- CHAPTER VII.
- CHAPTER VIII.
- CHAPTER IX.
- CHAPTER X.
- CHAPTER XI.
- CHAPTER XII.
- CHAPTER XIII.
- CHAPTER XIV.
- CHAPTER XV.
- CHAPTER XVI.
- CHAPTER XVII.
- CHAPTER XVIII.

CHAPTER I.

"She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?"

"Her eye discourses I will answer it."

Romeo.

Although the battle of Bunker-hill was fought while the grass yet lay on the meadows, the heats of summer had been followed by the nipping frosts of November; the leaf had fallen in its hour, and the tempests and biting colds of February had succeeded, before Major Lincoln left that couch where he had been laid, when carried, in total helplessness, from the fatal heights of the peninsula. Throughout the whole of that long period, the hidden bullet had defied the utmost skill of the British surgeons; nor could all their science and experience embolden them to risk cutting certain arteries and tendons in the body of the heir of Lincoln, which were thought to obstruct the passage to that obstinate lead, which, all agreed, alone impeded the recovery of the unfortunate sufferer. This indecision was one of the penalties that poor Lionel paid for his greatness; for had it been Meriton who lingered, instead of his master, it is quite probable the case would have been determined at a much earlier hour. At length a young and enterprising leech, with the world before him, arrived from Europe, who, possessing greater skill or more effrontery (the effects are sometimes the same) than his fellows, did not hesitate to decide at once on the

expediency of an operation. The medical staff of the army sneered at this bold innovator, and at first were content with such silent testimonials of their contempt. But when the friends of the patient, listening, as usual, to the whisperings of hope, consented that the confident man of probes should use his instruments, the voices of his contemporaries became not only loud, but clamorous. There was a day or two when even the watchworn and jaded subalterns of the army forgot the dangers and hardships of the siege, to attend with demure and instructed countenances to the unintelligible jargon of the "Medici" of their camp; and men grew pale, as they listened, who had never been known to exhibit any symptoms of the disgraceful passion before their more acknowledged enemies. But when it became known that the ball was safely extracted, and the patient was pronounced convalescent, a calm succeeded that was much more portentous to the human race than the preceding tempest; and in a short time the daring practitioner was universally acknowledged to be the founder of a new theory. The degrees of M. D. were showered upon his honoured head from half the learned bodies in Christendom, while many of his enthusiastic admirers and imitators became justly entitled to the use of the same magical symbols, as annexments to their patronymicks, with the addition of the first letter in the alphabet. The ancient reasoning was altered to suit the modern facts, and before the war was ended, some thousands of the servants of the crown, and not a few of the patriotic colonists, were thought to have died, scientifically, under the favour of this important discovery.

We might devote a chapter to the minute promulgation of such an event, had not more recent philosophers long since upset the practice, (in which case the theory seems to fall, as a matter of course,) by a renewal of those bold adventures, which teach us, occasionally, something new in the anatomy of man; as in the science of geography, the sealers of New-England have been able to discover Terra Australis, where Cook saw nothing but water; or Parry finds veins and arteries in that part of the American continent which had so long been thought to consist of worthless cartilage.

Whatever may have been the effects of the operation on the surgical science, it was healthful, in the first degree, to its subject. For seven weary months Lionel lay in a state in which he might be said to exist, instead of live, but little conscious of surrounding occurrences; and happily for himself, nearly insensible to pain and anxiety. At moments the flame of life would apparently glimmer like the dying lamp, and then both the fears and hopes of his attendants were disappointed, as the patient dropped again into that state of apathy in which so much of his time was wasted. From an erroneous opinion of his master's sufferings, Meriton had been induced to make a free use of soporifics, and no small part of Lionel's insensibility was produced by an excessive use of that laudanum for which he was indebted to the mistaken humanity of his valet. At the moment of the operation the adventurous surgeon had availed himself of the same stupifying drug, and many days of dull, heavy, and alarming apathy succeeded, before his system, finding itself relieved from its unnatural inmate, resumed its healthful functions, and began to renew its powers. By a singular goodfortune his leech was too much occupied by his own novel honours, to follow up his success, *secundem artem*, as a great general pushes a victory to the utmost; and that matchless doctor, Nature, was permitted to complete the cure.

When the effects of the anodynes had subsided, the patient found himself entirely free from uneasiness, and dropped into a sweet and refreshing sleep that lasted for many hours without interruption. He awoke a new man; with his body renovated, his head clear, and his recollections, though a little confused and wandering, certainly better than they had been since the moment when he fell in the mêlée on Breeds. This restoration to all the nobler properties of life occurred about the tenth hour of the day; and as Lionel opened his eyes, with understanding in their expression, they fell upon the cheerfulness which a bright sun, assisted by the dazzling light of the masses of snow without, had lent to every object in his apartment. The curtains of the windows had been opened, and every article of the furniture was arranged with a neatness that manifested the studied care which presided over his illness. In one corner, it is true, Meriton had established himself in an easy-chair, with an arrangement of attitude which spoke more in favour of his consideration for the valet than the master, while he was comforting his faculties for a night of watchfulness, by the sweet, because stolen, slumbers of the morning.

A flood of recollections broke into the mind of Lionel together, and it was some little time before he could so far separate the true from the imaginary, as to attain a tolerably clear comprehension of what had occurred in the little age he had been dozing. Raising himself on one elbow, without difficulty, he passed his hand once or twice slowly over his face, and then trusted his voice in a summons to his man. Meriton started at the well-known sounds, and after diligently rubbing his eyes, like one who awakes by surprise, he arose and gave the customary reply.

"How now, Meriton!" exclaimed Major Lincoln; "you sleep as sound as a recruit on post, and I suppose you have been stationed like one, with twice-told orders to be vigilant."

The valet stood with open mouth, as if ready to devour his master's words with more senses than one, and then, as Lionel concluded, passed his hands in quick succession over his eyes, as before, though with a very different object, ere he answered

"Thank God, sir, thank God! you look like yourself once more, and we shall live again as we used to. Yes, yes, sir you'll do now you'll do this time. That's a miracle of a man, is the great Lon'non surgeon! and now we shall go back to Soho, and live like civilizers. Thank God, sir, thank God! you smile again, and I hope if any thing should go wrong you'll soon be able to give me one of those awful looks that I am so used to, and which makes my heart jump into my mouth, when I know I've been forgetful!"

The poor fellow, in whom long service had created a deep attachment to his master, which had been greatly increased by the solicitude of a nurse, was compelled to cease his unconnected expressions of joy, while he actually wept. Lionel was too much affected by this evidence of feeling, to continue the dialogue, for several minutes; during which time he employed himself in putting on part of his attire, assisted by the gulping valet, when, drawing his robe-de-chambre around his person, he leaned on the shoulder of his man, and took the seat which the other had so recently quitted.

"Well, well, Meriton, that will do," said Lionel, giving a deep hem, as though his breathing was obstructed; "that will do, silly fellow; I trust I shall live to give you many a frown, and some few guineas, yet. I have been shot, I know"

"Shot, sir!" interrupted the valet "you have been downright and unlawfully murdered! you were first shot, and then baggoneted, and after that a troop of horse rode over you. I had it from one of the royal Irish, who lay by your side the whole time, and who now lives to tell of it a good honest fellow is Terence, and if such a thing was possible that your honour was poor enough to need a pension, he would cheerfully swear to your hurts at the King's Bench, or War-office; Bridewell, or St. James', its all one to the like of him."

"I dare say, I dare say," said Lionel, smiling, though he mechanically passed his hand over his body, as his valet spoke of the bayonet "but the poor fellow must have transferred some of his own wounds to my person I own the bullet, but object to the cavalry and the steel."

"No, sir, I own the bullet, and it shall be buried with me in my dressing-box, at the head of my grave," said Meriton, exhibiting the flattened bit of lead, exultingly, in the palm of his hand "it has been in my pocket these thirteen days, after tormenting your honour for six long months, hid in the what d'ye call 'em muscles, away behind the thingumy artery. But snug as it was, we got it out! he is a miracle is the great Lon'non surgeon!"

Lionel reached over to his purse, which Meriton had placed regularly on the table, each morning, in order to remove again at night, and dropping several guineas in the hand of his valet, said

"So much lead must need some gold to sweeten it. Put up the unseemly thing, and never let me see it again!"

Meriton coolly took the opposing metals, and after glancing his eyes at the guineas, with a readiness that embraced their amount in a single look, he dropped them carelessly into one pocket, while he restored the lead to the other with an exceeding attention to its preservation. He then turned his hand to the customary duties of his station.

"I remember well to have been in a fight on the heights of Charlestown, even to the instant when I got my hurt," continued his master "and I even recollect many things that have occurred since; a period which appears like a whole life to me. But after all, Meriton, I believe my ideas have not been remarkable for their clearness."

"Lord, sir, you have talked to me, and scolded me, and praised me a hundred and a hundred times over again; but you have never scolded as sharp like as you can, nor have you ever spoken and looked as bright as you do this morning!"

"I am in the house of Mrs. Lechmere, again," continued Lionel, examining the room "I know this apartment, and those private doors too well to be mistaken."

"To be sure you are, sir; Madam Lechmere had you brought here from the field to her own house, and one of the best it is in Boston, too: and I expect that Madam would some how lose her title to it, if any thing serious should happen to us?"

"Such as a bayonet, or a troop of horse! but why do you fancy any such thing?"

"Because, sir, when Madam comes here of an afternoon, which she did daily, before she sickened, I heard her very often say to herself, if you should be so unfortunate as to die, there would be an end to all her hopes of her house."

"Then it is Mrs. Lechmere who visits me daily," said Lionel, thoughtfully; "I have recollections of a female form hovering around my bed, though I had supposed it more youthful and active than that of my aunt."

"And you are quite right, sir you have had such a nurse the whole time as is seldom to be met with. For making a posset or a gruel, I'll match her with the oldest woman in the wards of Guy's; and, to my taste, the best bar-keeper at the Lon'non is a fool to her at a negus."

"These are high accomplishments, indeed! and who may be their mistress?"

"Miss Agnus, sir; a rare good nurse is Miss Agnus Danforth! though in point of regard to the troops, I shouldn't presume to call her at all distinguishable."

"Miss Danforth," repeated Lionel, dropping his expecting eyes in disappointment, from the face of Meriton to the floor "I hope she has not sustained all this trouble on my account alone. There are women enough in the establishment one would think such offices might be borne by the domestics in short, Meriton, was she without an assistant in all these little kindnesses?"

"I helped her, you know, sir, all I could; though my neguses never touch the right spot, like Miss Agnus's."

"One would think, by your account, that I have done little else than guzzle port wine, for six months," said Lionel, pettishly.

"Lord, sir, you wouldn't drink a thimblefull from a glass, often; which I always took for a bad symptom; for I'm certain 'twas no fault of the liquor, if it wasn't drunk."

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

"Well, enough of your favourite beverage! I sicken at the name already but, Meriton, have not others of my friends called to inquire after my fate?"

"Certainly, sir the commander-in-chief sends an aid or a servant every day; and Lord Percy left his card more than"

"Poh! these are calls of courtesy; but I have relatives in Boston Miss Dynevor, has she left the town?"

"No, sir," said the valet, very coolly resuming the duty of arranging the phials on the nighttable; "she is not much of a moving body, is that Miss Cecil."

"She is not ill, I trust?" demanded Lionel.

"Lord, it goes through me, part joy and part fear, to hear you speak again so quick and brisk, sir! No, she isn't downright ailing, but she hasn't the life and knowledge of things, as her cousin, Miss Agnus."

"Why do you think so, fellow?"

"Because, sir, she is mopy, and don't turn her hand to any of the light lady's work in the family. I have seen her sit in that very chair, where you are now, sir, for hours together, without moving; unless it was some nervous start when you groaned, or breathed a little upward through your honour's nose I have taken it into my consideration, sir, that she poetizes; at all events, she likes what I calls quietude!"

"Indeed!" said Lionel, pursuing the conversation with an interest that would have struck a more observant man as remarkable "what reason have you for suspecting Miss Dynevor of manufacturing rhymes?"

"Because, sir, she has often a bit of paper in her hand; and I have seen her read the same thing over and over again, till I'm sure she must know it by heart; which your poetizers always do with what they writes."

"Perhaps it was a letter?" cried Lionel, with a quickness that caused Meriton to drop a phial he was dusting, at the expense of its contents.

"Bless me, master Lionel, how strong, and like old times you speak!"

"I believe I am amazed to find you know so much of the divine art, Meriton."

"Practice makes perfect, you know, sir," said the simpering valet "I can't say I ever did much in that way, though I wrote some verses on a pet pig, as died down at Ravenscliffe, the last time we was there; and I got considerable eclaw for a few lines on a vase which lady Bab's woman broke one day, in a scuffle when the foolish creature said as I wanted to kiss her; though all that knows me, knows that I needn't break vases to get kisses from the like of her!"

"Very well," said Lionel; "some day when I am stronger, I may like to be indulged with a perusal go now, Meriton, to the larder, and look about you; I feel the symptoms of returning health grow strong upon me."

The gratified valet instantly departed, leaving his master to the musings of his own busy fancy. Several minutes passed away before the young man raised his head from the hand that supported it, and then it was only done when he thought he heard a light footstep near him. His ear had not deceived him, for Cecil Dynevor herself, stood within a few feet of the chair, which concealed, in a great measure, his person from her view. It was apparent, by her attitude and her tread, that she expected to find the sick where she had seen him last, and where, for so many dreary months, his listless form had been stretched in apathy. Lionel followed her graceful

movements with his eyes, and as the airy band of her morning cap waved aside at her own breathing, he discovered the unnatural paleness that was seated on her speaking features. But when she drew the folds of the bed curtains, and missed the invalid, thought is not quicker than the motion with which she turned her light person towards the chair. Here she encountered the eyes of the young man, beaming on her with delight, and expressing all that animation and intelligence to which they had so long been strangers. Yielding to the surprise and the gush of her feelings, Cecil flew to his feet, and clasping one of his extended hands in both her own, she cried

"Lionel, dear Lionel, you are better! God be praised, you look well again!"

Lionel gently extricated his hand from the warm and unguarded pressure of her soft fingers, and drew forth a paper which she had unconsciously committed to his keeping.

"This, dearest Cecil," he whispered to the blushing maiden, "this is my own letter, written when I knew my life to be at imminent hazard, and speaking the purest thoughts of my heart tell me, then, it has not been thus kept for nothing?"

Cecil dropped her face between her hands for a moment, in burning shame, and then, as all the emotions of the moment crowded around her heart, she yielded to them as a woman, and burst into a paroxysm of tears. It is needless to dwell on those consoling and seducing speeches of the young man, which soon succeeded in luring his companion not only from her sobs, but even from her confusion, and permitted her to raise her beautiful countenance to his ardent gaze, bright and confiding as his fondest wishes could have made it.

The letter of Lionel was too direct, not to save her pride, and it had been too often perused for a single sentence to be soon forgotten. Besides, Cecil had watched over his couch too fondly and too long to indulge in any of those little coquetries which are sometimes met with in similar scenes. She said all that an affectionate, generous, and modest female would say on such an occasion; and it is certain, that well as Lionel looked on waking, the little she uttered had the effect to improve his appearance ten-fold.

"And you received my letter on the morning after the battle?" said Lionel, leaning fondly over her, as she still, unconsciously, kneeled by his side.

"Yes yes it was your order that it should be sent to me only in case of your death; but for more than a month you were numbered as among the dead by us all. Oh! what a month was that!"

"Tis past, my sweet friend, and, God be praised, I may now look forward to health and happiness."

"God be praised, indeed," murmured Cecil, the tears again rushing to her eyes "I would not live that month over again, Lionel, for all that this world can offer!"

"Dearest Cecil," he replied, "I can only repay this kindness and suffering on my account, by shielding you from the rude contact of the world, even as your father would protect you, were he again in being."

She looked up in his face with all the soul of a woman's confidence beaming in her eyes, as she answered

"You will, Lincoln, I know you will you have sworn it, and I should be a wretch to doubt you."

He drew her unresisting form into his arms, and folded her to his bosom. In another moment a noise, like one ascending the stairs, was heard through the open door of the room, when all the feelings of her sex rushed to the breast of Cecil. She sprung on her feet, and hardly allowing time to the delighted Lionel to note the burning tints that suffused her whole face, she darted from the room with the rapidity and lightness of an antelope.

CHAPTER II.

"Dead, for a ducat, dead."

Hamlet.

While Lionel was in the confusion of feeling produced by the foregoing scene, the intruder, after a prelude of singularly heavy and loud steps, on the floor, as if some one approached on crutches, entered by a door opposite to the one through which Cecil had so suddenly vanished. At the next moment the convalescent was saluted by the full, cheerful voice of his visiter

"God bless you, Leo, and bless the whole of us, for we need it," cried Polwarth, eagerly advancing to grasp the extended hands of his friend. "Meriton has told me that you have got the true marks of health a good appetite, at last. I should have broken my neck in hurrying up to wish you joy on the moment, but I just stepped into the kitchen, without Mrs. Lechmere's leave, to show her cook how to broil the steak they are warming through for you a capital thing after a long nap, and full of nutriment God bless you, my dear Leo; the look of your bright eye is as stimulating to my spirits as a West-India pepper is to the stomach."

Polwarth ceased shaking the hands of his reanimated friend, as with a husky voice he concluded, and turning aside under the pretence of reaching a chair, he dashed his hand before his eyes, gave a loud hem, and took his seat in silence. During the performance of this evolution, Lionel had leisure to observe the altered person of the captain. His form, though still rotund and even corpulent, was much reduced in dimensions, while in the place of one of those lower members with which nature furnishes the human race, he had been compelled to substitute a leg of wood, somewhat inartificially made, and roughly shed with iron. This last sad alteration, in particular, attracted the look of Major Lincoln, who continued to gaze at it with glistening eyes, for some time after the other had established himself, to his entire satisfaction, in one of the cushioned seats of the apartment.

"I see my frame-work has caught your eye, Leo," said Polwarth, raising the wooden substitute, with an air of affected indifference, and tapping it lightly with his cane. "'Tis not as gracefully cut, perhaps, as if it had been turned from the hands of master Phidias, but in a place like Boston, it is an invaluable member, inasmuch as it knows neither hunger nor cold!"

"The Americans, then, press the town," said Lionel, glad to turn the subject, "and maintain the siege with vigour?"

"They have kept us in horrible bodily terror, ever since the shallow waters toward the mainland have been frozen, and opened a path directly into the heart of the place. Their Virginian generalissimo, Washington, appeared a short time after the affair over on the other peninsula, (a cursed business, that Leo!) and with him came all the trimmings of a large army. Since that time they have worn a more military front, though little else has been done, excepting an occasional skirmish, but cooping us up like so many uneasy pigeons in our cage."

"And Gage chafes not at the confinement?"

"Gage! we sent him off like the soups, months ago. No, no the moment the ministry discovered that we had come to our forks, in good earnest, they chose black Billy to preside: and now we stand at bay with the rebels, who have already learnt that our leader is not a child at the grand entertainment of war."

"Yes, seconded by such men as Clinton and Burgoyne, and supported by the flower of our troops, the position can be easily maintained."

"No position can be easily maintained, Major Lincoln," said Polwarth, promptly, "in the face of starvation, both

internal and external."

"And is the case so desperate?"

"Of that you shall judge yourself, my friend. When Parliament shut the port of Boston, the colonies were filled with grumblers; and now we have opened it, and would be glad to see their supplies, the devil a craft enters the harbour willingly ah! Meriton, you have the steak, I see; put it here, where your master can have it at his elbow, and bring another plate I breakfasted but indifferently well this morning. So we are thrown completely on our own resources. But the rebels do not let us enjoy even them in peace. This thing is done to a turn how charmingly the blood follows the knife! They have gone so far as to equip privateers, who cut off our necessaries, and he is a lucky man who can get a meal like the one before us."

"I had not thought the power of the Americans could have forced matters to such a pass."

"What I have mentioned, though of vital importance, is not half. If a man is happy enough to obtain the materials for a good dish you should have rubbed an onion over these plates, Mr. Meriton he don't know where he is to find fuel to cook it withal."

"Looking at the comforts with which I am surrounded, my good friend, I cannot but fancy your imagination heightens the distress."

"Fancy no such silly thing, for when you get abroad, you will find it but too exact. In the article of food, if we are not reduced, like the men of Jerusalem, to eating one another, we are, half the time, rather worse off, being entirely destitute of wholesome nutriment. Let but an unlucky log float by the town, among the ice, and go forth and witness the struggling and skirmishing between the Yankees and our frozen fingers for its possession, and you will become a believer! 'Twill be lucky if the water-soaked relic of some wharf should escape without a cannonade! I don't tell you these things as a grumbler, Leo; for thank God, I have only half as many toes as other men to keep warmth in; and as for eating, a little will suffice for me, now my corporeal establishment is so sadly reduced."

Lionel paused, in melancholy, as his friend attempted to jest at his misfortune, and then, by a very natural transition for a young man in his situation, he proudly exclaimed

"But we gained the day, Polwarth! and drove the rebels from their entrenchments, like chaff before a whirlwind!"

"Humph!" ejaculated the captain, laying his wooden leg carefully over its more valuable fellow, and regarding it ruefully, while he spoke "had we made a suitable use of the bounties of nature, and turned their position, instead of running into the jaws of the beast, many might have left the field better supplied with appurtenances than are some among us at present. But dark William loves a brush, they say, and he enjoyed it, on that occasion, to his heart's content!"

"He must be grateful to Clinton for his timely presence?"

"Does the devil delight in martyrdom! The presence of a thousand rebels would have been more welcome, even at that moment; nor has he smiled once, on his good natured assistant, since he thrust himself, in that unwelcome manner, between him and his enemy. We had enough to think of with our dead and wounded, and in maintaining our conquest, or something more than black looks and unkind eyes would have followed the deed."

"I fear to inquire into the fortunes of the field, so many names of worth must be numbered in the loss."

"Twelve or fifteen hundred men are not to be knocked on the head out of such an army and all the clever fellows escape. Gage, I know, calls the loss something like eleven hundred; but after vamping so much about the yankees, their prowess is not to be acknowledged in its bloom at once. A man seldom goes on one leg, but he halts a little at first, as I can say from experience put down thirteen, Leo, as a medium, and you'll not miscalculate largely yes, indeed, there were some brave young men amongst them! those rascally light-footed gentry that I gave up so opportunely, were finely peppered and there were the Fusilleers had hardly men enough left to saddle their goat!"

"And the marines! they must have suffered heavily; I saw Pitcairn fall before me;" said Lionel, speaking with hesitation "I greatly fear our old comrade, the grenadier, did not escape with better fortune."

"Mac!" exclaimed Polwarth, casting a furtive glance at his companion. "Ay, Mac was not as lucky in that business as he was in Germany he—em Mac had an obstinate way with him, Leo, a damn'd obstinate fellow in all military matters, but as generous a heart and as free in sharing a mess—hill as any man in his majesty's service! I crossed the river in the same boat with him, and he entertained us with his queer thoughts on the art of war. According to Mac's notions of things, the grenadiers were to do all the fighting a damn'd odd way with him had Mac!"

"There are few of us without peculiarities, and I could wish that none of them were more offensive than the trifling prejudices of poor Dennis M' Fuse."

"Yes, yes," added Polwarth, hemming violently, as if determined to clear his throat at every hazard; "he was a little opinionated in trifles, such as a knowledge of war, and matters of discipline, but in all important things as tractable as a child. He loved his joke, but it was impossible to have a less difficult or a more unpretending palate in one's mess! The greatest evil I can wish him was breath in his body, to live and enjoy, in these hard times, when things become excellent by comparison, the sagacious provision which his own ingenuity contrived to secure out of the cupidity of our ancient landlord, Mister Seth Sage."

"Then that notable scheme did not entirely fall to the ground," said Lionel, with a feverish desire to change the subject once more. "I had thought the Americans were too vigilant to admit the intercourse."

"Seth has been too sagacious to permit them to obstruct it. The prices acted like a soporific on his conscience, and, by using your name I believe, he has formed some friend of sufficient importance amongst the rebels to protect him in his trade. His supplies make their appearance twice a—week as regularly as the meats follow the soups in a well—ordered banquet."

"You then can communicate with the country, and the country with the town! Although Washington may wink at the proceeding, I should fear the scowl of Howe."

"Why, in order to prevent suspicions of unfair practices, and at the same time to serve the cause of humanity, so the explanation reads, you know, our sapient host, has seen fit to employ a fool as his agent in the intercourse. A fellow, as you may remember, of some notoriety; a certain simpleton, who calls himself Job Pray."

Lionel continued silent for many moments, during which time his recollections began to revive, and his thoughts glanced over the scenes that occurred in the first months of his residence in Boston. It is quite possible that a painful, though still general and indefinite feeling mingled with his musings, for he evidently strove to expel some such unwelcome intruder, as he resumed the discourse with a strong appearance of forced gayety.

"Ay, ay, I well remember poor Job a fellow once seen and known, not easily to be forgotten. He used, of old, to attach himself greatly to my person, but I suppose, like the rest of the world, I am neglected when in retirement."

"You do the lad injustice; he not only makes frequent inquiries, after his slovenly manner I acknowledge, concerning your condition, but sometimes he seems better informed in the matter than myself, and can requite my frequent answers to his questions, by imparting, instead of receiving, intelligence of your improvement; more especially since the ball has been extracted."

"That should be very singular, too," said Lionel, with a still more thoughtful brow.

"Not so very remarkable, Leo, as one would at first imagine," interrupted his companion "the lad is not wanting in sagacity, as he manifested by his choice of dishes at our old messtable Ah! Leo, Leo, we may see many a discriminating palate, but where shall we go to find another such a friend! one who could eat and' joke drink and quarrel with a man in a breath, like poor Dennis, who is gone from among us for ever! There was a piquancy about poor Mac that acted on the dullness of life like condiments on the natural appetite!"

Meriton, who was diligently brushing his master's coat, an office that he performed daily, though the garment had not been worn in so long a period, stole a glance at the averted eye of the Major, and understanding its expression to indicate a determined silence, he ventured to maintain the discourse in his own unworthy person.

"Yes, sir, a nice gentleman was captain M`Fuse, and one as fought as stoutly for the king as any gentleman in the army, all agrees. It was a thousand pities such a fine figure of a man hadn't a better idea of dress; it isn't all, sir, as is gifted in that way! But every body says he's a detrimental loss, though there's some officers in town who consider so little how to wear their, ornaments, that if they were to be shot I am sure no one would miss them."

"Ah! Meriton," cried the full-hearted Polwarth, "I see you are a youth of more observation than I had suspected! Mac had all the seeds of a man in him, though some of them might not have come to maturity. There was a flavour in his humour that served as a relish to every conversation in which he mingled. Did you serve the poor fellow up in handsome style, Meriton, for his last worldly exhibition?"

"Yes, indeed, sir, we gave him as ornamental a funeral as can be seen out of Lon'non. Besides the Royal Irish, all the grenadiers was out; that is all as wasn't hurt, which was near half of them. As I knowed the regard Master Lionel had for the captain, I dressed him with my own hands I trimmed his whiskers, sir, and altered his hair more in front, and seeing that his honour was getting a little gray, I threw on a sprinkling of powder, and as handsome a corpse was captain M`Fuse as any gentleman in the army, let the other be who he may!"

The eyes of Polwarth twinkled, and he blew his nose with a noise not unlike the sound of a clarion ere he rejoined

"Yes, yes, time and hardships had given a touch of frost to the head of the poor fellow; but it is a consolation to know that he died like a soldier, and not by the hands of that vulgar butcher, Nature; and that being dead, he was removed according to his deserts!"

"Indeed, sir," said Meriton, with a solemnity worthy of the occasion, "we gave him a great procession a great deal can be made out of his majesty's uniform, on such festivities, and it had a wonderful look about it! Did you speak, sir?"

"Yes," added Lionel, impatiently, "remove the cloth; and go, inquire if there be letters for me."

The valet submissively obeyed, and after a short pause the dialogue was resumed by the gentlemen on subjects of a less painful nature.

As Polwarth was exceedingly communicative, Lionel soon obtained a very general, and to do the captain suitable justice, an extremely impartial account of the situation of the hostile forces, as well as of all the leading events

that had transpired since the day of Breeds. Once or twice the invalid ventured an allusion to the spirit of the rebels, and to the unexpected energy they had discovered; but Polwarth heard them all in silence, answering only by a melancholy smile, and, in the last instance, by a significant gesture towards his unnatural supporter. Of course, after this touching acknowledgment of his former error, his friend waved the subject for others less personal.

He learned that the royal general maintained his hardly-earned conquest on the opposite peninsula, where he was as effectually beleaguered, however, as in the town of Boston itself. In the meantime, while the war was conducted in earnest at the point where it commenced, hostilities had broken out in every one of those colonies south of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, where the presence of the royal troops invited an appeal to force. At first, while the colonists acted under the impulses of the high enthusiasm of a sudden rising, they had been everywhere successful. A general army had been organized, as already related, and divisions were employed at different points to effect those conquests, which, in that early state of the struggle, were thought to be important to the main result. But the effects of their imperfect means and divided power were already becoming visible. After a series of minor victories, Montgomery had fallen in a most desperate but unsuccessful attempt to carry the impregnable fortress of Quebec; and ceasing to be the assailants, the Americans were gradually compelled to collect their resources to meet that mighty effort of the crown which was known to be not far distant. As thousands of their fellow-subjects in the mother country manifested a strong repugnance to the war, the Ministry so far submitted to the influence of that free spirit which first took deep root in Britain, as to turn their eyes to those states of Europe, who made a trade in human life, in quest of mercenaries to quell the temper of the colonists. In consequence, the fears of the timid amongst the Americans were excited by rumours of the vast hordes of Russians and Germans who were to be poured into their country with the fell intent to make them slaves. Perhaps no step of their enemies had a greater tendency to render them odious in the eyes of the Americans, than this measure of introducing foreigners to decide a quarrel purely domestic. So long as none but men who had been educated in those acknowledged principles of justice and law, known to both people, were admitted to the contest, there were visible points common to each, which might render the struggle less fierce, and in time lead to a permanent reconciliation. But they reasoned not inaptly when they asserted that in a contest rendered triumphant by slaves, nothing but abject submission could ensue to the conquered. It was like throwing away the scabbard, and, by abandoning reason, submitting the result to the sword alone. In addition to the estrangement these measures were gradually increasing between the people of the mother-country and the colonies, must be added the change it produced amongst the latter in their habits of regarding the person of their prince.

During the whole of the angry discussion, and the recriminations which preceded the drawing of blood, the colonists had admitted, to the fullest extent, not only in their language, but in their feelings, that fiction of the British law which says "the king can do no wrong." Throughout the wide extent of an empire, on which the sun was never known to set, the English monarch could boast of no subjects more devoted to his family and person, than the men who now stood in arms against what they honestly believed to be the unconstitutional encroachments of his power. Hitherto the whole weight of their resentment had justly fallen on the advisers of the Prince, who himself was thought to be ignorant, as he was probably innocent, of the abuses so generally practised in his name. But as the contest thickened, the natural feelings of the man were thought to savour of the political acts he was required to sanction with his name. It was soon whispered amongst those who had the best means of intelligence, that the feelings of the sovereign were deeply interested in the maintenance of what he deemed his prerogative, and the ascendancy of that body of the representatives of his empire, which he met in person and influenced by his presence. Ere long this opinion was rumoured abroad, and as the minds of men began to loosen from their ancient attachments and prejudices, they confounded, by a very natural feeling, the head with the members; forgetting that "Liberty and Equality" formed no part of the trade of Princes. The name of the monarch was daily falling into disrepute; and as the colonial writers ventured to allude more freely to his person and power, the glimmerings of that light were seen, which was a precursor of the rise of 'the stars of the west' amongst the national symbols of the earth. Until then, few had thought, and none had ventured to speak openly of independence, though events had been silently preparing the colonists for such a final measure.

Allegiance to the Prince was the last and only tie to be severed, for the colonies already governed themselves in all matters, whether of internal or foreign policy, as effectually as any people could, whose right to do so was not generally acknowledged. But as the honest nature of George III. admitted of no disguise, mutual disgust and alienation were the natural consequences of the reaction of sentiment between the Prince and his western people.

All this, and much more of minute detail, was hastily commented on by Polwarth, who possessed, in the midst of his epicurean propensities, sterling good-sense, and great integrity of intention. Lionel was chiefly a listener, nor did he cease the greedy and interesting employment until warned by his weakness, and the stroke of a neighbouring clock, that he was trespassing too far on prudence. His friend then assisted the exhausted invalid to his bed, and after giving him a world of good advice, together with a warm pressure of the hand, he stumped his way out of the room, with a noise that brought, at every tread, an echo from the heart of Major Lincoln.

CHAPTER III.

"God never meant that man should scale the heavens "By strides of human wisdom."

Cowper.

A VERY few days of gentle exercise in the bracing air of the season, were sufficient to restore the strength of the invalid, whose wounds had healed while he lay slumbering under the influence of the anodynes prescribed by his leech. Polwarth, in consideration of the dilapidated state of his own limbs, together with the debility of Lionel, had so far braved the ridicule of the army, as to set up one of those comfortable and easy conveyances, which, in the good old times of colonial humility, were known by the quaint and unpretending title of tom-pungs. To equip this establishment, he had been compelled to impress one of the fine hunters of his friend. The animal had been taught, by virtue of much training from his groom, aided a little, perhaps, by the low state of the garners of the place, to amble through the snow as quietly as if he were conscious of the altered condition of his master's health. In this safe vehicle the two gentlemen might be seen daily gliding along the upper streets of the town, and moving through the winding paths of the common, receiving the congratulations of their friends; or, in their turn, visiting others, who, like themselves, had been wounded in the murderous battle of the preceding summer, but who, less fortunate than they, were still compelled to submit to the lingering confinement of their quarters.

It was not difficult to persuade Cecil and Agnes to join in many of their short excursions, though no temptation could induce the latter to still the frown that habitually settled on her beautiful brow, whenever chance or intention brought them in contact with any of the gentlemen of the army. Miss Dynevor was, however, much more conciliating in her deportment, and even at times, so gracious as to incur the private reproaches of her friend.

"Surely, Cecil, you forget how much our poor country men are suffering in their miserable lodgings without the town, or you would be less prodigal of your condescension to these butterflies of the army," cried Agnes, pettishly, while they were uncloaking after one of these rides, during which the latter thought her cousin had lost sight of that tacit compact, by which most of the women of the colonies deemed themselves bound to exhibit their feminine resentments to their invaders "were a chief from our own army presented to you, he could not have been received in a sweeter manner than you bestowed your smile to-day on that sir Digby Dent!"

"I can say nothing in favour of its sweetness, my acid cousin, but *that* sir Digby Dent is a gentleman "

"A gentleman! yes so is every Englishman who wears a scarlet coat, and knows how to play off his airs in the colonies!"

"And as I hope I have some claims to be called a lady," continued Cecil, quietly, "I do not know why in the little

intercourse we have, I should be rude to him."

"Cecil Dynevor!" exclaimed Agnes, with a sparkling eye, and with a woman's intuitive perception of the other's motives, "all Englishmen are not Lionel Lincolns."

"Nor is Major Lincoln an Englishman," returned Cecil, laughing, while she blushed; "though I have reason to think that captain Polwarth may be."

"Silly, child, silly; the poor man has paid the penalty of his offence, and is to be regarded with pity."

"Have a care, my coz. Pity is one of a large connexion of gentle feelings; when you once admit the first-born, you may leave open your doors to the whole family."

"Now that is exactly the point in question, Cecil because you esteem Major Lincoln, you are willing to admire Howe and all his myrmidons; but I can pity, and still be firm."

"Le bon temps viendra!"

"Never," interrupted Agnes, with a warmth that prevented her perceiving how much she admitted "Never, at least, under the guise of a scarlet coat."

Cecil smiled, but having completed her toilet, she withdrew without making any reply.

Such little discussions, enlivened more or less by the peculiar spirit of Agnes, were of frequent occurrence, though the eye of her cousin became daily more thoughtful, and the indifference with which she listened, was more apparent in each succeeding dialogue.

In the meantime, the affairs of the siege, though conducted with extreme caution, amounted only to a vigilant blockade.

The Americans lay by thousands in the surrounding villages, or were huddled in strong bands nigh the batteries which commanded the approaches to the place. Notwithstanding, their means had been greatly increased, by the capture of several vessels, loaded with warlike stores, as well as by the reduction of two important fortresses towards the Canadian frontiers, they were still too scanty to admit of that wasteful expenditure which is the usual accompaniment of war. In addition to their necessities, as a reason for forbearance, might also be mentioned the feelings of the colonists, who were anxious, in mercy to themselves, to regain their town as little injured as possible. On the other hand, the impression made by the battle of Bunker-hill was still so vivid as to curb the enterprise of the royal commanders, and Washington had been permitted to hold their powerful forces in check, by an untrained and half-armed multitude, that was, at times, absolutely destitute of the means of maintaining even a momentary contest.

As, however, a show of hostilities was maintained, the reports of cannon were frequently heard, and there were days when skirmishes between the advanced parties of the two hosts, brought on more heavy firings, which continued for longer periods. The ears of the ladies had been long accustomed to these rude sounds, and as the trifling loss which followed was altogether confined to the outworks, they were listened to with but little or no terror.

In this manner a fortnight flew swiftly away, without an incident to be related. One fine morning, at the end of that period, Polwarth drove into the little court-yard of Mrs. Lechmere's residence, with all those knowing flourishes he could command, and which in the year 1775 were thought to indicate the greatest familiarity with the properties of a tom-pung. In another minute his wooden member was heard in the passage, timing his steps as

he approached the room where the rest of the party were waiting his appearance. The two cousins stood wrapped in furs, with their smiling faces blooming beneath double rows of lace to soften the pictures, while Major Lincoln was in the act of taking his cloak from Meriton as the door opened for the admission of the captain.

"What, already dished!" exclaimed the goodnatured Polwarth, glancing his eyes from one to the other "so much the better; punctuality is the true leaven of life a good watch is as necessary to the guest as the host, and to the host as his cook. Miss Agnes, you are amazingly murderous to-day! If Howe expects his subalterns to do their duty, he should not suffer you to go at large in his camp."

The fine eye of Miss Danforth sparkled as he proceeded, but happening to fall on his mutilated person, its expression softened, and she was content with answering with a smile

"Let your general look to himself; I seldom go abroad but to espy his weakness!"

The captain gave an expressive shrug of his shoulder, and turning aside to his friend, said in an under tone

"You see how it is, Major Lincoln; ever since I have been compelled to serve myself up, like a turkey from yesterday's dinner, with a single leg, I have not been able to get a sharp reply from the young woman she has grown an even-tempered, tasteless morsel! and I am like a two-prong fork; only fit for carving! well, I care not how soon they cut me up entirely, since she has lost her piquancy but shall we to the church?"

Lionel looked a little embarrassed, and fingered a paper he held in his hand, for a moment, before he handed it to the other for his perusal.

"What have we here?" continued Polwarth "Two officers wounded in the late battle, desire to return thanks for their recovery" hum hum hum two? yourself, and who is the other?"

"I had hoped it would be my old companion and school-fellow?"

"Ha! what, me!" exclaimed the captain, unconsciously elevating his wooden-leg, and examining it with a rueful eye "umph! Leo, do you think a man has a particular reason to be grateful for the loss of a leg?"

"It might have been worse."

"I don't know," interrupted Polwarth, a little obstinately "there would have been more symmetry in it, if it had been both."

"You forget your mother," continued Lionel, as though the other had not spoken; "I am very sure it will give her heartfelt pleasure."

Polwarth gave a loud hem, rubbed his hand over his face once or twice, gave another furtive glance at his solitary limb, and then answered, with a little tremour in his voice

"Yes, yes I believe you are quite right a mother can love her child, though he should be chopped into mince-meat! The sex get that generous feeling after they are turned of forty it's your young woman that is particular about proportions and correspondents."

"You consent, then, that Meriton shall hand in the request as it reads?"

Polwarth hesitated a single instant longer, and then, as he remembered his distant mother, for Lionel had touched the right chord, his heart melted within him.

"Certainly, certainly it might have been worse, as it was with poor Dennis ay, let it pass for two; it shall go hard but I find a knee to bend on the occasion. Perhaps, Leo, when a certain young lady sees I can have a `te deum' for my adventure, she may cease to think me such an object of pity as at present?"

Lionel bowed in silence, and the captain, turning to Agnes, conducted her to the sleigh with a particularly lofty air, that he intended should indicate his perfect superiority to the casualties of war. Cecil took the arm of Major Lincoln, and the whole party were soon seated in the vehicle that was in waiting.

Until this day, which was the second Sunday since his reappearance, and the first on which the weather permitted him to go abroad, Lionel had no opportunity to observe the altered population of the town. The inhabitants had gradually left the place, some clandestinely, and others under favour of passes from the royal general, until those who remained were actually outnumbered by the army and its dependents. As the party approached the "King's Chapel," the street was crowded by military men, collected in groups, who indulged in thoughtless merriment, reckless of the wounds their light conversation inflicted on the few townsmen who might be seen moving towards the church, with deportments suited to the solemnity of their purpose, and countenances severely chastened by a remembrance of the day, and its serious duties. Indeed, so completely had Boston lost that distinctive appearance of sobriety, which had ever been the care and pride of its people, in the levity of a garrison, that even the immediate precincts of the temple were not protected from the passing jest or rude mirth of the gay and unreflecting, at an hour when a quiet was wont to settle on the whole province, as deep as if Nature had ceased her ordinary functions to unite in the worship of man. Lionel observed the change with mortification, nor did it escape his uneasy glances, that his two female companions concealed their faces in their muff, as if to exclude a view that brought still more painful recollections to minds early trained in the reflecting habits of the country.

When the sleigh drew up before the edifice, a dozen hands were extended to assist the ladies in their short but difficult passage into the heavy portico. Agnes coldly bowed her acknowledgments, observing, with an extremely equivocal smile, to one of the most assiduous of the young men

"We, who are accustomed to the climate, find no difficulty in walking on ice, though to you foreigners it may seem so hazardous." She then bowed, and walked gravely into the bosom of the church, without deigning to bestow another glance to her right hand or her left.

The manner of Cecil, though more chastened and feminine, and consequently more impressive, was equally reserved. Like her cousin, she proceeded directly to her pew, repulsing the attempts of those who wished to detain her a moment in idle discourse, by a lady-like propriety that checked the advance of all who approached her. In consequence of the rapid movement of their companions, Lionel and Polwarth were left among the crowd of officers who thronged the entrance of the church. The former moved up within the colonnade, and passed from group to group, answering and making the customary inquiries of men engaged in the business of war. Here, three or four veterans were clustered about one of those heavy columns, that were arranged in formidable show on three faces of the building, discussing, with becoming gravity, the political signs of the times, or the military condition of their respective corps. There, three or four unfledged boys, tricked in all the vain emblems of their profession, impeded the entrance of the few women who appeared, under the pretence of admiration for the sex, while they secretly dwelt on the glitter of their own ornaments. Scattered along the whole extent of the entrance were other little knots; some listening to the idle tale of a professed jester, some abusing the land in which it was their fate to serve, and others recounting the marvels they had witnessed in distant climes, and in scenes of peril which beggared their utmost powers of description.

Among such a collection it was not difficult, however, to find a few whose views were more elevated, and whose deportment might be termed less offensive, either to breeding or principles. With one of the gentlemen of the latter class Lionel was held for some time in discourse, in a distant part of the portico. At length the sounds of the organ were heard issuing from the church, and the gay parties began to separate, like men suddenly reminded why they were collected in that unusual place. The companion of Major Lincoln had left him, and he was himself

following along the colonnade, which was now but thinly peopled, when his ear was saluted by a low voice, singing in a sort of nasal chant at his very elbow

"Wo unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the Synagogues, and greetings in the market!"

Though Lionel had not heard the voice since the echoing cry had issued out of the fatal redoubt, he knew its first tones on the instant. Turning at this singular denunciation, he beheld Job Pray, erect and immovable as a statue, in one of the niches, in front of the building, whence he gave forth his warning voice, like some oracle speaking to its devotees.

"Fellow, will no peril teach you wisdom!" demanded Lionel "how dare you brave our resentment so wantonly?"

But his questions were unheeded. The young man, whose features looked pale and emaciated, as if he had endured recent bodily disease, whose eye was glazed and vacant, and whose whole appearance was more squalid and miserable than usual, appeared perfectly indifferent to all around him. Without even altering the riveted gaze of his unmeaning eye, he continued

"Wo unto you! for ye neither go in yourselves; neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in!"

"Art deaf, fool!" demanded Lionel.

In an instant the eye of the other was turned on his interrogator, and Major Lincoln felt a thrill pass through him, when he met the wild gleam of intelligence that lighted the countenance of the changeling, as he continued in the same ominous tones

"Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, is in danger of hell-fire."

For a moment Lionel stood as if spell-bound, by the manner of Job, while he uttered this dreadful anathema. But the instant the secret influence ceased, he tapped the lad lightly with his cane, and bid him descend from the niche.

"Job's a prophet," returned the other, dishonouring his declaration at the same time, by losing the singular air of momentary intelligence, in his usual appearance of mental imbecility "it's wicked to strike a prophet. The Jews stoned the prophets, and beat them too."

"Do then as I bid you would you stay here to be beaten by the soldiers? Go now, away; after service come to me, and I will furnish you with a better coat than the garment you wear."

"Did you never read the good book," said Job, "where it tells how you mus'n't take heed for food nor raiment? Nab says when Job dies he'll go to heaven, for he gets nothing to wear, and but little to eat. Kings wear their di'mond crowns and golden flauntiness; and kings always go to the dark place."

The lad suddenly ceased, and crouching into the very bottom of his niche, he began to play with his fingers, like an infant amused with the power of exercising its own members. At the same moment Lionel turned from him, attracted by the rattling of side arms, and the tread of many feet behind him. A large party of officers belonging to the staff of the army had paused to listen to what was passing. Amongst them Lionel recognised, at the first glance, two of the chieftains, who, a little in advance of their attendants, were keenly eyeing the singular being that was squatted in the niche. Notwithstanding his surprise, Major Lincoln detected the scowl that impended over the dark brow of the commander-in-chief, while he bowed low, in deference to his rank.

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

"Who is this fellow, that dare condemn the mighty of the earth to such sweeping perdition?" demanded Howe "his own sovereign amongst the number!"

"'Tis an unfortunate being, wanting in intellect, with whom accident has made me acquainted," returned Major Lincoln; "who hardly knows what he utters, and least of all, in whose presence he has been speaking."

"It is to such idle opinions, which are conceived by the designing, and circulated by the ignorant, that we may ascribe the wavering allegiance of the colonies," said the British General. "I hope you can answer for the loyalty of your singular acquaintance, Major Lincoln?"

Lionel was about to reply with some little spirit, when the companion of the frowning chief suddenly exclaimed

"By the feats of the feathered Hermes, but this is the identical Merry Andrew who took the flying leap from Copp's, of which I have already spoken to you. Am I in error, Lincoln? Is not this the shouting philosopher, whose feelings were so elevated on the day of Breeds, that he could not refrain from flying, but who, less fortunate than Icarus, made his descent on terra firma?"

"I believe your memory is faithful, sir," said Lionel, answering the smile of the other "the lad is often brought to trouble by his simplicity?"

Burgoyne gave a gentle impulse to the arm he held, as if he thought the wretched being before them unworthy of further consideration; though secretly with a view to prevent an impolitic exhibition of the well-known propensity of his senior to push his notions of military ascendancy to the extreme. Perceiving, by the still darkening look of the other, that he hesitated, his ready lieutenant observed

"Poor fellow! his treason was doubly punished, by a flight of some fifty feet down the declivity of Copp's, and the mortification of witnessing the glorious triumph of his majesty's troops. To such a wretch we may well afford forgiveness."

Howe insensibly yielded to the continued pressure of the other, and his hard features even relaxed into a scowling smile, as he said, while turning away

"Look to your acquaintance, Major Lincoln, or bad as his present condition seems, he may make it worse. Such language cannot be tolerated in a place besieged. That is the word, I believe the rebels call their mob a besieging army, do they not?"

"They do gather round our winter-quarters, and claim some such distinction"

"It must be acknowledged they did well on Breeds too! The shabby rascals fought like true men."

"Desperately, and with some discretion," answered Burgoyne; "but it was their fortune to meet those who fought better, and with greater skill shall we enter?"

The frown was now entirely chased from the brow of the chief, who said complacently

"Come, gentlemen, we are tardy; unless more industrious we shall not be in season to pray for the king, much less ourselves."

The whole party advanced a step, when a bustle in the rear announced the approach of another officer of high rank, and the second in command entered into the colonnade, followed also by the gentlemen of his family. The instant he appeared the self-contented look vanished from the features of Howe, who returned his salute with cold

civility, and immediately entered the church. The quick-witted Burgoyne again interposed, and as he made way in his turn, he found means to whisper into the ear of Clinton some well-imagined allusion to the events of that very field which had given birth to the heart-burnings between his brother generals, and had caused the feelings of Howe to be estranged from the man to whose assistance he owed so much. Clinton yielded to the subtle influence of the flattery, and followed his commander into the house of God, with a bland contentment that he probably mistook for a feeling much better suited to the place and the occasion. As the whole group of spectators, consisting of aids, secretaries, and idlers, without, immediately imitated the example of the generals, Lionel found himself alone with the changeling.

From the moment that Job discovered the vicinity of the English leader, to that of his disappearance, the lad remained literally immovable. His eye was fastened on vacancy, his jaw had fallen in a manner to give a look of utter mental alienation to his countenance; and, in short, he exhibited the degraded lineaments and figure of a man, without his animation or intelligence. But as the last footsteps of the retiring party became inaudible, the fear which had put to flight the feeble intellects of the simpleton, slowly left him, and raising his face, he said, in a low, growling voice

"Let him go out to Prospect; the people will teach him the law!"

"Perverse and obstinate simpleton!" cried Lionel, dragging him, without further ceremony, from the niche "will you persevere in that foolish cry until you are whipped from regiment to regiment for your pains!"

"You promised Job the grannies shouldn't beat him any more, and Job promised to run your ar'n'ds."

"Ay! but unless you learn to keep silence, boy, I shall forget my promise, and give you up to the anger of all the grannies in town."

"Well," said Job, brightening in his look, like a fool in his exultation, "they are half of them dead, at any rate; Job heard the biggest man among 'em roar like a ravenous lion, `hurrah for the royal Irish,' but he never spoke ag'in; though there wasn't any better rest for Job's gun than a dead man's shoulder!"

"Wretch!" cried Lionel, recoiling from him in horror, "are your hands then stained with the blood of M'Fuse!"

"Job didn't touch him with his hands," returned the undisturbed simpleton "for he died like a dog, where he fell!"

Lionel stood a moment in utter confusion of thought; but hearing the infallible evidence of the near approach of Polwarth in his tread, he said, in a hurried manner, and in a voice half choked by his emotions

"Go, fellow, go to Mrs. Lechmere's, as I bid you tell Meriton to look to my fire."

The lad made a motion towards obeying, but checking himself, he looked up into the face of the other with a piteous and suffering look, and said

"See, Job's numb with cold! Nab and Job can't get wood now; the king keeps men to fight for it let Job warm his flesh a little; his body is cold as the dead!"

Touched to the heart by the request, and the helpless aspect of the lad, Lionel made a silent signal of assent, and turned quickly to meet his friend. It was not necessary for Polwarth to speak, in order to apprise Major Lincoln that he had overheard part of the dialogue between him and Job. His countenance and attitude sufficiently betrayed his knowledge, as well as the effect it had produced on his feelings. He kept his eyes on the form of the simpleton, as the lad shuffled his way along the icy street, with an expression that could not easily be mistaken.

"Did I not hear the name of poor Dennis?" at length he asked.

"'Twas some of the idle boasting of the fool. But why are you not in the pew?"

"The fellow is a protégé of yours, Major Lincoln; but you may carry forbearance too far," returned Polwarth, gravely. "I come for you, at the request of a pair of beautiful blue eyes, that have inquired of each one that has entered the church, this half-hour, where and why Major Lincoln has tarried."

Lionel bowed his thanks, and affected to laugh at the humour of his friend, while they proceeded together to the pew of Mrs. Lechmere without further delay.

The painful reflections excited by this interview with Job, gradually vanished from the mind of Lionel, as he yielded to the influence of the solemn service of the church. He heard the difficult and suppressed breathing of the fair being who kneeled by his side, while the minister read those thanksgivings which personally concerned himself, and no little of earthly gratitude mingled with the loftier aspirations of the youth, as he listened. He caught the timid glance of the soft eye from behind the folds of Cecil's veil, as they rose, and he took his seat as happy as an ardent young man might well be fancied, under the consciousness of possessing the best affections of a female so youthful, so lovely, and so pure.

Perhaps the service was not altogether so consoling to the feelings of Polwarth. As he recovered his solitary foot again, with some little difficulty, he cast a very equivocal glance at his dismembered person, hemmed aloud, and finished with a rattling of his wooden-leg about the pew, that attracted the eyes of the whole congregation, as if he intended the ears of all present should bear testimony in whose behalf their owners had uttered their extraordinary thanksgivings.

The officiating minister was far too discreet to vex the attention of his superiors with any prolix and unwelcome exhibitions of the Christian's duty. The impressive delivery of his text required one minute. Four were consumed in the exordium. The argument was ingeniously condensed into ten more; and the peroration of his essay was happily concluded in four minutes and a half; leaving him the satisfaction of knowing, as he was assured by fifty watches, and twice that number of contented faces, that he had accomplished his task by half a minute within the orthodox period.

For this exactitude he doubtless had his reward. Among other testimonials in his favour, when Polwarth shook his hand to thank him for his kind offices in his own behalf, he found room for a high compliment to the discourse, concluding by assuring the flattered divine, "that in addition to its other great merits, it was done in beautiful time!"

CHAPTER IV.

"Away; let naught to love displeasing,

"My Winifreda, move your care:

"Let naught delay the heavenly blessing,

"Nor squeamish pride, nor gloomy fear."

Anonymous.

It was perhaps fortunate for the tranquillity of all concerned, that during this period of their opening confidence, the person of Mrs. Lechmere came not between the bright image of purity and happiness that Cecil presented in each lineament and action, and the eyes of her lover. The singular, and somewhat contradictory interests that lady

had so often betrayed in the movements of her young kinsman, were no longer visible to awaken his slumbering suspicious. Even those inexplicable scenes in which his aunt had so strangely been an actor, were forgotten in the engrossing feelings of the hour; or, if remembered at all, were only suffered to dim the pleasing pictures of his imagination, as an airy cloud throws his passing shadows across some cheerful and lovely landscape. In addition to those very natural auxiliaries, love and hope, the cause of Mrs. Lechmere had found a very powerful assistant, in the bosom of Lionel, through an accident which had confined her for a long period, not only to her apartment, but to her bed.

On that day, when the critical operation was performed on the person of Major Lincoln, his aunt was known to have awaited the result in intense anxiety. As soon as the favourable termination was reported to her, she hastened towards his room with an unguarded eagerness, which, added to the general infirmities of her years, had nearly cost the price of her life. Her foot became entangled in her train, in ascending the stairs, but disregarding the warning cry of Agnes Danforth, with that sort of reckless vehemence that sometimes broke through the formal decorum of her manners, she sustained, in consequence, a fall that might well have proved fatal to a much younger woman. The injury she received was severe and internal; and the inflammation, though not high, was sufficiently protracted to arouse the apprehensions of her attendants. The symptoms were, however, now abating, and her recovery no longer a matter of question.

As Lionel heard this from the lips of Cecil, the reader will not imagine the effect produced by the interest his aunt took in his welfare, was at all lessened by the source whence he derived his knowledge. Notwithstanding Cecil dwelt on such a particular evidence of Mrs. Lechmere's attachment to her nephew, with much earnestness, it had not escaped Major Lincoln that her name was but seldom introduced in their frequent conversations, and never, on the part of his companion, without a guarded delicacy that appeared sensitive in the extreme. As their confidence, however, increased with their hourly communications, he began gently to lift the veil which female reserve had drawn before her inmost feelings, and to read a heart whose purity and truth would have repaid a more difficult investigation.

When the party returned from the church, Cecil and Agnes immediately hastened to the apartment of the invalid, leaving Lionel in possession of the little wainscoted parlour by himself; Polwarth having proceeded to his own quarters, with the assistance of the hunter. The young man passed a few minutes in pacing the room, musing deeply on the scene he had witnessed before the church; now and then casting a vacant look on the fanciful ornaments of the walls, among which the armorial bearings of his own name were so frequent, and in such honourable situations. At length he heard that light footstep approach, whose sound had now become too well known to be mistaken, and in another instant he was joined by Miss Dynevor.

"Mrs. Lechmere!" he said, leading her to a settee, and placing himself by her side; "you found her better, I trust?"

"So well that she intends adventuring, this morning, an interview with your own formidable self. Indeed, Lionel, you have every reason to be grateful for the deep interest my grandmother takes in your welfare! Ill as she has been, her inquiries in your behalf were ceaseless; and I have known her refuse to answer any questions about her own critical condition, until her physician had relieved her anxiety concerning yours."

As Cecil spoke, the tears rushed into her eyes, and her bloom deepened with the strength of her feelings.

"It is to you, then, that much of my gratitude is due," returned Lionel; "for by permitting me to blend my lot with yours, I find new value in her eyes. Have you acquainted Mrs. Lechmere with the full extent of my presumption? She knows of our engagement?"

"Could I do otherwise? while your life was in peril, I confined the knowledge of my interest in your situation to my own breast; but when we were flattered with the hopes of a recovery, I placed your letter in the hands of my natural adviser, and have the consolation of knowing that she approves of my what shall I call it, Lionel would

not folly be the better word?"

"Call it what you will, so you do not disavow it. I have hitherto forborne inquiring into the views of Mrs. Lechmere, in tenderness to her situation; but I may flatter myself, Cecil, that she will not reject me?"

For a single instant the blood rushed tumultuously over the fine countenance of Miss Dynevor, suffusing even her temples and forehead with its healthful bloom; but, as she cast a reproachful glance at her lover, it deserted even her cheeks, while she answered calmly, though with a slight exhibition of displeasure in her air

"It may have been the misfortune of my grandmother to view the head of her own family with too partial eyes; but, if it be so, her reward should not be distrust. The weakness is, I dare say, very natural, though not less a weakness."

For the first time, Lionel fully comprehended the cause of that variable manner with which Cecil had received his attentions, until interest in his person had stilled her sensitive feelings. Without, however, betraying the least consciousness of his intelligence, he answered

"Gratitude does not deserve so forbidding a name as distrust; nor will vanity permit me to call partiality in my favour a weakness."

"The word is a good and a safe term as applied to poor human nature," said Cecil, smiling once more with all her native sweetness, "and you may possibly overlook it when you recollect that our foibles are sometimes hereditary."

"I pardon your unkind suspicion for that gentle acknowledgment. But I may now, without hesitation, apply to your grandmother for her consent to our immediate union?"

"You would not have your epithalamium sung, when, at the next moment, you may be required to listen to the dirge of some friend!"

"The very reason you urge against our marriage, induces me to press it, Cecil. As the season advances, this play of war must end. Howe will either break out of his bounds, and drive the Amricans from the hills, or seek some other point for more active warfare. In either case you would be left in a distracted and divided country, at an age too tender for your own safety, rather the guardian than the ward of your helpless parent. Surely, Cecil, you would not hesitate to accept of my protection at such a crisis, I had almost dared to say, in tenderness to yourself, as well as to my feelings!"

"Say on," she answered; "I admire your ingenuity, if not your argument. In the first place, however, I do not believe your general can drive the Americans from their posts so easily; for, by a very simple process in figures, that even I understand, you may find, if one hill costs so many hundred men, that the purchase of the whole would be too dear nay, Lionel, do not look so grave, I implore you! Surely, surely, you do not think I would speak idly of a battle that had nearly cost your life, and and my happiness."

"Say on," said Lionel, instantly dismissing the momentary cloud from his brow, and smiling fondly in her anxious face; "I admire your casuistry, and worship your feeling; but can, also, deny your argument."

Reassured by his voice and manner, after a moment of extreme agitation, she continued in the same playful tones as before

"But we will suppose all the hills won, and the American chief, Washington, who, though nothing but a rebel, is a very respectable one, driven into the country with his army at his heels; I trust it is to be done without the

assistance of the women? Or, should Howe remove his force, as you intimate, will he not leave the town behind him? In either case I should remain quietly where I am; safe in a British garrison, or safer among my countrymen."

"Cecil, you are alike ignorant of the dangers and of the rude lawlessness of war! Though Howe should abandon the place, 'twould be only for a time; believe me, the ministry will never yield the possession of a town like this, which has so long dared their power, to men in arms against their lawful prince."

"You have strangely forgotten the last six months, Lionel, or you would not accuse me of ignorance of the misery that war can inflict!"

"A thousand thanks for the kind admission, dearest Cecil, as well as for the hint," said the young man, shifting the ground of his argument with the consistency, as well as the readiness of a lover; "you have owned your sentiments to me, and would not refuse to avow them again?"

"Not to one whose self-esteem will induce him to forget the weakness; but, perhaps, I might hesitate to do such a silly thing before the world."

"I will then put in to your heart," he continued, without regarding the smiling coquetry she had affected. "Believing the best, you will admit that another battle would be no strange occurrence?"

She raised her anxious looks to his face, but remained silent.

"We both know at least I know, from sad experience, that I am far from being invulnerable. Now, answer me, Cecil, not as a female struggling to support the false pride of her sex, but as a woman, generous and full of heart, like yourself were the events of the last six months to recur, whether would you live them over, affianced in secret, or as an acknowledged wife, who might not blush to show her tenderness to the world?"

It was not until the large drops that glistened at his words upon the dark lashes of Miss Dynevor, were shaken from the tremulous fringes that concealed her eyes, that she looked up, blushing into his face, and said

"Do you not then think, that I endured enough, as one who felt herself betrothed, but that closer ties were necessary to fill the measure of my suffering?"

"I cannot even thank you as I would for those flattering tears, until my question is plainly answered."

"Is this altogether generous, Lincoln?"

"Perhaps not in appearance, but sincerely so in truth. By heaven, Cecil, I would shelter and protect you from a rude contact with the world, even as I seek my own happiness!"

Miss Dynevor was not only confused, but distressed; she, however, said, in a low voice

"You forget, Major Lincoln, that I have one to consult, without whose approbation I can promise nothing."

"Will you, then, refer the question to her wisdom? Should Mrs. Lechmere approve of our immediate union, may I say to her, that you authorize me to ask it?"

Cecil said nothing; but smiling through her tears, she permitted Lionel to take her hand in a manner that a much less sanguine man would have found no difficulty in construing into an assent.

"Come, then," he cried; "let us hasten to the apartment of Mrs. Lechmere; did you not say she expected me?" She suffered him to draw her arm through his own, and lead her from the room. Notwithstanding the buoyant hopes with which Lionel conducted his companion through the passages of the house, he did not approach the chamber of Mrs. Lechmere without some inward repugnance. It was not possible to forget entirely all that had so recently passed, or to still, effectually, those dark suspicions which had been once awakened within his bosom. His purpose, however, bore him onward, and a glance at the trembling being who now absolutely leaned on him for support, drove every consideration, in which she did not form a most prominent part, from his mind.

The enfeebled appearance of the invalid, with a sudden recollection that she had sustained so much, in consequence of her anxiety in his own behalf, so far aided the cause of his aunt, that the young man not only met her with cordiality, but with a feeling akin to gratitude.

The indisposition of Mrs. Lechmere had now continued for several weeks, and her features, aged and sunken as they were by the general decay of nature, afforded strong additional testimony of the severity of her recent illness. Her face, besides being paler and more emaciated than usual, had caught that anxious expression which great and protracted bodily ailing is apt to leave on the human countenance. Her brow was, however, smooth and satisfied, unless, at moments, when a slight and involuntary play of the muscles betrayed that fleeting pains continued, at short intervals, to remind her of her illness. She received her visitors with a smile that was softer and more conciliating than usual, and which the pallid and care-worn appearance of her features rendered deeply impressive.

"It is kind, cousin Lionel," she said, extending her withered hand to her young kinsman, "in the sick to come thus to visit the well. For after so long apprehending the worst on your account, I cannot consent that my trifling injury should be mentioned before your more serious wounds."

"Would, madam, that you had as happily recovered from their effects as myself," returned Lionel, taking her hand and pressing it with great sincerity. "I shall never forget that you owe your illness to anxiety for me."

"Let it pass, sir; it is natural that we should feel strongly in behalf of those we love. I have lived to see you well again, and, God willing, I shall live to see this wicked rebellion crushed." She paused; and smiling, for a moment, on the young pair who had approached her couch, she continued, "Cecil hastold me all, Major Lincoln."

"No, not all, dear madam," interrupted Lionel; "I have something yet to add; and in the commencement, I will own that I depend altogether on your pity and judgment to support my pretensions."

"Pretensions is an injudicious word, cousin Lionel; where there is a perfect equality of birth, education, and virtues, and, I may say, considering the difference in the sexes, of fortune too, it may amount to claims; but pretensions is an expression too ambiguous. Cecil, my child, go to my library; in the small, secret drawer of my escritoir, you will find a paper bearing your name; read it, my love, and then bring it hither."

She motioned to Lionel to be seated, and when the door had closed on the retiring form of Cecil, she resumed the conversation.

"As we are about to speak of business, the confused girl may as well be relieved, Major Lincoln. What is this particular favour that I shall be required to yield?"

"Like any other sturdy mendicant, who may have already partaken largely of your bounty, I come to beg the immediate gift of the last and greatest boon you can bestow."

"My grandchild. There is no necessity for useless reserves between us, cousin Lionel, for you will remember that I too am a Lincoln. Let us then speak freely, like two friends, who have met to determine on a matter equally near

to the heart of each."

"Such is my earnest wish, Madam. I have been urging on Miss Dynevor the peril of the times, and the critical situation of the country, in both of which I have found the strongest reasons for our immediate union."

"And Cecil? "

"Has been like herself; kind, but dutiful. She refers me entirely to your decision, by which alone she consents to be guided."

Mrs. Lechmere made no immediate reply, but her features powerfully betrayed the inward workings of her mind. It certainly was not displeasure that caused her to hesitate, her hollow eye lighting with a gleam of satisfaction that could not be mistaken; neither was it uncertainty, for her whole countenance seemed to express rather the uncontrollable agitation which might accompany the sudden accomplishment of longdesired ends, than any doubt as to their prudence. Gradually her agitation subsided; and as her feelings became more natural, her hard eyes filled with tears, and when she spoke, there was a softness mingled with the tremor of her voice that Lionel had never before witnessed.

"She is a good and a dutiful child, my own, my obedient Cecil! She will bring you no wealth, Major Lincoln, that will be esteemed among your hordes, nor any proud title to add to the lustre of your honourable name; but she will bring you what is as good, if not better nay, I am sure it must be better a pure and virtuous heart, that knows no guile!"

"A thousand and a thousand times more estimable in my eyes, my worthy aunt!" cried Lionel, melting before the touch of nature, which had so effectually softened the harsh feelings of Mrs. Lechmere; "let her come to my arms pennyless, and without a name; she will be no less my wife, no less her own invaluable self."

"I spoke only by comparison, Major Lincoln; the child of Colonel Dynevor, and the granddaughter of the Lord Viscount Cardonnell, can have no cause to blush for her lineage; neither will the descendant of John Lechmere be a dowerless bride! When Cecil shall become Lady Lincoln, she need never wish to conceal the escutcheon of her own ancestors under the bloody hand of her husband's."

"May heaven long avert the hour when either of us may be required to use the symbol!" exclaimed Lionel.

"Did I not understand aright! was not your request for an instant marriage?"

"Never less in error, my dear Madam; but you surely do not forget that one lives so mutually dear to us, who has every reason to hope for many years of life; and I trust, too, of happiness and reason!"

Mrs. Lechmere looked wildly at her nephew, and then passed her hand slowly before her eyes, from whence she did not withdraw them until an universal shudder had shaken the whole of her enfeebled frame.

"You are right, my young cousin," she said, smiling faintly "I believe my bodily weakness has impaired my memory. I was indeed dreaming of days long since past! You stood before me in the image of your desolate father, while Cecil bore that of her mother; my own long-lost, but wilful Agnes! Oh! she was my child, my child! and God has forgotten her faults in mercy to a mother's prayers!"

Lionel recoiled a step before the wild energy of the invalid's manner, in speechless amazement. A flush had passed into her pallid cheeks, and as she concluded, she clasped her hands before her, and sunk on the pillows which supported her back. Large insulated tears fell from her eyes, and slowly moving over her wasted cheeks, dropped singly upon the counterpane. Lionel laid his hand upon the night-bell, but an expressive gesture from his

aunt prevented his ringing.

"I am well, again," she said "hand me the restorative by your side."

Mrs. Lechmere drank freely from the glass, and in another minute her agitation subsided, her features settling into their rigid composure, and her eye resuming its hard expression, as though nothing had occurred to disturb her usual cold and worldly look.

"You see how much better youth can endure the ravages of disease than age, by my present weakness, Major Lincoln," she continued; "but let us return to other, and more agreeable subjects you have not only my consent, but my wish that you should wed my grandchild. It a happiness that I have rather hoped for, than dared to expect, and I will freely add, 'tis a consummation of my wishes that will render the evening of my days not only happy, but blessed!"

"Then, dearest Madam, why should it be delayed no one can say what a day may bring forth at such a time as this, and the moment of bustle and action is not the hour to register the marriage vows."

After musing a moment, Mrs. Lechmere replied

"We have a good and holy custom in this religious province, of choosing the day which the Lord has set apart for his own exclusive worship, as that on which to enter into the honourable state of matrimony. Choose, then, between this or the next Sabbath for your nuptials."

Whatever might be the ardour of the young man, he was a little surprised at the shortness of the former period; but the pride of his sex would not admit of any hesitation.

"Let it be this day, if Miss Dynevor can be brought freely to consent."

"Here then she comes, to tell you, that at my request, she does. Cecil, my own sweet child, I have promised Major Lincoln that you will become his wife this day."

Miss Dynevor, who advanced into the centre of the room, before she heard the purport of this speech, stopped short, and stood like a beautiful statue, expressing astonishment and dismay. Her colour went and came with alarming quickness, and the paper fell from her trembling hands to her feet, which appeared riveted to the floor."

"To-day!" she repeated, in a voice barely audible "did you say to-day, my grandmother?"

"Even to-day, my child."

"Why this reluctance, this alarm, Cecil?" said Lionel, approaching, and leading her gently to a seat. "You know the peril of the times you have condescended to own your sentiments consider; the winter is breaking, and the first thaw can lead to events which may entirely alter our situation."

"All these may have weight in your eyes, Major Lincoln," interrupted Mrs. Lechmere, in a voice whose marked solemnity drew the attention of her hearers; "but I have other and deeper motives. Have I not already proved the dangers and the evils of delay! Ye are young, and ye are virtuous; why should ye not be happy? Cecil, if you love and revere me, as I think you do, you will become his wife this day."

"Let me have time to think, dearest grandmother. The tie is so new and so solemn! Major Lincoln dear Lionel, you are not wont to be ungenerous; I throw myself on your kindness!"

Lionel did not speak, and Mrs. Lechmere calmly answered

"'Tis not at his, but at my request that you will comply."

Miss Dynevor rose from her seat by the side of Lionel, with an air of offended delicacy, and said, with a mournful smile, to her lover

"Illness has rendered my good mother timid and weak will you excuse my desire to be alone with her."

"I leave you, Cecil," he said, "but if you ascribe my silence to any other motive than tenderness to your feelings, you are unjust both to yourself and me."

She expressed her gratitude only in her looks, and he immediately withdrew, to await the result of their conversation in his own apartment. The half-hour that Lionel passed in his chamber seemed half a year, but at the expiration of that short period of time, Meriton came to announce that Mrs. Lechmere desired his presence again in her room.

The first glance of her eye assured Major Lincoln that his cause had triumphed. His aunt had sunk back on her pillows, with her countenance set in a calculating and rigid expression, which indicated a satisfaction so selfish that it almost induced the young man to regret she had not failed. But when his eyes met the tearful and timid glances of the blushing Cecil, he felt, that provided she could be his without violence to her feelings, he cared but little at whose instigation she had consented.

"If I am to read my fate by your goodness, I know I may hope," he said, advancing to her side "if in my own deserts, I am left to despair."

"Perhaps 'twas foolish, Lincoln," she said, smiling through her tears, and frankly placing her hand in his, "to hesitate about a few days, when I feel ready to devote my life to your happiness. It is the wish of my grandmother that I place myself under your protection."

"Then this evening unites us for ever?"

"There is no obligation on your gallantry that it should positively take place this very evening, if any, or the least difficulties present."

"But none do nor can," interrupted Lionel. "Happily the marriage forms of the colony are simple, and we enjoy the consent of all who have any right to interfere."

"Go, then, my children, and complete your brief arrangements," said Mrs. Lechmere; "'tis a solemn knot that ye tie! it must, it will be happy!"

Lionel pressed the hand of his intended bride, and withdrew, and Cecil throwing herself into the arms of her grandmother, gave vent to her feelings in a burst of tears. Mrs. Lechmere did not repulse her child; on the contrary, she pressed her once or twice to her heart, but still an observant spectator might have seen that her looks betrayed more of worldly pride, than of those natural emotions which such a scene ought to have excited.

CHAPTER V.

"Come, friar Francis be brief; only to the plain form of "marriage."

Much Ado About Nothing.

Major Lincoln had justly said, the laws regulating marriages in the Massachusetts, which were adapted to the infant state of the country, threw but few impediments in the way of the indissoluble connexion. Cecil had, however, been educated in the bosom of the English church, and she clung to its forms and ceremonies with an affection that may easily be accounted for in their solemnity and beauty. Notwithstanding the colonists often chose the weekly festival for their bridals, the rage of reform had excluded the altar from most of their temples, and it was not usual with them to celebrate their nuptials in the places of public worship. But there appeared so much of unreasonable haste, and so little of due preparation in her own case, that Miss Dynevor, anxious to give all solemnity to an act to whose importance she was sensibly alive, expressed her desire to pronounce her vows at that altar where she had so long been used to worship, and under that roof where she had already, since the rising of the sun, poured out the thanksgivings of her pure spirit in behalf of the man who was so soon to become her husband.

As Mrs. Lechmere had declared that the agitation of the day, and her feeble condition must unavoidably prevent her witnessing the ceremony, there existed no sufficient reason for not indulging the request of her grandchild, notwithstanding it was not in strict accordance with the customs of the place. But being married at the altar, and being married in public, were not similar duties, and in order to effect the one and avoid the other, it was necessary to postpone the ceremony until a late hour, and to clothe the whole in a cloak of mystery, that the otherwise unembarrassed state of the parties would not have required.

Miss Dynevor made no other confidant than her cousin. Her feelings being altogether elevated above the ordinarily idle considerations which are induced by time and preparations on such an occasion, her brief arrangements were soon ended, and she awaited the appointed moment without alarm, if not without emotion.

Lionel had much more to perform. He knew that the least intimation of such a scene would collect a curious and a disagreeable crowd around and in the church, and he therefore determined that his plans should be arranged in silence, and managed secretly. In order to prevent a surprise, Meriton was sent to the clergyman, requesting him to appoint an hour in the evening when he could give an interview to Major Lincoln. He was answered, that at any moment after nine o'clock Dr. Liturgy would be released from the duties of the day, and in readiness to receive him. There was no alternative; and ten was the time mentioned to Cecil when she was requested to meet him before the altar. Major Lincoln distrusted a little the discretion of Polwarth, and he contented himself with merely telling his friend that he was to be married that evening, and that he must be careful to repair to Tremont-street in order to give away the bride; appointing an hour sufficiently early for all the subsequent movements. His groom and his valet had their respective and separate orders, and long before the important moment he had every thing arranged, as he believed, beyond the possibility of a disappointment.

Perhaps there was something a little romantic, if not diseased in the mind of Lionel, that caused him to derive a secret pleasure from the hidden movements he contemplated. He was certainly not entirely free from a touch of that melancholy and morbid humour which has been mentioned as the characteristic of his race, nor did he always feel the less happy because he was a little miserable. However, either by his activity of intellect, or that excellent training in life he had undergone, by being required to act early for himself, he had so far succeeded in quelling the evil spirit within him, as to render its influence quite imperceptible to others, and nearly so to himself. It had, in fine, left him what we have endeavoured to represent him in these pages, not a man without faults, but certainly one of many high and generous virtues.

As the day drew to a close, the small family party in Tremont-street collected in their usual manner to partake of the evening repast, which was common throughout the colonies at that period. Cecil was pale, and at times a slight tremor was perceptible in the little hand which did the offices of the table; but there was a forced calmness seated in her humid eyes that betokened the resolution she had summoned to her assistance, in order to comply with the wishes of her grandmother. Agnes Danforth was silent and observant, though an occasional look, of more

than usual meaning, betrayed what she thought of the mystery and suddenness of the approaching nuptials. It would seem, however, that the importance of the step she was about to take, had served to raise the bride above the little affectations of her sex; for she spoke of the preparations like one who owned her interest in their completion, and who even dreaded that something might yet occur to mar them.

"If I were superstitious, and had faith in omens, Lincoln," she said, "the hour and the weather might well intimidate me from taking this step. See, the wind already blows across the endless wastes of the ocean, and the snow is driving through the streets in whirlwinds!"

"It is not yet too late to countermand my orders, Cecil," he said, regarding her anxiously; "I have made all my movements so like a great commander, that it is as easy to retrograde as to advance."

"Would you then retreat before one so little formidable as I?" she returned, smiling.

"You surely understand me as wishing only to change the place of our marriage. I dread exposing you and our kind cousin to the tempest, which, as you say, after sweeping over the ocean so long, appears rejoiced to find land on which to expend its fury."

"I have not misconstrued your meaning, Lionel, nor must you be mistaken in mine. I will become your wife to-night, and cheerfully too; for what reason can I have to doubt you now, more than formerly! But my vows must be offered at the altar."

Agnes perceiving that her cousin spoke with a suppressed emotion that made utterance difficult, gaily interrupted her

"And as for the snow, you know little of Boston girls, if you think an icicle has any terrors for them. I vow, Cecil, I do think you and I have been guilty, when children, of coasting in a handsled, down the side of Beacon, in a worse flurry than this."

"We were guilty of many mad and silly things at ten, that might not grace twenty, Agnes."

"Lord, how like a matron she speaks already!" interrupted the other, throwing up her eyes and clasping her hands in affected admiration; "nothing short of the church will satisfy so discreet a dame, Major Lincoln! so dismiss your cares on her account, and begin to enumerate the cloaks and over-coats necessary to your own preservation."

Lionel made a lively reply, when a dialogue of some spirit ensued between him and Agnes, to which even Cecil listened with a beguiled ear. When the evening had advanced, Polwarth made his appearance, suitably attired, and with a face that was sufficiently knowing and important for the occasion. The presence of the captain reminded Lionel of the lateness of the hour, and, without delay, he hastened to communicate his plans to his friend.

At a few minutes before ten, Polwarth was to accompany the ladies in a covered sleigh to the chapel, which was not a stone's throw from their residence, where the bridegroom was to be in readiness to receive them, with the divine. Referring the captain to Meriton for further instructions, and without waiting to hear the other express his amazement at the singularity of the plan, Major Lincoln said a few words of tender encouragement to Cecil, looked at his watch, and throwing his cloak around him, took his hat, and departed.

We shall leave Polwarth endeavouring to extract the meaning of all these mysterious movements, from the wilful and amused Agnes, (Cecil having retired also,) and accompany the bridegroom in his progress towards the residence of the divine.

Major Lincoln found the streets entirely deserted. The night was not dark, for a full moon was wading among the volumes of clouds, which drove before the tempest in dark and threatening masses that contrasted singularly and wildly to the light covering of the hills and buildings of the town. Occasionally the gusts of the wind would lift eddying wreaths of fine snow from some roof, and whole squares were wrapped in mist as the frozen vapour whistled by. At times, the gale howled among the chimneys and turrets, in a steady, sullen roaring, and there were again moments when the element appeared hushed, as if its fury were expended, and winter, having worked its might, was yielding to the steady, but insensible advances of spring. There was something in the season and the hour peculiarly in consonance with the excited temperament of the young bridegroom. Even the solitude of the streets, and the hollow rushing of the winds, the fleeting and dim light of the moon, which afforded passing glimpses of sunrounding objects and then was hid behind a dark veil of shifting vapour, contributed to his pleasure. He made his way through the snow, with that species of stern joy, to which all are indebted, at times, for moments of wild and pleasing self-abandonment. His thoughts vacillated between the purpose of the hour, and the unlooked for coincidence of circumstances that had clothed it in a dress of such romantic mystery. Once or twice a painful and dark thought, connected with the secret of Mrs. Lechmere's life, found its way among his more pleasing visions, but it was quickly chased from his mind by the image of her who awaited his movements in such confiding faith, and with such secure and dependent affection.

As the residence of Dr. Liturgy was on the North-end, which was then one of the fashionable quarters of the town, the distance required that Lionel should be diligent, in order to be punctual to his appointment. Young, active, and full of hope, he passed along the unequal pavements with great rapidity, and had the satisfaction of penceiving by his watch, when admitted to the presence of the clergyman, that his speed had even outstripped the proverbial fleetness of time itself.

The reverend gentleman was in his study, consoling himself for the arduous duties of the day, with the comforts of a large easy-chair, a warm fire, and a pitcher filled with a mixture of cider and ginger, together with other articles that would have done credit to the knowledge of Polwarth in spices. His full and decorous wig was replaced by a velvet cap, his shoes were unbuckled, and his heels released from confinement. In short, all his arrangements were those of a man who, having endured a day of labour, was resolved to prove the enjoyments of an evening of rest. His pipe, though filled, and on the little table by his side, was not lighted, in compliment to the guest he expected at that hour. As he was slightly acquainted with Major Lincoln, no introduction was necessary, and the two gentlemen were soon seated; the one endeavouring to overcome the embarrassment he felt on revealing his singular errand, and the other waiting, in no little curiosity, to learn the reason why a member of parliament, and the heir of ten thousand a year, should come abroad on such an unpropitious night.

At length Lionel succeeded in making the astonished priest understand his wishes, and paused to hear the expected approbation of his proposal.

Dr. Liturgy had listened with the most profound attention, as if to catch some clue to explain the mystery of the extraordinary proceeding, and when the young man concluded, he unconsciously lighted his pipe, and began to throw out large clouds of smoke, like a man who felt there was a design to abridge his pleasures, and who was consequently determined to make the most of his time.

"Married! To be married in church! and after the night lecture!" he muttered in a low voice between his long drawn puffs "'tis my duty certainly Major Lincoln to marry my parishioners"

"In the present instance, as I know my request to be irregular, sir," interrupted the impatient Lionel, "I will make it your interest also." While speaking he took a well-filled purse from his pocket, and with an air of much delicacy laid a small pile of gold by the side of the silver spectacle-case of the divine, as if to show him the difference in the value of the two metals.

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

Dr. Liturgy bowed his acknowledgments, and insensibly changed the stream of smoke to the opposite corner of his month, so as to leave the view of the glittering boon unobstructed. At the same time he raised the heel of one shoe, and threw an anxious glance at the curtained window, to inquire into the state of the weather.

"Could not the ceremony be performed at the house of Mrs. Lechmere?" he asked; "Miss Dynevor is a tender child, and I fear the cold air of the chapel might do her no service!"

"It is her wish to go to the altar, and you are sensible it is not my part to question her decision in such a matter."

"'Tis a pious inclination; though I trust she knows the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal church. The laws of the colonies are too loose on the subject of marriages, Major Lincoln; culpably and dangerously loose!"

"But, as it is not in our power to alter, my good sir, will you permit me to profit by them; imperfect as they are?"

"Undeniably it is part of my office to christen, to marry, and to bury; a duty which I often say, covers the beginning, the middle, and the end of existence but permit me to help you to a little of my beverage, Major Lincoln we call it `Samson,' in Boston; you will find the `Danite' a warm companion for a February night in this climate."

"The mixture is not inaptly named, sir," said Lionel, after wetting his lips, "if strength be the quality most considered!"

"Ah! you have him from the lap of a Delilah; but it is unbecoming in one of my cloth to meddle with aught of the harlot."

He laughed at his own wit, and made a more spirituous than spiritual addition to his own glass, while he continued

"We divide it into `Samson with his hair off,' and `Samson with his hair on;' and I believe myself the most orthodox in preferring the man of strength, in his native comeliness. I pledge you, Major Lincoln; may the middle of your days be as happy as the charming young lady you are about to espouse may well render them; and your end, sir, that of a good churchman, and a faithful subject."

Lionel, who considered this compliment as an indication of his success, now rose, and said a few words on the subject of their meeting in the chapel. The divine, who manifestly possessed no great relish for the duty, made sundry slight objections to the whole proceeding, which were, however, soon overcome by the arguments of the bridegroom. At length every difficulty was happily adjusted, save one, and that the epicurean doctor stoutly declared to be a serious objection to acting in the matter. The church fires were suffered to go down, and his sexton had been taken from the chapel that very evening, with every symptom on him of the terrible pestilence which then raged in the place, adding, by its danger, to the horrors and the privations of the siege.

"A clear case of the small pox, I do assure you, Major Lincoln," he continued, "and contracted, without doubt, from some emissaries sent into the town for that purpose, by the wicked devices of the rebels."

"I have heard that each party accuses the other of resorting to these unjustifiable means of annoyance," returned Lionel; "but as I know our own leader to be above such baseness, I will not suspect any other man of it without proof."

"Too charitable by half, sir much too charitable! But let the disease come whence it will, I fear my sexton will prove its victim."

"I will take the charge on myself of having the fires renewed," said Lionel; "the embers must yet be in the stoves, and we have still an hour of time before us."

As the clergyman was much too conscientious to retain possession of the gold without fully entitling himself to the ownership, he had long before determined to comply, notwithstanding the secret yearnings of his flesh. Their plans were now soon arranged, and Lionel, after receiving the key of the chapel, took his leave for a time.

When Major Lincoln found himself in the street again, he walked for some distance in the direction of the chapel, anxiously looking along the deserted way, in order to discover an unemployed soldier, who might serve to perform the menial offices of the absent sexton. He proceeded for some distance without success, for every thing human seemed housed, even the number of lights in the windows beginning to decrease in a manner which denoted that the usual hour of rest had arrived. He had paused in the entrance of the dock-square, uncertain where to apply for an assistant, when he caught a glimpse of the figure of a man, crouching under the walls of the old turreted ware-house, so often mentioned. Without hesitating an instant, he approached the spot, from which the figure neither moved, nor did it indeed betray any other evidence of a consciousness of his proximity. Notwithstanding the dimness of the moon, there was light enough to detect the extreme misery of the object before him. His tattered and thin attire sufficiently bespoke the motive of the stranger for seeking a shelter from the cutting winds behind an angle of the wall, while his physical wants were betrayed by the eager manner in which he gnawed at a bone that might well have been rejected from the mess of the meanest private, notwithstanding the extreme scarcity that prevailed in the garrison. Lionel forgot for a moment his present object, at this exhibition of human suffering, and with a kind voice he addressed the wretched being.

"You have a cold spot to eat your supper in, my friend," he said; "and it would seem, too, but a scanty meal?"

Without ceasing to masticate his miserable nutriment, or even raising his eyes, the other said, in a growling voice

"The king could shut up the harbor, and keep out the ships; but he hasn't the might to drive cold weather from Boston, in the month of March!"

"As I live, Job Pray! Come with me, boy, and I will give you a better meal, and a warmer place to enjoy it in but first tell me; can you procure a lantern and a light from your mother?"

"You can't go in the ware'us' to-night," returned the lad, positively.

"Is there no place at hand, then, where such things might be purchased?"

"They keep them there," said Job, pointing sullenly to a low building on the opposite side of the square, through one of the windows of which a faint light was glimmering.

"Then take this money and go buy them for me, without delay."

Job hesitated with ill-concealed reluctance.

"Go, fellow, I have instant need of them, and you can keep the change for your reward."

The young man no longer betrayed any indisposition to go, but answered, with great promptitude for one of his imbecile mind

"Job will go, if you will let him buy Nab some meat with the change?"

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

"Certainly, buy what you will with it; and furthermore, I promise you that neither your mother nor yourself shall want again for food or clothing."

"Job's a-hungry," said the simpleton; "but they say hunger don't come as craving upon a young stomach as upon an old one. Do you think the king knows what it is to be a-cold and hungry?"

"I know not, boy but I know full well that if one suffering like you were before him, his heart would yearn to relieve him. Go, go, and buy yourself food too, if they have it?"

In a very few minutes Lionel saw the simpleton issuing from the house to which he had run at his bidding, with the desired lantern.

"Did you get any food," said Lionel, motioning to Job to precede him with the light "I trust you did not entirely forget yourself in your haste to serve me?"

"Job hopes he didn't catch the pestilence," returned the lad, eating at the same time voraciously of a small roll of bread.

"Catch what? what is it you hope you did not catch?"

"The pestilence they are full of the foul disorder in that house."

"Do you mean the small-pox, boy?"

"Yes; some call it small-pox, and some call it the foul disorder, and other some the pestilence. The king can keep out the trade, but he can't keep out the cold and the pestilence from Boston but when the people get the town back, they'll know what to do with it they'll send it all to the pest-housen!"

"I hope I have not exposed you unwittingly to danger, Job it would have been better had I gone myself, for I was inoculated for the terrible disease in my infancy."

Job, who, in expressing his sense of the danger, had exhausted the stores of his feeble mind on the subject, made no reply, but continued walking through the square, until they reached its termination, when he turned, and inquired which way he was to go.

"To the church," said Lionel, "and swiftly, lad."

As they entered Corn-hill, they encountered the fury of the wind, when Major Lincoln bowing his head, and gathering his cloak about him, followed the light which flitted along the pavement in his front. Shut out in a manner from the world by this covering, his thoughts returned to their former channel, and in a few moments he forgot where he was, or who he was following. He was soon awakened from his abstraction by perceiving that it was necessary for him to ascend a few steps, when supposing he had reached the place of destination, he raised his head, and unthinkingly followed his conductor into the tower of a large edifice. Immediately perceiving his mistake, by the difference of the architecture from that of the King's chapel, he reproved the lad for his folly, and demanded why he had brought him thither.

"This is what you call a church," said Job, "though I call it a meetin'us' It's no wonder you don't know it for what the people built for a temple, the king has turned into a stable!"

"A stable!" exclaimed Lionel. Perceiving a strong smell of horses in the place, he advanced and threw open the inner door, when, to his amazement, he perceived that he stood in an area fitted for the exercises of the cavalry.

There was no mistaking the place, nor its uses. The naked galleries, and many of the original ornaments were standing, but the accommodations below were destroyed, and in their places the floor had been covered with earth, for horses and their riders to practise in the cavesson. The abominations of the place even now offended his senses as he stood on that spot where he remembered so often to have seen the grave and pious colonists assemble, in crowds, to worship. Seizing the lantern from Job, he hurried out of the building with a disgust that even the unobservant simpleton had no difficulty in discovering. On reaching the street his eyes fell upon the lights, and on the silent dignity of Province-house, and he was compelled to recollect, that this wanton violation of the feelings of the colonists, had been practised directly under the windows of the royal governor.

"Fools, fools!" he muttered bitterly; "when ye should have struck like men, ye have trifled as children; and ye have forgotten your manhood, and even your God, to indulge your besotted spleen!"

"And now these very horses are starving for want of hay, as a judgment upon them!" said Job, who shuffled his way industriously at the other's side. "They had better have gone to meetin' themselves, and heard the expounding, than to set dumb beasts a rioting in a place that the Lord used to visit so often!"

"Tell me, boy, of what other act of folly and madness has the army been guilty?"

"What! hav'n't you heard of the old North! They've made oven-wood of the grandest temple in the Bay! If they dared, they'd lay their ungodly hands on old Funnel itself!"

Lionel made no reply. He had heard that the distresses of the garrison, heightened as they were by the ceaseless activity of the Americans, had compelled them to convert many houses, as well as the church in question, into fuel. But he saw in the act nothing more than the usual recourse of a common military exigency. It was free from that reckless contempt of a people's feelings, which was exhibited in the prostitution of the ancient walls of the sister edifice, which was known throughout New-England, with a species of veneration, as the "old South." He continued his way gloomily along the silent streets, until he reached the more favoured temple, in which the ritual of the English church was observed, and whose roof was rendered doubly sacred, in the eyes of the garrison, by the accidental circumstance of bearing the title of their earthly monarch.

CHAPTER VI.

"Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo; down!"

Macbeth.

Major Lincoln found the King's Chapel differing in every particular from the venerable, but prostituted building he had just quitted. As he entered, the light of his lantern played over the rich scarlet covering of many a pew, and glanced upon the glittering ornaments of the polished organ, which now slumbered in as chilled a silence, as the dead which lay in such multitudes within and without the massive walls. The laboured columns, with their slender shafts and fretted capitals, threw shapeless shadows across the dim background, peopling the galleries and ceiling with imaginary phantoms of thin air. As this slight delusion passed away, he became sensible of the change in the temperature. The warmth was not yet dissipated which had been maintained during the different services of the day; for notwithstanding the wants of the town and garrison, the favoured temple, where the representative of the sovereign was wont to worship, knew not the ordinary privations of the place. Job was directed to supply the dying embers of the stoves with fresh fuel, and as the simpleton well knew where to find the stores of the church, his office was performed with an alacrity that was not a little increased by his own sufferings.

When the bustle of preparation had subsided, Lionel drew a chair from the chancel, while Job crouched by the side of the quivering iron he had heated, in that attitude he was wont to assume, and which so touchingly

expressed the secret consciousness he felt of his own inferiority. As the grateful warmth diffused itself over the halfnaked frame of the simpleton, his head sunk upon his bosom, and he was fast falling into a slumber, like a worried hound that had at length found ease and shelter. A more active mind would have wished to learn the reasons that could induce his companion to seek such an asylum at that unseasonable hour. But Job was a stranger to curiosity; nor did the occasional glimmerings of his mind often extend beyond those holy precepts which had been taught him with such care, before disease had sapped his faculties, or those popular principles of the time, that formed so essential a portion of the thoughts of every New-Englandman.

Not so with Major Lincoln. His watch told him that many weary minutes must elapse before he could expect to receive his bride, and he disposed himself to wait with as much patience as comported with five-and-twenty, and the circumstances. In a short time the stillness of the chapel was restored, interrupted only by the passing gusts of the wind without, and the dull roaring of the furnace by whose side Job slumbered in a state of happy oblivion.

Lionel endeavoured to still his truant thoughts, and bring them in training for the solemn ceremony in which he was soon to be an actor. Finding the task too difficult, he arose, and approaching a window, looked out upon the solitude, and the whirlwinds of snow that drifted through the streets, eagerly listening for those sounds of approach which his reason told him he ought not yet to expect. Again he seated himself, and turned his eyes inquiringly about him, with a sort of inward apprehension that some one lay concealed, in the surrounding gloom, with a secret design to mar his approaching happiness. There was so much of wild and feverish romance in the incidents of the day, that he found it difficult, at moments, to credit their reality, and had recourse to hasty glances at the altar, his attire, and even his insensible companion, to remove the delusion from his mind. Again he looked upward at the unsteady and huge shadows which wavered along the ceiling and the walls, and his former apprehensions of some hidden evil were revived with a vividness that amounted nearly to a presentiment. So uneasy did he become at length, under this impression, that he walked along the more distant aisles, scrupulously looking into the dark pews, and throwing a scrutinizing glance behind each column, and was rewarded for his trouble, by hearing the hollow echoes of his own footsteps.

In returning from this round he approached the stove, and yielded to a strong desire of listening to the voice of even Job, in a moment of such morbid excitement. Touching the simpleton lightly with his foot, the other awoke with that readiness which denoted the sudden and disturbed nature of his ordinary rest.

"You are unusually dull to-night, Job," said Lionel, endeavouring to hush his uneasiness in affected pleasantry, "or you would inquire the reason why I pay my visit to the church at this extraordinary hour?"

"Boston folks love their meetin'us's," returned the obtuse simpleton.

"Ay! but they love their beds, too, fellow; and one-half of them are now enjoying what you seem to covet so much."

"Job loves to eat, and to be warm!"

"And to sleep too, if one may judge by your drowsiness."

"Yes, sleep is sweet; Job don't feel a-hungred when he's sleeping."

Lionel remained silent, for several moments, under a keen perception of the suffering exhibited in the touching helplessness, which marked the manner of the other, before he continued

"But I expect to be joined, soon, by the clergyman, and some ladies, and captain Polwarth."

"Job likes captain Polwarth he keeps a grand sight of provisions!"

"Enough of this! can you think of nothing but your stomach, boy?"

"God made hunger," said Job, gloomily, "and he made food, too; but the king keeps it all for his rake-hellies!"

"Well, listen, and be attentive to what I tell you. One of the ladies who will come here, is Miss Dynevor; you know Miss Dynevor, Job? the beautiful Miss Dynevor!"

The charms of Cecil had not, however, made their wonted impression on the dull eye of the idiot, who still regarded the speaker with his customary air of apathy.

"Surely, Job, you know Miss Dynevor!" repeated Lionel, with an irritability that, at any other time, he would have been the first to smile at "she has often given you money and clothes."

"Yes; Ma'am Lechmere is her grandam!"

This was certainly one of the least recommendations his mistress possessed, in the eyes of Lionel, who paused a moment, with inward vexation, before he added

"Let who will be her relatives, she is this night to become my wife. You will remain and witness the ceremony, and then you will extinguish the lights, and return the key of the church to Dr. Liturgy. In the morning come to me for your reward."

The changeling arose, with an air of singular importance, and answered

"To be sure. Major Lincoln is to be married, and he asks Job to the wedding! Now, Nab may preach her sarmons about pride and flaunty feelings as much as she will; but blood is blood, and flesh is flesh, for all her sayings!"

Struck by the expression of wild meaning that gleamed in the eyes of the simpleton, Major Lincoln demanded an explanation of his ambiguous language. But ere Job had leisure to reply, though his vacant look again denoted that his thoughts were already contracting themselves within their usually narrow limits, a sudden noise drew the attention of both to the entrance of the chapel. The door opened in the next instant, and the figure of the divine, powdered with drifted snow, and encased in various defences against the cold, was seen, moving with a becoming gravity, through the principal aisle. Lionel hastened to receive him, and to conduct him to the seat he had just occupied himself.

When Dr. Liturgy had uncloaked, and appeared in his robes of office, the benevolence of his smile, and the whole expression of his countenance, denoted that he was satisfied with the condition in which he found the preparations.

"There is no reason why a church should not be as comfortable as a man's library, Major Lincoln," he said, hitching his seat a little nearer to the stove. "It is a puritanical and a dissenting idea, that religion has any thing forbidding or gloomy in its nature; and wherefore should we assemble amid pains and inconvenience to discharge its sacred offices."

"Quite true, sir," returned Lionel, looking anxiously through one of the windows "I have not yet heard the hour of ten strike, though my watch tells me it is time!"

"The weather renders the public clocks very irregular. There are so many unavoidable evils to which flesh is heir, that we should endeavour to be happy on all occasions indeed it is a duty "

"It's not in the natur of sin to make fallen man happy," said a low, growling voice from behind the stove.

"Ha! what! did you speak, Major Lincoln a very singular sentiment for a bridegroom!" muttered the divine.

"'Tis that weak young man, whom I have brought hither to assist with the fires, repeating some of the lore of his mother; nothing else, sir."

By this time Dr. Liturgy had caught a glimpse of the crouching Job, and comprehending the interruption, he fell back in his chair, smiling superciliously, as he continued

"I know the lad, sir; I should know him. He is learned in the texts, and somewhat given to disputation in matters of religion. 'Tis a pity the little intellect he has, had not been better managed in his infancy; but they have helped to crush his feeble mind with their subtleties, We I mean we of the established church often style him the Boston Calvin ha, ha, ha! Old Cotton was not his equal in subtilty! but speaking of the establishment, do you not fancy that one of the consequences of this rebellion will be to extend its benefits to the colonies, and that we may look forward to the period when the true church shall possess its inheritance in these religious provinces?"

"Oh, most certainly," said Lionel, again walking anxiously to the window; "would to God they had come!"

The divine, with whom weddings were matters of too frequent occurrence to awaken his sympathies, understood the impatient bridegroom literally, and replied accordingly.

"I am glad to hear you say it, Major Lincoln, and I hope when the act of amnesty shall be passed, to find your vote on the side of such a condition."

At this instant Lionel caught a glimpse of the well-known sleigh, moving slowly along the deserted street, and uttering a cry of pleasure, he rushed to the door to receive his bride. Dr. Liturgy finished his sentence to himself, and rising from his comfortable position, he took the light and entered the chancel. The disposition of the candles having been previously made, when they were lighted, his book opened, his robes adjusted, and his features settled into a suitable degree of solemnity, he stood, waiting with becoming dignity the approach of those over whom he was to pronounce the nuptial benediction. Job placed himself within the shadows of the building, and stood regarding the attitude and imposing aspect of the priest, with a species of childish awe.

Then came a group, emerging from the obscurity of the distant part of the church, and moving slowly toward the altar. Cecil was in front, leaning on that arm which Lionel had given her, as much for support, as through courtesy. She had removed her outer and warmer garments in the vestibule of the sacred edifice, and now appeared, attired in a manner as well suited to the suddenness and privacy, as to the importance of the ceremony. A mantle of satin, trimmed with delicate furs, fell carelessly from her shoulders, partly concealing by its folds the exquisite proportions of her slender form. Beneath was a vestment of the same rich material, cut, after the fashions of that period, in a manner to give the exact outlines of the bust. Across the stomacher were deep rows of fine lace, and wide borders of the same valuable texture followed the retiring edges of her robe, leaving the costly dress within partly exposed to the eye. But the beauty and simplicity of her attire (it was simple for that day) was lost, or, rather, it served to adorn, unnoticed, the melancholy beauty of her countenance.

As they approached the expecting priest, Cecil threw, by a gentle movement, her mantle on the rails of the chancel, and accompanied Lionel, with a firmer tread than before, to the foot of the altar. Her cheeks were pale; but it was rather with a compelled resolution than dread, while her eyes were full of tenderness and thought: Of the two devotees of Hymen, she exhibited, if not the most composure, certainly the most singleness of purpose and intentness on the duty before them; for while the looks of Lionel were stealing uneasily about the building, as if he expected some hidden object to start up out of the darkness, her's were riveted on the priest in sweet and earnest attention.

They paused in their allotted places; and after a moment was allowed for Agnes and Polwarth, who alone followed, to enter the chancel, the low but deep tones of the minister were heard in the solemn stillness of the place.

Dr. Liturgy had borrowed a suitable degree of inspiration from the dreariness of the hour, and the solitude of the building where he was required to discharge his sacred functions. As he delivered the opening exhortation of the service, he made long and frequent pauses between the members of the sentences, giving to each injunction a distinct and impressive emphasis. But when he came to those closing words

"If any man can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together let him now speak, or else, hereafter, for ever hold his peace."

He lifted his voice, and raised his eyes to the more distant parts of the chapel, as though he addressed a multitude in the gloom. The faces of all present involuntarily followed the direction of his gaze, and a moment of deep expectation, which can only be explained by the singularly wild character of the scene, succeeded the reverberation of his tones. At that moment, when each had taken breath, and all were again turning to the altar, a huge shadow rose upon the gallery, and extended itself along the ceiling, until its gigantic proportions were seen hovering, like an evil spectre, nearly above them.

The clergyman suspended the half-uttered sentence. Cecil grasped the arm of Lionel convulsively, while a shudder passed through her frame, that seemed about to shake it to dissolution.

The shadowy image then slowly withdrew, not without, however, throwing out a fantastic gesture, with an arm which stretched itself across the vaulted roof, and down the walls as if about to clutch its victims beneath.

"If any man can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else, hereafter, for ever hold his peace," repeated the priest aloud, as if he would summon the universe at the challenge.

Again the shadow rose, presenting this time the strong and huge lineaments of a human face, which it was not difficult, at such a moment, to fancy possessed even expression and life. Its strongly marked features seemed to work with powerful emotion, and the lips moved as if the airy being was speaking to unearthly ears. Next came two arms, raised above the gazing group, with clasped hands, as in the act of benediction, after which the whole vanished, leaving the ceiling in its own dull white, and the building still as the graves which surrounded it.

Once more the excited minister uttered the summons; and again every eye was drawn, by a secret impulse, to a spot which seemed to possess the form without the substance of a human being. But the shadow was seen no more. After waiting several moments in vain, Dr. Liturgy proceeded, with a voice in which a growing tremor was very perceptible, but no further interruption was experienced to the end of the service.

Cecil pronounced her vows, and plighted her troth in tones of holy emotion, while Lionel, who was prepared for some strange calamity, went through the service to the end with a forced calmness. They were married; and when the blessing was uttered, not a sound nor a whisper was heard in the party. Silently they all turned away from the spot, and prepared to leave the place. Cecil stood passively, and permitted Lionel to wrap her form in the folds of her mantle with tender care, and when she would have smiled her thanks for the attention, she merely raised her anxious eyes to the ceiling, with an expression that could not be mistaken. Even Polwarth was mute; and Agnes forgot to offer those congratulations and good-wishes with which her heart had so recently been swelling.

The clergyman muttered a few words of caution to Job concerning the candles and the fire, and hurried after the retiring party with a quickness of step that he was willing to ascribe to the lateness of the hour, and with a total disregard to the safety of the edifice; leaving the chapel to the possession of the ill-gifted, but undisturbed son of Abigail Pray.

CHAPTER VII.

"Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all;
"Close up his eyes, and draw the curtain close;
"And let us all to meditation."

King Henry Vi.

The bridal party entered their little vehicle, silent and thoughtful; the voice of Polwarth being alone audible as he gave a few low and hurried orders to the groom who was in waiting. Dr. Liturgy approached for a moment, and made his compliments, when the sleigh darted away from before the building, as swiftly as if the horse that drew it partook of the secret uneasiness of those it held. The movements of the divine, though less rapid, were equally diligent, and in less than a minute the winds whistled, and clouds of snow were driven through a street, which every thing possessing life appeared once more to have abandoned.

The instant Polwarth had discharged his load, at the door of Mrs. Lechmere, he muttered something of "happiness and to-morrow," which his friend did not understand, and dashed through the gate of the court-yard, at the same mad rate that he had driven from the church. On entering the house, Agnes repaired to the room of her aunt, to report that the marriage knot was tied, while Lionel led his silent bride into the empty parlour.

Cecil stood, fixed and motionless as a statue, while her husband removed her cloak and mantle; her cheeks pale, her eyes riveted on the floor, and her whole attitude and manner exhibiting the intensity of thought which had been created by the scene in which she had just been an actor. When he had relieved her light form from the load of garments in which it had been enveloped by his care, he impelled her gently to a seat by his side, on the settee, and for the first time since she had uttered the final vow at the altar, she spoke

"Was it a fearful omen!" she whispered, as he folded her to his heart, "or was it no more than a horrid fancy!"

"'Twas nothing, love 'twas a shadow that of Job Pray, who was with me to light the fires."

"No no no," said Cecil, speaking with the rapidity of high excitement, and in tones that gathered strength as she proceeded "Those were never the unmeaning features of the miserable simpleton! Know, you, Lincoln, that in the haughty, the terrific outlines of those dreadful lineaments on the wall, I fancied a resemblance to the profile of our great uncle, your father's predecessor in the title Dark Sir Lionel, as he was called!"

"It was easy to fancy any thing, at such a time, and under such circumstances. Do not cloud the happiness of our bridal by these gloomy fancies?"

"Am I gloomy or superstitious by habit, Lionel?" she asked, with a deprecating tenderness in her voice, that touched his inmost heart "but it came at such a moment, and in such a shape, that I should be more than woman not to tremble at its terrible import!"

"What is it you dread, Cecil? Are we not married; lawfully, solemnly united?" the bride shuddered; but perceiving her unwilling, or unable to answer, he continued "beyond the power of man to sever; and with the consent, nay, by the earnest wish, the command of the only being who can have a right to express a wish, or have an opinion on the subject?"

"I believe that is I think, it is all as you say, Lionel," returned Cecil, still looking about her with a vacant and distressed air that curdled his blood; "yes yes, we are certainly married; and Oh! how ardently do I implore Him

who sees and governs all things, that our union may be blessed! but"

"But what, Cecil? will you let a thing of naught a shadow affect you in this manner?"

"'Twas a shadow, as you say, Lincoln; but where was the substance!"

"Cecil, my sensible, my good, my pious Cecil, why do your faculties slumber in this unaccountable apathy! Ask your own excellent reason: can there be a shade where nothing obstructs the light?"

"I know not. I cannot reason I have not reason. All things are possible to Him whose will is law, and whose slightest wish shakes the universe. There was a shadow, a dark, a speaking, and a terrible shadow; but who can say where was the reality?"

"I had almost answered, with the phantom, only in your own sensitive imagination, love. But arouse your slumbering powers, Cecil, and reflect how possible it was for some curious idler of the garrison to have watched my movements, and to have secreted himself in the chapel; perhaps from wanton mischief perhaps without motive of any kind."

"He then chose an awful moment in which to act his gambols!"

"It may have been one whose knowledge was just equal to giving a theatrical effect to his silly deception. But are we to be cheated of our happiness by such weak devices; or to be miserable because Boston contains a fool!"

"I may be weak, and silly, and even impious in this terror, Lincoln," she said, turning her softened looks upon his anxious face, and attempting to smile; "but it is assailing a woman in a point where she is most sensitive. You know that I have no reserve with you, now. Marriage with us is the tie that `binds all charities in one,' and at the moment when the heart is full of its own security, is it not dreadful to have such mysterious presages, be they true, or be they false, answering to the awful appeal of the church!"

"Nor is the tie less binding, less important, or less dear, my own Cecil, to us. Believe me, whatever the pride of manhood may say, of high destinies, and glorious deeds, the same affections are deeply seated in our nature, and must be soothed by those we love, and not by those who contribute to our vanity. Why, then, permit this chill to blight your best affections in their budding?"

There was so much that was soothing to the anxiety of a bride, in his sentiments, and so much of tender interest in his manner, that he at length succeeded, in a great degree, in luring Cecil from her feverish apprehensions. As he spoke, a mantling bloom diffused itself over her cold and pallid cheeks, and when he had done, her eyes lighted with the glow of a woman's confidence, and were turned on his own in bright, but blushing pleasure. She repeated his word `chill,' with an emphasis and a smile that could not be misconstrued, and in a few minutes he entirely succeeded in quelling the uneasy presentiments that had gained a momentary ascendancy over her clear and excellent faculties.

But notwithstanding Major Lincoln reasoned so well, and with so much success, against the infirmity of his bride, he was by no means equal to maintain as just an argument with himself. The morbid sensibility of his mind had been awakened in a most alarming manner by the occurrences of the evening, though his warm interest in the happiness of Cecil had enabled him to smother them, so long as he witnessed the extent and nature of her apprehensions. But, exactly in the proportion as he persuaded her into forgetfulness of the past, his recollections became more vivid and keen; and, notwithstanding his art, he might not have been able to conceal the workings of his troubled thoughts from his companion, had not Agnes appeared, and announced the desire of Mrs. Lechmere to receive the bride and bridegroom in her sick chamber.

"Come, Lincoln," said his lovely companion, rising at the summons, "we have been selfish in forgetting how strongly my grandmother sympathizes in our good or evil fortunes. We should have discharged this duty without waiting to be reminded of it."

Without making any other reply than a fond pressure of the hand he held, Lionel drew her arm through his own, and followed Agnes into the little hall which conducted to the upper part of the dwelling.

"You know the way, Major Lincoln," said Miss Danforth; "and should you not, my lady bride can show you. I must go and cast a worldly eye on the little banquet I have ordered, but which I fear will be labour thrown away, since captain Polwarth has disdained to exhibit his prowess at the board. Truly, Major Lincoln, I marvel that a man of so much substance as your friend, should be frightened from his stomach by a shadow!"

Cecil even laughed, and in those sweet feminine tones that are infectious, at the humour of her cousin; but the dark and anxious expression that gathered round the brow of her husband as suddenly checked her mirth.

"Let us ascend, Lincoln," she said, instantly, "and leave mad Agnes to her household cares, and her folly."

"Ay, go," cried the other, turning away towards the supper-room "eating and drinking is not ethereal enough for your elevated happiness; would I had a repast worthy of such sentimental enjoyment! Let me see dew drops and lovers tears, in equal quantities, sweetened by Cupid's smiles, with a dish of sighs, drawn by moon-light, for piquancy, as Polwarth would say, would flavour a bowl to their tastes. The dewdrops might be difficult to procure, at this inclement season, and in such a night; but if sighs and tears would serve alone, poor Boston is just now rich enough in materials!"

Lionel, and his half-blushing, half-smiling companion, heard the dying sounds of her voice, as she entered the distant apartment, expressing, by its tones, the mingled pleasantry and spleen of its mistress, and in the next instant they forgot both Agnes and her humour, as they found themselves in the presence of Mrs. Lechmere.

The first glance of his eye at their expecting relative, brought a painful throb to the heart of Major Lincoln. Mrs. Lechmere had caused herself to be raised in her bed, in which she was seated nearly upright, supported by pillows. Her wrinkled and emaciated cheeks were flushed with an unnatural colour, that contrasted too violently with the marks which age and strong passions had impressed, with their indelible fingers, on the surrounding wreck of those haughty features, which had once been distinguished for great, if not attractive beauty. Her hard eyes had lost their ordinary expression of worldly care, in a brightness which caused them rather to glare than beam, with flashes of unbridled satisfaction that could no longer be repressed. In short, her whole appearance brought a startling conviction to the mind of the young man, that whatever might have been the ardour of his own feelings in espousing her grand-child, he had at length realized the fondest desires of a being so worldly, so designing, and, as he was now made keenly to remember, of one, also, who he had much reason to apprehend, was so guilty. The invalid did not seem to think a concealment of her exultation any longer necessary, for stretching out her arms, she called to her child, in a voice raised above its natural tones, and which was dissonant and harsh from a sort of unholy triumph

"Come to my arms, my pride, my hope, my dutiful, my deserving daughter! Come and receive a parent's blessing; that blessing which you so much deserve!"

Even Cecil, warm and consoling as was the language of her grand-mother, hesitated an instant at the unnatural voice in which the summons was uttered, and advanced to meet her embrace with a manner less warm than was usual to her own ardent and unsuspecting nature. This secret restraint existed, however, but for a moment; for when she felt the encircling arms of Mrs. Lechmere pressing her warmly to her aged bosom, she looked up into the face of her grandmother, as if to thank her for so much affection, by her own guileless smiles and tears.

"Here, then, Major Lincoln, you possess my greatest, I had almost said my only treasure!" added Mrs. Lechmere "she is a good, a gentle, and dutiful child; and heaven will bless her for it, as I do." Leaning forward, she continued, in a less excited voice "Kiss me, my Cecil, my bride, my Lady Lincoln! for by that loved title I may now call you, as yours, in the course of nature, it soon will be."

Cecil, greatly shocked at the unguarded exultation of her grandmother, gently withdrew herself from her arms, and with eyes bent to the floor in shame, and burning cheeks, she willingly moved aside to allow Lionel to approach, and receive his share of the congratulations. He stooped to bestow the cold and reluctant kiss, which the offered cheek of Mrs. Lechmere invited, and muttered a few incoherent words concerning his present happiness, and the obligation she had conferred. Notwithstanding the high and disgusting triumph which had broken through the usually cold and cautious manner of the invalid, a powerful and unbidden touch of nature mingled in her address to the bridegroom. The fiery and unnatural glow of her eyes even softened with a tear, as she spoke

"Lionel, my nephew, my son," she said "I have endeavoured to receive you in a manner worthy of the head of an ancient and honourable name; but were you a sovereign prince, I have now done my last and best in your favour! Cherish her love her be more than husband be all of kin to the precious child, for she merits all! Now is my latest wish fulfilled! Now may I prepare myself for the last great change, in the quiet of a long and tranquil evening to the weary and troublesome day of life!"

"Woman!" said a tremendous voice in the back ground "thou deceivest thyself!"

"Who," exclaimed Mrs. Lechmere, raising her body with a convulsive start, as if about to leap from the bed "who is it speaks!"

"'Tis I" returned the well remembered tones of Ralph, as he advanced from the door to the foot of her couch "'Tis I, Priscilla Lechmere; one who knows thy merits and thy doom!"

The appalled woman fell back on her pillows, gasping for breath, the flush of her cheeks giving place to their former signs of age and disease, and her eye losing its high exultation in the glazed look of sudden terror. It would seem, however, that a single moment of reflection was sufficient to restore her spirit, and with it, all her deep resentments. She motioned the intruder away, by a violent gesture of the hand, and after an effort to command her utterance, she said, in a voice rendered doubly strong by overwhelming passion

"Why am I braved, at such a moment, in the privacy of my sick chamber! Have that madman, or impostor, whichever he may be, removed from my presence!"

She uttered her request to deadened ears. Lionel neither moved nor answered. His whole attention was given to Ralph, across whose hollow features a smile of calm indifference passed, which denoted how little he regarded the threatened violence. Even Cecil, who clung to the arm of Lionel, with all a woman's dependance on him she loved, was unnoticed by the latter, in the absorbing interest he took in the sudden reappearance of one whose singular and mysterious character had, long since, raised such hopes and fears in his own bosom.

"Your doors will shortly be open to all who may choose to visit here," the old man coldly answered; "why should I be driven from a dwelling where heartless crowds shall so soon enter and depart at will! Am I not old enough; or do I not bear enough of the aspect of the grave to become your companion? Priscilla Lechmere, you have lived till the bloom of your cheeks has given place to the colour of the dead; your dimples have become furrowed and wrinkled lines; and the beams of your once bright eye, have altered to the dull look of care but you have not yet lived for repentance!"

"What manner of language is this!" cried his wondering listener, inwardly shrinking before his steady, but glowing look. "Why am I singled from the world for this persecution? are my sins past bearing; or am I alone to

be reminded that sooner or later, age and death will come! I have long known the infirmities of life, and may truly say that I am prepared for their final consequences."

"'Tis well," returned the unmoved and apparently immovable intruder "take, then, and read the solemn decree of thy God; and may He grant thee firmness to justify so much confidence."

As he spoke, he extended, in his withered hand, an open letter towards Mrs. Lechmere, which the quick glance of Lionel told him bore his own name in the superscription. Notwithstanding the gross invasion of his rights, the young man was passive under the detection of this second and gross interference of the other in his most secret matters, watching with eager interest the effect the strange communication would produce on his aunt.

Mrs. Lechmere took the letter from the stranger with a sort of charmed submission, which denoted how completely his solemn manner had bent her to his will. The instant her look fell on the contents, it became fixed and wild. The note was, however, short, and the scrutiny was soon ended. Still she grasped it with an extended arm, though the vacant expression of her countenance betrayed that it was held before an insensible eye. A moment of silent and breathless wonder followed. It was succeeded by a shudder which passed through the whole frame of the invalid, her limbs shaking violently, until the rattling of the folds of the paper was audible in the most distant corner of the apartment.

"This bears my name," cried Lionel, shocked at her emotions, and taking the paper from her unresisting hand, "and should first have met my eye."

"Aloud aloud, dear Lionel," said a faint but earnest whisper at his elbow; "aloud, I implore you, aloud!"

It was not, perhaps, so much in compliance with this affecting appeal, in which the whole soul of Cecil seemed wrapped, as by yielding to the overwhelming flow of that excitement to which he had been aroused, that Major Lincoln was led to conform to her request. In a voice rendered desperately calm by his emotions, he uttered the fatal contents of the note, in tones so distinct, that they sounded to his wife, in the stillness of the place, like the prophetic warnings of one from the dead:

"The state of the town has prevented that close attention to the case of Mrs. Lechmere, which her injuries rendered necessary. An inward mortification has taken place, and her present ease is only the forerunner of her death. I feel it my duty to say, that though she may live many hours, it is not improbable that she will die to-night."

To this short, but terrible annunciation, was placed the well-known signature of the attending physician. Here was a sudden change, indeed! All had thought that the disease had given way, when it seemed it had been preying insidiously on the vitals of the sick. Dropping the note, Lionel exclaimed aloud, in the suddenness of his surprise

"Die to night! This is an unexpected summons, indeed!"

The miserable woman, after the first nerveless moment of her dismay, turned her looks anxiously from face to face, and listened intently to the words of the note, as they fell from the lips of Lionel, like one eager to detect the glimmerings of hope in the alarmed expression of their countenances. But the language of her physician was too plain, direct, and positive to be misunderstood or perverted. Its very coldness gave it a terrific character of truth.

"Do you then credit it?" she asked in a voice whose husky tones betrayed but too plainly her abject unwillingness to be assured. "You! Lionel Lincoln, whom I had thought my friend!"

Lionel turned away silently from the sad spectacle of her misery; but Cecil dropped on her knees at the bed-side, and clasping her hands, she elevated them, looking like a beautiful picture of pious hope, as she murmured

"He is no friend, dearest grandmother, who would lay flattery to a parting soul! But there is a better and a safer dependence than all this world can offer!"

"And you, too!" cried the devoted woman, rousing herself with a strength and energy that would seem to put the professional knowledge of her medical attendant at defiance "do you also abandon me! You whom I have watched in infancy, nursed in suffering, fondled in happiness, ay! and reared in virtue yes, that I can say boldly in the face of the universe! You, whom I have brought to this honourable marriage; would you repay me for all, by black ingratitude!"

"My grandmother! my grandmother! talk not thus cruelly to your child! But lean on the rock of ages for support, even as I have leaned on thee!"

"Away away weak, foolish child! Excess of happiness has maddened thee! Come hither, my son; let us speak of Ravenscliffe, the proud seat of our ancestors; and of those days we are yet to pass under its hospitable roofs. The silly girl thou hast wived would wish to frighten me!"

Lionel shuddered with inward horror while he listened to the forced and broken intonations of her voice, as she thus uttered the lingering wishes of her nature. He turned again from the view, and, for a moment, buried his face in his hands, as if to exclude the world and its wickedness, together, from his sight.

"My grandmother, look not so wildly at us!" continued the gasping Cecil "yon may have yet hours, nay, days before you." She paused an instant to follow the unsettled and hopeless gaze of an eye that gleamed despairingly on the objects of the room, and then, with a meek dependence on her own purity, dropping her face between her hands, she cried aloud in her agony

"My mother's mother! Would that I could die for thee!"

"Die!" echoed the same dissonant voice as before, from a throat that already began to rattle with the hastened approaches of death "who would die amid the festivities of a bridal! Away leave me. To thy closet, and thy knees, if thou wilt but leave me."

She watched, with bitter resentment, the retiring form of Cecil, who obeyed with the charitable and pious intention of complying literally with her grandmother's order, before she added

"The girl is not equal to the task I had set her! All of my race have been weak, but I my daughter my husband's niece"

"What of that niece!" said the startling voice of Ralph, interrupting the diseased wanderings of her mind "that wife of thy nephew the mother of this youth? Speak, woman, while time and reason are granted thee."

Lionel now advanced to her bed-side, under an impulse that he could no longer subdue, and addressed her solemnly

"If thou knowest aught of the dreadful calamity that has befallen my family," he said, "or in any manner hast been accessory to its cause, disburthen thy soul, and die in peace. Sister of my grandfather! nay, more, mother of my wife! I conjure thee, speak what of my injured mother?"

"Sister of thy grandfather mother of thy wife," repeated Mrs. Lechmere, slowly, and in a manner that sufficiently indicated the unsettled state of her thoughts "Yes, both are true!"

"Speak to me, then, of my mother, if you acknowledge the ties of blood tell me of her dark fate?"

"She is in her grave dead rotten yes yes her boasted beauty has been fed upon by beastly worms! What more would ye have, mad boy? Would'st wish to see her bones in their winding-sheet?"

"The truth!" cried Ralph; "declare the truth, and thy own wicked agency in the deed."

"Who speaks?" repeated Mrs. Lechmere, dropping her voice from its notes of high excitement again, to the tremulous cadency of debility and age, and looking about her at the same time, as if a sudden remembrance had crossed her brain; "surely I heard sounds I should know!"

"Here; look on me fix thy wandering eye, if it yet has power to see, on me," cried Ralph, aloud, as though he would command her attention at every hazard "'tis I that speaks to thee, Priscilla Lechmere."

"What wouldst thou have? My daughter? she is in her grave! Her child? She is wedded to another Thou art too late! Thou art too late! Would to God thou hadst asked her of me in season"

"The truth the truth the truth!" continued the old man, in a voice that rung through the apartment in wild and startling echoes "the holy and undefiled truth! Give us that, and naught else."

This singular and solemn appeal awakened the latest energies of the despairing woman, whose inmost soul appeared to recoil before his cries. She made an effort to raise herself once more, and exclaimed

"Who says that I am dying? I am but seventy! and 'tis only yesterday I was a child a pure, an uncontaminated child! He lies he lies! I have no mortification I am strong, and have years to live and repent in."

In the pauses of her utterance, the voice of the old man was still heard shouting

"The truth the truth the holy, undefiled truth!"

"Let me rise and look upon the sun," continued the dying woman. "Where are ye all? Cecil, Lionel my children, do ye desert me now? Why do ye darken the room? Give me light more light! more light! for the sake of all in heaven and earth, abandon me not to this black and terrific darkness!"

Her aspect had become so hideously despairing, that the voice of even Ralph was stilled, and she continued uninterruptedly to shriek out the ravings of her soul.

"Why talk to such as I of death! My time has been too short! Give me days give me hours give me moments! Cecil, Agnes Abigail; where are ye help me, or I fall!"

She raised herself, by a desperate effort, from the pillows, and clutched wildly at the empty air. Meeting the extended hand of Lionel, she caught it with a dying grasp, gave a ghastly smile, under the false security it imparted, and falling backward again, her mortal part settled, with an universal shudder, into a state of eternal rest.

As the horrid exclamations of the deceased ended, so deep a stillness succeeded in the apartment, that the passing gusts of the gale were heard sighing among the roofs of the town, and might easily be mistaken, at such a moment, for the moanings of unembodied spirits over so accursed an end.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I wonder, sir, since wives are monstrous to you,
"And that you fly them, as you swear them, lordship,
"Yet, you desire to marry."

All's Well that Ends Well.

Cecil had left the room of her grandmother, with the consciousness of sustaining a load of anguish to which her young experience had hitherto left her a stranger. On her knees, and in the privacy of her closet, she poured out the aspirations of her pure spirit, in fervent petitions to that power, which she who most needed its support, had so long braved by the mockery of respect, and the seemliness of devotion. With her soul elevated by its recent communion with her God, and her feelings soothed even to calmness by the sacred glow that was shed around them, the youthful bride at length prepared to resume her post at the bed-side of her aged relative.

In passing from her own room to that of Mrs. Lechmere, she heard the busy voice of Agnes below, together with the sounds of the preparations that were making to grace her own hasty bridal, and for a moment she paused to assure herself that all which had so recently passed was more than the workings of a disturbed fancy. She gazed at the unusual, though modest ornaments of her attire; shuddered as she remembered the awful omen of the shadow, and then came to the dreadful reality with an overwhelming conviction of its truth. After laying her hand on the door, she paused with secret terror, to catch the sounds that might issue from the chamber of the sick. After listening a moment, the bustle below was hushed, and she, too, heard the whistling of the wind as its echoes died away among the chimneys and angles of the building. Encouraged by the deathlike stillness of those within her grandmother's room. Cecil now opened the door, under the pleasing impression that she should find the resignation of a Christian, where she had so lately witnessed the incipient ravings of despair. Her entrance was timid, for she dreaded to meet the hollow, but glaring eye of the nameless being who had borne the message of the physician and of whose mien and language she retained a confused but fearful recollection. Her hesitation and her fears, were, however, alike vain; for the room was silent and tenantless. Casting one wondering look around, in quest of the form most dear to her, Cecil advanced with a light step to the bed, and raising the coverlid, discovered the fatal truth at a glance.

The lineaments of Mrs. Lechmere had already stiffened, and assumed that cadaverous and ghastly expression which marks the touch of death. The parting soul had left the impression of its agony on her features, exhibiting the wreck of those passions which caused her, even in death, to look backward on that world she was leaving for ever, instead of forward to the unknown existence, towards which she was hurried. Perhaps the suddenness and the very weight of the shock, sustained the cheerless bride in that moment of trial. She neither spoke nor moved for more than a minute; but remained with her eyes riveted on the desolation of that countenance she had revered from her infancy, with a species of holy awe that was not entirely free from horror. Then came the recollection of the portentous omens of her wedding, and with it a dread that the heaviest of her misfortunes were yet in reserve. She dropped the covering on the pallid features of the dead, and quitted the apartment with a hurried step. The room of Lionel was on the same floor with that which she had just left, and before she had time for reflection, her hand was on its lock. Her brain was bewildered with the rush of circumstances. For a single instant she paused with maiden bashfulness, even recoiling in sensitive shame from the act she was about to commit, when all her fears, mingled with glimmerings of the truth, flashed again across her mind, and she burst into the room, uttering the name of him she sought, aloud.

The brands of a fallen fire had been carefully raked together, and were burning with a feeble and wavering flame. The room seemed filled with a cold air, which, as she encountered it, chilled the delicate person of Cecil; and flickering shadows were playing on the walls, with the uncertain movements imparted by the unsteady light. But, like the apartment of the dead, the room was still and empty. Perceiving that the door of the little dressing-room was open, she rushed to its threshold, and the mystery of the cold air and the wavering fire was explained, when she felt the gusts of wind rush by her from the open door at the foot of the narrow stairs. If Cecil had ever been required to explain the feelings which induced her to descend, or the manner in which it was effected, she would

have been unable to comply, for quick as thought she stood on the threshold of the outer-door, nearly unconscious of her situation.

The moon was still wading among the driving clouds, shedding just light enough to make the spectator sensible of the stillness of the camp and town. The easterly wind yet howled along the streets, occasionally lifting whirlwinds of snow, and wrapping whole squares in its dim wreaths. But neither man nor beast was visible amid the dreariness.

The bewildered bride shrunk from the dismal view, with a keen perception of its wild consonance with the death of her grandmother. In another moment she was again in the room above, each part of which was examined with maddening anxiety for the person of her husband. But her powers, excited and unnatural as they had become, could support her no longer. She was forced to yield to the impression that Lionel had deserted her in the most trying moment, and it was not strange that she coupled the sinister omens of the night with his mysterious absence. The heart-stricken girl clasped her hands in anguish, and shrieking the name of her cousin, sunk on the floor in total insensibility.

Agnes was busily and happily employed with her domestics, in preparing such a display of the wealth of the Lechmeres as should not disgrace her cousin in the eyes of her more wealthy lord and master. The piercing cry, however, notwithstanding the bustle of hurrying servants, and the clatter of knives and plates, penetrated to the supper-room, stilling each movement, and blanching every cheek.

" 'Tis my name!" said Agnes; "who is it calls?"

"If it was *possible*," returned Meriton, with a suitable emphasis, "that Master Lionel's bride *could* scream so, I should say it was my Lady's voice!"

" 'Tis Cecil 'tis Cecil!" cried Agnes, darting from the room; "O, I feared I feared these hasty nuptials!"

There was a general rush of the menials into the chambers, when the fatal truth became immediately known to the whole family. The lifeless clay of Mrs. Lechmere was discovered in its ghastly deformity, and, to all but Agnes, it afforded a sufficient solution of the situation of the bride.

More than an hour passed before the utmost care of her attendants succeeded in restoring Cecil to a state in which questions might avail any thing. Then her cousin took advantage of the temporary absence of her women, to mention the name of her husband. Cecil heard her with sudden joy; but looking about the room wildly, as if seeking him with her eyes, she pressed her hands upon her heart, and fell backward in that state of insensibility from which she had just been roused. No part of this expressive evidence of her grief was lost on the other, who left the room the instant her care had succeeded in bringing the sufferer once more to her recollection.

Agnes Danforth had never regarded her aunt with that confiding veneration and love which purified the affections of the granddaughter of the deceased. She had always possessed her more immediate relatives, from whom she derived her feelings and opinions, nor was she wanting in sufficient discernment to distinguish the cold and selfish traits that had so particularly marked the character of Mrs. Lechmere. She had therefore, consented to mortify her own spirit, and submit to the privations and dangers of the siege, entirely from a disinterested attachment to her cousin, who, without her presence, would have found her solitude and situation irksome.

In consequence of this disposition of her mind, Agnes was more shocked than distressed by the unexpected death that had occurred. Perhaps, if her anxiety had been less roused in behalf of Cecil, she might have retired to weep over the departure of one she had known so long, and of one, also, that, in the sincerity of her heart, she believed so little prepared for the mighty change. As it was, however, she took her way calmly to the parlour, where she summoned Meriton to her presence.

When the valet made his entrance, she assumed the appearance of a composure that was far from her feelings, and desired him to seek his master, with a request he would give Miss Danforth a short interview, without delay. During the time Meriton was absent on this errand, Agnes endeavoured to collect her thoughts for any emergency.

Minute passed after minute, however, and the valet did not return. She arose, and stepping lightly to the door, listened, and thought she heard his footsteps moving about in the more distant parts of the building, with a quickness that proved he conducted the search in good faith. At length she heard them nigher, and it was soon certain he was on his return. Agnes seated herself as before, and with an air that seemed as if she expected to receive the master instead of the man. Meriton, however, returned alone.

"Major Lincoln!" she said; "you desired him to meet me here?"

The whole countenance of Meriton expressed his amazement, as he answered

"Lord! Miss Agnus; Master Lionel has gone out! gone out on *such* a night! and what is more remarkable, he has gone out without his mourning; though the dead of his own blood and connexions lies unburied in the house!"

Agnes preserved her composure, and gladly led the valet on in the path his thoughts had taken, in order to come at the truth, without betraying her own apprehensions.

"How know you, Mr. Meriton, that your master has been so far forgetful of appearances?"

"As certain, Ma'am, as I know that he wore his parade uniform this evening when he left the house the first time; though little did I dream his honour was going to get married! If he hasn't gone out in the same dress, where is it? Besides, Ma'am, his last mourning is under lock, and here is the key in my pocket."

" 'Tis singular he should choose such an hour, as well as the time of his marriage, to absent himself!"

Meriton had long learned to identify all his interests with those of his master, and he coloured highly under the oblique imputation that he thought was no less cast on Lionel's gallantry, than on his sense of propriety in general.

"Why, Miss Agnus, you will please remember, Ma'am," he answered, "as this wedding hasn't been at all like an English wedding nor can I say that it is altogether usual to die in England as suddenly as Ma'am Lechmere has been pleased"

"Perhaps," interrupted Agnes, "some accident may have happened to him. Surely no man of common humanity would willingly be away at such a moment!"

The feelings of Meriton now took another direction, and he unhesitatingly adopted the worst apprehensions of the young lady.

Agnes leaned her forehead on her hand, for a minute, in deep reflection, before she spoke again. Then raising her eyes to the valet, she said

"Mr. Meriton, know you where captain Polwarth sleeps?"

"Certainly, Ma'am! He's a gentleman as always sleeps in his own bed, unless the king's service calls him elsewhere. A considerate gentleman is captain Polwarth, Ma'am, in respect of himself!"

Miss Danforth bit her lip, and her playful eye lighted for an instant, with a ray that banished its look of sadness; but in another moment her features became demure, if not melancholy, and she continued

"I believe, then 'tis awkward and distressing, too, but nothing better can be done!"

"Did you please to give me any orders, Miss Agnus?"

"Yes, Meriton; you will go to the lodgings of captain Polwarth, and tell him Mrs. Lincoln desires his immediate presence here, in Tremont–street."

"My Lady!" repeated the amazed valet "why, Miss Agnus, the women says as my Lady is unconscionable, and does not know what is doing, or who speaks to her! A mournful wedding, Ma'am, for the heir of our house!"

"Then, tell him," said Agnes, as she arose to leave the room, "that Miss Danforth would be glad to see him."

Meriton waited no longer than was necessary to mutter his approbation of this alteration in the message, when he left the house, with a pace that was a good deal quickened by his growing fears on the subject of his master's safety. Notwithstanding his apprehensions, the valet was by no means insensible to the severity of the climate he was in, nor to the peculiar qualities of that night in which he was so unexpectedly thrust abroad to encounter its fury. He soon succeeded, however, in making his way to the quarters of Polwarth, in the midst of the driving snow, and in defiance of the cold that chilled his very bones. Happily for the patience of the worthy valet, Shearflint, the semi–military attendant of the captain, was yet up, having just discharged his nightly duties about the person of his master, who had not deemed it prudent to seek his pillow without proving the consolations of the trencher. The door was opened at the first tap of Meriton, and when the other had expressed his surprise, by the usual exclamations, the two attendants adjourned to the sitting–room, where the embers of a good wood fire were yet shedding a grateful heat in the apartment.

"What a shocking country is this America for cold, Mr. Shearflint," said Meriton, kicking the brands together with his boot, and rubbing his hands over the coals "I doesn't think as our English cold is at all like it. It's a stronger and a better cold is ours, but it doesn't cut one like dull razors, as this here of America."

Shearflint, who fancied himself particularly liberal, and ever made it a point to show his magnanimity to his enemies, never speaking of the colonists without a sort of protecting air, that he intended should reflect largely on his own candour, briskly replied

"This is a new country, Mr. Meriton, and one shouldn't be over–nice. When one goes abroad one must learn to put up with difficulties; especially in the colonies, where it can't be expected all things should be as comfortable as we has 'em at 'ome."

"Well, now, I call myself as little particular in respect of weather," returned Meriton, "as any going. But give me England for climate, if for nothing else. The water comes down in that blessed country in good, honest drops, and not in little frozen bits, which prick one's face like so many fine needles!"

"You do look, Mr. Meriton, a little as if you had been shaking your master's powder–puff about your own ears. But I was just finishing the heel–tap of the captain's hot toddy; perhaps if you was to taste it, 'twould help to thaw out the idears."

"God bless me! Shearflint," said Meriton, relinquishing his grasp of the tankard, to take breath after a most vigorous draught "do you always stuff his night–cap so thick?"

"No no the captain can tell a mixture by his nose, and it doesn't do to make partial alterations in his glass," returned Shearflint, giving the tankard a circular motion to stir its contents, while he spoke, and swallowing the trifle that remained, apparently at a gulp; "then as I thinks it a pity that any thing should be wasted in these distressing times, I generally drinks what's left, after adding sum'at to the water, just to mellow it down. But what

brings you abroad such a foul night, Mr. Meriton?"

"Sure enough, my idears wanted thawing, as you instigated, Shearflint! Here have I been sent on a message of life and death, and I was forgetting my errand like a raw boy just hired from the country!"

"Something is stirring, then!" said the other, offering a chair, which his companion received, without any words, while Polwarth's man took another, with equal composure. "I thought as much, from the captain's hungry appearance, when he came home to night, after dressing himself with so much care, to take his supper in Tremont–street."

"Something has been stirring, indeed! For one thing, it is certain, Master Lionel was married to–night, in the King's Chapel!"

"Married!" echoed the other "well, thank heaven, no such unavoidable has befallen us, though we have been amputrated. I couldn't live with a married gentleman, no how, Mr. Meriton. A master in breeches is enough for me, without one in petticoats to set him on!"

"That depends altogether on people's conditions, Shearflint," returned Meriton, with a sort of condescending air of condolence, as though he pitied the other's poverty. "It would be great folly for a captain of foot, that is nothing *but* a captain of foot, to unite in hymen. But, as we say at Ravenscliffe and Soho, Cupid will listen to the siyths of the heir of a Devonshire Baronet, with fifteen thousand a year."

"I never heard any one say it was more than ten," interrupted the other, with a strong taint of ill–humour in his manner.

"Not more than ten! I can count ten myself, and I am sure there must be some that I doesn't know of."

"Well, if it be twenty," cried Shearflint, rising and kicking the brands among the ashes, in a manner to destroy all the cheerfulness of the little fire that remained, "it wont help you to do your errand. You should remember that us servants of poor captains have nobody to help us with our work, and want our natural rest. What's your pleasure, Mr. Meriton?"

"To see your master, Mister Shearflint."

"That's impossibility! he's under five blankets, and I wouldn't lift the thinnest of them for a month's wages."

"Then I shall do it for you, because speak to him I must. Is he in this room?"

"Ay, you'll find him somewhere there, among the bed–clothes," returned Shearflint, throwing open the door of an adjoining apartment, secretly hoping Meriton would get his head broke for his trouble, as he removed himself out of harm's way, by returning to the fire–place.

Meriton was compelled to give the captain several rough shakes before he succeeded in rousing him, in the least, from his deep slumbers. Then, indeed, he overheard the sleeper muttering

"A damn foolish business, that had we made proper use of our limbs we might have kept them. You take this man to be your husband better for worse richer or poorer ha! who are you rolling, dog? have you no regard to digestion, to shake a man in this manner, just after eating!"

"It's I, sir Meriton."

"And what the devil do you mean by this liberty. Mr. I, or Meriton, or whatever you call yourself!"

"I am sent for you in a great hurry, sir awful things have happened to-night up in Tremont!"

"Happened!" repeated Polwarth, who by this time was thoroughly awake "I know, fellow, that your master is married I gave the bride away myself. I suppose nothing else, that is particularly extraordinary, has happened."

"Oh! Lord, yes, sir my Lady is in faintingfits, and master Lionel has gone, God knows whither, and Madam Lechmere is dead!"

Meriton had not concluded, before Polwarth sprang from his bed in the best manner he was able, and began to dress himself, by a sort of instinct, though without any definite object. By the unfortunate arrangement of Meriton's intelligence, he supposed the death of Mrs. Lechmere to be in consequence of some strange and mysterious separation of the bride from her husband, and his busy thoughts did not fail to recall the singular interruption of the nuptials, so often mentioned.

"And Miss Danforth!" he asked "how does she bear it?"

"Like a woman, as she is, and a true lady. It is no small thing as puts Miss Agnus beside herself, sir!"

"No, that it is not! she is much more apt to drive others mad."

"'Twas she, sir, as sent me to desire you to come up to Tremont-street, without any delay."

"The devil it was! Hand me that boot, my good fellow. One boot, thank God, is sooner put on than two! The vest and stock next. You, Shearflint! where have you got to, sirrah! Bring me my leg, this instant."

As soon as his own man heard this order, he made his appearance, and as he was much more conversant with the mystery of his master's toilette than Meriton, the captain was soon equipped for his sudden expedition.

During the time he was dressing, he continued to put hasty questions to Meriton, concerning the cause of the disturbance in Tremont-street, the answers to which only served to throw him more upon the ocean of uncertainty than ever. The instant he was clad, he wrapped himself in his cloak, and taking the arm of the valet, he essayed to find his way through the tempest to the spot where he was told Agnes Danforth awaited his appearance, with a chivalry that in another age, and under different circumstances, would have made him a hero.

CHAPTER IX.

"Proud lineage! now how little thou appearest!"

Blair.

Notwithstanding the unusual alacrity with which Polwarth obeyed the unexpected summons of the capricious being whose favour he had so long courted, with so little apparent success, he lingered in his steps as he approached near enough to the house in Tremont-street, to witness the glancing lights which flitted before the windows. On the threshold he stopped, and listened to the opening and shutting of doors, and all those marked, and yet stifled sounds, which are wont to succeed a visit of the grim monarch to the dwellings of the sick. His rap was unanswered, and he was compelled to order Meriton to show him into the little parlour where he had so often been a guest, under more propitious circumstances. Here he found Agnes, awaiting his appearance with a gravity, if not sadness of demeanour, that instantly put to flight certain complimentary effusions with which the captain

had determined to open the interview, in order to follow up, in the true temper of a soldier, the small advantage he conceived he had obtained in the good opinion of his mistress. Altering the exulting expression of his features, with his first glance at the countenance of Miss Danforth, Polwarth paid his compliments in a manner better suited to the state of the family, and desired to know if in any manner he could contribute to the comfort or relief.

"Death has been among us, captain Polwarth," said Agnes, "and his visit has, indeed, been sudden and unexpected. To add to our embarrassment, Major Lincoln is missing!"

As she concluded, Agnes fastened her eyes on the face of the other, as though she would require an explanation of the unaccountable absence of the bridegroom.

"Lionel Lincoln is not a man to fly, because death approaches," returned the captain, musing; "and less should I suspect him of deserting, in her distress, one like the lovely creature he has married. Perhaps he has gone in quest of medical aid?"

"It cannot be. I have gathered from the broken sentences of Cecil, that he, and some third person, to me unknown, were last with my aunt, and must have been present at her death; for the face was covered. I found the bride in the room which Lionel has lately occupied the doors open, and with indications that he and his unknown companion had left the house by the private stairs, which communicate with the western door. As my cousin speaks but little, all other clue to the movements of her husband is lost, unless this ornament, which I found glittering among the embers of the fire, may serve for such a purpose. It is, I believe, a soldier's gorget?"

"It is, indeed; and it would seem the wearer has been in some jeopardy, by this bullet-hole through its centre. By heavens! 'tis that of M'Fuse! Here is the 18th engraved; and I know these little marks which the poor fellow was accustomed to make on it at every battle; for he never failed to wear the bauble. The last was the saddest record of them all!"

"In what manner, then, could it be conveyed into the apartment of Major Lincoln? Is it possible that"

"In what manner, truly!" interrupted Polwarth, rising in his agitation, and beginning to pace the room, in the best manner his mutilated condition would allow "Poor Dennis! that I should find such a relic of thy end, at last! You did not know Dennis, I believe. He was a man, fair Agnes, every way adapted by nature for a soldier. His was the form of Hercules! The heart of a lion, and the digestion of an ostrich! But he could not master this cruel lead! He is dead, poor fellow, he is dead!"

"Still you find no clue in the gorget by which to trace the living?" demanded Agnes.

"Ha!" exclaimed Polwarth, starting "I think I begin to see into the mystery! The fellow who could slay the man with whom he had eaten and drunk, might easily rob the dead! You found the gorget near the fire of Major Lincoln's room, say you fair Agnes?"

"In the embers, as if cast there for concealment, or dropped in some sudden strait."

"I have it I have it," returned Polwarth, striking his hands together, and speaking through his teeth "'twas that dog who murdered him, and justice shall now take its swing fool or no fool, he shall be hung up like jerked beef, to dry in the winds of heaven!"

"Of whom speak you, Polwarth, with that threatening air?" inquired Agnes, in a soothing voice, of which, like the rest of her sex, she well knew not only the power, but when to exercise it.

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

"Of a canting, hypocritical, miscreant, who is called Job Pray a fellow with no more conscience than brains, nor any more brains than honesty. An ungainly villain; who will eat of your table to day, and put the same knife that administered to his hunger to your throat tomorrow! It was such a dog that butchered the glory of Erin!"

"It must have been in open battle, then," said Agnes, "for though wanting in reason, Job has been reared in the knowledge of good and evil. The child must be strongly stamped with the wrath of God, indeed, for whom some effort is not made by a Boston mother, to recover his part in the great atonement!"

"He, then, is an exception; for surely no Christian will join you in the great natural pursuit of eating at one moment, and turn his fangs on a comrade at the next."

"But what has all this to do with the absent bridegroom?"

"It proves that Job Pray has been in his room since the fire was replenished, or some other than you would have found the gorget."

"It proves a singular association, truly, between Major Lincoln and the simpleton," said Agnes, musing; "but still it throws no light on his disappearance. 'Twas an old man that my cousin mentioned in her unconnected sentences!"

"My life on it, fair Agnes, that if Major Lincoln has left the house mysteriously to-night, it is under the guidance of that wretch! I have known them together in council more than once, before this."

"Then, if he be weak enough to forsake such a woman as my cousin, at the instigation of a fool, he is unworthy of another thought!"

Agnes coloured as she spoke, and turned the conversation, with a manner that denoted how deeply she resented the slight to Cecil.

The peculiar situation of the town, and the absence of all her own male relatives, soon induced Miss Danforth to listen to the reiterated offers of service from the captain, and finally to accept them. Their conference was long and confidential; nor did Polwarth retire until his footsteps were assisted by the dull light of the approaching day. When he left the house to return to his own quarters, no tidings had been heard of Lionel, whose intentional absence was now so certain, that the captain proceeded to give his orders for the funeral of the deceased, without any further delay. He had canvassed with Agnes the propriety of every arrangement so fully, that he was at no loss how to conduct himself. It had been determined between them that the state of the siege, as well as certain indications of movements which were already making in the garrison, rendered it inexpedient to delay the obsequies a moment longer than was required by the unavoidable preparations.

Accordingly, the Lechmere vault, in the church-yard of the 'King's Chapel,' was directed to be opened, and the vain trappings in which the dead are usually enshrouded, were provided. The same clergyman who had so lately pronounced the nuptial benediction over the child, was now required to perform the last melancholy offices of the church over the parent, and the invitations to the few friends of the family who remained in the place were duly issued in suitable form.

By the time the sun had fallen near the amphitheatre of hills, along whose crests were, here and there, to be seen the works of the indefatigable men who held the place in leaguer, the brief preparations for the interment of the deceased were completed. The prophetic words of Ralph were now fulfilled, and, according to the custom of the province, the doors of one of its proudest dwellings were thrown open for all who choose, to enter and depart at will. The funeral train, though respectable, was far from extending to that display of solemn countenances which Boston in its peace and pride would not have failed to exhibit on any similar occasion. A few of the oldest and

most respected of the inhabitants, who were distantly connected by blood, or alliances with the deceased, attended; but there had been nothing in the cold and selfish character of Mrs. Lechmere to gather the poor and dependent in sorrowing groups around her funeral rites. The passage of the body, from its late dwelling to the tomb, was quiet, decent, and impressive, but entirely without any demonstrations of grief. Cecil had buried herself and her sorrows, together, in the privacy of her own room, and none of the more distant relatives who had collected, male or female, appeared to find it at all difficult to restrain their feelings within the bounds of the most rigid decorum.

Dr. Liturgy received the body, as usual, on the threshold of the sacred edifice, and the same solemn and affecting language was uttered over the dead, as if she had departed soothed by the most cheerful visions of an assured faith. As the service proceeded, the citizens clustered about the coffin, in deep attention, in admiration of the unwonted tremor and solemnity that had crept into the voice of the priest.

Among this little collection of the inhabitants of the colony, were interspersed a few men in the military dress, who, having known the family of the deceased in more settled times, had not forgotten to pay the last tribute to the memory of one of its dead.

When the short service was ended, the body was raised on the shoulders of the attendants, and borne into the yard, to its place of final rest. At such a funeral, where few mourned, and none wept, no unnecessary delay would be made in disposing of the melancholy relicks of mortality. In a very few moments, the narrow tenement which contained the festering remains of one who had so lately harboured such floods of human passion, was lowered from the light of day, and the body was left to moulder by the side of those which had gone before to the darkness of the tomb. Perhaps of all who witnessed the descent of the coffin, Polwarth alone, through that chain of sympathies which bound him to the caprice of Agnes, felt any emotion at all in consonance with the solemn scene. The obsequies of the dead were, like the living character of the woman, cold, formal, and artificial. The sexton and his assistants had hardly commenced replacing the stone which covered the entrance of the vault, when a knot of elderly men set the example of desertion, by moving away in a body from the spot. As they picked their footsteps among the graves, and over the frozen ground of the church-yard, they discoursed idly together, of the fortunes and age of the woman, of whom they had now taken their leave for ever. The curse of selfishness appeared even to have fallen on the warning which so sudden an end should have given to those who forgot they tottered on the brink of the grave. They spoke of the deceased as of one who had failed to awaken the charities of our nature, and though several ventured their conjectures as to the manner in which she had disposed of her worldly possessions, not one remembered to lament that she had continued no longer, to enjoy them. From this theme they soon wandered to themselves, and the whole party quitted the church-yard, joking each other on the inroads of time, each man attempting to ape the elastic tread of youth, in order not only to conceal from his companions the ravages of age, but with a vain desire to extend the artifice so far, if possible, as to deceive himself.

When the seniors of the party withdrew, the remainder of the spectators did not hesitate to follow, and in a few minutes Polwarth found himself standing before the vault, with only two others of all those who had attended the body. The captain, who had been at no little expense of time and trouble to maintain the decencies which became a near friend of the family of the deceased, stood a minute longer to permit these lingering followers to retire also, before he turned his own back on the place of the dead. But perceiving they both maintained their posts, in silent attention, he raised his eyes, more curiously, to examine who these loiterers might be.

The one nearest to himself was a man whose dress and air bespoke him to be of no very exalted rank in life, while the other was a woman of even an inferior condition, if an opinion might be formed from the squalid misery that was exhibited in her attire. A little fatigued with the arduous labours of the day, and of the duties of the unusual office he had assumed, the worthy captain touched his hat, with studied decorum, and said

"I thank you, good people, for this mark of respect to the memory of my deceased friend; but as we have performed all that can now be done in her behalf, we will retire."

Apparently encouraged by the easy and courteous manner of Polwarth, the man approached still nigher, and after bowing with much respect, ventured to say

"They tell me 'tis the funeral of Madam Lechmere that I have witnessed?"

"They tell you true, sir," returned the captain, beginning slowly to pick his way towards the gate; "of Mrs. Priscilla, the relict of Mr. John Lechmere a lady of a creditable descent, and I think it will not be denied that she has had honourable interment!"

"If it be the lady I suppose," continued the stranger, "she is of an honourable descent indeed. Her maiden name was Lincoln, and she is aunt to the great Devonshire Baronet of that family."

"How! know you the Lincolns?" exclaimed Polwarth, stopping short, and turning to examine the other with a stricter eye. Perceiving, however, that the stranger was a man of harsh and peculiarly forbidding features, in the vulgar dress already mentioned, he muttered "you may have heard of them, friend, but I should doubt whether your intimacy could amount to such wholesome familiarities as eating and drinking."

"Stronger intimacies than that, sir, are sometimes brought about between men who were born to very different fortunes," returned the stranger, with a peculiarly sarcastic and ambiguous smile, which meant more than met the eye "but all who know the Lincolns, sir, will allow their claims to distinction. If this lady was one of them, she had reason to be proud of her blood."

"Ay, you are not tainted, I see, with these revolutionary notions, my friend," returned Polwarth; "she was also connected with a very good sort of a family in this colony, called the Danforths you know the Danforths?"

"Not at all, sir, I "

"Not know the Danforths!" exclaimed Polwarth, once more stopping to bestow a freer scrutiny on his companion. After a short pause, however, he nodded his head, in approbation of his own conclusions, and added "No, no I am wrong I see you could not have known much of the Danforths!"

The stranger appeared quite willing to overlook the cavalier treatment he received, for he continued to attend the difficult footsteps of the maimed soldier, with the same respectful deference as before.

"I have no knowledge of the Danforths, it is true," he answered, "but I may boast of some intimacy with the family of Lincoln."

"Would to God, then," cried Polwarth, in a sort of soliloquy, which escaped him in the fullness of his heart, "you could tell us what has become of its heir!"

The stranger stopped short in his turn, and exclaimed

"Is he not serving with the army of the king, against this rebellion! Is he not here!"

"He is here, or he is there, or he is any where; I tell you he is lost."

"He is lost!" echoed the other.

"Lost!" repeated a humble female voice, at the very elbow of the captain

This singular repetition of his own language, aroused Polwarth from the abstraction into which he had suffered himself to fall. In his course from the vault to the church-yard gate, he had unconsciously approached the woman before mentioned, and when he turned at the sounds of her voice, his eyes fell full upon her anxious countenance. The very first glance was enough to tell the observant captain, that in the midst of her poverty and rags, he saw the broken remains of great female beauty. Her dark and intelligent eyes, set as they were in a sallow and sunken countenance, still retained much of the brightness, if not of the softness and peace of youth. The contour of her face was also striking, though she might be said to resemble one whose loveliness had long since departed with her innocence. But the gallantry of Polwarth was proof even against the unequivocal signs of misery, if not of guilt, which were so easily to be traced in her appearance, and he respected even the remnants of female charms which were yet visible amid such a mass of unseemliness, to regard them with an unfriendly eye. Apparently encouraged by the kind look of the captain, the woman ventured to add

"Did I hear aright, sir; said you that Major Lincoln was lost?"

"I am afraid, good woman," returned the captain, leaning on the iron-shod stick, with which he was wont to protect his footsteps along the icy streets of Boston "that this siege has, in your case, proved unusually severe. If I am not mistaken in a matter in which I profess to know much, nature is not supported as nature should be. You would ask for food, and God forbid that I should deny a fellow-creature a morsel of that which constitutes both the seed and the fruits of life. Here is money."

The muscles of the attenuated countenance of the woman worked with a sudden convulsive motion, and, for a moment, she glanced her eyes wistfully towards his silver, but a slight flush passing quickly over her pallid features, she answered

"Whatever may be my wants and my suffering, I thank my God that he has not levelled me with the beggar of the streets. Before that evil day shall come, may I find a place amongst these frozen hillocks where we stand. But, I beg pardon, sir, I thought I heard you speak of Major Lincoln."

"I did and what of him? I said he was lost, and it is true, if that be lost which cannot be found."

"And did Madam Lechmere take her leave before he was missing?" asked the woman, advancing a step nearer to Polwarth, in her intense anxiety to be answered.

"Do you think, good woman, that a gentleman of Major Lincoln's notion of things, would disappear after the decease of his relative, and leave a comparative stranger to fill the office of principal mourner!"

"The Lord forgive us all our sins and wickedness!" muttered the woman, drawing the shreds of her tattered cloak about her shivering form, and hastening silently away into the depths of the grave-yard. Polwarth regarded her unceremonious departure for a moment, in surprise, and then turning to his remaining companion, he remarked

"That woman is unsettled in her reason, for the want of wholesome nutriment. It is just as impossible to retain the powers of the mind, and neglect the stomach, as it is to expect a truant boy will make a learned man." By this time the worthy captain had forgotten whom it was he addressed, and he continued, in his usual philosophic strain, "children are sent to school to learn all useful inventions but that of eating; for to eat that is to eat with judgment, is as much of an invention as any other discovery. Every mouthful a man swallows has to undergo four important operations, each of which may be called a crisis in the human constitution."

"Suffer me to help you over this grave," said the other, officiously offering his assistance.

"I thank you, sir, I thank you 'tis a sad commentary on my words!" returned the captain, with a melancholy smile. "The time has been when I served in the light corps, but your men in unequal quantities are good for little else but garrisons! As I was saying, there is first, the selection; second, mastication; third, deglutition; and lastly, the digestion."

"Quite true, sir," said the stranger, a little abruptly; "thin diet and light meals are best for the brain."

"Thin diet and light meals sir, are good for nothing but to rear dwarfs and idiots!" returned the captain, with some heat. "I repeat to you, sir "

He was interrupted by the stranger, who suddenly smothered a dissertation on the connexion between the material and immaterial, by asking

"If the heir of such a family be lost, is there none to see that he is found again?"

Polwarth finding himself thus checked in the very opening of his theme, stopped again, and stared the other full in the face for a moment, without making any reply. His kind feeling, however, got the better of his displeasure, and yielding to the interest he felt in the fate of Lionel, he answered

"I would go all lengths, and incur every hazard to do him service!"

"Then, sir, accident has brought those together who are willing to engage in the same undertaking! I, too, will do my utmost to discover him! I have heard he has friends in this province. Has he no connexion to whom we may apply for intelligence?"

"None nearer than a wife."

"A wife!" repeated the other, in surprise "is he then married?"

A long pause ensued, during which the stranger mused deeply, and Polwarth bestowed a still more searching scrutiny than ever on his companion. It would appear that the result was not satisfactory to the captain, for shaking his head, in no very equivocal manner, he resumed the task of picking his way among the graves, towards the gate, with renewed diligence. He was in the act of seating himself in the pung, when the stranger again stood at his elbow, and said

"If I knew where to find his wife, I would offer my services to the lady?"

Polwarth pointed to the building of which Cecil was now the mistress, and answered, somewhat superciliously, as he drove away

"She is there, my good friend, but your application will be useless!"

The stranger received the direction in an understanding manner, and smiled with satisfied confidence, while he took the opposite route from that by which the busy equipage of the captain had already disappeared.

CHAPTER X.

"Up Fish—street! down Saint Magnus' corner!
"Kill and knock down! Throw them into Thames!"

"What noise is this I hear? Dare any be so bold to sound
"Retreat or parly; when I command them kill?"

King Henry IV.

It was rarely, indeed, that the equal minded Polwarth undertook an adventure with so fell an intent, as, was the disposition with which he directed the head of the hunter to be turned towards the dock-square. He had long known the residence of Job Pray, and often in passing from his lodgings, near the common, into the more fashionable quarter of the town, the good-natured epicure had turned his head to bestow a nod and a smile on the unsophisticated admirer of his skill in the culinary art. But now, as the pung whirled out of Corn-hill into the well-known area, his eye fell on the low and gloomy walls of the warehouse with a far less amicable design.

From the time he was apprized of the disappearance of his friend, the captain had been industriously ruminating on the subject, in a vain wish to discover any probable reason that might induce a bridegroom to adopt so hasty, and apparently so unjustifiable, a step as the desertion of his bride, and that, too, under circumstances of such peculiar distress. But the more he reasoned the more he found himself involved in the labyrinth of perplexity, until he was glad to seize on the slightest clue which offered, to lead him from his obscurity. It has already been seen in what manner he received the intelligence conveyed through the gorget of M'Fuse, and it now remains for us to show with what commendable ingenuity he improved the hint.

It had always been a matter of surprise to Polwarth, that a man like Lionel should tolerate so much of the society of the simpleton, nor had it escaped his observation that the communications between the two were a little concealed under a shade of mystery. He had overheard the foolish boast of the lad, the preceding day, relative to the death of M'Fuse, and the battered ornament, in conjunction with the place where it was found, which accorded so well with his grovelling habits, had tended to confirm its truth. The love of Polwarth for the grenadier was second only to his attachment for his earlier friend. The one had avowedly fallen, and he soon began to suspect that the other had been strangely inveigled from his duty by the agency of this ill-gifted changeling. To conceive an opinion, and to become confirmed in its justice, were results, generally, produced by the same operation of the mind, with this disciple of animal philosophy. Whilst he stood near the tomb of the Lechmeres, in the important character of chief mourner, he had diligently revolved in his mind the brief arguments which he found necessary to this conclusion. The arrangement of his ideas might boast of the terseness of a syllogism. His proposition and inference were something as follows Job murdered M'Fuse; some great evil has occurred to Lionel; and therefore Job has been its author.

It is true, there was a good deal of intermediate argument to support this deduction, at which the captain cast an extremely cursory glance, but which the reader may easily conceive, if at all gifted in the way of imagination. It would require no undue belief of the connexion between very natural effects and their causes, to show that Polwarth was not entirely unreasonable in suspecting the agency of the simpleton, nor in harbouring the deep and bitter resentment that so much mischief, even though it were sustained from the hands of a fool, was likely to awaken. Be that as it may, by the time the pung had reached the point already mentioned, its rapid motion, which accelerated the ordinarily quiet circulation of his blood, together with the scene through which he had just passed, and the recollections which had been crowding on his mind, conspired to wind up his resolution to a very obstinate pitch of determination. Of all his schemes, embracing, as they did, compulsion, confession, and punishment, Job Pray was, of course, destined to be both the subject and the victim.

The shadows of evening were already thrown upon the town, and the could had long before driven the few dealers in meats and vegetables, who continued to find daily employment around the illfurnished shambles, to their several homes. In their stead there was only to be seen a meager and impoverished follower of the camp, stealing along the shadows of the building, with her half-famished child, as they searched among the offals of the market for some neglected morsel, to eke out the scanty meal of the night. But while the common mart presented this appearance of dullness and want, the lower part of the square exhibited a very different aspect.

The warehouse was surrounded by a body of men in uniform, whose disorderly and rapid movements proclaimed at once, to the experienced eye of the captain, that they were engaged in a scene of lawless violence. Some were rushing furiously into the building, armed with such weapons as the streets first offered to their hands, while others returned, filling the air with their threats and outcries. A constant current of eager soldiers was setting out of the dark passages in the neighbourhood towards the place, and every window of the building was crowded with excited witnesses, who clung to the walls, apparently animating those within by their cheers and applause.

When Polwarth bade Shearflint pull the reins, he caught the quick, half-formed sentences that burst from the rioters, and even before he was able, in the duskiess of the evening, to discover the facings of their uniform, his ear detected the well-known dialect of the Royal Irish. The whole truth now broke upon him at once, and throwing his obese person from the sleigh, in the best manner he was able, he hobbled into the throng, with a singular compound of feeling, which owed its birth to the opposing impulses, of a thirst for vengeance, and the lingering influence of his natural kindness. Better men than the captain have, however, lost sight of their humanity, under those fierce sympathies that are awakened in moments of tumult and violence. By the time he had forced his person into the large, dark apartment that formed the main building, he had, in a great degree, suffered himself to be worked into a sternness of purpose which comported very ill with his intelligence and rank. He even listened, with unaccountable pleasure, to the threats and denunciations which filled the building; until, he foresaw, from their savage nature, there was great danger that one half of his object, the discovery of Lionel, was likely to be frustrated by their fulfilment. Animated anew by this impression, he threw the rioters from him with prodigious energy, and succeeded in gaining a position where he might become a more efficient actor in the fray.

There was still light enough to discover Job Pray placed in the centre of the warehouse, on his miserable bed, in an attitude between lying and sitting. While his bodily condition seemed to require the former position, his fears had induced him to attempt the latter. The large, red blotches which covered his unmeaning countenance, and his flushed eye-balls, too plainly announced that the unfortunate young man, in addition to having become the object of the wrath of a lawless mob, was a prey to the ravages of that foul disorder which had long before lighted on the town. Around this squalid subject of poverty and disease, a few of the hardiest of the rioters, chiefly the surviving grenadiers of the 18th, had gathered; while the less excited, or more timid among them, practised their means of annoyance at a greater distance from the malign atmosphere of the distemper. The bruised and bloody person of the simpleton manifested how much he had already suffered from the hands of his tormentors, who happily possessed no very fatal weapons, or the scene would have been much earlier terminated. Notwithstanding his great bodily debility, and the pressing dangers that beset him on every side, Job continued to face his assailants, with a sort of stupid endurance of the pains they inflicted.

At the sight of this revolting spectacle, the heart of Polwarth began greatly to relent, and he endeavoured to make himself heard, in the clamour of fifty voices. But his presence was unheeded, for his remonstrances were uttered to ignorant men, wildly bent on vengeance.

"Pul the baist from his rags!" cried one "'tis no a human man, but a divil's imp, in the shape of a fellow cratur!"

"For such as *him* to murder the flower of the British army!" said another "his small-pox is nothing but a foul invintion of the ould one, to save him from his daisarrevings!"

"Would any but a divil invent such a disorder at all!" interrupted a third, who, even in his anger, could not forget his humour. "Have a care, b'ys, he may give it to the whole family the naat'ral way, to save the charges of the inoculation!"

"Have done wid ye'r foolery, Terence," returned the first; "would ye trifle about death, and *his* unrevenged! Put a coal into his filth, b'ys, and burren *it* and him in the same bonfire!"

"A coal! a coal! a brand for the divil's burning!" echoed twenty soldiers, eagerly listening, in the madness of their fury, to the barbarous advice.

Polwarth again exerted himself, though unsuccessfully, to be heard; nor was it until a dozen voices proclaimed, in disappointment, that the house contained neither fire nor fuel, that the sudden commotion in the least subsided.

"Out of the way! out of the way wid ye!" roared one of gigantic mould, whose heavy nature had, like an overcharged volcano, been slowly wrought up to the eve of a fearful eruption "Here is fire to destroy a salamander! Be he divil or be he saint, he has great need of his prayers!"

As he spoke, the fellow levelled a musket, and another instant would have decided the fate of Job, who cowered before the danger with instinctive dread, had not Polwarth beat up the piece with his cane, and interposed his body between them.

"Hold your fire, brave grenadier," he said, warily adopting a middle course between the language of authority and that of counsel. "This is hasty and unsoldier-like. I knew, and loved your late commander well; let us obtain the confessions of the lad before we proceed to punishment there may be others more guilty than he."

The men regarded the unexpected intruder with such furious aspects as augured ill of their deference for his advice and station. "Blood for blood," passed from mouth to mouth, in low, sullen mutterings, and the short pause which had succeeded his appearance was already broken by still less equivocal marks of hostility, when, happily for Polwarth, he was recognised, through the twilight, by a veteran of the grenadiers, as one of the former intimates of M`Fuse. The instant the soldier communicated this discovery to his fellows, the growing uproar again subsided, and the captain was relieved from no small bodily terror, by hearing his own name passing among them, coupled with such amicable additions as, "*his* ould fri'nd!" "an offisher of the light troops" "he that the ribbils massacred of a leg!" &c. As soon as this explanation was generally understood, his ears were greeted with a burst from every mouth, of

"Hurrah! for captain Pollywarreth! *His* fri'nd! the brave captain Pollywarreth!"

Pleased with his success, and secretly gratified by the commendations that were now freely lavished on himself, with characteristic liberality, the mediator improved the slight advantage he had obtained, by again addressing them.

"I thank you, for your good opinion, my friends," he added, "and must acknowledge it is entirely mutual. I love the Royal Irish, on account of one that I well knew, and greatly esteemed, and who I fear was murdered in defiance of all the rules of war."

"Hear ye that, Dennis? murdered!"

"Blood for blood!" muttered three or four surly voices at once.

"Let us he deliberate, that we may be just, and just that our vengeance may be awful," Polwarth quickly answered, fearful that if the torrent once more broke loose, it would exceed his powers to stay. "A true soldier always awaits his orders; and what regiment in the army can boast of its discipline, if it be not the 18th! Form yourselves in a circle around your prisoner, and listen, while I extract the truth from him. After that, should he prove guilty, I will consign him to your tenderest mercy."

The rioters, who only saw, in the delay, a more methodical execution of their own violent purpose, received the proposition with another shout, and the name of Polwarth, pronounced in all the varieties of their barbarous idioms, rung loudly through the naked rafters of the building, while they disposed themselves to comply.

The captain, with a wish to gain time to command his thoughts, required that a light should be struck, in order, as he said, to study the workings of the countenance of the accused. As the night had now gathered about them in good earnest, the demand was too reasonable for objection, and with the same headlong eagerness that they had manifested a few minutes before, to shed the blood of Job, they turned their attention, with thoughtless versatility, to effect this harmless object. A brand had been brought, for a very different end, when the plan of burning was proposed, and it had been cast aside again with the change of purpose. A few of its sparks were now collected, and some bundles of oakum, which lay in a corner of the warehouse, were fired, and carefully fed in such a manner as to shed a strong light through every cranny of the gloomy edifice.

By the aid of this fitful glare, the captain succeeded, once more, in marshalling the rioters in such a manner that no covert injury could be offered to Job. The whole affair now assumed, in some measure, the character of a regular investigation. The curiosity of the men without, overcame their fears of infection, and they crowded into the place, in earnest attention, until, in a very few moments, no other sound was audible but the difficult and oppressed respiration of their victim. When all the other noises had ceased, and Polwarth, perceived, by the eager and savage countenances, athwart which the bright glare of the burning hemp was gleaming, that delay might yet be dangerous, he proceeded, at once, in his inquiries.

"You may see, Job Pray, by the manner in which you are surrounded," he said, "that judgment has at length overtaken you, and that your only hope for mercy lies in your truth. Answer, then, to such questions as I shall put, and keep the fear of God before your eyes."

The captain paused to allow this exhortation to produce its desired effect. But Job, perceiving that his late tormentors were quiet, and to all appearance bent on no immediate mischief, sunk his head languidly upon his blankets, where he lay in silence, watching, with rolling and anxious eyes, the smallest movements of his enemies. Polwarth soon yielded to the impatience of his listeners, and continued

"You are acquainted with Major Lincoln?"

"Major Lincoln!" grumbled three or four of the grenadiers "is it of *him* that we want to hear!"

"One moment, my worthy 18ths, I shall come at the whole truth the sooner, by taking this indirect course."

"Hurrah! for captain Pollywarreth!" shouted the rioter "him that the ribbils massacred of a leg!"

"Thank you thank you, my considerate friends answer, fellow, without prevarication; you dare not deny to me, your knowledge of Major Lincoln?"

After a momentary pause, a low voice was heard muttering among the blankets

"Job knows all the Boston people; and Major Lincoln is a Boston boy."

"But with Major Lincoln you had a more particular acquaintance restrain your impatience, men; these questions lead directly to the facts you wish to know." The rioters, who were profoundly ignorant of what sort of facts they were to be made acquainted with by this examination, looked at each other in uneasy doubt, but soon settled down again into their former deep silence. "You know him better than any other gentleman of the army?"

"He promised Job to keep off the grannies, and Job agreed to run his ar'n'ds."

"Such an arrangement betrays a greater intimacy than is usual between a wise man and a fool! If you are then so close in league with him, I demand what has become of your associate?"

The young man made no reply.

"You are thought to know the reasons why he has left his friends," returned Polwarth, "and I now demand that you declare them."

"Declare!" repeated the simpleton, in his most unmeaning and helpless manner "Job was never good at his schooling."

"Nay, then, if you are obstinate, and will not answer, I must withdraw, and permit these brave grenadiers to work their will on you."

This threat served to induce Job to raise his head, and assume that attitude and look of instinctive watchfulness that he had so recently abandoned. A slight movement of the crowd followed, and the terrible words of "blood for blood," again passed among them in sullen murmurs. The helpless youth, whom we have been obliged to call an idiot, for want of a better term, and because his mental imbecility removed him without the pale of legal responsibility, now stared wildly about him, with an increasing expression of reason, that might be ascribed expression the force of that inward fire which preyed upon his vitals, and which seemed to purify the spirit in proportion as it consumed the material dross of his existence.

"Its ag'in the laws of the Bay, to beat and torment a fellow-creature," he said, with a solemn earnestness in his voice, that would have melted hearts of ordinary softness; "and what is more, its ag'in His holy book! If you hadn't made oven-wood of the old North, and a horse-stable of the old South, you might have gone to hear such expounding as would have made the hair rise on your wicked heads!"

The cries of "Have done wid his foolery;" "the imp is playing his games on us!" "As if his wooden mockery was a church at all fit for a ra'al Christian!" were heard on every side, and they were succeeded by the often-repeated and appalling threat, of "blood for blood!"

"Fall back, men, fall back," cried Polwarth, flourishing his walking-stic in such a manner as effectually to enforce his orders; "wait for his confession before you judge. Fellow, this is the last and trying appeal to your truth your life most probably depends on the answer. You are known to have been in arms against the crown. Nay, I myself saw you in the field on that day when the troops a-a-a countermarched from Lexington; since when you are known to have joined the rebels while the army went out to storm the entrenchment on the heights of Charlestown." At this point in the recapitulation of the offences of Job, the captain was suddenly appalled by a glimpse at the dark and threatening looks that encircled him, and he concluded with a laudable readiness "On that glorious day when his majesty's troops scattered your provincial rabble like so many sheep driven from their pastures, by dogs!"

The humane ingenuity of Polwarth was rewarded by a burst of loud and savage laughter. Encouraged by this evidence of his power over his auditors, the worthy captain proceeded with an increased confidence in his own eloquence.

"On that glorious day," he continued, gradually warming with his subject, "many a gallant gentleman, and hundreds of fearless privates, met their fate. Some fell in open and manly fight, and according to the chances of regular warfare. Some he-e-m some have been mutilated; and will carry the marks of their glory with them to the grave." His voice grew a little thick and husky as he proceeded, but shaking off his weakness, he ended with an energy that he intended should curdle the heart of the prisoner, "while, fellow, some have been murdered!"

"Blood for blood!" was heard again passing its fearful round. Without attempting any longer to repress the rising spirit of the rioters, Polwarth continued his interrogatories, entirely led away by the strength of his own feelings on this sensitive subject.

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

"Remember you such a man as Dennis M'Fuse?" he demanded in a voice of thunder; "he that was treacherously slain in your inmost trenches, after the day was won! Answer me, knave, were you not among the rabble, and did not your own vile hand the bloody deed?"

A few words were heard from Job, in a low, muttering tone, of which only "the rake-hellies," and "the people will teach 'em the law!" were sufficiently distinct to be understood.

"Murder him! part him sowl from body!" exclaimed the fiercest of the grenadiers.

"Hold!" cried Polwarth; "but one moment more I would relieve my mind from the debt I owe his memory. Speak, fellow; what know you of the death of the commander of these brave grenadiers?"

Job, who had listened to his words attentively, though his uneasy eyes still continued to watch the slightest movements of his foes, now turned to the speaker with a look of foolish triumph, and answered

"The 18th came up the hill, shouting like roaring lions! but the Royal Irish had a deathhowl, that evening, over their tallest man!"

Polwarth trembled with the violence of the passions that beset him, but while with one hand he motioned to the men to keep back, with the other he produced the battered gorget from his pocket, and held it before the eyes of the simpleton.

"Know you this?" he demanded; "who sent the bullet through this fatal hole?"

Job took the ornament, and for a moment regarded it with an unconscious look. But his countenance gradually lighting with a ray of unusual meaning, he laughed in scornful exultation, as he answered

"Though Job is a fool, he can shoot!"

Polwarth started back aghast, while the fierce resentments of his ruder listeners broke through all restraint. They raised a loud and savage shout, as one man, filling the building with hoarse execrations and cries for vengeance. Twenty expedients to destroy their captive were named in a breath, and with all the characteristic vehemence of their nation. Most of them would have been irregularly adopted, had not the man who attended the burning hemp caught up a bundle of the flaming combustible, and shouted aloud

"Smodder him in the fiery flames! he's an imp of darkness; burren him, in his rags, from before the face of man!"

The barbarous proposition was received with a sort of frenzied joy, and in another moment a dozen handfuls of the oakum were impending above the devoted head of the helpless lad. Job made a feeble attempt to avert the dreadful fate that threatened him, but he could offer no other resistance than his own weakened arm, and the abject moanings of his impotent mind. He was enveloped in a cloud of black smoke, through which the forked flames had already begun to play, when a woman burst into the throng, casting the fiery combustibles from her, on either side, as she advanced, with a strength that seemed supernatural. When she had reached the bed, she tore aside the smoking pile with hands that disregarded the heat, and placed herself before the victim, like a fierce lioness, at bay, in defence of her whelps. In this attitude she stood an instant, regarding the rioters with a breast that heaved with passions too strong for utterance, when she found her tongue, and vented her emotions with all the fearlessness of a woman's indignation.

"Ye monsters in the shape of men, what is't ye do!" she exclaimed, in a voice that rose above the tumult, and had the effect to hush every mouth. "Have ye bodies without hearts! the forms without the bowels of the creatures of God! Who made you judges and punishers of sins! Is there a father among you, let him come and view the

anguish of a dying child! Is there a son, let him draw near, and look upon a mother's sorrow! Oh! ye savages, worse than the beasts of the howling wilderness, who have merey on their kinds, what is't ye do what is't ye do!"

The air of maternal intrepidity with which this burst from the heart was uttered, could not fail to awe the worst passions of the rioters, who gazed on each other in stupid wonder, as if uncertain how to act. The hushed, and momentary stillness was, however, soon broken once more by the low, murmuring threat of, "Blood for blood!"

"Cowards! Dastards! Soldiers in name and demons in your deeds!" continued the undaunted Abigail "come ye here to taste of human blood! Go away with you to the hills! and face the men of the Bay, who stand ready to meef you with arms in their hands, and come not hither to bruise the broken reed! Poor, suffering, and stricken as he is, by a hand far mightier than yours, my child will meet you there, to your shame, in the cause of his country, and the law!"

This taunt was too bitter for the unnurtured tempers to which she appealed, and the dying spark of their resentment was at once kindled into a blaze by the galling gibe.

The rioters were again in motion, and the cry of "burn the hag and the imp together," was fiercely raised, when a man of a stout, muscular frame forced his way into the cenfre of the crowd, making room for the passage of a female, whose gait and attire, though her person was concealed by her mantle, announced her to be of a rank altogether superior to the usual guests of the warehouse. The unexpected appearance, and lofty, though gentle bearing of this unlooked-for visiter, served to quell the rising uproar, which was immediately succeeded by so deep a silence that a whisper could have been heard in that throng which so lately resounded with violent tumult and barbarous execrations.

CHAPTER XI.

"Ay, sir, you shall find me reasouable; if it be so, I shall "do that that is reason."

Slender.

During the close of the foregoing scene Polwarth was in a bewildered state, that rendered him utterly incapable of exertion, either to prevent or to assist the evil intentions of the soldiery. His discretion, and all his better feelings, were certainly on the side of humanity, but the idle vaunt of the simpleton had stirred anew the natural thirst for vengeance. He recognized, at the first glance, in the wan, but speaking lineaments of the mother of Job, those faded remnants of beauty that he had traced, so lately, in the squalid female attendant who was seen lingering near the grave of Mrs. Lechmere. As she rushed before the men, with all the fearlessness of a mother who stood in defence of her child, the brightness of her dark eyes, aided as they were by the strong glare from the scattered balls of fire, and the intense expression of maternal horror that shone in every feature of her countenance, had imparted to her appearance a dignity and interest that greatly served to quell the unusual and dangerous passions that beset him. He was on the point of aiding her appeal by his authority and advice, when the second interruption to the brutal purpose of the men occurred, as just related. The effect of this strange appearance, in such a place, and at such a time, was not less instant on the captain than on the vulgar throug who surrounded him. He remained a silent and an attentive spectator.

The first sensation of the lady, in finding herself in the centre of such a confused and unexpected throng, was unequivocally that of an alarmed and shrinking delicacy; but forgetting her womanish apprehensions in the next moment, she collected the powers of her mind, like one sustained by high and laudable intentions, and dropping the silken folds of her calash, exhibited the pale, but lovely countenance of Cecil to the view of the wondering bystanders. After a moment of profound silence, she spoke

"I know not why I find this fierce collection of faces around the sick-bed of that unfortunate young man," she said; "but if it be with evil purpose, I charge you to relent, as you love the honour of your gallant profession, or fear the power of your leaders. I boast myself a soldier's wife, and promise you, in the name of one who has the ear of Howe, pardon for what is past, or punishment for your violence, as you conduct yourselves."

The rude listeners stared at each other in irresolute hesitation, seeming already to waver in their purpose, when the old grenadier, whose fierceness had so nearly cost Job his life, gruffly replied

"If you're an officer's lady, madam, you'll be knowing how to feel for the fri'nds of him that's dead and gone; I put it to the face of your ladyship's reason, if it's not too much for men to bear, and they such men as the 18ths, to hear a fool boasting on the high-ways and through the streets of the town, that he has been the death of the like of captain M'Fuse, of the grenadiers of that same radg'ment!"

"I believe I understand you, friend," returned Cecil, "for I have heard it whispered that the young man was believed to aid the Americans on the bloody day to which you allude but if it is not lawful to kill in battle, what are you, whose whole trade is war?"

She was interrupted by half-a-dozen eager, though respectful voices, muttering in the incoherent and vehement manner of their country, "It's all a difference, my lady!" "Fair fighting isn't foul-fighting, and foul fighting is murder!" with many other similar half-formed and equally intelligible remonstrances. When this burst was ended, the same grenadier who had before spoken, took on himself the office of explaining.

"If your ladyship spoke never a word again, ye've said the truth this time," he answered, "though it isn't exactly the truth, at all. When a man is kill't in the fair war, its a god-send; and no true Irishman will gainsay the same; but skulking behind a dead body, and taking aim into the f'atures of a fellow-crature, is what we complain of against the bloody-minded rascal. Besides, wasn't the day won? and even *his* death couldn't give *them* the victory!"

"I know not all these nice distinctions in your dreadful calling, friend," Cecil replied, "but I have heard that many fell after the troops mounted the works."

"That did they; sure your ladyship is knowing all about it! and it's the more need that some should be punished for the murders! It's hard to tell when we've got the day with men who make a fight of it after they are fairly baitin!"

"That others suffered under similar circumstances," continued Cecil, with a quivering lip, and a tremulous motion of her eye lids, "I well know, but had never supposed it more than the usual fortune of every war. But even if this youth has erred look at him! Is he an object for the resentment of men who pride themselves on meeting their enemies on equal terms! He has long been visited by a blow from a hand far mightier than yours, and even now is labouring, in addition to all other misfortunes, under that dangerous distemper whose violence seldom spares those it seizes. Nay, you, in the blindness of your anger, expose yourselves to its attacks, and when you think only of revenge, may become its victims!"

The crowd insensibly fell back as she spoke, and a large circle was left around the bed of Job, while many in the rear stole silently from the building, with a haste that betrayed how completely apprehension had got the better of their more evil passions. Cecil paused but an instant, and pursued her advantage.

"Go," she said; "leave this dangerous vicinity. I have business with this young man, touching the interests, if not the life of one dear, deservedly dear to the whole army, and would be left alone with him and his mother. Here is money retire to your own quarters, and endeavour to avert the danger you have so wantonly braved, by care and regimen. Go; all shall be forgotten and pardoned."

The reluctant grenadier took her gold, and perceiving that he was already deserted by most of his companions, he made an awkward obeisance to the fair being before him, and withdrew, not without, however, casting many a savage and sullen glance at the miserable wretch who had been thus singularly rescued from his vengeance. Not a soldier now remained in the building, and the noisy and rapid utterance of the retiring party, as each vehemently recounted his deeds, soon became inaudible in the distance.

Cecil then turned to those who remained, and cast a rapid glance at each individual of the party. The instant she encountered the wondering look of Polwarth, the blood mantled her pale features once more, and her eyes fell, for an instant, in embarrassment, to the floor.

"I trust we have been drawn here for a similar purpose, captain Polwarth," she said, when the slight confusion had passed away "the welfare of a common friend?"

"You have not done me injustice," he replied. "When the sad office, which your fair cousin charged me with, was ended, I hastened hither to follow a clue which I have reason to believe will conduct us to"

"What we most desire to find," said Cecil, involuntarily glancing her anxious eyes towards the other spectators. "But our first duty is humanity. Cannot this miserable young man be reconveyed to his own apartment, and have his hurts examined."

"It may be done now, or after our examination," returned the captain, with a cool indifference that caused Cecil to look up at him in surprise. Perceiving the unfavourable impression his apathy had produced, Polwarth turned carelessly to a couple of men who were still curious lookers-on, at the outer door of the building, he called to them "Here, Shearflint, Meriton, remove the fellow into yonder room."

The servants in waiting, who had been hitherto wondering witnesses of all that passed, received this mandate with strong disgust. Meriton was loud in his murmurs, and approached the verge of disobedience, before he consented to touch such an object of squalid misery. As Cecil, however, enforced the order by her wishes, the disagreeable duty was performed, and Job replaced on his pallet in the tower, from which he had been rudely dragged an hour before, by the soldiers.

At the moment when all danger of further violence disappeared, Abigail had sunk on some of the lumber of the apartment, where she remained during the removal of her child, in a sort of stupid apathy. When, however, she perceived that they were now surrounded by those who were bent on deeds of mercy rather than of anger, she slowly followed into the little room, and became an anxious observer of the succeeding events.

Polwarth seemed satisfied with what had been done for Job, and now stood aloof, in sullen attendance on the pleasure of Cecil. The latter, who had directed every movement with female tenderness and care, bade the servants retire into the outer-room and wait her orders. When Abigail, therefore, took her place, in silence, near the bed of her child, there remained present, besides herself and the sick, only Cecil, the captain, and the unknown man, who had apparently led the former to the warehouse. In addition to the expiring flames of the oakum, the feeble light of a candle was shed through the room, merely rendering the gloomy misery of its tenants more striking.

Notwithstanding the high, but calm resolution which Cecil had displayed in the foregoing scene with the rioters, and which still manifested itself, in the earnest brightness of her intelligent eye, she appeared willing to profit by the duskiess of the apartment, to conceal her expressive features from the gaze of even the forlorn female. She placed herself in one of the shadows of the room, and partly raised the calash, by a graceful movement of one of her hands, while she addressed the simpleton

"Though I have not come hither with any intent to punish, nor in any manner to intimidate you with threats, Job Pray," she said, with an earnestness that rendered the soft tones of her voice doubly impressive "yet have I come to question you on matters that it would be wrong, as well as cruel in you, to misrepresent, or in any manner to conceal"

"You have little cause to fear that any thing but the truth will be uttered by my child," interrupted Abigail. "The same power that destroyed his reason, has dealt tenderly with his heart the boy knows no guile would to God the same could be said of the sinful woman who bore him!"

"I hope the character you give your son will be supported by his conduct," replied Cecil: "with this assurance of his integrity, I will directly question him. But that you may see I take no idle liberty with the young man, let me explain my motives!" She hesitated a moment, and averted her face unconsciously, as she continued "I should think, Abigail Pray, that my person must be known to you?"

"It is it is," returned the impatient woman, who appeared to feel the feminine and polished elegance of the other a reproach to her own misery "you are the happy and wealthy heiress of her whom I have seen this day laid in her vault. The grave will open for all alike! the rich and the poor, the happy as well as the wretched! Yes yes, I know you! you are the bride of a rich man's son!"

Cecil shook back the dark tresses that had fallen about her countenance, and raised her face, tinged with its richest bloom, as she answered, with an air of matronly dignity

"If you then know of my marriage, you will at once perceive that I have the interest of a wife in Major Lincoln I would wish to learn his movements of your son."

"Of my boy! of Job! from the poor despised child of poverty and disease, would you learn tidings of your husband? no no, young lady, you mock us; he is not worthy to be in the secrets of one so great and happy!"

"Yet am I deceived if he is not! Has there not been one called Ralph, a frequent inmate of your dwelling, during the past year, and has he not been concealed here within a very few hours?"

Abigail started at this question, though she did not hesitate to answer, without prevarication

"It is true If I am to be punished for harbouring a being that comes I know whence, and goes I know whither; who can read the heart, and knows what man, by his own limited powers, could never know, I must submit. He was here yesterday; he may be here again to-night; for he comes and goes at will. Your generals and army may interfere, but such as I dare not forbid it!"

"Who accompanied him when he departed last?" asked Cecil, in a voice so low, that, but for the profound stillness of the place, it would have been inaudible.

"My child my weak, unmeaning, miserable child!" said Abigail, with a reckless promptitude that seemed to court any termination to her misery, however sudden or adverse. "If it be treasonable to follow in the footsteps of that nameless man, Job has much to answer for!"

"You mistake my purpose good, rather than evil, will attend your answers, should they be found true."

"True!" repeated the woman, ceasing the rocking motion of her body, and looking proudly up into the anxious face of Cecil "but you are great and powerful, and are privileged to open the wounds of the unhappy!"

"If I have said any thing to hurt the feelings of a child, I shall deeply regret the words," said Cecil, with gentle fervour "I would rather be your friend than your oppressor, as you will learn when occasion offers."

"No no *you* can never be a friend to *me!*" exclaimed the woman, shuddering; "the wife of Major Lincoln ought never to serve the interests of Abigail Pray!"

The simpleton, who had apparently lain in dull indifference to what was passing, raised himself now from among his rags, and said, with foolish pride

"Major Lincoln's lady has come to see Job, because Job is a gentleman's son!"

"You are the child of sin and misery!" groaned Abigail, burying her head in her cloak "would that you had never seen the light of day!"

"Tell me, then, Job, whether Major Lincoln himself has paid you this compliment, as well as I," said Cecil, without regarding the conduct of the mother "when did you see him last?"

"Perhaps I can put these questions in a more intelligible manner," said the stranger, with a meaning glance of his eye towards Cecil, that she appeared instantly to comprehend. He turned then to Job, whose countenance he studied closely, for several moments, before he continued "Boston must be a fine place for parades and shows, young man; do you ever go to see the soldiers exercise?"

"Job always keeps time in the marchings," returned the simpleton; "'tis a grand sight to see the grannies treading it off to the awful sound of drums and trumpets!"

"And Ralph," said the other, soothingly "does he march in their company too?"

"Ralph! he's a great warrior! he teaches the people their trainings, out on the hills Job sees him there every time he goes for the Major's provisions."

"This requires some explanation," said the stranger.

"'Tis easily obtained," returned the observant Polwarth. "The young man has been the bearer of certain articles, periodically, from the country into the town, during the last six months, under the favour of a flag."

The man mused a moment before he pursued the subject.

"When were you last among the rebels, Job?" he at length asked.

"You had best not call the people rebels," muttered the young man, sullenly, "for they wont put up with bitter names!"

"I was wrong, indeed," said the stranger. "But when went you last for provisions?"

"Job got in last Sabba'day morning; and that's only yesterday!"

"How happened it, fellow, that you did not bring the articles to me?" demanded Polwarth, with a good deal of impatient heat.

"He has unquestionably a sufficient reason for the apparent neglect," said the cautious and soothing stranger. "You brought them here, I suppose, for some good reason?"

"Ay! to feed his own gluttony!" muttered the irritated captain.

The mother of the young man clasped her hands together convulsively, and made an effort to rise and speak, but she sunk again into her humble posture, as if choked by emotions that were too strong for utterance.

This short, but impressive pantomime was unnoticed by the stranger, who continued his inquiries in the same cool and easy manner as before.

"Are they yet here?" he asked.

"Certain," said the unsuspecting simpleton;" "Job has hid them 'till Major Lincoln comes back. Both Ralph and Major Lincoln forgot to tell Job what to do with the provisions."

"In that case I am surprised you did not pursue them with your load."

"Every body thinks Job's a fool," muttered the young man; "but he knows too much to be lugging provisions out ag'in among the people. Why!" he continued, raising himself, and speaking, with a bright glare dancing across his eyes, that betrayed how much he prized the envied advantage "the Bay-men come down with cart-loads of things to eat, while the town is filled with hunger!"

"True; I had forgotten they were gone out among the Americans of course they went under the flag that you bore in?"

"Job didn't bring any flag insygnns carry the flags! He brought a turkey, a grand ham, and a little sa'ce there wasn't any flag among them."

At the sound of these eatables, the captain pricked up his ears, and he probably would have again violated the rigid rules of decorum, had not the stranger continued his questions.

"I see the truth of all you say, my sensible fellow," he observed. "It was easy for Ralph and Major Lincoln to go out by means of the same privilege that you used to enter?"

"To be sure," muttered Job, who, tired of the questions, had already dropped his head again among his blankets "Ralph knows the way he's Boston born!"

The stranger turned to the attentive bride, and bowed, as if he were satisfied with the result of his examination. Cecil understood the expression of his countenance, and made a movement towards the place where Abigail Pray was seated on a chest, betraying, by the renewed rocking of her body, and the low groans that from time to time escaped her, the agony of mind she endured.

"My first care," she said, speaking to the mother of Job, "shall be to provide for your wants. After which I may profit by what we have now gathered from your son."

"Care not for me and mine!" returned Abigail, in a tone of bitter resignation; "the last blow is struck, and it behoves such as we to bow our heads to it in submission. Riches and plenty could not save your grandmother from the tomb, and perhaps Death may take pity, ere long, on me. What do I say, sinner that I am! can I never bring my rebellious heart to wait his time!"

Shocked at the miserable despair that the other exhibited, and suddenly recollecting the similar evidences of a guilty life that the end of Mrs. Lechmere had revealed, Cecil continued silent, in sensitive distress. After a moment, to collect her thoughts, she said, with the meekness of a Christian, united to the soothing gentleness of

her sex

"We are surely permitted to administer to our earthly wants, whatever may have been our transgressions. At a proper time I will not be denied in my wish to serve you. Let us now go," she added, addressing her unknown companion then observing Polwarth making an indication to advance to her assistance, she gently motioned him back, and anticipated his offer, by saying, "I thank you, sir but I have Meriton, and this worthy man, besides my own maid without I will not further interfere with your particular objects."

As she spoke, she bestowed a melancholy, though sweet smile on the captain, and left the tower and the building, before he could presume to dispute her pleasure. Notwithstanding Cecil and her companion had obtained from Job all that he could expect, or in fact had desired to know, Polwarth lingered in the room, making those preparations that should indicate an intention to depart. He found, at length, that his presence was entirely disregarded by both mother and child. The one was still sitting, with her head bowed to her bosom, abandoned to her own sorrows, while the other had sunk into his customary dull lethargy, giving no other signs of life than by his laboured and audible breathing. The captain, for a moment, looked upon the misery of the apartment, which wore a still more dreary aspect under the dull light of the paltry candle, as well as at the disease and suffering which were too plainly exhibited in the persons of its abject tenants; but the glance at neither served to turn him from his purpose. Temptation had beset the humble follower of Epicurus in a form that never failed to subdue his most philosophic resolutions, and, in this instance, it prevailed once more over his humanity. Approaching the pallet of the simpleton, he spoke to him in a sharp voice, saying

"You must reveal to me what you have done with the provisions with which Mr. Seth Sage has entrusted you, young man I cannot overlook so gross a violation of duty, in a matter of such singular importance. Unless you wish to have the grannies of the 18th back upon you, speak at once, and speak truly."

Job continued obstinately silent, but Abigail raised her head, and answered for her child

"He has never failed to carry the things to the quarters of the Major, whenever he got back. No, no if my boy was so graceless as to steal, it would not be *him* that he would rob!"

"I hope so I hope so, good woman; but this is a sort of temptation to which men yield easily in times of scarcity," returned the impatient captain, who probably felt some inward tokens of his own frailty in such matters. "If they had been delivered would not I have been consulted concerning their disposition! The young man acknowledges that he quitted the American camp yesterday at an early hour."

"No no" and Job, "Ralph made him come away on Saturda'-night. He left the people without his dinner!"

"And repaid his loss by eating the stores! Is this your honesty, fellow?"

"Ralph was in such a hurry that he wouldn't stop to eat. Ralph's a proper warrior, but he doesn't seem to know how sweet it is to eat!"

"Glutton! gormandizer! Thou ostrich of a man!" exclaimed the angry Polwarth "is it not enough that you have robbed me of my own, but you must make me more conscious of my loss by thy silly prating?"

"If you really suspect my child of doing wrong to his employers," said Abigail, "you know neither his temper nor his breeding. I will answer for him, and with bitterness of heart do I say it, that nothing in the shape of food has entered his mouth for many long and weary hours. Hear you not his piteous longings for nourishment? God, who knows all hearts, will hear and believe his cry!"

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

"What say you, woman!" cried Polwarth, aghast with horror, "not eaten did you say! Why hast thou not, unnatural mother, provided for his wants why has he not shared in your meals?"

Abigail looked up into his face with eyes that gleamed with hopeless want, as she answered

"Would I willingly see the child of my body perish of hunger! The last crumb he had was all that was left me, and that came from the hands of one, who, in better justice, should have sent me poison!"

"Nab don't know of the bone that Job found before the barracks," said the young man, feebly; "I wonder if the king knows how sweet bones are?"

"And the provisions, the stores!" cried Polwarth, nearly choking "foolish boy, what hast thou done with the provisions?"

"Job knew the grannies couldn't find them under that oakum," said the simpleton, raising himself to point out their place of concealment, with silly exultation "when Major Lincoln comes back, may be he'll give Nab and Job the bones to pick!"

Polwarth was no sooner made acquainted with the situation of the precious stores, than he tore them from their concealment, with the violence of a maniac. As he separated the articles with an unsteady hand, he rather panted than breathed; and during the short operation, every feature in his honest face was working with extraordinary emotion. Now and then he muttered in an under tone "no food!" "suffering of inanition!" or some such expressive exclamation, that sufficiently explained the current of his thoughts. When all was fairly exposed, he shouted, in a tremendous voice

"Shearflint! thou rascal! Shearflint where have you hidden yourself?"

The reluctant menial knew how dangerous it was to hesitate answering a summons uttered in such a voice, and while his master was yet repeating his cries, he appeared at the door of the little apartment, with a face expressive of the deepest attention.

"Light up the fire, thou prince of idlers!" Polwarth continued in the same high strain; "here is food, and there is hunger! God be praised that I am the man who is permitted to bring the two acquainted! Here, throw on oakum light up, light up!"

As these rapid orders were accompanied by a corresponding earnestness of action, the servant, who knew his master's humour, sat himself most diligently at work to comply. A pile of the tarred combustible was placed on the dreary and empty hearth, and by a touch of the candle it was lighted into a blaze. As the roar of the chimney, and the bright glare were heard and seen, the mother and child both turned their lounging eyes towards the busy actors in the scene. Polwarth threw aside his cane, and commenced slicing the ham with a dexterity that denoted great practice, as well as an eagerness that renewed the credit of his disgraced humanity.

"Bring wood hand down that apology for a gridiren make coals, make coals at once, rascal," he said, at short intervals "God forgive me, that I should ever have meditated evil to one suffering under the heaviest of curses! D'ye hear, thou Shearffint! bring more wood; I shall be ready for the fire in a minute."

"'Tis impossible, sir," said the worried domestic; "I have brought the smallest chip there is to be found wood is too precious in Boston to be lying in the streets."

"Where do you keep your fuel, woman?" demanded the captain, unconscious that he addressed her in the same rough strain that he used to his menial "I am ready to put down."

"You see it all, you see it all!" said Abigail, in the submissive tones of a stricken conscience; "the judgment of God has not fallen on me singly!"

"No wood! no provisions!" exclaimed Polwarth, speaking with difficulty then dashing his hand across his eyes, he continued to his man, in a voice whose hoarseness he intended should conceal his emotion "thou villain, Shearflint, come hither unstrap my leg."

The servant looked at him in wonder, but an impatient gesture hastened his compliance.

"Split it into ten thousand fragments; 'tis seasoned and ready for the fire. The best of them, they of flesh I mean, are but useless incumbrances, after all! A cook wants hands, eyes, nose, and palate, but I see no use for a leg!"

While he was speaking, the philosophic captain seated himself on the hearth with great indifference, and by the aid of Shearflint, the culinary process was soon in a state of forwardness.

"There are people," resumed the diligent Polwarth, who did not neglect his avocation while speaking, "that eat but twice a-day; and some who eat but once; though I never knew any man thrive who did not supply nature in four substantial and regular meals. These sieges are damnable visitations on humanity, and there should be plans invented to conduct a war without them. The moment you begin to starve a soldier, he grows tame and melancholy: feed him, and defy the devil! How is it, my worthy fellow; do you like your ham running or dry?"

The savoury smell of the meat had caused the suffering invalid to raise his feverish body, and he sat watching, with greedy looks, every movement of his unexpected benefactor. His parched lips were already working with impatience, and every glance of his glassy eye betrayed the absolute dominion of physical want over his feeble mind. To this question he made the simple and touching reply, of

"Job isn't particular in his eating."

"Neither am I," returned the methodical gourmand, returning a piece of the meat to the fire, that Job had already devoured in imagination "one would like to get it up well, notwithstanding the hurry. A single turn more, and it will be fit for the mouth of a prince. Bring hither that trencher, Shearflint it is idle to be particular about crockery in so pressing a case. Greasy scoundrel, would you dish a ham in its gravy! What a nosegay it is, after all! Come hither, help me to the bed."

"May the Lord, who sees and notes each kind thought of his creatures, bless and reward you for this care of my forlorn boy!" exclaimed Abigail, in the fullness of her heart; "but will it be prudent to give such strong nourishment to one in a burning fever?"

"What else would you give, woman? I doubt not he owes his disease to his wants. An empty stomach is like an empty pocket, a place for the devil to play his gambols in. 'Tis your small doctor who prates of a meager regimen. Hunger is a distemper of itself, and no reasonable man, who is above listening to quackery, will believe it can be a remedy. Food is the prop of life and eating, like a crutch to a maimed man Shearflint, examine the ashes for the irons of my supporter, and then dish a bit of the meat for the poor woman. Eat away, my charming boy, eat away!" he continued, rubbing his hands in honest delight, to see the avidity with which the famishing Job received his boon. "The second pleasure in life is to see a hungry man enjoy his meal. The first being more deeply seated in human nature. This ham has the true Virginia flavour! Have you such a thing as a spare trencher, Shearflint? It is so near the usual hour, I may as well sup. It is rare, indeed, that a man enjoys two such luxuries at once!"

The tongue of Polwarth ceased the instant Shearflint administered to his wants; the warehouse, into which he had so lately entered with such fell intent, exhibiting the strange spectacle of the captain, sharing, with social communion, in the humble repast of its hunted and miserable tenants.

CHAPTER XII.

"Sir Thurio, give us leave, I pray, awhile

"We have some secrets to confer about."

Two Gentlemen of Verona

During the preceding exhibition of riot and degradation, in the dock-square, a very different state of things existed beneath the roof of a proud edifice that stood in an adjacent street. As was usual at that hour of the night, the windows of Province-house were brilliant with lights, as if in mockery of the naked dreariness of the neighbouring church, and every approach to that privileged residence of the representative of royalty, was closely guarded by the vigilance of armed men. Into this favoured dwelling it now becomes necessary to remove the scene, in order to pursue the thread of our unpretending narrative.

Domestics, in rich military liveries, might be seen gliding from room to room, in the hurry of a banquet some bearing vessels of the most generous wines into the apartment where Howe entertained the leaders of the royal army, and others returning with the remnants of a feast; which, though sumptuously served, having felt the scarcity of the times, had offered more to the eyes than to the appetites of the guests. Idlers, in the loose undress of their martial profession, loitered through the balls, and many a wistful glance, or lingering look followed the odorous scents, as humbler menials received the viands to transport them into the more secret recesses of the building. Notwithstanding the life and activity which prevailed, every movement was conducted in silence and regularity; the whole of the lively scene affording a happy illustration of the virtues and harmony of order.

Within the walls of that apartment to which every eye seemed directed as to a common centre, in anticipation of the slightest wish of those who revelled there, all was bright and cheerful. The hearth knew no want of fuel; the coarser workmanship of the floor was hid beneath rich and ample carpets, while the windows were nearly lost within the sweeping folds of curtains of figured damask. Every thing wore an air of exquisite comfort, blended with a species of careless elegance. Even the most minute article of the furniture had been transported from that distant country which was then thought to monopolize all the cunning arts of handicraft, to administer to the pleasures of those, who however careless of themselves in moments of trial, courted the most luxurious indulgencies in their hours of ease.

Along the centre of this gay apartment was spread the hospitable board of the entertainer. It was surrounded by men in the trappings of high military rank, though here and there might be seen a guest, whose plainer attire and dejected countenance, betrayed the presence of one or two of those misjudging colonists, whose confidence in the resistless power of the crown, began already to waver. The lieutenant of the King held his wonted place at the banquet, his dark visage expressing all the heartiness of a soldier's welcome, while he pointed out this or that favourite amongst an abundant collection of wines, that included the choicest liquors of Europe.

"For those who share the mess of a British general, you have encountered rude fare to-day, gentlemen," he cried; "though, after all, 'tis such as a British soldier knows how to fatten on, in the service of his master. Fill, gentlemen; fill in loyal bumpers, for we have neglected our allegiance."

Each glass now stood sparkling and overcharged with wine, when, after a short and solemn pause, the host pronounced aloud, the magical words "The King." Every voice echoed the name, after which there literally succeeded a breathless pause; when an old man, in the uniform of an officer of the fleet, first proving his loyalty by flourishing on high his inverted glass, added, with hearty will

"God bless him!"

"God bless him!" repeated the graceful leader, who has already been more than once named in these pages; "and grant him a long and glorious reign! and should there be no treason in the wish, in death, a Grave like yourself, worthy admiral `Sepulchrum sine sordibus extrue.'"

"Like me!" echoed the blunt seaman, whose learning was somewhat impaired by hard and long service "I am, it is true, none of your cabinwindow gentry, but his majesty might stoop lower than by favouring a faithful servant, like me, with his gracious presence."

"Your pardon, sir, I should have included, `permissum arbitrio.'"

The equivoque had barely excited a smile, when the sedate countenance of the commander-in-chief indicated that the subject was too serious for a jest. Nor did the naval chieftain appear to relish the unknown tongue; for quite as much, if not a little more offended with the liberty taken with his own name, than with the privileged person of the sovereign, he somewhat smartly retorted

"Permitted or not permitted, I command the fleet of his majesty in these waters, and it shall be noted as a cheerful day in our log-books, when you gentlemen of the army dismiss us to our duty again, on the high-seas. A sailor will grow as tired of doing nothing, as ever a soldier did of work, and I like `elbow-room,' even in my coffin ha, ha, ha what d'ye think of that, master wit ha, ha, ha what d'ye say to that?"

"Quite fair, well deserved, and cuttingly severe, admiral," returned the undisturbed soldier, smiling with perfect self-possession, as he sipped his wine. "But as you find confinement and leisure so irksome, I will presume to advise your seizing some of these impudent Yankees who look into the port so often, not only robbing us of our stores, but offending so many loyal eyes with their traitorous presence.

"I command a parley to be beaten," interrupted the commander-in-chief, "and a truce to further hostilities. Where all have done their duty, and have done it so well, even wit must respect their conduct. Let me advise you to sound the contents of that dusty-looking bottle, Mr. Graves; I think you will approve the situation as an anchorage for the night."

The honest old seaman instantly drowned his displeasure in a glass of the generous liquor, and smacking his lips after the potations, for he repeated the first on the moment, he exclaimed

"Ah! you are too stationary, by half, to stir up the soul of your liquors. Wine should never slumber on its lees until it has been well rolled in the trough of a sea for a few months; then, indeed, you may set it asleep, and yourself by the side of it, if you like a cat's nap."

"As orthodox a direction for the ripening of wine as was ever given by a bishop to his butler!" exclaimed his adversary. Another significant glance from his dark-looking superior, again checked his wilful playfulness, when Howe profited by the silence, to say with the frank air of a liberal host

"As motion is, just now, denied us, the only means I can devise, to prevent my wine from slumbering on its lees, is to drink it."

"Besides which, we are threatened with a visit from Mr. Washington, and his thirsty followers, who may save us all trouble in the matter, unless we prove industrious. In such a dilemma, Mr. Graves will not hesitate to pledge me in a glass, though it should be only to disappoint the rebels!" added Burgoyne, making a graceful inclination to the half-offended seaman.

"Ay, ay, I would do much more disagreeable things to cheat the rascals of their plunder," returned the mollified admiral, good-naturedly nodding his head before he swallowed his bumper "If there be any real danger of the

loss of such liquid amber as this, 'twould be as well to send it along-side my ship, and I will hoist it in, and find it a birth, though it shares my own cott. I believe I command a fortress which neither Yankee, Frenchman, nor Don, would like to besiege, unless at a respectful distance."

The officers around him looked exceedingly grave, exchanging glances of great meaning, though all continued silent, as if the common subject of their meditations was too delicate to be loudly uttered in such a presence. At length the second in command, who still felt the coldness of his superior, and who had, hitherto, said nothing during the idle dialogue, ventured a remark, with the gravity and distance of a man who was not certain of his welcome.

"Our enemies grow bold as the season advances," he said, "and it is past a doubt that they will find us employment in the coming summer. It cannot be denied but they conduct themselves with great steadiness in all their batteries, especially in this last, at the water-side; nor am I without apprehension that they will yet get upon the islands, and render the situation of the shipping hazardous."

"Get upon the islands! drive the fleet from their anchors!" exclaimed the veteran sailor, in undisguised amazement; "I shall account it a happy day for England, when Washington and his rabble trust themselves within reach of our shot!"

"God grant us a chance at the rascals with the bayonet in the open field," cried Howe, "and an end of these winter-quarters! I say winter-quarters, for I trust no gentleman can consider this army as besieged by a mob of armed peasants! We hold the town, and they the country; but when the proper time shall come well, sir, your pleasure," he continued, interrupting himself to speak to an upper servant at his elbow.

The man, who had stood for more than a minute, in an attitude of respectful attention, anxious to catch the eye of his master, muttered his message in a low and hurried voice, as if unwilling to be heard by others, and at the same time conscious of the impropriety of whispering. Most of those around him turned their heads in polite indifference, but the old sailor, who sat too near to be totally deaf, had caught the words, "a lady," which was quite enough to, provoke all his merriment, after such a free indulgence of the bottle. Striking his hand smartly on the table, he exclaimed, with a freedom that no other present could have presumed to use

"A sail! a sail! by George a sail! under what colours, friend; king's, or rebels? Here has been a blunder, with a vengeance! The cook has certainly been too late, or the lady is too early! ha, ha, ha Oh! you are wicked, free livers in the army!"

The tough old tar enjoyed his joke exceedingly, chuckling with inward delight at his discovery. He was, however, alone in his merriment, none of the soldiers venturing to understand his allusions, any further than by exchanging a few stolen looks of unusual archness. Howe bit his lips, with obvious vexation, and sternly ordered the man to repeat his errand in a voice that was more audible.

"A lady," said the trembling menial, "wishes to see your excellency, and she waits your pleasure, sir, in the library."

"Among his books, too!" shouted the admiral "that would have better become you, my joking friend! I say, young man, is the girl young and handsome?"

"By the lightness of her step, sir, I should think her young; but her face was concealed under a hood."

"Ay! ay! the jade comes hooded into the house of the king! Damn me, Howe, but modesty is getting to be a rare virtue amongst you gentlemen on shore!"

"'Tis a plain case against you, sir, for even the servant, as you find, has detected that she is light of carriage," said the smiling Burgoyne, making a half motion towards rising. "It is probably some applicant for relief, or for permission to depart the place. Suffer me to see her, and spare yourself the pain of a refusal?"

"Not at all," said Howe, gaining his feet with an alacrity that anticipated the more deliberate movement of the other "I should be unworthy of the trust I hold, could I not lend an occasional ear to a petition. Gentlemen, as there is a lady in the case, I presume to trespass on your indulgence. Admiral, I commend you to my butler, who is a worthy fellow, and can give you all the cruises of the bottle before you, since it left the island of Madeira."

He inclined his head to his guests, and passed from the room with a hurried step, that did not altogether consult appearances. As he proceeded through the hall, his ears were saluted by another burst from the hearty old seaman, who, however, enjoyed his humour alone, the rest of the party immediately turning to other subjects, with well-bred dullness. On entering the room already mentioned, Howe found himself in the presence of the female, who, notwithstanding their apparent indifference, was at that very moment occupying the thoughts, and exercising the ingenuity of every man he had left behind him. Advancing at once to the centre of the apartment, with the ease and freedom of a soldier who felt himself without a superior, he asked, with a politeness somewhat equivocal

"Why am I favoured with this visit? and why has a lady whose appearance shows she might command friends at any time, assumed this personal trouble?"

"Because I am a supplicant for a favour that might be denied to one who petitioned coldly," returned a soft, tremulous voice, deep within the covering of a silken calash. "As time is wanting to observe the usual forms of applications I have presumed to come in person, to prevent delay."

"And surely, one like you, can have little reason to dread a repulse," said Howe, with an attempt at gallantry, that would have better become the man who had offered to be his substitute. While speaking he advanced a step nigher to the lady, and pointing to her hood, he continued "Would it not be wise to aid your request, with a view of a countenance that I am certain can speak better than any words whom have I the honour to receive, and what may be the nature of her business?"

"A wife who seeks her husband," returned the female, dropping the folds of her calash, and exposing to his steady eyes, the commanding loveliness of the chaste countenance of Cecil The sudden annunciation of her character was forced from the lips of the unclaimed bride, by the freedom of a gaze to which she was unused; but the instant she had spoken, her eyes fell on the floor in embarrassment, and she stood deeply blushing at the strength of her own language, though preserving all the apparent composure and dignity of female pride. The English general regarded her beauty for a moment, with a pleased, though doubting eye, before he continued

"Is he whom you seek within or without the town?"

"I much fear, without!"

"And you would follow him into the camp of the rebels? This is a case that may require some deliberation. I feel assured I entertain a lady of great beauty; might I, in addition, know how to address her?"

"For my name I can have no reason to blush," said Cecil, proudly "'tis noble in the land of our common ancestors, and may have reached the ears of Mr. Howe I am the child of the late colonel Dynevor." '

"The niece of Lord Cardonnell!" exclaimed her auditor, in amazement, instantly losing the equivoal freedom of his manner in an air of deep respect "I have long known that Boston contained such a lady; nor do I forget that she is accused of concealing herself from the attentions of the army, like one of the most obdurate of our foes attentions which every man in the garrison would be happy to show her, from myself down to the lowest

ensign do me the honour to be seated?"

Cecil bowed her acknowledgments, but continued standing

"I have neither time nor spirits to defend myself from such an imputation," she answered "though should my own name prove no passport to your favour, I must claim it in behalf of him I seek."

"Should he be the veriest rebel in the train of Washington, he has great reason to be proud of his fortune!"

"So far from ranking among the enemies of the king, he has already been lavish of his blood in behalf of the crown," returned Cecil, unconsciously raising the calash again, with maiden bashfulness, as she felt the moment was approaching when she must declare the name of the man, whose influence over her feelings she had already avowed.

"And he is called?"

The answer was given to this direct question, in a low but distinct voice. Howe started when he heard the well-known name of an officer of so much consideration, though a meaning smile lighted his dark features, as he repeated her words in surprise

"Major Lincoln! his refusal to return to Europe, in search of health, is then satisfactorily explained! Without the town did you say! there must be some error."

"I fear it is too true!"

The harsh features of the leader contracted again into their sternest look, and it was apparent how much he was disturbed by the intelligence.

"This is presuming too far on his privilege," he muttered in an under tone. "Left the place, say you, without my knowledge and approbation, young lady?"

"But on no unworthy errand!" cried the almost breathless Cecil, instantly losing sight of herself in her anxiety for Lionel "private sorrows have driven him to an act, that, at another time, he would be the first to condemn, as a soldier."

Howe maintained a cool, but threatening silence, that was far more appalling than any words could be. The alarmed wife gazed at his lowering face for a minute, as if to penetrate his secret thoughts, then yielding, with the sensitiveness of a woman, to her worst apprehensions, she cried

"Oh! you would not avail yourself of this confession to do him harm! Has he not bled for you; lingered for months on the verge of the grave, in defence of your cause; and will you now doubt him! Nay, sir, though chance and years may have subjected him, for a time, to your controul, he is every way your equal, and will confront each charge before his Royal Master, let who may bring them against his spofless name!"

" 'Twill be necessary," the other coldly replied.

"Nay, hearken not to my weak, unmeaning words," continued Cecil, wringing her hands, in doubting distress; "I know not what I say, He has your permission to hold intercourse with the country weekly?"

"For the purpose of obtaining the supplies necessary to his past condition."

"And may he not have gone on such an errand, and under favour of the flag you yourself have cheerfully accorded?"

"In such a case would I not have been spared the pain of this interview!"

Cecil paused a moment, and seemed collecting her scatiered faculties, and preparing her mind for some serious purpose. After a little time, she attempted a painful smile, saying, more calmly

"I had presumed too far on military indulgence, and was even weak enough to believe the request would be granted to my name and situation."

"No name, no situation, no circumstances, can ever render"

"Speak not the cruel words, least they once more drive me from my recollection," interrupted Cecil. "First hear me, sir listen to a wife and a daughter, and you will recall the cruel sentence."

Without waiting for a reply, she advanced with a firm and proud step to the door of the room, passing her astonished companion with an eye and a face beaming with the fullness of her object. In the outer passage, she beckoned from among the loiterers in the hall, to the stranger who had accompanied her in the visit to the warehouse, and when he had approached, and entered the room, the door once more closed, leaving the spectators without, wondering whence such a vision of purity could have made its way within the sullied walls of Province-house.

Many long and impatient minutes were passed by the guests in the banqueting-room, during the continuance of this mysterious interview. The jests of the admiral began to flag, just as his companions were inclined to think they were most merited, and the conversation assumed that broken and disjointed character which betrays the wandering of the speakers' thoughts.

At length a bell rang, and orders came from the commander-in-chief, to clear the hall of its curious idlers. When none were left but the regular domestics of the family, Howe appeared, supporting Cecil, closely hooded, to the conveyance that awaited her presence at the gate. The air of their master communicated a deep respect to the manners of the observant menials, who crowded about their persons, to aid the departure, with officious zeal. The amazed sentinels dropped their arms, with the usual regularity, to their chieftain, as he passed to the outer portal in honour of his unknown companion, and eyes met the expressive glances of eyes, as all who witnessed the termination of this visit, sought in the countenances of those around them, some solution of its object.

When Howe resumed his seat at the table, another attempt was made by the admiral to renew the subject; but it was received with an air so cold, and a look so pointedly severe, that even the careless son of the ocean forgot his humour under the impression of so dark a frown.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
"Announced their march "

Scott.

Cecil suffered the night to advance a little, before she left Tremont-street, to profit by the permission to leave the place, her communication had obtained from the English general. It was, however, far from late when she took

leave of Agnes, and commenced her expedition, still attended by Meriton and the unknown man, with whom she has already, more than once, made her appearance in our pages. At the lower part of the town she left her vehicle, and pursuing the route of several devious and retired streets, soon reached the margin of the water. The wharves were deserted and still. Indicating the course by her own light and hurried footsteps, to her companions, the youthful bride moved unhesitatingly along the rough planks, until her progress was checked by a large basin, between two of the ordinary wooden piers which line the shores of the place. Here she paused for a moment, in doubt, as if fearful there had been some mistake, when the figure of a boy was seen advancing out of the shadows of a neighbouring store-house.

"I fear you have lost your way," he said, when within a few feet of her, where he stood, apparently examining the party with rigid scrutiny. "May I venture to ask whom or what you seek?"

"One who is sent hither, on private duty, by orders from the commander-in chief."

"I see but two," returned the lad, hesitating "where is the third?"

"He lingers in the distance," said Cecil, pointing to Meriton, whose footsteps were much more guarded than those of his mistress. "Three is our number, and we are all present."

"I beg a thousand pardons," returned the youth, dropping the folds of a sailor's over-coat, under which he had concealed the distinguishing marks of a naval dress, and raising his hat at the same moment, with great respect; "my orders were to use the utmost precaution, ma'am, for, as you hear, the rebels sleep but little to-night!"

" 'Tis a dreadful scene I leave, truly, sir," returned Cecil, "and the sooner it will suit your convenience to transport us from it, the greater will be the obligation you are about to confer."

The youth once more bowed, in submission to her wishes, and requested the whole party to follow whither he should lead. A very few moments brought them to a pair of water-stairs, where, under cover of the duskiness thrown upon the basin from the wharf, a boat lay concealed, in perfect readiness to receive them.

"Be stirring boys!" cried the youth, in a tone of authority; "ship your oars as silently as it stealing away from an enemy. Have the goodness, ma'am, to enter, and you shall have a quick and safe landing on the other shore, whatever may be the reception of the rebels."

Cecil and her two attendants complied without delay, when the boat glided into the stream with a velocity that promised a speedy verification of the words of the midshipman. The most profound stillness reigned among these nocturnal adventurers, and by the time they had rowed a short distance, the bride began to lose an immediate consciousness of her situation, in contemplation of the scene.

The evening was already milder, and by one of those sudden changes, peculiar to the climate, it was rapidly becoming even bland and pleasant. The light of a clear moon fell upon the town and harbour, rendering the objects of both visible, in mellowed softness. The huge black hulls of the vessels of war, rested sullenly on the waters, like slumbering leviathans, without even a sail or a passing boat, except their own, to enliven the view in the direction of the port. On the other hand, the hills of the town rose, in beautiful relief, against the clear sky, with here and there a roof or a steeple reflecting the pale light of the moon. The bosom of the place was as quiet as if its inhabitants were buried in midnight sleep, but behind the hills, in a circuit extending from the works on the heights of Charlestown, to the neck, which lay in open view of the boat, there existed all the evidences of furious warfare. During the few preceding nights the Americans had been more than commonly diligent in the use of their annoyances, but now they appeared to expend their utmost energies upon their enemies. Still they spared the town, directing the weight of their fire at the different batteries which protected the approaches to the place, as already described, along the western borders of the peninsula.

The ears of Cecil had long been accustomed to the uproar of arms, but this was the first occasion in which she was ever a witness of the mingled beauties and terrors of a cannonade at night. Suffering the calash to fall, she shook back the dark tresses from her face, and leaning over the sides of the little vessel, listened to the bursts of the artillery, and gazed on the sudden flashes of vivid light that mocked the dimmer illumination of the planet, with an absorbed attention that momentarily lured her into forgetfulness. The men pulled their light boat with muffled oars, and so still was its progress, that there were instants when even the shot might be heard rattling among the ruins they had made.

"It's amazement to me, madam," said Meriton, "that so many British generals, and brave gentlemen as there is in Boston, should stay in such a little spot to be shot at by a parcel of countrymen, when there is Lon'non, as still and as safe, at this blessed moment, as a parish church-yard, at midnight!"

Cecil raised her eyes at this interruption, and perceived the youth gazing at her countenance in undisguised admiration of its beauty. Blushing, and once more concealing her features beneath her calash, she turned away from the view of the conflict, in silence.

"The rebels are free with their gunpowder tonight!" said the midshipman. "Some of their cruisers have picked up another of our storeships, I fancy, or Mr. Washington would not make such a noisy time of it, when all honest people should be thinking of their sleep. Don't you believe, Ma'am, if the admiral would warp three or four of our heaviest ships up into the channel, back of the town, it would be a short method of lowering the conceit of these Yankees?"

"Really, sir, I am so little acquainted with military matters," returned Cecil, suffering her anxious features to relax into a smile, "that my opinion, should I venture to give one, would be utterly worthless."

"Why, young gentleman," said Meriton, "the rebels drove a galley out of the river, a night or two ago, as I can testify myself, having stood behind a large brick store, where I saw the whole affair, most beautifully conducted!"

"A very fit place for one like you, no doubt, sir," returned the midshipman, without attempting to conceal his disgust at so impertinent an interruption "do you know what a galley is, Ma'am? nothing but a small vessel cut down, with a few heavy guns, I do assure you. It would be a very different affair with a frigate or a two-decker! Do but observe what a charming thing our ship is, Ma'am I am sure so beautiful a lady must know how to admire a handsome ship! she lies here-away, nearly in a range with the second island."

To please the earnest youth, Cecil bent her head toward the quarter he wished, and murmured a few words in approbation of his taste. But the impatient boy had narrowly watched the direction of her eyes, and she was interrupted by his exclaiming in manifest disappointment

"What! that shapeless hulk, just above the castle! she is an old Dutch prize, en flute, ay, older than my grandmother, good old soul; and it wouldn't matter the value of a piece of junk; into which end you stepped her bowsprit! One of my school-fellows, Jack Willoughby, is a reefer on board her; and he says that they can just get six knots out of her, on her course in smooth water with a fresh breeze, allowing seven knot for lee-way! Jack means to get rid of her the moment he can catch the admiral running large, for the Graves's live near the Willoughbys' in town, and he knows all the soundings about the old man's humour. No, no, Ma'am, Jack would give every shot in his lockers to swing a hammock between two of the beams of our ship. Do excuse me, one moment;" presuming to take one of the hands of Cocil, though with sufficient delicacy, as he pointed out his favourite vessel "There, Ma'am, now you have her! She that's so taunt rigged, with a flying-jibboom, and all her top-gallant-yards stopped to her lower rigging we send them down every night at gun-fire, and cross them again next morning as regularly as the bell strikes eight. Isn't she a sweet thing, Ma'am? for I see she has caught your eye at last, and I am sure you can't wish to look at any other ship in port."

Cecil could not refuse her commendations to this eloquent appeal, though at the next moment she would have been utterly at a loss to distinguish the much-admired frigate from the despised store-ship.

"Ay, ay, Madam, I knew you would like her when you once got a fair glimpse at her proportions," continued the delighted boy; "though she is not half so beautiful on her broadside, as when you can catch her lasking, especially on her larboard bow pull, long and strong, men, and with a light touch of the water these Yankees have ears as long as borricoes, and we are getting in with the land. This set-down at Dorchester's neck will give you a long walk, Ma'am, to Cambridge; but there was no possibility of touching the rebels any where else to-night, or, as you see, we should have gone right into the face of their cannon."

"Is it not a little remarkable," said Cecil, willing to pay the solicitude of the boy to amuse her, by some reply, "that the colonists, while they invest the town so closely on the north and west, should utterly neglect to assail it on the south; for I believe they have never occupied the hills in Dorchester at all; and yet it is one of the points nearest to Boston!"

"It is no mystery at all!" returned the boy, shaking his head with all the sagacity of a veteran "it would bring another Bunker-hill about their ears; for you see it is the same thing at this end of the place that Charlestown neck is at the other! a light touch, men, a light touch!" he continued, dropping his voice as they approached the shore; "besides, Ma'am, a fort on that hill could throw its shot directly on our decks, a thing the old man would never submit to; and that would either bring on a regular hammering match, or a general clearing out of the fleet; and then what would become of the army! No, no the Yankees wouldn't risk driving the cod-fish out of their bay, to try such an experiment! Lay on your oars, boys, while I take a squint along this shore, to see if there are any Jonathans cooling themselves near the beach, by moon-light."

The obedient seamen rested from their labours, while their youthful officer stood up in the boat and directed a small night-glass over the intended place of landing. The examination proved entirely satisfactory, and in a low, cautious voice, he ordered the men to pull into a place where the shadow of the hills might render the landing still less likely to be observed.

From this moment the most profound silence was observed, the boat advancing swiftly, though under perfect command, to the desired spot, where it was soon heard grazing upon the bottom, as it gradually lost its motion, and finally became stationary. Cecil was instantly assisted to the land, whither she was followed by the midshipman, who jumped upon the shore, with great indifference, and approached the passenger, from whom he was now about to part

"I only hope that those you next fall in with, may know how to treat you as well as those you leave," said the boy, approaching, and offering his hand, with the frankness of an older seaman, to Cecil "God bless you, my dear Ma'am; I have two little sisters at home, nearly as handsome as yourself, and I never see a woman in want of assistance, but I think of the poor girls I've left in old England God bless you, once more I hope when we meet again, you will take a nearer view of the"

"You are not likely to part so soon as you imagine," exclaimed a man, springing on his feet, from his place of concealment behind a rock, and advancing rapidly on the party "offer the least resistance, and you are all dead."

"Shove off, men, shove off, and don't mind me!" cried the youth, with admirable presence of mind. "For God's sake, save the boat, if you die for it!"

The seamen obeyed with practised alacrity, when the boy darted after them with the lightness of his years, and making a desparate leap, caught the gunwale of the barge, into which he was instantly drawn by the sailors. A dozen armed men had by this time reached the edge of the water, and as many muskets were pointed at the retreating party, when he who had first spoken, cried

"Not a trigger! the boy has escaped us, and he deserves his fortune! Let us secure those who remain; but if a single gun be fired it will only draw the attention of the fleet and castle."

His companions, who had acted with the hesitation of men that were not assured the course they took was correct, willingly dropped the muzzles of their pieces, and in another instant the boat was ploughing its way towards the much-admired frigate, at a distance which would probably have rendered their fire quite harmless. Cecil had hardly breathed during the short period of uncertainty. but when the sudden danger was passed, she prepared herself to receive their captors, with the perfect confidence which an American woman seldom fails to feel in the mildness and reason of her countrymen. The whole party, who now approached her, were dressed in the ordinary habiliments of husbandmen, mingled, in a slight degree, with the more martial accoutrements of soldiers. They were armed with muskets only, which they wielded like men acquainted with all the uses of the weapon, at the same time that they were unaccustomed to the mere manual of the troops.

Every fibre of the body of Meriton, however, shook with fear, as he found this unexpected guard encircling their little party, nor did the unknown man who had accompanied them appear entirely free from apprehension. The bride still maintained her self-possession, supported either by her purpose, or her greater familiarity with the character of the people into whose hands she had fallen.

When the whole party were posted within a few feet of them, they dropped the butts of their muskets on the ground, and stood patient listeners to the ensuing examination. The leader of the party, who was only distinguished from his companions by a green cockade in his hat, which Cecil had heard was the symbol of a subaltern officer among the American troops, addressed her in a calm, but steady tone

"It is unpleasant to question a woman," he said, "and especially one of your appearance: but duty requires it of me. What brings you to this unfrequented point, in the boat of a king's ship, and at this unusual hour of the night?"

"I come with no intent to conceal my visit from any eyes," returned Cecil; "for my first wish is to be conducted to some officer of rank, to whom I will explain my object. There are many that I should know, who will not hesitate to believe my words."

"We none of us profess to doubt your truth; we only act with caution, because it is required by circumstances cannot the explanation be made to me; for I dislike the duty that causes trouble to a female?"

"'Tis impossible!" said Cecil, involuntarily shrinking within the folds of her mantle.

"You come at a most unfortunate moment," said the other, musing, "and I fear you will pass an uneasy night, in consequence. By your tongue, I think you are an American?"

"I was born among those roofs, which you may see on the opposite peninsula."

"Then we are of the same town," returned the officer, stepping back in a vain attempt to get a glimpse of those features which were concealed beneath the hood. He made no attempt, however, to remove the silk, nor did he in the slightest manner convey any wish of a nature that might be supposed to wound the delicacy of her sex; but finding himself unsuccessful, he turned away, as he added "and I grow tired of remaining where I can see the smoke of my own chimneys, at the same time I know that strangers are seated around the hearths below!"

"None wish more fervently than I, that the moment had arrived when each might enjoy his own, in peace and quietness."

"Let the parliament repeal their laws, and the king recall his troops," said one of the men, "and there will be an end of the struggle at once. We don't fight because we love to shed blood!"

"He would do both, friend, if the counsel of one so insignificant as I, could find weight in his royal mind."

"I believe there is not much difference between a royal mind and that of any other man, when the devil gets hold of it!" bluntly exclaimed another of the party. "I've a notion the imp is as mischievous with a king as with a cobbler!"

"Whatever I may think of the conduct of his ministers," said Cecil, coldly, "'tis unpleasant to me to discuss the personal qualities of my sovereign."

"Why, I meant no offence; though when the truth is uppermost in a man's thoughts, he is apt to let it out," returned the soldier. After this uncouth apology, he continued silent, turning away like one who felt dissatisfied with himself for what he had done.

In the mean time the leader had been consulting with one or two of his men aside. He now advanced again, and delivered the result of their united wisdom.

"Under all circumstances, I have concluded," he said, speaking in the first person, in deference to his rank, though in fact he had consented to change his own opinion at the instigation of his advisers, "to refer you for information to the nearest general officer, under the care of these two men, who will show you the way. They both know the country, and there is not the least danger of their mistaking the road."

Cecil bowed, in entire submission to this characteristic intimation of his pleasure, and declared her anxiety to proceed. The officer held another short consultation with the two guides, which soon terminated by his issuing orders to the rest of the detachment to prepare to depart. Before they separated, one of the guides, or, more properly, guards, approached Meriton, and said, with a deliberation that might easily be mistaken for doubt

"As we shall be only two to two, friend, will it not be as well to see what you have got secreted about your person, as it may prevent any hard words or difficulties hereafter. "You will see the reason of the thing, I trust, and make no objection."

"Not at all, sir, not at all!" returned the trembling valet, producing his purse, without a moment's hesitation; "it is not heavy, but what there is in it, is of the best English gold; which I expect is much regarded among you who see nothing but rebel paper!"

"Much as we set store by it, we do not choose to rob for it," returned the soldier, with cool contempt. "I wish to look for weapons, and not for money."

"But sir, as I unluckily have no weapons, had you not better take my money? there are ten good guineas, I do assure you; and not a light one among them all, 'pon honour! besides several pieces of silver."

"Come, Allen," said the other soldier, laughing, "it's no great matter whether that gentleman has arms or not, I believe. His comrade here, who seems to know rather better what he is about, has none, at any rate; and for one of two men, I am willing to trust the other."

"I do assure you," said Cecil, "that our intentions are peaceable, and that your charge will prove in no manner difficult."

The men listened to the earnest tones of her sweet voice with much deference, and in a few moments the two parties separated, to proceed on their several ways. While the main body of the soldiers ascended the hill, the guides of Cecil took a direction which led them around its base. Their route lay towards the low neck which connected the heights with the adjacent country, and their progress was both diligent and rapid. Cecil was often

consulted as to her ability to endure the fatigue, and repeated offers were made to accommodate their speed to her wishes. In every other respect she was totally disregarded by the guides, who, however, paid much closer attention to her companions, each soldier attaching himself to one of her followers, whom he constantly regarded with a watchful and wary eye.

"You seem cold, friend," said Allen to Meriton, "though I should call the night quite pleasant for the first week in March!"

"Indeed I'm starved to the bones!" returned the valet, with a shivering that would seem to verify his assertion. "It's a very chilly climate is this of America, especially of nights! I never really felt such a remarkable dampness about the throat before, within memory, I do assure you."

"Here is another handkerchief," said the soldier, throwing him a common 'kerchief from his pocket "wrap it round your neck, for it gives me an ague to hear your teeth knocking one another about so."

"I thank you, sir, a thousand times," said Meriton, producing his purse again, with an instinctive readiness "what may be the price?"

The man pricked up his ears, and dropping his musket from the guarded position in which he had hitherto carried it, he drew closer to the side of his prisoner, in a very companionable way, as he replied

"I did not calculate on selling the article; but if you have need of it, I wouldn't wish to be hard."

"Shall I give you one guinea, or two, Mr. Rebel?" asked Meriton, whose faculties were utterly confounded by his terror.

"My name is Allen, friend, and we like civil language in the Bay," said the soldier. "Two guineas for a pocket-handkerchief! I couldn't think of imposing on any man so much!"

"What shall it be then, half a guinea, or four half-crown pieces?"

"I didn't at all calculate to part with the handkerchief when I left home its quite new, as you can see by holding it up, in this manner, to the moon besides, you know, now there is no trade, these things come very high. Well, if you are disposed to buy, I dont wish to crowd; you may take it, finally, for the two crowns."

Meriton dropped the money into his hands, without hesitation, and the soldier pocketed the price, perfectly satisfied with his bargain and himself, since he had sold his goods at a clear profit of about three hundred per cent. He soon took occasion to whisper to his comrade, that in his opinion "he had made a good trade," and laying their heads together, they determined that the bargain was by no means a bad wind-fall. On the other hand, Meriton, who knew the difference in value between cotton and silk, quite as well as his American protectors, was equally well satisfied with the arrangement; though his contentment was derived from a very different manner of reasoning. From early habit, he had long been taught to believe that every civility, like patriotism in the opinion of Sir Robert Walpole, had its price; and his fears had rendered him somewhat careless about the amount of the purchase-money. He now considered himself as having a clear claim on the protection of his guard, and his apprehensions gradually subsided into security under the soothing impression.

By the time this satisfactory bargain was concluded, and each party was lawfully put in possession of his own, they had reached the low land already mentioned as the "neck." Suddenly the guard stopped, and bending forward, in the attitude of deep attention, they seemed to listen, intently, to some faint and distant sounds that were, for moments, audible in the intervals of the cannonade.

"They are coming," said one to the other; "shall we go on, or wait until they've passed?"

The question was answered in a whisper, and, after a short consultation, they determined to proceed.

The attention of Cecil had been attracted by this conference, and the few words which had escaped her guides; and, for the first time, she harboured some little dread as to her final destination. Full of the importance of her errand, the bride now devoted every faculty to detect the least circumstance that might have a tendency to defeat it. She trode so lightly on the faded herbage as to render her own footsteps inaudible, and more than once she was about to request the others to imitate her example, that no danger might approach them unexpectedly. At length her doubts were relieved, though her wonder was increased, by distinctly hearing the lumbering sounds of wheels on the frozen earth, as if innumerable groaning vehicles were advancing with slow and measured progress. In another instant her eyes assisted the organs of hearing, and by the aid of the moon her doubts, if not her apprehensions, were entirely removed.

Her guards now determined on a change of purpose, and withdrew with their prisoners within the shadow of an apple tree that stood on the low land, but a few paces from the line of the route evidently taken by the approaching vehicles. In this position they remained for several minutes, attentive observers of what was passing around them.

"Our men have woke up the British by their fire," said one of the guards; "and all their eyes are turned to the batteries!"

"Yes, it's very well as it is," returned his comrade; "but if the old brass congress mortar hadn't gi'n way yesterday, there would be a different sort of roaring. Did you ever see the old congress?"

"I can't say I ever saw the cannon itself, but I have seen the bombs fifty times; and pokerish-looking things they be, especially in a dark night but hush, here they come."

A large body of men now approached, and moved swiftly past them, in deepest silence, defiling at the foot of the hills, and marching towards the shores of the peninsula. The whole of this party was attired and accoutred much in the fashion of those who had received Cecil. One or two who were mounted, and in more martial trappings, announced the presence of some officers of higher rank. At the very heels of this detachment of soldiers, came a great number of carts, which took the route that led directly up to the neighbouring heights. After these came another, and more numerous body of troops, who followed the teams, the whole moving in the profoundest stillness, and with the diligence of men who were engaged in the most important undertaking. In the rear of the whole, another collection of carts appeared, groaning under the weight of large bundles of hay, and other military preparations of defence. Before this latter division left the low land, immense numbers of the closely-packed bundles were tumbled to the ground, and arranged, with a quickness almost magical, in such a manner as to form a light breast-work across the low ground, which would otherwise have been completely exposed to be swept by the shot of the royal batteries; a situation of things that was believed to have led to the catastrophe of Breeds, the preceding summer.

Among the last of those who crossed the neck, was an officer on horse-back, whose eye was attracted by the group who stood as idle spectators under the tree. Pointing out the latter object to those around him, he rode nigher to the party, and leaned forward in his saddle to examine their persons

"How's this!" he exclaimed "a woman and two men under the charge of sentinels! Have we then more spies among us cut away the tree, men; we have need of it, and let in the light of the moon upon them!"

The order was hardly given before it was executed, and the tree felled with a despatch that, to any but an American, would appear incredible. Cecil stepped aside from the impending branches, and by moving into the light, betrayed the appearance of a gentlewoman by her mien and apparel.

"Here must be some mistake!" continued the officer "why is the lady thus guarded?"

One of the soldiers, in a few words, explained the nature of her arrest, and in return received directions, anew, how to proceed. The mounted officer now put spurs into his horse, and galloped away, in eager pursuit of more pressing duties, though he still looked behind him, so long as the deceptive light enabled him to distinguish either form or features.

"'Tis advisable to go on the heights," said the soldier, "where we may find the commanding general."

"Any where," returned Cecil, confused with the activity and bustle that had passed before her eyes, "or any thing, to be relieved from this distressing delay."

In a very few moments they reached the summit of the nearest of the two hills, where they paused just without the busy circle of men who laboured there, while one of the soldiers went in quest of the officer in command. From the point where she now stood, Cecil had an open view of the port, the town, and most of the adjacent country. The vessels still reposed heavily on the waters, and she fancied that the youthful midshipman was already nestling safe in his own hammock, on board the frigate, whose tall and tapering spars rose against the sky in such beautiful and symmetrical lines. No evidences of alarm were manifested in the town; but, on the contrary, the lights were gradually disappearing, notwithstanding the heavy cannonade which still roared along the western side of the peninsula; and it was probable that Howe, and his unmoved companions, yet continued their revels, with the same security in which they had been left two short hours before. While, with the exception of the batteries, every thing in the distance was still, and apparently slumbering, the near view was one of life and activity. Mounds of earth were already rising on the crest of the hill labourers were filling barrels with earth and sand; fascines were tumbling about from place to place, as they were wanted, and yet the stillness was only interrupted by the unremitting strokes of the pick, the low and earnest hum of voices, or the crashing of branches, as the pride of the neighbouring orchards came, crushing, to the earth. The novelty of the scene beguiled Cecil of her anxiety, and many minutes passed unheeded by. Fifty times parties, or individuals amongst the labourers, approaching near her person, paused to gaze a moment at the speaking and sweet features that the placid light of the moon rendered even more than usually soft, and then pushed on in silence, endeavouring to repair, by renewed diligence, the transient forgetfulness of their urgent duties. At length the man returned, and announced the approach of the general who commanded on the hill. The latter was a soldier of middle age, of calm and collected deportment, roughly attired, for the occasion, and bearing no other symbol of his rank than the distinctive crimson cockade, in one of the large military hats of the period.

"You find us in the midst of our labours," he pleasantly observed, as he approached; "and will overlook the delay I have given you. It is reported you left the town this evening?"

"Within the hour."

"And Howe dreams he of the manner in which we are likely to amuse him in the morning?"

"It would be affectation in one like me," said Cecil, modestly, "to decline answering questions concerning the views of the royal general; but still you will pardon me if I say, that in my present situation, I could wish to be spared the pain of even confessing my ignorance."

"I acknowledge my error," the officer unhesitatingly answered. After a short pause, in which he seemed to muse, he continued "this is no ordinary night, young lady, and it becomes my duty to refer you to the general commanding this wing of the army. He possibly may think it necessary to communicate your detention to the commander-in-chief."

"It is he I seek, sir, and would most wish to meet."

He bowed, and giving his orders to a subaltern in a low voice, walked away, and was soon lost in the busy crowd that came and went in constant employment, around the summit of the hill. Cecil lingered a single moment after her new conductor had declared his readiness to proceed, to cast another glance at the calm splendour of the sea and bay; the distant and smoky roofs of the town; the dim objects that moved about the adjacent eminence, equally and similarly employed with those around her; and then raising her calash, and tightening the folds of her mantle, she descended the hill with the light and elastic steps of youth.

CHAPTER XIV.

"The rebel vales, the rebel dales,
 "With rebel trees surrounded,
"The distant woods, the hills and floods,
 "With rebel echoes sounded."

The Battle of the Kegs.

The enormous white cockade that covered nearly one side of the little hat of her present conductor, was the only symbol that told Cecil she was now committed to the care of one who held the rank of captain among those who battled for the rights of the colonies. No other part of his attire was military, though a cut-and-thrust was buckled to his form, which, from its silver guard, and formidable dimensions, had probably been borne by some of his ancestors, in the former wars of the colonies. The disposition of its present wearer was, however, far from that belligerent nature that his weapon might be thought to indicate, for he tendered the nicest care and assiduity to the movements of his prisoner.

At the foot of the hill, a wagon, returning from the field, was put in requisition by this semi-military gallant; and after a little suitable preparation, Cecil found herself seated on a rude bench by his side, in the vehicle; while her own attendants, and the two private men, occupied its bottom, in still more social affinity. At first their progress was slow and difficult, return carts, literally by hundreds, impeding the way; but when they had once passed the heavy-footed beasts who drew them, they proceeded in the direction of Roxbury, with greater rapidity. During the first mile, while they were extricating themselves from the apparently interminable line of carts, the officer directed his whole attention to this important and difficult manoeuvre; but when their uneasy vessel might be said to be fairly sailing before the wind, he did not choose to neglect those services, which, from time immemorial, beautiful women in distress have had a right to claim of men in his profession.

"Now do not spare the whip," he said to the driver, at the moment of their deliverance; "but push on, for the credit of horse-flesh, and to the disgrace of all horned cattle. This near beast of yours should be a tory, by his gait and his reluctance to pull in the traces for the common-good treat him as such, friend, and, in turn, you shall receive the treatment of a sound whip, when we make a halt. You have spent the winter in Boston, Madam?"

Cecil bent her head, in silent assent.

"The royal army will, doubtless, make a better figure in the eyes of a lady, than the troops of the colonies; though there are some among us who are thought not wholly wanting in military knowledge, and the certain air of a soldier," he continued; extricating the silverheaded legacy of his grandfather from its concealment under a fold of his companion's mantle "you have balls and entertainments without number, I fancy, Ma'am, from the gentlemen in the king's service."

"I believe that few hearts are to be found amongst the females in Boston, so light as to mingle in their amusements!"

"God bless them for it!" exclaimed her escort; "I am sure every shot we throw into the town, is like drawing blood from our own veins. I suppose the king's officers don't hold the colonists so cheap, since the small affair on Charlestown neck, as they did formerly?"

"None who had any interest at stake, in the events of that fatal day, will easily forget the impression it has made!"

The young American was too much struck by the melancholy pathos in the voice of Cecil, not to fancy he had, in his own honest triumph, unwittingly probed a wound which time had not yet healed. They rode many minutes after this unsuccessful effort on his part, to converse, in profound silence, nor did he again speak until the trampling of horses hoofs was borne along by the evening air, unaccompanied by the lumbering sounds of wheels. At the next turn of the road they met a small cavalcade of officers, riding at a rapid rate in the direction of the place they had so recently quitted. The leader of this party drew up when he saw the wagon, which was also stopped in deference to his obvious wish to speak with them.

There was something in the haughty, and yet easy air of the gentleman who addressed her companion, that induced Cecil to attend to his remarks with more than the interest that is usually excited by the common-place dialogues of the road. His dress was neither civil, nor wholly military, though his bearing had much of a soldier's manner. As he drew up, three or four dogs fawned upon him, or passed with indulged impunity between the legs of his high-blooded charger, apparently indifferent to the impatient repulses that were freely bestowed on their troublesome familiarities.

"High discipline, by !" exclaimed this singular specimen of the colonial chieftains "I dare presume, gentlemen, you are from the heights of Dorchester; and having walked the whole distance thither from camp, are disposed to try the virtues of a four-wheeled conveyance over the same ground, in a retreat!"

The young man rose in his place, and lifted his hat, with marked respect, as he answered

"We are returning from the hills, sir, it is true; but we must see our enemy before we retreat!"

"A white cockade! As you hold such rank, sir, I presume you have authority for your movements! Down, Juno down, slut."

"This lady was landed an hour since, on the point, from the town, by a boat from a king's ship, sir, and I am ordered to see her in safety to the general of the right wing."

"A lady!" repeated the other, with singular emphasis, slowly passing his hand over his remarkably aquiline and prominent features, "if there be a lady in the case, ease must be indulged. Will you down, Juno!" Turning his head a little aside, to his nearest aid, he added, in a voice that was suppressed only by the action; "some trull of Howe's, sent out as the newest specimen of loyal modesty! In such a case, sir, you are quite right to use horses I only marvel that you did not take six instead of two. But how come we on in the trenches? Down, you hussy, down! Thou shouldst go to court, Juno, and fawn upon his majesty's ministers, where thy sycophancy might purchase thee a riband! How come we on in the trenches?"

"We have broken ground, sir, and as the eyes of the royal troops are drawn upon the batteries, we shall make a work of it before the day shows them our occupation."

"Ah! we are certainly good at digging, if at no other part of our exercises! Miss Juno, thou putttest thy precious life in jeopardy! you will; then take thy fate!" As he spoke, the impatient chief drew a pistol from his holster, and snapped it twice at the head of the dog, that still fawned upon him in unwitting fondness. Angry with himself, his weapon, and the animal at the same moment, he turned to his attendants, and added, with bitter deliberation "gentlemen, if one of you will exterminate that quadruped, I promise him an honourable place in my

first despatches to congress, for the service!"

A groom in attendance whistled to the spaniel, and probably saved the life of the disgraced favourite.

The officer now addressed himself to the party he had detained, with a collected and dignified air, that showed he had recovered his self-possession, by saying

"I beg pardon, sir, for this trouble let me not prevent you from proceeding; there may be serious work on the heights before morning, and you will doubtless wish to be there." He bowed with perfect ease and politeness, and the two parties were slowly passing each other, when, as if repenting of his condescension, he turned himself in his saddle, adding, with those sarcastic tones so peculiarly his own "Captain, I beseech thee have an especial care of *the lady!* "

With these words in his mouth, he clapped spurs to his horse, and galloped onward, followed by all his train, at the same impetuous rate.

Cecil had heard each syllable that fell from the lips of both in this short dialogue, and she felt a chill of disappointment gathering about her heart, as it proceeded. When they had parted, drawing a long, tremulous breath, she asked, in tones that betrayed all her feelings

"And is this Washington?"

"*That!*" exclaimed her companion "No, no, Madam, he is a very different sort of man! That is the great English officer, whom congress has made a general in our army. He is thought to be as great in the field, as he is uncouth in the drawing-room yes, I will acknowledge that much in his favour, though I never know how to understand him; he is so proud so supercilious and yet he is a great friend of liberty!"

Cecil permitted the officer to reconcile the seeming contradictions in the character of his superior, in his own way, feeling perfectly relieved when she understood it was not the man who could have any influence on her own destiny. The driver now appeared anxious to recover the lost time, and he urged his horses over the ground with increased rapidity. The remainder of their short drive to the vicinity of Roxbury, passed in silence. As the cannonading was still maintained with equal warmth by both parties, it was hazarding too much to place themselves in the line of the enemy's fire. The young man, therefore, after finding a secure spot among the uneven ground of the vicinity, where he might leave his charge in safety, proceeded by himself to the point where he had reason to believe he should find the officer he was ordered to seek. During his short absence, Cecil remained in the wagon, an appalled listener, and a partial spectator of the neighbouring contest.

The Americans had burst their only mortar of size, the preceding night, but they applied their cannon with unwearied diligence, not only in the face of the British entrenchments, but on the low land, across the estuary of the Charles; and still farther to the north, in front of the position which their enemies held on the well-known heights of Charlestown. In retaliation for this attack, the batteries along the western side of the town were in a constant blaze of fire, while those of the eastern continued to slumber, in total unconsciousness of the coming danger.

When the officer returned, he reported that his search had been successful, and that he had been commanded to conduct his charge into the presence of the American commander-in-chief. This new arrangement imposed the necessity of driving a few miles farther, and as the youth began to regard his new duty with some impatience, he was in no humour for delay. The route was circuitous and safe; the roads good; and the driver diligent. In consequence, within the hour, they passed the river, and Cecil found herself, after so long an absence, once more approaching the ancient provincial seat of learning.

The little village, though in the hands of friends, exhibited the infallible evidences of the presence of an irregular army. The buildings of the University were filled with troops, and the doors of the different inns were thronged with noisy soldiers, who were assembled for the inseparable purposes of revelry and folly. The officer drove to one of the most private of these haunts of the unthinking and idle, and declared his intentions to deposit his charge under its roof, until he could learn the pleasure of the American leader. Cecil heard his arrangements with little satisfaction, but yielding to the necessity of the case, when the vehicle had stopped, she alighted, without remonstrance. With her two attendants in her train, and preceded by the officer, she passed through the noisy crowd, not only without insult, but without molestation. The different declaimers in the throng, and they were many, even lowered their clamorous voices as she approached, the men giving way, in deference for her sex, and she entered the building without hearing but one remark applied to herself, though a low and curious buzz of voices followed her footsteps to its very threshold. That solitary remark was a sudden exclamation, in admiration of the grace of her movements; and singular as it may seem, her companion thought it necessary to apologize for its rudeness, by whispering that it had proceeded from the lips of "one of the southern riflemen; a corps as distinguished for its skill and bravery as for its want of breeding!"

The inside of this inn presented a very different aspect from its exterior. The decent tradesman who kept it, had so far yielded to the emergency of the times, and perhaps, also, to a certain propensity towards gain, as temporarily to adopt the profession he followed; but by a sort of implied compact with the crowd without, while he administered to their appetite for liquor, he preserved most of the privacy of his domestic arrangements. He had, however, been compelled to relinquish one apartment entirely to the service of the public, into which Cecil and her companions were shown, as a matter of course, without the smallest apology for its condition.

There might have been a dozen people in the common room; some of whom were quietly seated before its large fire, among whom were one or two females; some walking; and others distributed on chairs, as accident or inclination had placed them. A slight movement was made at the entrance of Cecil, but it soon subsided; though her rich mantle of fine cloth, and silken calash, did not fail to draw the eyes of the women upon her, with a ruder gaze than she had yet encountered from the other sex during the hazardous adventures of the night. She took an offered seat near the bright and cheerful blaze on the hearth, which imparted all the light the room contained, and disposed herself to wait in patience the return of her conductor, who immediately took his departure for the neighbouring quarters of the American chief.

"'Tis an awful time for women bodies to journey in!" said a middle-aged woman near her, who was busily engaged in knitting, though she also bore the marks of a traveller in her dress. "I'm sure if I had thought there'd ha' been such contentions, I would never have crossed the Connecticut; though I have an only child in camp!"

"To a mother, the distress must be great, indeed," said Cecil, "when she hears the report of a contest in which she knows her children are engaged."

"Yes, Royal is engaged as a six-month's-man, and he is partly agreed to stay 'till the king's troops conclude to give up the town."

"It seems to me," said a grave looking yeoman, who occupied the opposite corner of the fire-place, "your child has an unfitting name for one who fights against the crown!"

"Ah, he was so called before the king wore his Scottish Boot! and what has once been solemnly named, in holy baptism, is not to be changed with the shift of the times! They were twins, and I called one Prince and the other Royal; for they were born the day his present majesty came to man's estate. That, you know, was before his heart had changed, and when the people of the Bay loved him little less than they did their own flesh and blood."

"Why, Goody," said the yeoman, smiling goodhumouredly, and rising to offer her a pinch of his real Scotch, in token of amity, while he made so free with her domestic matters "you had then an heir to the throne in your own

family! The Prince Royal they say comes next to the king, and by your tell, one of them, at least, is a worthy fellow, who is not likely to sell his heritage for a mess of pottage! If I understand you, Royal is here in service."

"He's at this blessed moment in one of the battering rams in front of Boston neck," returned the woman, "and the Lord, he knows, 'tis an awful calling, to be beating down the housen of people of the same religion and blood with ourselves! but so it must be, to prevail over the wicked designs of such as would live in pomp and idleness, by the sweat and labour of their fellow-creatures."

The honest yeoman, who was somewhat more familiar with the terms of modern warfare, than the woman, smiled at her mistake, while he pursued the conversation with a peculiar gravity, which rendered his humour doubly droll.

"'Tis to be hoped the boy will not weary at the weapon before the morning cometh. But why does Prince linger behind, in such a moment! Tarries he with his father on the homestead, in safety, being the younger born?"

"No, no," said the woman, " shaking her head, in sorrow, "he dwells, I trust, with our common Father, in heaven! Neither are you right in calling him the home-child. He was my first-born, and a comely youth he grew to be! When the cry that the reg'lars were out at Lexington, to kill and destroy, passed through the country, he shouldered his musket, and came down with the people, to know the reason the land was stained with American blood. He was young, and full of ambition, to be foremost among them who were willing to fight for their birth-rights; and the last I ever heard of him was in the midst of the king's troops on Breed's. No, no; his body never came off the hill! The neighbours sent me up the clothes he left in camp, and 'tis one of his socks that I'm now footing for his twin-brother."

The woman delivered this simple explanation with perfect calmness, though, as she advanced in the subject, large tears started from her eyes, and following each other down her cheeks, fell unheeded upon the humble garment of her dead son.

"This is the way our bravest striplings are cut off, fighting with the scum of Europe!" exclaimed the yeoman, with a warmth that showed how powerfully his feelings were touched "I hope the boy who lives, may find occasion to revenge his brother's death."

"God forbid! God forbid!" exclaimed the weeping mother "revenge is an evil passion; and least of all would I wish a child of mine to go into the field of blood with so foul a breast. God has given us this land to dwell in, and to rear up temples and worshippers of his holy name, and in giving it, he bestowed the right to defend it against all earthly oppression. If 'twas right for Prince to come, 'twas right for Royal to follow!"

"I believe I am reprov'd in justice," returned the man, looking around at the spectators, with an eye that no longer teemed with a hidden meaning "God bless you, my good woman; and deliver you, with your remaining boy, and all of us, from the scourge which has been inflicted on the country for our sins. I go west, into the mountains, with the sun, and if I can carry any word of comfort from you to the good man at home, it will not be a hill or two that shall hinder it."

"The same thanks to you for the offer, as if you did it, friend; my man would be right glad to see you at his settlement, but I sicken already with the noises and awful sights of warfare, and shall not tarry long after my son comes forth from the battle. I shall go down to Cragie's-house in the morning, and look upon the blessed man whom the people have chosen from among themselves as a leader, and hurry back again; for I plainly see that this is not an abiding place for such as I!"

"You will then have to follow him into the line of danger, for I saw him, within the hour, riding with all his followers, towards the water-side; and I doubt not that this unusual waste of ammunition is intended for more

than we of little wit can guess."

"Of whom speak you?" Cecil involuntarily asked.

"Of whom should he speak, but of Washington?" returned a deep, low voice at her elbow, whose remarkable sounds instantly recalled the tones of the aged messenger of death, who had appeared at the bed-side of her grandmother. Cecil started from her chair, and recoiled several paces from the person of Ralph, who stood regarding her with a steady and searching look, heedless of the observation they attracted, as well as of the number and quality of the spectators.

"We are not strangers, young lady," continued the old man; "and you will excuse me, if I add, that the face of an acquaintance must be grateful to one of your gentle sex, in a place so unsettled and disorderly as this."

"An acquaintance!" repeated the unprotected bride.

"I said an acquaintance; we know each other, surely," returned Ralph, with marked emphasis; "you will believe me when I add, that I have seen the two men in the guard-room, which is at hand."

Cecil cast a furtive glance behind her, and, with some alarm, perceived that she was separated from Meriton and the stranger. Before time was allowed for recollection, the old man approached her with a courtly breeding that was rendered more striking by the coarseness, as well as negligence of his attire.

"This is not a place for the niece of an English peer," he said; "but I have long been at home in this warlike village, and will conduct you to another residence more suited to your sex and condition.

For an instant Cecil hesitated, but observing the wondering faces about her, and the intense curiosity with which all in the room suspended their several pursuits, to listen to each syllable, she timidly accepted his offered hand, suffering him to lead her, not only from the room, but the house, in profound silence. The door through which they left the building, was opposite to that by which she had entered, and when they found themselves in the open air, it was in a different street, and a short distance removed from the crowd of revellers already mentioned.

"I have left two attendants behind me," she said, "without whom 'tis impossible to proceed."

"As they are watched by armed men, you have no choice but to share their confinement, or to submit to the temporary separation," returned the other, calmly. "Should his keepers discover the character of him who led you hither, his fate would be certain!"

"His character!" repeated Cecil, again shrinking from the touch of the old man.

"Surely my words are plain! I said his character. Is he not the deadly, obstinate enemy of liberty? And think you these countrymen of ours so dull as to suffer one like him, to go at large in their very camp! No, no," he muttered, with a low, but exulting laugh; "like a fool has he tempted his fate, and like a dog shall he meet it! Let us proceed; the house is but a step from this, and you may summon him to your presence if you will."

Cecil was rather impelled by her companion, than induced to proceed, when, as he had said, they soon stopped before the door of a humble and retired building. An armed man paced along its front, while the lengthened shadow of another sentinel in the rear was every half-minute thrown far into the street, in confirmation of the watchfulness that was kept over those who dwelt within.

"Proceed," said Ralph, throwing open the outer-door, without hesitation. Cecil complied, but started at encountering another man, trailing a musket, as he paced to and fro in the narrow passage that received her.

Between this sentinel and Ralph, there seemed to exist a good understanding, for the latter addressed him with perfect freedom

"Has no order been yet received from Washington?" he asked.

"None; and I rather conclude by the delay, that nothing very favourable is to be expected."

The old man muttered to himself, but passed an, and throwing open another door, said

"Enter."

Again Cecil complied, the door closing on her at the instant; but before she had time to express either her wonder or her alarm, she was folded in the arms of her husband.

CHAPTER XV.

"Is she a Capulet?

"O dear account! my life is my foe's debt."

Romeo.

Ah! Lincoln! Lincoln!" cried the weeping bride, gently extricating herself from the long embrace of Lionel, "at what a moment did you desert me!"

"And how have I been punished, love! a night of phrenzy, and a morrow of useless regrets! How early have I been made to feel the strength of those ties which unite us; unless, indeed, my own folly may have already severed them for ever!"

"Truant! I know you! and shall hereafter weave a web, with woman's art, to keep you in my toils! If you love me, Lionel, as I would fain believe, let all the past be forgotten. I ask I wish, no explanation. You have been deceived, and that repentant eye assures me of your returning reason. Let us now speak only of yourself. Why do I find you thus guarded, more like a criminal than an officer of the crown?"

"They have, indeed, bestowed especial watchfulness on my safety!"

"How came you in their power! and why do they abuse their advantage?"

"'Tis easily explained. Presuming on the tempestuousness of the night what a bridal was ours, Cecil!"

"'Twas terrible!" she answered, shuddering; then with a bright and instant smile, as if sedulous to chase every appearance of distrust or care from her countenance, she continued "but I have no longer faith in omens, Lincoln! or, if one has been given, is not the awful fulfilment already come? I know not how you value the benedictions of a parting soul, Lionel, but to me there is holy consolation in knowing that my dying parent left her blessing on our sudden union!"

Disregarding the hand, which, with gentle earnestness, she had laid upon his shoulder, he walked gloomily away, into a distant corner of the apartment.

"Cecil, I do love you, as you would fain believe," he said, "and I listen readily to your wish to bury the past in

oblivion. But I leave my tale unfinished! You know the night was such that none would choose, uselessly, to brave its fury I attempted to profit by the storm, and availing myself of a flag, which is regularly granted to the simpleton, Job Pray, I left the town. Impatient do I say impatient! borne along rather by a tempest of passions that mocked the feebler elements, we ventured too much Cecil, I was not alone!"

"I know it I know it," she said, hurriedly, though speaking barely above her breath "you ventured too much?"

"And encountered a piquet that would not mistake a royal officer for an impoverished, though privileged idiot. In our anxiety we overlooked believe me, dearest Cecil, that if you knew all the scene I had witnessed the motives which urged they, at least, would, justify this strange and seeming desertion."

"Did I doubt it, would I forget my condition, my recent loss, and my sex, to follow in the footsteps of one unworthy of my solicitude!" returned the bride, colouring as much with innate modesty, as with the power of her emotions. "Think not I come, with girlish weakness, to reproach you with any fancied wrongs! I am your wife, Major Lincoln; and as such would I serve you, at a moment when I know all the tenderness of the tie will most be needed. At the altar, and in the presence of my God, have I acknowledged the sacred duty; and shall I hesitate to discharge it because the eyes of man are on me!"

"I shall go mad! I shall go mad!" cried Lionel, in ungovernable mental anguish, as he paced the floor, in violent disorder. "There are moments when I think that the curse, which destroyed the father, has already lighted on the son!"

"Lionel!" said the soft, soothing voice of his companion, at his elbow, "is this to render me more happy! the welcome you bestow on the confiding girl who has committed her happiness to your keeping! I see you relent, and will be more just to us both; more dutiful to your God! Now let us speak of your confinement. Surely, you are not suspected of any criminal designs in this rash visit to the camp of the Americans! 'Twere easy to convince their leaders that you are innocent of so base a purpose!"

"'Tis difficult to evade the vigilance of those who struggle for liberty!" returned the low, calm voice of Ralph, who stood before them, unexpectedly. "Major Lincoln has too long listened to the councils of tyrants and slaves, and forgotten the land of his birth. If he would be safe, let him retract the error, while yet he may, with honour."

"Honour!" repeated Lionel, with unconcealed disdain again pacing the room with swift and uneasy steps, without deigning any other notice of the unwelcome intruder. Cecil bowed her head, and sinking in a chair, concealed her face in her small muff, as if to exclude some horrid and fearful sight from her view.

The momentary silence was broken by the sound of footsteps and of voices in the passage; and at the next instant the door of the room opening, Meriton was seen on its threshold. His appearance roused Cecil, who springing on her feet, beckoned him away, with a sort of phrenzied earnestness, exclaiming

"Not here! not here! for the love of heaven, not here!"

The valet hesitated, but catching a glimpse of his master, his attachment got the ascendancy of his respect

"God be praised for this blessed sight, Master Lionel!" he cried "'tis the happiest hour I have seen since I lost the look at the shores of old England! If 'twas only at Ravenscliffe, or in Soho, I should be the most contented fool in the three kingdoms! Ah, Master Lionel, let us get out of this province, into a country where there is no rebels; or any thing worse than King, Lords, and Commons!"

"Enough now; for this time, worthy Meriton, enough!" interrupted Cecil, breathing with difficulty, in her eagerness to be heard. "Go return to the inn the colleges any where do but go!"

"Don't send a loyal subject, Ma'am, again among the rebels, I desire to entreat of you. Such awful blasphemies, sir, as I heard while I was there! They spoke of his sacred majesty just as freely, sir, as if he had been a gentleman, like yourself. Joyful was the news of my release!"

"And had it been a guard-room on the opposite shore," said Ralph, "the liberties they used with your earthly monarch, would have been as freely taken with the King of kings!"

"You shall remain then," said Cecil, probably mistaking the look of high disdain which Meriton bestowed on his aged fellow-voyager, for one of a very different meaning "but not here. You have other apartments, Major Lincoln; let my attendants be received there you surely would not admit the menials to our interview!"

"Why this sudden terror, love! Here, if not happy, you at least are safe. Go, Meriton, into the adjoining room; if wanted, there is admission through this door of communication."

The valet murmured some half-uttered sentences, of which only the emphatic word "genteel" was audible, while the direction of his discontented eye, sufficiently betrayed that Ralph was the subject of his meditations. The old man followed his footsteps, and the door of the passage soon closed on both, leaving Cecil standing, like a beautiful statue, in an attitude of absorbed thought. When the noise of her attendants, as they quietly entered the adjoining room, was heard, she breathed again, with a tremulous sigh, that seemed to raise a weight of apprehension from her heart.

"Fear not for me, Cecil, and least of all for yourself," said Lionel, drawing her to his bosom with fond solicitude "my headlong rashness, or, rather, that fatal bane to the happiness of my house, the distempered feeling which you must have often seen and deplored, has indeed led me into a seeming danger. But I have a reason for my conduct, which avowed, shall lull the suspicions of even our enemies to sleep!"

"I have no suspicions no knowledge of any imperfections no regrets, Lionel; nothing but the most ardent wishes for your peace of mind; and if I might explain! yes, now is a time Lionel, kind, but truant Lionel"

Her words were interrupted by Ralph, who appeared again in the room, with that noiseless step, which, in conjunction with his great age and attenuated frame, sometimes gave to his movements and aspect the character of a being superior to the attributes of humanity. On his arm he bore an over-coat and a hat, both of which Cecil recognized, at a glance, as the property of the unknown man who had attended her person throughout all the vicissitudes of that eventful night.

"See!" said Ralph, exhibiting his spoils with a ghastly, but meaning smile, "see in how many forms Liberty appears to aid her votaries! Here is the guise in which she will now be courted!. Wear them, young man, and be free!"

"Believe him not listen not," whispered Cecil, while she shrunk from his approach in undisguised terror "nay, do listen, but act with caution!"

"Dost thou delay to receive the blessed boon of freedom, when offered?" demanded Ralph; "wouldst thou remain, and brave the angry justice of the American chief, and make thy wife, of a day, a widow for an age!"

"In what manner am I to profit by this dress?" said Lionel "to submit to the degradation of a disguise, success should be certain."

"Turn thy haughty eyes, young man, on the picture of innocence and terror, at thy side. For the sake of her whose fate is wrapped in thine, if not for your own, consult thy safety, and fly another minute may be too late."

"Oh! hesitate not a moment longer, Lincoln," cried Cecil, with a change of purpose as sudden as the impulse was powerful "fly, leave me; my sex and station will be"

"Never," said Lionel, casting the garment from him, in cool disdain. "Once, when Death was busy, did I abandon thee; but, ere I do it again, his blow must fall on me!"

"I will follow I will rejoin you."

"You shall not part," said Ralph, once more raising the rejected coat, and lending his aid to envelop the form of Lionel, who stood passive under the united efforts of his bride and her aged assistant "Remain here," the latter added, when their brief task was ended, "and await the summons to freedom. And thou, sweet flower of innocence and love, follow, and share in the honour of liberating him who has enslaved thee!"

Cecil blushed with virgin shame, at the strength of his expressions, but bowed her head in silent acquiescence to his will. Proceeding to the door, he beckoned her to approach, indicating, by an expressive gesture to Lionel, that he was to remain stationary. When Cecil had complied, and they were in the narrow passage of the building, Ralph, instead of betraying any apprehension of the sentinel who paced its length, fearlessly approached, and addressed him with the confidence of a known friend

"See!" he said, removing the calash from before the pale features of his companion, "how terror for the fate of her husband has caused the good child to weep! She quits him now, friend, with one of her attendants, while the other tarries to administer to his master's wants. Look at her; is't not a sweet, though mourning partner, to smooth the path of a soldier's life.

The man seemed awkwardly sensible of the unusual charms that Ralph so unceremoniously exhibited to his view, and while he stood in admiring embarrassment, ashamed to gaze, and yet unwilling to retire, Cecil traced the light footsteps of the old man, entering the room occupied by Meriton and the stranger. She was still in the act of veiling her features from the eyes of the sentinel, when Ralph re-appeared, attended by a figure muffled in the well-known over-coat. Notwithstanding the flopped hat, and studied concealment of his gait, the keen eyes of the wife penetrated the disguise of her husband, and recollecting, at the same instant, the door of communication between the two apartments, the whole artifice was at once revealed. With trembling eagerness she glided past the sentinel, and pressed to the side of Lionel, with a dependence that might have betrayed the deception to one more accustomed to the forms of life, than was the honest countrymen who had, so recently, thrown aside the flail to carry a musket.

Ralph allowed the sentinel no time to deliberate, but waving his hand in token of adieu, he led the way into the street, with his accustomed activity. Here they found themselves in the presence of the other soldier, who moved to and fro, along the allotted ground in front of the building, rendering the watchfulness by which they were environed, doubly embarrassing. Following the example of their aged conductor, Lionel and his trembling companion walked with apparent indifference towards this man, who, as it proved, was better deserving of his trust than his fellow, within doors. Dropping his musket across their path, in a manner which announced an intention to inquire into their movements, before he suffered them to proceed, he roughly demanded

"How's this, old gentleman! you come out of the prisoners' rooms by squads! one, two, three; our English gallant might be among you, and there would still be two left! Come, come, old father, render some account of yourself, and of your command. For, to be plain with you, there are those who think you are no better than a spy of Howe's, notwithstanding you are left to run up and down the camp, as you please. In plain Yankee dialect, and that's intelligible English, you have been caught in bad company of late, and there has been hard talk about shutting you up, as well as your comrade!"

"Hear ye that!" said Ralph, calmly smiling, and addressing himself to his companions, instead of the man whose interrogatories he was expected to answer "think you the hirelings of the crown are thus alert! Would not the slaves be sleeping the moment the eyes of their tyrants are turned on their own lawless pleasures! Thus it is with Liberty! The sacred spirit hallows its meanest votaries, and elevates the private to all the virtues of the proudest captain!"

"Come, come," returned the flattered sentinel, throwing his musket back to his shoulder again, "I believe a man gains nothing by battling you with words! I should have spent a year or two inside yonder colleges to dive at all your meaning. Though I can guess you are more than half-right in one thing; for if a poor fellow who loves his country, and the good cause, finds it so hard to keep his eyes open on post, what must it be to a half-starved devil on six-pence a-day! Go along, go along, old father; there is one less of you than went in, and if there was any thing wrong, the man in the house should know it!"

As he concluded, the sentinel continued his walk, humming a verse of Yankee-doodle, in excellent favour with himself and all mankind, with the sweeping exception of his country's enemies. To say that this was not the first instance of well-meaning integrity being cajoled by the jargon of liberty, might be an assertion too hazardous; but that it has not been the last, we conscientiously believe, though no immediate example may present itself to quote in support of such heretical credulity.

Ralph appeared, however, perfectly innocent of intending to utter more than the spirit of the times justified; for, when left to his own pleasure, he pursued his way, muttering rapidly to himself, and with an earnestness that attested his sincerity. When they had turned a corner, at a little distance from any pressing danger, he relaxed in his movements, and suffering his eager companions to approach, he stole to the side of Lionel, and clenching his hand fiercely, he whispered in a voice half choked by inward exultation

"I have him now? he is no longer dangerous! Ay ay I have him closely watched by the vigilance of three incorruptible patriots!"

"Of whom speak you," demanded Lionel "what is his offence, and where is your captive?"

"A dog! a man in form, but a tiger in heart! Ay! but I have him!" the old man continued, with a hollow laugh, that seemed to heave up from his inmost soul "a dog; a veritable dog! I have him, and God grant that he may drink of the cup of slavery to its dregs!"

"Old man," said Lionel, firmly, "that I have followed you thus far on no unworthy errand, you best may testify I have forgotten the oath which, at the altar, I had sworn to, to cherish this sweet and spotless being at my side, at your instigation, aided by the maddening circumstances of a moment; but the delusion has already passed away! Here we part for ever, unless your solemn and often-repeated promises are, on the instant, redeemed."

The high exultation which had, so lately, rendered the emaciated countenance of Ralph hideously ghastly, disappeared like a passing shadow, and he listened to the words of Lionel with calm and settled attention. But when he would have answered, he was interrupted by Cecil, who uttered, in a voice nearly suppressed by her fears

"Oh! delay not a moment! Let us proceed; any where, or any-how! even now the pursuers may be on our track. I am strong, dearest Lionel, and will follow to the ends of the earth, so you but lead!"

"Lionel Lincoln, I have not deceived thee!" said the old man, solemnly. "Providence has already led us on our way, and a few minutes will bring us to our goal suffer, then, that gentle trembler to return into the village, and follow!"

"Not an inch!" returned Lionel, pressing Cecil still closer to his side "here we part, or your promises are fulfilled."

"Nay, go with him go," again whispered the being who clung to him in trembling dependence. "This very controversy may prove your ruin did I not say I would accompany you, Lincoln?"

"Lead on, then," said her husband, motioning Ralph to proceed "once again will I confide in you; but use the trust with discretion, for my guardian spirit is at hand, and remember, thou no longer leadeest a lunatic!"

The moon fell upon the wan features of the old man, and exhibited their contented smile, as he silently turned away, and resumed his progress with his wonted, rapid, and noiseless tread. Their route still lay towards the skirts of the village. While the buildings of the University were yet in the near view, and the loud laugh of the idlers about the inn, with the frequent challenges of the sentinels, were still distinctly audible, their conductor bent his way beneath the walls of a church, that rose in solemn solitude in the deceptive light of the evening. Pointing upward at its somewhat unusual, because regular architecture, Ralph muttered as he passed

"Here, at least, God possesses his own, without insult!"

Lionel and Cecil slightly glanced their eyes at the silent walls, and followed into a small enclosure, through a gap in its humble and dilapidated fence. Here the former again paused, and spoke

"I will go no further," he said, unconsciously strengthening the declaration by placing his foot firmly on a mound of frozen earth, in an attitude of resistance "'tis time to cease thinking of 'self, and to listen to the weakness of her whom I support!"

"Think not of me, dearest Lincoln"

Cecil was interrupted by the voice of the old man, who raising his hat, and baring his gray locks to the mild rays of the planet, answered, with tremulous emotion

"Thy task is already ended! Thou hast reached the spot where moulder the bones of one who long supported thee. Unthinking boy, that sacrilegious foot treads on thy mother's grave!"

CHAPTER XVI.

"Oh, age has weary days,
"And nights o' sleepless pain!
"Thou golden time o' youthful prime,
"Why com'st thou not again."

Burns.

The stillness that succeeded this unexpected annunciation was like the cold silence of those who slumbered on every side of them. Lionel recoiled, a pace, in horror; then imitating the action of the old man, he uncovered his head, in pious reverence of the parent, whose form floated dimly in his imagination, like the earliest recollections of infancy, or the imperfect fancies of some dream. When time was given for these sudden emotions to subside, he turned to Ralph, and said

"And was it here that you would bring me, to listen to the sorrows of my family?"

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

An expression of piteous auguish crossed the features of the other, as he answered, in a voice which was subdued to softness

"Even here here, in the presence of thy mother's grave, shalt thou hear the tale!"

"Then let it be here!" said Lionel, whose eye was already kindling with a wild and disordered meaning, that curdled the blood of the anxious Cecil, who watched its expression with a woman's solicitude. "Here, on this hallowed spot, will I listen, and swear the vengeance that is due, if all thy previous intimations should be just"

"No, no, no listen not tarry not!" said Cecil, clinging to his side in undisguised alarm "Lincoln, you are not equal to the scene!"

"I am equal to any thing, in such a cause."

"Nay, Lionel, you overrate your powers! Think only of your safety, now; at another, and happier moment you shall know all yes I Cecil thy bride, thy wife, promise that all shall be revealed"

"Thou!"

"It is the descendant of the widow of John Lechmere who speaks, and thy ears will not refuse the sounds," said Ralph, with a smile that acted like a taunt on the awakened impulses of the young man "Go thou art fitter for a bridal than a church-yard!"

"I have told you that I am equal to any thing," sternly answered Lionel; "here will I sit, on this humble tablet, to hear all that you can utter, though the rebel legions encircle me to my death!"

"What! dar'st brave the averted eye of one so dear to thy heart!"

"All, or any thing," exclaimed the excited youth, "with so pious an object."

"Bravely answered! and thy reward is nigh nay, look not on the syren, or thou wilt relent."

"My wife," said Lionel, extending his hand, kindly, towards the shrinking form of Cecil.

"Thy mother!" interrupted Ralph, pointing with his emaciated hand to the cold residence of the dead.

Lionel sunk on the dilapidated grave-stone to which he had just alluded, and gathering his coat about him, he rested an arm upon his knee, while its hand supported his quivering chin, as if he were desperately bent on his gloomy purpose. The old man smiled with his usual ghastly expression, as he witnessed this proof of his success, and he took a similar seat on the opposite side of the grave, which seemed the focus of their common interest. Here he dropped his face between his hands, and appeared to muse like one who was collecting his thoughts for the coming emergency. During this short and impressive pause, Lionel felt the trembling form of Cecil drawing to his side, and before his aged companion spoke, her unveiled and pallid countenance was once more watching the changes of his own features, in submissive, but anxious attention.

"Thou knowest already, Lionel Lincoln," commenced Ralph, slowly raising his body to an upright attitude, "how, in past ages, thy family sought these colonies, to find religious quiet, and the peace of the just. And thou also knowest, for often did we beguile the long watches of the night in discoursing of these things, while the never-tiring ocean was rolling its waters, unheeded around, how Death came into its elder branch, which still dwelt amid the luxury and corruption of the English Court, and left thy father the heir of all its riches and honours."

"How much of this is unknown to the meanest gossip in the province of Massachusetts-Bay!" interrupted the impatient Lionel.

"But they do not know, that for years before this accumulation of fortune actually occurred, it was deemed to be inevitable by the decrees of Providence; they do not know how much more value the orphan son of the unprovided soldier, found in the eyes of those even of his own blood, by the expectation; nor do they know how the worldly-minded Priscilla Lechmere, thy father's aunt, would have compassed heaven and earth, to have seen that wealth, and those honours, to which it was her greatest boast to claim alliance descend in the line of her own body."

"But 'twas impossible! she was of the female branch; neither had she a son!"

"Nothing seems impossible to those on whose peace of mind the worm of ambition feeds thou knowest well she left a grand-child; had not that child a mother!"

Lionel felt a painful conviction of the connection, as the trembling object of these remarks sunk her head in shame and sorrow on his bosom, keenly alive to the justice of the character drawn of her deceased relative, by the mysterious being who had just spoken.

"God forbid that I, a Christian, and a gentleman," continued the old man, a little proudly, "should utter a syllable to taint the spotless name of one so free from blemish as she of whom I speak. The sweet child who clings to thee, in dread, Lionel, was not more pure and innocent than she who bore her. And long before ambition had wove its toils for the miserable Priscilla, the heart of her daughter was the property of the gallant and honourable Englishman, to whom in later years she was wedded."

As Cecil heard this soothing commendation of her more immediate parents, she again raised her face into the light of the moon, and remained, where she was already kneeling, at the side of Lionel, no longer an uneasy, but a deeply interested listener to what followed.

"As the wishes of my unhappy aunt were not realized," said Major Lincoln, "in what manner could they affect the fortunes of my father?"

"Thou shalt hear. In the same dwelling lived another, even fairer, and, to the eye, as pure as the daughter of Priscilla. She was the relative, the god-child, and the ward of that miserable woman. The beauty, and seeming virtues of this apparent angel in human form, caught the young eye of thy father, and in defiance of arts and schemes, before the long-expected title and fortune came, they were wedded, and thou wert born, Lionel, to render the boon of Fate doubly welcome."

"And then"

And then thy father hastened to the land of his ancestors, to claim his own, and to prepare the way for the reception of yourself, and his beloved Priscilla for then there were two Priscilla's; and now both sleep with the dead! All having life and nature, can claim the quiet of the grave, but I," continued the old man, glancing his hollow eye upward, with a look of hopeless misery "I, who have seen ages pass since the blood of youth has been chilled, and generation after generation swept away, must still linger in the haunts of men! but 'tis to aid in the great work which commences here, but which shall not end until a continent be regenerate."

Lionel suffered a minute to pass without a question, in deference to this burst of feeling; but soon making an impatient movement, it drew the eyes of Ralph once more upon him, and the old man continued

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

"Month after month, for two long and tedious years, did thy father linger in England, struggling for his own. At length he prevailed. He then hastened hither; but there was no wife no fond and loving Priscilla, like that tender flower that reposes in thy bosom, to welcome his return

"I know it," said Lionel, nearly choked by his pious recollections "she was dead."

"She was more," returned Ralph, in a voice so deep that it sounded like one speaking from the grave "she was dishonoured!"

"'Tis false!"

"'Tis true; true as that holy gospel which comes to men through the inspired ministers of God!"

"'Tis false," repeated Lionel, fiercely "blacker than the darkest thoughts of the foul spirit of evil!"

"I say, rash boy, 'tis true! She died in giving birth to the fruits of her infamy. When Priscilla Lechmere met thy heart-stricken parent with the damming tale, he read in her exulting eye, the treason of her mind, and, like thee, he dared to call heaven to witness, that thy mother was defamed. But there was one known to him, under circumstances that forbad the thoughts of deceit, who swore ay, took the blessed name of Him who reads all hearts, for warranty of her truth! and she confirmed it."

"The infamous seducer!" said Lionel, hoarsely, his body turning unconsciously away from Cecil "does he yet live? Give him to my vengeance, old man, and I will yet bless you for your accursed history!"

"Lionel, Lionel," said the soothing voice of his bride, "do you credit him?"

"Credit him!" said Ralph, with a horrid, inward laugh, as if he would deride the idea of incredulity; "all this must he believe, and more! Once again, weak girl, did thy grandmother throw out her lures for the wealthy baronet, and when he would not become her son, then did she league with the spirits of hell to compass his ruin. Revenge took place of ambition, and thy husband's father was the victim!"

"Say on!" cried Lionel, nearly ceasing to breathe in the intensity of his interest.

"The blow had cut him to the heart, and for a time, his reason was crushed beneath its weight. Yet 'twas but for an hour, compared to the eternity a man is doomed to live! They profited by the temporary derangement, and when his wandering faculties were lulled to quiet, he found himself the tenant of a mad-house, where, for twenty long years, was he herded with the defaced images of his maker, by the arts of the base widow of John Lechmere."

"Can this be true! Can this be true!" cried Lionel, clasping his hands wildly, and springing to his feet, with a violence that cast the tender form that still clung to him, aside, like a worthless toy "Can this be proved? How knowest thou these facts?"

The calm, but melancholy smile that was wont to light the wan features of the old man, when he alluded to his own existence, was once more visible, as he answered

"There is but little hid from the knowledge acquired by length of days; besides, have I not secret means of intelligence that are unknown to thee! Remember what, in our frequent interviews, I have revealed; recall the death-bed scene of Priscilla Lechmere, and ask thyself if there be not truth in thy aged friend!"

"Give me all! hold not back a title of thy accursed tale give me all or take back each syllable thou hast uttered."

"Thou shalt have all thou askest, Lionel Lincoln, and more," returned Ralph, throwing into his manner and voice its utmost powers of solemnity and persuasion "provided thou wilt swear eternal hatred to that country and those laws, by which an innocent and unoffending man can be levelled with the beasts of the field, and be made to rave even at his maker, in the bitterness of his sufferings."

"More than that ten thousand times more than that will I swear I will league with this rebellion"

"Lionel, Lionel what is't you do!" interrupted the heart-stricken Cecil.

But her voice was stilled by loud and busy cries, which broke out of the village, above the hum of revelry, and was instantly succeeded by the trampling of footsteps, as men rushed over the frozen ground, apparently by hundreds, and with headlong rapidity. Ralph, who was not less quick to hear these sounds than the timid bride, glided from the grave, and approached the high-way, whither he was slowly followed by his companions; Lionel utterly indifferent whither he proceeded, and Cecil trembling in every limb, with terror for the safety of him who so little regarded his own danger.

"They are abroad, and think to find an enemy," said the old man, raising his hand with a gesture to command attention; "but he has sworn to join their standards, and gladly will they receive any of his name and family!"

"No, no he has pledged himself to no dishonour," cried Cecil "Fly, Lincoln, while you are free, and leave me to meet the pursuers they will respect my weakness."

Fortunately the allusion to herself awakened Lionel from the dull forgetfulness into which his faculties had fallen. Encircling her slight figure with his arm, he turned swiftly from the spot, saying, as he urged her forward

"Old man, when this precious charge is in safety, thy truth or falsehood shall be proved."

But Ralph, whose unincumbered person, and iron frame, which seemed to mock the ravages of time, gave a vast superiority over the impeded progress of the other, moved swiftly ahead, waving his hand on high, as if to indicate his intention to join in the flight, while he led the way into the fields adjacent to the church-yard they had quitted.

The noise of the pursuers soon became more distinct, and in the intervals of the distant cannonade, the cries and directions of those who conducted the chase were distinctly audible. Notwithstanding the vigorous arm of her supporter, Cecil was soon sensible that her delicate frame was unequal to continue the exertions necessary to insure their safety. They had entered another road, which lay at no great distance from the first, when she paused, and reluctantly declared her inability to proceed.

"Then, here will we await our captors," said Lionel, with forced composure "let the rebels beware how they abuse their slight advantage!"

The words were scarcely uttered, when a cart, drawn by a double team, turned an angle in the highway, near them, and its driver appeared within a few feet of the spot where they stood. He was a man far advanced in years, but still wielded his long goad with a dexterity which had been imparted by the practice of more than half a century. The sight of this man, alone, and removed from immediate aid, suggested a desperate thought for self-preservation to Lionel. Quitting the side of his exhausted companion, he advanced upon him with an air so fierce that it might have created alarm in one who had the smallest reason to apprehend any danger.

"Whither go you with that cart," sternly demanded the young man, on the instant.

"To the point," was the ready answer; "yes, yes old and young big and little men and cre'turs four-wheels and two-wheels every thing goes to the point to-night, as you can guess, fri'nd! Why," he continued, dropping one end of his goad on the ground, and supporting himself by grasping it with both his hands "I was eightythree the fourteenth of the last March, and I hope, God willing, that when the next birth-day comes, there wont be a red coat left in the town of Boston. To my notion, friend, they have held the place long enough, and it's time to quit. My boys are in the camp, soldiering a turn the old woman has been as busy as a bee, sin' sun-down, helping me to load-up what you see, and I am carrying it over to Dorchester, and not a farthing shall it ever cost the Congress!"

"And you are going to Dorchester-neck with your bundles of hay!" said Lionel, eyeing both him and his passing team, in hesitation whether to attempt violence on one so infirm and helpless.

"Anan! you must speak up, soldier-fashion, as you did at first, for I am a little deaf," returned the carter. "Yes, yes, they spared me in the press, for they said I had done enough; but I say a man has never done enough for his own country, when any thing is left to be done. I'm told they are carrying over fashines, as they call 'em, and pressed-hay, for their forts. As hay is more in my fashion than any other fashion, I've bundled up a stout pile on't here, and if that wont do, why, let Washington come; he is welcome to the barn, stacks and all!"

"While you are so liberal to the Congress, can you help a female in distress, who would wish to go in the direction of your route, but is too feeble to walk?"

"With all my heart," said the other, turning round in quest of her whom he was desired to assist "I hope she is handy; for the night wears on, and I shouldn't like to have the English send a bullet at our people on Dorchester hills, before my hay gets there to help stop it."

"She shall not detain you an instant," said Lionel, springing to the place where Cecil stood, partly concealed by the fence, and supporting her to the side of the rude vehicle "you shall be amply rewarded for this service."

"Reward! Perhaps she is the wife or daughter of a soldier, in which case she should be drawn in her coach and four, instead of a cart and double team."

"Yes, yes you are right, she is both the wife of one, and the daughter of another soldier."

"Ay! God bless her! I warrant-me old Put was more than half-right, when he said the women would stop the two ridgements, that the proud parliamenter boasted could march through the colonies, from Hampshire to Georgi' well, fri'nds, are ye situated?"

"Perfectly," said Lionel, who had been preparing seats for himself and Cecil among the bundles of hay, and assisting his companion into her place during the dialogue "we will detain you no longer."

The carter, who was no less than the owner of a hundred acres of good land in the vicinity, signified his readiness, and sweeping through the air with his goad, he brought his cattle to the proper direction, and slowly moved on. During this hurried scene, Ralph had continued hid by the shadows of the fence. When the cart proceeded, he waved his hand, and gliding across the road, was soon lost to the eye in the misty distance, with which his gray apparel blended, like a spectre vanishing in air.

In the mean time the pursuers had not been idle. Voices were heard in different directions, and dim forms were to be seen rushing through the fields, by the aid of the deceptive light of the moon. To add to the embarrassment of their situation, Lionel found, when too late, that the route to Dorchester lay directly through the village of Cambridge. When he perceived they were approaching the streets, he would have left the cart, had not the experiment been too dangerous, in the midst of the disturbed soldiery, who now flew by on every side of them. In

such a strait, his safest course was to continue motionless and silent, secreting his own form, and that of Cecil, as much as possible, among the bundles of hay. Contrary to all the just expectations which the impatient patriotism of the old yeoman had excited, instead of driving steadily through the place, he turned his cattle a little from the direct route, and stopped in front of the very inn, where Cecil had, so lately, been conducted by her guide from the point.

Here the same noisy and thoughtless revelry existed as before. The arrival of such an`equiPAGE, at once drew a crowd to the spot, and the uneasy pair on the top of the load, became unwilling listeners to the conversation.

"What, old one, hard at it for Congress!" cried a man, approaching with a mug in his hand; "come, wet your throat, my venerable father of Liberty, for you are too old to be a son!"

"Yes, yes," answered the exulting farmer, "I am father and son, too! I have four boys in camp, and seven grand`uns, in the bargain; and that would be eleven good triggers in one family, if five good muskets had so many locks but the youngest men have got a ducking-gun, and a double barrel atween them, howsomever; and Aaron the boy, carries as good a horse-pistol, I calculate, as any there is going in the Bay! But what an uneasy time you have on't to-night! There's more powder wasted in mocking thunder, than would fight old Bunker over again, at `white o' the eye' distance!"

"`Tis the way of war, old man; and we want to keep the reg'lars from looking at Dorchester."

"If they did, they couldn't see far to-night, But, now do tell me; I am an old man, and have a grain of cur'osity in the flesh; my woman says that Howe casts out his carcasses at you; which I hold to be an irreligious deception?"

"As true as the gospel."

"Well, there is no calculating on the wastefulness of an ungodly spirit!" said the worthy yeoman, shaking his head "I could believe any wickedness of him but that! As cre'turs must be getting scarce in the town, I conclude he makes use of his own slain?"

"Certain," answered the soldier, winking at his companions "Breed's hill has kept him in ammunition all winter."

"`Tis awful, awful! to see a fellow-cre'tur flying through the air, after the spirit has departed to judgment! War is a dreadful calling; but, then, what is a man without liberty!"

"Hark ye, old gentleman, talking of flying, have you seen any thing of two men and a woman, flying up the road as you came in?"

"Anan! I'm a little hard o'hearing women, too! do they shoot their Jezebels into our camp! There is no wickedness the king's ministers wont attempt to circumvent our weak natur's!"

"Did you see two men and a woman, running away as you came down the road?" bawled the fellow in his ear.

"Two! did you say two?" asked the yeoman, turning his head a little on one side, in an attitude of sagacious musing.

"Yes, two men."

"No, I didn't see two. Running out of town, did you say?"

"Ay, running, as if the devil was after them."

"No; I didn't see two; nor any body running away it's a sartain sight of guilt to run away is there any reward offered?" said the old man, suddenly interrupting himself, and again communing with his own thoughts.

"Not yet they've just escaped."

"The surest way to catch a thief is to offer a smart reward no I didn't see two men you are sartain there was two?"

"Push on with that cart! drive on, drive on," cried a mounted officer of the quarter-master's department, who came scouring through the street, at that moment, awakening all the slumbering ideas of haste, which the old farmer had suffered to lie dormant so long. Once more flourishing his goad, he put his team in motion, wishing the revellers goodnight as he proceeded. It was, however, long after he had left the village, and crossed the Charles, before he ceased to make frequent and sudden halts in the highway, as if doubtful whether to continue his route, or to return. At length he stopped the cart, and clambering up on the hay, he took a seat, where with one eye he could regulate his cattle, and with the other examine his companions. This investigation continued another hour, neither party uttering a syllable, when the teamster appeared satisfied that his suspicions were unjust, and abandoned them. Perhaps the difficulties of the road assisted in dissipating his doubts, for as they proceeded, return carts were met at every few rods, rendering his undivided attention to his own team indispensable.

Lionel, whose gloomy thoughts had been chased from his mind by the constant excitement of the foregoing scenes, now felt relieved from any immediate apprehensions. He whispered his soothing hopes of a final escape to Cecil, and folding her in his coat, to shield her from the night-air, he was pleased to find, ere long, by her gentle breathing, that, overcome by fatigue, she was slumbering in forgetfulness on his bosom.

Midnight had long passed when they came in sight of the eminences beyond Dorchester-neck. Cecil had awoke, and Lionel was already devising some plausible excuse for quitting the cart, without reviving the suspicions of the teamster. At length a favourable spot occurred, where they were alone, and the formation of the ground was adapted to such a purpose. Lionel was on the point of speaking, when the cattle stopped, and Ralph suddenly appeared in the highway, at their heads.

"Make room, friend, for the oxen," said the farmer "dumb beasts wont pass in the face of man."

"Alight," said Ralph, seconding his words with a wide sweep of his arm towards the fields.

Lionel quickly obeyed, and by the time the driver had descended also, the whole party stood together in the road.

"You have conferred a greater obligation than you are aware of," said Lionel to the driver. "Here are five guineas."

"For what? for riding on a load of hay a few miles! no, no kindness is no such boughten article in the Bay, that a man need pay for it! but, friend, money seems plenty with you, for these difficult days!"

"Then thanks, a thousand times I can stay to offer you no more."

He was yet speaking, when, obedient to an impatient gesture from Ralph, he lifted Cecil over the fence, and in a moment they disappeared from the eyes of the astonished farmer.

"Halloo, friend," cried the worthy advocate for his country, running after them as fast as old age would allow "were there three of you, when I took ye up?"

The fugitives heard the call of the simple and garrulous old man, but, as will easily be imagined, did not deem it prudent to stop and discuss the point in question between them. Before they had gone far, the furious cry of, "take care of that team!" with the rattling of wheels, announced that their pursuer was recalled to his duty, by an arrival of empty wagons; and before the distance rendered sounds unintelligible, they heard the noisy explanation, which their late companion was giving to the others, of the whole transaction. They were not, however, pursued; the teamsters having more pressing objects in view than the detection of thieves, or even of pocketing a reward.

Ralph led his companions, after a brief explanation, by a long and circuitous path, to the shores of the bay. Here they found, hid in the rushes of a shallow inlet, a small boat, that Lionel recognised as the little vessel in which Job Pray was wont to pursue his usual avocation of a fisherman. Entering it without delay, he seized the oars, and aided by a flowing tide, he industriously urged it towards the distant spires of Boston.

The parting shades of the night were yet struggling with the advance of day, when a powerful flash of light illuminated the hazy horizon, and the roar of cannon, which had ceased towards morning, was again heard. But this time the sounds came from the water, and a cloud rose above the smoking harbour, announcing that the ships were again enlisted in the contest. This sudden cannonade induced Lionel to steer his boat between the islands; for the castle, and southern batteries of the town, were all soon united in pouring out their vengeance on the labourers, who still occupied the heights of Dorchester. As the little vessel glided by a tall frigate, Cecil saw the boy who had been her first escort in the wanderings of the preceding night, standing on its taffrail, rubbing his eyes with wonder, and staring at those hills, whose possession he had prophesied would lead to such bloody results. In short, while he laboured at the oars, Lionel witnessed the opening scene of Breed's acted anew, as battery after battery, and ship after ship, brought their guns to bear on the hardy countrymen who had, once more, hastened a crisis by their daring enterprise. Their boat passed unheeded, in the excitement and bustle of the moment, and the mists of the morning had not yet dissipated, when it shot by the wharves of Boston, and turning into the narrow entrance of the towndock, it touched the land, near the warehouse, where it had so often been moored, in more peaceable times, by its simple master.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Now cracks a noble heart; good—night,
"Sweet Prince."

Shakspeare.

Lionel assisted Cecil to ascend the difficult water—stairs, and still attended by their aged companion, they soon stood on the drawbridge that connected the piers which formed the mouth of the narrow basin.

"Here we again part," he said, addressing himself to Ralph; "at another opportunity let us resume your melancholy tale."

"None so fitting as the present: the time, the place, and the state of the town, are all favourable."

Lionel cast his eyes around on the dull misery which pervaded the neglected area. A few halfdressed soldiers and alarmed townsmen, were seen by the gray light of the morning, rushing across the square towards the point, whence the sounds of cannon proceeded. In the hurry of the moment, their own arrival was not noted.

"The place the time!" he slowly repeated.

"Ay, both. At what moment can the friend of liberty pass more unheeded, amongst these miscreant hirelings, than

now, when fear has broken their slumbers! You is the place," he said, pointing to the warehouse, "where all that I have uttered will find its confirmation."

Major Lincoln communed momentarily with his thoughts. It is probable that in the rapid glances of his mind, he traced the mysterious connexion between the abject tenant of the adjacent building, and the deceased grandmother of his bride, whose active agency in producing the calamities of his family had now been openly acknowledged. It was soon apparent that he wavered in his purpose, nor was he slow to declare it.

"I will attend you," he said; "for who can say what the hardihood of the rebels may next attempt, and future occasions may be wanting. I will first see this gentle charge of mine"

"Lincoln, I cannot must not leave you," interrupted Cecil, with earnest fervour "go, listen, and learn all; surely there can be nothing that a wife may not know!"

Without waiting for further objection, Ralph made a hurried gesture of compliance, and turning, he led the way, with his usual, swift footsteps, into the low and dark tenement of Abigail Pray. The commotion of the town had not yet reached this despised and neglected building, which was even more than ordinarily gloomy and still. As they picked their way, however, among the scattered hemp, across the scene of the preceding night's riot, a few stifled groans proceeded from one of the towers, and directed them where to seek its abused and suffering inmates. On opening the door of this little apartment, not only Lionel and Cecil paused, but even the immovable old man, appeared to hesitate, in wonder.

The heart stricken mother of the simpleton was seated on her humble stool, busied in repairing some mean and worthless garments which had, seemingly, been exposed to the wasteful carelessness of her reckless child. But while her fingers performed their functions with mechanical skill, her contracted brow, working muscles, and hard, dry eyes, betrayed the force of the mental suffering that she struggled to conceal. Job still lay stretched on his abject pallet, though his breathing was louder and more laboured than when we last left him, while his sunken features indicated the slow, but encroaching advances of the disease. Polwarth was seated at his side, holding a pulse, with an air of medical deliberation; and attempting, every few moments, to confirm his hopes or fears, as each preponderated in turn, by examining the glazed eyes of the subject of his care.

Upon a party thus occupied, and with feelings so much engrossed, even the sudden entrance of the intruders was not likely to make any very sensible impression. The languid and unmeaning look of Job wandered momentarily towards the door, and then became again fixed on vacancy. A gleam of joy shot into the honest visage of the captain when he first beheld Lionel, accompanied by Cecil, but it was instantly chased away by the settled meaning of care which had gotten the mastery of his usually contented expression. The greatest alteration was produced in the aspect of the woman, who bowed her head to her bosom, with a universal shudder of her frame, as Ralph stood unexpectedly before her. But from her also, the sudden emotion passed speedily away, her hands resuming their humble occupation, with the same mechanical and involuntary movements, as before.

"Explain this scene of silent sorrow!" said Eionel to his friend "how came you in this haunt of wretchedness, and who has harmed the lad?"

"Your question conveys its own answer, Major Lincoln," returned Polwarth, with a manner so deliberate, that he refused to raise his steady look from the face of the sufferer "I am here, because they are wretched!"

"The motive is commendable! but what aileth the youth?"

"The functions of nature seem suspended by some remarkable calamity! I found him suffering from inanition, and notwithstanding I applied as hearty and nutritious a meal as the strongest man in the garrison could require, the symptoms, as you see, are strangely threatening!"

"He has taken the contagion of the town, and you have fed him, when his fever was at the highest!"

"Is small-pox to be considered more than a symptom, when a man has the damnable disease of starvation! go to go to, Leo, you read the Latin poets so much at the schools, that no leisure is left to bestow on the philosophy of nature. There is an inward monitor that teaches every child the remedy for hunger."

Lionel felt no disposition to contend with his friend on a point where the other's opinions were so dogmatical, but turning to the woman, he said

"The experience of a professional nurse should have taught you, at least, more care."

"Can experience steel a mother to the yearnings of her offspring for food!" returned the forlorn Abigail "no, no the ear cannot be deaf to such a moaning, and wisdom is as folly when the heart bleeds."

"Lincoln, you chide unkindly," said Cecil "let us rather attempt to avert the danger, than quarrel with its cause."

"It is too late it is too late," returned the disconsolate mother; "his hours are already numbered, and Death is on him. I can now only pray that God will lighten his curse, and suffer the parting spirit to know his Almighty power."

"Throw aside these worthless rags," said Cecil, gently attempting to take the clothes, "nor fatigue yourself longer, at such a sacred moment, with unnecessary labour."

"Young lady, you little know a mother's longings; may you never know her sorrows! I have been doing for the child these seven-and-twenty years; rob me not of the pleasure, now that so little remains to be done."

"Is he then so old!" exclaimed Lionel, in surprise.

"Old as he is, 'tis young for a child to die! He wants the look of reason; heaven in its mercy grant that he may be found to have a face of innocence!"

Hitherto Ralph had remained where he first stood, as if riveted to the floor, with his eyes fastened on the countenance of the sufferer. He now turned to Lionel, and in a voice rendered even plaintive by his deep emotion, he asked the simple question

"Will he die?"

"I fear it that look is not easily to be mistaken."

With a step so light that it was inaudible, the old man moved to the bed, and seated himself on the side, opposite to Polwarth. Without regarding the wondering look of the captain, he waved his hand on high, as if to exhort to silence, and then gazing on the features of the sick, with melancholy interest, he said

"Here, then, is death again! None are so young as to be unheeded; 'tis only the old that cannot die. Tell me, Job, what seest thou in the visions of thy mind the unknown places of the damned, or the brightness of such as stand in presence of their God?"

At the well-known sound of his voice, the glazed eye of the simpleton lighted with a ray of reason, and was turned towards the speaker, once more, teeming with a look of meek assurance. The rattling in his throat, for a moment, increased, and then ceased entirely; when a voice so deep, that it appeared to issue from the depths of his chest, was heard, saying

"The Lord wont harm him who never harm'd the creaturs of the Lord?"

"Emperors and kings, yea, the great of the earth, might envy thee thy lot, thou unknown child of wretchedness!" returned Ralph "not yet thirty years of probation, and already thou throwest aside the clay! Like thee did I grow to manhood, and learn how hard it is to live; but like thee I cannot die! Tell me, boy, dost thou enjoy the freedom of the spirit, or hast thou still pain and pleasure in the flesh? Dost see beyond the tomb, and trace thy route through the pathless air, or is all yet hid in the darkness of the grave?"

"Job is going where the Lord has hid his reason," answered the same hollow voice as before; "his prayers wont be foolish any longer."

"Pray, then, for one aged and forlorn; who has borne the burden of life 'till Death has forgotten him, and who wearies of the things of earth, where all is treachery and sin. But stay, depart not, 'till thy spirit can bear the signs of repentance from yon sinful woman, into the regions of day."

Abigail groaned aloud; her hands again refused their occupation, and her head once more sunk on her bosom in abject misery. From this posture of self-abasement and grief, the woman raised herself to her feet, and putting aside the careless tresses of dark hair, which, though, here and there, streaked with gray, retained much of their youthful gloss, she looked about her with a face so haggard, and eyes so full of meaning, that the common attention was instantly attracted to her movements.

"The time has come, and neither fear nor shame shall longer tie my tongue," she said. "The hand of providence is too manifest in this assemblage around the death-bed of that boy, to be unheeded. Major Lincoln, in that stricken and helpless child, you see one who shares your blood, though he has ever been a stranger to your happiness. Job is your brother!"

Grief has maddened her! exclaimed the anxious Cecil "she knows not what she utters."

"'Tis true!" said the calm tones of Ralph.

"Listen," continued Abigail; "a terrible witness, sent hither by heaven, speaks to attest I tell no lie. The secret of my transgression is known to him, when I had thought it buried in the affection of one only who owed me every thing."

"Woman!" said Lionel, "in attempting to deceive me, you deceive yourself. Though a voice from heaven should declare the truth of thy damnable tale, still would I deny that foul object being the child of my beauteous mother."

"Foul and wretched as you see him, he is the offspring of one not less fair, though far less fortunate, than thy own boasted parent, proud child of Prosperity! call on heaven as thou wilt, with that blasphemous tongue, he is no less thy brother, and the elder born."

"'Tis true 'tis true 'tis most solemnly a truth!" repeated the unmoved and aged stranger.

"It cannot be!" cried Cecil "Lincoln, credit them not, they contradict themselves."

"Out of thy own mouth will I find reasons to convince you," said Abigail. "Hast thou not owned the influence of the son at the altar? Why should one, vain, ignorant and young as I was, be insensible to the seductions of the father!"

"The child is then, thine!" exclaimed Lionel, once more breathing with freedom " proceed with thy tale; you confide it to friends!"

"Yes yes," cried Abigail, clasping her hands, and speaking with bitter emphasis; "you have all the consolation of proving the difference between the guilt of woman and that of man? Major Lincoln, accursed and polluted as you see me, thy own mother was not more innocent nor fair, when my youthful beauty caught thy father's eye. He was great and powerful, and I unknown and frail yon miserable proof of our transgression did not appear, until he had met your happier mother!"

"Can this be so?"

"The holy gospels are not more true!" murmured Ralph.

"And my father! did he could he desert thee in thy need?"

"Shame came when virtue and pride had been long forgotten. I was a dependant of his own proud race, and opportunities were not wanting to mark his wandering looks and growing love for the chaste Priscilla. He never knew my state. While I was stricken to the earth by the fruits of guilt he proved how easy it is for us to forget, in the days of prosperity, the companions of our shame. At length, you were born; and unknown to him, I received his new-born heir from the hands of his jealous aunt. What accursed thoughts beset me at that bitter moment! But, praised be God in heaven, they passed away, and I was spared the sin of murder!"

"Murder!"

"Even of murder. You know not the desperate thoughts the wretched harbour for relief! But opportunity was not long wanting, and I enjoyed the momentary, hellish pleasure of revenge. Your father went in quest of his rights, and disease attacked his beloved wife. Yes, foul and unseemly as is my wretched child, the beauty of thy mother was changed to a look still more hideous! Such as Job now seems, was the injured woman on her death-bed. I feel all thy justice, Lord of power, and bow before thy will!"

"Injured woman!" repeated Lionel, "say on, and I will bless thee!"

Abigail gave a groan, so deep and hollow, that, for a moment, the listeners believed it was the parting struggle of the spirit of her son, and she sunk, helplessly, into her seat, again concealing her features in her dress.

"Injured woman!" slowly repeated Ralph, with the most taunting contempt in his accents "what punishment does not a wanton merit?"

"Ay, injured!" cried the awakened son "my life on it, thy tale, at least, is false."

The old man was silent, but his lips moved rapidly, as if he muttered an incredulous reply to himself, while a scornful smile cast its bright and peculiar meaning across the wasted lineaments of his face.

"I know not what you may have heard from others," continued Abigail, speaking so low that her words were nearly lost in the difficult and measured breathing of Job "but I call heaven to witness that you, now, shall hear no lie. The laws of the province commanded that the victims of the foul distemper should be kept apart, and your mother was placed at the mercy of myself, and one other, who loved her still less than I."

"Just providence! you did no violence?"

"The disease spared us such a crime. She died in her new deformity, while I remained a looker-on, if not in the beauty of my innocence, still free from the withering touch of scorn and want. Yes, I found a sinful, but flattering consolation in that thought! Vain, weak, and foolish as I had been, never did I regard my own fresh beauty, with half the inward pleasure that I looked upon the foulness of my rival. Your aunt, too she was not without the

instigations of the worker of mischief."

"Speak only of my mother," interrupted the impatient Lionel "of my aunt, I already know the whole."

"Unmoved and calculating as she was, how little did she understand good from evil! She even thought to crack the heart-strings, and render whole, by her weak inventions, that which the power of God could only create. The gentle spirit of thy mother had hardly departed, before a vile plot was hatched to destroy the purity of her fame. Blinded fools that we were! She thought to lead by her soothing arts, aided by his wounded affections, the husband to the feet of her own daughter, the innocent mother of her who stands beside thee; and I was so vain as to hope, that, in time, justice and my boy, might plead with the father and seducer, and raise me to the envied station of her whom I hated."

"And this foul calumny you repeated, with all its basest colouring, to my abused father?"

"We did we did; yes, God, he knows we did! and when he hesitated to believe, I took the holy evangelists as witnesses of my truth!"

"And he," said Lionel, nearly choked by his emotions "he believed it!"

"When he heard the solemn oath of one, whose whole guilt he thought lay in her weakness to himself, he did. As we listened to his terrible denunciations, and saw the frown which darkened his manly beauty, we both thought we had succeeded. But how little did we know the difference between rooted passion and passing inclination! The heart we thought to alienate from its dead partner, we destroyed; and the reason we conspired to deceive, was maddened!"

When her voice ceased, so profound a silence reigned in the place, that the roar of the distant cannonade sounded close at hand, and even the low murmurs of the excited town swept by, like the whisperings of the wind. Job suddenly ceased to breathe, as though his spirit had only lingered to hear the confession of his mother, and Polwarth dropped the arm of the dead simpleton, unconscious of the interest he had so lately taken in his fate. In the midst of this death like stillness, the old man stole from the side of the body, and stood before the self-condemned Abigail, whose form was writhing under her mental anguish. Crouching more like a tiger than a man, he sprang upon her, with a cry so sudden, so wild, and so horrid, that it caused all within its hearing to shudder with instant dread.

"Beldame!" he shouted, "I have thee now! Bring hither the book! the blessed, holy word of God! Let her swear, let her swear! Let her damn her perjured soul, in impious oaths!"

"Monster! release the woman!" cried Lionel, advancing to the assistance of the struggling penitent; "thou, too, hoary-headed wretch, hast deceived me!"

"Lincoln! Lincoln!" shrieked Cecil, "stay that unnatural hand! you raise it on thy father!"

Lionel staggered back to the wall, where he stood motionless, and gasping for breath. Left, to work his own frantic will, the maniac would speedily have terminated the sorrows of the wretched woman, had not the door been burst open with a crash, and the stranger who was left by the cunning of the madman, in the custody of the Americans, rushed to the rescue.

"I know your yell, my gentle baronet!" cried the aroused keeper, for such in truth he was, "and I have a mark for your malice, which would have gladly had me hung! But I have not followed you from kingdom to kingdom, from Europe to America, to be cheated by a lunatic!"

It was apparent, by the lowering look of the fellow, how deeply he resented the danger he had just escaped, as he sprang forward to seize his prisoner. Ralph abandoned his hold the instant this hated object appeared, and he darted upon the breast of the other with the undaunted fury that a lion, at bay, would turn upon its foe. The struggle was fierce and obstinate. Hoarse oaths, and the most savage execrations burst from the incensed keeper, and were blended with the wildest ravings of madness from Ralph. The excited powers of the maniac at length prevailed, and his antagonist fell under their irresistible impulse. Quicker than thought, Ralph was seen hovering on the chest of his victim, while he grasped his throat with fingers of iron.

"Vengeance is holy!" cried the maniac, bursting into a shout of horrid laughter, at his triumph, and shaking his gray locks till they flowed in wild confusion around his glowing eye-balls;"Urim and Thummim are the words of glory! Liberty is the shout! die, damned dog! die like the fiends in darkness, and leave freedom to the air!"

By a mighty effort the gasping man released his throat a little from the gripe that nearly throttled him, and cried, with difficulty

"For the love of heavenly justice, come to my aid! will you see a man thus murdered?"

But he addressed himself to the sympathies of the listeners in vain. The females had hid their faces, in natural horror; the maimed Polwarth was yet without his artificial limb; and Lionel still looked upon the savage fray with a vacant eye. At this moment of despair, the hand of the keeper was seen plunging, with violence, into the side of Ralph, who sprang upon his feet at the third blow, laughing immoderately, but with sounds so wild and deep, that they seemed to shake his inmost soul. His antagonist profited by the occasion, and darted from the room with the headlong precipitation of guilt.

The countenance of the maniac, as he now stood, struggling between life and death, changed with each fleeting impulse. The blood flowed freely from the wounds in his side, and as the fatal tide ebbed away, a ray of passing reason lighted his pallid and ghastly features. His inward laugh entirely ceased. The glaring eye-balls became stationary, and his look, gradually softening, settled on the appalled pair, who took the deepest interest in his welfare. A calm and decent expression possessed those lineaments which had just exhibited the deepest marks of the wrath of God. His lips moved in a vain effort to speak; and stretching forth his arms, in the attitude of benediction, like the mysterious shadow of the chapel, he fell backward on the body of the lifeless and long-neglected Job, himself perfectly dead.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I saw an aged man upon his bier,
"His hair was thin and white, and on his brow
"A record of the cares of many a year;
"Cares that were ended and forgotten now.
"And there was sadness round, and faces bow'd,
"And woman's tears fell fast, and children wail'd aloud.

Bryant

As the day advanced, the garrison of Boston was put in motion. The same bustle, the same activity, the same gallant bearing in some, and dread reluctance in others, were exhibited, as on the morning of the fight of the preceding summer. The haughty temper of the royal commander could ill brook the bold enterprise of the colonists; and, at an early hour, orders were issued to prepare to dislodge them. Every gun that could be brought to bear upon the hills was employed to molest the Americans, who calmly continued their labours, while shot

were whistling around them on every side. Towards evening a large force was embarked, and conveyed to the castle. Washington appeared on the heights, in person, and every military evidence of the intention of a resolute attack on one part, and of a stout resistance on the other, became apparent.

But the fatal experience of Breed's had taught a lesson that was still remembered. The same leaders were to be the principal actors in the coming scene, and it was necessary to use the remnants of many of the very regiments which had bled so freely on the former occasion. The half-trained husbandmen of the colonies were no longer despised; and the bold operations of the past winter, had taught the English generals that, as subordination increased among their foes, their movements were conducted with a more vigorous direction of their numbers. The day was accordingly wasted in preparations. Thousands of men slept on their arms that night, in either army, in the expectation of rising, on the following morning, to be led to the field of slaughter.

It is not improbable, from the tardiness of their movements, that a large majority of the royal forces did not regret the providential interposition, which certainly saved them torrents of blood, and not improbably, the ignominy of a defeat. One of the sudden tempests of the climate arose in the darkness, driving before it men and beasts, to seek protection, in their imbecility, from the more powerful warring of the elements. The golden moments were lost; and, after enduring so many privations, and expending so many lives, in vain, Howe sullenly commenced his arrangements to abandon a town, on which the English ministry had, for years, lavished their indignation, with all the acrimony, and, as it now seemed, with the impotency of a blind revenge.

To carry into effect this sudden and necessary determination, was not the work of an hour. As it was the desire of the Americans, however, to receive their town back again as little injured as possible, they forbore to push the advantage they possessed, by occupying those heights, which, in a great measure, commanded the anchorage, as well as a new and vulnerable face of the defences of the king's army. While the semblance of hostilities was maintained by an irregular and impotent cannonade, conducted with so little spirit as to wear the appearance of being intended only to amuse, one side was diligently occupied in preparing to depart, and the other was passively awaiting the moment when they might peaceably repossess their own. It is unnecessary to remind the reader, that the entire command of the sea, by the British, would have rendered any serious attempt to arrest their movements, perfectly futile.

In this manner a week was passed, after the tempest had abated the place exhibiting throughout this period, all the hurry and bustle, the joy and distress that such an unlooked-for event was likely to create.

Toward the close of one of those busy and stirring days, a short funeral train was seen issuing from a building which had long been known as the residence of one of the proudest families in the province. Above the outer-door of the mansion was suspended a gloomy hatchment, charged with the 'courant' deer of Lincoln, encircled by the usual mementos of mortality, and bearing the rare symbol of the "bloody-hand." This emblem of heraldic grief, which was never adopted in the provinces, except at the death of one of high importance, a custom that has long since disappeared with the usages of the monarchy, had caught the eyes of a few idle boys, who alone were sufficiently unoccupied, at that pressing moment, to note its exhibition. With the addition of these truant urchins, the melancholy procession took its way toward the neighbouring church-yard of the king's chapel.

The large bier was covered by a pall so ample that it swept the stones of the threshold, while entering into the body of the church. Here it was met by the divine we have had occasion to mention more than once, who gazed, with a look of strange interest, at the solitary and youthful mourner, that closely followed in his dark weeds. The ceremony, however, proceeded with the usual solemnity, and the attendants slowly moved deeper into the sacred edifice. Next to the young man, came the well-known persons of the British commander-in-chief, and of his quickwitted and favourite lieutenant. Between them, walked an officer of inferior rank, who, notwithstanding his maimed condition, had been able, by the deliberation of the march, to beguile the ears of his companions, to the very moment of meeting the clergyman, with some tale of no little interest, and great apparent mystery. The remainder of the train, which consisted only of the family of the two generals, and a few menials, came last, if we

except the idlers, who stole euriously in their footsteps.

When the service was ended, the same private communication was resumed between the two chieftains, and their companion, and continued until they arrived at the open vault, in a distant corner of the enclosure. Here the low conversation ended, and the eye of Howe, which had hitherto been riveted in deep attention on the speaker, began to wander in the direction of the dangerous hills occupied by his enemies. The interruption seemed to have broken the charm of the secret conversation, and the anxious countenances of both the leaders betrayed how soon their thoughts had wandered from a tale of great private distress, to their own heavier cares and duties.

The bier was placed before the opening, and the assistants of the sexton advanced to perform their office. When the pall was removed, to the evident amazement of most of the spectators, two coffins were exposed to view. One was clothed in black—velvet, studded with silver nails, and ornamented after the richest fashions of human pride, while the other lay in the simple nakedness of the clouded wood. On the breast of the first, rose a heavy silver plate, bearing a long inscription, and decorated with the usual devices of heraldry; and on the latter, were simply carved on the lid, the two initial letters J. P.

The impatient looks of the English generals intimated to Dr. Liturgy the value of every moment, and in less time than we consume in relating it, the bodies of the high—descended man of wealth, and of his nameless companion, were lowered into the vault, and left to decay, in silent contact, with that of the woman who, in life, had been so severe a scourge to both. After a besitation of a single moment, in deference to the young mourner, the gentlemen present, perceiving that he manifested a wish to remain, quitted the place in a body, with the exception of the maimed officer, already mentioned, whom the reader has at once recognised to be Polwarth. When the men had replaced the stone above the mouth of the vault, securing it by a stout bar of iron and a beavy lock, they delivered the key to the principal actor in the scene. He received it in silence, and dropping gold into their hands, motioned to them to depart.

In another instant a careless observer would have thought that Lionel and his friend were the only living possessors of the church—yard. But under the adjoining wall, partly hid from observation by the numerous head—stones, was the form of a woman, bowed to the earth, while her figure was concealed by the cloak she had gathered sbapelessly about her. As soon as the gentlemen perceived they were alone, they slowly advanced to the side of this desolate being.

Their approaching footsteps were not unheeded, though, instead of facing those who so evidently wished to address her, she turned to the wall, and began to trace, with unconscious fingers, the letters of a tablet in slate, which was let into the brick—work, to mark the position of the tomb of the Lechmeres.

"We can do no more," said the young mourner "all now rests with a mightier hand than any of earth."

The squalid limb that was thrust from beneath the red garment, trembled, but it still continued its unmeaning employment.

"Sir Lionel Lincoln speaks to you," said Polwarth, on whose arm the youthful baronet leaned.

"Who!" shrieked Abigail Pray, casting aside her covering, and baring those sunken features, on which misery had made terrible additional inroads, within a few days "I had forgotten I had forgotten! the son succeeds the father; but the mother must follow her child to the grave!"

"He is honourably interred with those of his blood, and by the side of one who loved his simple integrity!"

"Yes, he is better lodged in death, than he was in life! Thank God! he can never know cold nor hunger more!"

"You will find that I have made a provision for your future comfort; and I trust, that the close of your life will be happier than its prime."

"I am alone," said the woman, hoarsely. "The old will avoid me, and the young will look upon me in scorn! Perjury and revenge lie heavy on my soul!"

The young baronet was silent, but Polwarth assumed the right to reply

"I will not pretend to assert," said the worthy captain, "that these are not both wicked companions; but I have no doubt you will find somewhere in the Bible, a suitable consolation for each particular offence. Let me recommend to you a hearty diet, and I'll answer for an easy conscience. I never knew the prescription fail. Look about you in the world does your well-fed villain feel remorse! No; it's only when his stomach is empty that he begins to think of his errors! I would also suggest the expediency of commencing soon, with something substantial, as you show, altogether, too much bone, at present, for a thriving condition. I would not wish to say any thing distressing, but we both of us may remember a case, where the nourishment came too late."

"Yes, yes, it came too late!" murmured the conscience-stricken woman "all comes too late! even the penitence, I fear!"

"Say not so," observed Lionel; "you do outrage to the promises of one who never spoke false."

Abigail stole a fearful glance at him, which expressed all the secret terror of her soul, as she half whispered

"Who witnessed the end of Madam Lechmere! did her spirit pass in peace?"

Sir Lionel, again, remained profoundly silent.

"I thought it," she continued "'tis not a sin to be forgotten on a death-bed! To plot evil, and call on God, aloud, to look upon it! Ay! and to madden a brain, and strip a soul like his to nakedness! Go," she added, beckoning them away with earnestness "ye are young and happy; why should ye linger near the grave! Leave me, that I may pray among the tombs! If any thing oan smooth the bitter moment, it is prayer."

Lionel dropped the key he held in his hand at her feet, and said, before he left her

"Yon vault is closed for ever, unless, at your request, it should be opened at some future time, to place you by the side of your son. The children of those who built it, are already gathered there, with the exception of two, who go to the other hemisphere to leave their bones. Take it, and may heaven forgive you, as I do."

He let fall a heavy purse by the side of the key, and, without uttering more, he again took the arm of Polwarth, and together they left the place. As they turned through the gate-way, into the street, each stole a glance at the distant woman. She had risen to her knees; her hands had grasped a head-stone, and her face was bowed nearly to the earth, while by the writhing of her form, and the humility of her attitude, it was apparent that her spirit struggled powerfully with the Lord for mercy.

Three days afterwards, the Americans entered, triumphantly, on the retiring footsteps of the royal army. The first among them, who hastened to visit the graves of their fathers, found the body of a woman, who had, seemingly, died under the severity of the season. She had unlocked the vault, in a vain effort to reach her child, and there her strength had failed her. Her limbs were decently stretched on the faded grass, while her features were composed, exhibiting in death the bland traces of that remarkable beauty which had distinguished and betrayed her youth. The gold still lay neglected, where it had fallen.

The amazed townsmen avoided this spectacle with horror, rushing into other places to gaze at the changes and the destruction of their beloved birth-place. But a follower of the royal army, who had lingered to plunder, and who had witnessed the interview between the officers and Abigail, shortly succeeded them. He lifted the flag, and lowering the body, closed the vault; then hurling away the key, he seized the money, and departed.

The slate has long since mouldered from the wall; the sod has covered the stone, and few are left who can designate the spot where the proud families of Lechmere and Lincoln were wont to inter their dead.

Sir Lionel and Polwarth proceeded, in the deepest silence, to the long-wharf, where a boat received them. They were rowed to the much-admired frigate, that was standing off-and-on, under easy sail, waiting their arrival. On her decks they met Agnes Danforth, with her eyes softened by tears, though a rich flush mantled on her cheeks, at witnessing the compelled departure of those invaders she had never loved.

"I have only remained to give you a partingkiss, cousin Lionel," said the frank girl, affectionately saluting him, "and now shall take my leave, without repeating those wishes that you know are so often conveyed in my prayers."

"You will then leave us?" said the young baronet, smiling for the first time in many-a-day. "You know that this cruelty"

He was interrupted by a loud hem from Polwarth, who advanced, and taking the hand of the lady, repeated his wish to retain it for ever, for at least the fiftieth time. She heard him, in silence, and with much apparent respect, though an arch smile stole upon her gravity, before he had ended. She then thanked him with suitable grace, and gave a final and decided refusal. The captain sustained the repulse like one who had seen much similar service, and politely lent his assistance to help the obdurate girl into her boat. Here she was received by a young man who was apparelled like an American officer. Sir Lionel thought the bloom on her cheek deepened, as her companion, assiduously, drew a cloak around her form to protect her from the chill of the water. Instead of returning to the town, the boat, which hore a flag, pulled directly for the shore occupied by the Americans. The following week Agnes was united to this gentleman, in the bosom of her own family. They soon after took quiet possession of the house in Tremont-street, and of all the large real estate left by Mrs. Lechmere, which had been previously bestowed on her, by Cecil, as a dowry.

As soon as his passengers appeared, the captain of the frigate communicated with his admiral, by signal, and received, in return, the expected order to proceed in the execution of his trust. In a few minutes the swift vessel was gliding by the heights of Dorchester, training her guns on the adverse hills, and hurriedly spreading her canvass as she passed. The Americans, however, looked on in sullen silence, and she was suffered to gain the open ocean, unmolested, when she made the best of her way to England, with the important intelligence of the intended evacuation.

She was speedily followed by the fleet, since which period the long-oppressed and devoted town of Boston has never been visited by an armed enemy.

During their passage to England, sufficient time was allowed Lionel, and his gentle companion, to reflect on all that had occurred. Together, and in the fullest confidence, they traced the wanderings of intellect which had so closely and mysteriously connected the deranged father with his impotent child; and as they reasoned, by descending to the secret springs of his disordered impulses, they were easily enabled to divest the incidents we have endeavoured to relate, of all their obscurity and doubt.

The keeper who had been sent in quest of the fugitive madman, never returned to his native land. No offers of forgiveness could induce the unwilling agent in the death of the Baronet, to trust his person, again, within the influence of the British laws. Perhaps he was conscious of a motive that none but an inward monitor might detect.

Lionel Lincoln; or, The Leaguer of Bostonm, Volume 2

Lionel, tired at length with importuning without success, commissioned the husband of Agnes to place him in a situation, where, by industry, his future comfort was amply secured.

Polwarth died quite lately. Notwithstanding his maimed limb, he contrived, by the assistance of his friend, to ascend the ladder of promotion, by regular gradations, nearly to its summit. At the close of his long life, he wrote Gen., Bart. and M. P. after his name. When England was threatened with the French invasion, the garrison he commanded was distinguished for being better provisioned than any other in the realm, and no doubt it would have made a resistance equal to its resources. In Parliament, where he sat for one of the Lincoln boroughs, he was chiefly distinguished for the patience with which he listened to the debates, and for the remarkable cordiality of the `ay' that he pronounced on every vote for supplies. To the day of his death, he was a strenuous advocate for the virtues of a rich diet, in all cases of physical suffering, "especially," as he would add, with an obstinacy that fed itself, "in instances of debility from febrile symptoms."

Within a year of their arrival, the uncle of Cecil died, having shortly before followed an only son to the grave. By this unlooked-for event, Lady Lincoln became the possessor of his large estates, as well as of an ancient Barony, that descended to the heirs general. From this time, until the eruption of the French revolution, Sir Lionel Lincoln, and Lady Cardonnell, as Cecil was now styled, lived together in sweetest concord, the gentle influence of her affection moulding and bending the feverish temperament of her husband, at will. The heir-loom of the family, that distempered feeling so often mentioned, was forgotten, in the even tenor of their happiness. When the heaviest pressure on the British constitution was apprehended, and it became the policy of the minister to enlist the wealth and talent of his nation in its support, by propping the existing administration, the rich Baronet received a peerage in his own person. Before the end of the century he was further advanced to a dormant Earldom, that had, in former ages, been one of the honours of an elder branch of his family.

Of all the principal actors in the foregoing tale, not one is now living. Even the roses of Cecil and Agnes have long since ceased to bloom, and Death has gathered them, in peace and innocence, with all that had gone before. The historical facts of our legend are beginning to be obscured by time; and it is more than probable, that the prosperous and affluent English peer, who now enjoys the honours of the house of Lincoln, never knew the secret history of his family, while it sojourned in a remote province of the British empire.

FINIS.