

THE  
Counterfeiters of the Cuyahoga.

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A BUCKEYE ROMANCE.

Countess of the Cayahoga.

A ROMANTIC ROMANCE.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE STORY OPENS.

THROUGH northern Ohio, toward Lake Erie, flows a winding stream, which the Indians named Cuyahoga—or crooked water. It is the principal river of several counties which lie in what is now known as the Western Reserve, but which in the early history of the West was called New Connecticut, comprising a large tract of land ceded by the General Government to the State of Connecticut. It was settled mainly by active, enterprising Yankees, who, if they were not as laborious farmers as the Pennsylvania emigrants, had generally more intelligence and public spirit, erected more tasteful dwellings, gave more skillful attention to mechanics, constructed better roads, and more rapidly developed whatever mineral resources were hidden beneath the soil on which their clearings were made.

A little settlement, began at the mouth of the Cuyahoga, increased rapidly in importance, and to its vicinity immigrants were attracted. Following, back into the forest, the winding course of the stream, they made settlements along its banks, and in a few years the town, situated where the river cast itself into the Lake, became a port of considerable commerce. It is now a principal city of the West. It

bears the name of the first official surveyor of the Reserve. The country is rolling, and the Cuyahoga, winding around hills and through ravines, tumbles over many little cascades of romantic as well as practical interest. Yankee ingenuity very soon discovered this practical interest, and turned it to good account. Mills and factories were erected, and little villages sprang up around them.

Enterprise had so far developed and enriched the region round about the Cuyahoga, that a canal was required to convey its productions to the Lake shore, and this canal had been several years a source of convenience and profit, when a young man, fresh from the city of Boston, made himself known in a village situated at the principal falls of the river. He engaged workmen for the construction of a cottage in the place of a rude cabin, belonging to a farm which stretched away from the river at one of its most romantic points.

A village—especially in a new country—is the center, if not of universal sympathy, of universal curiosity. There was something more than curiosity—there was anxiety to know all about the proprietor of the new cottage. Was it for his father?—was he an agent for some western capitalist?—was he about to be, or had he just been married? He was rather young for the last conjecture to gain credence, because no one supposed him to be more than twenty years old. Gossip was confounded. The young man was discreet. He kept his own secrets. Even the landlord of the village inn, with whom he boarded, could only tell that he was from Boston—that is, could only tell so much about him in connection with his business designs; but of the young man, individually, he knew something more. He knew that he was a sharp enemy of such practices as were common in his bar-room.

The rubicund boniface had been cut to the quick of anger, if not repentance, on several occasions, by pictures which his young guest had drawn of the results of the drinking customs he encouraged. Two or three times the Bostonian had held discussions with the frequenters of the bar-room, and he had not made friends by the faithful expositions he gave of the bondage which drew them to the tavern, morning, noon and night.

Gossip concentrates at a village tavern. While one set of influences gravitates always toward the church, another just as surely gravitates toward the tavern. During the hour between service, on several Sabbaths, there was gossip concerning the cottage-builder, in the village churchyard. He had sat one morning in the deacon's pew—that was the only time he had been seen at church. It must be confessed that he had then given marked attentions to the pastor's discourse, but why did he not come again? Why? Nobody had ever heard him swear; he was upright, even liberal in his dealings. Why? The same question was put often at the tavern. The landlord said he was "more agin drinkin', and more like a Christian, so far as he could see, than many of them that went to church regularly, but then it was queer, and for his part he didn't like the fellow anyhow. He'd nothing particular agin him, but it *was* queer."

What *was* queer, the landlord did not definitely explain, but the expression was taken up by several of the faithful subjects of his dominion, and it became public opinion that about the new cottage some remarkable mystery hung.

Meantime the cottage was finished, and in a few days it was furnished with rich, antique furniture, which had been sent from Boston to one of the village warehouses.

The tavern commanded a view of the canal. The men who had come there to get their drinks, before engaging in the occupations of the day, saw the young man, who had for a number of weeks been the subject of their gossip, go one Monday morning directly from the bar-room porch to a packet, on which was a sign-board, saying "FOR CLEVELAND."

Here was additional subject-matter for gossip. Whither could he be going, and what for? The most satisfactory conjecture was, naturally enough, that he must be on an errand for the family that would occupy Brome Cottage—that was the name he had given it: therefore during his absence tongues were not idle concerning it and its mystery.

It was a handsome cottage, handsomely situated. It commanded a view of rough water and rougher rocks—of overhanging trees, which, gnarled and scraggy, grew out from the steep craggy banks of the river; and it commanded also a wide view of fair fields and deep woods—woods for miles unbroken—fields blackened with many large stumps, but lying beautifully, and to the farmer possessing rich promise.

In all its parts the cottage was not completed; the design, drafted evidently by an experienced architect, was not fully carried out, and except that some forest trees had been removed and others left, in fulfillment of a purpose which contemplated surrounding adornment, there had yet been no attempt made to lay out a yard or a garden.

On the Saturday morning succeeding young Brome's departure on the canal-boat, there was bustle and activity at the cottage. The villagers soon learned that it was occupied by an elderly lady and two young persons. One of these was the youth with whom they had become somewhat acquainted, and the other was his sister. So much mystery

was unraveled. But what was the family, and where did it come from, and what would it do? It was not poor; it was respectable, but not very rich. There village gossip could safely go, but it could go no farther without launching into boundless speculation—fathomless conjecture.

Martha Brome, the mother of Harry and Alice Brome, was a widow lady, who had spent the hopeful period of her life in the city of Boston. Her husband had been an enterprising merchant. When about to retire from business with a competency, the failure of several large houses brought on a commercial crisis in his circle, by which his prospects of ease and quiet, in mature age, were crushed. He was a heart-broken as well as a fortune-broken merchant, and he died in a few months after his business prospects had been blasted. He was not, however, a bankrupt. He had speculated largely in western lands, and when his affairs were settled, it was ascertained that his wife and children controlled an excellent young farm, near an Ohio village, and that they had, besides, several thousand dollars with which to improve their property.

Mrs. Brome was a "strong-minded woman"—a woman who could calmly meet stern realities. When she understood the condition of her pecuniary affairs, she calculated practically for herself and family. She determined to relinquish the society of her friends—sunder the ties which, throughout her life, had been gathering in the city of her birth, and for the sake of her children emigrate to the West.

Harry had been his father's doting pride. He had been liberally educated, and he was an upright, thoughtful young man. His mother hoped that in a new country he might become a man of distinction.

Alice was a slender but healthful girl, with her mother's spirit and pride. Brother and sister concurred cheerfully in their mother's plans, and while the mother and Alice visited some near relatives, Harry was sent West to prepare their farm for their reception. They had carefully estimated their resources, and what could be commanded with them, and young Brome was prepared to make the most of the funds at his disposal. When his mother had closely examined the result of his agency, and the manner in which his trust had been executed, she was well satisfied, and so frankly told him.

Saturday was the first day the Brome family spent at their cottage, and consequently Sunday was the second. The village gossips had calculated somewhat on this Sunday. There was preaching at but one church. Across the valley rang the solemn tones of the bell, and the people with staid step and sober mien turned their faces toward the spire which should lead the minds of the devout from earth heavenward; but it must be confessed that, on the particular occasion concerning which we write, many of the church-goers had more curiosity about what they should see at church than what they would hear from the preacher.

Whether this be a more common error among country than among city people, we would not pretend to decide. We are writing a history—not speculating on human frailties in the abstract.

But the Brome family did not hear the village pastor's sermon. Those eyes turned away from the preacher's desk, when steps were heard in the aisles, saw only faces that were familiar. It was not until the succeeding Sabbath that any



representative of Brome Cottage appeared in the deacon's pew.

The Deacon and the Pastor! What potent names in the Yankee village! Parson Humiston was a steady, good old man, beloved by all his congregation, and respected by the chiefest of the village sinners. His sermons were safe and solid, if not eloquent; he could tell the children pleasant little pious stories, and he had a meek and winning way of administering practical counsel and spiritual encouragement to the maidens, old or young—to the mothers, sad or gay—among whom he visited. Shakspeare said a sweet, low voice is a beautiful thing in woman; he might have added, a meek and winning way of administering counsel is a beautiful thing in a pastor.

Deacon Anstey was a contrast to the parson. One was of ample form, good-natured, genial; the other was thin, spare, hard-hearted and sharp. He was liberal to the church—never anywhere else. In his business dealings he was even miserly; but he was an enterprising merchant, and controlled a profitable business. Sometimes there were bitter stories told about him—sometimes he was called a hypocrite—sometimes a sleek scoundrel; but he was always regular at church meetings—he had bought the only bell there was in the village—he paid a considerable portion of the parson's meager salary, and, by hook and by crook, he was a deacon.

Harry Brome had carried a letter of introduction from a Boston merchant to Deacon Anstey, and the deacon had been quite civil to him; but Harry was not attracted by his sharp, thin voice, to seek frequent consultation, and between him and this important personage the coldness and reserve of a first acquaintance had not been broken, up to the period

when, with his mother and sister, he was, from the deacon's pew, the chief attraction in Parson Humiston's congregation, on the second Sabbath after their arrival at Cuyahoga village. The week which ended with the coming in of this Sabbath had witnessed only one event which demands record in this history. Harry Brome had registered his name in the office of a village lawyer as a student at law.

During a "quarterly occasion," the Methodist minister of the circuit made an effort to organize a Temperance Society in the village, and Harry assisted him energetically. When the preliminary meeting was called he spoke earnestly and pointedly, and rather intimated that, among citizens who should be moral exemplars, he saw need of temperance reform. This was bold if not impudent for so young a man and so new a citizen.

Deacon Anstey was quite incensed. "The upstart," he said, "a sprig of the law, who wants to make himself talked about!"

"Not altogether," said the landlord, who knew Harry; "I reckon he's pretty strong temperance, 'cause he used to lecture the fellows at my house, but then I agree with you, Deacon, it's rather sassy."

So the gossip ran. The temperance enterprise signally failed, and young Brome came out of the contest with a few warm friends, but many bitter enemies. He was impetuous and by no means conciliating, and when he had opportunity criticised opponents, on whatever question of which he had the better side, with unrelenting severity, pursuing, with caustic irony, any advantage he might gain.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PLOT OPENS.

“HARRY BROME, ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW.” These words, plainly painted upon the window shutter of a small office, told a story in which the occupant of that office had a life-interest. Some of his enemies had said, “What does he try to domineer over a hired man for on his mother’s farm—why don’t he go to work himself?” but Harry had studiously pursued his own and his mother’s purpose, during two years, and had been admitted to the bar, with warm commendations from the lawyers who reported to the court upon his fitness. During those two years many small revolutions had transpired in the village. From a number of households, lights had gone out and in others stars had risen. Barton, the landlord, had several mortgages on property which was free when Harry Brome first knew its owners; the general business of the town had increased, but Deacon Anstey had not been as successful as in former years. He had reached too far and grasped too tightly. He had found it convenient to request permission to resign his deaconship, which permission had been granted. He and young Brome were no better friends than when they were first acquainted.

Brome Cottage had become an inviting home. It was a

“remarkable place” in the new country—a place travelers stopped to admire, and a place travelers talked about when they had journeyed far from it. When the jessamine and honeysuckle crept over its trellised arbors, and vines with beautiful flowers entwined the latticed windows—when roses bloomed along graveled walks that were shaded by young trees, beneath which, in prepared plats, rare plants, flowers and shrubs grew, it appeared in delightful contrast with the rough fields and massive forests by which it was environed.

Each morning, when the birds were lively, and prodigal of songs, the Brome family was gathered in the garden. Harry and Alice industriously assisted their mother in the labor of making such improvements as she did not choose to intrust to their gardener. Mrs. Brome was the same calm thoughtful woman. In appearance she had but slightly changed during the two years of her western life, and what change could be observed was the result of improved health. It was remarked by a shrewd observer of human nature that “sorrow and suffering are essential to the rich development of female character.” The trials and cares which had been imposed upon Mrs. Brome had only served to develop a character fitted for distinction in a wide sphere of action. This character was faintly understood at Cuyahoga village.

Mrs. Brome had not been neighborly according to the definition her neighbors attached to this phrase. She had never given a party. Parson Humiston had been with his daughter to take tea at the cottage many times, and he always spoke highly of Mrs. Brome, of Harry and Alice. A few of his parishoners could not understand why he was so favorably inclined toward a family which did not regularly sit under his preaching. Very rarely did Mrs. Brome attend

his church, and Harry and Alice were oftener students of nature in some quiet glen or shady nook, or of books at home, than of the pastor and his people at church. Besides Parson Humiston and his daughter, there were a few persons in the village who appreciated the Brome family; and though they thought Harry a little harsh in his opinions, and somewhat indiscreet in the sternness of his disputes with those whom he considered vulgar or hypocritical, though they deemed Alice quite too retired in her taste and manners, they were satisfied that Mrs. Brome understood her duties and obligations, and would not fail to lead her children aright. Napoleon, with profound conviction, said—"The fate of a child is always the work of a mother." Mrs. Brome was assiduous in her care and thoughtful in her instructions, and she indulged visions of bright promise for her children. It is for this history to tell whether she experienced that

———"there is nothing upon earth  
More miserable than she that has a son  
And sees him err."

Northern Ohio was "flooded" with counterfeit money. Much of the "spurious currency" was so faithfully executed that the best judges were often deceived. It was a common rumor that somewhere in the vicinity of Cuyahoga village, was the head-quarters of the counterfeiters; and it was whispered that persons of honorable standing before the community had secret cognizance of the counterfeiters and their haunts. Where these rumors originated no person could tell. The village landlord, who was supposed to occupy the chief post among newsmongers, was often interrogated concerning them, and he invariably answered:

"It's a tarnal lie, the whole of it. Nobody who knows

anything would suppose that, if counterfeiters were in this region, they'd be peddling their trash about here thick as huckleberries. Them fellows is sharp. They don't sell their wares where they make 'em."

There was some philosophy in Barton's opinion, but in spite of it, the suspicion that the counterfeiters were hidden in or near Cuyahoga village, acquired force and currency. Frequently men of undoubted honesty found themselves in possession of considerable sums of money, which better judges than they pronounced counterfeit. They could not always remember from whom it was received, and there was general complaint of swindling, and business confidence was much disturbed. Harry Brome, on several occasions, was victimized, and, once or twice, under such circumstances as gave his prejudiced enemies opportunity to mutter indefinite whispers and make mysterious allusions.

He one day pursued a man named Sandys, who had given him several bills, which a friend pronounced counterfeit; when he found him, he talked hastily and bitterly about the circulation of such stuff. High words had passed between them, when Brome said:

"This is the second time that I have had bad money from you. You are either a very poor judge, or you don't care whether I am cheated or not."

"And s'pose I don't," answered Sandys, coolly, "what'll you do about it?"

"I'll tell you what I'd do. If I could prove that you gave this to me knowingly, I'd send you to the penitentiary, where there are many men who have done less harm in the world than you."

Sandys was a grocer and liquor merchant, and there had never been cordiality between him and Brome.

"You talk well," retorted Sandys, "but *pre-haps* we'd be in company. Some folks is a little suspicious that you know how to get rags with picters on 'em."

"What, Sir," demanded Harry, "do you mean to insinuate that I have ever dealt in counterfeit money?"

"Insinuate," said Sandys with a cold sneer, "I don't know what that is."

"Well, Sir, I'll make you know, if you dare to hint a suspicion that I have any knowledge of the counterfeiters which would implicate me in their rascality. I believe that some of them are not far from this spot. I only wish I could get a clue to them. This place would soon be too hot for them or any of their accomplices."

This threat was uttered in a manner which impressed Sandys that it was aimed at him. He stepped toward young Brome with a clenched fist, muttering an oath between his teeth, when a stranger addressed them:

"I wish the direction to Brome Cottage, and would be obliged to either of you gentlemen for it," said the stranger.

"Here's a puppy can take you there," cried Sandys, turning on his heel, and leaving young Brome to explain the circumstances under which he was found.

Harry at once recognized the stranger as the son of a merchant in Boston, with whom his father had been associated in business.

"You do not know me?" said Harry; "country air has improved my complexion."

"I did not, but now I *do* know my old friend and school-

mate," returned the stranger, extending his hand, which was cordially grasped.

Exchanging sketches of adventure since they had been at school, the young men walked slowly toward Brome Cottage.

When Harry introduced his companion as Joseph Etherege, of Boston, Mrs. Brome distinctly remembered him, and gave him a high-bred but not cold welcome, which caused him to feel that he had found a home.

Etherege had known Alice Brome only as a giddy school-girl. He was delighted to meet her a young woman of education and spirit, delicate, but not fragile, polite, but not affected. Alice was not beautiful in that sense which requires symmetry of features, but she had an expressive countenance and a graceful form; her mother's fair complexion and deep blue eyes, with the same winning grace of manner, the same dignified repose in her deportment.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE COUNTERFEITERS DISCOVERED.

HARRY BROME was a capital sportsman. He knew well every glen and dell and vale in which game was abundant, within a circuit of many miles around his mother's cottage; and he could tell where an experienced fisherman was certain, if "the sign was right," to take from the river a string of choice fish. Etherege was as fond of forest sports as Harry, and he had been a guest at Brome Cottage but a few days when he could describe all of Harry's favorite haunts. The places of romantic interest along the river having been visited, the deepest woods and wildest ravines having been explored, Harry determined to interest his companion in geological speculations concerning a cave which he had discovered, on one of his hunting expeditions. It was near the opening of a deep ravine, in an unfrequented forest, which crowned a range of low hills along the river, about three miles below the village.

It was a pleasant autumn afternoon when the young friends set out on their expedition. There was promise of good shooting, and each had his gun. They had no sooner entered the forest than they became more interested in the pursuit of game than in geological investigations or speculations,

and they were led away from the path Brome had designed to follow. In endeavoring to retrace his steps he temporarily lost his reckoning, and Etherege joked him about being bewildered.

"Here's a faint trail, suppose we try that?" said Etherege.

"I have no objection," answered Harry, "because we cannot be very far out of the way, and have time enough to get home before dark, if we take another day for the cave."

"I am inclined to think we'll be compelled to take another day. Your luck is bad to-day. I've got more game than you have, and you are lost."

"Of course *you* know the way," returned Harry, laughing, "lead on."

Etherege walked on briskly, and Harry followed. They had only proceeded a few steps when a squirrel ran across their path, a few rods in front of them. Etherege gave him chase, and Harry watched the race. The nimble creature did not take to a tree, as the sportsman had expected, and Etherege continued to pursue it. Harry now joined him, and both exerted themselves to get a shot. They were disappointed. The game escaped; and when they gave up the chase, they found themselves on the brink of a ravine which Harry declared to be that in which the cave he sought was to be found.

"But we'll not explore it to-day," he said; "we'll not lose ourselves another time, and shall not waste the day chasing squirrels which we cannot shoot."

"That's very cool," returned Etherege; "but now if you'll kill that woodpecker, getting his supper out of the top branch

of yon old tree across the ravine, I'll say no more about your bewilderment."

"Protection from your wit is easily purchased," cried Harry; "here goes."

He raised his gun to his shoulder and was about to discharge it, when suddenly he rested the barrel across his left arm and listened.

"What's up?" asked Etherege.

"Hish!" answered Harry.

Watchfully and noiselessly he moved a few steps along the brow of the ravine, then stopped and listened again: then he proceeded a few rods farther, when he turned and beckoned Etherege toward him, who came forward as cautiously as his companion.

"You know, Joseph, I told you about the counterfeit money in this country and my suspicions, on the day you inquired for our cottage in the village. Well, I have often met suspicious fellows in these woods. Just as I was going to shoot, I heard my name mentioned down here in the ravine by a voice I believe I know, and it belongs to a man who bears me no good will. Now I'm going to see what he's doing."

Harry crept forward, and Etherege followed him. Presently Harry stopped where the bank of the ravine was precipitous, and swinging himself around an overhanging tree, he gazed intently into the hollow below him.

"By Jupiter! the game's up," he whispered, turning to Etherege. "This is a capital day's shooting. Look yonder."

Etherege looked as directed, and saw three men sitting under a tree, apparently intently occupied in a game of euchre.

"They're playing euchre," he said, "and it don't strike me that the game *is* up."

"I'll show you what kind of euchre it is," answered Harry; "come this way—I am going to euchre them."

Harry crept to a point where he could closely observe the persons he had discovered, then he said to Etherage:

"One is Tom Darwin, a noted scoundrel, the other is Deacon Anstey, and the other is that man Sandys with whom I had the dispute, on the day you came to Cuyahoga. As sure as fate they have a lot of 'coney' between them."

"And what is 'coney'?" whispered Etherage.

"That's the counterfeiters' technical name for spurious notes. These scoundrels are preparing to circulate a 'batch' of them. I see through the scheme. Sandys and Anstey provide the money, and employ Darwin to put it off. If I don't get them in limbo, my name's not Brome," said Harry with energy.

"Hark!" said Etherage.

The friends listened, and, from the conversation of the counterfeiters, learned that Sandys was telling them about his dispute at the village with Harry.

"We must look out for that fellow," said Anstey. "He and I have always been enemies. I tried to conciliate him when he first came to the village, but he scorned my advances, and I've hated him ever since."

"He's got grit," said Sandys, "and if he could get a clue to our operations he'd never sleep till he tracked us. We've got to watch him, now, I tell you."

"Gammon," said Darwin in his coarse rough way; "you fellers never will get along, if you're afraid of a sassy little

Yankee lawyer. You keep your eyes open and *prehaps* we can get *him* in a scrape."

The counterfeiters now conversed in so low a tone that Brome and Etherege could not understand them.

Harry had seen enough, and he told Etherege that it was time to proceed homeward. In retracing their steps, the young men were not so cautious as they had been when seeking the counterfeiters, and when they were passing an open spot on the brow of the ravine, Tom Darwin caught a glimpse of them.

"The devil and his imps," cried he; "by the Lord Harry, yonder is that infernal Yankee lawyer now!"

"He's seen us—he's followed us," cried Anstey, quaking, "and you've made a pretty muss of it by getting in this place, Tom."

"You're an old woman if you were a deacon once," answered Tom, angrily; "if I can run my risk I guess you can your'n, and you'll have to, that's all, *Deacon Anstey*."

"Never mind, Tom," said Sandys, who was more collected than Anstey. "It's all right. It's not likely them fellows saw us, but we must find out whether they did or not, and you and I can do that."

"Suppose they did see us and know we had 'coney' here to-day, what's to be done then?" inquired Anstey, not yet assured that he was safe.

"We'll have to leave this country sudden, that's all," answered Sandys.

"Not as you knows on," said Tom Darwin, impudently.

"What then, Tom?" asked Sandys.

"We'll put the sneakin' spies out of the way first," answered Darwin, between his teeth.

Neither Sandys nor Anstey made any reply to this threat. It was more than they were prepared for, but what they could or *would* do, were it certain that young Brome had discovered them, neither could answer.

The business of the "council" in the forest having been transacted, the counterfeiters separated and proceeded to the village in different directions, where they assembled another "council" to decide what was to be done in the event that Harry Brome should take any step which indicated that he had clue to their rascality.

Meantime Harry and Etherege had safely reached home, unconscious that they had been seen by the counterfeiters.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CONSPIRACY DEVELOPED.

JOSEPH ETHEREGE was a fortune-hunter. He had received a liberal education; he had traveled in Europe—and this at the period of which we write, was an important fact in the education of a young gentleman; he had graduated from a medical school of high standing, and with money enough to purchase a large tract of land in a new country, he had emigrated westward for the purpose of “locating.” Harry Brome was quite anxious that Etherege should “settle down” at Cuyahoga village, but the young doctor would make him no definite promise. Whenever he talked of visiting other counties or towns in the State, Brome was eloquent on the prospects of the Cuyahoga valley, and Etherege hesitated to take leave of his good friends at Brome Cottage. Perhaps one reason why he hesitated was, because he began to have an interest in the Brome family; an interest more enlivening than the sports of the field, and quite as engrossing as money-making—indeed, it was embraced in the plan of “fortune-hunting” which the young man had arranged.

Walks and drives, readings and talkings, in and around Brome Cottage, were not altogether objectless, and their object was something more than time-killing.

Alice Brome was a charming girl; fitted especially was she to charm an enterprising, enthusiastic young man, who, resolved upon an earnest effort in a new country to become a citizen of influence and usefulness, wished a helpmate competent to understand his strivings, and appreciate the spirit which animated them.

Alice was one evening reading a new novel, when she threw it aside with a slight scornfulness in her manner. Etherege took it up and discovered that she had been perusing a scene between lovers who were lack-a-daisically tender—whose love was of the whimpering, lachrymose character—which is an emotion of “fancy”—a victim of whim and caprice—the love which animates flirts, male or female—which finds wedlock irksome, and which deliberately souring, for the sake of appearances, expresses itself in “my dear,” but never sings :

“Home, sweet home. Be it ever so humble,  
There’s no place like Home.”

Etherege could have no other opinion than that Alice was a worshiper of the sensible and the truthful. He was pleased with her quiet, dignified expression of contempt for such silly “scenes” as the novel depicted. He did not then reveal the satisfaction he enjoyed, but determined, on the first fitting occasion, to suggest the “scene” to the remembrance of Alice.

One morning she invited him to go with her into the garden and assist in the care of some flowers, which needed protection from the winds of early autumn, that had already tipped with yellow the leaves of the maple trees in the forest.

Etherege watched for an opportunity to recall to Alice’s



mind the sentiment the novel which he had seen her read awakened, without arousing a suspicion that he had divined the cause of the scorn with which she had thrown the book aside.

"It is quite natural," said he, "to associate summer flowers, which the frosts of winter kill, with the friendship good fortune attracts, but which bad luck drives away. I am not surprised that many poets and many romancers have perplexed their wits to find a new expression for the thought."

"But after all, Mr. Etherege," said Alice, "it is hardly fair to the flowers. They are not false. They leave no duties undischarged. They bloom and are beautiful for us until their allotted time to die."

"A beautiful defense," exclaimed Etherege; "I judge from it that you have less even than the usual slender confidence in friendships which are made when the sun of fortune is warm."

"We may find good and true friends, Mr. Etherege, in the height of prosperity, but we cannot always tell on whom we may rely till misfortune reverses our obligations, and makes them valuable to us. But I am talking what is very commonplace, and you cannot be interested."

"You are quite mistaken. I think your words have meanings which do not at first appear in them, and I am interested to know whether your thoughts are not led away from common friendships, to obligations and relations dearer and more important."

"You are not gallant, Mr. Etherege, to give my words meanings of your own, and then ask confession of me; but I am not reluctant to tell you that I have been thinking of a book I read not long ago, in which "real life" was depicted

as the silly pastime of coquetting boys and girls. Holding marriage to be a solemn and thoughtful step, I was indignant that such books should be popular, among women who are expected to teach children what is expected of them, and what they may well accomplish in the world."

"You are quite utilitarian," said Etherege, designing to elicit further expressions of the train of thought in which Alice had fallen, but she answered him:

"Only a little practical, as my mother says, Mr. Etherege. But here comes Harry; I will appeal to him."

"And why appeal?" said Etherege, smiling. "I have not disputed you." Alice looked a mischievous response, but spoke none; for Harry, swinging his gun with one hand and grasping Etherege with the other, said:

"Come, I have harnessed the horse for a ride. A gentleman at the village yesterday described to me a desirable tract of land which is for sale on reasonable terms, and I propose that we take a look at it. If it is what he represented it to be, there is a speculation in it."

"There will be no harm in taking a look at it," answered Etherege, "and I am at your service."

"The ride at all events will be pleasant," said Harry, "and as on our return home we may drive near that cave, above the falls in our river, which we did *not* visit the other day, we may derive pleasure as well as profit from the trip."

Harry led his friend from the garden, and placing his rifle in a safe place beneath the wagon seat, said:

"We may meet some adventure that will require it. I always take it along."

"Perhaps you'll come across the counterfeiters again," returned Etherege.

"I should not probably have occasion to shoot one of them if I did, but when we get into the woods, if we can do nothing more, I'll beat you shooting at a mark so handsomely, that you will never dare to say another word about my having been lost."

"I take the banter," said Etherge.

The property Brome designed to visit was situated about ten miles from Cuyahoga village. When the friends had talked with its owner, learned the price and terms of sale, and had acquainted themselves with the character of the soil and other advantages possessed by the farm, Etherge was well pleased, and, somewhat influenced perhaps by the conversation of the morning, determined to make an investment. He told the farmer that Mr. Brome was his banker, and that if he would meet him in the village on the following Saturday, he would receive a deed for the property and make the required payment.

"The business of our ride is over; now for the pleasure," said Harry.

"It is afternoon, you observe," returned Etherge, "and if we visit the cave you must drive briskly."

Harry cracked his whip, and his smart horse whirled the light wagon rapidly toward the village. In half an hour Harry checked the speed of the animal, and turning him from the main road into a dim track stretching through a dense forest, drove slowly and cautiously for about another half hour, and then reining up, bid Etherge alight.

The horse was detached from the wagon and securely fastened; Harry took his gun from its resting place, and was leading the way toward a narrow ridge which could be discerned between the trees, when Etherge said:

"If these woods are haunted by counterfeiters, I should be a little afraid to leave my horse in them."

"Pshaw," returned Harry, "I've left him many a time. There's more risk in stealing a horse than in making spurious money, and the fellows we saw out here are sly rogues, I assure you."

"Do you suppose they can have any suspicion that you know their rascality?" said Etherage.

"They know that I have been watching for the counterfeiters, and that I would send them to the penitentiary if I could detect them; knowing their own guilt, of course they are a little afraid of me. They would not hesitate to injure me if they could do so safely to themselves."

"It becomes you then to be cautious."

"I know it does; I thought of that when I brought out my rifle to-day."

Conversing about the counterfeiters and what was to be expected and what feared of them, the two friends approached the high and rocky "bluffs," into which the cave they sought opened. They were in the vicinity of the place where they had discovered Darwin and his confederates in council during their previous search for the cave, and Brome proposed that Etherage should seat himself at the foot of one of the hemlock trees which crowned the ledge of rocks, while he reconnoitered the ravine beyond. Etherage was not suspicious that harm would befall himself or his companion, and he consented, upon condition that Harry would not be absent more than fifteen minutes.

Brome had not skulked along the brow of the ledge overhanging the river more than five minutes, when he caught a glimpse of some one dodging among the trees before him.

He glanced at his gun as if to inquire whether he could rely on it, and followed the shadow which had attracted his attention. It led him down the ledge and toward the place where his horse and wagon stood. He had an opportunity to see the man whom he followed, but could not recognize him. He thought of what Etherege had said about horse-stealing, and, neglecting his engagement to return to his friend, in a quarter of an hour, continued the pursuit. Presently the suspected horse-thief no longer endeavored to disguise his progress, but walked forward boldly, and striking into the path which led into the public road, pushed forward toward it.

Then Brome regretted his suspicions, and hastened to retrace his footsteps. He walked rapidly to the brow of the ledge and proceeded to the spot where he had taken leave of Etherege. The young man was gone. Brome whistled, and anxiously expected a response. None came. He hallooed. His voice echoed among the trees, but the echoes brought no other answer than their own. He began to feel solicitude, if not alarm. He closely examined the ground around the tree where Etherege had sat, to ascertain if any footsteps were imprinted on it. He could discover none. Then he looked along and down the ledge for some trace of his departure; he observed a handkerchief lying some distance below him. He hastened to pick it up. There were drops of blood on it, and it belonged to Etherege.

Brome's fears were now intensely excited. He suspected that Etherege had been attacked and had fled toward the wagon. He ran through the woods with nervous haste, and when he reached his wagon could discover no sign of his friend, but when he looked for his horse, he saw that the

strap, with which he was hitched to a tree, had been cut. Between the tree and the road there were deep hoof-marks, as if the horse had been urged swiftly away.

Brome was in a maze of doubt and conjecture. Again and again he hallooed. No answer came. Already the sun threw lengthened shadows, and, convinced that Etherege must have been pursued by some foe or foes and had fled to the horse, cut him loose and escaped, Brome at once determined to follow.

If his conjectures were well founded, he should soon meet his friend, with company returning in quest of him; if not, he could alarm the village and search for Etherege.

Brome had not traveled far on the public road, when he met a man with whom he was acquainted. Then he learned that his horse, riderless, had been seen dashing at full speed toward the village. Harry dare not idly indulge conjectures as to the fate of his friend, but he hastened to the nearest farm-house, and engaging a horse, galloped home to assure his mother and sister that he was not harmed; inform them of the circumstances of his friend's disappearance, and make arrangements for a thorough search of the woods in which he had been lost, or—murdered!

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SEARCH.

BROME halted at the cottage door only long enough to inform his mother and Alice that Etherege was mysteriously missing. Leaving them to painful surmise and perplexing conjecture, he rode to the village for the purpose of securing aid for a thorough search of the woods in which his friend had disappeared. His impetuosity, his nervous anxiety, declared to the loungers at the tavern, before he alighted from his horse, that he had exciting news to communicate. They gathered around him, eagerly repeating to each other the words in which he told how he had lost Etherege.

Concerning what might have been the fate of the stranger Brome had conflicting suspicions, and he expressed none of them; but Barton, the landlord, said:

“Murdered for his money—that’s what he’s been—I’ll bet a treat for the town.”

“He had no money with him,” answered Brome quickly.

“But he had money somewhere, hadn’t he?” returned Barton, “and the fellow who took him off knows how to get it. You must look out for him, Mr. Brome.”

Harry was about to reply, when he saw Sandys walk

away from the tavern steps, muttering. He could not hear the grocer's words, but a friend of Harry's did.

"Likely the fellow who took him off, *does* know where the money is, and if he don't be watched it's 'cause I'm blind. It's lucky Barton thought of that."

While Sandys was muttering and plotting, Brome had said :

"Never mind, Mr. Barton, about speculations now. We must scour the woods, and I am here to raise a party of volunteers."

Sandys heard those words and hastened to find Anstey.

When Harry led a party of villagers in quest of Etherege, the grocer and the ex-deacon were with it.

All night shout answered shout—fires gleamed and torches flickered in the woods to which Brome had conducted Etherege. When the light of morning came, and the fires and the torches died out, hope died in the minds of the searchers, and they went home weary and unhappy, bearing tidings which increased the excitement in the village.

It was Sabbath morning, a beautiful Sabbath morning; a purple haze hung on the hills, and the air in the valleys was calm, and sweet, and exhilarating. The Sabbath bell had a softened sound, and it seemed as if the sexton rang it slowly, so slowly indeed, that to many its notes were knell-like—to the family at Brome Cottage they were doleful.

Parson Humiston had a thin congregation and an inattentive one. In his last prayer for the morning service, he remembered the missing Etherege and prayed that, in the providence of God, he might safely be restored to his sad friends. The church attendants remembered the burden of this petition more vividly than they did the lessons of the sermon,



when they went out among the villagers to talk of the minister's eloquence.

In a new country, in a young village, the people know each other much better than they do in developed towns or thriving cities. They have more interest in each other's welfare, and more sympathy for each other's misfortunes. A severe affliction in one family throws a pensive influence into every other family. Therefore it was that the people of Cuyahoga village were sympathetically absorbed in emotions of curiosity, conjecture, and sympathy.

At Brome Cottage there was no rest, no peace. The search of Saturday night had satisfied Harry Brome that Etherege could not be found in the woods, and he was convinced that Tom Darwin was answerable for his disappearance. Upon consultation he determined to hazard the arrest of the outlaw. Having ascertained where he was most likely to be discovered, Harry, late on Sunday evening, took the village constable into his buggy, and secretly departed on the desperate venture of arresting, upon vague suspicion, a man who was known to be bold, reckless, and revengeful.

When Brome and the constable went away from Cuyahoga village to hunt Darwin, he was skulking about its streets, seeking Sandys and Anstey.

In the rear of Sandys' grocery there was a low, dark room, in which many a scene of villainy had been planned, and thither the outlaw wended his way.

The grocer was at home. He received Darwin with a show of cordiality and gave him a seat in the council-room, then he went out, locking the door and bolting it on the outside, leaving Darwin to meditate on his past life—its schemes of villainy and its scenes of cruelty, or to plot new conspir-

acies. He knew that for the present he was a prisoner, but he was confident that Sandys would soon return, and that with him would come Anstey and others who were in the secrets of the Counterfeiters of the Cuyahoga.

The outlaw thought often of young Brome. He feared him more than he did any of the village officers. He was satisfied that Brome knew him to be a "counterfeiter," and that he would arrest him as soon as he could get evidence enough to hold him. He had plotted to circumvent Brome, but the plot had failed of execution, and now the outlaw wanted to report progress to his confederates and consult on the next steps to be taken for the safety of the band.

"I'll watch 'em to-night," said Darwin. "I'll let 'em know it all. I'll get 'em in the fix. They've got to come in, and just about daybreak I'll leave 'em in the lurch. This town's not quite the place for me. It's a little too warm here, and afore the folks know just what grocery-keeper Sandys and *Deacon* Anstey really are, I'd better be off. I've had one experience in striped trowsers, and I wouldn't like another."

While Darwin thus plotted for himself and against others of the counterfeiters, he had no suspicion that Harry Brome was already watchfully employed in guarding against his emigration from the valley of the Cuyahoga, at least until they had met.

Brome, though confident that Darwin was responsible for Etherege's disappearance, trusted that his friend was not murdered, and, guarding against Darwin's secret escape, he had determined to confront the outlaw, tell him what he knew about the counterfeiters, what he suspected concerning Etherege, and assure him that if he would restore the

young man to his friends, he should be permitted to elude the clutches of the law.

The constable with whom he searched was but partially in Brome's confidence. He was not yet certain how far he dare trust him. He was a resolute and careful man, but he was neither very active nor very shrewd.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE COUNCIL.

DARWIN was walking his prison when Sandys returned. The grocer was accompanied by Anstey, and a man named Tickell, whom Darwin had only met in council once before.

The counterfeiters were not very cordial in their greetings, and with a heavy frown on his brow, Darwin said :

“ Well, *Deacon*, it's a little scarey, aint it ? ”

“ That depends on what you have been doing,” returned Anstey.

“ What do you suppose ? ” angrily cried Darwin.

“ Keep quiet, Tom,” interposed Sandys, “ we want your head cool to-night.”

“ I *am* cool,” said Tom, “ I'm going to keep cool, and now I'll just ask Deacon Anstey, in a quiet way, what he *supposes* I've been doin'.”

“ No offense, Darwin,” said Anstey, with submission, “ but there's big excitement in the village, and it's a little suspected that you know what has become of that fellow, *Etherege*, the friend of that little devil, *Brome*.”

“ I do know just that,” answered Darwin, “ and that little devil knows too.”

“ I'm afraid he does,” said Sandys.

“ I know it, I tell you. I saw it done.”

"Saw what done, Darwin?" cried Anstey.

"Now, Deacon, *you* keep cool," answered Darwin, "and I'll tell you. I made up my mind about a week ago that them fellows did see us in the ravine, and that that sassy little lawyer was laying his traps to catch us. I didn't say nothing to you fellows, but I determined to catch *him*. Do you understand that?—to put him out of the way, Deacon Anstey."

"You'd kill him, Tom Darwin. You did kill that Etherege. I wash my hands of it. Oh God! I never thought of this," cried Anstey.

"Bah, you chicken!" returned Darwin. "Now I tell you I did not kill him; I haven't said he was dead."

"Look here, Tom," said Sandys, who was fully as anxious as Anstey, but had more prudence, "you're trying to put a riddle on us. Talk it out, and let us know what's up."

"Who's that fellow?" said Darwin, pointing to Tickell.

"He's safe," answered Sandys. "I'll go bail for him."

"If he leaks," said Tom, "or shows signs of leaking, he knows where a ball will go."

"He aint afraid of you, Tom Darwin. He knows you, and you ought to know him. If you can't trust him, he'll go out," returned Tickell.

"There's a little grit in you," answered Tom, "and you've heard too much to go now. I'll trust you. Deacon Anstey, I'm going to give you what you wanted to know when you first came in here."

Anstey made no reply, and Darwin continued:

"I was at the cave where our manufactory is, on Saturday, and as I was crossing the hill, I caught a glimpse of the sassy lawyer and the Yankee he takes about with him. I took

a notion to get our necks out of a scrape by getting the Yankee's in. I thought if I could catch the lawyer, I might keep him safe a couple of days, and get the Yankee suspected for having made away with him, or compel Brome to hush up about us."

"The Lord, Darwin, you have been playing a *nice* game," sighed Anstey, striding across the council-room.

Darwin looked at the ex-deacon with a sardonic smile, and went on :

"That plan wouldn't work, because the lawyer had a rifle and the Yankee didn't, and I was a calculatin' what might be done, when, by the powers, the lawyer—"

"A trumped-up story, a trumped-up story," cried Anstey, taking courage from the desperate character of the trap into which he saw the counterfeiters falling. "You've killed that Etherege, and you'll be found out—you'll go to the gallows, and we'll go to the peni—"

Anstey had not time to finish the word ; Darwin sprang upon him, crying :

"Do you call me a liar, you hypocritical old villain ?"

A knife gleamed in the outlaw's hand, and he might have plunged it into Anstey's breast, but a quick thought that such an act would prevent the flight he had planned, restrained him. He hurled Anstey to the ground, declaring with an oath,

"You're too mean a coward to strike. You'll go to the penitentiary as true as ever you were a deacon, mind that. I know what's become of that Etherege, and unless something comes to that Brome, my neck goes it too. But something *will* come to him. That's all I've got to say. I'm mum, Deacon Anstey, till I get you into a worse scrape than you're

in now. But I'll watch you—mind you, Deacon Anstey, I'll watch you sharp."

Sandys tried all his arts to induce Darwin to reveal what he knew of the fate of Etherege, but the outlaw was obdurate.

"I'm going out of this hole," said he, "and Deacon Anstey may as well go home. It's no use to coax me. I tell you I won't say another word this night. Let me alone. Don't vex me now, and maybe the next time that I am here I'll be talkative."

Sandys conducted the counterfeiters into the street, and they separated in darkness, each plotting to shield himself from the retribution which he feared.

Tickell thanked his stars that he had accidentally been admitted to the council. He was every where considered a vagabond sort of a fellow, but he had once been a respectable and prosperous citizen, and no one suspected that he had any part or lot with the counterfeiters.

He was the tool, the slave, the victim of Barton, the landlord, but his family would have been the landlord's victims more bitterly than language can describe, had it not been for many kind words and many little offices, many needful gifts, which came to them from Brome Cottage.

Tickell was not wholly corrupted, and he thought he saw in Darwin's partial revelations a deep plot to bring trouble upon the Brome family—he reflected on the kindness of that family to his own, and he deliberately considered whether the counterfeiters had stronger claims upon him than Harry Brome, and his mother and sister. He might run perilous risks, but he determined to watch for an opportunity to befriend his benefactors.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A CONFLICT.

THERE were yet no signs of dawn when Tom Darwin skulked away from Cuyahoga village. He followed the street nearest the river until he had reached a bridge which crossed it, half a mile below the town. Half way over the bridge, the outlaw sat down as if to soothe a disturbed spirit by the roar of the waters which dashed over huge rocks in the bed of the river. He was not a man who analyzed quiet emotions—he did not clearly inquire into motives for actions which involved no apparent danger, but instinctively, no doubt, chose the bridge as a place for meditation, because he could think more keenly and plan more sharply, where the roar of the river answered to the tumult of conflicting dreads, fears and resolves, which disturbed his mental repose.

The banks of the river were high where the bridge spanned it, and they were precipitous and craggy. The narrow bed of the stream was broken by a number of low but clearly defined precipices, and the water, rushing in eddies and counter-eddies around the rocks which resisted its current, then plunging over cascades, roared with a force which bore the stunning sound to a considerable distance on either side.

Amid the deafening roar of the Cuyahoga falls, in the



darkness of the hour which precedes day-break, the outlaw sought to reconcile the conflicting fears and purposes which influenced him, and to shape a satisfactory course of action. Had Sandys or Anstey suspected that he had the remotest intention of fleeing from that part of the country, they would have taken sure means to check him; but his intentions were known only to himself, and he chuckled quietly when he thought of the perplexing rage that would overcome Deacon Anstey, when it was certain that Darwin had fled, and taken the secret of Etherege's disappearance with him.

The mist which morning had lifted from the valleys, upon the hill-tops began to assume a roseate glow, when Darwin walked rapidly from Cuyahoga bridge, and turning into a path that led down the bank of the river, pursued it a few rods; then crossing a field, he entered a strip of dense woods. He did not follow a path, but walked in nearly a straight line until he reached a natural opening where a spring bubbled up, creating a small marsh, in which tall grass grew.

There the outlaw halted, and after taking a "refreshing" drink from a pocket cup, in which there was a very little water, he gave a shrill whistle. For a moment he listened attentively. His signal was not answered, and he exclaimed with nervous impatience:

"Curse the fool, I told him to be here at day-break. I'ts half an hour after that time. I'll blow him up if he aint more prompt."

Darwin sat down on a log near the spring, and taking from his pocket a huge knife, began to whittle and to think. He was restless, and he made large whittlings. He was startled by a whistle, which, springing to his feet, he answered. Soon a stout, thick-set, rough-looking man emerged from a thicket

and approached the spring. Darwin met him with the salutation, "Didn't you promise to be here as soon as it was light?"

"Yes, and I'd been here if it hadn't been for your bad calculation. The nag you wanted was'nt where you said I'd find him, and I had to hunt the critter."

"You got him?" said Darwin.

"I did that. He's in fine order, right out here on the edge of the woods."

"We'll go over, then," said Darwin. "When did you take him?"

"Night before last. It's safe to ride him away from here to-day, but maybe it wouldn't be to-morrow."

"I'll look out for that. You take care of yourself when I'm gone and don't git distressed about my luck. To-night I'll let the critter run, I don't care a curse where."

Conversing upon their villainous schemes for the future, the outlaws walked briskly through the woods until they reached the place where Darwin's companion had left the horse he had stolen.

Darwin untied the animal and sprang into the saddle. He then gave his hand to his fellow-outlaw and said:

"Now, Billy, good-by; one week from to-night we meet, you know where. You go back to the village and lounge about to-day, and to-night make tracks. Tell Sandys and Anstey I'll be at the grocery about eleven to-night. They'll wait."

"Good-by, Tom," answered Billy Mervin. "You can bet on me for Monday next. I'll tell the fellows at the grocery, and they *will* wait, that's a fact, and so'll somebody else. I don't care for the grocer nor the deacon. The devil

take them. But otherwise, I'm a little compunctious, Tom. Sometimes I've a notion to crack a pistol."

"Bah!" said Darwin sneeringly, "let the thing work. After we've gone, I don't care if the whole of it comes out against that chicken-hearted, hypocritical old deacon. If that Brome aint got rid of, he'll fetch it out. I must be off. You go back to town like an honest man."

This conversation had been held as Billy Mervin walked beside Darwin's horse, while he rode through the woods toward the public road. The distance was short, only a few yards. They reached the highway as Darwin spoke. He struck his horse a sharp blow, and the animal, having high mettle, sprang into a swift gallop.

Taking a farewell look of Darwin as a cloud of dust began to envelop him and his stolen horse, Mervin proceeded to execute the command that he should visit the village.

It was rather an untraveled road along which Darwin galloped. He was obliged to travel for a few miles on another one, where he might expect to meet many persons, and when he approached it, he checked his steed. Though he burned with impatience, prudence required him to ride slowly. He was in sight of the point at which he could turn from the great highway into a by-road that led in the direction he wished to pursue. He congratulated himself upon his good luck, and again gave his horse the rein.

Just at the point where the by-road branched off, there was a turn in the main one, and Darwin's eyes were fixed suspiciously on this turn as he neared it. To his decided chagrin it was not more than a hundred yards distant when a buggy containing two men was driven around it. At first, Darwin saw nothing in their appearance to alarm him, but

quickly he recognized Harry Brome and Constable Sedley, who, as Darwin was aware, held the office of deputy sheriff.

Brome's blood quickened in his veins as he recognized the outlaw. At once he reined up his horse and arose from his seat.

Darwin's liveliest suspicions were awakened. He thought it folly to turn back—he determined at all hazards to ride on. If it was the intention of Brome to arrest him, he should make the attempt at desperate risk. Darwin had confidence in his horse, and he would test his speed and bottom. He was a good horseman, and could impart to his steed something of the resolution which, at any time, might nerve himself. Rising in his stirrups, he applied his whip vigorously. Brome and the constable saw that Darwin would pass them, and in all probability escape, unless violent measures were employed to check his career. The constable sprang from the buggy. On came Darwin at breakneck speed. Brome raised his rifle to his face, and the outlaw saw that he designed to fire, but he did not heed the warning. Both Brome and the constable cried "stop!" but the outlaw passed them.

There was a sharp report—the horse and its rider were prostrated upon the road.

"You've killed him," cried the constable. "Rash, very rash, better let him gone."

"I shot at the horse, not at him," answered Brome calmly, "but I'll take the consequence. He's not dangerously hurt. See, he is getting up."

"Let us go to him," said the constable.

"Go on, but be a little cautious. He's armed, I'll warrant; I'll have a bullet in my rifle before I approach him."

Brome and the constable drew near the outlaw, who had

endeavored to rise, but finding himself unable, leaned upon his elbow. They were within pistol shot when, with a quick movement, he fired at them, and for Brome the shot had been fatal, but that the hand that held the pistol was more unsteady than it had ever before been.

"It's no use, Darwin," said the constable; "you may as well give up."

"Never, to you, dogs—take that;" with these defiant words Darwin fired a second pistol, but Sedley was watching him, and the bullet missed its aim.

Evidently Darwin was dangerously injured. The bullet had struck his horse in the shoulder, causing him to stumble, and Darwin was thrown forward violently; his skull was fractured, and blood-vessels in his body had been ruptured. Blood flowed from his mouth as he spoke. He felt that his final hour had come, and he said:

"Yes, you, Harry Brome, *Esquire*. You had been glad to have killed me outright. You wanted an excuse to shoot me. Dead men tell no tales; but I can talk yet, and I can tell it all, and I will. You've been after me to make folks believe I killed that young Etherege. You are a respectable man, I am a counterfeiter, but if I had strength enough I'd show you that I am not as much of a scoundrel as you are. Take that man, take him, Constable Sedley. I'm a dying man, and I tell you that he's a murderer. He killed his friend Etherege. He shot him for his money."

"Villain, you die with a monstrous lie on your soul. Your life has been one continued crime, and what can you expect to gain by this false charge? Nobody will believe it," cried Brome with vehemence.

“Ask Billy Mervin—ask Deacon Anstey or grocer Sandys, or—”

“Villains like yourself,” cried Brome.

“They can show you up, though, and they will. They know who’s got that chap’s money. I aint the first man you’ve shot at, but maybe I’m the last.” (Darwin raised himself up as he spoke.) “I’d be sure of *that* if I had a pistol. You’d go to hell with me.”

Darwin gasped as he uttered this threat, and Sedley stooped down to support him, but the outlaw made a motion as if to grasp his knife, and the constable allowed him to fall back on the ground. It was evident he could not survive long, and Sedley wished to put him in Brome’s buggy and convey him to the village, but he would not be moved. Brome and Sedley consulted upon the course they should pursue, and Brome said :

“You stay here ; I’ll go to the village and get help.”

“No, no,” gasped Darwin ; “don’t let him—he’ll never come back.”

Whether influenced by these words or not, the constable would not consent that Brome should depart, and as Darwin had grown so weak he could no longer resist, Sedley insisted that he should be put in the buggy. Brome assisted, and the outlaw was placed where he could be drawn to the village. Sedley supported him, and Brome led the horse. They had not gone far when Sedley said :

“It’s over ; he’s dead.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE VILLAGE GOSSIP.

SLOWLY Brome's buggy, bearing the dead body of the outlaw, was driven into the village. Constable Sedley directed that it should stop at Barton's tavern, and immediately it was surrounded by an anxious, gossip-loving circle. Each one asked many questions, and then repeated what had not been answered. But few received definite information concerning the manner of Darwin's destruction, and the village buzzed with false rumors. The story most frequently told was that Brome had met Darwin; that the lawyer had charged Darwin with the murder of Etherege; that the outlaw returned the charge, and swore he saw Brome kill his friend; and that Brome then shot him. In all the rumors, facts were distorted to Brome's disadvantage, and it was the general impression that he had committed murder; some thought, in the shooting of Darwin; others, by destroying his friend. A few men and women who knew Brome, from a proper estimate of his character, indignantly branded these rumors as villanious, but many were not at all surprised. It was "just as they expected."

Among the latter class was a prominent member of Parson

Humiston's church—Mrs. Prime. She had often wondered that the Parson went so often to Brome Cottage, and came so seldom to her house. She never missed a sermon—the Bromes often did; she never disputed about doctrines—the Bromes often did; nobody ever saw her walking for pleasure on Sunday; she didn't even stroll in the churchyard, nor would she allow her children to pick flowers there. All of the ordinances of the church were observed by her, and more too. But few of them, according to her judgment, did the Bromes observe, and yet Parson Humiston was scarcely cordial to her, while he went every week, at least once, to Brome Cottage. He didn't preach as sternly as he had years before, and he must be falling from grace. Oh, it was enough to make any body fall from grace to be often in that Brome Cottage. There was a "*wicked pianer*."—and there were novels, a great many novels, and sometimes there was dancing; and some folks said there had been card-playing; and Harry Brome and Alice Brome went to meeting when they chose. No wonder he was a bad fellow! O, he had the worst temper. He must have, because his mother always had done just as wise Solomon said worldly women would *do*, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." No wonder he had committed murder. It was what Mrs Prime expected!

A soliloquy of this character Mrs. Prime indulged in the hearing of Mr. P. He was a quiet man. His wife had a will, and her will was enough for the whole family, but sometimes he dared indulge unexpressed opinions; and while Mrs. P. ran on about the Bromes, he gratified himself with the reflection, that if his wife was a little like Mrs. Brome he



wouldn't complain; and as for Harry Brome's having committed murder, it was simply fudge.

In the gratification of this opinion, the quiet, humble man rather forgot himself, and he concluded his reverie by deliberately spitting on the floor, close by Mrs. P., who was industriously knitting, but not so industriously that she failed to observe the sin her careless husband had committed.

"Oh, la me," sighed she, "these men *are* all alike. Now, these fifteen years I've been talking, and talking, and it's no use."

Perhaps these latter words were addressed to Mr. P.'s actions, or perhaps bore reference to the lack of success in her talking. At all events, the humble man was exerting himself to eradicate all appearance of the stain he had made upon the home-made carpet.

Mrs. Prime (it ought to have been Prim) was a professing Christian, and she was precise in her profession, yet she was an idolater. She had a household idol, and incessantly she worshiped it. Every action, every movement, was a devotion to it, and it was an imp. Her thin form bore testimony in each article of dress, in every motion, to the ruling power of this household idol. Poor Mr. P., how often he wished that his wife could be converted from her idolatry. He would cheerfully have dispensed with his dinner every day for a year, could he by his own starvation have exorcised the imp which monopolized her affections.

"Every thing is very neat about you," said an intimate friend one day when Mrs. P. was not in hearing.

"Oh, Lord, yes," answered Mr. Prime; "but there's reason in all things, except some women, and my wife's one of them. I like order and neatness, but there are other com-

forts in the world besides order and neatness, only my wife don't know them. The 'imp of neatness is her idol.' ”

“Hands off”—“don't put me out of place,” could be read from every portion of Mrs. P.'s household as distinctly as if each article bore a printed label. The prevailing rule was that every thing was to be kept clean and in order. There were few things for use—ease; comfort was rarely, very rarely, calculated upon.

At Brome Cottage order and system were observed, but there was no severity, no stiffness. You felt at home in its parlors. When Mrs. P.'s parlors were entered, the visitor shrank like one intruding in a circle which was sacred to silence and severity. Mrs. P. never went to Brome Cottage but she said, “Oh, my, how things *are* knocked about here. There's no rule about this house. It's all vanity.”

Therefore it was to be expected that when she heard the rumors about Brome and Darwin, she would half close her cold gray eyes, and looking down over her narrow chin, say:

“Well, well, any body might have known he'd come to *some* bad end.”

Thus this precise woman concluded, from her own standard, without evidence, without reflection. The world is full of opinions just as shrewd; with just as good a basis.

While Madame Prime was giving Mr. P. a piece of her mind about a man's duty in his own house, and about the wickedness of such doings as she knew had been at Brome Cottage, Harry was conversing with his mother about the troubles which thickened around him. He said:

“I am the victim of a conspiracy, mother, and it comes from a quarter of which I had no suspicion when I first resolved to ferret out the counterfeiters. The outlaws, Darwin,

Anstey, Sandys, and the others, are but the servants, the hired instruments, of men who have bigger schemes than were ever yet projected in this country. I have only a hint of what they are at, but it comes from a reliable source, and soon I shall know it all; that is, I shall know it, if they do not triumph. I am in great danger, mother. There are men against me who have influence and money. They will not hesitate to take all possible advantage of Darwin's declaration against me, and circumstances will be brought forward that may enable them to make out a plausible case. They will have me arrested if they can, in the hope of keeping me from pursuing them, but, should they even succeed in getting a verdict against me, of branding me as a murderer, they shall not escape."

Harry had never so fully explained to his mother what he knew of, and what he had to fear from, the counterfeiters. She was now much moved at the picture he drew, but she had faith in the right, and she said:

"I must regret Darwin's death, but I cannot blame you. Let your enemies do what they may, they cannot sustain his charge against you, and unless they kill you, as they have poor Etherege, you will in the end triumph. I fear for your life, Harry."

"You need not, mother. The counterfeiters dare not assassinate me now. Such an act would ruin their schemes. But, mother, I do not believe they killed Etherege."

"And who did, then?"

"I am persuaded that he was not killed. I believe he was made a prisoner in some of their dens. They may let him starve to death, but I do not think they have assassinated him. Against all appearances, this conviction hangs to me."

“May your conviction prove correct and may he be restored to us,” said Mrs. Brome, devoutly, “but I can see no foundation for such a hope. He is murdered, and you may be arrested as his murderer. Oh, my God, how little do we know what grief a day may bring forth. It had been better, Harry, if you had let the counterfeiters alone.”

“But, mother, I could not.”

“No, Harry, you could not. That is true. Now, you must triumph.”

“I feel, mother, that severe trials are in store for us, but I am confident of triumph in the last hour, and perhaps it will be shown us that the kind offices of love and charity we have dispensed in this neighborhood have more power, when affliction overtakes us, than the enmity of narrow bigots who envy us, or the villainy of scoundrels who fear us. I know we have a few friends, mother, who can be relied upon. How does Alice take the bad news?”

“She is much distressed. She has never been herself since Etherege disappeared; and now she is inconsolable.”

“I will find her and cheer her up.”

Mrs. Brome went about her household duties with a troubled spirit, yet with a faith which enabled her to appear as if no fears oppressed her.

Harry sought Alice. They had a long and earnest conversation, and when they parted, Brome had renewed interest in the solution of the mystery which hung about the fate of Etherege.

## CHAPTER IX.

### COUNTERPLOTS.

HARRY had determined while talking with Alice to go to the village, and, if possible, ascertain the character of the gossip concerning him. He walked immediately to Barton's tavern. When he opened the door, and allowed a breath of fresh air to disturb the fumes of whisky and tobacco which hung about the stove, there was quite a buzz among the loungers who had met to smoke, drink, and talk over the news. In this group there was a stranger, who took no part in the conversation, and who neither drank nor smoked. He had, however, been an attentive listener to the talk about Brome, and the speculations in regard to Darwin's death. Brome at once observed this man. There was commanding character in his face and form and bearing. Brome gazed at him intently. He did not meet the gaze frankly and boldly, and Harry puzzled his wits to answer to himself, why. The conversation stopped. Brome saw that he was an intruder, and, after exchanging a few words with Barton, went out. The door had not entirely closed behind him when the stranger arose, and inquired of the landlord:

“Can you tell me that young man's name?”

"I reckon I can—that's the chap they're talkin' about. He's the fellow that put a bullet in Darwin, a man who could drink twice as much whisky as any other man in this county."

The stranger immediately followed Brome, but he was not quick enough to observe that the young lawyer had been met by a man who on an important occasion had vowed to befriend him, and who was about to tell him that the tall, handsome man he had seen before Barton's bar-room stove was an individual from whom he had more to fear than from Sandys or Anstey, or any other of their village accomplices. Having communicated this information, Harry's friend said:

"You go home, and I'll watch. There's to be plotting done to-night, and I know where, and I mean to know what it is, but, Harry Brome, you will stand by me if I get in trouble by it. I am sober now. I have been all day, and I shall not drink to-night."

"You know you can depend on me, Tickell. Keep the promise you now make, and I can depend on you. Remember every thing depends on you to-night."

"You needn't fear," answered Tickell, as he wrung Brome's hand. Harry went directly home, while his companion stealthily returned to the village.

Tickell visited Barton's tavern, and made a hasty survey of the bar-room, then he turned his face toward Sandys' grocery. As he approached it he saw the door open, and the light which gleamed into the street showed him that the tall, handsome man who had attracted Brome's attention in the tavern, was about to give Grocer Sandys a call. Tickell was tempted to follow the stranger at once, but he had plans to further which could be best prosecuted, for the present,

outside of the grocery. He had heard that Mervin, Tom Darwin's closest confidant, was in the village, and he wished to see him. Mervin and he had been old chums, and he was certain that if he could induce the villain to warm himself with a few social glasses, he could gain some profitable information from him. Tickell suspected that Mervin would visit the grocery, and it was his intention to watch for and fall in with him. While he was watching, Deacon Anstey entered the grocery. Tickell grew tired of his dull task, and determined to see why the handsome stranger and the sly deacon had called upon the grocer. When he presented himself before the counter he found no one in attendance but a flaxen-haired boy, who was known to be remarkable for his dullness. This boy was more dull than usual, being apparently half asleep, and Tickell could not ascertain from him whether Sandys had been at home that evening or not. The boy knew nothing. Tickell's suspicions were highly excited, and his curiosity to know why Anstey and the stranger had called on Sandys and gone into secret council was intense, but as he had received no intimation of the meeting, he dared not venture to intrude upon the circle. He was reluctantly obliged to retrace his footsteps back to Barton's. However, he did not give up hope of meeting Mervin. Barton knew the outlaw's friend, and Tickell applied to him for information concerning his hiding place.

"He's been wanting to see you," said Barton, "and I'll tell him you are here."

"You can give us a place for a little private confab, and something to keep us awake?"

"On terms, Tickell. You know, on terms."

“Of course; I’m in luck just now, and can stand one treat.”

This was said in a tone Barton understood, and with a sly wink he conducted Tickell to a small back room, in which many dark and drunken scenes had been enacted, then went in quest of Mervin. He was not long absent, and when Mervin entered the den of secret carousal where Tickell awaited him, he cried:

“Good for a big time, old chum. I expected to’ve been out of this town to-night, but circumstances was agin me, and I’m not in the best of spirits. I’d just as lief take a jollify with you as any other fellow.”

“All right, then,” answered Tickell, shaking the rough hand extended to him. “You see I’ve got the documents.”

“You’re a clever chap, and you’ll join me in a big glass to Tom Darwin. Curse my stars if I don’t want to put a ball in that fellow who stopped him with his rifle, but then I won’t. There’s a worse trap set for him than I could manage.”

“You mean Brome.”

“I jist do.”

“I understand, Mervin, but I’m afraid it won’t work. That fellow’s got some friends in this town, and they’ll make a big fuss.”

“Who cares? It must work. It’s fixed right, and any how that fellow goes out of the way.”

“Which fellow?” asked Tickell, with a knowing wink.

“Why, Brome, of course; t’other one’s already fixed. Tom Darwin’s not a man to half do things. But I’ll tell you, Tickell, sometimes I’m a little squeamish. If it could



have been done, I'd 've squared things up one way or t'other."

"Squared things up one way or t'other. I don't exactly understand."

"Then you don't know quite as much as I reckoned you did. You'll have to wait a spell before you do. You're all right, Tickell, but I can't let you in just yet. You know I am one of the chaps that can't be pumped."

"And I'm one of the chaps that wouldn't try to pump you, but I'll own up that I don't know all about this scheme you're in with Etherege and Brome, and I'd like to be a little better posted, because I've got to work, and I can't work in the dark, and what's more, I won't try. Neither Anstey nor Sandys, nor that handsome new fellow, Leyton, can make a blind tool out of me."

"You're right, Tickell, and that makes me think of it. I promised to sneak up to the grocery to-night, and if you come along, maybe your peepers will be opened."

To this proposition Tickell demurred. He said he had calculated on a good social time, and he didn't like to give it up, but Mervin said:

"Pshaw, come along; we'll have a good time up there. The old grocer will have to tap some of his choice kegs."

After feigning to take a starting drink with the outlaw, Tickell grasped his arm, and the two worthies marched cautiously toward the grocery.

## CHAPTER X.

### PLOTS THICKEN.

DEACON ANSTEY, Grocer Sandys, and the handsome stranger had been for several hours engaged in earnest conversation. The stranger whom Anstey called Colonel Leyton, with a submissive emphasis on the *Colonel*, had visited Cuyahoga village for the purpose of completing arrangements to prosecute a banking system, exceeding in magnitude any scheme of the character which had ever been prosecuted in America. He was quite surprised and very much chagrined to learn that the friends on whom he relied were suspected, and were involved in an enterprise, to relieve themselves, which threatened to explode his plans to their fullest extent.

"The whole of it is bad," he said. "I told you long ago Darwin wasn't to be trusted. He was always reckless. He never valued any body's life, and didn't care how much peril he brought on his associates."

"That's a fact, Colonel," said Anstey. "I was always afraid of him."

"And that's another fact," retorted Sandys, "I believe he hated you, and that's the reason we're in this scrape. Un-

less Harry Brome is got out of the way, we'll all wear striped trowsers."

"Come, come, friends, this is no time for wrangling. We're in a bad scrape, and must make the best of it. If I had known yesterday, however, what I know to-day, I had not been here to-night; but I am satisfied every thing depends on shutting up the fellow you call Brome. Can't he be bought?"

"Bought!" said Anstey. "Bought. You might as well talk about buying a flash of lightning if you were in a dark corner—"

"Them's my sentiments," said Sandys slowly.

"Then he must be convicted of the murder of the missing man you call Etherege. There's no other way," answered the Colonel.

"And as soon as he is arrested, he'll blow on us."

"That risk you must take, Mr. Sandys," said the Colonel. "But I don't believe he will. He's not had a chance to get enough to blow on, unless you have some traitor among you here. Do you suspect any body?"

"Let me see," said Anstey. "I guess Mervin's safe. He was a confidant of Darwin's, but I'm a little suspicious of Tickell. His folks live near Brome Cottage, and Mrs. Brome has often sent them things. He's a good-natured, easy fellow, and we'll have to watch him."

"You'd better watch him, and don't let him know any more than he now does. The plans I have revealed to-night, you must keep to yourselves. But where is that Mervin you spoke of? You tell me he's the only man who really knows whether the devil has that Etherege or not."

"He promised to come up here to-night," answered Sandys, "and it's about time he was coming."

"Well, I'm dry, Sandys," returned Leyton, "suppose you go and fill up the bottle, and see if he's not in the grocery."

Sandys went out of the council-chamber, and Leyton rose and walked backward and forward, while Anstey watched him with a sadly puzzled expression on his countenance.

When Sandys appeared behind his counter in his grocery, he was confronted by two persons who had for some time been waiting his appearance. The grocer was not pleased to see at least one of them, but he must appear as if he was right glad, so, after shaking Mervin's hand, he greeted Tickell with a great show of cordiality. This same show Tickell returned. While he was returning it, he did not fail to observe that Sandys gave Mervin a significant wink.

When Sandys went among his liquor casks in the back part of his grocery, Mervin followed him, and when Sandys again appeared where he could address Tickell, Mervin was not with him.

Tickell was accustomed to peculiar maneuvers on the part of Sandys and Anstey: he was quite disappointed in Mervin's disappearance, but he knew it would be vain to attempt to get in the council, and he resolved to ward off suspicion. He chatted with Sandys a few moments, because he saw that the grocer was itching to get away from him, and did not know how to accomplish it. When he relieved his host's perplexity by declaring that he must go down to Barton's, Sandys used an expression in which cowardly lies are often concealed, in more respectable and worthy company—"You needn't be in a hurry;" but Tickell's "call" to the tavern was peremptory, and he left Sandys rejoicing.

When Tickell went out of the grocery, he was wiser than when he entered it. Over Sandys' best brandy he had had a somewhat satisfactory chat with Mervin, and now, instead of going to Barton's tavern, he went to Brome Cottage.

The grocery door was no sooner closed behind Tickell than Sandys hastened whither he had sent Mervin. He found Leyton, Anstey, and the outlaw talking earnestly. Anstey had been remonstrating, but his influence was overpowered by the others, and Mervin said:

"I am satisfied, Colonel. Here's a witness to the bargain. I know a fellow who was followed by Harry Brome that day; he'll swear that Tom Darwin told the truth. I'll get an affidavit from him to-morrow, and the rest I'll finish before sunrise; but mind you, if the bargain aint kept, I'll blow the whole of you, if my neck is stretched for it."

"You needn't be afraid of us, and we won't of you. You can depend on us, because you know what is our interest, and we can depend on you because we know what is yours, and then you want to revenge Darwin's death."

"That I do, Colonel; and I will, you can bet your life."

Sandys, who had been till now a quiet listener, demanded explanations, which the Colonel gave him. He considered the plans a few moments, and then agreed to do whatever was required of him to further them. His own safety, as he thought, was involved in their success.

Anstey feared that his safety was involved in the same success, and he feared to have the plans put into execution. If never before in his life, he now regretted the hypocritically wicked career into which his inordinate avarice had led him. He was rich, but he was not respected—not even among his companions in fraud. All his life he had coveted

cash, now he coveted character. He drank deeply to overcome his dread emotions, but when he went home, in spite of his maudlin condition, he was racked with accusing fears, wicked hopes and bitter regrets. His curses on himself for his first step in counterfeiting were more expressive than deacons generally are presumed to command.

When Anstey bid his confrères good night, he supposed that Sandys and Leyton had separated for that night. They deceived him. As soon as the Colonel, who went out with Anstey, parted from him on the street, he returned to the grocer's council-room—and when these two schemers had sat down to a third bottle of brandy, Leyton said:

“I believe you're right; Anstey's afraid. He'd back out now, square, if he could. We must hook him in deeper, and it must be done in connection with that devil you've waked up here.”

“You mean Brome?”

“Of course I do. It's infernal bad that you should have let him get a clue.”

“Let, thunder and lightning. There's no let about it. He saw us in the woods; but then, if it hadn't been for Tom Darwin's dare-devil propensity, and Anstey's cowardice, he'd never troubled us. Now, we're in for it, and he must swing—or at least be jugged till we are safe.”

“And Anstey must make him swing.”

“That'll be too hard, Colonel. He hates him like poison, but he's too much afraid to take a public stand. I wouldn't be in favor of trusting him—the first man who attacked him would find weak places. He used to have pluck, but he's lost it lately.”

“If he don't go it who will?”

"We'll have to depend on Mervin. He's a trump. Excitement is high, and when Mervin's friend gets out a warrant, we'll throw our respectable influence in the scale."

"Our respectable influence—that's a fact, and it will be respectable influence. Let us get out of this fuss, and the scheme is clear."

"That reminds me, Colonel, you were going to give me some more particulars about what's been done."

"It's very late and I must be off, but I can tell you that a large amount of the currency is now ready. Nick Bidle himself couldn't detect the notes. Look at these."

The Colonel handed Sandys half a dozen counterfeit notes on the United States Bank. Sandys' eyes twinkled as he examined them, and when he pronounced them good, the Colonel continued:

"It's a good scheme. We've already made arrangements for a vessel at New Orleans; Johnston, who, you know, is a big merchant in Cleveland, is fully with us, and there are other big men in it. Just let us get our bark into the Gulf of Mexico once, and she shall go straight to China, where, with *our* currency, we can put in a splendid cargo, and before the notes can come back here, we can pocket the profits and take care of ourselves. Think if it is not worth some risk, Mr. Sandys."

Grocer Sandys did think. When Colonel Leyton went staggering to Barton's tavern, long after midnight, Sandys went to bed, but not to sleep. He could not sleep for thinking.

Had the intention of his thoughts been honest, they would not have disturbed his rest.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE ARREST.

It was Tuesday morning. Joseph Etherege had been missing since Saturday afternoon. Diligent and thorough search for him had been fruitless. Public opinion declared that he had been murdered for his money. By whom and how? were the absorbing topics of speculation in Cuyahoga village and vicinity. At Brome Cottage speculations on the mysterious fate of its guest had occupied every mind. A thousand conjectures had been indulged, and a thousand plans discussed; but when Harry Brome came home the acknowledged cause of Darwin's death, and immediately was talked of as the only person who could tell what had become of his *friend*, all other plans and conjectures were merged in one comprehensive purpose—to crush his conspiring enemies by exposing their frauds, at the same time revealing the mystery of Etherege's fate, and the true cause of his death or abduction.

Mrs. Brome and Harry had met Tickell at a late hour in the night, and they were seated at a late breakfast when a servant entered the room and said a gentleman wished to see Mr. Brome.

Harry went out and met Constable Sedley. He invited



the officer into the cottage, but the invitation was declined. "My business is with you—it's a little particular and I don't like it, but I must do my duty, and I wouldn't like to alarm your mother and sister. I've only a little document to show you."

He handed Brome a small slip of paper, and Harry read it carefully, without any outward emotion. It was a warrant for his arrest as the murderer of Joseph Etherege. It had been issued upon the oath of Ben Danmer, an easy-going, indolent young man, who hung about Barton's tavern, and who drove a team, or chopped wood, when his necessities required him to work—when Barton would not trust him for board or for whisky, unless "the old score was wiped out." He had been chopping for Barton on Saturday, near the place at which Etherege disappeared.

"Walk into the house, Mr. Sedley. I must show this to my mother."

The constable was confused, and he made no reply, but mechanically followed Brome.

When he entered the breakfast-room, Mrs. Brome bid him good morning, and invited him to be seated, but he stood near the door changing his hat from one hand to the other, and said:

"It's mighty unpleasant, Mrs. Brome, but I'm a public officer, a servant, madam, and must do my duty."

Harry had handed the warrant to his mother, and she only bowed in response to the constable's apology.

"Who was with Mr. Danmer when this warrant was issued?" asked Mrs. Brome.

"Well, there was several at the 'Squire's. I recollect Deacon Anstey," said the constable.

“There can be no bail given?”

“Not in such a case, madam.”

“Harry must go with you to prison, then?”

“Yes, ma’am, but not just now to real jail. He’s goin’ to be examined in the village, maybe this afternoon, maybe to-morrow, and till then he’ll have to be shut up in a room at Barton’s.”

“Your instructions are that he shall go there?”

“That’s the distressing fact, ma’am.”

As the constable spoke these words in a tone of sympathy, he looked sharply at Mrs. Brome. He could not understand her. She was so calm.

“Do you know any of the evidence on which it is expected to sustain this charge?” said Harry.

“Well, I can’t say I do, but I heard Danmer say that he could swear what Tom Darwin told me was true, because he was with Darwin when it was done. I don’t know as I ought to say any thing about it, but that’s all I know.”

“That’s what I or any body else could have guessed, and you run no risk in telling it,” returned Brome.

The constable did not like this response, and he said:

“Well, Mr. Brome, we needn’t dispute, but we’ll go to the village as soon as you are ready.”

Harry looked at his mother inquiringly, and she said:

“Go, Harry, at once. Alice went over to Mr. Humiston’s to see Edith, who came home last night. We’ll all come down to see you when she returns.”

“I am your prisoner, Mr. Sedley,” said Harry.

The constable led the road and Harry followed, after whispering to his mother that Tickell must be seen before night.

Harry Brome had not been a prisoner at Barton’s tavern

half an hour before all the people of the village were discussing the probabilities of his examination by the village 'Squire. The bar-room was crowded, and the landlord did a "thriving" business.

Mrs. Prime was not at all disappointed when the news of the arrest reached her ears. Of course she had expected it. But she was very sorry for Mrs. Brome. She would go at once and suggest the consolations of religion to her. When neighbors were in trouble it was Christian-like for their friends to give them religious counsel. Immediately Mrs. Prime was "fixed up" and on her way to Brome Cottage. It seemed to her that it was a long time before her knock was answered. But the folks were in trouble and she must excuse them, she supposed. At length Mrs. Brome answered the summons in person.

What a contrast there was in the appearance and bearing of those two women as they met. One was calm, and dignified and commanding. Her dress was of plain, soft material, and without ornament. Mrs. Prime was restless, suspicious, and forbidding. Two little tight curls, which peeped out from the lining of her bonnet, were kept in perpetual motion by her restlessness. She wore a plain black silk dress. The sharp lines of its folds, as they fell over her thin frame, were in keeping with the jealous severity of her character.

It always seemed to me that a generous-hearted, true woman should never wear harsh, black silk. There is a class of narrow-minded, ill-tempered, severe women, with whose characteristics it is in keeping. They admire it; it becomes them; and, as it is not in harmony with a liberal, hopeful character, to disappointed, soured spinsters, and wives and maidens who will be cross and jealous, and carry unhappi-

ness wherever they go, it ought by other women to be wholly surrendered.

But though, in plain silk, Mrs. Prime, with jewels and ribbons, made quite a rich show. She never went visiting or to church without giving her neighbors good reason to believe that vanity, as well as gossip, was one of her characteristics, and, having an impression to make at Brome Cottage, as a matter of course, she appeared "to the best possible advantage."

Mrs. Brome did not invite her in. She stood in the hall with an inquiring expression on her countenance, which plainly enough said—"Mrs. Prime, what is the occasion of your call this morning?"

"You will excuse me, Mrs. Brome, but really I have heard that Mr. Brome had been taken by the constable this morning, and I didn't know but you might be in trouble, and I came to inquire if any of our church could render you any assistance."

"I thank you, Mrs. Prime, for any sympathy you may have, but you could afford us no aid. I know my son to be the victim of a wicked conspiracy, and he needs no defense which his character will not make for him."

"But it's terrible, Mrs. Brome, and you'll allow me to recommend to you the consolations of the Gospel."

"The same recommendation I have had before this morning from your worthy minister, with whom I was conversing when you knocked."

"Ah! then my poor words come late, but you'll have my prayers, Mrs. Brome."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Brome, bowing; and Mrs. Prime bowing in return, retreated, for she was not dull of appre-

hension, and she had become convinced that she was not needed at Brome Cottage.

As she went away she said to herself, "How she froze me off. I never did like her. I can't have any more charity. Parson Humiston! yes, I'll warrant he's there. He's most too thick there. I just believe Harry Brome will be convicted, and then what'll Parson Humiston say?"

Mrs. Brome had no uncharitable remarks to make when she parted from Mrs. Prime, but very likely she could not entertain very high respect for a person who, on the pretense of giving pious consolation, would endeavor to intrude upon her grief for the sake of getting materials for gossip. Poor Mrs. Prime, her selfishness and vanity and jealousy were transparent. She was one of a class which is quite numerous in even this day of "progress." When we are in deep trouble true friends are rare, but often those are numerous who pretend to give us sympathy for the sake of getting our confidence, that they may know how weak or how hard-hearted we are, and make capital out of our infirmities.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PRISONER.

HARRY BROME had been a prisoner for one day. His mother and Alice, Parson Humiston and Edith Humiston, his daughter, had visited him. He was stronger in spirit than when his arrest was made, but he had yet been stronger if Alice had not appeared overcome with painful fears and conjectures. She would have been entirely prostrated, but that she leaned in spirit as well as body, upon Edith Humiston, who was as dear as a sister to her. She was older and sterner than Alice. They differed widely in appearance. Timidity and reserve were to be read in Alice's deep-blue eyes. Edith was tall and commanding. She was not unwomanly bold, but she was not timid. She had black hair, and very black eyes. They were small, bright, keen eyes. Alice had not feared to give Edith suspicions of her regards for the man whom her brother was accused of having murdered, but how eloquently had she plead that brother's innocence! Edith needed no eloquence to convince her of Brome's innocence. She would not have believed that he could decoy a friend into the woods and murder him for his money, even if his sister had feared that he was guilty.

During the visit of these friends, Brome had no opportunity to ascertain satisfactorily what Tickell was doing for him. Whenever company was permitted to enter his prison-room, he was closely watched. But Mrs. Brome had scarcely returned to Brome Cottage when Tickell slyly visited her, and she was assured that he was yet true to their interests. Upon leaving Mrs. Brome with this assurance, he went to Barton's tavern, keenly on the alert for any hints which might aid him in his determination to serve Brome at the expense of the counterfeiters. He believed that Joseph Etherege had not been killed, but that, in some safe retreat about the village or in the woods, he was a prisoner like Brome, at the mercy of the counterfeiters. To satisfy himself whether his conjecture was true was now his purpose. He mingled in the throng at Barton's, and was not modest in his denunciations of Brome, but he met none of those from whom he expected to derive advantage in the furtherance of his design. He wished to meet either Mervin or Danmer, or both. While he searched for them, they were in secret council with Leyton, Sandys, and Anstey. In that council plans were fully arranged for the conviction of Brome before the magistrate. The examination would take place the following day. The "testimony" was all prepared. In company with a village lawyer who had long been one of Brome's jealous enemies, the task of this preparation had been committed to Deacon Anstey. Danmer's story was shrewdly concocted, and he had learned his "lesson." This accomplished, Mervin and Danmer were permitted to take leave of the leading conspirators, and when they were gone, Sandys said:

"I think it's a sure thing now. We need not appear in

it at all; Constable Sedley is completely our dupe, and he can make out case enough to jug Mr. Brome till court time, which is two months yet."

"It's all right, I think," answered Leyton. "Two months are enough. We can all take care of ourselves in that time."

"Maybe, and maybe not," said Anstey. "We've got to go on, I suppose, now, but we're only getting ourselves deeper into the trouble, and I wish I was out of the whole of it."

"As much of a coward as ever," retorted Sandys. "We know you, Deacon Anstey, and there's no escape for you. You must go on; if you don't, you're a dead man, if I have to shoot you myself. We're in a devil of a pickle now, that's a fact, but we've got to go through it, and then you can go to the devil if you want to; I'm going somewhere else."

"I'm not so much of a coward, Mr. Sandys, as to be afraid of your shooting," answered Anstey, "but I'm afraid your somewhere else will be to the penitentiary, and that we will all go together. If you'd taken my advice long ago, we would not have been in this pickle."

"Hold on!" cried Leyton. "It's no use to quarrel among ourselves now. Let's wait and see what's done to-morrow. I promised to see Lawyer Swift to-night, and it's time I was hunting him up."

The parting between Sandys and Anstey was sullen. Each was really afraid of the other. Sandys would have been glad to have seen Anstey in limbo could he have escaped himself; and if any friend of Brome's had gained Anstey's confidence that night, he might have learned the true cause of the young lawyer's imprisonment.



With fears and passions which threw him in a state of mind justifying such conclusions, Anstey sought for Danmer. He did not find him. Mervin, Danmer and Tickell had accidentally met, and Mervin bantered Tickell to finish the spree they began the night previous. Tickell was not slow to accept this banter. It was a short spree, for Mervin had important business to transact that night; but before it was over, Tickell learned that Anstey and Sandys somewhat suspected him, and when Mervin left him to transact the business on which he excused himself from longer remaining in his company, Tickell had a curiosity to know the nature of that business. He did not express that curiosity to his companions, but he gratified it by following their footsteps. They went to the office of Lawyer Swift, where they met Leyton, with whom Mervin had a few moments' secret conversation. Then he took leave of Danmer, telling him he would meet him early in the morning. Tickell cautiously followed the outlaw. He was impressed that something important to Brome depended on his actions that night, and he was determined to know whither he wandered and what he did.

Mervin went down through the village, and crossed the bridge over the falls of the river. There was no moon, but it was a clear autumn night, and Tickell found no difficulty in pursuing the conspirator. He followed the same path Darwin took on the morning they met at the spring in the woods. He walked rapidly, and sometimes talked to himself. Tickell saw that he was bearing toward that part of the forest where Etherege had disappeared, and his impression that with the fate of the missing man, Mervin's business for the night had some association, grew stronger.

For half an hour the pursuit was easy—then the wind rose, and occasional clouds crossed the sky—Mervin was, by this time, in the deep woods. He drew a small lantern from his coat pocket, and having lighted it, pushed forward with quickened steps. Tickell's difficulties multiplied, but he succeeded in keeping within sight of the lantern's glow. Mervin climbed a hill and descended into a ravine. He walked through this ravine till he reached a point where the rocks were large and numerous. Then he halted and opened his lantern so that it threw light on all sides. Tickell could now more easily follow the conspirator, notwithstanding the ruggedness of the path. He found himself at the opening of a cave. His heart beat heavily—his breath was almost suspended. In his anxiety he forgot necessary caution. He stumbled over a fragment of a rock, and fell with a groan. In an instant, Mervin threw the light of his lantern in the direction of the groan, and saw Tickell gather himself up. He did not recognize him, but he drew a pistol and fired. The aim was not sure, and Tickell gained his feet unharmed. With all his energy, he grasped a fragment of rock and hurled it at the conspirator. The aim was better than had been that of Mervin's pistol. The conspirator was knocked down; his lantern was broken, and its light extinguished.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE EXAMINATION.

It was cold, drizzly and dreary—that day on which Harry Brome was to be examined on suspicion that he, a young man who had borne a character previously above reproach, had deceived a guest at his mother's house, under base pretense of friendship, and had murdered him for his money. What dishonest speculation could he have engaged in, that he so pressingly needed the money as to go to so terrible an extremity to get it? was a conjecture often indulged among a portion of the villagers; others said it was possible that he did murder Etherege, but not for his money. Some sudden quarrel must have arisen. Perhaps there was jealousy between them—perhaps he might have revenged himself for some family insult, real or fancied.

These and many other suppositions were gossiped upon as the number increased whom curiosity had brought together to hear the examination. Notwithstanding the storm, which grew colder as the day advanced, not only the citizens of the village gathered in and around the tavern, but people came from the country, anxious to learn all that had transpired, and all the stories about what was expected to trans-

pire. There was no office in the town large enough to hold half the people who wished to hear the trial. At length Constable Sedley succeeded in obtaining the school-house. The pupils were given a holiday in order that the curiosity of their parents and friends might be gratified in hearing the testimony which was expected to consign to infamy a fellow-being, who was just then at the threshold of active life.

About ten o'clock 'Squire Park carried his "authorities" to the school-house. He was followed by Constable Sedley, with Brome in custody. The prisoner was accompanied by his mother and sister. Parson Humiston and his daughter were not far from the Brome family. Behind and around the group which the constable conducted, swarmed men, women and children, who were determined to see all that was to be seen, and hear all that was to be heard.

Harry and his mother looked in vain among the faces staring at them, for Tickell's well-known features. They had been expecting tidings from him since the evening previous. Now they feared that his designs were suspected, and that the counterfeiters had dealt foully with him. On the other hand, the leading conspirators were disturbed by the non-appearance of Mervin. When last seen, he had promised to meet Danmer early in the morning. He had not again been heard from. Could he have fled? was he a traitor? or had he been waylaid? He was a slippery fellow. When he did not keep his appointments, there was reason to fear that he had gone over to the enemy for a bigger bribe.

All this Deacon Anstey considered, and he was very nervous. Leyton did not show himself. Sandys was quite as much disturbed as Anstey, but he could more successfully conceal his inquietude.

Brome had so far depended on Tickell that he had not prepared even the form of a defense without him. His own knowledge, combined with what Tickell was to secure proof of, was, in his judgment, sufficient to confound the conspirators and expose their infamous designs.

Tickell had failed to furnish the aid promised, at the hour when it could alone be made available in the examination. Brome must meet it alone. His lawyer was a tried friend, and a shrewd cross-questioner. He could be depended upon to sift the "testimony" thoroughly.

The 'Squire opened his court; the witnesses were called, and the examination proceeded in regular order.

It was proven that Brome and Etherage had gone away from the village in a buggy. The farmer, of whom Etherage bought land, testified to the particulars of their visit to him, and he was required to dwell particularly on the fact that Etherage had said he intrusted the use of his money to Brome. Other testimony of a technical character was adduced; then it was proven that Brome returned to the village in a great excitement—that he showed to several persons a handkerchief stained with blood, which had belonged to Etherage—that thorough search had been made for Etherage.

When Constable Sedley was called upon the stand, he gave clearly the incidents of the meeting with Darwin. Danmer was the next witness. Brome's lawyer had not as yet cross-examined one of the witnesses. He moved forward when Danmer took the stand and gazed intently at him. Danmer did not quail under the gaze. It had been anticipated that Danmer would be the first witness, but in Lawyer Swift's judgment, it was better that something of a case should be made out before Mr. Danmer subjected himself to scrutiny.

Just as Danmer had taken his oath, a note was handed to Brome. His face glowed as he read it. He showed it to his mother, and her face glowed more brightly than her son's had. His counsel read it without change of countenance and put it in his vest pocket, as if it were of little account, but Danmer had noticed the interest with which Brome and his mother perused it, and he was somewhat disconcerted. He managed, however, to answer calmly, when Lawyer Swift asked if he knew the prisoner.

“ Did you see him on Saturday last ? ”

“ Yes sir.”

“ Where ? ”

“ I saw him at his mother's cottage in the morning, and in the afternoon I saw him in the woods below the village.”

“ What was he doing ? ”

“ I had been chopping wood and was coming to the village with Tom Darwin, who said he'd been out shootin' squirrels, when I heard loud words. We listened a minute, and then we hurried up and saw Mr. Brome and Mr. Etherege.”

“ You had seen Etherege before ? ” said the lawyer.

“ Yes sir—several times.”

“ What were Mr. Etherege and Mr. Brome doing ? ”

“ Mr. Etherege was doing nothing. I thought Mr. Brome had been striking him with his rifle. I was going to rush on Brome, when Tom Darwin stopped me. He said he wanted to see a fight between them fellows, and nobody should interfere. He'd blow my brains out if I made a sign. I didn't care about having my brains blown out, and I kept still. It was good, Tom Darwin said; Brome knew a little too much about him, and now he'd got him. Let him kill t'other fel-

low. I knew Darwin didn't care what he did, and I was afraid of him."

"What kind of a place was it where this affray occurred?"

"It was in a ravine which many folks know out there. There's a big cave in the hill, and it was right close to this cave. I was on top of the hill when I heard the noise."

"What did Brome do with Etherege after you came up?"

"He didn't do any thing. Etherege was dead then, as near as I could see."

"Did you stay there and watch Brome?"

"No."

"And why didn't you?"

"Tom Darwin wouldn't let me. He said he'd shoot me if I didn't come away, and if I'd keep still a few days he'd pay me."

"What was Darwin's motive for requiring you not to tell what you had seen?"

"I don't know. He didn't give me any reason, only that he had a spite agin Brome, and he wasn't ready yet to blow on him."

"Did you see Brome strike Etherege?"

"No, but I'm sure he did."

"Why?"

"I know from his actions. He cut up like a guilty man."

There had been a death-like stillness in the court-room. When Lawyer Swift said he had asked all the questions he thought necessary, there was a buzz of conversation, but it stopped as he turned to Brome's lawyer and said, with a triumphant air:

"Take the witness."

Lawyer Farley looked sharply at Danmer and said:

“ You were a friend of Tom Darwin’s ? ”

“ Not much. ”

“ You know Deacon Anstey, and Grocer Sandys, and Billy Mervin ? ”

“ Have seen them. ”

“ Well, when did they concoct for you this story which you have just told ? ”

“ I hope the witness will not be insulted, ” said Lawyer Swift.

“ Not at all, ” replied Farley. “ It’s a civil question. He can answer it easily. Come, Mr. Danmer, give us the time. ”

The witness made no response. There had been a murmur of astonishment in the audience. Now all was hushed. Deacon Anstey and Grocer Sandys were very much interested. The witness was out of his “ lesson. ” He was thrown on his own resources. The deacon and the grocer were anxious to know how he would “ dodge ” the lawyer.

“ You don’t answer my question, Mr. Danmer, ” said the lawyer. “ Yonder is Mr. Anstey, and right behind you is Mr. Sandys. They can correct you if you should not give the right date. ”

“ May it please the court, ” said Lawyer Swift, “ I should like to understand the motive of these insinuations against the witness and other respectable citizens of this village. ”

“ May it please the court, ” answered Lawyer Farley, “ we make no insinuations. We mean to show a conspiracy between persons who are now in this house, and some others, to convict Mr. Brome of a crime which their confederates committed. It is a conspiracy to prevent Mr. Brome from bringing them to justice for their villainy. The scheme was well laid, but not so well that it cannot be exposed. We ask that



Mr. Sandys and Mr. Anstey be brought forward and detained as witnesses for the defense."

The order desired in this request was given, and Deacon Anstey and Grocer Sandys were brought within view of all the spectators. They exchanged significantly perplexing glances, and thought with serious emotion of what Brome had seen them at in the forest. Neither of them had ever in the slightest degree imagined that he could be put on the witness stand for Brome. They were very impatient to know what Lawyer Farley would ask next.

"May it please the court," said Lawyer Swift, "it is now afternoon. It is past the usual time for adjournment. I would suggest that the court take a recess."

"We beg the gentleman not to be quite so anxious. We have no objection to a recess, but we shall demand that the witness on the stand be taken into custody," said Farley.

"On what ground?" demanded Swift.

"That he is perjured," replied Farley.

"This is a remarkable proceeding," said Swift.

"You will think it more remarkable still, when our evidence is all in," answered Farley.

There was a strange feeling of mingled hope and distrust in the audience. The 'Squire felt it. Lawyer Swift perceived it, and rose to take advantage of it.

"May it please the court, I hope this irregular proceeding on the part of the defense may be stopped. It is all founded on presumption—impudent presumption. There is not a particle of proof—"

"There is," rang shrilly from a voice in the back part of the school-house.

At this moment the crowd swayed with excitement, and

cries of "Clear the way," "Clear the way," were uttered by many voices.

From the central aisle the mass of men parted as if a magical wand had fallen between them; at the same time two persons were hurried toward the bar.

"Etherege!" cried Harry Brome.

"Tickell!" cried Anstey and Sandys simultaneously, and with the cry both rose to their feet. In the confusion they would have dashed from the school-house, but Lawyer Farley watched them, and he cried:

"Stop the conspirators!"

Anstey, Sandys and Danmer were immediately in safe custody.

"The best laid schemes o' mice an' men  
Gang aft a-gley."

Of the meeting between Etherege and Brome and Mrs. Brome, and Alice and Etherege, it is enough to say that there were cries of joy, and tears and congratulations, and rapid questions and quick answers.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE LAST.

THE evening after Brome's examination, there was a remarkable revolution in the public opinion of Cuyahoga village. He, who had been a wretch for whom "hanging was too good," was regarded as a deeply-injured young man—a shrewd, useful young man. It was strange, many people said, that so much confidence had been put in the charges of the conspiring counterfeiters.

What of these counterfeiters? Tickell had managed to inform himself of the treacherous designs of Tom Darwin, and of the distrust Leyton and Sandys entertained for Anstey. When he told the whole story of plotting and counterplotting, the penitent deacon was quite vexed, and in his vexation he talked wildly, so wildly that Tickell learned fully the object of Colonel Leyton's visit to Cuyahoga village. It was not hard, then, to persuade the deacon to agree to divulge all his knowledge of the counterfeiters, upon the assurance that he should escape the law's reward. Harry Brome did not learn from the deacon the motives of Etherege's imprisonment, but he did learn fully those for the subsequent conspiracy against his own liberty. Etherege was able, however, to tell a satisfactory story about his capture and

detention. His friends were impatient for this story as soon as congratulations on his escape had been given him. Before the Brome family and friends left the school-house, many questions were put to him. He answered them as fully as was possible at the time, but while he and Harry, and Alice and Edith, rode in a carriage from the village to Brome Cottage, he detailed at length the story of his wrongs. He said that Brome had not been absent from him more than a quarter of an hour, when a blow from an unexpected and unseen foe, felled him to the ground. He was rendered insensible. When his consciousness returned, he was a prisoner, in a lone, dark, damp cell, and Tom Darwin was his companion.

“Where am I? What am I a prisoner for?” were his first words.

“You’re in *my* jail,” answered Darwin with an oath, “and you’ll stay here till you learn the fun of spying after other folks’s business.”

“Where is Harry Brome? What has been done to him?”

“Nothing *yet*,” said Darwin with a sinister smile. “He has gone home to tell his folks that you’re lost or murdered. They’ll hunt you, but they’ll not find you. You’re safe.”

“Safe!” answered Etherege, “in the power of an outlaw—an unscrupulous counterfeiter? Why not murder me at once?”

“That wouldn’t suit my purpose,” returned Darwin with provoking calmness.

Securely bound, Etherege was too much of a philosopher to indulge impotent rage, and he endeavored to speak calmly to his jailor and learn the cause of his imprisonment, but

Darwin only taunted him. He was compelled to lose his temper or be silent. The outlaw went out from the cell, and was absent several hours. When he returned he was accompanied by Billy Mervin, and, from their conversation, the prisoner learned that his friends at the village were alarmed, and that thorough search was to be made for him. When his captors left him alone again, he hallooed until his strength failed him, in hope some one searching for him would hear the cry. He had no idea, however, of the locality of his prison. For aught he knew, it might be some subterranean vault in the village. His calls for help were therefore given with forlorn hope. There was no light in his cell. He could not distinguish between night and day. Before the second morning of his imprisonment arrived, it seemed to him that many days and many nights must have passed. He could take no note of time. When Mervin and Darwin left him, they had loosened the cords with which his arms were tied, and he had slipped his hands from them. He would have groped about his dungeon, but he feared some trap was left, some pitfall, by which his life would be destroyed, and he dared not venture many steps. He could have welcomed death, but that he hoped for rescue. It was not a flattering tale hope told, but there was encouragement enough in it to render the prisoner tenacious of life. During the first hours, or, as they seemed to him days, of his imprisonment, this tenacity was a sustaining power. It grew weaker and weaker, until he deliberately made up his mind that he must die, in darkness, a lingering death, and no friend ever know his sad fate. No one came to bring him food or drink. When first imprisoned he would have spurned it, but he grew weak and faint, then hungry—intensely, desperately thirsty

and hungry. He felt his strength departing. His gnawing hunger and burning thirst seemed to have consumed themselves, and he was left reckless of life; he prayed for death. He thought of the world and all its gladness for a young, healthful, hopeful man, and he wished for death. Whether he thought of Brome Cottage and its inmates especially, he did not say, but his eyes told tales which were, to those who listened, a satisfactory revelation that bitter regrets were blended with his forced resignation.

He wondered how long a man could live without nourishment. He wished to calculate how many days had passed since he was taken prisoner. He could not decide satisfactorily, not because he had not been informed of the power of human endurance, but he could not estimate how much strength had gone from him. At times he was resolute—again he was faint and weak. He passed into a state of forgetfulness—it was not sleep—it was only forgetfulness of his present situation. He lived over again scenes which were dear in his memory. Sweet pleasure surrounded him, when he was startled by a sharp cry—a flash of light pained his eyes. Some one shook him and spoke kind words to him. He aroused himself enough to ask :

“ Where am I ? ”

“ With a friend, who comes from Harry Brome. Get out of this dungeon quick, for God’s sake,” was the answer.

Leaning upon the friend who thus encouraged him, Etheridge was assisted from the dungeon into a large underground chamber, where daylight dimly shone. He was too weak to ask explanations. He submitted himself to his guide, and was conducted into the open air. Then he was assisted over and around rocks which jutted from a hill-side. When he

reached the bottom of a deep ravine, his guide showed him a horse and wagon. Disguised in a farmer's slouched hat and great coat, he was driven to Cuyahoga village, and ushered into the place where his friend Brome was undergoing examination on suspicion of being his murderer. He recovered his astonishment just in time to complete the "argument" Brome's counsel had interposed to expose the counterfeiters' conspiracy. Tickell had told his story of Etherege's rescue to Brome at the school-house, and when Etherege concluded, Harry briefly sketched Tickell's exploits, beginning with incidents which the course of our Romance has revealed.

When Tickell was left in the cave with Mervin, he dared not call for fear his voice would tell the outlaw where to make a fresh attack, not knowing whether that individual was seriously or slightly wounded. He held his breath and listened. He heard deep groans, then oaths, then the exclamation :

"Come out there, whoever you are; if you wasn't bored when I shot, you needn't be afeard. You did the business for me."

Tickell did not know whether to believe this a sham or the fact, and he kept quiet.

Again and again, the outlaw cursed and called. His voice grew weaker. He swore he was dying. He said:

"I know it—my time's come, and I'll tell you that fellow you're after's here, but I'll be damned if you'll find him. If you'd let me alone a little while, I'd fixed him."

"Damned you'll be, then, Billy Mervin, for I *will* find him," cried Tickell, assured that Mervin could do him no harm.

"Holy Mother! you traitor dog," groaned Mervin.

“Take it easy,” Billy, responded Tickell, “the game is up.”

Mervin answered with curses, and Tickell groped his way toward the spot, whence the curses proceeded. Accidentally his foot struck some light object. He picked it up, and to his joy discovered that it was Mervin's lantern. Tickell was a smoker, and had with him the means of striking a light. In a moment he was enabled to examine the extent of Mervin's injury. He was not so badly hurt that Tickell dared trust him, and he tied his arms with his handkerchief, and then promised he would help him to escape if he would tell him where to find Etherege.

The stone Tickell hurled struck Mervin on the breast. He was not hurt as badly as he feared. Tickell had no doubt he would recover, and told him so.

Mervin cursed and threatened for some time, but when he became satisfied that he was securely in Tickell's power, and that there was hope of his recovery if he could be taken care of, he consented to give Tickell directions which led him to the dungeon where Etherege pined.

Tickell at once assured himself that Mervin did not deceive, and when daylight came, he went to the nearest farm-house, procured a horse and wagon, and conveyed the outlaw to his own house in the village. He left there the note which was handed to Brome in the school-house, after the examination had opened, then, in hot haste, returned to the cave, and rescued the prisoner.

While the people of Cuyahoga village were gossiping about the remarkable operations of the counterfeiters, and the circumstances of the acquittal of Brome, Tickell arranged for the pursuit of Colonel Leyton, who, early on the



morning of the examination, had disappeared. The handsome, accomplished Colonel, he who, while scheming to defraud on a large scale, had been a favored guest of the proudest citizens of not only Cuyahoga village, but of larger towns in Ohio, was arrested and thrown into prison. Subsequently, upon the testimony of Tickell and Anstey, he and Grocer Sandys were sent in company to the penitentiary.

Meantime Constable Sedley was ordered to New Orleans to check the scheme for defrauding people of foreign lands, which Anstey had divulged. It was discovered that a ship had been purchased and was partly laden with stores. Several of the "stockholders" were arrested; others escaped and became restless wanderers, fleeing from justice—fearing recognition—shunning observation.

When the excitement attending his rescue and its results had passed away, Joseph Etherege fell violently sick. For several weeks his life was in imminent danger, but after a favorable crisis, he recovered rapidly. During his illness a "ministering angel" often brought sunshine to his bedside, sunshine that warmed his heart. When his health returned he begged the company, the consolation, the sympathy of that "angel" through health as well as sickness, so long as both should live.

It was Christmas eve. A gay company had assembled at Brome Cottage. There were two brides and two grooms in that company. The drifting snow and the whistling winds were unheeded. The houseless, the homeless, on that stormy night were forgotten by the merry revelers, who were rejoicing in the happiness present and in prospect.

Suddenly there was a wild alarm. A startling cry rang on the night air. It was "FIRE! FIRE!!"

A portion of Brome Cottage was in flames. The wedding guests were driven into the night-storm. Brides and grooms, male and female guests, were soon engaged with hot and nervous energy in efforts to subdue the flames. Water enough could not be procured. The wind was high. Before citizens of the village could reach the scene of painful disaster, the handsome cottage was wrapped in flames. Only a small portion of its valuable furniture was snatched from the fire.

"An incendiary did this," every body said. The morning after the fire, a man was found near the cottage—frozen to death. He was recognized as Billy Mervin. In his death grasp, he had an expired torch.

He had avenged, in his wicked way, the death of Darwin.

Tickell had kept him at his house several weeks, and would have kept him longer, but one night, though weak and penniless, he secretly crept away.

The people of the village never saw him, but Barton the landlord knew he was not far distant, and Barton also knew that, on Christmas eve, he was very drunk, and had made mysterious threats.

"The way of the transgressor is hard."

Anstey was obliged to move west. Tickell chose to emigrate westward also, and so did Barton, whose tavern had become a place of bad repute.

Brome Cottage was not rebuilt, but Harry Brome and Edith his wife, and Mrs. Brome his mother, had a happy home in the village, and there was another happy home there, and Mr. Joseph Etherege and Mrs. Alice Etherege were its master and its mistress.