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INTO THE DARKNESS.

BY M. F. BIGNEY.

Into the darkness a soul hath sped—
A soul weighed down with a load of crime,
A soul that would fain, with its dust be dead
And lost in the earth's dark grime.

Into the light of the upper skies
A soul is called on its judgment day;
A soul that hath made of dross its prize,
And mocked at the "narrow way."

Poor soul! with pity its victims gaze;
Soul, self condemned in the light eternal
It reads its record with dread amaze
And feels the undying worm.

The judgment is fixed ere the judge appears;
The slain again meet the slayers sight,
While the shame and the wrong of the finite years
Appeal to the Infinite.

Soul, self-condemned, what a fate is thine!
A fate, where the tortures of memory
Through the spirit senses like serpents twine,
Till their sting seems a part of thee!

There's no repentance for deeds of shame;
Each daring sin hath an endless life,
Which curseth the doer with constant blame
And blameth with constant strife.

Poor soul! lost soul! with a ceaseless dole
Still moaning thy errors forevermore;
How sad to thee is thy life's dark scroll;
How barren the shining shore!

THROUGH WIND AND RAIN.

BY MARY CEIL HAY.

Yes, that's the portrait of the present Squire Handsome. No, I don't think we old servants ever call him handsome. I daresay you are right, though, and if we'd known him less, we might have spoken of his being handsome. We only know him as the kindest master and the tenderest son in all the world. Yet I daresay you are right, for when I'm here by myself among the portraits (the servants wondering why their old housekeeper wanders over the house so much alone) it is alwas to his face I turn with the best memories, and there is nothing then to dim my spectacles, as there is when my eyes rest upon the portraits opposite—you see them? The portraits of his father and grandfather.

It was just such a night as this that ushered in the new year five and twenty years ago; and even now, that evening is as clear in my memory as this has been, though Wesmede to-day is filled with guests and gayety, and that old house echos music and laughter, instead of that one strange cry. Promised to tell you, did I? Come nearer to the fire, then, and throw on another log. Many a night I've sat just here to see the old year die. Sometimes in that wonderful silence of the starshine; sometimes in brilliant moonlight, when that line of heath road beyond the park lay like a broad white ribbon on the brown; and sometimes, as it does to-night—and did upon that other night just five and twenty years ago—panting for its breath and dying in passionate tears. You can see now how the poplars, far away against the sky there, bend like reeds; and when the hurrying clouds fly by and leave the young moon uncovered, you can trace that bridle path across the heath, glistening like a shallow brook. Just such a night as this it was, wild, wet, and gusty when the old squire and I stood watching—

But how's this? I ought not to be in the middle of my story before I begin. Let me see—there's another New Year's eve that I can remember, fifty years ago, when the Squire held his new born infant in his arms, with such a smile as we had never seen upon his face before, and stood there in a dream until they roused him to tell him that his young wife could not live.

All in all was the boy to his father from that very night, yet at first there was sometimes a fancy among us that our master's great affection for his son came second to his pride in his heir. He was growing old, you see, and of course there must have been times when he feared that the proud old name would die, and the place he loved so well go to that distant branch of the Capletons, of which Captain Warder was the living representative—a cold, middle-aged man, whom the old 'Squire never had liked. But now that the son and heir was born, Mr. Capleton, with some new feeling, turned round and seemed to grow fond of this heir presumptive—as they called him. But we didn't, and there was a conviction among us that whenever he came to Wesmede it was because he either wanted money in a hurry, or had nowhere else to go.

For years after the little heir was born, Captain Warder didn't come to Wesmede at all. He might have been too angry, or he might have been really abroad as it was reported. But gradually his visits were resumed, and then, year by year, they grew longer and more frequent.

At Wesmede everything went smoothly and happily for the squire through his son's boyhood; for though, of course, Mr. Will got into trouble sometimes, as schoolboys will, the trouble never lasted, for the boy was gentle and true-hearted, even if he had a share of his father's self-will. So the time went on until within a few days of Mr. Will's leaving college, when he was to come home for a few weeks, then join a party of friends and travel for a year before settling at Wesmede and taking the Squire's duties upon himself. Just as we were dreading lest Mr. Capleton should fret through his son's long absence, a distant connection of his died, leaving an only daughter unprovided for. So the squire, when he heard this, went off at once to Scotland and brought back the orphan girl with him.

Her portrait here? Of course it is, for she was one of the Capletons, you know, though she was so poor that I've seen her turn the bows of ribbon on her dress and patch the pages of her music. Beautiful? I don't know, because I have heard so many different faces called beautiful. At first the servants called her "puny," then I noticed that the maids grew to imitate her, and dropped their voices when they spoke of her. As for me, from the very first moment that my eyes rested on her I saw what won my heart. Her face was narrow and delicate, yet there was a sweet and steadfast light upon it which made it beautiful beyond what I had ever before understood of the word.

How well I remember the day Mr. Will came home from college and found her standing shyly at his father's side waiting for him. Such a glance came into his eyes that, though I'd known them all his life, I felt I'd never seen them properly till then. Of course I could only guess how he spent that evening, the first which he had ever had a girl companion at home; but before a week had passed I had seen what made me sad enough.

"If Agnes does her duty, Will," I heard the Squire say one morning, while Mr. Will stood against the low oak chimney-piece in the hall, with his face bent, "I shall give her a wedding portion, and marry her to Warner. I shall be doing both of them a good turn. And that reminds me, Will, Luxleigh tells me his daughter returns from Paris next year, to take her place at the head of his house."

No answer from Mr. Will, but the Squire didn't notice it, and went on in a pleasant, satisfied tone.

"I've never kept you in the dark as to my intentions, Will, have I? You've always been fully aware of the good fortune in store for you. Luxleigh's estate and Luxleigh's daughter go together, and the prize is to be yours on your return; always supposing, Will, that you act your own part like a gentleman and—a lover."

"And if I don't?"

The Squire's laugh rang out with a merriment which had not a grain of suspicion in it. "If you lose your reason during the next year—put it that way, Will." When Mr. Will looked up, I was passing him in leaving the hall, and I remember wondering how it was the Squire could be so unsuspecting. When I reached my own room, still thinking over that expression on my young master's face, I found Miss Agnes standing at the window, looking out into the park as she waited for me. When we had held our usual morning discussion, she turned to the window again before leaving the room.

"If you are looking for Mr. Will, Miss Agnes," said I, standing with my back to her, and speaking easily what, with my old-fashioned notions, I fancied it would be wise to say, "he's in the hall. The master has been talking to him of his wedding with Miss Luxleigh. I was rearranging the curtains, and the master told me not to go, so I heard them."

She was facing me now, innocently and wistfully meeting my eyes, so my next words almost choked me.

"For years this has been an understood thing. Miss Agnes, did you never hear it? You see the Luxleigh property touches Wesmede north, south, and east. Of course it will be a wise marriage."

She was looking at me still, and the old light was within her eyes, and the gentle smile upon her lips; but oh, the whiteness of her face!

"I dare say, Miss Agnes," said I, bending over my fire, "that you had never even heard of it."

"Not—yet."

When she went away from the room so quietly, of course I wished I hadn't said a word; but still I'd done it with the fancy that it might be kinder to do it at once. Somehow it never seemed to enter the Squire's head that there could be danger to his plans in the close intimacy between his son and Miss Agnes; or in the charm to Mr. Will of such a sweet girl-companion in the home in which he'd never known a mother or a sister. As for Mr. Will I don't think he ever even tried to feel that Miss Agnes was like a sister to him, for from the first he had loved her as brothers don't love; and—yes; after all these years I can say it as confidently as I said it then—firmly as Mr. Capleton's heart was set upon that projected marriage for his son, everything would have ended happily for Miss Agnes and Mr. Will, if it had not been for Captain Warder. No; even yet I can not tell how, but I feel as sure of it as I am that that's the wind, sobbing on its way across the heath.

When the day came for Mr. Will to leave home, no one saw his parting with Miss Agnes, but two hours after I had watched the carriage out of sight I found her standing at the window with her eyes fixed on the spot where it had disappeared, and though they were filled with tears, I never saw that trustful look upon her face so trustful as it was at that minute.

I think that Miss Agnes had made a determination that, as far as she possibly could, she would be both son and daughter to Mr. Capleton in his son's absence, and it was prettier than any picture to see them together—always together. She would walk with him round the estate, discussing alterations and improvements just as his son would have done; his arm in hers, and always the brightest interest in her face. She would drive him for hours among his tenants, remembering everything for him, and doing as much, in her gentle, quiet way to win their hearts as he could do with all his wealth and power. She would ride beside him into Exeter on his weekly visits, and the two horses, by force of habit, kept so closely together that it became a proverb there. She would go with him to the heavy county dinners, leaning on his arm as his own daughter would have done, and so grateful to him for her plain white dress (and making so much of it in her pleasant way) that often when I've watched them off, my eyes have been too full to meet hers—the idea of it! Tears, because she loved the old man so well.

But best of all was it to see them together through those long winter evenings at home, when she would sing to him, read to him, talk to him—ah, well, it is such a nature as hers, I think, that can make home for a man, in its highest and holiest sense.

For many weeks after Mr. Will left us, Captain Warder did not show himself at Wesmede, and when he came at last, walking quietly and undemonstratively through the little eastern door, it wasn't very wonderful that none of us could suspect or be guarded against the misery he brought. After that first visit, others followed rapidly; and I understood very well how the Squire, having planned that marriage between Captain Warder and Miss Agnes, should be very willing to throw them together.

But still Miss Agnes avoided him whenever she could; and once when I asked her (just for no purpose at all) which of her cousins she liked best, the rush of pink to her face, and the trembling of her lips when she said "one was all truth and honor"—and then failed for words—was proof enough that she had sounded Captain Warder's nature.

Gradually, during those visits of Captain Warder to Wesmede, there came a consciousness of something being wrong. I don't suppose I can make you understand, for I couldn't understand it myself, but all the peaceful calm of the old house seemed ruffled, and not only did we see that the Squire had grown suspicious of his adopted daughter, but we noticed that in every word he uttered of his absent son his voice had a fretfulness which I had never heard in it before. Quite sure I felt that Captain Warder's influence was effecting this change, but I could never have fully comprehended it if I had not once chanced to overhear him speaking unrestrainedly. The master had sent for me to the library to check some bills for him, and while I did it Captain Warder came in, bringing two foreign letters which he had called for in Exeter, thinking—so he said—to please his cousin by anticipating next morning's post. The master's eyes brightened at sight of his son's hand; but, with a slow smile—I remember thinking it the ugliest smile I ever saw—Captain Warder laid upon the Squire's letter one addressed in the same hand to Miss Agness.

"Well?" questioned Mr. Capleton.

"May I hear, before I deliver this, of my cousin Will's health and welfare?" asked Captain Warder, putting his arm through the Squire's, and sauntering with him to the next room, Miss Agnes' letter in one hand. I didn't pretend to go on with my figures, for every word they uttered reached me through the curtains, and presently I understood well enough *who* was making Mr. Will's absence fatal to the dear old home. From that very hour the end followed so naturally in spite of its misery, that I seemed to have been expecting it all just as it came.

That very night, when I was sitting alone in my room, fancying the whole household was in bed, my door was softly opened and Miss Agnes came in in her white dress, far more like a ghost than —. She came in, I say, almost without a sound, and dropped upon her knees at my side just as she might have done if I had been her mother, and she—broken hearted. I couldn't say a word; I only put my hands upon her soft dark hair, and tried to keep back the tears; old women are so silly with their tears.

"This is good-by," she said presently, raising her white face, and at that moment the steadfast light within her eyes was sad to see. "Good-by. This dear life is over for me—from to-night."

"My dear," I cried, as I took both her chilly hands in mine, "what is it that you mean, Miss Agnes!"

"I am—going." Her voice sank to a very whisper at the last word, so no wonder I could not feel sure I had heard aright. Yet not for anything could I ask her again, because I seemed to understand it so well, after those suspicions of Captain Warder's which I had overheard.

"I am going—to-morrow," she whispered, her wide eyes meeting mine with an untuttered longing in them. "I am going because—my uncle has lost—his trust in me. He thinks I would ruin—his son's—life. I ruin it! I have an old friend who will receive me—I think. She is poor, but I—will help her. I—need not be—a burden."

"Where is she, Miss Agnes?"

But no, not by hinting, or asking, or even entreating, could I win that information. She would not leave me the power of telling Mr. Will where she was gone.

"But tell him," she whispered, very softly, "please tell him—only this one thing; that kneeling here, just as I might have knelt at my own mother's side, I pray that he will do as his father wishes. I shall be quite happy—presently. His father has been as my father, and I have no word to say to-night, or ever, but—God bless him."

I don't know whether I answered at all; I fancy not; but I held her to my breast and—well, never mind that.

Strange to say, it was on the very next morning, just before Miss Agnes left us, that Lord Luxleigh brought his daughter to Wesmede; then, of course, I guessed that both my master and Captain Warder had been yesterday aware of her return. I was lingering with Miss Agnes in the hall—just making tasks to keep me besides her—when the two young ladies met. I was a poor judge, of course, but I did think that the frail, sad girl, who was going alone into the world for the sake of Mr. Will, was far better worth his love than the girl who, with her foreign voice and dress and manners, was come to win what my dear was resigning. Quite courteously the Squire introduced his young cousin to Miss Luxleigh, but somehow, his voice sounded all different.

Ah! how the minutes fled till she was gone, then how they crept by us, bringing us never the music of a girlish voice and willing step; bringing us even no word from the outer world to tell us of her. Though I could see that the Squire missed her more than words could say, he never even uttered her name. Captain Warder did wisely not to leave him alone just then, knowing what the empty rooms would be for him, after the bright companionship of his adopted daughter. The intercourse between Luxleigh and Wesmede became very close. Perhaps Miss Luxleigh enjoyed the Squire's perpetual narratives of his son's perfections, and perhaps adulation of every kind was welcome to her. In any case she came very frequently to Wesmede, and so aided Captain Warder's attempt to keep Mr. Capleton from being solitary.

So the time went on till Mr. Will's return. Of course I know nothing of what passed in that first interview between the father and son, but I happened to meet my young master on the stairs just afterward, and he passed me without a word or glance, his eyes burning and his lips drawn tight upon his teeth. Later on, when I was tired of hearing him pacing to and fro in his room, I ventured quietly in to him, to give him the welcome I'd always given in old times, when he had come home from school or college. At first I thought he was going to turn away from me, but quite suddenly (as if he remembered that his secret lay in my keeping) he turned and greeted me. It was a good while, though, before I trusted myself to give him Miss Agnes's message, and almost as soon as ever I had repeated it—he, standing in utter stillness to listen—the door opened and Captain Warder came in with his greeting; a greeting far too loud and cordial to be quite honest for him.

Mr. Will looked down with silent contempt upon his cousin's outstretched hand, then he turned to me as if he were not even aware that any one else stood there. "Old friend," he said, "I am going away again, to fetch my cousin Agnes back to Wesmede; so you see I must answer your welcome by another good-by."

I was looking straight into Captain Warder's face, but I could not find out whether his surprise was real or feigned. "Your father found himself deceived in Agnes Capleton," he said, "and naturally he will never consent to her return here."

Shall I ever forget my young master's fierce reply, or the savage gloom of Captain Warder's face when he left the room?

Mr. Will had a long interview with his father after that: and from what he told me afterward, when he came to see if I could help him by the faintest clue to Miss Agnes' present home, I understood that my master had said if he could not return to marry Miss Luxleigh he need never return at all, and had strictly forbidden him to bring Miss Agnes to Wesmede. From that—even without being told—I could guess that Captain Warder had been present at the interview, in spite of Mr. Will's earnest wish to see his father alone; but I did not wonder the father should fear trusting to himself this refusal of his son's anxious prayer.

Not for months after Mr. Will's departure did the Squire betray any symptom of having taken to heart the defeat of his scheme or the absence of his son; and so the people grew to say he didn't care, and that Captain Warder was as good as any son to him; but I knew better. Sometimes, wandering to his door late in the night to be sure that all was well, I would hear the old man weeping like a girl; and a year afterward I found those letters of Mr. Will's, which were never answered, worn to shreds, as a century could not have worn them had they lain in the Squire's desk instead of—where they *did* lie.

As time went on, and the old Squire's strength and spirit gradually failed him, he grew to lean more and more upon me; a sure sign that his hard resolves were outliving his physical strength. But no wonder, for those resolves were constantly propped by crafty words and deeds of apparent devotion from the one enemy of all his good and kindly impulses. Just as if she understood the state of the case, Miss Luxleigh left off coming to Wesmede; and this served Captain Warder for another argument against Mr. Will, as I knew, because I was so often with my master now. He had grown so to depend upon my always being ready to his call, that I heard the tales Captain Warder brought of Mr. Will's past life; stories, whether true or false, which he had simply raked up to widen the present breach, and which fulfilled their purpose with a cruel success. If I could by any means have discovered where Mr. Will was, all this time, I would myself have written him an entreaty to return and put an end to this misery; but I have shown you where those unanswered letters lay, and now they had ceased altogether. Never had the Squire let any one look upon those, and Captain Warder's poison had done its work so well, that the very mention of Mr. Will's name now was enough to throw my master into a state of suppressed passion which was most dangerous for him in his enfeebled condition. At last, one day—nearly a year had passed since Mr. Will followed Miss Agnes from Wesmede, and though Captain Warder heard of their marriage, he said, we did not know whether to believe it or not—the Squire's lawyer came over from Exeter, in a dog cart, which Captain Warder had driven in, and spent a day at Wesmede closeted with Mr. Capleton, whose raised unsteady tones reached me as I passed the library door. There were many surmises among the servants as to the business in hand, but I never had a doubt at all; and when I went into the master's room at night (as I always did now, inventing some excuse or other just to see him the last thing, for I pitied him for the sore companion he had in his unquiet conscience), and he bid me wait a few minutes, I knew quite well what he was going to tell me. My guess was right. Squire Capleton had made a new will that day, disinheriting his only son, and leaving the whole of his property to Captain Warder, who was to assume the old name when he took possession of Wesmede. I stood near my master's chair, listening while he told me all this, and my lips seemed glued together; for if any sound had escaped them just then, it would have been a cry of anger which would have shut out from me my master's confidence forever.

"You hear?" he questioned sharply, when he had finished; and I thought there was a great eagerness in his sunken eyes—a great eagerness to hear some one say he had done right.

"I hear, sir," I said, when I could speak quietly and without exciting him, "but it signifies little to any of us. It isn't very likely we old servants will stay at Wesmede to see Captain Warder take our young master's place; or bear our old master's name to make it hated."

He turned to me, but his anger was too fierce to be more than instantaneous, and then there dawned upon his poor, weak face a pitiful questioning. "I've done the only thing I could have done—the only thing," he said, his voice rising "You are a silly, prejudiced woman; faithful as far as a woman's nature can go, but silly and prejudiced. Go to bed."

After that I threw away all fear of my old master, and talked to him daringly, often and often and often, both of his son and Miss Agnes. You see I could do them no harm. He had done his worst. He could not either make them unhappier or leave them more destitute, so I had no longer any fear for the effect of those words which would rise hotly and anxiously to my lips. Sometimes he was almost patient with me, and would only murmer the old reply, which he always uttered so very slowly, "I am glad I did it—very glad I did it."

But at other times he would loudly and fretfully silence me, ordering me from his presence. Yet—and this was sad even to me, because it so plainly betrayed his growing weakness—he would summon me again almost immediately, and presently would once more repeat the old assurance, which it was so plain to see he could not believe, repeat it as constantly as he might.

As the winter closed in Captain Warder hardly left him. Perhaps even he could see now that the hardened spirit was wearing out, as well as the thin bent form, and he feared more than ever to remove his influence. Day by day now my master clung more closely to his old servants, and he fretted so when I left him that I got into the habit of bringing my work and my accounts to his room quite naturally; then of reading to him, as if that had always been a part of my day's work, and bringing him messages from the tenants, and of getting somehow to make him feel it natural to listen to me while he rested. Then you may be sure I let him feel what his people would think if (I never made it when) they were to have for their master and their landlord a man whom they had always honestly disliked, as they had always honestly disliked Captain Warder. But though in time all this grew natural to us, the Squire would never let me utter two sentences together of Mr. Will's return, or of forgiveness for him and Miss Agnes. At last this day came round—Mr. Will's birthday, and the last day of that year which had been so wretched for us all. The Squire had been so restless and ill the day before, that I had sat up in his room all night, and I remember noticing with what a start he rose from his pillows when I let in the daylight, asking me sharply what day it was. Standing beside him—and I know I must have looked as anxious as I felt—I told him. And then I gently led him on to recall those happy birthdays Mr. Will had always spent at home; going back even to that one when he had taken his baby as a New Year's gift from heaven. Quite silently he listened to me, but his weak, white fingers were pressed upon his eyes.

"O, master," I cried, folding my hands just as if I cried to my Master in Heaven, "forgive him and bring him home once more."

Through all its pain his face darkened with great anger when I spoke, and he sent me from him as he had so often done before. But when I returned I found him sitting at the window in the feeble winter sunshine, looking himself more feeble than I had ever seen him look before, but with a gentleness in his face and attitude which almost frightened me by its strong contrast to the passionate vehemence with which he had dismissed me an hour before.

"Hester," he said, calling me by the name he had been used to call me when I was a young girl about the house, learning from my mother how to take her place (the place I've filled for fifty years), "Hester, perhaps he will come to-day."

I had the hardest work in the world to prevent my doing anything foolish in my joy at hearing only those few words. To think that at last he should of his own accord, and so gently, speak of Mr. Will's return! Ah, if it could but happen on that very day—that birthday which they had always spent together!

"No, no," said the Squire, sharply, guessing my motive, when I, in trembling anxiety, asked if he knew where Mr. Will would be this day. "No, no; and if I knew a hundred times you should not send."

But afterward, as he still sat quietly beside the window, he spoke to me quite gently, now and then, as if he read my thoughts while I sat working opposite him.

"Yes; he may come to-day—by his own wish. If not—never mind—never mind."

Then, as time went on; "Warder was right; he never meant to return. He was glad to break the old ties—irksome ties—and he and Agnes tired of them. Never mind—never mind."

"Perhaps," said I, with a sudden boldness, as unexpected by myself as by my master, "Mr. Will is too poor to travel now."

The Squire started forward on his chair, looking into my face with a new anguish; but the next moment he had sunk back again, and was murmuring softly to himself once more. "Pooh, pooh! Warder knew he borrowed money; he had no difficulty in doing that. My old age and my failing health made it easy for my heir to borrow. No; he had no difficulty. Warder heard of it all. Those men do not guess of my new will, though. Well, they deserve to suffer, for lending money to a rebellious son—a disobedient son. It is a just will, and Warder has promised that, in my place, he will do all that—my son has left undone. Yes, it is a just will."

Yet for all the reiterated words, it was plain to see that that will lay heavily upon my poor master's heart.

"Hester," he said once, looking wistfully at me in the waning afternoon light, "if he comes—to-day. If—loving the old times—he comes to me upon his birthday, to begin the new year with his hand in mine, I shall burn the will I made in my anger. If he does not, I shall know that all is best as it is."

Can any words describe the eagerness with which I watched that line of road across the heath, sitting motionless in my intense anxiety, and praying silently from my heart? But the daylight waned, and neither a carriage nor a solitary figure broke that line of bleak road which ended on the horizon.

"Leave them," said the Squire, almost roughly staying my hand, as I attempted to close the shutters when the world was all in darkness; "leave them until this day—and this old year—are dead."

The physician, who came over every day from Exeter, tried his best to woo my master from the gloom, saying, when he found all other attempts fail, that he wanted to dine with him beside the fire. But no, my master only shook his head gravely, and said he had a fancy for that seat to-night; and that his eyes were tired, and he did not need the light. So at last the physician went away, seeing he was useless, but he said he should return early in the morning, for he himself had been alarmed by the change this one day had made in Mr. Capleton, though he evidently saw no immediate danger. He thought it a pity that Captain Warder should happen to be away for that night, and I did not of course tell him how glad I was.

When I returned to my master's room, the firelight showed me his chair empty at the uncurtained window, and I was looking round in real alarm when he entered from the library. As he came forward I saw that he carried a sealed packet, and my heart beat with joy when, with it in his hand he came toward the fire.

"Oh, master, yes," I cried involuntarily, when he paused, "burn it to-night."

He closed his long weak fingers over it. "If he comes," he whispered huskily, "I shall burn it. That will be my birthday gift to my repentant boy. If not—it is a just will—quite just, and it shall stand."

I saw it would be best to say no other word. His own longing to destroy the will was as strong as any persuasions could be, and I saw that there was no power which could urge him to it except his son's return—my poor, poor master!

So again we sat and watched, looking out into the darkness; and when the faintest sound broke the stillness, I could see in the firelight how my master started forward in his chair, his great hope hurrying his breath. Strange to say, as the darkness deepened his confidence seemed to grow only the stronger and more steadfast, until at last, by its very simplicity as well as force, it had inspired in me a confidence just as strong.

The weather had been fine all day, though the wind was high, and there had been fitful gleams of sunshine falling upon my master's old, worn face, like the angel touches falling now upon his heart. But after the sun had set the weather changed, and each gust of wind sent noisy splashes of rain against the uncovered window panes. But, through all the dreariness of the night and the rain and the darkness, we sat on, watching without seeing, and listening intently for one sound which yet never could have been heard above the roar of the wind.

Once during that long watch I was summoned down stairs. I stood for a few minutes in the brightly lighted kitchen, giving the orders which the servants needed, and after that glare the darkness of the Squire's room struck heavily upon my heart; but saddest of all was it to see the new attitude of eager expectancy in which I found him now. He was leaning forward on the arms of his chair, and did not turn his face from the window even while he spoke to me in a low, hurried voice. "The moon hath risen. Come quickly, Hester. When this cloud has passed we shall see the road across the heath. Wait! wait! It lay just now almost as clearly as in daylight. The clouds are heavy, but after each passes we shall see. There! there!"

He had risen from his chair. With the hand which held the sealed packet he leaned against the window, with the other he shaded his eyes to peer forth into the night. The moonlight showed me this, and nothing more, till he dropped his hand from his face and seized my arm.

"See! it is like daylight. Does he come?"

That road across the heath lay wet and clear and glistening, just as we have seen it lie to-night; and my younger, stronger eyes searched the spot where my master's eyes were fixed; yet it was his cry of joy which first broke the silence.

"There! there!" he cried, and I, trembling so that I could scarcely stand, tried to give shape to that gliding shadow on the straight, wet road.

"I see, I see," my master whispered, his thin form heaving with an almost terrible emotion, "he—is come."

"I can not see," I said, only because I so dreaded a disappointment for him now.

"Not see?" he questioned, turning to me with a gentle, perplexed smile. "Go, Hester, and make sure that the fire is burning brightly in his room, and have Rollo unchained and brought into the house. It will make the faithful old dog young again to see the master he loves. Let the whole house be ready to welcome him. Let his rooms look just as they used to look. They can not be too bright to-night. Make haste, because he comes so quickly."

It was well that those hungry clouds had hidden the moon again, for I could not keep the tears away; and in the midst of his eager joy, my master would have been hurt to see them.

"He comes on horseback, Hester. Have his horse well cared for. It will need rest after having come so fast—you saw how fast he flew, didn't you?" My master was walking with me toward the door as he hurried through these loving orders, and the packet was tightly grasped in his hand. "You will burn it now, sir? You will destroy it before I bring up my young master?"

"No," he said, a shadow falling over his eager white face, as he nervously changed the will from hand to hand, "I must see his face and hear his voice; then it shall flame to ashes. Hark!"

The quick, bright word, and my master's sudden pause with outstretched hands and uplifted head, stopped me on my way; and so I was still standing beside him, in a gleam of brightest moonlight, when Mr. Will came in; and that cry from his father's lips made me reel blindly for one moment.

I saw that my young master had come straight and hurriedly there, for the rain was thick upon his hair and dress, and the hand he gave me, when his father released it, was wet and cold. Seeing this, I was hastening to his room that he might find a bright fire there (though there was little fear, for I had had the room ready all that day), when my master called me back.

"Stay, Hester," he said, in a new, bright tone, "you deserve to see this burned. It is all over now. See!"

He dropped the sealed packet into the very heart of the hot, wide fire, and now sat watching it crumble into ashes, while his face had a smile upon it which was almost radiant in its ease and happiness. Mr. Will stood watching, too, but very gravely, and when presently every trace of the paper had disappeared, he dropped upon his knees, besides his father's chair, and with his face hidden, sobbed just three words, as I pray I may never hear man sob again:

"Father, forgive me!"

The words were stopped upon his lips by the old man's loving fingers. "It is I, Will, it is I who need forgiveness. But this is forgiveness. God will pardon us both, and no one again can separate us."

I had softly closed the door upon them then, and for a long while I lingered in Mr. Will's rooms, giving them all the homliness I could. Then I went down with orders for the young master's supper. It hardly surprised me to find that the servants in the house did not know that he had arrived, for I knew that if they had seen him they would have taken his wet coat. There was quite a shout of joy when I told them my news, and some of them followed me to the master's door that they might be the first to greet Mr. Will. They stood back quietly for me to go in alone, but—ah me! My cry soon brought them.

There sat our master beside the glowing fire with still that smile of full content on his pale lips; but the lips were motionless forevermore, and he was all alone. Neither the glow of the fire, nor the moonlight shining in now unhindered, showing us any figure save that solitary sleeping one of our old master.

More to tell? very little; and how nervous it makes one in this fitful moonlight and the rush of rain and wind, and with those weird flying shadows which the firelight throws upon the pictures. Surely you know the end as well as I do.

Not one of the servants, even the oldest among them, ever jested with me about my account of the young master's return in the dying of the old year; but I heard them whispering together afterward, when I fell ill, that that strange dream of mine had warned them of an illness. Dream!

For days and weeks, and even months, Captain Warder carried on the fruitless search for Mr. Capleton's will, firmly convinced that the Squire himself must have removed it—his private bureau had a lettered lock which none but himself understood, and this was untouched at his death—only to place it in another hiding place. But the search was in vain, and of course I had no tale to tell him.

But the search for Mr. Will was longer and more wearisome still, and the Squire had been two months dead, and Captain Warder was beginning to feel secure in the mastership at Wesmede, when the Exeter lawyers sent us word they had traced Mr. Capleton's heir. That very night they arrived at Wesmede in a postchaise, and brought my master's heir, lying asleep in his mother's arms. In a moment I recognized Miss Agnes, when she came into the hall shyly and sadly, in her heavy mourning, just as she had first come to us, and no voice was needed to tell any of us for whom she wore that widow's cap around her small, sad face.

Ah! what a sad home coming it was. Miss Agnes—it seemed so natural to have her back that I could not for a time get out of using the old name—tried very hard, as we could see, to shake off her weight of grief, but I did not wonder that for so long it was impossible to her.

During that wreck, on New Year's eve, of the sailing vessel in which she and her husband and baby were coming from Australia to plead in person for their father's pardon, she had been rescued with the other women and children sorely against her will, as she wished to stay beside her husband. But with tears and prayers he had urged her, assuring her there was a chance for all, but only if she left him then. So he had seen her safe into the boat, and then had labored to save others, until he and the captain were alone upon the decks of the sinking ship in which they had been homeward bound. One sailor, who was saved, had told her, how he had seen Mr. Will at the last moment kneeling on the wet deck, himself wet through, his head upon his folded arms; and how he had heard him sob three words—which might well have been the cry from every heart that night—"Father, forgive me," and then gone down on the broken ship.

And when Miss Agnes had told me this, with stiff white lips and tearless eyes, which were almost proud in their great love, I found that I could tell her how my master had died on that New Year's eve, with his hand upon his son's head, answering that very prayer with his own appeal for pardon. I remember how the light broke upon her pale face—just that steady, trustful light of old—when she heard how they were together at the very last; and though she said no word to me, I know to whom she *did* breathe grateful words.

Yes, that's her portrait; and if there's another lady in all the land better beloved than she has been for these five-and-twenty years through which she has lived among us at Wesmede, I should like to know where that lady's home may be.

Quite happy looking? Indeed she is. Isn't it always a life which is lived for others that is the happiest of all? And would not the love of such a son crown any mother's life with blessing?

Yes: that's the present Squire. A handsome face you call it; but if you knew him as I know him, you would see far more than that; and when I look at the two portraits opposite, I like to think how proud the old Squire and Mr. Will would have been to see how nobly he reigns here in their stead, while they are resting.—*Argosy.*

"If you think the Lord called you to preach," said an old minister to a young one, "there is a mistake somewhere between you and the Lord." The *Courier-Journal*, inspired by Tilden's barrel, says, "Then the Lord called Samuel." The fact is John Morrissey called, and Boss Kelley went a thousand better.

'NEATH THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE.

[AIR—Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean.]

At St. Louis the "Dems" had a notion
They'd but to make promises free,
And amid the exciting commotion
Their record forgotten would be;
But in vain do their leaders dissemble
About what, if trusted, they'd do,
For we know how the South made them tremble
And flinch from the Red, White and Blue.
They flinched from the Red, White and Blue,
As "party" compelled them to do;
And the votes Hayes and Wheeler assemble
Shall make them their flinching renew!

When the war-drum resounded for battle,
Their best—they were few—faced the storm;
But the others, like dumb, driven cattle,
Stayed moaning at home for "reform;"
And at last, all the tempest forgotten,
Again as the South bids them do,
They denounce the republic as rotten,
And mourn for the Red, White and Blue.
They mourn for the Red, White and Blue,
Which once in their hearts they o'erthrew;
And the votes Hayes and Wheeler begotten
Shall make them their mourning renew!

So, the day, boys, the day, boys, remember,
When strike we for cause that is just,
And our ballots we'll cast in November
For men we have tried and can trust;
As our party has once saved the nation,
And shown that 'tis loyal and true,
It shall still have the patriot's oblation,
And win 'neath the Red, White and Blue.
We'll win 'neath the Red, White and Blue,
As always accustomed to do;
And our chiefs, Hayes and Wheeler, we'll station,
Our White House's lease to renew!

General Santa Anna.

General Antonio Lopez De Santa Anna, the oldest survivor of the great political events in Mexico during the early part of the present century, died at Vera Cruz on the twentieth of last month. He was the connecting link between the viceroy despotism of the Spaniards and that of the Emperor Iturbide, and the independent movement inaugurated by D. Benito Juarez. Santa Anna was born in Jalapa, February 21, 1798, and had consequently attained his seventy-ninth year at the time of his death. During the early part of his career he did nothing of an extraordinary character. He entered the Spanish army at the age of fourteen and became a violent partisan against Mexican independence, which Guadalupe Victoria was endeavoring to establish.

After contributing to the success of the Spanish troops and being rewarded by a commission of lieutenant colonel, he found that the restoration of peace would bring him no opportunity of personal advancement, and for this reason abandoned the cause he had sustained, joining Iturbide in the plot to overthrow the Spanish despotism. After Iturbide's triumph he was the first to revolt by proclaiming "Liberty and a federal union." This movement was aided by the Spanish party, out of a spirit of revenge against Iturbide for his establishment of Mexican independence, and resulted in the downfall of the Emperor. This, however, did not result in the advancement of Santa Anna, who was still an obscure soldier, and he was obliged to make way for General Victoria. But he soon rebelled again, this time on pretense of opposing the election of Pedraza in 1828. This was the second revolution produced by Santa Anna, and the second in the history of Mexican independence. It ended in the wanton sacking of the capital and the elevation to the Presidency of General Guerrero, who was afterward succeeded by Bustamente, Santa Anna being still too young to administer the government.

At this period General Bravo attempted to produce a revolution in conjunction with Santa Anna, who advanced with his troops to effect a junction, but he met with such poor success and the cause was so unpopular that he broke faith with General Bravo, and fell in with the wishes of his troops, reserving himself for another time. About this time the Spaniards invaded the country and were defeated by Generals Feran and Santa Anna at Tampico, where they surrendered. This raised Santa Anna high in public esteem, but his vaulting ambition would not allow him to be content. His aim was to sit in the presidential chair, and to accomplish this end he again revolted, declaring in favor of General Pedraza, whose election he had prevented in 1828.

At this time he was an ultra liberalist. He joined the Masonic Order and the party of the Yorkinos, and by their aid was finally elevated to the supreme power in March, 1833. During his presidency he was a favorite with the army, but was unpopular with the people, who regarded his course as aiming at an imperial crown. From this time forward Mexico was in a state of decadence and rapidly advancing toward her ruin. Under Bustamente's government the country was in a prosperous condition—revenues were collected, order prevailed, commerce thrived, the public debt was paid and the nation's credit improved. After Santa Anna's accession to power all these things were changed, and little that was good or useful remained.

During the early part of Santa Anna's administration several insurrections broke out, the last and most formidable of which was crushed on May 11, 1835, when the insurgents were totally defeated and the republican party received a fatal blow. A complete administrative reorganization was now effected, by which all the Governors of the several States became dependent on the central power. Being of an avaricious disposition, Santa Anna began to look with covetous eyes on the immense wealth of the Church, and formed a plan for confiscating its property to the uses of the government. He feared the result of direct means to accomplish his object, and therefore took an indirect course. Under some frivolous pretense he retired temporarily from the presidency, and Gomez Farias, as Vice President assumed the reins of government. He at once proceeded to put into effect Santa Anna's plans for the confiscation of the property of the Church, but the movement became so unpopular, and met with such fierce opposition, that Santa Anna agitated a revolution against his own Vice President and against the federal union—the very principle he had proclaimed in his revolt against Iturbide. The States of Guanajuato, Traentecas, Jalisco and some of the most populous and wealthy States of the Mexican union were invaded, levied upon and destroyed in such a manner that they have never been able to recover their former positions in the union. Santa Anna then proclaimed the system of centralization.

At this period a revolutionary feeling which had long existed in Texas found vent and broke out in open insurrection. Santa Anna took the field in person early in 1836, and the middle of February he reached the Rio Grande at the head of any army numbering 6000 men. On March 6 he stormed the Alamo at San Antonio, after several days' siege, and massacred its defenders. His own loss in this engagement was very heavy. After the massacre at Goliad, which was done by his express orders, he marched toward Gonzales. On April 21 his army was totally routed by the Texans under Houston, and on the next day he was taken prisoner. His functions as President were at once suspended by the Mexican government. In 1837 he was liberated and returned to his native country by way of the United States, but was coolly received, and in the presidential election of that year he received only two out of the sixty-nine electoral votes, after which he retired to his private estate at Jalapa. During the same year he took part in the defense of Vera Cruz against the French, and there received an injury which rendered the amputation of one of his legs necessary. This restored him to public confidence, and in the long contention that ensued between the centralists and federalists he was a prominent leader of the former. Through the protection of General Valencia he was enabled to return to absolute power, being virtually dictator from October 10, 1841, to June 4, 1844, under the title of provisional President. During this term of office he gave another constitution to Mexico, the third he had framed and put into effect. He was again made constitutional President under the instrument of June 12, 1843, from June 4 to September 20, 1844, when he was deposed by a new revolution, and taken prisoner near Tlacolula. On January 15, 1845, he was banished for ten years, and took up his residence in Cuba. In the following year, however, he was recalled, appointed generalissimo, and made provisional President. Immediately after he advanced northward at the head of 20,000 men, and on February 22, 1847, attacked the American army at Buena Vista, 5000 strong, under General Taylor, by whom he was routed on the next day. For this defeat he was called to account by the Vice President, Gomez Favias, but he contrived to stir up a revolt against the followers of the latter which ended in his deposition, giving Santa Anna complete and absolute control of the government.

Having succeeded in raising a new army, he took up a position at Cerro Gordo, where he was again defeated by the Americans under General Scott on April 18. With a remnant of his army, numbering about 3000 men, he retreated toward the City of Mexico. Late in April he learned of his appointment by Congress as President, but finding that the election which the States had held on May 15 was unfavorable to him, he induced Congress to postpone the counting of votes until January, 1848. Meanwhile he banished or imprisoned all who opposed his schemes, and established a severe censorship of the press. He organized an army of 30,000 men for the defense of the capital, but a succession of disasters rendered abortive all his plans. First, Molino del Rey was stormed and captured by General Scott's army on September 8, 1847; then Chapultepec fell on the thirteenth, and on the following day the capital was surrendered. General Santa Anna now endeavored to retrieve his reputation by resigning the presidency and besieging Puebla. He was attacked, however, by General Lane at Huamantla, was forced to retire, and thus Puebla was relieved. On April 5, 1848, he sailed for Jamaica, where he remained till 1853, when he returned to Mexico and was received with enthusiasm. He was appointed President for one year, after which he was instructed to convene a constituent Congress. Instead of doing this, however, he fomented another revolution, and was made President, with power to name his successor, and with the title of most serene highness. His rule was despotic in the extreme, and caused another revolution, which was led by General Alvarez. In 1855, after a struggle of two years, Santa Anna abdicated unconditionally, and on August 16 of the same year sailed for Havana. Later he spent two years in Venezuela, afterward going to St. Thomas. He reappeared in Mexico during the French invasion, and pledged himself to maintain a strict neutrality. In May, 1864, however, a manifest was issued which tended to excite disturbances in his favor, and Generaz Bazaine at once ordered him to leave the country. Maximilian, however, made him grand marshal of the empire, but a year later he was implicated in a conspiracy against the Emperor, and was obliged to return to St. Thomas. He made another effort to retain his ascendency in Mexico in 1867, but was taken prisoner at Vera Cruz and condemned to death. He was pardoned by Juarez on condition that he would leave the country forever, and he came to the United States.

In 1868, after residing for some time on Staten Island, he planned another expedition against Jaurez, and sailed on a merchant ship trading between New York and Vera Cruz. He had sent agents ahead who disseminated an appeal to the Mexicans which he had prepared. He intended first to obtain possession of San Juan d'Ulloa, the fortress of Vera Cruz. The commander of the fortress and city pretended to enter into negotiations with Santa Anna, but on his arrival he was made prisoner. He was pardoned and returned to the United States, where he resided on Staten Island, spending his time in cock-fighting and playing Spanish monte. After the death of Jaurez in 1875, Santa Anna returned to his native country, and has since resided in seclusion in the City of Mexico.

The following description of the personal appearance of this remarkable man was published in a Southern paper last summer and reproduced in the *Times* on July 7:

"My suprise at the appearance of the old General was shared by my companion. Instead of the gray-haired old man that we had expected to see, an upright, soldierly figure stood before us. His form was not yet bowed down by the weight of years, and his coal-black, flashing eyes told that the fires of early life were not yet all spent. Incredible as it may seem, Santa Anna's hair has not yet turned gray, and his face has a kindly, hopeful expression, strangely at variance with the wide-spread ideas of his character. He wears no beard of any kind, and is as smooth-faced as a woman. In talking he is much troubled with a badly-fitting set of teeth, which fall from the palate, and he is slightly deaf. It was in moving across the room and seating himself on the sofa, however, that the infirmities of his age showed themselves most conspicuous. His false leg troubled him, and I thought he showed a disposition to hide it, for, after seating himself very carefully, he threw it out directly before him and covered it with the left. He sat upright, nor did he lean back or change his position the whole hour we were with him. Santa Anna is slim built, about five feet ten in height, and in his younger days must have been a handsome man—as he is at present a fine-looking old gentleman. He is talkative and social, loves to recount his own exploits, and seems to live at present in the past. He knows that the future holds nothing for him, consequently he take very little interest in the passing events of the day. He did not even know the name of the President of the United States, and asked several little questions about our affairs that almost any schoolboy would be capable of answering. * * * In describing the events of half a century ago we were astonished to note the accuracy with which he gave the minutest particulars. Every date and incident seemed to be as fresh in his memory as though it were an event of the day before.—*New York Times.*

How a "Soft Answer" Failed.

When a Munson street man went home to dinner, Thursday, he discovered that one of his hens was in the next yard, and was being chased swiftly thereabout by the owner of the yard, whose inflamed face and flashing eyes were appropriately set off by a club six feet long. There was a sudden boiling up in the man's bosom as he saw his hen thus threatened, and the first prompting was to pick up a rock and heave it through the skull of his neighbor. But this was the feeling of but an instant. The owner of the hens was a man who desired to live at peace with everybody, to be charitable to all. He did not like this neighbor, who was gruff and ignorant and coarse, but duty overcame his prejudices. He would conquer this man by kindly words. So he walked up to the dividing fence and accosted him. The man turned about on him, and, with an oath, howled:

"I'll kill every hen you have got on your blasted premises! I won't be rode over by a hog any way!"

The owner of the hens hastily swallowed a lump in his throat, and calmly said:

"I am sorry that my hens trouble you—"

"What good is your infernal snivelling going to do me?" yelled the man in interruption.

"Hear me, will you, please?" I thought the hens would stay at home—"

"Thought thunder!" howled the man. "Any jackass would a known better than that."

The owner of the hens grew very red in the face, but he remembered that a soft answer will turn away wrath, and he calmly said:

"I am very sorry, indeed, that it has happened; and I will pay you cheerfully for all damage done to your garden."

"O, you will?" said the man, leaning on his club, and gazing cynically into the face of his humble neighbor.

"Yes, I will."

"Well, you'd better, if you know when you are well off," returned the gardener, in coarse triumph.

Again a deep flush came to the face of the gentleman, but by a mighty effort he again won the mastery over himself. There was one more step to take, the hardest and most difficult of all, and he gathered all his strength for it.

"I hope you will pardon me for the trouble I have made you."

The lines which had begun to soften a trifle in the offended party's face suddenly hardened again.

"You pay me that money first, and we'll talk about the other thing afterwards," he harshly spoke. "No soft sawder goes down me, I kin tell you."

The gentleman paid the money, but he did so with burning cheeks, and a feeling of secret dissatisfaction with himself. It is better to return evil with good, but even the Great Teacher applied the lash to the money-changers.—*Danbury News.*

Ask the taxpayers of New York, who pay a tax of fourteen per cent on real estate, if the Democratic party is a reform party. This burden of taxation is an inheritance left by Boss Tweed and his friend Tilden.