

A Picture.

One picture fair within my heart I carry, Unshadowed by the weary weight of years; And often, as amid strange scenes I tarry, A vision of my early youth appears.

The houses clustered on the water's border, Clear imaged in the softly-flowing stream; The tress beyond it, set in gracious order, The bridge, the road—delicious is the dream!

Each nook recalls fond thoughts, and memories soften My heart to those that still by them abide; I think of those that wandered with me often— Of those who now in earth lie side by side.

Long years have rolled, and other children gladly Rove in the woods and by the waterside; And some who walked with me may eye them sadly, And think of other days, whose light has died.

And yet it lives, and sheds a wondrous sweetness Around the ways, else darkly shaded all; Making the heart, prepared in all meekness, Like "darkened chamber," when the bright rays fall;

A home of beauty, where the past is cherished, Each common thing made radiant in the light; No gleam of love or beauty that has perished, But here, relived, is clear to inward sight.

A Lover's Mistake.

John Lorrimor believed it a sad day for himself when Mr. Strathley came to Ford to look after the mill, which had lately fallen into the hands of Strathley & Stone, lumber merchants of the metropolis, a hundred miles away. Why had Mr. Strathley chosen to immerse himself in that little country village, whose society was naturally uncongenial to a man of the world? Why, if it were not because he had seen Margaret on his first visit to look after the purchase of the mill, and had dined at her grandfather's as if he were an old friend, John reasoned? Were there not women as fair in his own world whom he could love and win, that he need go out of his way to rob another man? Could he not have sent an agent to reside at Ford, and attend to the firm's business, in that old-fashioned corner of the earth, if money-making were the only attraction? What malign fate had caused him to gravitate to Ford, where no stranger was ever known to stay a moment longer than circumstances obliged him? With his fine manner and fine clothes; his paler than all things in heaven and earth; his handsome face and figure, was it not hiding his light under a bushel? What could he find in Ford to interest him if it were not Margaret?

It was a bitter season for Lorrimor, who, having been sweet upon Margaret ever since he was a boy in jackets, felt as if he had established a claim upon her affections, and was aggrieved to find her amused by Strathley—walking with him in season and out of season; sitting in the farm house porch in confidential converse, or singing from the same old psalter on Sunday evenings. It was surely enough to enrage any lover, and especially one who felt so certain of his case that he had delayed about riveting the chains, and had taken everything for granted before putting the question.

Lorrimor began to study his mirror for the first time in his life; to become enamored of fine clothes; to suspect himself of awkwardness and ignorance. It suddenly occurred to him that he must have been blind ever to have believed that Margaret would care for him, though he had thought that actions spoke louder than words; though he had taken her part at school, when the others twitted her about shabby gowns and her wild brother Ben, who had brought his grandfather's nose to the grindstone—the country people said—and obliged him to mortgage the farm and this same mill, which had been his own years ago, in order to pay gambling debts.

"And served him right," they grumbled, not satisfied with the retribution. Providence had seen fit to administer "served him right for educating Ben beyond his betters," 'til he was that proud he looked down on his own kith and kin and ran away to sea, where all the scamps go, when there ain't no more money to make away with. And it ain't no great loss, neither," they declared, "when he was down with all hands on board, off the coast somewhere, and nobody left to give the particklers; and though he's gone to his account, and I don't hev no wish to disparage the dead."

All at once Lorrimor began to look at himself as if he were somebody else, and the view failed to satisfy his soul. Crossing the brook that flowed through the meadow, one evening, he met Margaret alone.

"Well met," said she, gayly, showing him a handful of water-lilies. "See, I fished these out of the bottomless pond, in an old leaky wherry that was rotting on the shore. Will you have some?"

"Why didn't you ask me to get them for you, Margaret? You might have been at the bottom of the pond by this time." "It is bottomless, you know."

"Why didn't you ask Mr. Strathley to get them for you?" he added, as an afterthought.

The sudden color reddened upon Margaret's cheek.

"Mr. Strathley has something else to do."

"But I have nothing else to do that I should like half as well. Margaret—we used to be such friends—I used to think—but no matter what—you find Strathley more to your mind, no doubt. I don't blame you, only we were such old friends."

There was a look of trouble growing in Margaret's eyes. "We are friends still, I hope," she said.

"Are we? That fellow with his fine airs and bold eyes has bewitched you; we were happy enough before he came. Do you know what they say in the village?"

"I do not care what they say," she replied, with growing color and a tear in her eyes that belied her words. "What right have you to speak of me? Why do you listen, you who pretended to be my friend?"

"Pretend! That's an honest word between you and me! If Strathley had your good at heart—"

"Take care, John, don't say anything against Mr. Strathley. You might be sorry for it some day. He is—he knew my poor Brother Ben—at school, or somewhere. It does us good to hear him talk

of Ben!" It was hard for Margaret to dissemble, and she did it with a poor grace.

"Blessings brighten as they take their flight," thought Lorrimor; "knew you, Brother Ben, did he? and your grandfather listens?" The time had been when Ben's name had been forbidden, and the old farmer had sworn that Ben's shadow should never darken his door.

"People ought to be careful how they speak of their own flesh and blood," groined the neighbors when the Arcturnus was cast away, and the last chance of giving Ben with it. But though Grandfather Bevis had aged since then, had begun to have a halt in his step and a stoop in his shoulders, and to grow a fresh crop of wrinkles, yet even grim Death had failed to obliterate Ben's misdeeds—their impoverished condition was a constant reminder. Mr. Bevis saw his more fortunate neighbors enjoying the fruits of land he had cleared with the horny hand of toil, sitting down to bounteous supped tables, with a good balance in the bank for rainy weather, while he and his fared scantily, and hardly dared to look the future in the face.

Ben had been the apple of his eye, and to have suffered from his selfishness added another sting to poverty.

"When Mr. Strathley first mentioned Ben, grandfather just groined and toddled out of the room. The next time he shut his eyes and made believe to sleep; but now, do you know, he hangs upon Mr. Strathley's words, John, though he never asks a question. But the day will come when he will pardon poor Ben, I know it will."

"And Strathley, having done missionary work, will demand his reward!" said John, bitterly. "Margaret, do you think he means fairly by you? Isn't it just a season's amusement to him?"

"I have no fears," she answered. "But in spite of what folks might say, Mr. Strathley was at Ford, on and off, all summer."

"The mill needs a sight of looking after," they sniffed, "it might run away; he had taken a mighty fancy to Meg Bevis, and praps she expected to be a fine lady, anon, and ride in her carriage and have servants under her; but there was many a hole in the skimmer. 'Twasn't likely but he'd been used to women-folks as could play the pianny and wear the fashions as natural as their own skins. Old Bevis ought to be ashamed to allow such goings on under his eyes."

High time 'o' day, too, for Mr. Strathley to put Bevis an overseer at the mill, over the heads of younger and smarter men, with no end of wages and nothing to do but watch the gang-saw! That didn't look queer, did it? And wasn't Strathley's team stabled in Bevis' barn; and didn't Meg use it when she pleased, and a mighty smart team, too, no one-hoss-shay. And who could tell why he'd bought the Dean meadow of Bevis, when it was such a barren waste that the grasshoppers avoided it? He hadn't no use for it, there wasn't a stick of timber on it, but it put cash in old Bevis' pocket, where cash was a stranger, eh?"

Lorrimor was obliged to listen to all this without the power of proving it false, and it made his heart ache as that organ had never ached before; darkened the day and embittered life for him. He dreaded to meet friend or foe, for fear of hearing opinions which he could not combat, and they all wondered that he would not join in the general cavil. Had not Margaret thrown him over for a flashy fellow, about whom nobody knew anything beyond what he chose to tell? Wasn't resentment the proper attitude for a jilted lover? To be sure, he felt very hard toward this handsome, well-to-do gentleman who had stepped between him and happiness—who slipped so easily into the position for which John had served twice seven years.

He could scarcely bear the sight of him dawdling about Bevis' farm—as though to the manner born—but he was obliged to own that Strathley showed a surpassing good-nature, an indifference to his rudeness that was provoking; and that he was just as ready to be civil and friendly afterward.

"Surely this is a hard world," thought Lorrimor, "in which it is necessary to love one's enemy, though he has stolen the apple of one's eye." Wasn't it if it required a little to much of human nature—or, at least, of Lorrimor's nature? Still, if he happened to meet Strathley on the highway and fared on a piece with him, talking of the prospects for lumbering in the coming winter; about provisioning the camp and engaging men, and of that kind of rough-and-ready life, Lorrimor could not deny but he was a pleasant, companionable fellow enough, with a deal of backbone, who knew his work and the sort of people with whom he had to deal.

"I mean to have a taste of this camp-life myself, this winter," he said by the way. "I want to know what it is like, to become brave enough not to heed poor fare, a hard couch, or howling wolves."

"You won't find it as easy as lying, I reckon," said Lorrimor, "a little of that kind of thing goes a great way."

"I dare say. Are you going to join my gang?"

"No, thank you. I'm looking for a chance to sell out. I want to raise some ready money and be off to California, where it grows faster than in this soil."

"Ah, going to leave for good and all? Any disappointment? She hasn't gone back on you, eh?"

"Who do you mean?" asked John, fiercely.

"The girl you are going to leave behind you."

"I have no sweetheart," said John evasively.

"More's the pity—it's love that makes the world go round."

"No, it isn't—it's meay."

"If you want money my boy, let me help you."

"You! No, thank you. I want no man's money."

Lorrimor did not find a purchaser for his farm before the winter set in, cold and bitter, with angry storms and biting frosts. He was still waiting for one when Mr. Strathley came from town on a dark December day, and meeting Lorrimor, begged he would pioneer him through the woods to the camp.

"I suppose you know the woods as well as your own face?" he said.

"Yes," said Lorrimor; "only, if it should come to a storm as it threatens, we may lose our reckoning. Hadn't you better wait till the weather clears?"

"How far do you call it?"

"Near six miles; but it isn't like walking on a concrete pavement, you know."

"No, I'm inclined to push on to-day, if you're willing."

"They set out not long after noon; the sun came out and blinked at them; but by the time they had struck into the deep woods he had thinned better of it and retired behind a flaw of snow."

"This will all blow over," said Strathley, confidently.

"Or maybe we'll outstrip the storm and reach the camp ahead of it," agreed Lorrimor.

But though the storm seemed in no hurry, it meant business; from a slight flaw, it goes into a lazy tumult of snow-flakes, obliterating landmarks, and making the woods murky and bewildering.

"Six miles are soon traveled in the worst weather," averred Strathley. "It's getting confoundedly dark though, Lorrimor; it seems to me we have walked ten leagues already."

"I'll be blessed if it isn't the longest six miles I ever footed," confessed Lorrimor. "We ought to be close upon the camp, unless—"

But just then Strathley stumbled in the swiftly descending darkness, and fell, with a groan, over the ragged remnant of a lightning-blasted stump.

"Tough luck," said Lorrimor, rubbing his face with the new fallen snow, and chafing his hands; for Mr. Strathley was prone upon the ground in a dead faint.

"What if he never came to life again?" Lorrimor asked himself. "What would Margaret do? Would it be happier for himself?"

"Where have I been?" asked Strathley, suddenly, sitting upright and trying to look through the darkness.

"That's more than I can tell you," answered Lorrimor. "You had a fall that knocked the breath out of you a spell. Do you feel better? Could you walk, think?"

"Certainly, let's be jogging. There—give me your hand. I'm a trifle stiff from the fall yet. It's deuced cold, seems to me."

"That's so; it left off snowing a mile back, and the wind has stiffened. It's going to be a rough night. We haven't any time to lose; you see, we must have missed the path some time ago; that rascally snow pelted a fellow's face so fast and thick. Eh! what's the trouble now?"

"I must sit down again for a spell; I can't keep up with you."

"But you must, you know."

"I couldn't walk another rod just now if death himself were at my heels."

"Nonsense. Trudge along; it's growing colder every moment. It's death to give up."

Strathley staggered along for a few paces, with Lorrimor's aid; but soon came to a halt.

"I tell you, Lorrimor, it's no go; you'll have to leave me and push ahead."

"I'll carry you first."

"That deuced fall took all the pluck out of me. I might find some courage to crawl if I were sure it wasn't a tom-fool's errand—if we were on the right track—but it would be a sin to keep you here in this weather. I'll wait awhile and catch my breath. Do you go on. I'll overtake you sooner or later."

"Will you? If I leave you, you'll never take another step, you'll just doze off into the other world. The only safe thing for us to do is to keep jogging till we drop; anything else is suicide, and."

"—with an effort—there's Margaret!"

"Yes," drowsily, "there's Margaret, to be sure. I must make an effort—for her sake! But you push along—! I'll follow I couldn't walk just yet to save myself from perdition. I'm so stunned and shaken; no—I couldn't."

Lorrimor leaned against the nearest tree and waited in desperation. It was bitter cold, he owned, and his powers of persuasion were exhausted; but to leave the man to his own devices was certain death—and what then? Was he his brother's keeper? Why should he hazard life and love for this stranger who had stepped between himself and happiness? Did he owe Mr. Strathley aught? He started forward a few paces—perhaps the camp was near at hand and he could bring help. But what was he doing? Deceiving himself? Should he leave Strathley behind? Would he be able to find him in the dark? Would any halloo of his waken him from that deathly sleep into which he was fast falling? But there was Margaret—would she not be all his own again? And then he hung his head there in the coming winter; about provisioning the camp and engaging men, and of that kind of rough-and-ready life, Lorrimor could not deny but he was a pleasant, companionable fellow enough, with a deal of backbone, who knew his work and the sort of people with whom he had to deal.

"I mean to have a taste of this camp-life myself, this winter," he said by the way. "I want to know what it is like, to become brave enough not to heed poor fare, a hard couch, or howling wolves."

"You won't find it as easy as lying, I reckon," said Lorrimor, "a little of that kind of thing goes a great way."

"I dare say. Are you going to join my gang?"

"No, thank you. I'm looking for a chance to sell out. I want to raise some ready money and be off to California, where it grows faster than in this soil."

gotten gains, too. As a stranger I had some chance of earning my way into his good graces. You see, I left here twenty years ago, a stripling, with flaxen hair and beardless face, and I'm bronzed and weather-beaten beyond recognition. When I return to Ford, we will have it out with Grandfather Bevis, and you know the worst of best. And you, Lorrimor—well, there's Margaret. Perhaps I shall dance at your wedding in spite of a rough night in the backwoods."

The Adventure of a Mason.

BY WASHINGTON IRVING.

There was upon a time a poor mason or bricklayer, in Granada, who kept at the saints' days and holidays, and Saint Monday into the bargain, and, with all his devotion, he grew poorer and poorer and could scarcely earn bread for his numerous family. One night he was aroused from his first sleep by a knocking at his door. He opened it, and beheld before him a tall, meagre, cadaverous-looking priest.

"Hark ye, honest friend!" said the stranger, "I have observed that you are a good Christian, and one to be trusted; will you undertake a job this very night?"

"With all my heart, Senor Padre, on condition that I am paid accordingly."

"That you shall be; but you must suffer yourself to be blindfolded."

To this the mason made no objection, so being hoodwinked, he was led by the priest through various rough lanes and winding passages, until they stopped before the portal of a house. The priest then applied a key, turned a creaking lock, and opened what sounded like a ponderous door. They entered, the door was closed and bolted, and the mason was conducted through an echoing corridor and a spacious hall, to an interior part of the building. Here the bandage was removed from his eyes, and he found himself in a patio or court, dimly lighted by a single lamp. In the centre was the dry basin of an old Moorish fountain, under which the priest requested him to form a small vault, bricks and mortar being at hand for the purpose. He accordingly worked all night, but without finishing the job. Just before daybreak the priest put a piece of gold into his hand, and, having again blindfolded him, conducted him back to his dwelling.

"Are you willing," said he, "to return and complete your work?" "Gladly, Senor Padre provided I'm so well paid."

"Well, then, to-morrow at midnight I will call again." He did so, and the vault was completed. "Now," said the priest, "you must help me to bring forth the bodies that are to be buried in this vault."

The poor mason's hair rose on his head at these words; he followed the priest, with trembling steps, into a retired chamber of the mansion, expecting to behold some ghastly spectacle of death, but was relieved on perceiving three or four portly juries standing in one corner. They were evidently full of money, and it was with great labor that he and the priest carried them forth and consigned them to their tomb. The vault was then closed, the pavement replaced, and all traces of the work obliterated. The mason was again hoodwinked and led forth by a route different from that by which he had come.

After they had wandered for a long time through a perplexed maze of alleys, they halted. The priest then put two pieces of gold into his hand. "Wait here, said he, 'until you hear the cathedral bell toll for matins. If you presume to uncover your eyes before that time, evil will befall you. So saying he departed. The mason waited faithfully, amusing himself by weighing the gold pieces in his hand, and clinking them against each other. The moment the cathedral bell rang its matins peal, he uncovered his eyes, and found himself on the banks of the Xenil, from whence he made the best of his way home, and revelled with his family for a whole fortnight on the profits of his two nights' work; after which he was as poor as ever.

He continued to work a little, and made a good deal, and kept Saints'-days and holidays, from year to year, while his family grew up as gaunt and ragged as a crew of gypsies. As he was seated one evening at the door of his house, he was accosted by a rich old curmudgeon, who was noted for owning many houses and being a gripping landlord. The man of money eyed him for a moment from beneath a pair of anxious, shagged eyebrows.

"I am told, friend that you are very poor."

"There is no denying the fact, senor—it speaks for itself."

"I presume, then, that you will be glad of a job, and will work cheap."

"As cheap, my master, as any mason in Granada."

"That's what I want. I have an old house fallen into decay, that cost me more money than it is worth to keep it in repair, for nobody will live in it; so I must contrive to patch it up and keep it together at as small expense as possible."

The mason was accordingly conducted to a large deserted house that seemed going to ruin. Passing through several empty halls and chambers, he entered an inner court, where his eye was caught by an old Moorish fountain. He paused a moment, for a dreamy recollection of the place came over him.

"Pray," said he, who occupied this house formerly?"

"A pest upon him!" cried the landlord "It was an old miserly priest, who cared for nobody but himself. He was said to be immensely rich, and, having no relation, it was thought he would leave all his treasures to the Church. He died suddenly, and the priests and friars thronged to take possession of his wealth; but nothing could they find but a few ducats in a leather purse. The worst luck has fallen on me, for, since his death the old fellow continues to occupy my house without paying rent, and there's no taking the law on a dead man. The people pretend to hear the clinking of gold all night in the chamber where the old priest slept, as if he were counting over his money, and sometimes a groaning and moaning about the court. Whether true or false, these stories have brought a bad name on my house, and not a tenant will remain in it."

"Enough," said the mason, sturdily "let me live in your house rent-free until some better tenant present, and I will engage to put it in repair, and to quiet the

troubled spirit that disturbs it. I am a good Christian and a poor man, am not to be daunted by the devil himself, even though he should come in the shape of a big bag of money!"

The offer of the honest mason was gladly accepted, he moved with his family into the house, and fulfilled all his engagements. By little and little he restored it to its former state; the clinking of gold was no more heard at night in the chamber of the defunct priest, but began to be heard by day in the pocket of the living mason.

In a word, he increased rapidly in wealth, to the admiration of all his neighbors, and became one of the richest men in Granada; he gave large sums to the Church, by way no doubt of satisfying his conscience, and never revealed the secret of the vault until on his death-bed to his son and heir.

The End of a Candle.

CLEMENT SCOTT.

The title of my story is suggestive, and I doubt not that it may appeal to boys' minds in various ways. Allow me, however, to preface my little anecdote with the grave assertion that what follows is connected in no way whatever with what, in schoolboy phraseology, is technically known as "a sell." I have been, thank goodness, a schoolboy myself; and I am happy to say that the old-fashioned tricks were, as they should be, played upon me in common with my fellow-creatures.

What I have to tell has, however, nothing to do with tricks in tallow or pilfered lights. My story treats of a real bona fide candle, not one of your modern composite inventions with a finely tapered end patented and warranted to fit every conceivable candlestick, and a wick that never wants snuffing, but dies away into a dissipated fery end.

You must go back with me to the old days, when patent candles were not invented or thought of, and when a silver snuffer-tray and a pair of silver snuffers were brought in and deposited by the side of the candlesticks in great state. According to my present ideas of life, I don't think that I should consider Staunton altogether a lively place; but Staunton in the days when I knew it was to me a paradise. My two maiden aunts, were exceedingly fond of their nephew, and as their nephew was not altogether a mischievous lad, and possessed the wonderful gift of being able to amuse himself, it need not appear extraordinary that the owners of a certain white-looking, clean mansion in Main Street of Staunton and the pale-faced visitor at the said mansion goton very well together.

My first insight into life and its mysterious ways, dates from my first visit to Staunton, where I was just as happy watching the market-carts come into town and put up at the "Tavern," over the way as I was playing at stage coach, and every other conceivable variation of a coaching expedition, all by myself in a deserted out-house, the only property to render me assistance being a tumble-down and rickety old phaeton.

I had been a mite, oocie lad, amusing myself in my quiet, unassuming manner, thoroughly contented with my own society and that of my respected aunts. Charley Clode was the means of revolutionizing my life. He had lots of adventures and tales to relate to me; he first fired me with the enthusiasm of public school life, told me of his adventures and deeds of daring, of the heroes of the school that he worshipped and the sneaks whom he despised; and altogether I thought Charley Clode a most enjoyable companion, and cultivated his society accordingly.

He was a capital fellow was Charley's father, and would often come out and have a turn with us at ball, or whatever game we might be playing. He was a doctor, and great at all sorts of experiments, with which he used to delight us in the evenings. According to Charley's account there was no one who could make such fireworks as his father, and though it was the wrong time of the year we were promised a miniature display on the lawn the very first dark night that came.

One evening—I shall never forget it—I was over at the Clodes' house, and the doctor, who had nothing particular to do, was working for us a little steam-engine he had lately made. The doctor had a workshop in the basement floor of the house; and adjoining this was a dark, gloomy-looking cellar, wherein were deposited all sorts of odds and ends—old empty bottles from the surgery, packing-cases, and rubbish of every kind. The workshop and its adjacent lumber-cellar had always been forbidden us boys, for the doctor rather mistrusted Charley's capabilities of resisting the fascinations of the lathe; and though not particularly tidy in his own work, had that peculiar method in his untidiness that he knew exactly where to lay his hands upon everything he wanted, and was by no means anxious that any of his work should be spoiled by careless handling or delayed by a sudden impulse of boyish mischief.

On the particular night to which I am alluding, Charley and I were sent off from the drawing-room, in which the doctor's family was assembled, to hunt up the remains of an old tramway which the doctor had made years ago, and which was to be called into requisition on the special occasion on which the doctor had promised all of us that he would work the miniature engine on which he had expended so much time and trouble, in full assembly.

The wreck of the tramway was reported to be among the old lumber which lay in a helpless and confused mass in the dreary dark cellar which adjoined the surgery on the basement floor.

"For it is pitch dark now, and we shall not be able to see a yard before us."

"All right old boy; but let us be quick about it; for your father seems anxious to work this engine, and all the ladies are impatient."

We made our way into the kitchen, and I don't think they were quite prepared for our sudden appearance, or the energetic appeal Charley made for a candle.

In a little room adjoining the kitchen a maid was washing up plates and glasses by the light of the very smallest portion of a tallow candle, whose wick was at that moment of a portentous length, and dimmed considerably the uncertain rays which the candle threw upon the melancholy party.

"Here, this will do," said energetic Charley, seizing the scrap of candle, and

in the energy, extracting it from the humble socket which contained it. I really believe it was nothing more than a bottle. "We shan't be gone a minute. You can stay in the dark, Mary, until we return."

It was useless for Mary to protest, which she did emphatically, asserting that she would not allow the young men to go messing themselves over with all that nasty tallow. Charley would wait for no apologies; and thrusting the scrap of tallow-candle end into my hand, for he was guide and knew the way and the whereabouts of the article which we had come to find, he preceded me through the surgery into the deserted cellar.

Charley's search was not at first quite successful. I could do nothing towards assisting him, but stood patiently in the middle of the cellar with the scrap of candle-end gradually diminishing between my fingers, the wick getting longer and longer and the light more and more obscure.

At last Charley's voice spoke encouragement. My part of the transaction was not a lively one, and I felt particularly glad that we were not to return to the drawing-room discomfited. Boys don't like to be thought stupid, and to have returned to the doctor empty-handed would have been the signal for a volley of "chaff" from the doctor and a chorus from the expectant ladies.

"Here's the tramway sure enough," said Charley, from behind two old packing-cases, "but I can't get it out without your help. Just put that beastly candle down somewhere and give us a hand behind here."

Charley's request was easier made than accomplished. The "beastly candle," as he chose to call it, was naked and unprotected by any candlestick, and to keep the light in under these circumstances was not such an easy matter. We were not at all anxious to be left in the dark, which late very nearly overtook us, for I made three dismal attempts at setting up the candle, and failed egregiously on every occasion.

Charley was getting impatient, and again summoned me to his assistance in authoritative tones from behind the large packing-cases.

A bright thought suddenly struck me. At my side was an open bag containing sand—at least, it seemed like sand to me; but I had no time to stop and examine its contents very closely. I plunged the candle end into the sand, and to my joy I saw that it stood up firmly in its *improvised* resting-place. But I could not help noticing that the wick had now got to an enormous size, and that at its end was an ugly fery lump which threatened every moment to detach itself and tumble among the sand. I went to Charley's assistance, and by dint of a good deal of pulling and hauling we managed at last to extricate the doctor's tramway from its obscure hiding-place.

We emerged from behind the packing-cases.

"Where did you put the candle?" said Charley; for the light had now got so dim that it was a difficult matter to see at all.

"In that bag of sand."

"Bag of sand!"—where?"

I went towards it. I heard a crash behind me. The tramway had fallen from Charley's shoulder, and I felt myself suddenly dragged back just as I had got within reach of the candle.

I heard but three words, and they were not spoken, but literally hissed into my ears.

"Sand! It's gunpowder!"

I very nearly dropped. That awful cold shiver which we have most of us experienced, ran all over me, and then I turned around and faced Charley. He looked like death, and a cold sweat was breaking out on his face. There was no time to be lost. An enormous blossom of red fire was now hanging to the charred wick, which any moment might fall among the gunpowder, and then it was easy to guess what would follow. There was enough there to blow up the house twenty times over.

"Does your hand shake?" said Charley. "Do you think you dare try?"

My nerve—I was very young, you must remember—was quite gone. I tried once twice; and so did Charley; but we were both trembling in every limb. A nervous twitch of the hand would have destroyed ever soul in that house in less than a minute. Charley had said rightly that there was no time to be lost. There was little good in our standing there looking at one another and waiting for death. There we were powerless to save one another or any one had been proved.

Charley was the bolder of the two; and luckily knew his way in the dark. He literally dragged me out of the cellar. I did not know where I was going,