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Fatal Mistake

BY

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"FETTERED, YET FREE," "CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE," "ESTELLE'S ERROR," "FALSE PRIDE," "STRICKEN DUMB," ETC., ETC.

CONTINUED.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE END OF A BRIGHT DREAM.

Mr. James Dalton had suddenly gained a clue which was as unexpected as it was extraordinary. He thought himself dreaming at first, and it was some time before he could realize his good fortune; but, when he did realize it, his discretion had to be brought into full play, for he could scarcely retain the secret.

It lacked three days of Christmas when he called again at the house of his promised bride. The evening was clear but frosty, and a light wind had sprung up. The artist concluded that he should be more comfortable in-door than in taking his usual prowl about the city. At dusk he ascended the steps of Clarice's pleasant little dwelling and rang the bell. Clarice was just spreading the cloth for supper as he entered the room. The fire burned brightly and seemed vieing with the light of the lamp.

Everything looked neat and comfortable, but the chief attraction to James Dalton was absent.

"Where is Celeste?" he asked, seating himself in the large arm-chair.

"She has gone out," replied Clarice, nervously, busily setting the table.

"Gone out!" exclaimed the young man, springing from his seat.

"Yes. She said she was longing for a breath of fresh air, and wished to take a short walk. As she has not been out since she came here, I could not object, and she pleaded very hard."

James Dalton's face did not betray the tempest of doubt and fear which raged within.

"How long has she been gone?" he asked, quietly.

Clarice appeared not to have heard this question, for she did not answer.

"How long has she been gone?" repeated James Dalton.

"Almost an hour," said Clarice, reluctantly.

A slight pallor was visible on James Dalton's face, and his lips twitched, as he picked up his hat,

"Then she will not return," he said—"she has been tracked!"

Not long after receiving this intelligence, the artist was again in the little wooden church opposite the house which set back from the street, in the suburbs of Brooklyn city.

He took his station at the partly-opened window, buttoning up his coat to keep out the wind. It was a curious episode in the history of that holy edifice.

The next morning worship was to be held the church, for it was Saturday night, and here was a man-hunter watching in its precincts in anticipation of prey.

There was a bright moon shining, and every object about and near the building could be plainly seen. Occasionally, wind clouds drifted across the horizon, but soon were gone, when all was bright again under the effulgent moonlight.

The streets were deserted.

A single light burned in the upper part of the house which was being watched, just the same as on that former occasion when James Dalton had spent the night in the church.

More than an hour passed without anything to interrupt the monotony of the place when the watcher observed a movement at the western corner of the house. It was a cautious movement—some object, human or animal, he could not tell which, was evidently trying to get around to the front door. Presently the object came out from the shadow of the eaves and passed along until it gained the door.

It was the figure of a woman!

James Dalton's heart gave a wild leap.

Who could it be?

The door of the house was in partial shadow, and he could not see whether she entered it or remained outside. Racked with doubt and fear, his self-control almost foorsook him; but he curbed his wild desire to rush out and confront the woman, and waited.

Some hours had passed when the door of the house was opened and two men issued forth. They came slowly down the garden path, pushed open the gate, and went down the street.

James Dalton quickly left the church, locked it, and followed the two men. They were crossing the fields back of the house, and had quickened their pace. The young man kept some distance behind them, staggering carelessly along. He had put on an rusty black coat, the sleeves of which were dilapidated, and had drawn a slouch hat ver his forehead. To all appearance he as only a half-drunken laborer.

Once the men stopped and looked back; then, as James-Dalton staggered and almost fell, they went on.

Quickening his pace, James Dalton was soon up with them. The keen-eyed man whom he had seen on Broaday, some time before, he singled out at a glance, and shoved violently against him.

The man sprang back with an oath, but not before a pistol-barrel was pressed against his temple.

"I want you, my man!" said James Dalton, coolly, and he blew a shrill blast from a whistle attached to the button-hole of his coat.

The man's companion turned and fled in the direction he had come.

The keen-eyed man seemed so completely surprised as to be incapable of making any resistance.

"George Ricker," said Mr. Dalton, as a policeman came up in answer to his summons, "you must turn back, and go quietly with us to the house which you have just left."

Upon reaching the house, James Dalton sounded his whistle twice and rang the door-bell violently. After a few moments' delay, the door was cautiously opened, and the bold-faced woman called Jess looked out. Without ceremony, the young man gave the door a kick which sent it back against the wall, and the party made their way in, reinforced by two officers, who had answered James Dalton's signal.

As they entered the drawing-room, the woman Jess, who rushed in ahead of them, gave a bundle of wood, strangely enough, lying in the open fire-place, a kick, as if desiring to put it back out of sight.

James Dalton sprang forward and picked up the wood, which proved to be a box painted in imitation. The box had in it a quantity of bank notes. He then walked over to George Ricker, who stood looking at him with a dogged expression, but who seemed afraid to move from the side of the policeman in whose custody he was. James Dalton inspected the thief's coat from the collar down to the bottom, and from the bottom up to the collar again, on both sides. Then, catching hold of the left lappel, he drew from his vest pocket a small piece of cloth, which he had picked up in the Ovington library, and fitted it in the rent lappel.

"You have had a tussle with somebody, and have lost a portion of your dry goods!" he said, dryly.

One of the police officers, who had ascended to the second story, came down accompanied by Miss Celeste Van Duyne.

With a loud wail, the beautiful woman ran into James Dalton's outstretched arms.

"You will not believe me wicked?" she sobbed, caressing him passionately.

"Why did you come here, Celeste?" asked the young man, holding her close. "Did you come or were you forced?"

"I came to get evidence for you, my darling—for you! Take me away from this dreadful place! That wicked man, who ought to love me, has tried to make me a prisoner! I would have done all in my power to shield him, but he is so bad—worse than I thought—oh, so much worse!"

"I found the young woman tied to a chair in the back room," explained the policeman who had brought her in.

George Ricker stood looking upon this scene as if mute from astonishment.

"You should have left the matter entirely to me, Celeste," said James Dalton, in a low tone. "It was wrong in you to attempt assisting me thus."

"What is the meaning of all this?" exclaimed George Ricker. "What am I arrested for?"

"For robbery and assault," said Mr. Dalton.

"Is that any reason why you should make love to my wife before my very eyes? I think you are laying yourself liable to the law!'

"Your wife!"

"Oh, how can you speak so falsely?" cried Miss Van Duyne, clinging closer to her lover.

"What, do you deny that you are my wife?"

Miss Van Duyne began to weep unrestrainedly.

"Have you the heart to assail the character of your own sister?" exclaimed James Dalton. "Are you sunk so low that you would drag her down with you?"

George Ricker gave utterance to a loud laugh.

"Believe it or not, as you like," he said, coolly. "Mrs. Ricker came stealing in here to-night to get a paper which, in her flight from home, she must have forgotten. I heard a noise in my room and, going to discover the cause, caught Celeste just in time to hinder her destroying the paper. Ah, Celeste, my girl, I thought better of you—I thought you would use me right! I have always been kind to you!"

"Do you claim that this stricken woman is your lawfully-wedded wife?" cried James Dalton.

George Ricker handed him a paper.

"No, no!" shrieked Miss Van Duyne, as she endeavored to snatch it from her lover's hand. "You must not read it!"

But, despite her protest, James Dalton read the paper. It was a marriage certificate, which proved the burglar's assertion to be true.

"I love you, Mr. Dalton!" moaned the beautiful woman, sinking to her knees and clutching his hand, upon which she showered hot, convulsive kisses—"I love you—you saved my life!"

"Vile, infamous woman!" exclaimed the deceived man, "how dare you love another than the man to whom you are wedded! And you claimed to be so pure and innocent!"

He drew away from her, and, deprived of her hold upon his hand, the miserable woman fell prone on the carpet, face downward.

Female beauty had forever lost its charm for James Dalton.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A TERRIBLE REVELATION.

Two evenings after the events recorded in the preceding chapter, Mrs. Granby Dumont was to attend a select masquerade at a friend's, Mrs. Elbert Carlton, in Morrisania. The General cared little for such scenes, but he believed that his young wife wished to appear at the soiree, and he was willing to sacrifice his own happiness to hers, although he did think that her experience at the Academy of Music would keep her from attending any more, at present, of the same sort of entertainment, even if it were private.

As he was waiting to attend his wife to the masquerade, a servant entered and handed him a letter, which informed him that if he would come to the masquerade alone, he should see, with his own eyes, and hear with his own ears, the guilt of the woman whom he had wedded. It was signed "Lady Friend."

"I will go!" exclaimed Granby Dumont. "Surely I shall be able to fathom this vile plot!"

He ascended to the dressing-room of his wife and informed her that an unexpected summons called him away. He wished her to go without him.

Mrs. Dumont was inwardly glad that her husband was not to be present at her friend's house.

The parlors were comfortably filled with beauty and fashion, but there was no form there more graceful than that of Mrs. Granby Dumont.

After the first quadrille, Mrs. Dumont contrived to drop the arm of her partner and to disappear.

She went out upon the piazza at the back of the house and descended the steps to the grounds below.

"They will be here shortly after eleven!" she murmured, drawing the thick shawl which she had flung over her costume close about her.

She had not to wait long.

Two men entered the grounds by the carriage-way—William Gorton and Levinto, the Spaniard.

"You both know what to do?" she asked.

"Yes, madam," replied Gorton. "We are only to watch, and to be ready, should our services be needed."

"Precisely so—one of you will be near me wherever I go; and you will make it your business to keep your eye upon Mr. James Dalton, if he appears here to-night."

The two men glided silently away beneath the skeleton trees.

"Would it not be better to end this suspense now?" muttered Mrs. Dumont. "No," she added; "I will go forward—I will see what can be done!"

The General went in a coach, which he hired from a livery stable, but he took his own driver.

"Why do these people persist in slandering her?" he thought. "I will believe in her and trust her to the last, and it shall be my business to unravel this mystery."

About a half mile from the house, the coach was brought to a stand-still.

The General thrust his head out of the window.

"If you are General Granby Dumont, stop!" said a voice. "You are close to your destination."

"I am?" answered the General, proudly, alighting from the vehicle.

The man who had accosted him bade him follow, and, in a few minutes they reached a dilapidated building.

This house was empty.

General Dumont said nothing, and the stranger requested the coachman, who had reined in his horses at the door, to drive on a little further. So soon as the vehicle was gone, the man entered the house, the General following. The shutters were closed. The General's guide pointed to a ladder, leading to the second story, which the two ascended.

The General looked around him, and, by the dim light which issued from a lamp below, he beheld, in the further corner of the chamber a form whose presence sent a thrill to his heart. For the third time he beheld that white-robed figure.

"You do well, Granby Dumont," said the figure—"you do well to obey my summons. Perhaps, now, you will credit what you see, and know that I have spoken truly!"

"It is the appointed hour," said the guide, whose voice was muffled in the folds of a huge scarf. "You have but to watch and listen." He knelt down and slid away a portion of the flooring. "You may watch without fear of being seen."

The General stationed himself at the aperture, and waited, with wildly-beating heart. He had been watching about ten minutes when he heard a door open. A moment afterward, he saw two persons enter the room beneath him.

They were both masked—one was a man, and the other a woman, who was dressed, from head to foot, in a black domino.

"Thank Heaven," thought the General, "it is not Maud! She wore a different dress." But, in a moment, he murmured: "Ah, misery, it is she!"

"Why have you brought me to this place?" exclaimed Mrs. Dumont, looking around the apartment.

"Because I have something to say which must not be overheard," returned her companion.

"You might surely have chosen a better scene for our interview, Mr. Dalton."

"Who says that I am Mr. Dalton?" said the mask, in a strange tone.

"Your voice says so."

"But voices are sometimes alike. You might be mistaken in the identity."

"But I am not mistaken," replied Mrs. Dumont. "You told me that you have something of importance to say, or I should not have consented to accompany you here."

"I have to inform you of a peril which menaces you."

"A peril!"

"The peril of being accused of the murder of your lover, Clarence Suydam."

Granby Dumont expected that his wife would start from her seat, angry and indignant, to repudiate the vile charge contained in these words; but she did not stir.

"Who accuses me?" she asked, in a hoarse, gasping voice.

"Yourself," answered the mask. "You are your own accuser, and the strongest accusation almost that exists against you is the evidence of your own handwriting—the letters written by you to the murdered man, Clarence Suydam."

The face of Maud Dumont grew ghastly white, and the General could see that she was trembling violently.

"There are no such letters in existence," she said.

"There are, and you know that there are. Why did you refuse them when they were offered you?"

"I refused them," gasped the wretched woman, "because——"

"Because they were offered by the dead!" said the mask, in a solemn voice. "Maud Dumont, you who deceived the most generous of men by your false smiles, your hollow words—you are the murderer of the man whose only crime was to love and trust you. The letters written by you to Clarence Suydam are still in existence; they prove the motive of your crime, and they are in the hands of those who will not scruple to use them when the fitting time comes. But that is not all. In the grave dug for another is the body of your murdered lover, whose birthmark, when he is exhumed, will establish his identity. He was slain by a man in your employ and cast into the river."

The guilty woman uttered a long, wild shriek, and fell upon her knees at the feet of her accuser.

"Mr. Dalton," she cried, "why are you thus pitiless? What have I ever done to win your hate? We have always been friends. I have greatly esteemed you—you cannot say that I have ever injured you in word, look or deed!"

"You have injured—murdered my friend, Clarence Suydam," said the mask, sternly.

"Ah! I am innocent of his murder—I repeat, I am innocent—for I loved him truly, and would have married him when my husband died. I wished money, and sacrificed all to obtain it. But think you I love Granby Dumont? No, no! I fooled him by false words, and he was weak enough to believe that I loved him! Have pity on me! have pity! I may appear guilty, but I swear that I am innocent! It is all a mistake! At your feet, I supplicate for mercy! Remember, Mr. Dalton, that I am a weak woman, and withhold your hand!"

Had Maud Dumont been less agitated by the terrible agony of fear, she might have heard a stifled groan of despair that was uttered in the chamber above. The one bright dream of Granby Dumont's life was broken. The mask had fallen. He now knew the nature of the woman he had loved and trusted.

"I have told you before that you are mistaken, Maud Dumont," said her companion, in a cold and pitiless voice; "I am not James Dalton!"

"Not James Dalton!" repeated the woman, in utter bewilderment. "Who, then, are you?"

"One whom you should have reason to remember," answered the man.

At the same moment he threw aside the black velvet mask that had covered his face.

The glare of the lamp shone full upon that rigid and marble-like countenance.

A shriek of terror and despair burst from Maud Dumont's lips, and she fell fainting on the rugged flooring of the chamber. The face upon which she had looked was the same which she had beheld in the private box at the Academy of Music. It was the face of Clarence Suydam, her murdered lover.

The shriek had been overheard. William Gorton had followed his mistress. He heard her wild cry and rushed to her assistance.

William Gorton raised the prostrate woman in his arms and carried her out into the open air.

The cool breeze revived her; she opened her eyes and gazed wildly about.

"Kill him, William!" she cried in a hoarse voice, as she recognized her servant and accomplice—"kill him! He has returned to torment me—he has returned to denounce me! Kill him, and I will reward you more richly than I have yet rewarded you!"

William Gorton drew a pistol from his pocket and rushed toward the empty house. He ran into the empty chamber and took deliberate aim at the mask, who stood calm and motionless beside a broken table. But, before William Gorton could pull the trigger, the stranger flung aside his black velvet mask and a flaxen wig which had concealed his dark hair.

The servant uttered a cry of terror scarcely less wild and piercing than that which had burst from the lips of his mistress.

"The dead!" he cried—"the murdered victim risen from the grave to glare at me with his hollow eyes! Hide me from him—hide me from him!"

He flung up his arms wildly, as if to shut out the sight of that dreaded face, and rushed from the building, staggering as he went.

It was thus Granby Dumont learned the dark secret of his beautiful wife's history.

TO BE CONTINUED.

ANECDOTES OF COLERIDGE.

He was dining with some friends near London, when a broken soldier, in old tattered uniform, came to the window, begging; on which Coleridge launched into a history, causes, effects—everything—of the Peninsular War. "What a pity," said one of the party afterwards, "that that old soldier came up to the window!" "It would have been all the same," said the other, "if a magpie had hopped across the path." It seldom happens that those who are famous at monologue are equally clever at retort. But Coleridge uttered one of the finest things, on a sudden provocation, ever said in any language. He was addressing a British mob, when some of his hearers, not liking his sentiments, hissed. He paused, looked calmly around at them, and then, enunciating very slowly, said: "When, on the burning embers of Democracy you throw the cold water of reason, no wonder that they hiss." It was of course better suited to an Athenian assembly than to a British mob. but it was a glorious outburst all the same,

A FEMALE HUNTER.

Miss Molly Allen, of Napa, Cal., a maiden of twelve or thirteen, has killed more game with her small telescopic rifle than any two hunters in that region this winter. She made thirty dollars on squirrels' tails last summer, getting only five cents apiece. At a shooting match last year she took so many prizes that her bearded opponents ruled her out of the ring.

MAN is the weeping animal born to govern all the rest.

Slumber Song.

Sister Simplicite,
Sing, sing a song to me,
Sing me to sleep.
Some legend low and long,
Slow as the summer song
Of the dull deep.

Some legend, long and low,
Whose equal ebb and flow,
To and fro creep.
On the deep marge of gray,
'Tween the soul's night and day,
Washing awake away
Into sleep.

Some legend, low and long,
Never so weak or strong
As to let go
While it can hold this heart,
Without a sigh or smart,
Or as to hold this heart
When it sighs "No."

Some long, low, swaying song,
As the swayed shadows long,
Sway to and fro
Where, thro' the crowing cocks,
And by the swinging c ocks,
Some weary mother rocks,
Some weary woe.

Sing up and down to me,
Like a dream-boat at sea,
So and still so.
Float thro' the "then" and "when"
Rising from when to then,
Sinking from then to when,
While the waves go.

Low and high, high and low,
Now and then, then and now,
Now, now,
And when the now is then, and when
the then is now,
And when the low is high, and when
the high is low,
Low, low,
Let me float, let the boat,
Go, go,
Let me glide, let me slide,
Slow, slow;
Gliding boat, sliding boat,
Slow, slow,
Glide away, slide away,
So, so.

THE SQUIRE'S PROPOSAL.

"No, Salmantha Jane Peabody, you won't stir one step to the singin'-school! I ain't goin' to have you gaddin' about the hull blessed time. You'll stay to hum one evenin', jest to see how it seems!

"You h'ain't been out a single evenin' this week? Wal, what of it? If you should stay in another week, 'twouldn't hurt you none, I guess.

"No, *I h'ain't forgot when I was young,* nuther. 'Tain't so long ago that I should forget it. When I was at your age, I staid to hum, and made myself useful; I didn't spend the heft of my time spinnin' street-yarn, as the girls do now-a-days. I used to spin flax an' wool, an' make butter an' cheese, an' wash, an' iron, an' bake. An' all I did was done as it orter be. But as fur you, you jest flurry round, half doin' what you purtend to dew, so's to be a-kitin' off some'eres, an' I'm goin' tew put a stop to't. I knew how 'twould be when your gardeen sent you to the 'cademy.

"What's that? *You told Sam Skinner that you'd go to the singin'-school, an' he's comin' fur ye?* Let him come here on sich an arrant as that, an' I'll tell him suthin' he won't want to hear agin! I've had as much as I want of the Skinners sence your father, who never had no more judgment than a baby, 'pinted the deacon tew be your gardeen. He's for ever meddlin' with things that don't consarn him, an' 'Lijah, Sam's father, is off the same piece. It was 'nough tew put me out of conceit of him tew see him sidlin' up tew the Widder Peters las' Sabbath-day evenin', an' his wife not in her grave six months yit."

"Miss Peters is his wife's brother's widow? What's that to dew with it? I like to see folks show some respect to their deceased pardners. Your father has been dead eight years come March, an' there ain't none of of the male sect dared tew hint at sich a thing as my takin' anybody in his place.

"You should think 'twould take consider'ble courage? You'd had a new father long afore this if I'd given some folks any encouragement.

"There's Sam Skinner comin' cross lots? Yes, an' makin' a straight bee-line fur the door. That's what you've slicked yourself up so scrumtious fur, with that red ribbon in your hair, an' Sunday go-tew-meetin' dress on. I've as good a mind as ever I had tew eat to make you go an' take it off."

In walked Sam, a tall, strapping fellow, with curly black hair and eyes of the same color, with a sly, roguish gleam in them, which reminded one of his uncle, the deacon.

"Good-arternoon, Mrs. Peabody. How d'ye do?"

"I ain't any tew well, nor any tew glad to see *you,* Mister Sam, to speak politely. I see you over tew the elder's t'other night, an' you seemed tew be very merry. Yer uncle thought he'd got a good joke on me, but he ain't quite so smart as he thinks himself."

"Oh, pshaw! Mrs. Peabody; there don't nobody mind what Uncle Ike says. He will have his joke, you know; it's jest as nat'ral to him as to breathe; but he don't bear no malice. Good-arternoon, Miss Salmantha, I calc'late we'll have a nice clear evenin' fur the singin'-school. I called to say that I'd come fur ye a leetle arter seven."

"You needn't trouble yourself, Mister Sam,; Salmantha ain't goin' tew the singin'-school. So if that's all the arrant you have, you'd better be goin'."

"'Twon't be no trouble, not the least mite, as I'm goin' the same way myself. That ain't all my arrant, nuther. Dad sent a message to ye, though I don't s'pose you care to hear it."

"If yer father sent me a message, Sam Skinner, I'll thank you tew deliver it."

"Wal, he told me to tell ye that he was comin' over to see ye this evenin'. But I don't suppose you'll care to see him, so I'll tell him not tew come."

"Why, how you *dew* run on, Sam! I never see the beat on't—never! Strange you can't take a joke. Of *course* I'll be glad tew see yer father. Him an' me used to be great cronies when we was at your age, an' there ain't no knowin' what might have happened if Johnathan Peabody hadn't come along."

"I s'pose the old man thought the coast would be clear this evenin', eh, Salmantha? On his account I'm really sorry you are tew busy tew go. P'raps you'd better consider on't a spell."

"Wal, I don't know as there's anything tew hinder her goin'," said the widow, as her daughter made no reply. "There'll be nothin' but the supper dishes tew wash, an' I can dew them. Tell yer father that I'll be glad tew see him, Sam. I remember when he was as straight as an arrer, an' his hair as black an' curly as your'n. Not but what he's a nice personable man, now. What air you gigglin' fur, Salmantha? Is it anythin' strange fur the squire, in his lonely sitivation, tew call on a neighbor an' old schoolmate? 'Pears tew me I'd try tew show some manners. A body would think you was brung up in the woods. You h'ain't told Sam whether you was goin' tew singin'-school. Yes, Sam, she'll go. You'd better come airly, as it's quite a piece to the school-'us."

With another wink to Salmantha, whose whose cheeks were as red as the apples she was paring, Sam took himself off, whistling merrily as he retraced his way across the fields.

"I wonder what the squire wants tew see me so partic'ler 'bout, Salmantha? *H'ain't the least idee?* Wal, all I know is that he never was in no sich takin' afore his wife died. I ruther guess that old-maid sister of his don't make things none tew comf'table fur him. She's a dretful poor housekeeper, so I've heerd say. Fetch me a clean cap out of the bureau-drawer. Not that; the one with the crimped border an' laylock ribbin. What *air* you gigglin' at? *'Pears to you I'm fixin' up consider'ble?* How ridic'lous you dew talk! as tho' I didn't want tew be clean. There's Sam comin' through the gate; don't keep him waitin'."

* * * * * *

"How dew, Squire Skinner? Walk in, an' take a cheer by the stove, dew."

"Wal, I don't care if I do widder; its a bitter cold night, a good deal colder than I calc'lated on when I started."

"True enough, squire; there are nights that middle-aged folks, like we be, find a warm corner by a rousing fire like this better'n the jolliest sleigh ridin' that can be got up. Salmantha she's gone tew the singin' school, so I'm all alone this evenin'. I'm proper glad you happened in; them that's in our lonely sitivation orter be neighborly."

"I s'pose Sam told you my arrant?" said the squire.

"Wal, yes, he sorter hinted—te, he, he! Boys will be boys, you know, an' Sam is as full of mischief as an egg is full of meat. Try a piece of mince-pie, squire? I didn't eat much supper, so I put one in the oven tew warm. My poor dead-an'-gone husband used to say that nobody could beat me makin' mince-pies. Take a piece, dew."

"Thank'ee, widder, I don't care if I do. I'm mightily glad you're so favorable to my propersition. I told Sam that you was allus so pertic'lar 'bout keepin' everythin' jest as 'twas in Mr. Peabody's time, that I was most afeared you mighnt't like it."

"Dear me, squire! how curi'us that you should have thought that, when you know how much I allus sot by you ever sence we used tew go tew school together. The Lord knows I h'ain't been in no hurry fur any change, an' if it had been any one but you that hinted at sich a thing I'd ha' showed 'em tew the door in quick metre, an' they would't have been long in taking it neither. Them that's had the padner that I had ain't in no hurry tew get another Jon'than used to speak of you often; he thought there wasn't nobody like squire Skinner. An' when I see you in the cheer that he so often sot in, it re'ly seems as if 'twas him a settin' there."

"I'm obleeged to you, widder, fur your good opinion. But to return to business. Mine is a leetle the lightest, but 'twouldn't hardly be noticed, an' if so be we can strike a bargin, there won't be a better match in the hull township, I'll bet."

"Lawful sakes, squire! how you fluster a body! It is so sudding. But, then, t'ain't as though we hadn't knowed each other ever sence we was knee-high to a grasshopper. Wal, no, I can't say as there would be a better match, takin' it all in all, than our'n would be. An' we ain't obleeged tew wait or ask nobody, but can suit ourselves in marryin'. So, if you're agreeable I am."

Squire Skinner stared at the speaker in blank amazement.

"Good gracious, Mrs Peabody! what *be* you talkin' on? I h'ain't said nothin' 'bout marryin'. I was speakin' 'bout swappin my bay horse fur your gray one. You see—"

The widow Peabody arose to her feet, the very brows upon her cap assuming a belligernent aspect.

"Dew you mean to insult me, Squire Skinner?"

"By no manner o' means. Your gray horse an' mine is sich a nice match as to size an' color so I thought——"

"Dew you see that air door, sir? The sooner you march out on't the better it will be fur you!"

"But, widder——"

"Start yourself, I tell ye! an' don't you never darken my door ag'in!"

Exist the squire, in a great hurry.

An hour later, Salmantha came in, her cheeks all aglow and her eyes as bright as the stars that looked down upon the whispering and lingering parting at the gate.

She found her mother in no very amiable humor.

"So you've come at last, miss? A pretty time o' night fur you tew be comin' home! *Thought I had sich good company that you wouldn't hurry eh?* Who told you that I consider old 'Lijah Skinner good comp'ny? He's the most tiresone fellow I ever *did* see! There he sot an' sot, an' wouldn't take no kind of a hint, till I fairly had tew tell him tew go. I wonder what good he thinks it's going tew dew him to come here to see *me?* Now, Salmantha Jane Peabody, I want you tew jest remember one thing, that this is the last time you go out with Sam Skinner!"

A CART LOAD OF CASH.

Twenty-two years ago, as the story runs, Mr. Pendley was living at Sugar Hill, Ga., and was then engaged in gold mining with Moses Lott. Lott had heard of a very rich silver mine from John Lumpkin. Lumpkin had heard of it from a Baptist preacher, who lived near Carnesville; the preacher had heard of it from a man who had died near him, and who on his death-bed had given the preacher a minute description of the mine and its surroundings. Lott told Pendley that the stranger on his death-bed said that he and other South Carolinians had come out among the Indians hunting gold and silver ore; that they crossed the Oconee at Hurricane Shoals, proceeded along a well-known Indian trail to the Chattahoochee, went down the Chattaooochee to the mouth of a large creek, and in hunting a place to cross, went up the creek some distance, where two of the Carolinians—the stranger being one—were captured by a company of Spaniards, were carried at night some four or five miles south of the head of the creek, and were put to work in a silver mine during each night, and just before day they took the silver ore upon their backs, went due south from the mine five miles to an island covered with an immense swamp growth, and in the middle of this island, in a rude shop, they worked ore and moulded the metal into silver dollars; that when the Indians found them out they filled up the mine with timber and dirt, buried as much as a wagon load silver dollars in the middle of the shop, burned down the shop, released the two South Carolinians, and left; that one of the South Carolinians was lost, and that the dying man was on his way home with the great secret, which he revealed to the preacher on his death-bed.

With this account Mr. Pendley set out in 1853 to find the mine answering to the description received. In 1855 he found an old mine, exactly answering the description. It is situated five miles due south of Suwannee creek, in Gwinnett county, and the island is on Beaver Ruin creek, five miles due south of the mine. On the island Mr. P. found cinders, Indian vessels and implements, and the hole in the ground, which had been filled up by old Billy Chamblee, who cleared up the island, and who testified to having found the hole open. Mr. Pendley went to work on the old mine. and continued until his small capital was spent, when he suspended. When again his means enabled him to renew his labors, the war came on and forced him to defer it. In 1871 he resumed work again alone, followed the old tunnel by sinking shafts for nearly two hundred feet, without finding anything except unmistakable evidence of the old tunnel, which was filled with leaves, brush, oak post and timber. A few weeks ago he reached the end of the old tunnel, and found a vein of mineral ore one and a half feet thick and fifteen feet wide. Above it there is a layer of white clay; beneath it there is a hard yellow rock, and on each side there is a wall of very hard, blue sandstone. The ore consists of two layers, one blueish, the other reddish brown; is very soft—somewhat cohesive—and very heavy.

IMPORTANT TO BATHERS.

Avoid bathing within two hours after a meal. Avoid bathing when exhausted by fatigue or from any other cause. Avoid bathing when the body is cooling after perspiration; but bathe when the body is warm, provided no time is lost in getting into the water. Avoid chilling the body by sitting or standing naked on the shore or in boats after having been in the water. Avoid remaining too long in the water, leave the water immediately there is the slightest feeling of chillness. Avoid bathing altogether in the open air, if, after having been a short time in the water, there is a sense of chillness with numbness of the hands and feet. The vigorous and strong may bathe early in the morning on an empty stomach. The young- and those that are weak; had better bathe three hours after a meal; the best time for such is from two to three hours after breakfast. Those who are subject to attacks of giddiness and faintness, and those who suffer from palpitation and other sense of discomfort at the heart, should not bathe without first consulting their medical adviser.

RUNNING FOR OFFICE.

I never run for office but once. At the earnest solicitations of some of my friends, in an unguarded moment I allowed myself to be announced as candidate for the office of Justice of the Peace. Previous to this fool move I had been considered a decent kind of a man, but the next day when the Bugle came out it was filled with accounts of my previous history that would have curdled the blood of a Digger Indian. A susceptible public was gravely informed that I was not fit for the office, that I was almost a fool, besides I had come West under very suspicious circumstances. I had starved my deaf old grandmother to death and then sold the remains to a soap-factoy. I had stolen a hand organ from a poor blind cripple and run away with the proceeds. I had sold my grandfather's coffin for fourteen dollars, and buried the old gent in a boot box. In utter despair I rushed around to headquarters, withdrew my name and swore a solemn swear that I would never indulge in politics again. And I never will.—*John Quill.*

HE WOULD TRY IT.

An old gent living in the country called at the office of the gas company in Chicago the other day, having a two quart pail in his hand and asked:

"Is this where they sell gas?"

"Yes, sir, we can furnish you with gas," replied the clerk.

"Well," said the old man as he pulled the cover off his pail, "I've heerd a good deal about gas, and my wife's heerd a good deal about gas, and I'll take two quarts along and try it. How much is it a quart?"

When he was informed that gas was a vapor, and the method of burning it was explained, he sighed and said:

"Hannah will be awfully disappointed."

WHY could not the habits of the mosquito have been given to the trout? Think of the "bites" a man could get then!

THE man who holds a loan hand—The pawnbroker.

Near Death's Door.

If he were to live a thousand years, Louis Blanding, a mining expert, would not be likely to forget the terrible experience he passed through in a Nevada ore shaft in the month of February, 1880. Mr. Blanding lived in San Francisco, and went to Nevada to examine a quartz mine. Accompanied by the owner, with lighted candles, they entered the tunnel. Twenty-five feet from the head of it they came to a winze fifty-six feet deep. Over this winze is a windlass. Mr. Blanding examined it carefully, and, observing no weak spots in its construction, had his companion let him to the bottom. He inspected the ledge, made measurements, secured a sack of specimens, and, putting one foot in the bight of the rope, shouted to the man above to hoist away. After ascending thirty feet he ceased to rise.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"The windlass is broken," was the reply.

"Fix it, and hoist away."

"I can't. The support at one side has broken down; one end of the drum has dropped to the ground; my shoulder is under it, and if I stir the whole thing will give way," was the startling reply that came back.

The candle at the top had been extinguished. Mr. Blanding recognized the urgency of having a cool head in such an emergency, and told the party to take things easy. He dropped the candlestick, sack of specimens, and the hammer to the bottom of the winze. Then, bracing one of his shoulders against the side of the hole and his feet against the other, he worked his way up, inch by inch, the owner taking in the slack of the rope with one hand. Thus he ascended ten feet. Then the sides of the winze grew so far apart that this plan could no longer be pursued. There was but one salvation. The remaining ten feet must be climbed "hand over hand." Releasing his feet from the knot, he put the idea into practice. Exhausted by his previous efforts in walking to the mine and exploring it, it seemed to him he had climbed a mile, and, stopping to rest, found by the voice above that he had yet five feet to go. With another superhuman effort another start was made. After what seemed an age one of his hands struck the edge of the covering on one side of the mouth. His body and limbs were suffering the agonies of cramps and soreness, and his brain began to reel. All sorts of frightful phantoms filled his mind. With a final effort he reached up and found he could get the end of one hand's finger over the edge of the board that answered for part of the covering. With the despair of a man who faces a fearful death and knows it, he let go the rope altogether, and raising the other hand obtained a precarious hold. His body swung back and forth over the dark abyss an instant, and, as he felt that his hands were losing their hold, he cried, "Save me quick; I am going!"

Just then his companion, who is a man of great strength, dropped the end of the drum, and, grasping his coat collar, drew him out on the floor of the tunnel.

The mining expert was utterly prostrated as his rescue was effected. He was carried out of the tunnel, his clothes dripping in perspiration, and laid in the snow. When partially recovered he was assisted to a house three miles away. His whole frame was so racked with the physical and mental torture that for several hours he had no use of some of his limbs. Two days after he returned to the mine, and with an iron bar broke the windlass into a thousand pieces, then fished the sack of specimens out of the winze. During a whole lifetime of mining adventures in some of the deepest claims in the world he said he was never so near the door of death, and he hoped never to pass through the like again.

A Live Mummy.

Monge, the celebrated French mathematician and natural philosopher, after his return from the campaign in Egypt with the great Napoleon, invited several of his colleagues at the Institute of France and various officers of high rank, among whom was General Augereau, to dine with him, and to be present afterward at the opening of a box containing a mummy which dated from the time of Sesostris. While the soup was being served. Augereau could scarcely restrain his impatience to see the mummy, and during the whole of dinner-time he could hardly be prevented from leaving the table to go and look at the curiosity. While at dessert, his fellow-guests, who could not understand the valiant soldier's impatience, could scarcely prevail upon him to wait till they had swallowed their coffee. At last they left the table and passed into the savant's study, where a coffin, covered with hieroglyphics, lay upon a table. Monge vainly endeavored to explain the meaning of these wonderful symbolical inscriptions to his guests.

"Open it!" cried Augereau, with feverish impatience. "Make haste!"

Monge raised the lid of the coffin, when the spectators saw before them, swathed in bandages, and black as a nigger, the mortal remains of an Egyptian mummy who had probably been present at the construction of the pyramids.

"You wished to see the mummy," said Monge, turning to Augereau; "I hope you are satisfied."

The latter, dumb with astonishment, opened his eyes to their widest extent, and at last muttered in an anxious voice, "But—the mummy is dead!" His fellow-guests exploded with laughter, at which Augereau was of course highly indignant. He never forgave Monge for not having shown him a live mummy.

LITTLE SINS.

In a Carolina forest of a thousand acres you can scarcely find a tree that is not dead and crumbling to decay. No fire has swept over it, no lightning scathed those naked, bleaching pines. This ruin was wrought by a little insect's larvæ, no larger than a grain of rice. What a hundred axe-men could not accomplish by years of hard labor, this seemingly insignificant insect sent its feeble offspring to perform. One alone could have little power, it is true, but millions were marshalled, and all the skill of man could not stay their course. Such is the power of little sins.

A CONNECTICUT woman bet a new hat against a bonnet that she could jump further than any church deacon in Norwich, and she beat the best man by seven inches.