CHAPTER X.

MR. DYE.

The tide flowed back and forth beneath the thickening ice unseen, and the winter wore on. Maxey's new pupil was making much progress. The same was true, in another sense, of Maxey himself. Sometimes in the interest and preoccupation of their mutual labors their heads would get very close together. This was so entirely accidental and unpremeditated an occurrence that the fact that a sudden interruption at such times started a blush into the faces of each seems strange and unaccountable. But it was unquestionably the fact. A knock at the outer door one afternoon was attended by this result. They had been bending over a sketch by a window in the rear room, and both became suddenly conscious that they were betraying unwonted confusion. Maxey was so painfully aware of his own betrayal of sentiment that he was very glad of the opportunity offered to conceal it by answering the summons at the door.

He stepped into the vestibule and partly closed the entrance to the rear chamber before he looked into the outer corridor. Two men stood by the stair railing. When he saw them, the artist's heart gave a great bound. One man he knew by sight, the other he knew by intuition. The foremost man was the sly landlord of 40 Flood street. The other, who remained a little in the rear, was a curious specimen of humanity. He appeared to be between 40 and 50 years of age. His face was smooth, his skin very pale and sallow. His cheeks sank into two cavernous hollows. His hair was long and of an obstinate straightness. It buried his ears and swept his coat collar. In perfect keeping with the rest of his appearance, his eyes looked as though they might have been of a definite color in his boyhood, but had faded out from long usage. So did his hat, his coat and what was visible of the remainder of his habit. There were a telltale glossiness and a woebegone threadbareness about them all. If there was a forlorn and utterly cast down atmosphere surrounding his face, this was equally true of his hat and shoes. His ancient coat was buttoned up about his neck with such an evident attempt to conceal the absence of a collar or the dirtiness of his linen that the only possible excuse for having taken so much pains about the matter seemed to be to allow the observer a chance to amuse himself with a speculation as to which of the two was the fact. And with all this there were hard lines in the man's face which spoke of unhappiness, even perhaps despair.

Mr. Belfry bowed as soon as the door was opened. With a placid wink, of which his companion was blissfully unconscious, he said:

"I believe you was the man, sir, that wanted a man to write letters for you?"

"I believed I was," returned the artist. "And if you have found me the person I want I shall be greatly obliged to you. Let the gentleman come in. Perhaps you wouldn't mind yourself taking a seat in the vestibule?"

The hireling gave Maxey a sly look and a profound bow. He motioned his companion forward, and when the door was closed immediately turned the key in the lock, drew a chair up against it and sat calmly down with his back to it.

The faded and forlorn individual did not notice this action, as it was done behind him. He had come into the hall, had removed his hat and was bestowing one or two smoothing touches upon his obstinate hair, eying Maxey rather steadily the while.

"You did not mention the gentleman's name," said the artist.

"His name is Dye," returned the sly Belfry.

At this the lips of the stranger unclosed to give slow and distinct utterance, in a dull, somber voice, to the corroborative statement.

"Mr. Leander Dye, sir."

"Dye? Dye? Rather an odd name, that. But I think I have heard it before. I think I have. Come in, Mr. Dye, come in. I have recently taken it upon myself to become the protector and guardian of a certain young person to whom I shall take great pleasure in introducing you."

Maxey threw open the door communicating with the rear room and stepped in. The next instant the young woman and the man confronted each other.

The meeting affected them differently. Annette was so overcome that she was obliged to cling to the piano for support. Mr. Dye, even under the shock of the first meeting, did not start, nor was anything added to the natural pallor of his countenance. He merely turned his head, saw the man who had brought him there sitting with his back against the door, cast a faded glance over the general situation, including the resolute artist standing before him, folded his arms across his breast in a manner that would have been dignified but for the inconvenient necessity of retaining his hold on the forlorn hat and made the remark as if he were announcing the most casual thing in the world:

Maxey threw open the door.

"You have set a trap for me."

Maxey was somewhat astonished at his coolness, though he thought his attitude a little theatrical. However it might have been for Mr. Dye, the meeting was certainly a very painful one for the poor girl who had been taught in her early years to call him father. Her bosom rose and fell. She became so white that Maxey began to regret having subjected her to the shock. In his anxiety to overwhelm the man he had not considered the possible effect on the woman. Still the worst was over, and he could only proceed.

"I suppose you won't deny that you know this lady?" he said in a voice that was meant to be very uncompromising and stern.

"Sir, it would be utterly useless for me to deny anything."

Mr. Dye had not cast a second glance at his former daughter, nor did he do so now. He made his answer in the most grave, even dignified tones. He punctuated perfectly. There was a little pause after the "sir" and a full stop at the "anything." This calmness, which might be either the calmness of determination or of despair, rather disconcerted the artist. He had often imagined himself the central figure in such an interview, but he had never dreamed of a man like Mr. Dye.

"Nevertheless I will break his guard yet," he thought.

After a minute's silence Mr. Dye went on in the same measured tones in which self consciousness and hopelessness were strangely intermingled.

"Touching the lady now under your charge, whom I once disgraced in permitting to be known by a name by no means a synonym for integrity and uprightness, I do not hesitate to say that I am exceedingly well rejoiced at seeing her in such apparently excellent health. She is a good girl, sir; she is everything the term implies, and yet, sir, you must be aware of the almost painful relations that exist between us, and being aware of them and of the fact that they are so strong that she left my house voluntarily, for the avowed reason that a longer life with so uncongenial a person as myself was unbearable, you can scarcely be surprised that our meeting is not more mutually pleasurable and cordial."

Mr. Dye occasionally hesitated an instant for a word, but generally his dull, somber voice flowed on, measurably and uninterruptedly, as if he were delivering himself of a speech that was quite familiar to him. His dignified bearing was in such marked contrast to the dominant air of faded gentility that pervaded him as to be almost painfully ludicrous. Maxey gazed at him steadily and said:

"You don't know where she went when she left your house?"

"Sir, she never made a confidant of me. Do not misunderstand me. I am not reproaching her. I was utterly unfit for and unworthy of her confidence. I always avoided her, as the bad instinctively avoid the good. She was right to go. I entered only a feeble protest. I am aware, sir, that it may seem incongruous and artificial coming from me, but even at the risk of seeming incongruous and artificial I desire to say in taking my farewell of the young lady under your charge—for you can scarcely wish to prolong an interview that is manifestly so painful to her—that I am heartily, devoutly, sincerely sorry that fate ever threw her into the way of such a worthless mortal as myself, and that I earnestly hope that her future may be as bright and unclouded as her past was dark and unfortunate."

Despite the theatrical ring of the sepulchral voice there was a tone of sincerity and candor about the last few words that made an impression, even against his will, upon the artist. The tears came into Annette's eyes. Timidly and tremblingly she approached Mr. Dye and held out her small white hand.

"Mr. —no, father," she faltered, "please do not think I was ungrateful. You will forgive me for what I said about my parentage when I was angry. If you have done right, it was cruel. If you have not, it is a matter for your own soul. I shall never forget that it was your roof that sheltered me when I had no other. Believe me, I did not run away from you. I met with—a terrible accident."

Mr. Dye did not look at her, but he unfolded his arms to take her hand, which he held as lightly as possible and dropped at the first opportunity. Maxey, who was watching him closely, was startled to see in his face a momentary betrayal of sentiment. There was no doubt about it. Mr. Dye's dim eyes watered, and the corners of his gloomy mouth twitched. The tone in which he at last replied was very different from the one in which he had previously spoken.

"If I said God bless you, it would be mummery. The blessing of a man like me is a poor legacy, but I should like to say something to show you that I am really sorry for the part I have played in your life. You always were a good girl and did your best to please me. I am not your father. I could not feel toward you as a father ought perhaps, but I was not insensible of your virtues. I never was more pleased in my life than when I heard"— He seemed to think himself in danger of committing himself here, for he hesitated and finally substituted —"when you just now told me that you had escaped a terrible accident. Goodby, Annette."

Annette went out, sobbing. When the door had closed behind her, Maxey mentally braced himself for a desperate contest. Unfortunately for him, at the very outset of the battle he felt a distrust of himself and a dread of the superior strength of his adversary.

Acting upon the theory that Mr. Dye had some knowledge of the crime on the sea road, he had prepared a terrible surprise for him. He had caused it to be understood that the victim of that crime had died in consequence and then suddenly confronted him with her. He had congratulated himself beforehand on the effect of this trying situation, but Mr. Dye had scarcely expressed more surprise than if it had been the most ordinary occurrence of daily life.

Maxey spoke up sharply:

"Now to the business which I have to transact with you. There is no need of your standing, sir. Sit down."

"Sir, I was standing here," said Mr. Dye, thoroughly recovered from his recent momentary weakness, "utterly at a loss to determine what could be the marvelous nature of the circumstances that could influence such a gentleman as yourself to take the pains to enter into a not very reputable subterfuge to induce so humble an individual as myself to come to your house, when a simple written request left at my lodgings would have been sufficient. Men do not take such pains—my long experience with human nature leads me to say it—men do not take such pains without an adequate motive."

Mr. Dye said all this not as though he had any real curiosity. In fact, there was such a somber, graveyard atmosphere about his voice and manner that the hearer was involuntarily impressed with the belief that he had reached a stage of mental depression where it was no longer possible to harbor a lively interest in any affair of life.

"We will not discuss that now," said Maxey. "There are some matters which you must explain to my satisfaction before I shall feel overwhelmed with a sense of my own meanness. If you will sit down, it will be more comfortable for you, as it may prove to be somewhat lengthy session."

"Sir, it is immaterial to me."

Having said this with a sign that seemed to leave no matter of doubt that he spoke the truth, Mr. Dye accepted the proffered chair. He deposited his woebegone hat upon the center table with as much care as if it had been the most valuable thing in the world, folded his arms and fixed his faded glance upon the ruffled fur surface before him. Maxey seated himself opposite where he could watch him narrowly.

"You understand me, I hope, sir?—must be explained, if not to me now, to the proper authorities at some other time. I have not employed the police so far in this matter for reasons of my own. The police unfortunately includes the press. My family affairs have enjoyed all the publicity I care for of late, but if necessary I have fully made up my mind to sacrifice my own feelings in this regard. I must inform you at once that the police would be very glad to know where to find you, and it remains for you to say whether you shall let them know it in person or go from here a free man."

Maxey had been awake nights planning his procedure at this interview. At this point in the case he had always pictured the trembling villain as turning pale and saying, "Oh, Mr. Maxey, do not deliver me to the police, and I will tell you everything!" but in reality the presumable villain opened his unblanched lips to say in an entirely steady voice:

"Sir, you see here a man who for years and years has been struggling in the face of great and insurmountable odds, and who has made a failure of the struggle. I do not know what you mean, but you evidently desire to institute legal proceedings of some nature against me. You have my full and free permission so to do. If I am accused of anything, I care not what in the category of crimes, from petty larceny to murder, I shall not take the trouble to deny it. When this man brought me to your door, I was wondering if it were possible for Providence so far to have relented toward me as to be opening for me a means of honest and manly employment. I came here as a last effort in that direction. With the result of this experiment in mind, I shall never try it again. No, sir. Do what you please with me. I will employ no counsel. I will make no defense. The law may take its course. The remainder of my life, the manner of my death, is a matter of total indifference to me."

The voice had still its theatrical ring, but underneath it all there was a grimness and a sincerity that carried with it the conviction that he meant what he said. When the amazed Maxey could speak, he exclaimed:

"So you confess your share in the crime without equivocation?"

"Sir, I can only confess the truth, but as I am not a man of veracity that would have little weight. If you have any evidence at all of any wrong dealing on my part, an ignorant and uncultivated jury would undoubtedly do your work and convict me of anything. I look like a villain. I have all the suspicions and unexplainable habits of a villain. Twelve average men would say at once: 'He is a villain. Let us punish him.'"

"And you haven't a shadow of a suspicion of what you would be accused?"

"Sir, of what use is it to question me? If I say no, you will not believe me. If I say yes, I should only lay myself open to further questions, which it would be impossible for me to answer, and then you would not believe me. In any case I should be a liar and an equivocator in your eyes. The shortest way is to call the police at once. Sir, I have used alcohol very freely of late years, and it has partially succeeded in achieving the result to secure which I learned to like it—in blunting my senses and brutalizing my intellect, but I have yet remaining to me, I think I may say without exaggeration, sufficient penetration and sagacity to understand that a gentleman like yourself does not take such pains to become possessed of the person of a social outcast like myself unless he believes such a step of supreme importance. Doubtless you have your theories?"

"Doubtless I have. You have parried my question very ingeniously, Mr. Dye. Let me see what you will say to the next. You spoke of the truth in the matter. What is the truth?"

"Sir, I will answer you unreservedly. I connect my presence here, not without some degree of naturalness, you must admit, to the interest you take in the young lady whom I have reared as my daughter. While I can have no idea of what your suspicions are or of what you would convict me, inasmuch as you speak of the police I infer that it must be something of a criminal nature. The truth in relation to that matter is Annette is not my child, and I have no claim or authority over her. I never even legally adopted her. If she has borne my name, it was because my late wife wished it for the child's own sake. She believed that it would be humiliating for the child to be brought up in the knowledge that she had no name; that she was in truth a waif whose parentage was unknown. I would have given much if the name we gave her had been worth more for her own sake, but it was the best that we could do under the circumstances."

"Who were Annette's parents?"

"God knows."

"And you?"

"Sir, I am not in his confidence."

"You talk that way and expect me to believe you!"

"Sir, on the contrary, I do not. Neither do I wish to be understood as indulging in profane levity. I have the utmost respect for the Deity. He has, he can have none for me."

Maxey was astounded. It was not alone the coolness of the man, but the sincerity and despair with which he seemed to speak. In spite of himself, the artist began to believe him. For a moment he could not regain courage enough to return to the attack. Mr. Dye lifted his faded eyes inquiringly from the contemplation of his hat.

"You don't believe me?" he said.

"It seems hardly possible."

"Sir, it is the truth. For myself I would not take the trouble to speak. For her sake I will say to you that I take my oath before Almighty God, as I hope for mercy in the world to come, that I do not know who her parents were."

He said this solemnly and impressively. It produced a profound effect on Maxey, who had never drifted away from the religious teaching of his youth. The name of the Deity was a very solemn thing in his eyes. He could not understand why it should not be in the eyes of all men. Nevertheless he mustered up courage to renew the battle.

"If this be true, why then did you appear so excited on the night when you put this child into your wife's arms? Why did you plead with her so earnestly never to reveal that the child was not your own? Why did you even say that if the truth were known it might bring you to the gallows?"

Surprises like this may startle the calmness of effrontery, but there are few surprises sufficiently strong to overcome the calmness of despair. Mr. Dye was utterly unmoved. He replied in his somberest tones:

"Sir, you must be aware that the moribund when approaching dissolution enters frequently into a stage of hallucination. The mind wanders. If it were worth while to defend myself, I should say that my poor wife was not herself; that she exaggerated."

This was simply unanswerable, and strangely enough it was the first time it had occurred to Maxey. The artist felt the groundwork of his hopes giving way beneath him, but he forced himself to assume a skeptical air and to proceed.

"You can tell me, I suppose, how you became possessed of this child?"

"Sir, I can assuredly."

"In the name of goodness, vary your form of address a little," cried Maxey, exasperated by the inevitable prefatory "sir." Mr. Dye looked up with mild surprise in his faded eyes.

"Since it annoys you, sir, I will."

"It is unnatural, and you put it on for effect."

"You are a gentleman, sir. I cannot contradict you."

Maxey bit his lip.

"Be kind enough, then, to go on."

"It was a dark night, sir," said Mr. Dye, looking as though he were drawing the whole scene out of the ruffled surface of his forlorn hat. "I was coming home from a low resort. I stumbled up my steps unsteadily and fell over a bundle that was lying outside my door. It was little Annette, stupefied by the effects of some drug which had been given her. I took her in to my wife, and that poor, unfortunate woman who wrecked her life when she married me conceived an affection for her at once. We never had any children. She desired to keep her. I permitted her to do so. That is the whole story. Do not think I wish to be short with you. I will answer any question you think it worth your while to address to me."

"Did you leave the city immediately after you found the child?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"My business, perhaps it would be franker to say my means of livelihood, necessitated it."

"What has been your means of livelihood?"

"Swindling in all its various forms."

Maxey sat staring in bewilderment for some minutes.

"By what methods?"

"By the meanest methods. Do you wish me to give a catalogue of my crooked ways? It would no doubt be instructive to you."

"Never mind that," cried Maxey, with sudden energy. "Answer me this: Were you concerned in the attempt to murder this child Annette?"

Mr. Dye sprang to his feet with a force that overturned his chair and stood with a horrified look fixed full on the artist's face. His lip trembled and his voice faltered when he asked:

"Is that—is that your suspicion?"

"I am not here to talk of suspicions. I am asking you a plain question, susceptible of a plain answer."

Gradually the horrified look faded out of his face. The lack luster eyes sought the surface of the hat again. He turned and carefully restored the chair to an upright position before he replied:

"I would rather, I would much rather, sir, the accusation should come in any other form, but go on, sir, go on even in this. If there has been such an attempt, arrest me, try me, convict me, hang me. I am utterly unworthy of the least respect, as you realize. A man who would steal would kill. He would shoot down even the young and innocent girl who trusted him. Go on, sir. I shall not oppose you."

"I am half a mind to take you at your word!" cried Maxey, rising and impatiently pacing the floor.

"I shall not resist you, sir."

"Do you mean to tell me that you do not know of the foul attempt on this poor girl's life on the sea road the very day you disappeared from town?"

Mr. Dye made no reply at once, but a harsh, grating sound issued from between his lips. Maxey even thought he heard him murmur through his clinched teeth:

"The black heart! The black heart!"

But his faded glance was scarcely lifted from the forlorn hat ere he became passive again.

"I can only say to you, sir, that I never heard of this thing before."

"Don't you read the newspapers?"

"Not except by accident. I have no interest in the world whatever."

"Do you never hear people talk?"

"I have heard nobody talk about this, but I have been away where I would be little likely to."

"Why did you go away?"

"Because it was necessary for me to have money. I have been engaged in an attempt to raise money by dishonest means—an attempt which failed as disastrously as it deserved. It was my belief until I came here that Annette had indeed voluntarily absented herself from my abode, as she had threatened to do. If you will ask the landlord at 40 Flood street, he will tell you that I left money in his charge to be given to her if she returned during my absence. I had, I could have, no possible ill will for that unfortunate girl. Neither was her life such that she could have acquired enemies. You speak in riddles, sir. Would it be asking too much that you should tell me the circumstances? But, no; you will not do that, for I am the man suspected."

"I think circumstances warrant a suspicion that you know more than you will admit. Nevertheless, lest I do an injustice, I will tell you what you ask."

He told it. Mr. Dye listened motionless till the end. When it was over, he remained silent.

"Have you nothing to say to this?" asked Maxey. "Do you suspect nobody?"

"I have nothing to say, sir."

"Nothing?"

"Not a word."

"Well, then," cried Maxey excitedly, "there is only one course open to me."

He was interrupted by a knock at the door. Annette, whose eyes were not yet free from tears, implored his attention for a moment. He went into the parlor with her.

Miss Maxey, dressed for the street, sat in one corner of the room, apparently preoccupied, though the unusual color in her cheeks was evidence enough that she was disturbed by more than ordinary emotions. The artist barely noticed her. He was too much under the power of the new and contending feelings that filled his soul when Annette spoke to him to heed anything else, for Annette opened her heart to him and laid bare her sweet and forgiving nature as she never had done before. And she pleaded for the token of his regard for her which he was the least in the world desirous of granting. But what could he do under the spell of her presence? How could he say "No" even when the granting of her prayer would allow to slip through his fingers the first real key to the mystery of the sea road which he felt he had ever held? The beautiful face turned toward him so beseechingly, the dark eyes emphasized her words so eloquently that he had no power to resist.

She could not forget that Mr. Dye had brought her up, had given her a home; that he stood to her in place of a father. She could not bear to think of his being persecuted or molested on her account. If he would not speak, let him remain silent. The pest was passed. Would not Mr. Maxey give her his promise not to follow up that dark matter further? Mr. Maxey did not want to, but for her sake Mr. Maxey would, and he did.

"I promise you," he said at length. "I will detain him no longer. I will tell him that he is at liberty to go where he pleases, and that I do it for his daughter's sake."

"Oh, no; please don't tell him that. It is not necessary that he should know that I interceded for him. I would rather not."

"Very well then," said Maxey. "So be it."

He left the room and dismissed Mr. Belfry from his post in the hall.

As he was holding the door open for the sly landlord to pass out, Miss Maxey swept by him on her way to the street, and as she went she flashed into her brother's face a look of mingled pity and contempt which made him feel decidedly uncomfortable.

"She thinks I have yielded to Annette too readily," he reflected, "and no doubt she is right. No doubt I have."

Still he could not retract his promise now. He went into the room where the somber man still sat.

"Mr. Dye, I have only one more question to ask you. Have you told me everything which you believe it is necessary for me as the guardian of Annette to know?"

"Sir, I have nothing more to say."

"I have done, sir."

Mr. Dye arose, calm and unmoved now as he had been at first, smoothed off his hat with his glistening sleeve, put it upon his head and made the following speech:

"I desire first, sir, to warn you, if you wish to retain me, to have me arrested. Necessity is a stern law. I must eat. If there is nothing for me here, I shall not remain here. I do not much think, in view of the manifold vicissitudes of life and the uncertainties of the appellations which control human events, that if you let me go today it is at all probable you will ever see me again."

"You are at liberty to go where you will," said Maxey. "If you have told me the truth, there is no reason why you should not. If you have lied to me, settle it with your conscience."

He opened the door. Mr. Dye said not a word. He made a profound stage bow, settled his hat more firmly on his head and stalked out.

"And that is the end," thought the artist, with some bitterness, "of my experience as a detective."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

OUR KALEIDOSCOPE.

Deceit.

False and hollow is the heart
That flutters in her breast.
She tells the audience she sings
Her number by request.
—Detroit Tribune.

A Fixed Habit of His.

Maud—You better be on the lookout for a proposal from Charley Doodley.

Ellen—Why? Has he expressed his affection for me?

Maud—No, but he proposed to me last night, and I refused him.—Chicago Record.

A Great Need.

A Somerville bachelor is going to take out a patent. He has discovered a brand new way to entertain a baby when he is left alone with it for the afternoon, and he expects to be richer than the Astorbilts before the year is out.—Somerville Journal.

The Question.

"I'm going to leave you," the actress said
In a voice that was low and sad.
"Is it," the husband dropped his head,
"In earnest or just an ad.?"
—Chicago Tribune.

Their Revolt.

Bubbsby—I understand they're trying to pass a bill prohibiting baby carriages on the streets. I bet the kids are kicking.

Gubbsby—I should say they were. Why, even the youngest of them are up in arms.—Buffalo Express.

Saying and Doing.

Cora—Why did she leave the room when she was in the middle of her argument about the cruelty of killing song birds?

Merritt—She went to show the servant how to drop a live lobster into boiling water.—New York Truth.

Another Seashore Resort Boom.

Soon summer girls from dry goods clerks
Of silks will beg a sample,
And with it make their bathing skirts
And find the measure ample.
—Chicago Journal.

The One Thing Required.

You say you do not love me, dear. I know this must be true.
But you need not give back the heart that I once gave to you.
No, not the heart, but I would like to get the other thing.
I'd like to get that silver back, also those diamond rings,
For I can get along without the heart. Yes, dear, that's true.
But, oh, for all the hard earned wealth that I blew in on you!
—New York Sun.

Assured.

They had been engaged for several months.

"My life," he whispered one evening, "have not the qualities which make me acceptable to you been sufficiently tried to satisfy you of their genuineness?"

She hesitated only a moment.

"Yes," she answered firmly. "A fortune that can survive such a year as the past has been must be pretty solid. Darling, I am yours."

The clock ticked noisily, and the flames crackled in the grate.—Detroit Tribune.

The Biggest Part of It.

"This," said the congressman to his visiting friends as he picked up a slender pamphlet, "this is the bill which is creating such widespread interest throughout the country."

"And what are those vast tomes I see beside it?" queried one of his guests.

"Those?" said the congressman. "Oh, those are the amendments to the bill."—Chicago Record.

Lipsomania In Boston.

A maiden in Boston he wanted to kiss,
Although 'twere a kiss frappe,
But when he attempted to osculate her
The maiden had something to say—
To wit:
"Excuse me, dear sir, if I seem to be rude,
But bacteriological bliss
Is not what I want, and kiss me you cawn't,
For microbes exist in a kiss."
—Detroit Free Press.

Wouldn't Repeat.

"I am going to spend a week up at the Barker's in Riverdale," said Borely.

"So Barker told me," said Cynicus.

"What did he say?"

"Well, really, Borely, I don't like to say. I never use profane language."—Life.

Postponed.

Perhaps the best specimen of wit that has enlivened a county court in many a day was that emitted like a flash by John Coffey, the attorney, who has been guilty of a good many things that have disturbed the serenity of bench and bar. Mr. Coffey was counsel in a case which had already been postponed some two or three times at his request. It was before Judge Outcalt. Again Mr. Coffey asked for postponement. The court reminded him that it had already been postponed several times at his request.

"Have you good grounds for wishing another postponement?" asked the court.

"Yes, sir, I have," replied Coffey.

"What are they?" asked the court.

"Coffey grounds, your honor."

"Coffey grounds?" repeated the judge.

"Yes, sir," said John.

Then the judge got on his dignity and reminded the lawyer that he was trifling with the court.

"Your honor," said Mr. Coffey, "there was a small addition to my family last night, and I submit, your honor, that this is good grounds for asking for a postponement."

Did John get it? Well, rather.—New York Sun.

THE COLORED HANDKERCHIEF.

It Is Still In Evidence, and Stationery Is Now Rainbow Hued.

Colored handkerchiefs hold their own in popular favor, although there are certain prejudiced minds who consider that these articles belong in the list of those which should always be pure white, a list which includes muslin underwear, nightdresses, linen shirts, collars and cuffs, bedding and table linen. The conservative class is in the minority, however, and some of the tinted handkerchiefs are really dainty and pretty enough to convert the most rigid conventionalist. Squares of solid colored linen lawn in blue, pink, lavender or yellow are scalloped and embroidered with white. Others have a white middle, with a broad hemstitched colored border, and the name is written across the corner and embroidered in silk or linen to match. In pure white handkerchiefs there is an infinite variety in sheer linen, with wide or narrow hemstitched borders, worked edges, lace frills and fine insertion. These surrounded with delicate valenciennes and embroidered with white linen floss are almost the prettiest of any shown, although there are beautiful ones, made of pineapple cloth and worked elaborately with silk, that look like bits of frostwork.

PARASOLS.

The fancy for color has gone further than handkerchiefs, unfortunately, and has noticeably affected stationery, which may be seen in various strong tones of tan, blue, green and brick red. It is extremely unpleasant to look at and requires only the addition of some sort of powerful scent to be in thoroughly consistent bad taste.

Among the parasols there is nothing particularly new. The straight handle terminated by a ball is almost universal this season, and the canopy fop has gone quite out, but the chiffon and lace puffs and ruffles of several years past are still employed and are very delicate and light. Pure white and black and white are much seen, as also are sun umbrellas of changeable and fine checked silk. In more expensive goods there are lovely parasols of white satin, in which are set several rows of white lace insertion, diminishing in width as they approach the center. Others have a heavy fall of lace about the edge, headed by a puffing, the fullness of which is gathered over the ribs.

JUDIC CHOLLET.

A PRETTY PARIS GOWN.

It Is of White Lawn and Green Velvet, French and Yankee Fashions.

We are fond of affirming in a dissatisfied manner that European fashion papers and fashion writers are superior to those in America, as is everything else abroad, according to the critics. Their pictures are certainly better and their articles are well expressed, but it is astonishing to how large an extent their professedly original text is made up of recommendations of particular dressmakers, hairdressers, perfumers and cosmetic manufacturers. If a woman writes to a reputable American publication for advice concerning her complexion or hair, she is given several bits of practical advice, with perhaps a harmless prescription tacked on that she can have made up at any chemist's shop. On the contrary, the correspondents' column of a French fashion paper is a mere string of addresses of business firms whose merchandise is recommended by the person having charge of that department of the journal over his signature. The French are a thrifty nation, and it may be reckoned that a comfortable income is netted from this sort of journalism, which cuts both ways. It is a very good sort of scheme from a financial point of view, but the American public is better served, for our journalists are paid at only one point on the route and have no temptation to fill up their allotted space with advertisements of particular articles. After all, it is a great thing to be an American—we all feel it even when we are foolish enough not to admit it—and it is best of all to be an American woman, for she has the advantage of living from infancy in an atmosphere of mental freedom such as the women of no other nation enjoy. No amount of later experience counteracts the early influence of prejudice and narrow views, and American women can count upon themselves as their best guides in spite of the superior educational advantages of their European sisters.

A VELVET AND LAWN COMBINATION.

But we have wandered away from fashions, which purport to be our main object. We still look to Paris for them, and the heart of Paris is the stage. From that standard authority is derived the costume of which a sketch is given. The skirt of white lawn is trimmed with bands of embroidered insertion and an embroidered flounce. The bodice is of malchite green velvet, with a short, full basque. It has a full vest of white silk muslin and velvet revers covered with guipure. The sleeves reach to the elbow, and a black satin girdle encircles the waist. JUDIC CHOLLET.

London papers gravely announce the "engaged mantle" as a New York novelty, worn, it seems, by young fiancees as a more outward sign of their contemplation of matrimony than the engagement ring.

Skirts are just right at present, neither too full nor too skimpy. Some are paneled, some are shirred, and a few—a very few—are draped.