

put the three little girls in one bed ; they might get fighting. John, I do wish you'd sell that old bureau for what it will fetch."

"Sell the old bureau !" exclaimed Mr. Cockermuth.

"I'm sure I should. What good does it do ? Unless that bureau goes out of the room, we can't put the extra bed in. I've been in there half the day with Susan and Ann, planning and contriving, and we find it can't be done any way. Do let Ward take it away, John ; there's no place for it in the other chambers. He'd give you a fair price for it, I dare say."

Miss Betty had never cared for this piece of furniture, thinking it more awkward than useful ; she looked eagerly at her brother, awaiting his decision. She was the elder of the two ; tall, like him ; but whilst he maintained his thin, wiry form, just the shape of an upright gas-post with arms, she had grown stout with no shape at all. Miss Betty had dark, thick eyebrows and an amiable red face. She wore a "front" of brown curls with a high and dressy cap perched above it. This evening her gown was of soft twilled shot-green silk, a white net kerchief was crossed under its body, and she had on a white muslin apron.

"I don't mind," assented the lawyer, as easy in disposition as Miss Betty was ; "it's of no use keeping it that I know of. Send for Ward and ask him, if you like, Betty."

Ward, a carpenter and cabinet-maker, who had a shop in the town and sometimes bought second-hand things, was sent for by Miss Betty on the following morning ; and he agreed, after some chaffering, to buy the old bureau. It was the bureau from which Philip's box of gold had disappeared—but I dare say you have understood that. In the midst of all this stir and clatter, just as Ward betook himself away after concluding the negotiation, and the maids were hard at work above stairs with mops and pails and scrubbing-brushes, the first advance-guard of the visitors unexpectedly walked in : Captain Cockermuth.

Miss Betty sat down in an access of consternation. She could do nothing but stare. He had not been expected for a week yet ; there was nothing ready and nowhere to put him.

"I wish you'd take to behaving like a rational being, Charles !" she exclaimed. "We are all in a mess ; the rooms upside down, and the bedside carpets hanging out at the windows."

Captain Cockermuth said he did not care for bedside carpets, he could sleep anywhere—on the brewhouse-bench, if she liked.

He quite approved of selling the old bureau, when told it was going to be done.

Ward had appointed five o'clock that evening to fetch it away. They were about to sit down to dinner when he came, five o'clock being the hour for late dinners then in ordinary life. Ward had brought a man with him and they went upstairs.

Miss Betty, as carver, sat at the top of the dining-table, her back to the windows, the lawyer in his place at the foot, Charles between them, facing the fire. Miss Betty was cutting off the first joint of a loin of veal when the bureau was heard coming down the staircase with much bumping and noise.

Mr. Cockermuth stepped out of the dining-room to look on. The captain followed: being a sociable man with his fellow-townspeople, he went to ask Ward how he did.

The bureau came down safely, and was lodged at the foot of the stairs; the man wiped his hot face, while Ward spoke with Captain Cockermuth. It seemed quite a commotion in the usual quiet dwelling. Susan, a jug of ale in her hand, which she had been to the cellar to draw, stood looking on from the passage; Mr. Dene and a younger clerk, coming out of the office just then to leave for the evening, turned to look on also.

"I suppose there's nothing in here, sir?" cried Ward, returning to business and the bureau.

"Nothing, I believe," replied Mr. Cockermuth.

"Nothing at all," called out Miss Betty through the open parlour-door. "I emptied the drawers this morning."

Ward, a cautious man and honest, drew back the lid and put his hand in succession into the pigeon-holes, which had not been used since Philip's time. There were twelve of them; three above, and three below on each side, and a little drawer that locked in the middle. "Halloa!" cried Ward, when his hand was in the depth of one of them: "here's something."

And he drew forth the lost box. The little ebony box with all the gold in it.

Well now, that was a strange thing. Worcester thinks so, those people who are still living to remember it, to this day. How it was that the box had appeared to be lost and was searched for in vain over and over again, by poor Philip and others; and how it was that it was now recovered in this easy and natural manner, was never explained or accounted for. Ward's opinion was that the box must have been put in, side upwards, that it had in some

way stuck to the back of the deep, narrow pigeon-hole, which just about held the box in width, that those who had searched took the box for the back of the hole when their fingers touched it, and that the bumping of the bureau now in coming downstairs had dislodged the box and brought it forward. As a maker of bureau's, Ward's opinion was listened to with deference. Any way, it was a sort of theory, serving passably well in the absence of any other. But who knew? All that was certain about it was the fact; the loss and the recovery after many years. It happened just as here described, as I have already said.

Sam Dene had never heard of the loss. Captain Cockermuth perfectly beside himself with glee, explained it to him. Sam laughed as he touched with his forefinger the closely packed golden guineas, lying there so snug and safe, offered his congratulations, and walked home to tea.

It chanced that on that especial Tuesday evening, matters were at sixes and sevens in the Parslets' house. Sally had misbehaved herself and was discharged in consequence; and the servant engaged in her place, who was to have entered that afternoon, had not made her appearance. When Sam entered, Maria came out of the parlour, a pretty blush upon her face. And to Sam the unexpected sight of her, it was not often he got a chance of it, and the blush and the sweet eyes came like a gleam of Eden, for he had grown to love her dearly. Not that he had owned it to himself yet.

Maria explained. Her school had broken up for the Easter holidays earlier than it ought, one of the girls showing symptoms of measles; and her mother had gone out to see what had become of the new servant, leaving a request that Mr. Dene would take his tea with them in the parlour that evening, as there was no one to wait on him.

Nothing loth, you may be sure, Mr. Dene accepted the invitation, running up to wash his hands, and give a look at his hair, and running down in a trice. The tea-tray stood in readiness on the parlour-table, Maria sitting behind it. Perhaps she had given a look at *her* hair, for it was quite more lovely, Sam thought, more soft and silken than any hair he had ever seen. The little copper kettle sang away on the hob by the fire.

"Will papa be long, do you know?" began Maria demurely, feeling shy and conscious at being thus thrown alone into Sam's company. "I had better not make the tea until he comes in."

“ I don't know at all,” answered Sam. “ He went out on some business for Mr. Cockermuth at half-past four, and was not back when I left. Such a curious thing has just happened up there, Miss Parslet ! ”

“ Indeed ! What is it ? ”

Sam entered on the narrative. Maria, who knew all about the strange loss of the box, grew quite excited as she listened. “ Found ! ” she exclaimed. “ Found in the same bureau ! And all the golden guineas in it ! ”

“ Every one,” said Sam : “ as I take it. They were packed right up to the top ! ”

“ Oh, what a happy thing ! ” repeated Maria, in a fervent tone that rather struck Sam, and she clasped her fingers into one another, as one sometimes does in pleasure or in pain.

“ Why do you say that, Miss Parslet ? ”

“ Because papa—but I do not think I ought to tell you,” added Maria, breaking off abruptly.

“ Oh, yes, you may. I am quite safe, even if it's a secret. Please do.”

“ Well,” cried the easily persuaded girl, “ papa has always had an uncomfortable feeling upon him ever since the loss. He feared that some people, knowing he was not well off, might think perhaps it was he who had stolen upstairs and taken it.”

Sam laughed at that.

“ He has never *said* so, but somehow we have seen it, my mother and I. It was altogether so mysterious a loss, you see, affording no clue as to *when* it occurred, that people were ready to suspect anything, however improbable. Oh, I am thankful it is found ! ”

The kettle went on singing, the minutes went on flitting, and still nobody came. Six o'clock struck out from the cathedral as Mr. Parslet entered. Had the two been asked the time, they might have said it was about a quarter-past five. Golden hours fly quickly ; fly on angels' wings.

Now it chanced that whilst they were at tea, a creditor of Sam's came to the door, one Jonas Badger. Sam went to him : and the colloquy that ensued might be heard in the parlour. Mr. Badger said (in quite a fatherly way) that he really could not be put off any longer with promises ; if his money was not repaid to him before Easter he should be obliged to take steps about it, should write to Mr. Jacobson, of Elm Farm, to begin with. Sam returned to the tea-table with a wry face.

Soon after that, Mrs. Parslet came in, the delinquent servant in her rear. Next, a friend of Sam's called, Austin Chance, whose father was a solicitor in good practice in the town. The two young men, who were very intimate and often together, went up to Sam's room above.

"I say, my good young friend," began Chance, in a tone that might be taken for jest or earnest, "don't you go and get into any entanglement in that quarter."

"What d'you mean now?" demanded Sam, turning the colour of the rising sun.

"I mean Maria Parslet," said Austin Chance, laughing. "She's a deuced nice girl; I know that; just the one a fellow might fall in love with unawares. But it wouldn't do, Dene."

"Why wouldn't it do?"

"Oh, come now, Sam, you know it wouldn't. Parslet is only a working clerk at Cockermuth's."

"I should like to know what has put the thought in your head?" contended Sam. "You had better put it out again. I've never told you I was falling in love with her; or told herself, either. Mrs. Parslet would be about me, I expect, if I did. She looks after her as one looks after gold."

"Well, I found you in their room, having tea with them, and——"

"It was quite an accident, an exceptional thing," interrupted Sam.

"Well," repeated Austin, "you need not put your back up, old fellow; a friendly warning does no harm. Talking of gold, Dene, I've done my best to get up the twenty pounds you wanted to borrow of me, and I can't do it. I'd let you have it with all my heart if I could; but I find I am harder up than I thought for."

Which was all true. Chance was as good-natured a young man as ever lived, but at this early stage of his life he made more debts than he could pay.

"Badger has just been here, whining and covertly threatening," said Sam. "I am to pay up in a week, or he'll make me pay—and tell my uncle, he says, to begin with."

"Hypocritical old skinflint!" ejaculated Chance, himself sometimes in the hands of Mr. Badger—a worthy gentleman who did a little benevolent usury in a small and quiet way, and took his delight in accommodating safe young men. A story was whispered that young M., desperately hard-up, borrowed two pounds from

him one Saturday night, undertaking to repay it, with two pounds added on for interest, that day month ; and when the day came and M. had not got the money, or was at all likely to get it, he carried off a lot of his mother's plate under his coat to the pawnbroker's.

"And there's more besides Badger's that is pressing," went on Dene. "I must get money from somewhere, or it will play the very deuce with me. I wonder whether Charley Hill could lend me any?"

"Don't much think so. You might ask him. Money seems scarce with Hill always. Has a good many ways for it, I fancy."

"Talking of money, Chance, a lot has been found at Cocker-muth's to-day. A box full of guineas that has been lost for years."

Austin Chance stared. "You don't mean that box of guineas that mysteriously disappeared in Philip's time?"

"Well, they say so. It is a small, round box of carved ebony, and it is stuffed to the brim with old guineas. Sixty of them, I hear."

"I can't believe it's true ; that *that's* found."

"Not believe it's true, Chance ! Why, I saw it. Saw the box found, and touched the guineas with my fingers. It has been hidden in an old bureau all the time," added Sam, and he related the particulars of the discovery.

"What an extraordinary thing !" exclaimed young Chance : "the queerest start I ever heard of." And he fell to musing.

But the "queer start," as Mr. Austin Chance was pleased to designate the resuscitation of the box, did not prove to be a lucky one.

II

The sun shone brightly on Foregate Street, but did not yet touch the front windows on Lawyer Cockermuth's side of it. Miss Betty Cockermuth sat near one of them in the parlour, spectacles on nose, and hard at work unpicking the braid of some very old woollen curtains, green once, but now faded to a sort of dingy brown. It was Wednesday morning, the day following the wonderful event of finding the box, lost so long, full of its golden guineas. In truth nobody thought of it as anything less than marvellous.

The house-cleaning, in preparation for Easter and Easter's

visitors, was in full flow to-day, and would be for more than a week to come ; the two maids were hard at it above. Ward, who did not disdain to labour with his own hands, was at the house, busy at some mysterious business in the brew-house, coat off, shirt-sleeves stripped up to elbow, plunging at that moment something or other into the boiling water of the furnace.

“ How I could have let them remain up so long in this state, I can't think,” said Miss Betty to herself, arresting her employment, scissors in hand, to regard the dreary curtains. She had drawn the table towards her from the middle of the room, and the heavy work was upon it. Susan came in to impart some domestic news.

“ Ward says there's a rare talk in the town about the finding of that box, missis,” cried she, when she had concluded it. “ My ! how bad them curtains look, now they're down ! ”

Servants were on more familiar terms with their mistresses in those days without meaning, or showing, any disrespect ; identifying themselves, as it were, with the family and its interests. Susan, a plump, red-cheeked young woman turned thirty, had been housemaid in her present place for seven years. She had promised a baker's head man to marry him, but never could be got to fix the day. In winter she'd say to him, “ Wait till summer ” ; and when summer came, she'd say, “ Wait till winter.” Miss Betty commended her prudence.

“ Yes,” said she now, in answer to the girl, “ I've been wondering how we could have kept them up so long ; they are not fit for much, I'm afraid, save the rag-bag. Chintz will make the room look much nicer.”

As Susan left the parlour, Captain Cockermuth entered it, a farmer with him who had come in from Hallow to the Wednesday's market. The captain's delighted excitement at the finding of the box had not at all subsided ; he had dreamt of it, he talked of it, he pinned every acquaintance he could pick up this morning and brought him in to see the box of gold. Independently of its being a very great satisfaction to have had the old mysterious loss cleared up, the sixty guineas would be a huge boon to the captain's pocket.

“ But how was it that none of you ever found it, if it remained all this while in the pigeon-hole ? ” cried the wondering farmer, bending over the little round box of guineas, which the captain placed upon the table open, the lid by its side.

“Well, we didn’t find it, that’s all I know ; or poor Philip, either,” said Captain Cockermuth.

The farmer took his departure. As the captain was showing him to the front-door, another gentleman came bustling in. It was Thomas Chance, the lawyer, father of the young man who had been the previous night with Samson Dene. He and Lawyer Cockermuth were engaged together just then in some complicated, private, and very disagreeable business, each acting for a separate client, who were the defendants against a great wrong—or what they thought was one.

“Come in, Chance, and take a look at my box of guineas, resuscitated from the grave,” cried the captain, joyously. “You can go into the office to John afterwards.”

“Well, I’ve hardly time this morning,” answered Mr. Chance, turning, though, into the parlour and shaking hands with Miss Betty. “Austin told me it was found.”

Now it happened that Lawyer Cockermuth came then into the parlour himself, to get something from his private desk-table which stood there. When the box had been discussed, Mr. Chance took a letter from his pocket and placed it in his brother practitioner’s hands.

“What do you think of that ? ” he asked. “I got it by post this morning.”

“Think ! why, that it is of vital importance,” said Mr. Cockermuth when he had read it.

“Yes ; no doubt of that. But what is to be our next move in answer to it ? ” asked the other.

Seeing they were plunging into business, the captain strolled away to the front-door, which stood open all day, for the convenience of those coming to the office, and remained there whistling, his hands in his pockets, on the look out for somebody else to bring in. He had put the lid on the box of guineas, and left the box on the table.

“I should like to take a copy of this letter,” said Mr. Cockermuth to the other lawyer.

“Well, you can take it,” answered Chance. “Mind who does it, though—Parslet, or somebody else that’s confidential. Don’t let it go into the office.”

“You are wanted, sir,” said Mr. Dene, from the door.

“Who is it ? ” asked his master.

“Mr. Chamberlain. He says he is in a hurry.”

"I'm coming. Here, Dene!" he called out as the latter was turning away: and young Dene came back again.

"Sit down here, now, and take a copy of this letter," cried the lawyer, rapidly drawing out and opening the little writing-desk table that stood against the wall at the back of the room. "Here's pen, ink and paper, all ready: the letter is confidential, you perceive."

He went out of the room as he spoke, Mr. Chance with him; and Sam Dene sat down to commence his task, after exchanging a few words with Miss Betty, with whom he was on good terms.

"Charles makes as much fuss over this little box as if it were filled with diamonds from Golconda, instead of guineas," remarked she, pointing with her scissors to the box, which stood near her on the table, to direct the young man's attention to it. "I don't know how many folks he has not brought in already to have a look at it."

"Well, it was a capital find, Miss Betty; one to be proud of," answered Sam, settling to his work.

For some little time nothing was heard but the scratching of Mr. Dene's pen and the clicking of Miss Betty's scissors. Her task was nearing completion. A few minutes more, and the last click was given, the last bit of the braid was off. "And I'm glad of it," cried she aloud, flinging the end of the curtain on the top of the rest.

"This braid will do again for something or other," considered Miss Betty, as she began to wind it upon an old book. "It was put on fresh only three or four years ago. Well brushed, it will look almost like new."

Again Susan opened the door. "Miss Betty, here's the man come with the chintz: five or six rolls of it for you to choose from," cried she. "Shall he come in here?"

Miss Betty was about to say Yes, but stopped and said No, instead. The commotion of holding up the chintzes to the light, to judge of their different merits, might disturb Mr. Dene; and she knew better than to interrupt business.

"Let him take them to the room where they are to hang, Susan; we can judge best there."

Tossing the braid to Susan, who stood waiting at the door, Miss Betty hastily took up her curtains, and Susan held the door open for her mistress to pass through.

Choosing chintz for window-curtains takes some time ; as everybody knows whose fancy is erratic. And how long Miss Betty and Susan and the young man from the chintz-mart had been doubting and deciding and doubting again, did not quite appear, when Captain Cockermuth's voice was heard ascending from below.

" Betty ! Are you upstairs, Betty ? "

" Yes, I'm here," she called back, crossing to the door to speak.

" Do you want me, Charles ? "

" Where have you put the box ? "

" What box ? "

" The box of guineas."

" It is on the table."

" It is not on the table. I can't see it anywhere."

" It was on the table when I left the parlour. I did not touch it. Ask Mr. Dene where it is : I left him there."

" Mr. Dene's not here. I wish you'd come down."

" Very well ; I'll come in a minute or two," concluded Miss Betty, going back to the chintzes.

" Why, I saw that box on the table as I shut the door after you had come out, ma'am," observed Susan, who had listened to the colloquy.

" So did I," said Miss Betty ; " it was the very last thing my eyes fell on. If young Mr. Dene finished what he was about and left the parlour, I dare say he put the box up somewhere for safety. I think, Susan, we must fix upon this light pea-green with the rose-buds running up it. It matches the paper : and the light coming through it takes quite a nice shade."

A little more indecision yet ; and yet a little more, as to whether the curtains should be lined, or not, and then Miss Cockermuth went downstairs. The captain was pacing the passage to and fro impatiently.

" Now then, Betty, where's my box ? "

" But how am I to know where the box is, Charles, if it's not on the table ? " she remonstrated, turning into the parlour, where two friends of the captain's waited to be regaled with the sight of the recovered treasure. " I had to go upstairs with the young man who brought the chintzes ; and I left the box here " —indicating the exact spot on the table. " It was where you left it yourself. I did not touch it at all."

She shook hands with the visitors. Captain Cockermuth looked gloomy—as if he were at sea and had lost his reckoning.

"If you had to leave the room, why didn't you put the box up?" asked he. "A box full of guineas shouldn't be left alone in an empty room."

"But Mr. Dene was in the room; he sat at the desk there, copying a letter for John. As to why didn't I put the box up, it was not my place to do so that I know of. You were about yourself, Charles—only at the front-door, I suppose."

Captain Cockermuth was aware that he had not been entirely at the front-door. Two or three times he had crossed over to hold a chat with acquaintances on the other side the way; had strolled with one of them nearly up to Salt Lane and back. Upon catching hold of these two gentlemen, now brought in, he had found the parlour empty of occupants and the box not to be seen.

"Well, this is a nice thing—that a man can't put his hand upon his own property when he wants to, or hear where it is!" grumbled he. "And what business on earth had Dene to meddle with the box?"

"To put it in safety—if he did meddle with it, and a sensible thing to do," retorted Miss Betty, who did not like to be scolded unjustly. "Just like you, Charles, making a fuss over nothing! Why don't you go and ask young Dene where it is?"

"Young Dene is not in. And John's not in. Nobody is in but Parslet; and he does not know anything about it. I must say, Betty, you manage the house nicely!" concluded the captain, ironically, giving way to his temper.

This was, perhaps the reader may think, commotion enough "over nothing," as Miss Betty put it. But it was not much as compared with the commotion which set in later. When Mr. Cockermuth came in, he denied all knowledge of it, and Sam Dene was impatiently waited for.

It was past two o'clock when he returned, for he had been home to dinner. The good-looking young fellow turned in at the front-door with a fleet step, and encountered Captain Cockermuth, who attacked him hotly, demanding what he had done with the box.

"Ah," said Sam, lightly and coolly, "Parslet said you were looking for it." Mr. Parslet had in fact mentioned it at home over his dinner.

"Well, where is it?" said the captain. "Where did you put it?"

"I?" cried young Dene. "Not anywhere. Should I be likely

to touch the box, sir? I saw the box on that table while I was copying a letter for Mr. Cockermuth; that's all I know of it."

The captain turned red, and pale, and red again. "Do you mean to tell me to my face, Mr. Dene, that the box is *gone*?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Sam in the easiest of all easy tones. "It seems to be gone."

The box was gone. Gone once more with all its golden guineas. It could not be found anywhere; in the house or out of the house, upstairs or down. The captain searched frantically, the others helped him, but no trace of it could be found.

At first it was impossible to believe it. That this self-same box should mysteriously have vanished a second time, seemed to be too marvellous for fact. But it was true.

Nobody would admit a share in the responsibility. The captain left the box safe amidst (as he put it) a room full of people: Miss Betty considered that she left it equally safe, with Mr. Dene seated at the writing-table, and the captain dodging (as *she* put it) in and out. Mr. Cockermuth had not entered the parlour since he left it, when called to Mr. Chamberlain, with whom he had gone out. Sam Dene reiterated that he had not meddled with the box; no, nor thought about it.

Sam's account, briefly given, was this. After finishing copying the letter, he closed the little table-desk and pushed it back to its place against the wall, and had carried the letter and the copy into the office. Finding Mr. Cockermuth was not there, he locked them up in his own desk, having to go to the Guildhall upon some business. The business there took up some time, in fact until past one o'clock, and he then went home to dinner.

"And did you consider it right, Sam Dene, to leave a valuable box like that on the table, unguarded?" demanded Captain Cockermuth, as they all stood together in the parlour, after questioning Sam; and the captain had been looking so fierce and speaking so sharply that it might be thought he was taking Sam for the thief, off-hand.

"To tell the truth, captain, I never thought of the box," answered Sam. "I might not have noticed that the box was in the room at all but for Miss Betty's drawing my attention to it. After that, I grew so much interested in the letter I was copying (for I know all about the cause, as Mr. Cockermuth is aware, and it was curious news) that I forgot everything else."

Lawyer Cockermuth nodded to confirm this. The captain went on :

" Betty drew your attention to it, did she ? Why did she draw it ? In what way ? "

" Well, she remarked that you made as much fuss over that box as if it were filled with diamonds," replied the young man, glad to pay out the captain for his angry and dictatorial tone. But the captain was in truth beginning to entertain a very ominous suspicion.

" Do you wish to deny, Samson Dene, that my sister Betty left that box on the table when she quitted the room ? "

" Why, who does ? " cried Sam. " When Miss Betty says she left the box on the table, of course she did leave it. She must know. Susan, it seems, also saw that it was left there. "

" And you could see that box of guineas standing stark staring on the table, and come out of the room and leave it to its fate ! " foamed the captain. " Instead of giving me a call to say nobody was on guard here ! "

" I didn't see it," returned Sam. " There's no doubt it was there, but I did not see it. I never looked towards the table as I came out, that I know of. The table, as I dare say you remember, was not in its usual place ; it was up there by the window. The box had gone clean out of my thoughts. "

" Well, Mr. Dene, my impression is *that you have got the box*," cried the angry captain.

" Oh, is it ! " returned Sam, with supreme good humour, and just the least suspicion of a laugh. " A box like that would be uncommonly useful to me. "

" I expect, young man, the guineas would ! "

" Right you are, captain. "

But Captain Cockermuth regarded this mocking pleasantry as particularly ill-timed. *He believed the young man was putting it on to divert suspicion from himself.*

" Who did take the box ? " questioned he. " Tell me that. "

" I wish I could, sir. "

" How could the box vanish off the table unless it was taken, I ask you ? "

" That's a puzzling question," coolly rejoined Sam. " It was too heavy for the rats, I expect. "

" Oh, dear, but we have no rats in the house," cried Miss Betty.

" I wish we had, I'm sure—and could find the box in their holes. "

She was feeling tolerably uncomfortable. Placid and easy in a general way, serious worry always upset her considerably.

Captain Cockermuth's suspicions were becoming certainties. The previous night, when his brother had been telling him various items of news of the old town, as they sat confidentially over the fire after Miss Betty had gone up to bed, Mr. Cockermuth chanced to mention the fact that young Dene had been making a few debts. Not speaking in any ill-natured spirit, quite the contrary, for he liked the young man amazingly. Only a few, he continued; thoughtless young men would do so; and he had given him a lecture. And then he laughingly added the information that Mr. Jacobson had imparted to him twelve months ago, in their mutual friendship—of the debts Sam had made in London.

No sensible person can be surprised that Charles Cockermuth recalled this now. It rankled in his mind. Had Sam Dene taken the box of guineas to satisfy these debts contracted during the past year at Worcester? It looked like it. And the longer the captain dwelt on it, the more and more likely it grew to look.

All the afternoon the search was kept up by the captain. Not an individual article in the parlour but was turned inside out; he wanted to have the carpet up. His brother and Sam Dene had returned to their work in the office as usual. The captain was getting to feel like a raging bear; three times Miss Betty had to stop him in a dreadful fit of swearing; and when dinner-time came he could not eat. It was a beautiful slice of Severn salmon, which had its price, I can tell you, in Worcester then, and minced veal, and a jam tart, all of which dishes Charles Cockermuth especially favoured. But the loss of the sixty guineas did away with his appetite. Mr. Cockermuth, who took the loss very coolly, laughed at him.

The laughing did not mend the captain's temper: neither did the hearing that Sam Dene had departed for home as usual at five o'clock. Had Sam been innocent, he would at least have come to the parlour and inquired whether the box was found, instead of sneaking off home to tea.

Fretting and fuming, raging and stamping, disturbing the parlour's peace and his own, strode Charles Cockermuth. His good-humoured brother John bore it for an hour or two, and then told him he might as well go outside and stamp on the pavement for a bit.

"I will," said Charles. Catching up his hat, saying nothing to

anybody, he strode off to see the sergeant of police—Dutton—and laid the case concisely before him : The box of guineas was on the table where his sister sat at work ; her work being at one end, the box at the other. Sam Dene was also in the room, copying a letter at the writing-table. Miss Betty was called upstairs ; she went, leaving the box on the table. It was the last thing she saw as she left the room ; the servant, who had come to call her, also saw it standing there. Presently young Dene also left the room and the house ; and from that moment the box was never seen.

“What do you make of that, Mr. Dutton?” summed up Captain Cockermuth.

“Am I to understand that no other person entered the room after Mr. Dene quitted it?” inquired the sergeant.

“Not a soul. I can testify to that myself.”

“Then it looks as though Mr. Dene must have taken the box.”

“Just so,” assented the complainant, triumphantly. “And I shall give him into custody for stealing it.”

Mr. Dutton considered. His judgment was cool ; the captain’s hot. He thought there might be ins and outs in this affair that had not yet come to the surface. Besides that, he knew young Dene, and did not much fancy him the sort of individual likely to do a thing of this kind.

“Captain Cockermuth,” said he, “I think it might be best for me to come up to the house and see a bit into the matter personally, before proceeding to extreme measures. We experienced officers have a way of turning up scraps of evidence that other people would never look at. Perhaps, after all, the box is only mislaid.”

“But I tell you it’s *lost*,” said the captain. “Clean gone. Can’t be found high or low.”

“Well, if that same black box is lost again, I can only say it is the oddest case I ever heard of. One would think the box had a demon inside it.”

“No, sergeant, you are wrong there. The demon’s inside him that took it. Listen while I whisper something in your ear—that young Dene is over head and ears in debt : he has debts here, debts there, debts everywhere. For some little time now, as I chance to know, he has been at his very wits’ end to think where or how he could pick up some money to satisfy the most pressing ; fit to die of fear, lest they should travel to the knowledge of his uncle at Elm Farm.”

"Is it so?" exclaimed Mr. Dutton, severely. And his face changed, and his opinion also. "Are you sure of this, sir?"

"Well, my informant was my brother; so you may judge whether it is likely to be correct or not," said the captain. "But, if you think it best to make some inquiries at the house, come with me now and do so."

They walked to Foregate together. The sergeant looked a little at the features of the parlour, where the loss had taken place, and heard what Miss Betty had to say, and questioned Susan. This did not help the suspicion thrown on Sam Dene, saving in one point—their joint testimony that he and the box were left alone in the room together.

Mr. Cockermuth had gone out, so the sergeant did not see him; but, as he was not within doors when the loss occurred, he could not have aided the investigation in any way.

"Well, Dutton, what do you think now?" asked Captain Cockermuth, strolling down the street with the sergeant when he departed.

"I confess my visit has not helped me much," said Dutton, a slow-speaking man, given to be cautious. "If nobody entered the room between the time when Miss Cockermuth left it and you entered it, why then, sir, there's only young Dene to fall back upon."

"I tell you nobody did enter it," cried the choleric captain; "or *could*, without my seeing them. I stood at the front-door. Ward was busy at the house that morning, dodging perpetually across the top of the passage, between the kitchen and brew-house: he, too, is sure no stranger could have come in without being seen by him."

"Did you see young Dene leave the room, sir?"

"I did. Hearing somebody come out of the parlour, I looked round and saw it was young Dene with some papers in his hand. He went into the office for a minute or two, and then passed me, remarking, with all the impudence in life, that he was going to the town hall. He must have had my box in his pocket then."

"A pity but you had gone into the parlour at once, captain," remarked the sergeant. "If only to put the box in safety—provided it was there."

"But I thought it was safe. I thought my sister was there. I did go in almost directly."

"And you never stirred from the door—from first to last?"

“ I don't say that. When I first stood there I strolled about a little, talking with one person and another. *But I did not stir from the door after I saw Sam Dene leave the parlour.* And I do not think five minutes elapsed before I went in. Not more than five, I am quite certain. What are you thinking about, Dutton?—you don't seem to take me.”

“ I take you well enough, sir, and all you say. But what is puzzling me in the matter is this ; strikes me as strange, in fact : that Mr. Dene should do the thing (allowing that he has done it) in so open and barefaced a manner, laying himself open to immediate suspicion. Left alone in the room with the box by Miss Betty, he must know that if, when he left it, the box vanished with him, only one inference would be drawn. Most thieves exercise some caution.”

“ Not when they are as hard up as Dene is. Impudence with them is the order of the day, and often carries luck with it. Nothing risk, nothing win, they cry, and they *do* risk—and win. Dene has got my box, sergeant.”

“ Well, sir, it looks dark against him ; almost *too* dark ; and if you decide to give him into custody, of course we have only too—— Good-evening, Badger !”

They had strolled as far as the Cross, and were standing on the wide pavement in front of St. Nicholas' Church, about to part, when that respectable gentleman, Jonas Badger, passed by. A thought struck the captain. He knew the man was a money-lender in a private way.

“ Here, Badger, stop a minute,” he hastily cried. “ I want to ask you a question about young Dene—my brother's clerk, you know. Does he owe you money?—Much ?”

Mr. Badger, wary by nature and by habit, glanced first at the questioner and then at the police-sergeant, and did not answer. Whereupon Captain Cockermuth, as an excuse for his curiosity, plunged into the history of what had occurred : the finding of the box of guineas yesterday and the losing it again to-day, and the doubt of Sam.

Mr. Badger listened with interest ; for the news of that marvellous find had not yet reached his ears. He had been shut up in his office all the morning, very busy over his account-books ; and in the afternoon had walked over to Kempsey, where he had a client or two, getting back only in time for tea.

“ That long-lost box of guineas come to light at last !” he

exclaimed. "What an extraordinary thing! And Mr. Dene is suspected of— Why, good gracious!" he broke off in fresh astonishment, "I have just seen him with a guinea in his pocket!"

"Seen a guinea in Sam Dene's pocket!" cried Captain Cockermuth, turning yellow as the gas-flame under which they were standing.

"Why yes, I have. It was——"

But there Mr. Badger came to a full stop. It had suddenly struck him that he might be doing harm to Sam Dene; and the rule of his life was not to harm any one, or to make an enemy, if his own interest allowed him to avoid it.

"I won't say any more, Captain Cockermuth. It is no business of mine."

But here Mr. Sergeant Dutton came to the fore. "You must, Badger. You must say all you know that bears upon the affair; the law demands it of you. What about the guinea?"

"Well, if you force me to do so—putting it in that way," returned the man, driven into a corner.

Mr. Badger had just been down to Edgar Street to pay another visit to Sam. Not to torment him; he did not do that more than he could help; but simply to say he would accept smaller instalments for the liquidation of his debt—which of course meant giving to Sam a longer time to pay the whole in. This evening he was admitted to Sam's sitting-room. During their short conversation, Sam, searching impatiently for a pencil in his waistcoat-pocket, drew out with it a few coins in silver money, and one coin in gold. Mr. Badger's hungry eyes saw that it was an old guinea. These particulars he now imparted.

"What did he *say* about the guinea?" cried Captain Cockermuth, his own eyes glaring.

"Not a word," said Badger; "neither did I. He slipped it back into his pocket."

"I hope you think there's some proof to go upon *now*," were Charles Cockermuth's last words to the police-officer as he wished him good-night.

On the following morning, Sam Dene was apprehended, and taken before the magistrates. Beyond being formally charged, very little was done; Miss Betty was in bed with a sick headache, brought on by the worry, and could not appear to give evidence; so he was remanded on bail until Saturday.

III

I'm sure you might have thought all his rick-yards were on fire by the way old Jacobson came bursting in. It was Saturday morning, and we were at breakfast at Dyke Manor. He had run every step of the way from Elm Farm, two miles nearly, not having patience to wait for his gig, and came in all excitement, the *Worcester Herald* in his hand. The Squire started from his chair; Mrs. Todhetley, then in the act of pouring out a cup of coffee, let it flow over on to the tablecloth.

"What on earth's amiss, Jacobson?" cried the Squire.

"Ay, what's amiss," stuttered Jacobson in answer; "*this is amiss,*" holding out the newspaper. "I'll prosecute the editor as sure as I'm a living man. It is a conspiracy got up to sell it; a concocted lie. It can't be anything else, you know, Todhetley. And I want you to go off with me to Worcester. The gig's following me."

When we had somewhat collected our senses, and could look at the newspaper, there was the account as large as life. Samson Reginald Dene had been had up before the magistrates on Thursday morning on a charge of stealing a small box of carved ebony, containing sixty guineas in gold, from the dwelling house of Lawyer Cockermuth; and he was to be brought up again that day, Saturday, for examination.

"A pretty thing this is to see, when a man opens his weekly newspaper at his breakfast-table!" gasped Jacobson, flicking the report with his angry finger. "I'll have the law of them—accusing *my* nephew of such a thing as that! You'll go with me, Squire!"

"Go! of course I'll go!" returned the Squire, in his hot partisanship. "We were going to Worcester, any way; I've things to do there. Poor Sam! Hanging would be too good for the printers of that newspaper, Jacobson."

Mr. Jacobson's gig was heard driving up to the gate at railroad speed; and soon our own carriage was ready. Old Jacobson sat with the Squire, I behind with Giles; the other groom, Blossom, drove Tod in the gig; and away we went in the blustering March wind. Many people, farmers and others, were on the road, riding or driving to Worcester market.

Well, we found it was true. And not the mistake of the newspapers: they had but reported what passed before the magistrates at the town hall.

The first person we saw was Miss Cockermuth. She was in a fine way, not knowing what to think or believe, and sat in the parlour in that soft green gown of twilled silk (that might have been a relic of the silk made in the time of the Queen of Sheba), her cap and front all awry. Rumour said old Jacobson had been a sweetheart of hers in their young days ; but I'm sure I don't know. Any way they were very friendly with one another, and she sometimes called him "Frederick." He sat down by her on the horsehair sofa, and we took chairs.

She recounted the circumstances (ramblingly) from beginning to end. Not that the end had come yet by a long way. And there it was, she wound up, when the narrative was over : the box had disappeared, just for all the world as mysteriously as it disappeared in the days gone by.

Mr. Jacobson had listened patiently. He was a fine, upright man, with a healthy colour and bright dark eyes. He wore a blue frock-coat to-day with metal buttons, and top-boots. As yet he did not see how they had got up grounds for accusing Sam, and he said so.

"To be sure," cried the Squire. "How's that, Miss Betty?"

"Why, it's this way," said Miss Betty—"that nobody was here in the parlour but Sam when the box vanished. It is my brother Charles who has done it all ; he is so passionate, you know. John has properly quarrelled with him for it."

"It is not possible, you know, Miss Betty, that Sam Dene could have done it," struck in Tod, who was boiling over with rage at the whole thing. "Some thief must have stolen in at the street door when Sam had left the room."

"Well, no, that could hardly have been, seeing that Charles never left the street door after that," returned Miss Betty, mildly. "It appears to be a certain fact that not a soul entered the room after the young man left it. And there lies the puzzle of it."

Putting it to be as Miss Betty put it—and I may as well say here that nothing turned up, then or later, to change the opinion—it looked rather suspicious for Sam Dene. I think the Squire saw it.

"I suppose you are sure the box was on the table when you left the room, Miss Betty?" said he.

"Why, of course I am sure, Squire," she answered. "It was the last thing my eyes fell on ; for, as I went through the door, I glanced back to see that I had left the table tidy. Susan can bear witness to that. Dutton, the police-sergeant, thinks some demon

of mischief must be in that box—meaning the deuce, you know. Upon my word it looks like it.”

Susan came in with some glasses and ale as Miss Betty spoke, and confirmed the testimony—which did not need confirmation. As she closed the parlour-door, she said, after her mistress had passed out, she noticed the box standing on the table.

“Is Sam here to-day—in the office?” asked Mr. Jacobson.

“Oh, my goodness, no,” cried Miss Betty in a fluster. “Why, Frederick, he has not been here since Thursday, when they had him up at the Guildhall. He couldn’t well come while the charge is hanging over him.”

“Then I think we had better go out to find Sam, and hear what he has to say,” observed Mr. Jacobson, drinking up his glass of ale.

“Yes, do,” said Miss Betty. “Tell poor Sam I’m as sorry as I can be—pestered almost out of my mind over it. And as to their having found one of the guineas in his pocket, please just mention to him that I say it might have slipped in accidentally.”

“One of the guineas found in Sam’s pocket!” exclaimed Mr. Jacobson, taken aback.

“Well, I hear so,” responded Miss Betty. “The police searched him, you see.”

As the Squire and Mr. Jacobson went out, Mr. Cockermuth was coming in. They all turned into the office together, while we made a rush to Sam Dene’s lodgings in Edgar Street: as much of a rush, at least, as the Saturday’s streets would let us make. Sam was out, the young servant said when we got there, and while parleying with her Mrs. Parslet opened her sitting-room door.

“I do not suppose Mr. Dene will be long,” she said. “He has to appear at the town hall this morning, and I think it likely he will come home first. Will you walk in and wait?”

She handed us into her parlour, where she had been busy, marking sheets and pillow-cases and towels with “prepared” ink; the table was covered with them. Tod began telling her that Mr. Jacobson was at Worcester, and went on to say what a shame it was that Sam Dene should be accused of this thing.

“We consider it so,” said Mrs. Parslet, who was a capable, pleasant-speaking woman, tall and slender. “My husband says it has upset Mr. Cockermuth more than anything that has occurred for years past. He tells his brother that he should have had it investigated privately, not have given Mr. Dene into custody.”

“Then why did he let him do it, Mrs. Parslet?”

She looked at Tod, as if surprised at the question. “Mr. Cockermuth knew nothing of it; you may be sure of that. Captain Cockermuth had the young man at the Guildhall and was preferring the charge, before Mr. Cockermuth heard a word of what was a-gate. Certainly that is a most mysterious box! It seems fated to give trouble.”

At this moment the door opened, and a young lady came into the parlour. It was Maria. What a nice face she had!—what sweet, thoughtful eyes!—what gentle manners! Sam’s friends in the town were accusing him of being in love with her—and small blame to him.

But Sam did not appear to be coming home, and time was getting on. Tod decided not to wait longer, and said good-morning.

Flying back along High Street, we caught sight of the tray of Dublin buns, just put fresh on the counter in Rouse’s shop, and made as good a feast as time allowed. Some people called them Doubling buns (from their shape, I take it), and I don’t know to this day which was right.

Away with fleet foot again, past the bustle round the town hall, and market house, till we came to the next confectioner’s and saw the apple-tarts. Perhaps somebody remembers yet how delicious those apple-tarts were. Bounding in, we began upon them.

While the feast was in progress, Sam Dene went by, walking very fast. We dashed out to catch him. Good Mrs. Mountford chanced to be in the shop and knew us, or they might have thought we were decamping without payment.

Sam Dene, in answer to Tod’s hasty questions, went into a passion; swearing at the world in general, and Captain Cockermuth in particular, as freely as though the justices, then taking their places in the Guildhall, were not as good as within earshot.

“It is a fearful shame, Todhetley!—to bring such a charge against me, and to lug me up to the criminal bar like a felon. Worse than all, to let it go forth to the town and county in to-day’s glaring newspapers that I, Sam Dene, am a common thief!”

“Of course it is a fearful shame, Sam—it’s infamous, and all your friends know it is,” cried Tod, with eager sympathy. “My

father wishes he could hang the printers. I say, what do you think has become of the box?"

"Become of it!—why, that blundering Charles Cockermuth has got it. He was off his head with excitement at its being found. He must have come into the room and put it somewhere and forgotten it: or else he put it into his pocket and got robbed of it in the street. That's what I think. Quite off his head, I give you my word."

"And what fable is it the wretches have got up about finding one of the guineas in your pocket, Sam?"

"Oh, bother that! It was my own guinea. I swear it—there! I can't stay now," went on Sam, striding off down High Street. "I am due at the town hall this minute; only out on bail. You'll come with me."

"You go in and pay for the tarts, Johnny," called back Tod, as he put his arm within Sam Dene's. I looked in, pitched a shilling on the counter, said I didn't know how many we had eaten; perhaps ten; and that I couldn't wait for change."

Crushing my way amidst the market women and their baskets in the Guildhall yard, I came upon Austin Chance. His father held some post connected with the law, as administered there, and Austin said he would get me in.

"Can it be true that the police found one of the guineas about him?" I asked.

Chance pulled a long face. "It's true they found one when they searched him——"

"What right had they to search him?"

"Well, I don't know," said Austin, laughing a little; "they did it. To see perhaps whether all the guineas were about him. And I am afraid, Johnny Ludlow, that the finding of that guinea will make it rather hard for Sam. It is said that Maria Parslet can prove the guinea was Sam's own, and that my father has had a summon's served on her to appear here to-day. He has taken Sam's case in hand; but he is closer than wax, and tells me nothing."

"You don't think he can have stolen the box, Chance?"

"I don't. I shouldn't think him capable of anything so mean; let alone the danger of it. Not but that there are circumstances in the case that tell uncommonly strong against him. And where the deuce the box can have got to, otherwise, is more than mortal man can guess at. Come along."

IV

Not for a long while had Worcester been stirred as it was over this affair of Samson Dene's. What with the curious discovery of the box of guineas after its mysterious disappearance of years, and then its second no less mysterious loss, with the suspicion that Sam Dene stole it, the Faithful City was so excited as hardly to know whether it stood on its head or its heels.

When the police searched the prisoner on Thursday morning, after taking him into custody, and found the guinea upon him (having been told that he had one about him), his guilt was thought to be as good as proved. Sam said the guinea was his own, an heirloom, and stood to this so indignantly resolute that the police let him have it back. But now, what did Sam go and do? When released upon bail by the magistrates—to come up again on the Saturday—he went straight off to a silversmith's, had a hole stamped in the guinea and hung it to his watch-chain across his waistcoat, that the public might feast their eyes upon it. It was in this spirit of defiance—or, as the town called it, bravado—that he met the charge. His lodgings had been searched for the rest of the guineas, but they were not found.

The hour for the Saturday's examination—twelve o'clock—was striking, as I struggled my way with Austin Chance through the crush round the Guildhall. But that Austin's father was a man of consequence with the door-keepers, we should not have got in at all.

The accused, arraigned by his full name, Samson Reginald Dene, stood in the place allotted to prisoners, cold defiance on his handsome face. As near to him as might be permitted, stood Tod, just as defiant as he. Captain Charles Cockermuth, a third in defiance, stood opposite to prosecute; while Lawyer Cockermuth, who came in with Sam's uncle, Mr. Jacobson, openly wished his brother at Hanover. Squire Todhetley, being a county magistrate, sat on the bench with the City magnates, but not to interfere.

The proceedings began. Captain Cockermuth related how the little box, his property, containing sixty golden guineas, was left on the table in a sitting-room in his brother's house, the accused being the only person in the room at the time, and that the box disappeared. He, himself (standing at the front-door), saw the accused quit the room; he went into it almost immediately, but

the box was gone. He swore that no person entered the room after the prisoner left it.

Miss Betty Cockermuth, flustered and red, appeared next. She testified that she was in the room nearly all the morning, the little box being upon the table; when she left the room, Mr. Dene remained in it alone, copying a letter for her brother; the box was still on the table. Susan Edwards, housemaid at Lawyer Cockermuth's, spoke to the same fact. It was she who had fetched her mistress out, and she saw the box standing upon the table.

The accused was asked by one of the magistrates what he had to say to this. He answered, speaking freely, that he had nothing to say in contradiction, except that he did not know what became of the box.

"Did you see the box on the table?" asked the lawyer on the opposite side, Mr. Standup.

"I saw it there when I first went into the room. Miss Betty made a remark about the box, which drew my attention to it. I was sitting at the far end of the room, at Mr. Cockermuth's little desk-table. I did not notice the box afterwards."

"Did you not see it there after Miss Cockermuth left the room?"

"No, I did not; not that I remember," answered Sam. "Truth to say, I never thought about it. My attention was confined to the letter I was copying, to the exclusion of everything else."

"Did any one come into the room after Miss Cockermuth left it?"

"No one came into it. Somebody opened the door and looked in."

This was fresh news. The town hall pricked up its ears.

"I do not know who it was," added Sam. "My head was bent over my writing, when the door opened quickly, and as quickly shut again. I supposed somebody had looked in to see if Mr. or Miss Cockermuth was there, and had retreated on finding they were not."

"Could that person, whomsoever it might be, have advanced to the table and taken the box?" asked the chief of the magistrates.

"No, sir. For certain, no!"—and Sam's tone here, he best knew why, was aggravatingly defiant. "The person might have put his head in—and no doubt did—but he did not set a foot inside the room."

Captain Cockermuth was asked about this: whether he observed any one go to the parlour and look in. He protested till he was nearly blue with rage (for he regarded it as Sam's invention), that such a thing never took place, that no one whatever went near the parlour-door.

Next came up the question of the guinea, which was hanging from his watch-guard, shining and bold as if it had been brass. Sam had been questioned about this by the justices on Thursday, and his statement in answer to them was just as bold as the coin.

The guinea had been given him by his late father's uncle, old Thomas Dene, who had jokingly enjoined him never to change it, always to keep it by him, and then he would never be without money. Sam had kept it; kept it from that time to this. He kept it in the pocket of an old-fashioned leather case, which contained some letters from his father, and two or three other things he valued. No, he was not in the habit of getting the guinea out to look at, he had retorted to a little badgering; had not looked at it (or at the case either, which lay in the bottom of his trunk) for months and months—yes, it might be years, for all he recollected. But on the Tuesday evening, when talking with Miss Parslet about guineas, he fetched it to show to her; and slipped in into his pocket afterwards, where the police found it on the Thursday. This was the substance of his first answer, and he repeated it now.

“Do you know who is said to be the father of lies, young man?” asked Justice Whitewicker in a solemn tone, suspecting that the prisoner was telling an out-and-out fable.

“I have heard,” answered Sam. “Have never seen him myself. Perhaps you have, sir.” At which a titter went round the court, and it put his worship's back up. Sam went on to say that he had often thought of taking his guinea into wear, and had now done it. And he gave the guinea a flick in the face of us all.

Evidently little good could come of a hardened criminal like this; and Justice Whitewicker, who thought nothing on earth so grand as the sound of his own voice from the bench, gave Sam a piece of his mind. In the midst of this a stir arose at the appearance of Maria Parslet. Mr. Chance led her in; her father, sad and shrinking as usual, walked behind them. Lawyer Cockermuth—and I liked him for it—made a place for his clerk next to himself. Maria looked modest, gentle, and pretty. She wore black silk, being in slight mourning, and a dainty white bonnet.

Mr. Dene was asked to take tea with them in the parlour on the Tuesday evening, as a matter of convenience, Maria's evidence ran, in answer to questions, and she briefly alluded to the reason why. Whilst waiting together, he and she, for her father to come in, Mr. Dene told her of the finding of the ebony box of guineas at Mr. Cockermuth's. She laughingly remarked that a guinea was an out-of-date coin now, and she was not sure that she had ever seen one. In reply to that, Mr. Dene said he had one by him, given him by an old uncle some years before ; and he went upstairs and brought it down to show to her. There could be no mistake, Maria added to Mr. Whitewicker, who wanted to insinuate a word of doubt, and her sweet brown eyes were honest and true as she said it ; she had touched the guinea and held it in her hand for some moments.

"Held it and touched it, did you, Miss Parslet?" retorted Lawyer Standup. "Pray what appearance had it?"

"It was a thin, worn coin, sir," replied Maria ; "thinner, I think, than a sovereign, but somewhat larger ; it seemed to be worn thin at the edge."

"Whose image was on it?—what king's?"

"George the Third's. I noticed that."

"Now, don't you think, young lady, that the accused took this marvellous coin from his pocket, instead of from some receptacle above stairs?" went on Mr. Standup.

"I am quite sure he did not take it from his pocket when before me," answered Maria. "He ran upstairs quickly, saying he would fetch the guinea : he had nothing in his hands then."

Upon this Lawyer Chance inquired of his learned brother why he need waste time in useless questions ; begging to remind him that it was not until Wednesday morning the box disappeared, so the prisoner could not well have had any of its contents about him on Tuesday.

"Just let my questions alone, will you," retorted Mr. Standup, with a nod. "I know what I am about. Now, Miss Parslet, please attend to me. Was the guinea you profess to have seen a perfect coin, or was there a hole in it?"

"It was a perfect coin, sir."

"And what became of it?"

"I think Mr. Dene put it in his waistcoat-pocket : I did not particularly notice. Quite close upon that, my father came home, and we sat down to tea. No, sir, nothing was said to my father

about the guinea ; if it was, I did not hear it. But he and Mr. Dene talked of the box of guineas that had been found."

"Who was it that called while you were at tea?"

"Young Mr. Chance called. We had finished tea then, and Mr. Dene took him upstairs to his own sitting-room."

"I am not asking you about young Mr. Chance ; we shall come to him presently," was the rough-toned, but not ill-natured retort.

"Somebody else called : who was it?"

Maria, blushing and paling ever since she stood up to the ordeal, grew white now. Mr. Badger had called at the door, she answered, and Mr. Dene went out to speak to him. Worried by Lawyer Standup as to whether he did not come to ask for money, she said she believed so, but she did not hear all they said.

Quiet Mr. Parslet was the next witness. He had to acknowledge that he did hear it. Mr. Badger appeared to be pressing for some money owing to him ; could not tell the amount, knew nothing about that. When questioned whether the accused owed him money, Parslet said not a shilling ; Mr. Dene had never sought to borrow of him, and had paid his monthly accounts regularly.

Upon that, Mr. Badger was produced ; a thin man with a neck as stiff as a poker ; who gave his reluctant testimony in a sweet tone of benevolence. Mr. Dene had been borrowing money from him for some time ; somewhere about twenty pounds, he thought, was owing now, including interest. He had repeatedly asked for its repayment, but only got put off with (as he believed) lame excuses. Had certainly gone to ask for it on the Tuesday evening ; was neither loud nor angry, oh dear no ; but did tell the accused he thought he could give him some if he would, and did say that he must have a portion of it within a week, or he should apply to Mr. Jacobson, of Elm Farm. Did not really mean to apply to Mr. Jacobson, had no wish to do any one an injury, but felt vexed at the young man's off-handedness, which looked like indifference. Knew besides that Mr. Dene had other debts.

Now I'll leave you to judge how this evidence struck on the ears of old Jacobson. He leaped to the conclusion that Sam had been going all sorts of ways, as he supposed he went when in London, and might be owing, the mischief only knew how much money ; and he shook his fist at Sam across the justice-room.

Mr. Standup next called young Chance, quite to young Chance's surprise ; perhaps also to his father's. He was questioned upon no

end of things—whether he did not know that the accused was owing a great deal of money, and whether the accused had shown any guinea to him when he was in Edgar Street on the Tuesday night. Austin answered that he believed Mr. Dene owed a little money, not a great deal, so far as he knew ; and that he had not seen the guinea or heard of it. And in saying all this, Austin's tone was just as resentfully insolent to Mr. Standup as he dared to make it.

Well, it is of no use to go on categorically with the day's proceedings. When they came to an end, the magistrates conferred pretty hotly in a low tone amongst themselves, some apparently taking up one opinion, as to Sam's guilt, or innocence, and some the other. At length they announced their decision, and it was as follows.

"Although the case undoubtedly presents grave grounds of suspicion against the accused, Samson Reginald Dene—'Very grave indeed,' interjected Mr. Whitewicker, solemnly—we do not consider them to be sufficient to commit him for trial upon ; therefore, we give him the benefit of the doubt, and discharge him. Should any further evidence transpire, he can be brought up again."

"It was Maria Parslet's testimony about the guinea that cleared him," whispered the crowd, as they filed out.

And I think it must have been. It was just impossible to doubt her truth, or the earnestness with which she gave it.

Mr. Jacobson "interviewed" Sam, as the Americans say, and the interview was not a loving one. Being in the mood, he said anything that came uppermost. He forbade Sam to appear at Elm Farm again ever, as "long as oak and ash grew" ; and he added that as Sam was bent on going to the deuce head foremost, he might do it upon his own means, but that he'd never get any more help from him.

The way the Squire lashed up Bob and Blister when driving home—for, liking Sam hitherto, he was just as much put out as old Jacobson—and the duet they kept together in abuse of his misdeeds, was edifying to hear. Tod laughed ; I did not. The gig was given over this return journey to the two grooms.

"I do not believe Sam took the box, sir," I said to old Jacobson, interrupting a fiery oration.

He turned round to stare at me. "What do you say, Johnny Ludlow ? You do not believe he took the box ?"

“ Well, to me it seems quite plain that he did not take it. I’ve hardly ever felt more sure of anything.”

“ Plain ! ” struck in the Squire. “ How is it plain, Johnny ? What grounds do you go upon ? ”

“ I judge by his looks and his tones, sir, when denying it. They are to be trusted.”

They did not know whether to laugh or scoff at me. It was Johnny’s way, said the Squire ; always fancying he could read the riddles in a man’s face and voice. But they’d have thrown up their two best market-going hats with glee to be able to think it true.

V

Samson Reginald Dene was relieved of the charge, as it was declared “ not proven ” ; all the same, Samson Reginald Dene was ruined. Worcester said so. During the following week, which was Passion Week, its citizens talked more of him than of their prayers.

Granted that Maria Parslet’s testimony had been honestly genuine, a theory cropped up to counteract it. Lawyer Standup had been bold enough to start it at the Saturday’s examination : a hundred tongues were repeating it now. Sam Dene, as may be remembered, was present at the finding of the box on Tuesday ; he had come up the passage and touched the golden guineas in it with the tips of his fingers ; those fingers might have deftly extracted one of the coins. No wonder he could show it to Maria when he went home to tea ! Captain Cockermuth admitted that in counting the guineas subsequently he had thought he counted sixty ; but, as he knew there were (or ought to be) that number in the box, probably the assumption misled him, causing him to reckon them as sixty when in fact there were only fifty-nine. Which was a bit of logic.

Still, popular opinion was divided. If part of the town judged Sam to be guilty, part believed him to be innocent. A good deal might be said on both sides. To a young man who does not know how to pay his debts from lack of means, and debts that he is afraid of, too, sixty golden guineas may be a great temptation ; and people did not shut their eyes to that. It transpired also that Mr. Jacobson, his own uncle, his best friend, had altogether cast Sam off and told him he might now go to the dogs his own way.

Sam resented it all bitterly, and defied the world. Far from

giving in or showing any sense of shame, he walked about with an air, his head up, and that brazen guinea dangling in front of him. He actually had the face to appear at college on Good Friday (the congregation looking askance at him), and sat out the cold service of the day : no singing, no organ, and the little chorister-boys in black surplices instead of white ones.

But the crowning act of boldness was to come. Before Easter week had lapsed into the past, Sam Dene had taken two rooms in a conspicuous part of the town and set-up in practice. A big brass plate on the outer door displayed his name : " Mr. Dene, Attorney-at-law." Sam's friends extolled his courage ; Sam's enemies were amazed at his impudence. Captain Cockermuth prophesied that the ceiling of that office would come tumbling down on its crafty occupant's head : it was *his* gold that was paying for it.

The Cockermuths, like the town, were divided in opinion. Mr. Cockermuth could not believe Sam guilty, although the mystery as to where the box could be puzzled him as few things had ever puzzled him in this life. He would fain have taken Sam back again, had it been a right thing to do. What the captain thought need not be enlarged upon. While Miss Betty felt uncertain ; veering now to this belief, now to that, and much distressed either way.

There is one friend in this world that hardly ever deserts us—and that is a mother. Mrs. Dene, a pretty little woman yet, had come flying to Worcester, ready to fight everybody in it on her son's behalf. Sam of course made his own tale good to her ; whether it was a true one or not he alone knew, but not an angel from heaven could have stirred her faith in it. She declared that, to her positive knowledge, the old uncle had given Sam the guinea.

It was understood to be Mrs. Dene who advanced the money to Sam to set up with ; it was certainly Mrs. Dene who bought a shutting-up bed (at old Ward's), and a gridiron, and a tea-pot, and a three-legged table, and a chair or two, all for the back-room of the little office, that Sam might go into house-keeping on his own account, and live upon sixpence a-day, so to say, until business came in. To look at Sam's hopeful face, he meant to do it, and to live down the scandal.

Looking at the thing impartially, one might perhaps see that Sam was not swayed by impudence in setting-up, so much as by obligation. For what else lay open to him ?—no firm would engage

him as clerk with that doubt sticking to his coat-tails. He paid some of his debts, and undertook to pay the rest before the year was out. A whisper arose that it was Mrs. Dene who managed this. Sam's adversaries knew better; the funds came out of the ebony box; that, as Charles Cockermuth demonstrated, was as sure as heaven.

But now there occurred one thing that I, Johnny Ludlow, could not understand, and never shall: why Worcester should have turned its back, like an angry drake, upon Maria Parslet. The school, where she was resident teacher, wrote her a cool, polite note, to say she need not trouble herself to return after the Easter recess. That example was followed. Pious individuals looked upon her as a possible story-teller, in danger of going to the bad in Sam's defence, nearly as much as Sam had gone.

It was just a craze. Even Charles Cockermuth said there was no sense in blaming Maria: of course Sam had deceived her (when pretending to show the guinea as his own), just as he deceived other people. Next the town called her "bold" for standing up in the face and eyes of the Guildhall to give her evidence. But how could Maria help that? It was not her own choice: she'd rather have locked herself up in the cellar. Lawyer Chance had burst in upon her that Saturday morning (not ten minutes after we left the house), giving nobody warning, and carried her off imperatively, never saying "Will you, or Won't you." It was not his way.

Placid Miss Betty was indignant when the injustice came to her ears. What did people mean by it? she wanted to know. She sent for Maria to spend the next Sunday in Foregate Street, and marched with her arm-in-arm to church (St. Nicholas'), morning and evening.

As the days and the weeks passed, commotion gave place to a calm; Sam and his delinquencies were let alone. One cannot be on the grumble for ever. Sam's lines were pretty hard; practice held itself aloof from him; and if he did not live upon the sixpence a-day, he looked at every halfpenny that he had to spend beyond it. His face grew thin, his blue eyes wistful, but he smiled hopefully.

"You keep up young Dene's acquaintance, I perceive," remarked Lawyer Chance to his son one evening as they were finishing dinner, for he had met the two young men together that day.

"Yes : why shouldn't I ?" returned Austin.

"Think that charge was a mistaken one, I suppose ?"

"Well I do, father. He has affirmed it to me in terms so unmistakable that I can but believe him. Besides, I don't think Dene, as I have always said, is the sort of fellow to turn rogue : I don't, indeed."

"Does he get any practice ?"

"Very little, I'm afraid."

Mr. Chance was a man with a conscience. On the whole, he felt inclined to think Sam had not helped himself to the guineas, but he was by no means sure of it : like Miss Betty Cockermuth, his opinion veered, now on this side, now on that, like a haunted weathercock. If Sam was not guilty, why, then, Fate had dealt hardly with the young fellow—and what would the end be ? These thoughts were running through the lawyer's mind as he talked to his son and sat playing with his bunch of seals, which hung down by a short, thick gold chain, in the old-fashioned manner.

"I should like to say a word to him if he'd come to me," he suddenly cried. "You might go and bring him, Austin."

"What—this evening ?" exclaimed Austin.

"Aye ; why not ? One time's as good as another."

Austin Chance started off promptly for the new office, and found his friend presiding over his own tea-tray in the little back-room ; the loaf and butter on the table, and a red herring on the gridiron.

"Hadn't time to get any dinner to-day ; too busy," was Sam's apology, given briefly with a flush of the face. "Mr. Chance wants me ? Well, I'll come, What is it for ?"

"Don't know," replied Austin. And away they went.

The lawyer was standing at the window, his hands in the pockets of his pepper-and-salt trousers, tinkling the shillings and sixpences there. Austin supposed he was not wanted, and shut them in.

"I have been thinking of your case a good bit lately, Sam Dene," began Mr. Chance, giving Sam a seat and sitting down himself ; "and I should like to feel, if I can, more at a certainty about it, one way or the other."

"Yes, sir," replied Sam. And you must please to note that manners in those days had not degenerated to what they are in these. Young men, whether gentle or simple, addressed

their elders with respect ; young women also. " Yes, sir," replied Sam. " But what do you mean about wishing to feel more at a certainty ? "

" When I defended you before the magistrates, I did my best to convince them that you were not guilty : you had assured me you were not : and they discharged you. I believe my arguments and my pleadings went some way with them."

" I have no doubt of it, sir, and I thanked you at the time with all my heart," said Sam warmly. " Some of my enemies were bitter enough against me."

" But you should not speak in that way—calling people your enemies ! " reproved the lawyer. " People were only at enmity with you on the score of the offence. Look here, Sam Dene—did you commit it, or did you not ? "

Sam stared. Mr. Chance had dropped his voice to a solemn key, his head was pushed forward, gravity sat on his face.

" No, sir. No."

The short answer did not satisfy the lawyer. " Did you filch that box of guineas out of Cockermuth's room ; or were you, and are you, as you assert, wholly innocent ? " he resumed. " Tell me the truth as before Heaven. Whatever it be, I will shield you still."

Sam rose. " On my sacred word, sir, and before Heaven, I have told nothing but the truth. I did not take or touch the box of guineas. I do not know what became of it."

Mr. Chance regarded Sam in silence. He had known young men, when under a cloud, prevaricate in a most extraordinary and unblushing manner : to look at them and listen to them, one might have said they were fit to be canonized. But he thought truth lay with Sam now.

" Sit down, sit down, Dene," he said. " I am glad to believe you. Where the deuce could the box have got to ? It could not take flight through the ceiling up to the clouds, or down to the earth through the floor. *Whose hands took it ?* "

" The box went in one of two ways," returned Sam. " If the captain did not fetch it out unconsciously, and lose it in the street, why, somebody must have entered the parlour after I left it and carried off the box. Perhaps the individual who looked into the room when I was sitting there."

" A pity but you had noticed who that was."

" Yes, it is. Look here, Mr. Chance ; a thought has more than

once struck me—if that person did not come back and take the box, why has he not come forward openly and honestly to avow it was himself who looked in?"

The lawyer gave his head a dissenting shake. "It is a ticklish thing to be mixed up in, he may think, one that he had best keep out of—though he may be innocent as the day. How are you getting on?" he asked, passing abruptly from the subject.

"Oh, middling," replied Sam. "As well, perhaps, as I could expect to get on at first, with all the prejudice abroad against me."

"Earning bread and cheese?"

"Not quite—yet."

"Well, see here, Dene—and this is what I chiefly sent for you to say, if you could assure me on your conscience you deserved it—I may be able to put some little business in your hands. Petty matters are brought to us that we hardly care to waste time upon. I'll send them to you in future. I dare say you'll be able to rub on by dint of patience. Rome was not built in a day, you know."

"Thank you, sir; I thank you very truly," breathed Sam. "Mr. Cockermuth sent me a small matter the other day. If I can make a bare living of it at present, that's all I ask. Fame and fortune are not rained down upon black sheep."

Which was so true a remark as to need no contradiction.

May was nearing its close then, and the summer evenings were long and lovely. As Sam went forth from the interview, he thought he would take a walk by the river, instead of turning in to his solitary rooms. Since entering upon them he had been as steady as Old Time: the accusation and its attendant shame seemed to have converted him from a heedless, youthful man into a wise old sage of age and care. Passing down Broad Street towards the bridge, he turned to the left and sauntered along beside the Severn. The water glittered in the light of the setting sun; barges, some of them bearing men and women and children, passed smoothly up and down on it; the opposite fields, towards St. John's, were green as an emerald: all things seemed to wear an aspect of brightness.

All on a sudden things grew brighter—and Sam's pulses gave a leap. He had passed the grand old red-stoned wall that enclosed the Bishop's palace, and was close upon the gates leading up to the Green, when a young lady turned out of them and came

towards him with a light, quick step. It was Maria Parslet, in a pretty summer muslin, a straw hat shading her blushing face. For it did blush furiously at sight of Sam.

“Mr. Dene!”

“Maria!”

She began to say, hurriedly, that her mother had sent her with a message to the dressmaker on the Parade, and she had taken that way, as being the shortest—as if in apology for having met Sam.

He turned with her, and they paced slowly along side by side, the colour on Maria's cheeks coming and going with every word he spoke and every look he gave her—which seemed altogether senseless and unreasonable. Sam told her of his conversation with Austin Chance's father, and his promise to put a few things in his way.

“Once let me be making two hundred a year, Maria, and then——”

“Then what?” questioned Maria innocently.

“Then I should ask you to come to me, and we'd risk it together.”

“Risk what?” stammered Maria, turning her head right round to watch a barge that was being towed by.

“Risk our luck. Two hundred a year is not so bad to begin upon. I should take the floor above as well as the ground-floor I rent now, and we should get along. Any way, I hope to try it.”

“Oh, Mr. Dene!”

“Now don't ‘Mr. Dene’ me, young lady, if you please. Why, Maria, what else can we do? A mean, malicious set of dogs and cats have turned their backs upon us both; the least we should do is to see if we can't do without them. I know you'd rather come to me than stay in Edgar Street.”

Maria held her tongue, as to whether she would or not. “Mamma is negotiating to get me a situation at Cheltenham,” she said.

“You will not go to Cheltenham, or anywhere else, if I get any luck,” he replied dictatorially. “Life would look very blue to me now without you, Maria. And many a man and wife, rolling in riches at the end, have rubbed on with less than two hundred a year at the beginning. I wouldn't say, mind, but we might risk it on a hundred and fifty. My rent is low, you see.”

“Ye—es,” stammered Maria. “But—I wish that mystery of the guineas could be cleared up!”

Sam stood still, turned, and faced her. “Why do you say *that*? You are not suspecting that I took them?”

“Oh dear, no,” returned Maria, losing her breath. “I *know* you did not take them: could not. I was only thinking of your practice: so much more would come in.”

“Cockermuth has sent me a small matter or two. I think I shall get on,” repeated Sam.

They were at their journey’s end by that time, at the dress-maker’s door. “Good-evening,” said Maria, timidly holding out her hand.

Sam Dene took it and clasped it. “Good-bye, my darling. I am going home to my bread and cheese supper, and I wish you were there to eat it with me!”

Maria sighed. She wondered whether that wonderful state of things would ever come to pass. Perhaps no; perhaps yes. Meanwhile no living soul knew aught of these treasonable aspirations; they were a secret between her and Sam. Mr. and Mrs. Parslet suspected nothing.

Time went on. Lawyer Chance was as good as his word, and put a few small matters of business into the hands of Sam Dene. Mr. Cockermuth did the same. The town came down upon him for it; though it let Chance alone, who was not the sort of man to be dictated to. “Well,” said Cockermuth in answer, “I don’t believe the lad is guilty; never have believed it. Had he been of a dishonest turn, he could have helped himself before, for a good deal of my cash passed at times through his hands. And, given that he was innocent, he has been hardly dealt by.”

Sam Dene was grateful for these stray windfalls, and returned his best thanks to the lawyers for them. But they did not amount to much in the aggregate; and a gloomy vision began to present itself to his apprehension of being forced to give up the struggle, and wandering out in the world to seek a better fortune. The summer assizes drew near. Sam had no grand cause to come on at them, or small one either; but it was impossible not to give a thought now and again to what his fate might have been, had he stood committed to take his trial at them. The popular voice said that was only what he merited.

VI

The assizes were held, and passed. One hot day, when July was nearing its meridian, word was brought to Miss Cockermuth—who was charitable—that a poor sick woman whom she befriended, was worse than usual, so she put on her bonnet and cloak to pay her a visit. The bonnet was a huge Leghorn, which shaded her face well from the sun, its trimming of straw colour; and the cloak was of thin black "taffeta," edged with narrow lace. It was a long walk on a hot afternoon, for the sick woman lived but just on this side Henwick. Miss Betty had got as far as the bridge, and was about to cross it when Sam Dene, coming over it at a strapping pace, ran against her.

"Miss Betty!" he cried. "I beg your pardon."

Miss Betty brought her bonnet from under the shade of her large grass-green parasol. "Dear me, is it you, Sam Dene?" she said. "Were you walking for a wager?"

Sam laughed a little. "I was hastening back to my office, Miss Betty. I have no clerk, you know, and a client *might* come in."

Miss Betty gave her head a twist, something between a nod and a shake; she noticed the doubtful tone in the "might." "Very hot, isn't it?" said she. "I'm going up to see that poor Hester Knowles; she's uncommon bad, I hear."

"You'll have a warm walk."

"Aye. Are you pretty well, Sam? You look thin."

"Do I? Oh, that's nothing but the heat of the weather. I am quite well, thank you. Good-afternoon, Miss Betty."

She shook his hand heartily. One of Sam's worst enemies, who might have run in a curricule with Charles Cockermuth, as to an out-and-out belief in his guilt, was passing at the moment, and saw it.

Miss Betty crossed the bridge, turned off into Turkey, for it was through those classical regions that her nearest and coolest way lay, and so onwards to the sick woman's room. There she found the blazing July sun streaming in at the wide window, which had no blind, no shelter whatever from it. Miss Betty had had enough of the sun out-of-doors, without having it in. Done up with the walk and the heat, she sat down on the first chair, and felt ready to swoon right off.

"Dear me, Hester, this is bad for you!" she gasped.

"Did you mean the sun, ma'am?" asked the sick woman, who

was sitting full in it, wrapped in a blanket or two. "It is a little hot just now, but I don't grumble at it; I'm so cold mostly. As soon as the sun goes off the window, I shall begin to shiver."

"Well-a-day!" responded Miss Betty, wishing she could be cool enough to shiver. "But if you feel it cold now, Hester, what will you do when the autumn winds come on?"

"Ah, ma'am, please do not talk of it! I just can't tell what I shall do. That window don't fit tight, and the way the wind pours in through it upon me as I sit here at evening, or lie in my little bed there, passes belief. I'm coughing always then."

"You should have some good thick curtains put up," said Miss Betty, gazing at the bare window, which had a pot of musk on its sill. "Woollen ones."

The sick woman smiled sadly. She was very poor now, though it had not always been so; she might as well have hoped to buy the sun itself as woollen curtains—or cotton curtains either. Miss Betty knew that.

"I'll think about it, Hester, and see if I've any old ones that I could let you have. I'm not sure; but I'll look," repeated she—and began to empty her capacious dimity pockets of a few items of good things she had brought.

By and by, when she was a little cooler, and had talked with Hester, Miss Betty set off home again, her mind running upon the half-promised curtains. "They are properly shabby," thought she, as she went along, "but they'll serve to keep the sun and the wind off her."

She was thinking of those warm green curtains that she had picked the braid from that past disastrous morning—as the reader heard of, and all the town as well. Nothing had been done with them since.

Getting home, Miss Betty turned into the parlour. Susan—who had not yet found leisure to fix any time for her wedding—found her mistress fanning her hot face, her bonnet untied and tilted back.

"I've been to see that poor Hester Knowles, Susan," began Miss Betty.

"Law, ma'am!" interposed Susan. "What a walk for you this scorching afternoon! All up that wide New Road!"

"You may well say that, girl: but I went Turkey away. She's very ill, poor thing; and that's a frightfully staring window of hers, the sun on it like a blazing fire, and not as much as a rag

for a blind ; and the window don't fit, she says, and in cold weather the biting wind comes in and shivers her up. I think I might give her those shabby old curtains, Susan—that were up in Mr. Philip's room, you know, before we got the new chintz ones in."

"So you might, ma'am," said Susan, who was not a bad-hearted girl, excepting to the baker's man. "They can't go up at any of our windows as they be ; and if you had 'em dyed, I don't know as they'd answer much, being so shabby."

"I put them—let me see—into the spare ottoman, didn't I? Yes, that was it. And there I suppose they must be lying still."

"Sure enough, Miss Betty," said Susan. "I've not touched 'em."

"Nor I," said Miss Betty. "With all the trouble that got into our house at that time, I couldn't give my mind to seeing after the old things, and I've not thought about them since. Come upstairs with me now, Susan ; we'll see what sort of a state they are in."

They went up ; and Miss Betty took off her bonnet and cloak and put her cap on. The spare ottoman, soft, and red, and ancient, used as a receptacle for odds and ends that were not wanted, stood in a spacious linen-closet on the first-floor landing. It was built out over the back-door, and had a skylight above. Susan threw back the lid of the ottoman, and Miss Betty stood by. The faded old brown curtains, green once, lay in a heap at one end, just as Miss Betty had hastily flung them in that past day in March, when on her way to look at the chintzes.

"They're in a fine rabble, seemingly," observed Susan, pausing to regard the curtains.

"Dear me !" cried Miss Betty, conscience-stricken, for she was a careful housewife, "I let them drop in any way, I remember. I did mean to have them well shaken out of doors and properly folded, but that bother drove it all out of my head. Take them out, girl."

Susan put her strong arms underneath the heap and lifted it out with a fling. Something heavy flew out of the curtains, and dropped on the boarded floor with a crash. Letting fall the curtains, Susan gave a wild shriek of terror and Miss Betty gave a wilder, for the floor was suddenly covered with shining gold coins. Mr. Cockermuth, passing across the passage below at the moment, heard the cries, wondered whether the house was on fire, and came hastening up.

"Oh," said he coolly, taking in the aspect of affairs. "So the thief was you, Betty, after all !"

He picked up the ebony box, and bent his head to look at the guineas. Miss Betty sank down on a three-legged stool—brought in for Philip's children—and grew as white as death.

Yes, it was the missing box of guineas, come to light in the same extraordinary and unexpected manner that it had come before, without having been (as may be said) truly lost. When Miss Betty gathered her curtains off the dining-room table that March morning, a cumbersome and weighty heap, she had unwittingly gathered up the box with them. No wonder Sam Dene had not seen the box on the table after Miss Betty's departure! It was a grievous misfortune, though, that he failed to take notice it was not there.

She had no idea she was not speaking truth in saying she *saw* the box on the table as she left the room. Having seen the box there all the morning she thought it was there still, and that she saw it, being quite unconscious that it was in her arms. Susan, too, had noticed the box on the table when she opened the door to call her mistress, and believed she was correct in saying she saw it there to the last: the real fact being that she had not observed it was gone. So there the box with its golden freight had lain undisturbed, hidden in the folds of the curtains. But for Hester Knowles's defective window, it might have stayed there still, who can say how long?

Susan, no less scared than her mistress, stood back against the closet wall for safety, out of reach of those diabolical coins; Miss Betty, groaning and half-fainting on the three-legged stool, sat pushing back her cap and her front. The lawyer picked up the guineas and counted them as he laid them flat in the box. Sixty of them: not one missing. So Sam's guinea *was* his own! He had not, as Worcester whispered, trumped up the story with Maria Parslet.

"John," gasped poor Miss Betty, beside herself with remorse and terror, "John, what will become of me now? Will anything be done?"

"How 'done'?" asked he.

"Will they bring me to trial—or anything of that—in poor Sam's place?"

"Well, I don't know," answered her brother grimly; "perhaps not this time. But I'd have you take more care in future, Betty, than to hide away gold in old curtains."

Locking the box securely within his iron safe, Mr. Cockermuth

put on his hat and went down to the town hall, where the magistrates, after dispensing their wisdom, were about to disperse for the day. He told them of the wonderful recovery of the box of guineas, of how it had been lost, and that Sam Dene was wholly innocent. Their worships were of course charmed to hear it, Mr. Whitewicker observing that they had only judged Sam by appearances, and that appearances had been sufficient (in theory) to hang him.

From the town hall, Mr. Cockermuth turned off to Sam's office. Sam was making a great show of business, surrounded by a table full of imposing parchments, but with never a client to the fore. His old master grasped his hand.

"Well, Sam, my boy," he said, "the tables have turned for you. That box of guineas is found."

Sam never spoke an answering word. His lips parted with expectation: his breath seemed to be a little short.

"Betty had got it all the time. She managed somehow to pick it up off the table with those wretched old curtains she had there, all unconsciously, of course, and it has lain hidden with the curtains upstairs in a lumber-box ever since. Betty will never forgive herself. She'll have a fit of the jaundice over this."

Sam drew a long breath. "You will let the public know, sir?"

"Aye, Sam, without the loss of an hour. I've begun with the magistrates—and a fine sensation the news made amidst 'em, I can tell you; and now I'm going round to the newspapers; and I shall go over to Elm Farm the first thing to-morrow. The town took up the cause against you, Sam: take care it does not eat you now in its repentance. Look here, you'll have to come round to Betty, or she'll moan her heart out: you won't bear malice, Sam?"

"No, that I won't," said Sam warmly. "Miss Betty did not bear it to me. She has been as kind as can be all along."

The town did want to eat Sam. It is the custom of the true Briton to go to extremes. Being unable to shake Sam's hands quite off, the city would fain have chaired him round the streets with honours, as it used to chair its newly returned members.

Captain Cockermuth, sent for post haste, came to Worcester all contrition, beseeching Sam to forgive him fifty times a day, and wanting to press the box of guineas upon him as a peace-offering. Sam would not take it: he laughingly told the captain that the box did not seem to carry luck with it.

And then Sam's troubles were over. And no objection was made by his people (as it otherwise might have been) to his marrying Maria Parslet by way of recompense. "God never fails to bring good out of evil, my dear," said old Mrs. Jacobson to Maria, the first time they had her on a visit at Elm Farm. As to Sam, he had short time for Elm Farm, or anything else in the shape of recreation. Practice was flowing in quickly : litigants arguing, one with another, that a young man, lying for months under an imputation of theft, and then coming out of it with flying colours, must needs be a clever lawyer.

"But, Johnny," Sam said to me, when talking of the past, "there's one thing I would alter if I made the laws. No person, so long as he is only suspected of crime, should have his name proclaimed publicly. I am not speaking of murder, you understand, or charges of that grave nature ; but of such a case as mine. My name appeared in full, in all the local newspapers, Samson Reginald Dene, coupled with theft, and of course it got a mark upon it. It is an awful blight upon a man when he is innocent, one that he may never quite live down. Suspicions must arise, I know that, of the innocent as well as the guilty, and they must undergo preliminary examinations in public and submit to legal inquiries : but time enough to proclaim who the man is when evidence strengthens against him, and he is committed for trial ; until then let his name be suppressed. At least that is my opinion."

And it is mine as well as Sam's.

C. Hedley Barker

THE ACE OF TROUBLE

from PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, 1925

It must have been unbearable for Herbert Dawlish to reflect that, had the waitress not been slack, he would never have committed murder.

Dawlish had just ten minutes to spare, and he was feeling infernally hungry. So he dropped into an A.B.C. and called for a cup of tea and a bath bun. The waitress dawdled, and Herbert

Dawlish fidgeted impatiently. He must have taken out his watch at least ten times in five minutes. When at last his tea and bath bun arrived, he had two minutes in which to bolt it down and catch the train for Herne Bay.

He rushed on to the platform just as the train was pulling out. His lips tightened with annoyance as he realised that he couldn't possibly reach the saloon. This meant that he would miss the "coasters," and his game of cards.

The train gathered speed. Dawlish gripped his bag, and ran, realising that he would be lucky now to catch it at all. However, he managed with a flying leap to land (amid the yells of railway officials) on the footboard of the rear coach. He clung there for a moment, panting, then opened the door and subsided with a gasp on the seat.

The man opposite regarded Herbert Dawlish with interest. He was a flashy sort of person with a gold horseshoe in his tie, and aggressively square shoes. He said the usual things that people do say on these occasions—narrow shave, not so easy to run at Dawlish's time of life, and so forth. He also launched into a protracted and lurid reminiscence which had to do with one Sam Biggs, who, being denied the luck which had attended Mr. Dawlish, fell between the footboard and the platform.

"'Orrible sight. I never want to see another like it."

Herbert Dawlish, far as distant Jupiter in that moment from murderous intent, gazed upon the man he was going to murder. He never suffered fools gladly, and this fellow seemed a particularly priceless specimen. However, when the man suggested a game of cards, Dawlish brightened considerably. He had a passion for cards, and he fell in eagerly with the proposal.

"I have a pack here," he said, diving into his pocket. There his fingers came in contact with something hard, and he pulled it out with an embarrassed smile. He said, jocularly, laying an automatic pistol on the table:

"Don't be alarmed. I'm no gunman. I bought this in town to-day. You see, I belong to the Herne Bay rifle club, and they've just started a revolver class. Fascinating sport."

The other nodded.

"May I?" he said, and, picking up the weapon, examined it with the eye of an expert. "Dandy little gun," was his comment. "Loaded, too, by gosh!"

"Er—yes. I brought some cartridges along. It's quite safe. The

catch is on. Now, what shall we play? Do you happen to know Soixante-six? It's an ideal game for two."

"Swa——?"

"In other words, sixty-six. It's a kind of——"

"Right, governor! I got you. Sixty-six. Yers. Used to play it over the other side. I remember at Vimmy Ridge——"

"Cut, will you?"

Herbert Dawlish dealt.

"What about stakes?" he murmured with a swift, appraising glance at the other's ensemble.

"Oh, five bob a time."

Dawlish was surprised. This was a good deal higher than he was used to, but he guessed he could hold his own, anyway. He dealt the cards in bundles of three and two. Play began.

Now, it very soon became obvious to Dawlish that this fellow with the horseshoe had handled cards before. He had that nifty method of shuffling and dealing which involves a flourishing and crackling of the cards. He licked his thumbs. The pasteboards flew from his nimble fingers like greased lightning.

Dawlish paid out. Five—ten—fifteen—thirty-five—fifty. He lost six pounds. A dull flush tinted his high cheekbones. He fortified himself with a long pull from his pocket-flask, clenched his teeth, and concentrated grimly.

Long before the train had reached Chatham that six pounds had become forty-six. Dawlish was plunging madly to retrieve his losses. A ghastly fear contracted his heart. He had lost much—very much more than he could afford to lose. It was quarter day, and he had calls to meet which must be met out of this money that he was losing.

At seventy pounds Herbert Dawlish leant back and wiped the sweat from his forehead with a shaky hand. He was pale, and the corners of his mouth were out of his control. A very unpleasant sight, indeed.

"I am afraid," he muttered, "that I can't go on. I've lost every penny."

The nifty man stopped short in the midst of a tune he was whistling.

"That a fact? Hard luck, mate. Good game, though, eh? Ammer and tongs."

"Look here," said Dawlish abjectly. "I—it's a queer thing to ask, but—could you let me have that money back? For

a little while, I mean. I would repay you, later. But, just now, I—I——”

The nifty man had been staring at Dawlish in blank surprise. Now he suddenly guffawed.

“Well, that’s rich,” he observed. “I’ll tell the missus that when I gits ’ome. She’ll cry ’er eyes out, that she will. No, matey. Napoo. I ain’t the Salvation Army ’Ome.”

“Let me explain,” begged Dawlish in agony. “You don’t understand. It’s like this——”

“Aw, shove a boot in it, ole feller. You oughtn’t never to ’ave come out without yer nurse. Hey! What the——”

“Put up your hands,” said Dawlish, staring wickedly from behind his automatic. “Right up!”

Even then, Dawlish had no notion of murder. He merely wanted to scare the fellow into parting with the money. He was frantic. He positively daren’t go home and face his wife with a story of seventy pounds lost. But, firearms are dangerous things to play with. The nifty man’s eyes narrowed. He made a sudden spring. And Dawlish, closing his eyes, pulled the trigger.

Death is shockingly quick and sudden. In one brief second Dawlish was saddled with a corpse. There was a grim blue hole in the middle of its forehead, and it had sagged slackly on the floor like a sack of something. Dawlish commanded himself with an effort, and began to think out ways and means.

He was about to bundle the body out of the carriage on to the permanent way when he caught sight of a wrist-watch. An inspiration caused him to alter the time of this watch to five-fifty. He counted on the watch stopping when the crash came, and a watch stopped at five-fifty (unless the body were found immediately) would point to the fact of the man’s having travelled down by an earlier train.

This done, he opened the carriage-door, looked cautiously ahead, and behind, then, with the train doing about forty, shoved out the remains of the nifty man.

Venner, the Scotland Yard man, was in the eight-forty town on the following morning. He and two others greeted Dawlish with ribald cries, as usual. These four had played cards on the up journey every day (barring holidays) for ten years.

“Come along, you old blighter—the cards,” they cried. “Where were you loafing last night, by the way?”

"Late," said Dawlish. "Had to run for it. Seen the paper? This murder on the five-ten?"

Smith, who was sorting out Dawlish's cards, nodded.

"Poor devil's all bashed about," he said. "Face practically gone, they say. Not that he'd feel that, I suppose. You heard anything about it, Venner, apart from what the papers give?"

Venner smiled quietly.

"I hear a good deal," he said, "that I'm not allowed to tell. As a matter of fact, I viewed the body about two or three hours after the murder. They rushed me up by car from Herne Bay."

"I say," said Smith, "look here, old Dawlish, you've only got half a pack here. The ace of trouble's missing."

Smith always called the ace of spades the ace of trouble, because spades stood for trouble in the fortune-teller's jargon.

"I expect it's in my pocket," said Dawlish.

But he was spared the trouble of searching by Venner. The man from the Yard looked suddenly grave as he pulled out a card from his own pocket.

"No," he said. "Here it is, unless I'm mistaken."

He laid the ace of spades on the table—the ace which had been missing from that same pack.

"Yes, that's it, by Jove!" cried Smith. "Where the devil did you get it, you old card-sharper?"

Venner turned and looked at Dawlish. Then he laid a hand on his arm.

"Dawlish," he said, "this hurts like blazes. But I've got to do it. You're arrested. *That ace of spades was found up the sleeve of the murdered man.*"

Edgar Allan Poe

THE MYSTERY OF
MARIE ROGÊT¹

from an American magazine

1842

Es giebt eine Reihe idealischer Begebenheiten, die der Wirklichkeit parallel läuft. Selten fallen sie zusammen. Menschen und Zufälle modificiren gewöhnlich die idealische Begebenheit, so dass sie unvollkommen ercheint, und ihre Folgen gleichfalls unvollkommen sind. So bei der Reformation ; statt des Protestantismus kam das Lutherthum hervor.

There are ideal series of events which run parallel with the real ones. They rarely coincide. Men and circumstances generally modify the ideal train of events, so that it seems imperfect, and its consequences are equally imperfect. Thus with the Reformation ; instead of Protestantism came Lutheranism.—NOVALIS. *Moral Ansichten*.

There are few persons, even among the calmest thinkers, who have not occasionally been startled into a vague yet thrilling half-credence in the supernatural, by *coincidences* of so seemingly marvellous a character that, as *mere* coincidences, the intellect has been unable to receive them. Such sentiments—for the half-credences of which I speak have never the full force of *thought*—

¹ Upon the original publication of *Marie Rogêt*, the foot-notes now appended were considered unnecessary ; but the lapse of several years since the tragedy upon which the tale is based, renders it expedient to give them, and also to say a few words in explanation of the general design. A young girl, Mary Cecilia Rogers, was murdered in the vicinity of New York ; and although her death occasioned an intense and long-enduring excitement, the mystery attending it had remained unsolved at the period when the present paper was written and published (November 1842). Herein, under pretence of relating the fate of a Parisian *grisette*, the author has followed, in minute detail, the essential, while merely paralleling the inessential, facts of the real murder of Mary Rogers. Thus all argument upon the fiction is applicable to the truth ; and the investigation of the truth was the object.

The Mystery of Marie Rogêt was composed at a distance from the scene of the atrocity, and with no other means of investigation than the newspapers afforded. Thus much escaped the writer of which he could have availed himself had he been upon the spot and visited the localities. It may not be improper to record, nevertheless, that the confessions of the persons (one of them the Madame Deluc of the narrative), made, at different periods, long subsequent to the publication, confirmed, in full not only the general conclusion, but absolutely *all* the chief hypothetical details by which that conclusion was attained.

such sentiments are seldom thoroughly stifled unless by reference to the doctrine of chance, or, as it is technically termed, the Calculus of Probabilities. Now this Calculus is, in its essence, purely mathematical; and thus we have the anomaly of the most rigidly exact in science applied to the shadow and spirituality of the most intangible in speculation.

The extraordinary details which I am now called upon to make public, will be found to form, as regards sequence of time, the primary branch of a series of scarcely intelligible *coincidences*, whose secondary or concluding branch will be recognised by all readers in the late murder of Mary Cecilia Rogers, at New York.

When, in an article entitled, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, I endeavoured, about a year ago, to depict some very remarkable features in the mental character of my friend, the Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, it did not occur to me that I should ever resume the subject. This depicting of character constituted my design; and this design was thoroughly fulfilled in the wild train of circumstances brought to instance Dupin's idiosyncrasy. I might have adduced other examples, but I should have proven no more. Late events, however, in their surprising development, have startled me into some further details, which will carry with them the air of extorted confession. Hearing what I have lately heard, it would be indeed strange should I remain silent in regard to what I both heard and saw long ago.

Upon the winding up of the tragedy involved in the deaths of Madame L'Esplanaye and her daughter, the Chevalier dismissed the affair at once from his attention, and relapsed into his old habits of moody reverie. Prone, at all times, to abstraction, I readily fell in with his humour; and continuing to occupy our chambers in the Faubourg Saint Germain, we gave the Future to the winds, and slumbered tranquilly in the Present, weaving the dull world around us into dreams.

But these dreams were not altogether uninterrupted. It may readily be supposed that the part played by my friend, in the drama at the Rue Morgue, had not failed of its impression upon the fancies of the Parisian police. With its emissaries, the name of Dupin had grown into a household word. The simple character of those inductions by which he had disentangled the mystery never having been explained even to the Prefect, or to any other individual than myself, of course it is not surprising that the affair was regarded as little less than miraculous, or that the Chevalier's

analytical abilities acquired for him the credit of intuition. His frankness would have led him to disabuse every inquirer of such prejudice ; but his indolent humour forbade all further agitation of a topic whose interest to himself had long ceased. It thus happened that he found himself the cynosure of the political eyes ; and the cases were not few in which attempt was made to engage his services at the Prefecture. One of the most remarkable instances was that of the murder of a young girl named Marie Rogêt.

This event occurred about two years after the atrocity in the Rue Morgue. Marie, whose Christian and family name will at once arrest attention from their resemblance to those of the unfortunate "cigar-girl," was the only daughter of the widow Estelle Rogêt. The father had died during the child's infancy, and from the period of his death, until within eighteen months before the assassination which forms the subject of our narrative, the mother and daughter had dwelt together in the Rue Pavée Saint Andrée ;¹ Madame there keeping a *pension*, assisted by Marie. Affairs went on thus until the latter had attained her twenty-second year, when her great beauty attracted the notice of a perfumer, who occupied one of the shops in the basement of the Palais Royal, and whose custom lay chiefly among the desperate adventurers infesting that neighbourhood. Monsieur Le Blanc² was not unaware of the advantages to be derived from the attendance of the fair Marie in his perfumery ; and his liberal proposals were accepted eagerly by the girl, although with somewhat more of hesitation by Madame.

The anticipations of the shopkeeper were realised, and his rooms soon became notorious through the charms of the sprightly *grisette*. She had been in his employ about a year, when her admirers were thrown into confusion by her sudden disappearance from the shop. Monsieur Le Blanc was unable to account for her absence, and Madame Rogêt was distracted with anxiety and terror. The public papers immediately took up the theme, and the police were upon the point of making serious investigations, when, one morning, after the lapse of a week, Marie, in good health, but with a somewhat saddened air, made her reappearance at her usual counter in the perfumery. All inquiry, except that of a private character, was, of course, immediately hushed. Monsieur Le Blanc professed total ignorance, as before. Marie, with Madame replied to all questions, that the last week had been spent at the

¹ Nassau Street.

² Anderson.

house of a relation in the country. Thus the affair died away, and was generally forgotten ; for the girl, ostensibly to relieve herself from the impertinence of curiosity, soon bade a final adieu to the perfumer, and sought the shelter of her mother's residence in the Rue Pavée Saint Andrée.

It was about five months after this return home, that her friends were alarmed by her sudden disappearance for the second time. Three days elapsed, and nothing was heard of her. On the fourth her corpse was found floating in the Seine,¹ near the shore which is opposite the Quartier of the Rue Saint Andrée, and at a point not very far distant from the secluded neighbourhood of the Barrière du Roule.²

The atrocity of this murder (for it was at once evident that murder had been committed), the youth and beauty of the victim, and, above all, her previous notoriety, conspired to produce intense excitement in the minds of the sensitive Parisians. I can call to mind no similar occurrence producing so general and so intense an effect. For several weeks, in the discussion of this one absorbing theme, even the momentous political topics of the day were forgotten. The Prefect made unusual exertions ; and the powers of the whole Parisian police were, of course, tasked to the utmost extent.

Upon the first discovery of the corpse, it was not supposed that the murderer would be able to elude, for more than a very brief period, the inquisition which was immediately set on foot. It was not until the expiration of a week that it was deemed necessary to offer a reward ; and even then this reward was limited to a thousand francs. In the meantime the investigation proceeded with vigour, if not always with judgment, and numerous individuals were examined to no purpose ; while, owing to the continual absence of all clue to the mystery, the popular excitement greatly increased. At the end of the tenth day it was thought advisable to double the sum originally proposed ; and, at length, the second week having elapsed without leading to any discoveries, and the prejudice which always exists in Paris against the police having given vent to itself in several serious *emeutes*, the Prefect took it upon himself to offer the sum of twenty thousand francs " for the conviction of the assassin," or, if more than one should prove to have been implicated, " for the conviction of any one of the assassins." In the proclamation setting forth this reward, a full pardon

¹ The Hudson.

² Weehawken.

was promised to any accomplice who should come forward in evidence against his fellow ; and to the whole was appended, wherever it appeared, the private placard of a committee of citizens, offering ten thousand francs, in addition to the amount proposed by the Prefecture. The entire reward thus stood at no less than thirty thousand francs, which will be regarded as an extraordinary sum when we consider the humble condition of the girl, and the great frequency, in large cities, of such atrocities as the one described.

No one doubted now that the mystery of this murder would be immediately brought to light. But although, in one or two instances, arrests were made which promised elucidation, yet nothing was elicited which could implicate the parties suspected ; and they were discharged forthwith. Strange as it may appear, the third week from the discovery of the body had passed, and passed without any light being thrown upon the subject, before even a rumour of the events which had so agitated the public mind reached the ears of Dupin and myself. Engaged in researches which had absorbed our whole attention, it had been nearly a month since either of us had gone abroad, or received a visitor, or more than glanced at the leading political articles in one of the daily papers. The first intelligence of the murder was brought us by G—, in person. He called upon us early in the afternoon of the thirteenth of July 18—, and remained with us until late in the night. He had been piqued by the failure of all his endeavours to ferret out the assassins. His reputation—so he said with a peculiarly Parisian air—was at stake. Even his honour was concerned. The eyes of the public were upon him ; and there was really no sacrifice which he would not be willing to make for the development of the mystery. He concluded a somewhat droll speech with a compliment upon what he was pleased to term the *tact* of Dupin, and made him a direct and certainly a liberal proposition, the precise nature of which I do not feel myself at liberty to disclose, but which has no bearing upon the proper subject of my narrative.

The compliment my friend rebutted as best he could, but the proposition he accepted at once, although its advantages were altogether provisional. This point being settled, the Prefect broke forth at once into explanations of his own views, interspersing them with long comments upon the evidence ; of which latter we were not yet in possession. He discoursed much and, beyond doubt, learnedly ; while I hazarded an occasional suggestion as

the night wore drowsily away. Dupin, sitting steadily in his accustomed arm-chair, was the embodiment of respectful attention. He wore spectacles, during the whole interview ; and an occasional glance beneath their green glasses sufficed to convince me that he slept not the less soundly, because silently, throughout the seven or eight leaden-footed hours which immediately preceded the departure of the Prefect.

In the morning, I procured, at the Prefecture, a full report of all the evidence elicited, and, at the various newspaper offices, a copy of every paper in which, from first to last, had been published any decisive information in regard to this sad affair. Freed from all that was positively disproved, the mass of information stood thus :

Marie Rogêt left the residence of her mother, in the Rue Pavée St. André, about nine o'clock in the morning of Sunday, June the 22nd, 18—. In going out, she gave notice to a Monsieur Jacques St. Eustache,¹ and to him only, of her intention to spend the day with an aunt, who resided in the Rue des Drômes. The Rue des Drômes is a short and narrow but populous thoroughfare, not far from the banks of the river, and at a distance of some two miles, in the most direct course possible, from the *pension* of Madame Rogêt. St. Eustache was the accepted suitor of Marie, and lodged, as well as took his meals, at the *pension*. He was to have gone for his betrothed at dusk, and to have escorted her home. In the afternoon, however, it came on to rain heavily ; and, supposing that she would remain at her aunt's (as she had done under similar circumstances before), he did not think it necessary to keep his promise. As night drew on, Madame Rogêt (who was an infirm old lady, seventy years of age) was heard to express a fear " that she should never see Marie again " ; but this observation attracted little attention at the time.

On Monday it was ascertained that the girl had not been to the Rue des Drômes ; and when the day elapsed without tidings of her, a tardy search was instituted at several points in the city and its environs. It was not, however, until the fourth day from the period of her disappearance that anything satisfactory was ascertained respecting her. On this day (Wednesday, the 25th of June) a Monsieur Beauvais,² who, with a friend, had been making inquiries for Marie near the Barrière du Roule, on the shore of the Seine which is opposite the Rue Pavée St. André, was informed

¹ Payn.

² Crommelin.

a corpse had just been towed ashore by some fishermen, who had found it floating in the river. Upon seeing the body, Beauvais, after some hesitation, identified it as that of the perfumery-girl. His friend recognised it more promptly.

The face was suffused with dark blood, some of which issued from the mouth. No foam was seen, as in the case of the merely drowned. There was no discoloration in the cellular tissue. About the throat were bruises and impressions of fingers. The arms were bent over on the chest, and were rigid. The right hand was clenched ; the left partially open. On the left wrist were two circular excoriations, apparently the effect of ropes, or of a rope in more than one revolution. A part of the right wrist, also, was much chafed, as well as the back throughout its extent, but more especially at the shoulder-blades. In bringing the body to the shore the fishermen had attached to it a rope, but none of the excoriations had been effected by this. The flesh of the neck was much swollen. There were no cuts apparent, or bruises which appeared the effect of blows. A piece of lace was found tied so tightly around the neck as to be hidden from sight ; it was completely buried in the flesh, and was fastened by a knot which lay just under the left ear. This alone would have sufficed to produce death. The medical testimony spoke confidently of the virtuous character of the deceased. She had been subjected, it said, to brutal violence. The corpse was in such condition when found that there could have been no difficulty in its recognition by friends.

The dress was much torn and otherwise disordered. In the outer garment, a slip, about a foot wide, had been torn upward from the bottom hem to the waist, but not torn off, was wound three times around the waist, and secured by a sort of hitch in the back. The dress immediately beneath the frock was of fine muslin ; and from this a slip eighteen inches wide had been torn entirely out—torn very evenly and with great care. It was found around her neck, fitting loosely, and secured with a hard knot. Over this muslin slip and the slip of lace the strings of a bonnet were attached, the bonnet being appended. The knot by which the strings of the bonnet were fastened was not a lady's, but a slip or sailor's knot.

After the recognition of the corpse, it was not, as usual, taken to the Morgue (this formality being superfluous), but hastily interred not far from the spot at which it was brought ashore. Through the exertions of Beauvais, the matter was industriously

hushed up, as far as possible ; and several days had elapsed before any public emotion resulted. A weekly paper,¹ however, at length took up the theme ; the corpse was disinterred, and a re-examination instituted ; but nothing was elicited beyond what has been already noted. The clothes, however, were now submitted to the mother and friends of the deceased and fully identified as those worn by the girl upon leaving home.

Meantime, the excitement increased hourly. Several individuals were arrested and discharged. St. Eustache fell especially under suspicion ; and he failed, at first, to give an intelligible account of his whereabouts during the Sunday on which Marie left home. Subsequently, however, he submitted to Monsieur G——, affidavits, accounting satisfactorily for every hour of the day in question. As time passed and no discovery ensued, a thousand contradictory rumours were circulated, and journalists busied themselves in *suggestions*. Among these, the one which attracted the most notice, was the idea that Marie Rogêt still lived—that the corpse found in the Seine was that of some other unfortunate. It will be proper that I submit to the reader some passages which embody the suggestion alluded to. These passages are *literal* translations from *L'Etoile*,² a paper conducted, in general, with much ability.

“ Mademoiselle Rogêt left her mother’s house on Sunday morning, June the 22nd, 18—, with the ostensible purpose of going to see her aunt, or some other connection in the Rue des Drômes. From that hour, nobody is proved to have seen her. There is no trace or tidings of her at all. . . . There has no person, whatever come forward, so far, who saw her at all, on that day, after she left her mother’s door. . . . Now, though we have no evidence that Marie Rogêt was in the land of the living after nine o’clock on Sunday, June the 22nd, we have proof that, up to that hour, she was alive. On Wednesday noon, at twelve, a female body was discovered afloat on the shore of the Barrière du Roule. This was, even if we presume that Marie Rogêt was thrown into the river within three hours after she left her mother’s house, only three days from the time she left her home—three days to an hour. But it is folly to suppose that the murder, if murder was committed on her body, could have been consummated soon enough to have enabled her murderers to throw the body into the river before midnight. Those who are guilty of such horrid crimes choose darkness rather than

¹ The New York *Mercury*.

² The New York *Brother Jonathan*, edited by H. Hastings Weld, Esq.

light. . . . Thus we see that if the body found in the river *was* that of Marie Rogêt, it could only have been in the water two and a half days, or three at the outside. All experience has shown that drowned bodies, or bodies thrown into the water immediately after death by violence, require from six to ten days for sufficient decomposition to take place to bring them to the top of the water. Even where a cannon is fired over a corpse, and it rises before, at least, five or six days' immersion, it sinks again, if let alone. Now, we ask what was there in this case to cause a departure from the ordinary course of nature? . . . If the body had been kept in its mangled state on shore until Tuesday night, some trace would be found on shore of the murderers. It is a doubtful point, also, whether the body would be so soon afloat, even were it thrown in after having been dead two days. And, furthermore, it is exceedingly improbable that any villains who had committed such a murder as is here supposed, would have thrown the body in without weight to sink it, when such a precaution could have so easily been taken."

The editor here proceeds to argue that the body must have been in water "not three days merely, but, at least, five times three days," because it was so far decomposed that Beauvais had great difficulty in recognising it. This latter point, however, was fully disproved. I continue the translation :

"What, then, are the facts on which M. Beauvais says that he has no doubt the body was that of Marie Rogêt? He ripped up the gown sleeve, and says he found marks which satisfied him of the identity. The public generally supposed those marks to have consisted of some description of scars. He rubbed the arm and found *hair* upon it—something as indefinite, we think, as can readily be imagined—as little conclusive as finding an arm in the sleeve. M. Beauvais did not return that night, but sent word to Madame Rogêt, at seven o'clock, on Wednesday evening, that an investigation was still in progress respecting her daughter. If we allow that Madame Rogêt, from her age and grief, could not go over (which is allowing a great deal), there certainly must have been some one who would have thought it worth while to go over and attend the investigation, if they thought the body was that of Marie. Nobody went over. There was nothing said or heard about the matter in the Rue Pavée St. André, that reached even the occupants of the same building. M. St. Eustache, the lover and intended husband

of Marie, who boarded in her mother's house, deposes that he did not hear of the discovery of the body of his intended until the next morning, when M. Beauvais came into his chamber and told him of it. For an item of news like this, it strikes us it was very coolly received."

In this way the journal endeavoured to create the impression of an apathy on the part of the relatives of Marie, inconsistent with the supposition that these relatives believed the corpse to be hers. Its insinuations amount to this : that Marie, with the connivance of her friends, had absented herself from the city for reasons involving a charge against her chastity ; and that these friends upon the discovery of a corpse in the Seine, somewhat resembling that of the girl, had availed themselves of the opportunity to impress the public with the belief of her death. But *L'Etoile* was again overhasty. It was distinctly proved that no apathy, such as was imagined, existed ; that the old lady was exceedingly feeble, and so agitated as to be unable to attend to any duty ; that St. Eustache, so far from receiving the news coolly, was distracted with grief, and bore himself so frantically, that M. Beauvais prevailed upon a friend and relative to take charge of him, and prevent his attending the examination at the disinternment. Moreover, although it was stated by *L'Etoile*, that the corpse was re-interred at the public expense, that an advantageous offer of private sepulture was absolutely declined by the family, and that no member of the family attended the ceremonial ; although, I say, all this was asserted by *L'Etoile* in furtherance of the impression it designed to convey—yet *all* this was satisfactorily disproved. In a subsequent number of the paper, an attempt was made to throw suspicion upon Beauvais himself. The editor says :

"Now, then, a change comes over the matter. We are told that, on one occasion, while a Madame B—— was at Madame Rogêt's house, M. Beauvais, who was going out, told her that a *gendarme* was expected there, and that she, Madame B——, must not say anything to the *gendarme* until he returned, but let the matter be for him. . . . In the present posture of affairs M. Beauvais appears to have the whole matter locked up in his head. A single step cannot be taken without M. Beauvais, for go which way you will, you run against him. . . . For some reason he determined that nobody shall have anything to do with the proceedings but himself, and he has elbowed the male relatives out of the way, according to their representations, in a very singular manner. He seems to have

been very much averse to permitting the relatives to see the body."

By the following fact, some colour was given to the suspicion thus thrown upon Beauvais. A visitor at his office, a few days prior to the girl's disappearance, and during the absence of its occupant, had observed a *rose* in the key-hole of the door, and the name "Marie" inscribed upon a slate which hung near at hand.

The general impression, so far as we were enabled to glean it from the newspapers, seemed to be, that Marie had been the victim of a *gang* of desperadoes—that by these she had been borne across the river, maltreated, and murdered. *Le Commercial*,¹ however, a print of extensive influence, was earnest in combating this popular idea. I quote a passage or two from its columns :

"We are persuaded that pursuit has hitherto been on a false scent so far as it has been directed to the *Barrière du Roule*. It is impossible that a person so well known to thousands as this young woman was, should have passed three blocks without someone having seen her ; and any one who saw her would have remembered it, for she interested all who knew her. It was when the streets were full of people, when she went out. . . . It is impossible that she could have gone to the *Barrière du Roule*, or to the *Rue des Drômes*, without being recognised by a dozen persons ; yet no one has come forward who saw her outside her mother's door, and there is no evidence except the testimony concerning her *expressed intentions*, that she did go out at all. Her gown was torn, bound round her, and tied ; and by that the body was carried as a bundle. If the murder had been committed at the *Barrière du Roule*, there would have been no necessity for any such arrangement. The fact that the body was found floating near the *Barrière* is no proof as to where it was thrown into the water. . . . A piece of one of the unfortunate girl's petticoats, two feet long and one foot wide, was torn out and tied under her chin around the back of her head, probably to prevent screams. This was done by fellows who had no pocket-handkerchief."

A day or two before the Prefect called upon us, however, some important information reached the police, which seemed to overthrow, at least, the chief portion of *Le Commercial's* argument. Two small boys, sons of a Madame Deluc, while roaming among the woods near the *Barrière du Roule*, chanced to penetrate a close thicket, within which were three or four large stones, forming

¹ *New York Journal of Commerce.*

a kind of seat with a back and footstool. On the upper stone lay a white petticoat ; on the second, a silk scarf. A parasol, gloves, and a pocket-handkerchief were also here found. The handkerchief bore the name " Marie Rogët." Fragments of dress were discovered on the brambles around. The earth was trampled, the bushes were broken, and there was every evidence of a struggle. Between the thicket and the river, the fences were found taken down, and the ground bore evidence of some heavy burthen having been dragged along it.

A weekly paper, *Le Soleil*,¹ had the following comments upon this discovery—comments which merely echoed the sentiment of the whole Parisian press :

" The things had all evidently been there at least three or four weeks ; they were all mildewed down hard with the action of the rain, and stuck together from mildew. The grass had grown around and over some of them. The silk on the parasol was strong, but the threads of it were run together within. The upper part, where it had been doubled and folded, was all mildewed and rotten, and tore on its being opened. . . . The pieces of her frock torn out by the bushes were about three inches wide and six inches long. One part was the hem of the frock, and it had been mended ; the other piece was part of the skirt, not the hem. They looked like strips torn off, and were on the thorn bush, about a foot from the ground. . . . There can be no doubt, therefore, that the spot of this appalling outrage has been discovered."

Consequent upon this discovery, new evidence appeared, Madame Deluc testified that she keeps a roadside inn not far from the bank of the river, opposite the Barrière du Roule. The neighbourhood is secluded—particularly so. It is the usual Sunday resort of blackguards from the city, who cross the river in boats. About three o'clock, in the afternoon of the Sunday in question, a young girl arrived at the inn accompanied by a young man of dark complexion. The two remained here for some time. On their departure, they took the road to some thick woods in the vicinity. Madame Deluc's attention was called to the dress worn by the girl, on account of its resemblance to one worn by a deceased relative. A scarf was particularly noticed. Soon after the departure of the couple, a gang of miscreants made their appearance, behaved boisterously, ate and drank without making payment, followed in the route of the young man and girl, returned

¹ Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post*, edited by C. I. Peterson, Esq.

to the inn about dusk, and re-crossed the river as if in great haste.

It was soon after dark, upon this same evening, that Madame Deluc, as well as her eldest son, heard the screams of a female in the vicinity of the inn. The screams were violent but brief. Madame D. recognised not only the scarf which was found in the thicket, but the dress which was discovered upon the corpse. An omnibus driver, Valence,¹ now also testified that he saw Marie Rogêt cross a ferry on the Seine, on the Sunday in question, in company with a young man of dark complexion. He, Valence, knew Marie, and could not be mistaken in her identity. The articles found in the thicket were fully identified by the relatives of Marie.

The items of evidence and information thus collected by myself, from the newspapers, at the suggestion of Dupin, embraced only one more point—but this was a point of seemingly vast consequence. It appears that, immediately after the discovery of the clothes as above described, the lifeless or nearly lifeless body of St. Eustache, Marie's betrothed, was found in the vicinity of what all now supposed the scene of the outrage. A phial labelled "laudanum," and emptied, was found near him. His breath gave evidence of the poison. He died without speaking. Upon his person was found a letter, briefly stating his love for Marie, with his design of self-destruction.

"I need scarcely tell you," said Dupin, as he finished the perusal of my notes, "that this is a far more intricate case than that of the Rue Morgue; from which it differs in one important respect. This is an *ordinary*, although an atrocious, instance of crime. There is nothing peculiarly *outré* about it. You will observe that, for this reason, the mystery has been considered easy when for this reason it should have been considered difficult of solution. Thus, at first, it was thought unnecessary to offer a reward. The myrmidons of G—— were able at once to comprehend how and why such an atrocity *might have been* committed. They could picture to their imaginations a mode—many modes—and a motive—many motives; and because it was not impossible that either of these numerous modes and motives *could* have been the actual one, they have taken it for granted that one of them *must*. But the ease with which these variable fancies were entertained, and the very plausibility which each assumed, should have been understood

¹ Adam.

as indicative rather of the difficulties than of the facilities which must attend elucidation. I have therefore observed that it is by prominences above the plane of the ordinary, that reason feels her way, if at all, in her search for the true, and that the proper question in cases such as this is not so much 'what has occurred?' as 'what has occurred that has never occurred before?' In the investigations at the house of Madame L'Esplanaye,¹ the agents of G—— were discouraged and confounded by that very *unusualness* which, to a properly regulated intellect, would have afforded the surest omen of success; while this same intellect might have been plunged in despair at the ordinary character of all that met the eye in the case of the perfumery-girl, and yet told of nothing but easy triumph to the functionaries of the Prefecture.

"In the case of Madame L'Esplanaye and her daughter, there was, even at the beginning of our investigation, no doubt that murder had been committed. The idea of suicide was excluded at once. Here, too, we are freed, at the commencement, from all supposition of self-murder. The body found at the Barrière du Roule was found under such circumstances as to leave us no room for embarrassment upon this important point. But it has been suggested that the corpse discovered is not that of the Marie Rogêt for the conviction of whose assassin, or assassins, the reward is offered, and respecting whom, solely, our agreement has been arranged with the Prefect. We both know this gentleman well. It will not do to trust him too far. If, dating our inquiries from the body found, and then tracing a murderer, we yet discover this body to be that of some other individual than Marie; or if, starting from the living Marie, we find her, yet find her unassassinated—in either case we lose our labour; since it is Monsieur G—— with whom we have to deal. For our own purpose, therefore, if not for the purpose of justice, it is indispensable that our first step should be the determination of the identity of the corpse with the Marie Rogêt who is missing.

"With the public the arguments of *L'Etoile* have had weight; and that the journal itself is convinced of their importance would appear from the manner in which it commences one of its essays upon the subject—'Several of the morning papers of the day,' it says, 'speak of the *conclusive* article in Monday's *Etoile*.' To me, this article appears conclusive of little beyond the zeal of its inditer. We should bear in mind that, in general, it is the object of our

¹ See *Murders in the Rue Morgue*.

newspapers rather to create a sensation—to make a point—than to further the cause of truth. The latter end is only pursued when it seems coincident with the former. The print which merely falls in with ordinary opinion (however well founded this opinion may be) earns for itself no credit with the mob. The mass of the people regard as profound only him who suggests *pungent contradictions* of the general idea. In ratiocination, not less than in literature, it is the *epigram* which is the most immediately and the most universally appreciated. In both, it is of the lowest order of merit.

“What I mean to say is, that it is the mingled epigram and melodrame of the idea, that Marie Rogêt still lives, rather than any true plausibility in this idea, which have suggested it to *L'Etoile*, and secured it a favourable reception with the public. Let us examine the heads of this journal's argument; endeavouring to avoid the incoherence with which it is originally set forth.

“The first aim of the writer is to show, from the brevity of the interval between Marie's disappearance and the finding of the floating corpse, that this corpse cannot be that of Marie. The reduction of this interval to its smallest possible dimension, becomes thus, at once, an object with the reasoner. In the rash pursuit of this object, he rushes into mere assumption at the outset. ‘It is folly to suppose,’ he says, ‘that the murder, if murder was committed on her body, could have been consummated soon enough to have enabled her murderers to throw the body into the river before midnight.’ We demand at once, and very naturally, *why*? Why is it folly to suppose that the murder was committed *within five minutes* after the girl's quitting her mother's house? Why is it folly to suppose that the murder was committed at any given period of the day? There have been assassinations at all hours. But, had the murder taken place at any moment between nine o'clock in the morning of Sunday and a quarter before midnight, there would still have been time enough ‘to throw the body into the river before midnight.’ This assumption, then, amounts precisely to this—that the murder was not committed on Sunday at all—and, if we allow *L'Etoile* to assume this, we may permit it any liberties whatever. The paragraph beginning ‘It is folly to suppose that the murder, etc.,’ however it appears as printed in *L'Etoile*, may be imagined to have existed actually *thus* in the brain of the inditer: ‘It is folly to suppose that the murder, if murder was committed on the body, could have been committed soon enough to have enabled her murderers to throw the body into the river

before midnight ; it is folly, we say, to suppose all this, and to suppose at the same time (as we are resolved to suppose), that the body was *not* thrown in until *after* midnight'—a sentence sufficiently inconsequential in itself, but not so utterly preposterous as the one printed.

“Were it my purpose,” continued Dupin, “merely to *make out a case* against this passage of *L'Etoile's* argument, I might safely leave it where it is. It is not, however, with *L'Etoile* that we have to do, but with the truth. The sentence in question has but one meaning, as it stands ; and this meaning I have fairly stated ; but it is material that we go behind the mere words for an idea which these words have obviously intended, and failed to convey. It was the design of the journalists to say that at whatever period of the day or night of Sunday this murder was committed, it was improbable that the assassins would have ventured to bear the corpse to the river before midnight. And herein lies, really, the assumption of which I complain. It is assumed that the murder was committed at such a position, and under such circumstances, that *the bearing it* to the river became necessary. Now, the assassination might have taken place upon the river's brink, or on the river itself ; and, thus, the throwing the corpse in the water might have been resorted to at any period of the day or night, as the most obvious and most immediate mode of disposal. You will understand that I suggest nothing here as probable, or as coincident with my own opinion. My design, so far, has no reference to the *facts* of the case. I wish merely to caution you against the whole tone of *L'Etoile's suggestion*, by calling your attention to its *ex-parte* character at the outset.

“Having prescribed thus a limit to suit its own preconceived notions ; having assumed that, if this were the body of Marie, it could have been in the water but a very brief time, the journal goes on to say :

“‘All experience has shown that drowned bodies, or bodies thrown into the water immediately after death by violence, require from six to ten days for sufficient decomposition to take place to bring them to the top of the water. Even when a cannon is fired over a corpse, and it rises before at least five or six days' immersion, it sinks again if let alone.’

“These assertions have been tacitly received by every paper in Paris, with the exception of *Le Moniteur*.¹ This latter print

¹ The New York *Commercial Advertiser*, edited by Col. Stone.

endeavours to combat that portion of the paragraph which has reference to 'drowned bodies' only, by citing some five or six instances in which the bodies of individuals known to be drowned were found floating after the lapse of less time than is insisted upon by *L'Etoile*. But there is something excessively unphilosophical in the attempt, on the part of *Le Moniteur*, to rebut the general assertion of *L'Etoile*, by a citation of particular instances militating against that assertion. Had it been possible to adduce fifty instead of five examples of bodies found floating at the end of two or three days, these fifty examples could still have been properly regarded only as exceptions to *L'Etoile's* rule, until such time as the rule itself should be confuted. Admitting the rule (and this *Le Moniteur* does not deny, insisting merely upon its exceptions), the argument of *L'Etoile* is suffered to remain in full force; for this argument does not pretend to involve more than a question of the *probability* of the body having risen to the surface in less than three days; and this probability will be in favour of *L'Etoile's* position until the instances so childishly adduced shall be sufficient in number to establish an antagonistical rule.

"You will see at once that all argument upon this head should be urged, if at all, against the rule itself; and for this end we must examine the *rationale* of the rule. Now the human body, in general, is neither much lighter nor much heavier than the water of the Seine; that is to say, the specific gravity of the human body, in its natural condition, is about equal to the bulk of fresh water which it displaces. The bodies of fat and fleshy persons, with small bones, and of women generally, are lighter than those of the lean and large-boned, and of men; and the specific gravity of the water of a river is somewhat influenced by the presence of the tide from the sea. But, leaving this tide out of the question, it may be said that *very* few human bodies will sink at all, even in fresh water, *of their own accord*. Almost any one, falling into a river, will be enabled to float, if he suffer the specific gravity of the water fairly to be adduced in comparison with his own—that is to say, if he suffer his whole person to be immersed, with as little exception as possible. The proper position for one who cannot swim, is the upright position of the walker on land, with the head thrown fully back, and immersed; the mouth and nostrils alone remaining above the surface. Thus circumstanced, we shall find that we float without difficulty and without exertion. It is evident, however, that the gravities of the body, and of the bulk of water displaced,

are very nicely balanced, and that a trifle will cause either to preponderate. An arm, for instance, uplifted from the water, and thus deprived of its support, is an additional weight sufficient to immerse the whole head, while the accidental aid of the smallest piece of timber will enable us to elevate the head so as to look about. Now, in the struggles of one unused to swimming, the arms are invariably thrown upward, while an attempt is made to keep the head in its usual perpendicular position. The result is the immersion of the mouth and nostrils, and the inception, during efforts to breathe while beneath the surface, of water into the lungs. Much is also received into the stomach, and the whole body becomes heavier by the difference between the weight of the air originally distending these cavities, and that of the fluid which now fills them. This difference is sufficient to cause the body to sink, as a general rule ; but it is insufficient in the cases of individuals with small bones and an abnormal quantity of flaccid or fatty matter. Such individuals float even after drowning.

“ The corpse, being supposed at the bottom of the river, will there remain until, by some means, its specific gravity again becomes less than that of the bulk of water which it displaces. This effect is brought about by decomposition, or otherwise. The result of decomposition is the generation of gas, distending the cellular tissues and all the cavities, and giving the *puffed* appearance which is so horrible. When this distension has so far progressed that the bulk of the corpse is materially increased without a corresponding increase of *mass* or weight, its specific gravity becomes less than that of the water displaced, and it forthwith makes its appearance at the surface. But decomposition is modified by innumerable circumstances—is hastened or retarded by innumerable agencies ; for example, by the heat or cold of the season, by the mineral impregnation or purity of the water, by its depth or shallowness, by its currency or stagnation, by the temperament of the body, by its infection or freedom from disease before death. Thus it is evident that we can assign no period, with anything like accuracy, at which the corpse shall rise through decomposition. Under certain conditions this result would be brought about within an hour ; under others it might not take place at all. There are chemical infusions by which the animal frame can be preserved *for ever* from corruption ; the bichloride of mercury is one. But, apart from decomposition, there may be, and very usually is, a

generation of gas within the stomach, from the acetous fermentation of vegetable matter (or within other cavities from other causes), sufficient to induce a distension which will bring the body to the surface. The effect produced by the firing of a cannon is that of simple vibration. This may either loosen the corpse from the soft mud or ooze in which it is embedded, thus permitting it to rise when other agencies have already prepared it for so doing : or it may overcome the tenacity of some putrescent portions of the cellular tissues, allowing the cavities to distend under the influence of the gas.

“ Having thus before us the whole philosophy of this subject we can easily test by it the assertions of *L'Etoile*. ‘ All experience shows,’ says this paper, ‘ that drowned bodies, or bodies thrown into the water immediately after death by violence, require from six to ten days for sufficient decomposition to take place to bring them to the top of the water. Even when a cannon is fired over a corpse, and it rises before at least five or six days’ immersion, it sinks again if let alone.’

“ The whole of this paragraph must now appear a tissue of inconsequence and incoherence. All experience does *not* show that ‘ drowned bodies ’ *require* from six to ten days for sufficient decomposition to take place to bring them to the surface. Both science and experience show that the period of their rising is, and necessarily must be, indeterminate. If, moreover, a body has risen to the surface through firing of cannon, it will *not* ‘ sink again if let alone,’ until decomposition has so far progressed as to permit the escape of the generated gas. But I wish to call your attention to the distinction which is made between ‘ drowned bodies,’ and ‘ bodies thrown into water immediately after death by violence.’ Although the writer admits the distinction, he yet includes them all in the same category. I have shown how it is that the body of a drowning man becomes specifically heavier than its bulk of water, and that he would not sink at all, except for the struggle by which he elevates his arms above the surface, and his gasps for breath while beneath the surface—gasps which supply by water the place of the original air in the lungs. But these struggles and these gasps would not occur in the body ‘ thrown into the water immediately after death by violence.’ Thus, in the latter instance, *the body, as a general rule, would not sink at all*—a fact of which *L'Etoile* is evidently ignorant. When decomposition had proceeded to a very great extent—when the flesh had in a great measure left

the bones—then, indeed, but not *till* then, should we lose sight of the corpse.

“And now what are we to make of the argument, that the body found could not be that of Marie Rogêt, because, three days only having elapsed, this body was found floating? If drowned, being a woman, she might never have sunk; or, having sunk, might have reappeared in twenty-four hours or less. But no one supposes her to have been drowned; and, dying before being thrown into the river, she might have been found floating at any period afterward whatever.

“‘But,’ says *L’Etoile*, ‘if the body had been kept in its mangled state on shore until Tuesday night, some trace would be found on shore of the murderers.’ Here it is at first difficult to perceive the intention of the reasoner. He means to anticipate what he imagines would be an objection to his theory—viz. : that the body was kept on shore two days, suffering rapid decomposition—*more* rapid than if immersed in water. He supposes that, had this been the case, it *might* have appeared at the surface on the Wednesday, and thinks that *only* under such circumstances it could have so appeared. He is accordingly in haste to show that it *was not* kept on shore; for, if so, ‘some trace would be found on shore of the murderers.’ I presume you smile at the *sequitur*. You cannot be made to see how the mere *duration* of the corpse on the shore could operate to *multiply traces* of the assassins. Nor can I.

“‘And furthermore it is exceedingly improbable,’ continues our journal, ‘that any villains who had committed such a murder as is here supposed, would have thrown the body in without weight to sink it, when such a precaution could have so easily been taken.’ Observe, here, the laughable confusion of thought! No one—not even *L’Etoile*—disputes the murder committed *on the body found*. The marks of violence are too obvious. It is our reasoner’s object merely to show that this body is not Marie’s. He wishes to prove that *Marie* is not assassinated—not that the corpse was not. Yet his observation proves only the latter point. Here is a corpse without weight attached. Murderers, casting it in, would not have failed to attach a weight. Therefore it was not thrown in by murderers. This is all which is proved, if anything is. The question of identity is not even approached, and *L’Etoile* has been at great pains merely to gainsay now what it has admitted only a moment before. ‘We are perfectly convinced,’ it says, ‘that the body found was that of a murdered female.’

“Nor is this the sole instance, even in this division of his subject, where our reasoner unwittingly reasons against himself. His evident object, I have already said, is to reduce, as much as possible, the interval between Marie’s disappearance and the finding of the corpse. Yet we find him *urging* the point that no person saw the girl from the moment of her leaving her mother’s house. ‘We have no evidence,’ he says, ‘that Marie Rogêt was in the land of the living after nine o’clock on Sunday, June the 22nd.’ As his argument is obviously an *ex-parte* one, he should, at least, have left this matter out of sight ; for had any one been known to see Marie, say on Monday, or on Tuesday, the interval in question would have been much reduced, and, by his own ratiocination, the probability much diminished of the corpse being that of the *grisette*. It is, nevertheless, amusing to observe that *L’Etoile* insists upon its point in the full belief of its furthering its general argument.

“Re-peruse now that portion of this argument which has reference to the identification of the corpse by Beauvais. In regard to the *hair* upon the arm, *L’Etoile* has been obviously disingenuous. M. Beauvais, not being an idiot, could never have urged in identification of the corpse, simply *hair upon its arm*. No arm is *without* hair. The *generality* of the expression of *L’Etoile* is a mere perversion of the witness’ phraseology. He must have spoken of some *peculiarity* in this hair. It must have been a peculiarity of colour, of quantity, of length, or of situation.

“‘Her foot,’ says the journal, ‘was small—so are thousands of feet. Her garter is no proof whatever—nor is her shoe—for shoes and garters are sold in packages. The same may be said of the flowers in her hat. One thing upon which M. Beauvais strongly insists is, that the clasp on the garter found had been set back to take it in. This amounts to nothing ; for most women find it proper to take a pair of garters home and fit them to the size of the limbs they are to encircle, rather than to try them in the store where they purchase.’ Here it is difficult to suppose the reasoner in earnest. Had M. Beauvais, in his search for the body of Marie, discovered a corpse corresponding in general size and appearance to the missing girl, he would have been warranted (without reference to the question of habiliment at all) in forming an opinion that his search had been successful. If, in addition to the point of general size and contour, he had found upon the arm a peculiar hairy appearance which he had observed upon the living Marie, his opinion might have been justly strengthened ; and the