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Jack Harkaway in New York;

The Adventures of the Travelers' Club.

BY HENRICHING HEMING,
(JACK HARKAWAY.)

AUTHOR OF "CAPTAIN OF THE CLAN," "MICK
MICKY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE TRAVELERS' CLUB.

"PLEASE to me, Mame Jack, you done gone been quiet long 'wall' dis spell," declared Monday, Jack Harkaway's colored servant, as he entered his master's room at the hotel.

It was a fine morning in the month of October.

Jack Harkaway at the age of eighteen, well supplied with money, had been leading an idle life in London for some time.

This did not suit Monday's ideas at all.

Looking up from the newspaper he was reading, Jack pushed back his curly hair from his temples forward and smiled.

"What would you like to be doing, my madda friend?" he asked.

"Don't know 'actly that I'd like to do anything in particular, Mame Jack, but dis chile hasn't killed nobody lately."

"You must learn to curb your savage instincts, Monday," said Harkaway.

"But dis I may tell you, it is possible that we shall be on the move sooner than you expect."

"Mawry? Gully, neb, dat's de good news, for

me. I've been afraid I'd get in for real me, 'bout dis wear out."

"What have you got in your hand?"

"Ki! What 'uh? I got? A letter, I remember dat I came in for some'ing."

"Give it me."

Monday handed his master a letter and retired, without vouching in any further remark.

The epistle was directed to a delicate lady's hand and was highly perturbed.

Breaking the seal, Jack muttered: "From Miss Van Hosen. Wants to see me now. Something important to communicate, I'll go in half an hour. Lucky it was not this evening, as I have a special meeting of the Travelers' Club to attend."

Miss Lena Van Hosen belonged to one of the first families of New York city, and although years of age was the prettiest and most accomplished girl in London, which is saying a great deal.



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Project Gutenberg's Jack Harkaway in New York, by Bracebridge Hemyng

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CHAPTER I.

A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TRAVELERS' CLUB.

"Pears to me, Marse Jack, you done gone been quiet long 'nuff dis spell," exclaimed Monday, Jack Harkaway's colored servant, as he entered his master's room at the hotel.

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"Hooray! Golly, sah, dat's de good news, for suah. I'se been afraid I'se gwine ter rust out, 'stead ob wear out."

"What have you got in your hand?"

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Monday handed his master a letter and retired, without venturing on any further remark.

The epistle was directed in a delicate lady's hand and was highly perfumed.

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Miss Lena Van Hoosen belonged to one of the first families of New York city, and at nineteen years of age was the prettiest and most accomplished girl in London, which is saying a great deal.

"PEARS TO ME, MARSE JACK, YOU DONE GONE BEEN QUIET LONG 'NUFF DIS SPELL," EXCLAIMED MONDAY, JACK HARKAWAY'S COLORED SERVANT, AS HE ENTERED HIS MASTER'S ROOM.

She had been making the tour of Europe with her mother and father, and was resting awhile, before returning to America. Jack had been considerably struck with her grace and beauty, paying her much attention, since his first introduction to her at a ball.

He had every reason to believe that she also thought very well of him.

Taking up his hat, he quitted the hotel, and hiring a cab, was driven to Miss Van Hoosen's residence in Belgravia.

She received him cordially.

"I sent for you, Mr. Harkaway, for a particular reason," she exclaimed.

"Indeed!" replied Jack. "Whatever the reason may be, I feel very much indebted to you for this mark of attention on your part."

"In the first place, we are going home next week."

"So soon?"

"Yes, papa has business to attend to and we have already been absent nearly twelve months."

"I regret that I shall lose your agreeable society."

"The gap in the circle of your acquaintance, which our going away will create," said Miss Van Hoosen, "I have no doubt you will soon supply."

"Not so easily as you imagine," he answered.

"But that is not all I wanted to see you about," continued Miss Van Hoosen as her face assumed a graver expression. "You are well acquainted with Lord Maltravers."

"Yes, his lordship is a member of the same club as myself—the Travelers'. I have no reason to believe that he likes me; in fact, a coldness has always existed between us."

The young lady drew her chair closer to Jack.

"Now," she said, "what I am going to tell you, must be received in strict confidence."

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"Yesterday, Lord Maltravers called upon me and did me the honor to ask for my hand."

Jack's heart fluttered a little, for this was more than he had ever dared to do.

"What answer did you give him?" he inquired.

"The same that I have given to others before him."

"And that is—?"

"Simply, that I have promised my parents that I will neither engage myself to, or marry any one, until I am twenty-one. Thereupon, he most unjustifiably made use of your name."

"My name!"

"He said that he knew you were his rival, and that I had refused him on your account; he added that he would soon remove you from his path and then he would urge his suit again."

Jack Harkaway was astonished at this revelation.

"He may have remarked that I admired you, Miss Van Hoosen," he exclaimed. "But he was quite unwarranted in saying what he did. If he attempts to pick a quarrel with me, let him beware."

"That is precisely what I want you to avoid," she replied.

"No matter; the days of dueling are not yet over. In France a man can seek satisfaction for his wounded honor."

"Let me beg and pray of you, to keep away from Lord Maltravers."

"I can make no promise."

"Remember that people tell strange tales of him. He has resided much in Italy and I have heard that he keeps a Neapolitan assassin in his pay."

Jack laughed heartily at this.

"I am not a child to be scared by such stories as that," he answered. "But if it will

relieve your mind, I will undertake to be on my guard."

This was all Miss Van Hoosen could obtain from him, and she was very uneasy in her mind, when he rose to take his leave. He was much gratified with the result of his visit. For Lord Maltravers he did not care a snap of the fingers; but he was delighted to think that Lena Van Hoosen thought enough of him to send for and warn him of a danger which she fancied he was menaced with.

When he left the house, he walked slowly toward the club, where he knew he would meet some of his friends.

In the reading-room he encountered Dick Harvey, who had been his schoolmate and had accompanied him in most of his wanderings by sea and land.

In an arm-chair sat Professor Isaac Mole, his old tutor, who was fast asleep.

"How do, Jack?" exclaimed Harvey. "You see the professor is a little under the weather. Will you come to the committee-room? The meeting is convened for two o'clock and it is nearly that now."

"With pleasure," replied Jack.

Why the Travelers' Club was called by that name, no one had ever been able to discover. Its members were men who knew nothing of other countries, except what they read in books.

The special meeting, on the present occasion, had been called by Mr. Oldfogey, the President, to discuss the actual habitat of that noble beast, the buffalo.

When Jack and Harvey entered the committee-room, there were about a dozen members present.

Mr. Oldfogey called the meeting to order.

He was an elderly gentleman with a large bald head; he wore spectacles and a bottle-green coat with brass buttons.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "you are assembled here to-day, for the purpose of discussing the actual location of the buffalo. I am of opinion that this gigantic beast is to be found in certain parts of Central Park, in New York city, and I am told that it roams at will over the plains of Jersey. It will be a valuable contribution to science, if we can settle this vexed question, and I invite the views of members on the subject."

Captain Cannon, a stout, plethoric gentleman, of a soldierly bearing, who had seen service in the Rifle Brigade, and was noted among his friends for being able

to tell more wildly improbable yarns than any one else, responded to the call.

"The buffalo is a great fact," he exclaimed. "When in Canada West with my regiment, I got lost in the Hudson's Bay territory, and subsisted for six months on buffalo-meat. As far as I know, the buffalo is only found east of the Missouri river, and is rapidly dying out. Buffaloes are, to my certain knowledge, sir, used in New York for drawing street cars. It is naturally a beast of burden and very tame. When in Montreal, I used to drive a buffalo to a sleigh; he went well and was docile. The buffalo's favorite food is peanuts; he will also thrive on popcorn."

The gallant captain sat down, after delivering this remarkable contribution to natural history, and Mr. Zebadiah Twinkle rose to his feet.

"Sir," he exclaimed, looking fiercely at the President, "I rise to a point of order. There are only twelve members present, and according to by-law 27 it requires fifteen to make a quorum."

Mr. Twinkle was tall and angular, and he glared defiantly around him.

The character of Mr. Twinkle was a very remarkable one. He was a gentleman of independent means, who had retired rich from the grocery business. His ambition was to be considered a sporting character. He was a great boaster, but when put to the test, generally collapsed in a ludicrous manner. In fact he was in common parlance a fraud and a blower, but he caused great amusement to his friends.

The entrance at this moment of five additional members of the club, effectually disposed of Mr. Twinkle's point of order.

"Good!" he said. "Now that everything is regular, I will proceed with my remarks. As my worthy and gallant friend Captain Cannon has stated, it is a fact that buffaloes exist in the city of New York, for whenever the citizens of that vast commercial metropolis go sleigh-riding, they invariably take their buffaloes. The animal is by no means ferocious, and is frequently taught by the Indians of Manhattan Island to follow them about like a dog."

Mr. Twinkle was followed by Jack, who could not help smiling at the dense ignorance displayed by the previous speakers.

"Mr. President and gentlemen of the Travelers' Club," he exclaimed, "allow me to state that the buffalo is a wild animal, which is only to be found on the plains of the Far West, where it ranges in herds in a savage state. It may be found as far south-west as Texas, and as far north as Montana."

"Is my veracity called in question?" cried Captain Cannon.

"Am I an ignoramus?" asked Mr. Twinkle.

"Order, gentlemen!" said the President, rapping the table.

"Allow me to make a suggestion," exclaimed Harvey. "As there is such a diversity of opinion about the buffalo, and the members of the club seem to be very hazy about the land in which he lives, I propose that a committee of—say five—be appointed to go to America and make a report."

This proposition was received with favor.

"Make it a substantive motion," said the President, "and I will take the sense of the meeting on it."

This was done, and the motion being put to the vote, it was carried, *nem. con.*

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Oldfoguey, "the power of appointment belongs, I believe, to me."

"It does, by virtue of the office you hold," replied Mr. Twinkle.

"Then I appoint as members of this investigating committee, Mr. Harkaway, Professor Mole, Captain Cannon, and Mr. Twinkle, with Mr. Harvey as Secretary, each gentleman paying his own expenses. The committee will start within a month for New York and report to us once a week."

"On the subject of the buffalo?" asked Captain Cannon.

"Precisely."

No objection was made to this, and those named on the committee accepted the honor imposed upon them.

Jack was willing enough to go to America, because Miss Van Hoosen was also going to that country, and he thought sufficiently well of her to wish to enjoy her society.

When all was settled, the meeting adjourned, and Jack went to apprise Mr. Mole of his selection as one of the Buffalo Investigating Committee.

The professor was still sleeping calmly, but he had attracted the attention of Lord Maltravers.

This scion of the aristocracy was about twenty-five years of age, very rich and extremely haughty.

His father died when he was young. He was educated by a private tutor who let him have his way in everything. His mother doted on and spoiled him.

Young, rich, titled, handsome, what wonder was it, that he was arrogant and thought himself cast in a superior mold to his fellow-creatures, whom he despised and looked down upon. Maltravers hated Jack Harkaway, in the first place because Jack paid him no deference, and secondly because he fancied Lena Van Hoosen preferred the dashing Jack to himself.

Knowing that Professor Mole was a friend of Jack's he lost no opportunity of insulting him.

Seeing him asleep, he twisted a piece of paper into what boys call a 'jigger,' and lighting it at both ends, placed it on the old man's nose.

He was accompanied by a young man who was his toady; his name was Simpkins, and in consideration of many favors bestowed upon him by Lord Maltravers, Simpkins was his most devoted servant.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Simpkins, "what an excellent joke; that will wake the old boy up."

"He's no right to sleep in a club, by Jove," remarked his lordship.

"Certainly not; it is not the proper place."

Presently the flame began to burn the skin of the professor's nasal organ, and he awoke with a cry of affright.

His hands instinctively sought his nose and he pulled off the 'jigger.'

"Confound it," he exclaimed, "my face is burnt. Who has done this?"

The two young men began to laugh loudly and were evidently enjoying their practical joke.

"I did it," said Lord Maltravers. "Is there anything else you want to know?"

Mr. Mole regarded him with indignation.

"If I wasn't an old man, I would chastise you for your insolence," he cried.

"Don't fall back on your age," replied Maltravers. "I am here to take the consequences of anything I may have done."

A quick step caused him to turn round.

"Are you?" asked a voice.

It was Harkaway, who, standing in the doorway, had been a silent spectator of the scene.

Lord Maltravers folded his arms.

"I am ready to answer you, or any one else," he said.

The two men regarded one another sternly.



CHAPTER II.

"THE DUEL ON THE SANDS."

Jack Harkaway was afraid of no man living, and though averse to quarreling, he always supported his friends.

"You have committed a gross outrage on Mr. Mole!" he exclaimed; "and in his name, I demand an apology."

"Indeed!" sneered Maltravers.

"And what is more, I mean to have it."

"Is that so?"

"Apologize, my lord, or something may—nay, will assuredly happen which both of us will have cause to regret."

"You want, sir, what I do not feel inclined to give you," replied Maltravers. "I am not in the habit of apologizing to a gentleman, and should not think of doing so to *you*."

"That is as much as to say that I am not a gentleman," exclaimed Jack, the hot blood rushing in a crimson tide to his face.

"You are perfectly at liberty to place whatever construction you like on my words, sir."

Simpkins smiled approval in his usual insipid manner.

"Bravo!" he lisped. "Very fine, indeed."

"I ask you once more," said Jack, "if you will make the *amende honorable* to my friend?"

"And I distinctly refuse to do so."

"In that case I shall chastise you, as I would any yelping cur which annoyed me in the street. Mind yourself, my lord," Jack exclaimed.

He raised his fist and dealt Maltravers a blow which the other vainly endeavored to ward off.

His lordship fell heavily against the wall and the blood flowed from a cut in his

face, which extended the whole length of the right cheek.

"Good heavens!" said Simpkins. "The man is a butcher. He has marked you for life, Maltravers."

The latter applied a silk handkerchief to his hurt, withdrawing it covered with the hot blood.

"Coward!" he exclaimed. "You struck me with a ring on your finger."

"Served you right," said Mr. Mole. "I wish he had given you more of it. This will teach you not to insult an old man, who never did you any harm."

"I am not talking to you, imbecile," hissed Maltravers.

He turned to his toady:

"Give me your arm, Simpkins," he added.

"With all the pleasure in life," was the reply.

"You shall hear from me, Mr. Harkaway," continued Maltravers.

"Whenever you please," answered Jack, carelessly.

"I presume you will not refuse me the satisfaction of a gentleman."

"You can rely upon me."

His lordship bowed stiffly, and, still holding the handkerchief to the cut, from which the blood trickled slowly, left the room.

"Am I much hurt, Simpkins?" he asked.

"Cut all to pieces."

"Shall I be disfigured?"

"You will always have a scar, I fear," replied Simpkins.

"Curse that fellow!" cried Maltravers, between his clenched teeth, "he shall pay a terrible reckoning for this."

"Why didn't you hit him back again?"

"He took me by surprise, and he hit with such force, that he knocked me out of time. My head swims now and I am so dizzy, I feel as if I should faint."

They passed out of the door, leaving Jack and the professor together.

The latter shook Harkaway by the hand very warmly.

"Many thanks, my dear fellow," he exclaimed. "You acted very properly in punishing that man. He has made a dead-set at me for some time past."

"On my account; I know it all," replied Jack. "This row was bound to come. I was warned of it only this morning."

"Do you think he means to fight?"

"I am sure of it."

"And you will meet him?"

"I do not see how I can avoid it. No matter; *vive la bagatelle*, as the French say. A life of adventure for me."

Jack related to Mr. Mole the proceedings of the club and the selection of a committee to proceed to New York. In a short time Harvey came in, and when told about the quarrel with Lord Maltravers, gladly consented to act as his second, if a challenge should be sent.

The law of England forbade dueling, but in France, hostile meetings frequently took place, and they did not doubt that the encounter would be arranged for that country.

As the challenged party, Jack had the choice of weapons and resolved to choose swords, as he was an expert swordsman.

He invited the professor and Harvey to dine with him at his hotel, intending to go to the theater afterward, but this intention was frustrated by the visit of Captain Cannon, who sent up his card saying he wanted to see him on urgent business.

Jack stepped into an inner room and at once accorded him an interview.

"Very sorry to trouble you about an unpleasant matter," said the captain. "But Lord Maltravers has asked me to act as his friend."

"I understand," replied Jack. "You have heard all about this unfortunate business."

"Surely, and if a blow had not been struck we could have arranged it. As it is, a meeting must take place."

"Where?"

"At Calais, by daybreak to-morrow morning."

"So soon?"

"Yes, it is useless to delay," replied the captain. "The express train leaves at half-past eight. Who is your second?"

"Mr. Harvey."

"Very well. I shall expect him at my hotel, the Imperial, after our arrival. We will arrange everything. It is all very simple. I fought a dozen duels before I was your age and always winged my man."

"Really!"

"Fact, I assure you. Keep your courage up."

"No fear of that," replied Jack. "I hope your principal will be as calm as I am."

"Oh! he won't show the white feather," answered Captain Cannon. "The Maltravers blood may be bad, but there isn't an ounce of cowardice in it. Good-by, we meet to-morrow."

Jack nodded, and seeing Captain Cannon out, excused himself to Mr. Mole and sent for Monday, to whom he confided the fact that he was going to France to fight a duel.

"You fight a jewell, Marse Jack?" said Monday; "what you want to do that for?"

"It is a point of honor. Don't you see? I struck this man and must give him satisfaction."

"You leave him to me and I put six inches of bowie-knife in him, for suah."

Monday's eyes gleamed like those of a cougar, and it was clear that he meant what he said.

"Don't ever talk to me like that again," exclaimed Jack. "I am no assassin."

By half-past eight, Jack and Harvey were comfortably seated in a carriage of the mail train on their way to France.

"If I fall," said Jack, "I want you to see Miss Van Hoosen and tell her that my last thoughts were of her."

"I'll do it," replied Harvey. "But I do not think anything will happen to you."

They arrived in due course and Jack retired to rest, while Harvey sought Captain Cannon to arrange the preliminaries.

He found the captain drinking wine with Lord Maltravers and talking loudly about the exploits of his youth.

"Ah! Harvey," he exclaimed, "here you are. Sit down and join us in the foaming goblet. That's a good phrase I flatter myself. A duel stirs my blood and carries me back a long way. I recollect when I was quartered in Dublin, a fiery young Hussar took exception to something I said and threw a glass of wine in my face—he did, by Jove, sir. That was a case of pistols for two and a coffin for one. I met him in Phoenix Park the next day and at the first fire, I shot him through the heart, and went to the expense of having his body embalmed to send home to his mother."

"Very considerate of you, I am sure," remarked Harvey.

"Oh! it's just like me. I'm all heart. By the way, what weapons does your principal select?"

"Swords."

"Humph! I'd rather it had been pistols, because the affair would have been over sooner; but no matter. I have an elegant pair of rapiers. We will meet you at six o'clock on the sands at low-water, one mile south of the town."

"That is sufficient," answered Harvey.

He refused to spend the night in a spree as the captain evidently intended to, and returned to his own hotel.

At five o'clock he had Jack up, and they sought the appointed spot, finding Lord Maltravers and his second already there.

In an instant the principals stripped to their shirts and grasped the weapons which were handed them.

The swords were of highly tempered steel, sharply pointed and as pliable as a willow wand.

The sun was just rising in the east, gilding the horizon with its burning rays. A few fishing-smacks lay in the offing. The tide was on the turn, and the wavelets plashed mournfully on the sand, as if singing a requiem.

"*En garde!*" cried Maltravers.

Jack placed himself in position. His right arm and knee advanced, and his left hand by his side.

The swords clashed as they crossed each other, and recovering, the duelists watched carefully for an opening.

Lord Maltravers lunged in *carte*, but his thrust was delicately foiled by his opponent, who parried it skillfully.

A long strip of plaster hid the cut on his lordship's face, which was ghastly white and terribly in earnest.

For some minutes they fenced with the adroitness of veteran swordsmen, neither gaining the slightest advantage, though a hectic spot which appeared on Maltravers's face, indicated that his mind was less at ease than Jack's.

Suddenly Jack ceased to act on the defensive and became the aggressor, breaking down his lordship's guard and pinking him slightly in the left arm.

"First blood!" said Harvey; "are you satisfied?"

"Confound it, no. This is a duel to the death," replied Maltravers, his face distorted with passion.

"As you please," replied Jack.

Again, they faced one another, the wounded man having hastily tied a piece of his shirt sleeve round his arm.

The swords clashed in the bright morning sunshine, which every moment became brighter.

In vain Maltravers strove to injure his enemy. Each thrust was parried and he panted with exertion, while tears of impotent rage started to his eyes.

"Ha! I have you now," he exclaimed, as the point of his rapier touched Jack's breast.

"Not quite," replied Jack, who threw himself back, instantly recovered, and lunging in *tierce*, sent his weapon through the left shoulder of the nobleman.

Maltravers staggered; he leant upon his sword, which snapped in half, and he sunk upon his knees, his face convulsed with pain.

"That ends it," exclaimed the captain. "I confess myself satisfied."

"No! No!" cried his lordship, seizing the pointed end of his rapier and binding a kerchief round the broken part so as to hold it more securely.

"Surely, you will fight no more?"

"I will fight till I drop."

Harkaway broke his sword in half over his knee and grasped the narrow end, in

the same manner as his adversary.

"I am willing," he replied.

"My dear fellow," remonstrated Harvey, "are you insane?"

"By no means," was the calm and confident reply. "I did not come here to play, and besides, I hate to leave my work half finished."

"Eh! the wretch," said Maltravers, bursting with rage, "he mocks me; but we shall see."

Jack sunk on his knees in front of Maltravers, and they were now so near, that their eyes returned flash for flash and their hot breath fanned each other's face.

Maltravers was bleeding profusely, his blood dropping on the thirsty sand, which greedily sucked up the ruby fluid, and the ghastly pallor of his face deepened.

In a few minutes he had succeeded in inflicting a few scratches upon his adversary and he grated his teeth with grim satisfaction.

This irritated Jack, who precipitated matters, by receiving the point of his lordship's weapon in his left arm and throwing himself upon him, piercing his breast and bearing him to the ground.

Now Maltravers could utter no protest, for he fainted and extended himself on the ground in the attitude of a corpse.

Jack hurriedly put on his coat.

He was bleeding, but in the excitement of the moment felt no inconvenience, and it was not till his wound stiffened that he knew he was hurt. They began to leave the spot.

"Look here," said the captain, "this is contrary to all precedent. I recollect when I fought the major of the Twenty-seventh, and left him for dead, we sent a coach after him and a doctor."

"All right," responded Harvey, "we will do that for you."

He departed hastily with Harkaway, and the captain dragged the insensible body of Maltravers to a spot further inland, where the rapidly advancing waves could not touch it.

For the next hour he busied himself in stanching the blood, which indeed was the only way of saving the defeated man's life. At the expiration of that time he perceived a carriage driving furiously along the sand.

When it reached the spot where the captain was standing a gentleman stepped out.

"I am the doctor," he said.

Captain Cannon nodded, and after a brief examination the medical man ordered Maltravers to be driven to the hotel.

For some hours he hovered between life and death.

The captain remained in constant attendance by the bedside, until a severe attack of fever supervened, when a professional nurse was hired.

On the third day the crisis came.

It was midnight when the doctor left the sick man's room and sought the captain.

"Has this gentleman any friends?" he inquired.

"Yes, in England," was the reply.

"It will be best to send for them without delay."

"Is the case so grave as that?"

"I cannot answer for the result," replied the doctor.

Captain Cannon at once telegraphed to Lady Maltravers, the mother of the sick man.

That night the patient was very feverish and restless; he recognized no one.

In the afternoon of the following day Lady Maltravers arrived at the hotel accompanied by Bambino, his lordship's Italian servant.

This fellow had a most villainous countenance and it was said that he had been condemned to the galleys for a term of years, in expiation of some terrible crime.

"My son! Where is my son?" demanded Lady Maltravers.

She was conducted to his room and from that time forth watched over him with all a mother's devotion.



CHAPTER III.

THE ASSASSIN AT WORK.

Thanks to his youth, aided, by a strong and vigorous constitution, Lord Maltravers passed through the valley of the shadow of death without succumbing to the fell destroyer.

In a fortnight he was out of danger.

The doctor predicted that his recovery would be slow, and advised that he should remain where he was until his strength was fully established.

Lady Maltravers returned to London, rejoicing that her child was saved to her, for with all his faults she loved him with the strong intensity of a fond and over-indulgent mother.

Consequently his lordship remained at Calais in the charge of his faithful valet, Bambino.

One day, while sitting up for the first time, his pale and haggard face brought into prominence by the rays of the sun which streamed in through the open window, he received a letter from Simpkins, to whom he had written for news.

In this letter he was informed that Harkaway and four friends were about to depart for New York in a few days on board the steamer Erin, Miss Van Hoosen having preceded them by a week.

"Bambino," exclaimed his lordship.

"Signor," replied the valet, who glided softly to his side, with the noiseless motion of a black snake.

"Three years ago, when I was in Florence, a man named Bambino was being tried for the commission of a double murder. He had killed the woman he was about to marry and a man of whom he was jealous. The trial excited great interest; and finally, being found guilty, Bambino was condemned to the galleys for the term of his natural life."

The Italian raised his hand deprecatingly.

"That was in the past, master," he said.

"True; but it is necessary that I should recall it. I took an interest in you, visiting you in prison before your transportation to the coast to begin your life-long slavery. I wanted just such a man as yourself."

"You have ever found me grateful, signor."

"Don't interrupt me. You swore by your faith that if I procured your release, your life should be mine to dispose of, as I thought fit. By expending large sums in bribing your jailers, I contrived that you should escape, and since then you have lived a life of comparative ease and luxury."

"It is true," exclaimed Bambino.

"The time has now arrived when I want you to exercise your peculiar talents on my behalf."

"You have but to command, my lord," replied the Italian. "It is for me to obey."

"Good. You have seen Mr. Harkaway?"

"I know him well."

"Again, good," exclaimed Maltravers, whose dark eyes flashed vindictively. "Harkaway is my enemy!"

"He shall die," said Bambino, solemnly.

"Very well. It is for you to see to that. I am in the position you see me now, through that man. He starts for New York on Saturday in the steamer Erin, following a lady I love, whom he intends to steal from me and marry, if I do not stop him. You will embark on the same vessel, and by the time I am well enough to join you in New York, you will have rendered a good account of him."

"His spirit shall have gone to the land of shades. I, Bambino, swear it," said the Italian.

"I rely on you. Is it requisite for me to say anything more?"

"Nothing, my lord."

"Then take what money you want and be off," returned Lord Maltravers.

That night Bambino was on his way to Liverpool, from which port the steamer started.



CHAPTER IV.

ADÉLE.

Lord Maltravers was reading a book when the door opened and a beautiful girl with long silky dark hair entered the room.

Her face was sad, and there were traces of tears on her pale cheeks.

Springing forward, she threw herself on her knees before him, and seizing his hand, which she covered with kisses, exclaimed, in pathetic tones, "Oh! Arthur, at last I have found you."

"Adéle!" he said, while a hectic flush mantled his cheek.

"Yes," she replied. "It is your own Adéle, the little girl you vowed to love; Adéle whom you married two years ago in the little French village in the *Pas de Calais*. Oh, Arthur! how could you desert me?"

"I—I never married you," he answered, stammering a little.

"Indeed you did."

"It was a mock marriage."

"The good *curé* who united us is alive. He will bear evidence that I am your wife. I, Adéle Bellefontaine, am in reality Lady Maltravers."

"It is false."

"Oh! do not repudiate me, for, darling, I love you," she pleaded. "If you have forgotten me, I can never forget you."

"How did you find me out?"

"I read an account of your duel in the papers; they said you were ill and suffering; I walked fifty miles to come and nurse you, because I was too poor to ride."

"You shall have money to go home again, foolish girl," said Maltravers.

"I do not want it. All I ask is your love," replied Adéle. "Let me have the sweet privilege of waiting upon you, Arthur. I will be your servant, your slave. Do not, for heaven's sake, drive me from you."

Maltravers was ill at ease and could not disguise his agitation.

Two years before, as the poor girl had truly said, he had met her in a secluded village, where he was fishing. He had married the poor peasant girl and then basely deserted her.

Some letters he left behind revealed his true name, and at the first chance Adèle had come to him, to beg once more for that love for which she was pining.

It was impossible for him to acknowledge her claim or recognize her before his friends, and for a moment he did not know what to do.

His mind, however, was soon made up; he would threaten her, deny her story, and drive her from him.

"Rise," he exclaimed; "you are an impudent impostor. If you do not instantly quit this room I will have you arrested. It is the correctional tribunal which should deal with such creatures as you."

Adèle rose to her feet and clasped her head with her hands as if her throbbing brain would burst.

Could she believe the evidence of her senses?

"My God!" she cried. "He sends me away! Does he not know that I have a heart which will break? Are a man's vows traced upon the sand or written in water when he tells a woman he loves her?"

"Go," continued Maltravers, sternly.

For a minute she was completely overwhelmed and stood like one in a dream.

"Yes, I will go," she said in a choked voice. "Heaven knows whither! The folks in my village shall never see me again, or know my shame. I said I would go after my husband and bring him back. My father and mother were to prepare a *fête*. That is over. I have been gathering Dead Sea fruit. It has turned to dust in my hand. I trusted a bad man and my punishment is more than I can bear. Yet, the water is near, and there is one refuge for the weary and heart-broken. Farewell, Arthur. May God forgive you, as does your Adèle."

Not a muscle of Maltravers's face moved. He stared coldly at this poor girl whom he had wronged so infamously and there was an aristocratic sneer on his well-cut lip.

She staggered rather than walked to the door. She descended the stairs like one dazed. The iron had entered into her soul, and those hearts which have been

seared by the burning hand of misfortune can alone sympathize with her.

Adèle gained the street. Mechanically she sought the harbor and entered upon the broad pathway of the long pier. There was a wild desperation in her eyes; her face was lighted up with a half-insane gleam; no tears came to her relief. At times a choking sob broke in her throat—this was the only evidence of feeling that she gave vent to.

A drizzling rain was falling which kept away the usual promenaders on the pier. The tide was flood and several vessels were sailing out of the harbor.

She paid no attention to anything, seeming to be absorbed in her misery. Her eyes became fixed and glassy. Occasionally she moaned as if in pain, and pressed her hand to her side to still the beating of her heart.

When the end of the pier was reached, she stopped, raised her eyes to heaven and her lips moved as if in silent prayer.

Then she sprung lightly over the parapet and fell into the foaming sea, whose waves were beating in clouds of spray against the wooden supports of the pier.

A large merchantman was passing out of the harbor at the time with all sails set, and the rash act of the poor suicide was witnessed by the sailors on the deck.

Without a moment's hesitation one gallant fellow jumped overboard and swam toward the drowning girl.

He succeeded in reaching her as she was about to sink, and held her up, until a boat from his ship came to her rescue.

Adèle and her brave preserver were picked up and conveyed to the vessel, she being in a dead faint.

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the sailor, as his eyes fell more closely upon the girl's features. "It is Adèle Bellefontaine, from my village of St. Ange, just as sure as my name is Jacques Belot and she was the only girl I ever loved, until she married that scoundrelly Englishman, who deserted her. If it had not been for Adèle, here, I should never have gone to sea."

"What are we to do with her?" asked the captain. "The wind and tide are against us and it is bad luck to put back."

"Take her with us, captain," said Jacques, who was a fine, handsome young sailor.

"It is bad luck to have a would-be suicide on board," remarked the boatswain.

"Ah! bah! you old croaker," replied Jacques. "How do you know the girl intended to kill herself?"

"I saw her deliberately jump into the sea."

"And I saw her blown over the side of the pier, by the wind."

The sailors laughed at this sally, which encouraged Jacques. "Won't you take her to New York, captain?" he continued.

"Yes," replied the captain, good-naturedly, "I suppose I may as well. She will be a companion to my wife. Carry her below, friend Jacques, but mind you don't get so dazzled by the girl's pretty eyes, as to neglect your duty. Take her away."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Jacques, who raised Adèle's slender form in his arms and transported her to the captain's cabin.

The skipper's wife was glad of a companion and at once proceeded to restore her to consciousness, while Jacques related the affair.

When Adèle opened her eyes she looked wildly around her and murmured: "Is this death?"

"No, deary," replied the captain's wife, "this is life. You were saved by Jacques here."

"Oh! let me die."

"What for, child? You are young and pretty. Life should have its charms for you."

"I have seen him and he drove me from him. He says I have no claim on him and threatened me with the police. Oh! it has broken my heart."

She burst into a paroxysm of bitter tears, but they relieved the overcharged fountains of her soul.

"It will do her good," exclaimed her kind protectress.

Jacques Belot gnashed his teeth.

"She said 'he' and she has seen him," he muttered. "I know what it means well enough. That vile Englishman has gone back on her. I have seen him, I can recall his face like a book. He is a lord, they say; his name is Maltravers. You see I forget nothing. We shall meet one day, and it seems to me that there will be a little account for me to square with Mr. Englishman—*sacré-e-e!*"

Presently Adèle recognized Jacques, and greeted him as an old friend, but not as

a former lover.

To him and the captain's wife she related her story, gaining much sympathy from them.

"Forget this milor'," said the captain's wife.

"Impossible," rejoined Adèle.

"He is unworthy of you. Go to America and marry this brave fellow who loves you and has saved your life."

Adèle shook her head sadly.

"Madame," she replied, "though I am deserted, I cannot fail to recollect that I am the legal wife of Lord Maltravers."

"At least promise that you will not again attempt to commit suicide."

"I promise."

With that they were obliged to be content and so the good ship *Notre Dame de Calais* sailed along the English Channel and out into the storms of the broad Atlantic.



CHAPTER V.

THE VOYAGE.

Some days afterward the ocean steamship Erin started from Liverpool, having on board, among others, Jack Harkaway and his friends, and Signor Bambino, an Italian gentleman, who stated that he was proceeding to New York on business of a commercial nature.

Jack and Harvey took no interest whatever in the absurd question about the buffalo, which agitated the quidnuncs of the Travelers' Club.

The reason Jack was going to New York was simple enough; he wanted to be where Miss Van Hoosen was; and Harvey went because his friend Jack did.

After the first sensations inseparable from a sea-voyage were overcome, the saloon passengers began to fraternize, and among the most popular in the smoking-room was Signor Bambino.

Four days after leaving Liverpool, the Erin encountered severe weather; the decks were swept by the sea fore and aft, and for six hours the hatches were battened down. When the storm ceased, the passengers came on deck once more and enjoyed the calm of the evening.

Jack and Bambino played eucher until midnight, when the Italian threw down the cards.

"I have had enough of it, if it is all the same to you," he exclaimed.

"But you have lost heavily," said Jack.

"Bah! what is that? to-day we lose, to-morrow we win. It is only a trifle, after all."

"As you please," replied Jack.

"Let us take a stroll on deck," continued the Italian.

"With all my heart."

They quitted the saloon and went on deck, which the quick eye of Bambino saw was deserted.

A thick mist had arisen, and though the captain was on the bridge his form could

not be distinguished.

The phosphorescent pathway in the wake of the big ship gleamed and scintillated.

"How beautiful," remarked Jack.

"Yes," replied Bambino. "It looks like a sea of fire. One might walk on it."

"I should not like to try," Jack said, laughing.

"Suppose you do make the effort."

At these words of Bambino, Jack turned half round sharply, and faced him squarely.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"Precisely what I say," rejoined Bambino.

They were standing at the stern of the ship, right behind the wheel-house.

"Who are you, and what do you want of me?" inquired Jack, who became suspicious.

"I have a fancy to throw you into the sea."

"Madman!"

"Yes, if you like. I am peculiar at times. Come! how do you like the look of this?"

As he spoke, Bambino drew a long knife and made a thrust with it at Harkaway.

The latter stepped back quickly, receiving the point of the knife in the fleshy part of his right arm.

It was merely a graze and did not cause him any serious inconvenience, but it served to put him on his guard.

Being unarmed himself, he concluded that his best course would be to grapple with his assailant, which he accordingly did, dashing the knife from his grasp by a lucky hit and placing himself more on an equality with the cowardly assassin.

The struggle that ensued was short, sharp and decisive, for the superior strength of the robust Englishman soon told on the effeminate Italian, who, deprived of his knife, was not very dangerous.

Jack threw him on the deck and pinned him by the throat.

"Villain," he cried, "what was your object in attacking me?"

Bambino made no answer.

"Tell me," continued Jack, "or I'll strangle the life out of you!"

He compressed his fingers mere tightly and the assassin's eyes started from their sockets, while his face assumed a purple hue.

"Speak, speak!" persisted Jack.

A gurgling sound came from the man's mouth, and he made signs that he was being stifled.

When the gripe was slightly relaxed he said: "I am a poor adventurer, and fancied I could get money by robbing you."

"That is not the truth; robbery was not your object, but murder."

"Well, I will confess," exclaimed Bambino, who was afraid of being killed and thought he could serve his employer better alive than dead.

"Make haste."

"Lord Maltravers ordered me to kill you. I am simply a hired assassin. Let me live."

All was instantly clear to Jack.

"I am satisfied," he replied.

"You will let me go, now?"

"Indeed, I will do nothing of the kind. I must make you a prisoner for my own protection, and when we reach New York the authorities will decide what is to be done with you."

It was in vain for Bambino to protest; he submitted to his fate in sullen silence, allowing himself to be dragged amidship, when Jack explained to the first officer what had happened.

The watch was called, and the would-be murderer, gnashing his teeth at the failure of his attempt, was taken below and confined.

The next morning Jack appeared at breakfast in the saloon as if nothing had happened, but he told Mr. Mole and Harvey that an emissary of Lord Maltravers had attempted his life.

"This is very important," observed the professor. "It shows to what lengths

Maltravers will go to remove you from his path. Let the man's full confession be taken; he can then be used as a means for the arrest of his lordship, who, if I am right in my law, can be sent to prison, as the fellow's accomplice."

"Certainly, he can," replied Harvey.

"It is not very pleasant," remarked Jack, "to know that an enemy is plotting against you in a far-off country and sending out men to kill you."

"I have an idea," said Mole.

"Something novel for you, sir."

"Oh! no. This old head has been prolific in its time. Let us form ourselves into the Jack Harkaway guard."

"Splendid idea," cried Harvey. "I volunteer for the service. You and I will arm ourselves and one or both of us will be with him, night and day."

"No, no," said Jack, much touched at this proof of the devotion of his friends, "it is unnecessary."

"On the contrary," answered Mole, "I am sure that this attempt will be followed by others."

"Well! If you insist upon it—"

"We do," said both the professor and Harvey in chorus.

Jack shook their hands in token of gratitude, and as Mr. Mole had brought out a small arsenal of pistols and knives in his trunk, for use in an emergency, he promptly armed both himself and Harvey.

Meanwhile Jack remained on deck.

Suddenly the man on the look-out reported a sail to leeward.

The steamer altered her course and made directly for the vessel, as she showed signals of distress and appeared to be in a water-logged condition.

When near enough the captain ordered the engines to be stopped and a boat lowered.

This was done and a crew manned the boat to row to the distressed craft.

An event like this relieved the monotony of a sea voyage and the deck was soon crowded with passengers.

In half an hour the crew had rowed to the vessel and returned without boarding

her.

They reported that the ship was leaking badly and had been abandoned by her crew, after suffering severely from the late storm.

Her masts had all gone by the side; her sails were blown to rags; her bulwarks were stove in. She was rudderless and it was a wonder how she kept afloat.

When this was reported and the boat hauled up to the davits once more, the captain of the steamer ordered the engineer to go ahead, and proceeded on his course.

He felt that he had done all that humanity required of him.

Scarcely had the dull, heavy beat of the enormous engines made themselves heard in the vibrating ship than a commotion was seen in the forecastle.

Jack ran forward to ascertain the cause.

A man was seen struggling fiercely with the sailors, who were trying to detain him.

It was Bambino.

By some means, while the steamer was lying to, he had contrived to escape from the place in which he was confined.

"Stop him!" cried Jack. "Knock him down, he is dangerous."

Bambino, however, was too much for his opponents, and dashing them on one side, made a flying leap and sprung over the side into the sea.

Whether he dived like a duck or was sucked under the ship and struck by one of the flanges of the screw, it was difficult to tell.

He was looked for in all directions. The steamer was again stopped and the boat lowered, but nothing could be seen of the man overboard.

"He is gone to his last account," said the captain, "and he is no loss."

"I'd rather have had him live," replied Jack, to whom this remark was addressed, "and somehow, I can't quite make up my mind that the fellow was born to be drowned."

"Hanging is certainly more in his line."

"That is so," said Jack.

The steamer once more proceeded on her way, and Jack amused himself by

scanning the expanse of ocean, through an opera-glass.

He fancied he saw a dark object resembling a man struggling with the waves in the vicinity of the abandoned vessel.

It was quickly left behind, and thinking it might have been his imagination, he dismissed Bambino from his mind.



CHAPTER VI.

THE ABANDONED SHIP.

The crafty Italian, however; was not so easily disposed of.

He was perfectly at home in the water, and had, by diving, kept himself concealed from view, his intention being to swim toward the abandoned vessel, which he had seen as soon as he came on deck.

He knew that a long term of imprisonment awaited him, if he was taken to New York, and he deemed any risk, no matter how desperate, preferable to that fate.

This decided him in jumping overboard.

In time, he succeeded in reaching the water-logged ship, which rolled uneasily upon the heaving bosom of the deep.

Climbing up the chains, he got on board and found himself the sole master of a fine vessel.

She was partly laden with timber, which accounted for her keeping afloat, in the disabled condition in which she was.

His first task was to examine her cabins, which were free from water.

In the fore-castle he found everything in disorder, as if the vessel had been abandoned in a hurry and without sufficient cause.

Probably the ship was overwhelmed by the fury of the storm in the dead of night, and the crew, seized with a panic, had lowered the boats.

Her figure-head had been washed away and the name on her stern was not decipherable.

Bambino could only make out the letters, "v—r—e—a—n—d—ris."

Going aft, he descended the companion-ladder, and entered the captain's cabin, where the same indications of haste were noticeable as in the fore-castle.

Everything had been thrown about in reckless confusion, and many articles of value were piled up, as if to be carried away.

In various lockers he found provisions in plenty, unharmed by the saltwater.

Cans of meats, sardines, biscuits and fruits, as well as bottles of wine, brandy and beer.

His spirits rose at this timely discovery, and his elation increased as he reflected that the ship would keep afloat for some time, unless engulfed by another storm, of which there was no indication at present.

Sitting down, he placed on the table of the cabin an excellent repast, of which he partook with a good appetite, washing it down with copious draughts of wine.

His satisfaction culminated when he found a box of fine cigars, which he promptly began to smoke, a box of matches affording him all the light he wanted.

While he was congratulating himself upon his good luck, he heard a peculiar sound.

This came from what appeared to be an inner cabin, the door of which was locked.

The sound resembled the moaning of some human being in deep anguish.

Somewhat superstitious, Bambino crossed himself and muttered a prayer.

Again the sound was repeated.

Bambino's hair began to erect itself, and he advanced to the partition, inclining his head in a listening position.



CHAPTER VII.

THE MYSTERY OF THE DESERTED VESSEL.

After listening at the partition for some time Bambino became convinced that a human being was confined in an inner cabin.

Frequently he heard sobs and groans mingled with exclamations in the French language, with which he was well acquainted.

A further examination showed him a door, against which several pieces of furniture were jammed, they having evidently been thrown against it during the progress of the storm.

This had effectually prevented the egress of the unfortunate person inside.

Being a powerful man, the Italian exerted himself to the utmost and succeeded in removing a bureau, some chairs and a heavy table which were piled up in confusion.

Then the door flew open, and he beheld a lady lying on a bed, and it was easily observable that she was in a state of complete exhaustion, having been many days without food.

Had not help come when it did, she could not have survived much longer.

Though the face was very beautiful, the cheeks were sunken, emaciated and hollow; her long silken hair hung in disheveled masses over her shoulders, and in her deeply expressive eyes there was the glare of incipient insanity.

No sooner did the girl see Bambino than she endeavored to rise, but was compelled to fall back again by weakness.

"Who are you?" he asked, tenderly.

"I am an angel now," she replied. "Death has held me in his arms. I do not suffer any more, though it was hard and bitter to die."

Her voice was faint and feeble. There was that in her words and manner which indicated that her mind was wandering. Reason had tottered on its throne, until it had finally given way beneath the weight of her sufferings.

Seeing that she was in want of nourishment, he procured some food which he

administered with a spoon, afterward compelling her to drink some wine.

Toward night she improved considerably, and fell into a refreshing sleep.

Bambino went repeatedly on deck to look out for a sail, but did not see one.

His position was a precarious one, for should another storm arise, there was little doubt the vessel would either capsize or break her back.

He drew some consolation from the fact that he was in the path of the steamships which were constantly crossing and recrossing the Atlantic ocean.

Two days passed, during which the lady remained in a comatose state; but, as he continued to feed her at intervals, she gradually regained her strength, and on the third day was able to get up and converse.

Her mind, however, was gone. She talked incoherently, persisting that she had died during the storm, and that she was a spirit.

"When I was alive," she would say, "I lived in France and I married an English nobleman. When he dies and comes to the land of spirits, he will not deny that I am his wife, though on earth, he drove me from him and broke my heart."

"What was his name?" asked Bambino, who became interested in her random utterings, he scarcely knew why.

"Lord Maltravers; you see I remember that, though I cannot recollect all things that happened before I died. I was called Adèle."

Bambino started and visibly changed color.

He had heard his master speak of this girl, and it appeared to him that he had made an important discovery.

Maltravers had admitted to this confidential villain that he had legally married the girl, and he hoped that she was dead, as she might give him some trouble if she lived.

Slave as he was, bound hand and foot to his titled master, Bambino felt that, with this girl in his possession, he would have a powerful weapon to use, should he ever come into open conflict with him.

He determined to say that she was his sister and that the captain and crew of the ship had left them behind in their hurry to quit, while he could easily add that Adèle had become crazed with terror.

A week went by; and though Adèle grew stronger, there was no amelioration in

her mental condition.

She was quiet and even childish. Never did she utter any threats against Lord Maltravers. She loved him in a sweet, innocent way that was very affecting.

In a locket, which she wore around her neck, she had a faded photograph of the handsome, bad man, who had made her the plaything of an idle hour and ruined her young life. This she would take from her bosom where she concealed it and kiss with the greatest rapture, pressing her lips to it and murmuring words of purest affection and despairing love.

It was a sight to make the hardest heart feel, and bring tears to the eyes of the most callous man of the world.

Even Bambino, wretch that he was, had known what it was to love, and he sighed for her misery.

At length the wished-for sail hove in sight, and the Italian contrived to attract the attention of the crew, who lowered a boat to come to their rescue.

He went below and roused Adèle, who was bending over the photograph of the loved one, very much as a little child plays with a pretty toy.

"Come, *mio caro*," he exclaimed, "we are going on board another ship, which will take us to a great city. Put that thing away."

Adèle held up the picture, while a smile overspread her countenance.

"Isn't he lovely?" she asked.

Bambino set his lips firmly together, while the dark eyes—peculiar to the Latin race—flashed forth their fire.

"I can't say anything against him," he replied, "for I owe him much; but, *cospetto!* you and he will go to different places when you die."

"I am dead. You know that," said the simple-minded girl. "But will he not come to me in time and ask my pardon? Will he not fold me in his arms as of old and call me his darling?"

"Possibly."

"Oh, yes," said she, as her eyes rolled in an ecstasy of unbounded affection. "It must be so. There *must* be some recompense for the pure in heart, hereafter."

Bambino was touched.

He patted her beautiful hair with the air of an affectionate brother.

"Would to God, my child," he said, "that I had won your love instead of the woman's who—but no matter; my hand is red with her blood."

Adèle looked at him in dread surprise.

"Did you kill her?" she asked.

Bambino laughed, in a harsh, metallic tone.

"She is dead," he replied. "Ay, and—*Corpo di Baccho!* the man is in the grave, too."

"Man! what man?" inquired Adèle.

"Ask me no more questions, unless you want to madden me," cried Bambino. "I thought the wound was cicatrized, but you, with your childish questions, set my blood on fire. I loved that woman."

"Maltravers loved me once, yet I did not kill him when he deserted me and afterward drove me from him, when I laid my heart at his feet. How can you kill those you love?"

Bambino could say no more. He led Adèle gently but firmly up the companion-ladder, and in a few minutes the boat from the steamer was alongside.

They were taken off the ship. He told his story and excited much sympathy, especially when he reached the vessel, which was bound to New York.

Adèle and he were given berths in the intermediate part of the ship, which is amidships, and in five days they found themselves in New York.

Bambino was careful to conceal his right name, as he knew the log would be published in the papers, and might reach Harkaway's eye.

The Italian resolved to keep Adèle in his charge, as a counterfoil to any ill-treatment he might receive from Lord Maltravers.

When the steamer arrived, he went to a hotel and having secured attendance for Adèle, cast about for some place where he could place her.

In a paper he saw an advertisement to this effect:

"ASTROLOGY.—Madame Vesta Levine, the only real fortune-teller in the city—electric baths—galvanism. Boarders taken. W. 32d St."

The morning after his arrival he called upon Mme. Levine, who was a middle-aged lady, with an intellectual face.

She did not look like a charlatan, and exhibited a diploma from a medical college, which proved that she had some knowledge of the healing art.

He was received in her office, which contained only a few chairs, a table and some books on a shelf, having no skulls, stuffed snakes and the ordinary stock in trade of a fortune-teller.

"What can I do for you, sir?" she demanded.

"I have a sister," replied Bambino, "whose mind is affected through a disappointment in love and a subsequent shipwreck at sea. She is young. I do not wish to put her in an asylum. I have great faith in electricity and I will place her in your care, paying three months' board in advance, if you will receive her."

"I shall be glad to take her as a patient," answered Mme. Levine.

"You will try to cure her?"

"Undoubtedly."

"I must warn you that she imagines she is a departed spirit."

Mme. Levine smiled.

"That is nothing," she answered. "I have had worse cases than that. When shall I expect your sister, sir?"

Bambino promised to bring her round that evening, and took his departure.

Later in the day he made his reappearance with Adèle, who evinced no attachment for him and seemed only to care for being alone.

For hours she would talk to herself and occasionally press her hands to her head, as if it hurt her.

Mme. Vesta Levine had a room at the top of her house prepared for her and detailed a colored woman to wait upon her.

"Beware," said Bambino as he left the house, "how you treat my sister. I shall demand a strict account of you."

The madame smiled scornfully, for she glanced from the swarthy Italian to the fair-haired daughter of France, and she knew in one instant that they were not related.

"Sir," she replied, "your 'sister' is perfectly safe in my hands, and when you require her I shall be perfectly ready to deliver her."

Bowing politely the Italian took his leave, feeling that Adèle was in good hands, and that he could find her whenever he wanted her.

While returning to the hotel at which he was staying, he beheld two gentlemen walking together on Broadway.

No sooner had he seen them than he drew his breath quickly and drawing his hat over his brows, darted into a doorway to allow them to pass, without perceiving him.

It was Jack Harkaway and his friend Harvey.

"We must hurry," exclaimed Jack, "or we shall be late for Miss Van Hoosen's reception, and you do not know how my heart longs to see that girl once more."

Harvey laughed lightly.

"It seems to me," he replied, "that you are very much smitten in that quarter."

"I don't mind acknowledging it," said Jack. "She is just about the sweetest, prettiest, most charming young lady that I ever met in all my travels."

"So she is," answered Harvey. "She is worthy of you and you of her."

"If it had not been for the superlative attraction that she has for me I should not be here now."

"Well! You can congratulate yourself on one thing."

"What is that?"

"You have cut Lord Maltravers out of the game entirely. He has no show now. Ha! Ha!" laughed Harvey.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Jack. "You are right there, but the fellow is dangerous."

"Yes, indeed."

"Fancy his sending a fellow to assassinate me. It was lucky I got the best of him."

"Between you and the fishes of the Atlantic there cannot be much left of the villain," remarked Harvey.

This conversation was distinctly audible to Bambino, as the two young men had paused to light their cigars.

"We shall see!" muttered the crafty Italian. "Let those laugh who win."

At this moment an elderly gentleman, passing by in the dim light of the evening, drew out his pocket-handkerchief; and, in doing so, a large wallet fell on the sidewalk.

He did not notice his loss.

Bambino, however, saw it, and a sudden idea came into his head, upon which he did not hesitate to act.

Starting rapidly forward, he picked up the wallet, and pushing against Jack, dropped it into the pocket of his overcoat.

"Here, you, sir!" exclaimed Jack. "Where are you coming to?"

"Beg pardon," answered Bambino, in a gruff voice.

"Don't do it again, that's all," rejoined Jack. "There is lots of room for both of us."

Bambino retired as quickly as he came, and walked after the elderly gentleman who had lost the wallet.

"Sir," he exclaimed, touching him on the shoulder.

This man was a merchant connected with the Produce Exchange, very wealthy, but very mean.

"I've nothing for you," replied Mr. Cobb, for that was his name.

"I want to speak to you."

"Not to-night, my good fellow. I can't give anything to tramps and beggars."

"Listen a moment," persisted Bambino. "Have you lost anything?"

Instantly Mr. Cobb's hands dived into his pockets, and a look of alarm stole over his face.

"Why, bless me, yes, my wallet!" he said. "Have you seen it?"

"Did it contain anything valuable?"

"I should say it did. Valuable! What's the man talking about? Where is it? Tell me at once, or I'll call the police and have you arrested."

Bambino pointed to Harkaway, who was only a few yards ahead.

"Do you see that person?" he asked.

"Which one—there are two together?"

"The stout one. It is he whom I saw take your wallet from your pocket."

"Then he is a thief?"

"Precisely," replied Bambino. "Good-evening. I hope you will recover your property."

Lifting his hat politely, he turned down a side street, leaving Mr. Cobb to go after his money.

Harkaway was perfectly unconscious of the trick that had been played upon him.

As for Harvey, he was a little uneasy.

"Jack," he said, "did you notice the face of that fellow who pushed up against you?"

"Not distinctly; why?" replied Jack.

"I did, and the features reminded me of that Italian scoundrel of whom we were talking."

"Bambino?"

"Yes. The hired assassin of your sworn enemy, Lord Maltravers."

"Absurd!" exclaimed Jack. "The fellow perished at sea. We know that very well."

"Never mind; the face haunts me."

"You shouldn't indulge such silly fancies, Dick. I tell you the rascal is as dead as a doornail," replied Jack.

Just then, Mr. Cobb rushed up and seized Harkaway rudely by the arm.

"Hello!" exclaimed Jack. "What's the matter with you? Has every one got a mania for jostling me to-night?"

"My wallet, my wallet!" cried Mr. Cobb.

Jack shook off his grasp and drawing himself up proudly looked him sternly in the face.

"My good sir," he said, "be kind enough to explain yourself."

"You have stolen my wallet. I saw you do it."

This was a stretch of imagination on the part of the produce merchant, but he relied on what Bambino had told him.

"Do I look like a—a thief?" inquired Jack, not knowing whether to get angry or not, and feeling inclined to regard Mr. Cobb as a harmless lunatic.

"No," admitted the merchant, "but gentlemanly thieves are the most dangerous."

Jack turned inquiringly to Harvey.

"Dick," he exclaimed, "ought I not to knock this man down?"

"Under the circumstances, you would be justified," replied Harvey. "But, my dear boy, he is old and we should respect old age."

"True. Pass on, sir, and do not presume to annoy me any more with your ridiculous charges," said Jack.

"My money. I want my money, robber. You shall not escape me thus," persisted Mr. Cobb.

Again he laid his hand on Jack, who this time flung him violently against the window of a store.

A small crowd of idlers began to collect, and the attention of one of the Broadway squad was arrested.

"What's all this?" asked the officer, coming up.

"Arrest this man," cried Mr. Cobb.

"What for?"

"Robbery. I charge him with having stolen my wallet, containing a large sum."

"Who are you?"

"Richard Cobb, of the firm of Cobb and Co. Every one knows me in South street."

The officer seized Jack by the elbow.

"I arrest you," he said. "Come along."

"Allow me to explain," exclaimed Jack.

"You can do that at the station."

Jack shrugged his shoulders.

"This is a queer country," he replied; "yet I make it a rule never to resist constituted authority."

"You wouldn't find it much use if you did," answered the officer, swinging his locust club.

Harvey was much annoyed.

"Let me assure you, policeman," he said, "that you have made a mistake."

"Can't help it," was the stolid reply.

"This is my friend, Mr. Harkaway, of England. We are stopping at the Fifth avenue Hotel."

"I guess the pair of you will stop somewhere else to-night," answered the policeman, smiling at his own joke.

It was useless to argue the point, and the officer conducted his prisoners to the station, where Mr. Cobb made his charge.

Jack indignantly denied the accusation, and demanded to be searched.

Imagine his dismay, when the searchers produced the missing wallet from the pocket of his overcoat.

"That's mine!" cried Mr. Cobb, exultantly. "What did I tell you?"

"Lock 'em both up," said the captain.

"I will send for the British Consul," exclaimed Jack. "This is some infamous plot."

"Bambino," muttered Harvey.

"Right, Dick; your eyes were better than mine. I ought to have known that the fellow was never born to be drowned," replied Jack.

"Put them in different cells," continued the captain.

They were conducted below and locked up, feeling very indignant, but unable to help themselves.

The charge looked very grave against them, and Harvey was as much implicated as Jack, because he was regarded as an accomplice.

Mr. Cobb promised to appear in the morning, and went home.

As he left the station he did not perceive a man who was hiding in the shadow of a house.

This was Bambino, who had watched the arrest, and finding that the game was

securely bagged, turned away with a chuckle.

"Five years in State's prison for highway robbery," he muttered, "will please his lordship."

Repairing to a telegraph office, he sent the following dispatch by cable to Maltravers:

"Come over as soon as you can. The coast is clear. The lady can be yours, as Jack will not be likely to cross your path for some time to come.

"BAMBINO."



CHAPTER VIII.

A LOVERS' QUARREL.

Professor Mole was very much surprised at the failure of Jack and Harvey to return to the hotel, and he was still more astonished, when at midnight he received a note informing him of their arrest on a false charge of robbery.

He at once proceeded to the station and had an interview with them, and afterward procured bail in the person of the proprietor of the hotel.

The next thing was to see Mr. Cobb, who, now that his money was recovered, was in a happier frame of mind, and being satisfied of Harkaway's respectability, consented to withdraw the charge.

How the money got into Jack's pocket it was not easy to explain, and the affair remained a mystery.

It was unfortunately necessary for Harkaway to appear in court, but on Mr. Cobb's application he was discharged.

The case, however, was reported in the papers; and Jack, to his mortification, read a paragraph entitled:

"SINGULAR CHARGE AGAINST AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.

"Mr. Jack Harkaway and Mr. Richard Harvey, two English gentlemen of means and respectability, residing at the Brevoort House, were charged at the Jefferson Market police court with stealing a wallet containing three thousand dollars in cash and securities, from the person of Mr. Cobb, a well-known member of the Produce Exchange. The money was found on Mr. Harkaway, but Mr. Cobb, feeling assured that there was a mistake somewhere, refused to prosecute and withdrew the charge, whereupon the prisoners were discharged."

This was intensely annoying to Jack, because it stabbed his reputation and cast a slur upon his honor.

There was no possibility of explaining the matter, and he felt that his character was blackened, though his friends did not attach the importance to the occurrence that he did.

The villain, Bambino, had not succeeded in his purpose, which was to put Jack out of the way in a prison, so as to make the coast clear for his noble employer.

Yet he had inflicted a wound on a most sensitive mind, and he chuckled inwardly at the chagrin which he knew Harkaway must suffer.

With cat-like stealth he watched and waited for an opportunity to deal him another blow.

The effect of the publication above referred to was soon apparent.

Jack determined to show himself everywhere, for he thought that to hide himself would be to tacitly admit that he was guilty and felt ashamed.

Consequently he drove out nearly every day.

Mr. Mole, Captain Cannon and Mr. Twinkle were occupied in searching New York and its vicinity for buffalo; but, much to their disappointment, they could not find any.

The professor prepared an elaborate report for the club which had sent out the expedition, in which he stated: "After a prolonged investigation, I am inclined to think that the buffalo, like the mastodon and the dodo, is an extinct animal, as I can discover no trace of a living buffalo so far, though I am in hopes that when we visit Long Island, which I am told is wild and savage, we may meet with some specimen of this almost mythical beast."

There was going to be a steeple-chase at Jerome Park, and Jack sent Miss Van Hoosen an invitation to ride to the grounds.

This led to the first severe mortification he received, after the report in the papers, for Lena refused in the following brief note:

"MISS VAN HOOSEN presents her compliments to Mr. Harkaway, and begs to thank him for his invitation, which she is reluctantly compelled to decline."

On receiving this, Jack showed it to Harvey.

"Look at that, Dick," he exclaimed, "and tell me what is the meaning of it."

Harvey read it, and replied, "It is laconic enough, and it means, simply, that the lady will not go."

"What would you do, under the circumstances?"

"Call upon her and have an explanation."

"I shouldn't be surprised, if she has seen that paragraph about Mr. Cobb's money."

"More than likely."

Jack bit his lips with vexation and his face reddened.

Without losing any time he visited Lena, and was shown into the reception-room.

Presently Lena entered, looking more than usually sweet and charming.

There was some slight embarrassment in her manner, as she held out her hand and requested him to be seated.

"I am so sorry you cannot come with us," he said.

"So am I," she replied. "But I am glad to have an opportunity of explaining. There is no gentleman of my acquaintance whom I esteem more than I do you."

Jack bowed politely, and felt that he could have laid down his life for her, for saying those words.

"My brother," she continued, "has read something about you in a journal, and he says I ought not to receive your visits. I feel that there must be some mistake. If you could only see my brother and explain—"

A tall gentleman, a few years older than Jack, entered the room at this moment.

"No explanation is necessary," he exclaimed.

Jack flushed indignantly.

"I presume," he said, "I have the honor of addressing Mr. Alfred Van Hoosen?"

"That is my name," replied the new-comer, stiffly.

"And the brother of this lady?"

"Precisely, sir."

"In that case, your relationship prevents me from taking the notice of your words which I otherwise should."

"Oh, sir," said Alfred Van Hoosen, as he smiled sarcastically, "pray do not let that stand in your way."

"I was simply desirous of assuring your sister that there was absolutely no foundation for the report to which she alluded."

"The case speaks for itself."

"Am I to understand that you do not consider me a proper person to visit at your house?"

"That is what I intended to convey to you, and I have to thank you for saving me the trouble of expressing myself."

Jack turned to Lena, regarding her almost with an imploring glance.

"Do you concur in your brother's opinion?" he asked.

She would not trust herself to speak, but inclined her head.

Burning with mortification, Jack quitted the house with despair in his heart, for it seemed as if Lena was lost to him forever.

In order to regain her good-will it would be necessary to satisfy her brother, and as he would listen to no explanation, this course seemed impossible.

For some time he was inconsolable, but he determined to go to the race all the same, hoping that he might at least see Lena there.

It was a lovely day, and all the wealth and fashion of New York was hastening toward the Park.

On Eighth avenue they passed an open carriage, in which were seated Miss Van Hoosen and her mother.

In spite of his dismissal of the day before, Jack ventured to raise his hat, but Lena did not bow, though he fancied her eyes appeared to seek his.

"Fine girl that," remarked a gentleman who sat by Jack. "You appear to know her."

"Yes," replied Jack, "I met them in Paris—that is—her mother and herself."

"Fine family. Best in New York. Regular Knickerbocker stock. Are you acquainted with her brother?"

"I have met him," said Jack a little confused.

"He rides to-day."

"Indeed! I was not aware of that."

"Yes, he mounts a horse called Warrior. The knowing ones are betting two to one on him, and I heard him say at the Union Club last night, that if he won he would give the cup to his sister."

Jack was not of an uncharitable disposition, but some how or another he hoped that Alfred Van Hoosen would not win.

At length the course was reached, and Jack took a walk to the starting-place to have a look at the horses.

He was an excellent cross-country rider himself, and he loved a horse dearly.

All at once he saw a gentleman drive up to one of the stables, and alight hurriedly from his buggy. In doing which he slipped from the step and fell heavily to the ground.

A cry of pain escaped him.

"Confound it," he exclaimed. "I've sprained my ankle."

It was Alfred Van Hoosen.

Leaning on the arm of his trainer, who hurried up to offer his support, he entered the stable.

Jack lingered around the spot to see what the result of the accident would be, for it appeared as if Mr. Van Hoosen would be unable to ride his horse that day.

While he was waiting, Harvey met him and said excitedly:

"I have been looking for you."

"Anything happened?" asked Jack.

"Oh! no, but I want you to be upon your guard."

"What for?"

"Near the grand stand, I saw that Italian ruffian Bambino, whom Lord Maltravers hired to kill you."

Jack smiled incredulously.

"My dear fellow," he replied, "it is evident to me that you have got Bambino on the brain."

"I can trust my eyes, I suppose," answered Harvey, a little petulantly.

"Not in this case. You have seen a man who resembles Bambino, that is all."

"And I distinctly assert it is the assassin himself."

"Bosh!"

"All right. A willful man must have his way," said Harvey, shrugging his shoulders.

"I should like to argue the point with you, but you are such a confirmed skeptic, I fear I should be wasting my time."

"Oh, no, I am open to conviction," Harkaway rejoined.

"Well, now, is it not possible that when the assassin jumped overboard he might have gained the abandoned vessel?"

"Possible, but not probable."

"Granting the fact of his having gained it, could he not have been taken off and brought to New York?"

"Ah!" said Jack, drawing a deep breath.

"What do you think now?"

"I begin to believe in your Bambino."

"Shake hands on that. I think I begin to see how the money of Mr. Cobb came into your pocket; it was an attempt to blast your reputation. Having failed to kill you, he stabs your character and wounds you in your tenderest and most susceptible part. Here is another point—Lord Maltravers, this scoundrel's master, is your rival for the affections of Miss Van Hoosen."

"Undoubtedly!"

"Well, you call and are refused the house, simply on account of this alleged robbery. What is more calculated to please Maltravers!"

"True. I am willing to admit, Dick, that you are a genius, and I will be on my guard, as you suggest," said Jack.

The course was crowded with people and carriages. It was the most brilliant gathering of the year, and still the people came.

A bell rung to give notice that the start for the steeple-chase was about to be made.

There were a dozen entries; some of the horses were ridden by their owners, some by professional jockeys.

The horses and their riders began to show themselves on the track, and some took preliminary canters, exciting the admiration and criticism of the spectators.

Presently, the trainer of Warrior came out of the stable, looking very much disconcerted.

He approached two men who were standing near Harkaway, and the conversation which ensued was distinctly audible.

"Is the boss much hurt?" asked one.

"Yes, his foot has swelled so that I had to cut his boot off. He's lying on a bale of hay, and in great pain."

"Then he won't ride Warrior to-day?"

"He can't."

"What are you going to do about it?" asked the man.

"He wants you to take the mount and will pay you well. He knows you are a good rider."

"I'm not going to risk breaking my neck, by riding a beast with such a temper as Warrior," replied the man.

"You're a fool."

"Maybe so, in your estimation, but I'm not tired of my life yet. Why, I would not cross that brute's back in a flat race, let alone a steeple-chase. Mr. Van Hoosen is the only one who can manage him, and perhaps he'd come to grief at the first steep fence."

"Then we shall have to withdraw him," said the trainer sadly.

"That's all you can do."

"It's a pity, for I thought he'd win *sure*, and I have bet more money on him than I care to lose."

Impelled by an irresistible motive, and filled with a dare-devil spirit, which he could not keep down at times, Harkaway touched the trainer on the shoulder.

"Do you want some one to ride your horse?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir."

"I'll do it."

The trainer eyed him curiously, and the result of his inspection appeared to be satisfactory.

"How much do you want for it?" he inquired.

"Nothing at all. I am a gentleman, and will do it just for the fun of the thing."

"Beg pardon, sir," replied the trainer touching his hat respectfully.

"Get the colors, bring them into the stable, and I'll soon be in the saddle."

"Won't you come inside and see Mr. Van Hoosen, sir?"

"It is not necessary. I—I don't care to disturb him. Besides, there is no time to be lost. There goes the bell to clear the course, again, and most of the horses are in the paddock."

"Who shall I tell master is riding the horse, sir?"

"Say Mr. Smith," replied Jack, who wished to keep his identity concealed from Mr. Van Hoosen.

The trainer led the way to the stables; the jockey's dress was brought and put on; Warrior was led out. He was a powerful horse, well-bred and in every respect a magnificent animal. He threw his ears back and kicked out viciously as if to show his temper.

"What are you going to do, Jack?" asked Harvey.

"Ride the beauty," was the reply.

"He's no lamb, if I'm any judge. Look at his ugly eye."

Jack patted Warrior's neck, saying, "Soho! my lad. Steady!" When he sprung into the saddle, grasped the reins firmly and received the whip from the trainer.

"Be careful how you use the spur, sir," exclaimed the latter.

Jack nodded carelessly.

"Go and put your money on, Dick," he said. "I mean to win this race or break the horse's heart and my own neck, just to show a certain young lady and her brother what I can do."

Touching Warrior lightly with his whip, he cantered toward the inclosure, where the other horses had already assembled.

The Van Hoosen colors were, black cap and white shirt with large black bands. If not pretty, it was at least very conspicuous and calculated to attract attention.



CHAPTER IX.

THE RACE.

Going on the course, Jack gave Warrior a canter to see what he was made of, and found him a fast goer, well up to his weight, but inclined to be restive and have his own way.

In front of the grand stand, which was thronged with elegantly-dressed ladies and gentlemen, Jack stopped short in the canter and took a look at the sea of faces.

In the front row was Miss Van Hoosen and her mother. They had evidently heard nothing about Alfred's accident, for when they recognized the horse and the colors, they appeared much astonished.

Jack could not resist the temptation of bowing to Lena, who, quite perplexed, acknowledged his salutation by a slight inclination of the head.

Then he cantered gracefully back to the starting-place, taking his position among the other riders, to be ready for the start.

This was effected without much trouble, no time being allowed Harkaway for reflection.

He did not consider that he had undertaken a dangerous task in consenting to ride an animal he knew nothing of, but he had confidence in his own powers, and had never been much in the habit of calculating on consequences.

"They're off! they're off!" shouted the crowd, as the beautiful creatures dashed past, like so many arrows from a bow.

Jack was perfectly satisfied that Warrior had wind and bottom enough to stay, and he determined to ride a waiting race, feeling sure that several horses would tail off and that some would fail at the jumps.

The first jump was made of hurdles, and this Warrior took well, rising like a bird and going over without any more trouble than eating a measure of oats.

Although Jack held him well in hand his stride told in the first mile, and he had cut down the crowd considerably, there being only four horses in front of him.

The most dangerous-looking one of these was a long-barreled, long-legged black

horse, with powerful haunches and a way of going that meant mischief.

At the second jump, which was made of branches of trees to represent a hedge, Warrior began to show his temper, for he flatly refused to take it.

Jack put him at it again, and gave him the spur, digging the rowels deep into his flanks, while he lashed him with the whip.

With a snort of mingled rage and pain, the horse rushed at the jump and cleared it; but he was docile no longer, for he dashed away in a manner which showed that he meant to have his own way.

"Go it, my beauty!" muttered Jack, "we'll soon see who is master."

Warrior was not at all backward in accepting this challenge, and made the running in fine style, taking leap after leap like a deer.

It required a strong hand and a quick eye to manage him. Jack's arms felt as if they would be pulled out of their sockets, but he kept his seat in the saddle as if he had grown there.

The course was a circular one. Two-thirds of the way round was an artificially-constructed water-jump, a hole having been dug, about twenty-five feet wide by forty feet long and ten deep. Owing to recent rain this formidable leap was full of water.

A large crowd had collected here, anticipating some sport, for it was correctly surmised that many horses would either refuse it or throw their riders.

Jack had not been over the course, which was a great disadvantage to him, yet he saw the gleam of the water and prepared for it. The black horse was leading, and behind it was a strong Kentucky bay.

Both cleared the water-jump successfully.

Jack now passed the fourth horse, which had weakened visibly. The third horse fell at the water-jump, breaking his rider's collar-bone and injuring itself so that it had to be shot.

This accident made Jack third in the race.

After the water-leap were three sets of hurdles; and then, for about a mile and a half, it was a straight run for home, over as nice a bit of turf as a horse ever galloped on.

Warrior approached his task and Jack plied him with whip and spur, fearful he

might balk at the sight of the water, as many horses will, and determining to get him over if possible.

Loud cheers and cries of encouragement greeted him.

The edge of the water was nearly reached; he prepared to lift the horse; and with the breeze almost blowing the words down his throat, he stimulated the animal with his voice:

"Now, then, my darling," he said, "jump for your life and mine."

Suddenly a man in the crowd opened an umbrella and held it up near Warrior's eyes.

The effect was instantaneous, for the horse swerved, refused the jump, and rearing up, stood for a moment on his hind legs, pawing the air.

Jack was afraid he would fall on and crush him, but he was equal to the occasion, for he threw himself off, just as Warrior fell back.

Before he did this, he caught sight of the man with the umbrella.

"Bambino," he muttered.

The wretch had opened the umbrella, evidently on purpose to frighten the horse and make Jack endanger his life.

Harvey was right, after all.

The fall which Jack received was an ugly one; for a moment he lay stunned and bleeding from a cut on the forehead.

He had lost his cap, and his shirt was torn and muddy.

Kind and sympathizing bystanders helped him to his feet; willing hands caught his horse.

Harkaway looked about him in a dazed manner, but his indomitable pluck carried him through the trying ordeal.

His head was swimming and he was in pain, but he never faltered for a moment.

Bambino had disappeared.

Perhaps he dreaded the vengeance of the populace, for his cowardly trick could not fail to be noticed by some one.

"Give it up, boss," asked a man who had helped Jack to rise.

"No; I'll ride or die," was the answer.

He walked to the horse, mounted, and backing his steed, who was quivering in every limb, put him again at the jump.

The bystanders were delighted with his courage.

His phrase "ride or die" seemed to tickle the crowd immensely.

"Hurrah!" they cried. "Ride or die! Bravo!"

"Who is that?" asked some one. "He wears the Van Hoosen colors."

"It's Jack Harkaway," replied a stableman who had seen Jack's drag.

"He's got grit in him."

"You just bet you he has."

"Hurrah!" shouted the crowd, again. "Ride or die! Sail in! Ride or die!"

This time, Warrior, as if ashamed of himself for his former failure, made amends by taking the leap, with the velocity of a meteor.

He landed safely on the other side amid the applause of the spectators, and Jack gave him his head.

Away they went, the horse seeming to like nothing better.

The black horse was not so far ahead, as Jack had expected, for he had not been husbanded by his rider, and his strength was beginning to fail him.

The first set of hurdles was cleared; at the second, Warrior stumbled; but a vigorous hand on the reins and a sharp reminder with the whip, showed him his duty, and he went over.

At the third and last set, the second horse fell heavily, throwing his rider.

Harkaway was now second in the race, the leader being on the home stretch, and going in a somewhat labored manner.

Going over the last fence, Jack put all his horsemanship into requisition.

The grand stand was in view, and the hoarse roar of thousands of voices became audible.

"Ride or die!" thought Jack, "and by Jove I'll do it."

Whip and spur were not spared, and Warrior, now mastered and tamed, overhauled the black horse about half a mile from home.

Now ensued the most interesting and exciting part of the race.

The Kentucky thoroughbred, ridden by its owner, struggled gamely; and he and Warrior went along neck and neck.

Louder and louder grew the roar of the assembled multitude.

Jack knew he was drawing near the goal, but a mist came over his eyes.

How near it was he could not tell.

The black horse at last seemed to fall back, Warrior went on ahead. There was a shout of acclamation.

"Black cap wins! Van Hoosen! Van Hoosen!"

Jack reined in his horse; the trainer seized the bridle, and he dismounted at the stable-door; though how he got there, he could not tell.

"All right now, sir. Step inside," said the trainer.

The mist was deepening, and the dizziness in Jack's head was increasing.

He could only see objects indistinctly.

What was the matter with him? Could he have hurt himself more than he suspected?

Before him was a gentleman who sat on a bale of hay, and he seemed to have a bandage on his foot.

"Mr. Smith," began the gentleman. "Why! It's Jack Harkaway!—Mr. Harkaway, I mean, pardon the familiarity. How the deuce did you come to ride my horse, sir?"

"You're Alfred Van Hoosen?" said Jack, in a faint voice.

"Certainly, I am."

"Did I win the race?"

"Did you win it? Why, man alive! It was the finest race on record, they tell me. Every one is perfectly wild about it, and—"

"Excuse me," interrupted Jack. "I know I ought not to have ridden your horse, but I wanted your sister to have the cup, and if you'll accept my apology—"

It was now Van Hoosen's turn to interrupt Jack.

"Apology! my dear fellow," he said. "I don't know what you mean."

"You didn't treat me well the other day, and I know it was wrong to ride your horse."

"You have done me the greatest service one man could do another," replied Van Hoosen. "When I sprained my ankle, I hurt it badly, and I am told I shall not get out of the house for a month at least. At present I am suffering terrible torture. If you had not ridden my horse, I should have been a ruined man, for I don't mind telling you I had backed my mount heavily, and I stood to lose more than I can afford. It would have broken my heart to go to my mother and ask her to pay my debts of honor. You have saved me."

Jack's face lighted up with a faint smile.

It was the brother of the girl he loved who was talking to him.

"I'm awfully glad," he said. "It pleases me to help a man out of a bad place. If your man will give me my coat, I'll go home now, and send you the colors in the morning. I've got friends here—drove my drag down, you know, and I fear I have neglected them."

"Sit down a moment," replied Van Hoosen. "You're a fine fellow, Harkaway, and I'm sorry for what I said yesterday."

"Don't mention it, my dear fellow. I've forgotten it."

"I've sent for some wine. Won't you wait?"

"Well, yes. Just a moment—the fact is—I'm not well—I've got a sudden vertigo—I—I can't see."

He extended his arms and groped his way, toward the door; but ere he reached it he fell on the floor, and the blood flowed again from the wound on his forehead.

For a time his senses left him.



CHAPTER X.

A RECONCILIATION.

When Jack Harkaway came to himself he was in a strange room, and he did not know what to make of it.

The apartment was elegantly furnished; pictures of value hung upon the walls, and it was evident that he was in the house of people of taste and wealth.

"Hello! where am I?" he asked.

The heavy damask curtains were drawn around the windows, so that only a faint light penetrated to the bedside.

Yet in the imperfect light Jack fancied he saw a shadowy female form, exquisitely symmetrical, get up from a lounge and leave the room.

A bell-rope hung by the side of the bed, which attracted Jack's attention, and he rung it violently.

Raising himself up, he sunk down again as if unable to sustain his weight.

"I'm frightfully weak," he murmured. "Wonder if I've been sick?"

Presently a footstep sounded on the stairs and a man opening the door, entered the apartment.

Jack recognized Alfred Van Hoosen.

"Well, my boy," he exclaimed. "So you have come to, at last?"

"Have I been very bad?" asked Jack.

"Only brain fever, that's all."

"How was that?"

"When you threw yourself off Warrior—by the way, I sold him for fifty thousand dollars, yesterday. Thanks to you."

"To me?"

"Yes, indeed—you made his reputation. But as I was going to say—you struck your head against a stone, just before you made that famous 'ride or die' speech."

"Is it famous?"

"Well, I should think so. It's been in all the papers, and you'll be called 'Ride or die Jack,' as long as you live in this country."

"You don't say so?" replied Jack, while a smile of satisfaction stole over his countenance.

He was not vain, but he liked to be praised when he deserved it, and he knew he had ridden Warrior for all he was worth.

"Where am I?" he added.

"In my house. I took the liberty of bringing you here," replied Alfred Van Hoosen.

"Don't apologize."

"Oh! but I must," said Alfred, laughing. "You apologized for riding my horse to victory, don't you remember?"

"Have I been ill long?"

"About ten days—but don't excite yourself. The doctor says you'll be out in a week, if you keep quiet."

"Thanks. I'll be quiet. Who has been nursing me?"

"I am not at liberty to tell you."

"Was it your sister? I thought I saw—"

"Ask her yourself," interrupted Alfred Van Hoosen. "I must leave you now, as it is strictly against orders to talk to you. The nurse will bring up your beef tea in a few minutes; be good to yourself."

"One moment. Did you get the cup?"

"The steeple-chase cup? Yes, indeed. It adorns the family mahogany down-stairs, and mother is really proud of it. Good-by."

Alfred quitted the room, and Jack sunk back on the pillow in a doze, filled with pleasant reflections.

Soon the nurse, who had been engaged from a neighboring hospital, came upstairs and sat down to watch the patient.

She was not in the best temper, for she had been disturbed while at supper and was lamenting the good things she had left below stairs.

"It's very odd," she murmured, "that a sick man can't be left alone for an hour. This one wouldn't die or jump out of the window. That buttered toast and those sardines I quitted were real elegant; my mouth waters at the thought of them."

Scarcely had the words escaped her lips than there was a knock at the door.

"Come!" she said, testily.

The door opened and a dark-haired man of swarthy complexion appeared.

"Please!" he exclaimed. "I've brought the medicine, from the drug-store, and they told me down-stairs to come up with it."

"You ain't the young fellow that came before," the nurse said, eying him critically.

"No, he's a friend of mine, and he asked me to come."

"All right. What's the directions?"

"You're to give the gentleman the white mixture right away, and at midnight, the red."

"Are those the doctor's orders?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I wish you'd wait here, while I go and finish my supper; the folks are at dinner and no one will know."

The man's dark eyes flashed.

"Cospetto!" he muttered. "I'd like nothing better."

"What's that you said?" asked the nurse.

"Nothing, ma'am. I'll be glad to stay."

"What countryman are you?"

"Italian."

"Thought you were a foreigner. Well! you stay here and I'll give you ten cents when I come back. If he wakes up, call me, by ringing the bell."

"Yes, ma'am."

The nurse at once quitted the room, and the Italian advanced to the bed, looking intently at Harkaway.

"It is he," he said in a low tone. "I have tracked him to his lair. Now for the medicine, but how to give it him? He will know me. Perhaps I had best wait for the nurse."

He handled the bottle, which was an ordinary two-ounce vial, and regarded it affectionately.

"Let him once swallow *this*," he added, "and he will never wake up more."

Harkaway moved restlessly in his sleep.

Had he an intimation that Bambino was near him, preparing to carry out another iniquitous scheme generated by his fertile brain?

In sober truth, to give the fellow his due, he served his master well.

Lord Maltravers had no cause to be dissatisfied with him.

The daylight had faded away and there was but a dim twilight existing, which made it difficult to discern objects.

Everything looked shadowy and ghostly.

Bambino had seen Harkaway's insensible condition when he was carried off the course and he had tracked him to the Van Hoosens' house.

The white mixture in the vial was a subtle poison, and he had gained an entrance to the house by pretending that he was a clerk from the drug store.

Touching Jack on the arm, he saw him awake.

"What is it?" he asked, dreamily.

"Your medicine," replied Bambino.

"Give it me, and let me sleep. I am drowsy."

"It is to make you sleep," said the Italian, with a grim smile.

He took up a glass and poured out the colorless fluid, which in reality was a death draught. Harkaway sat up and extended his hand for it, and having received it, raised the glass to his lips.

At this critical moment the door opened and the doctor who was attending him made his appearance.

"What's this?" he said. "No light? and what have you got in your hand? I am the doctor, don't you know me?"

"Medicine!" answered Jack, replying to the first question.

"Eh? I don't understand," said the doctor, with a puzzled air.

"Some stuff you sent me, I suppose."

Bambino bent over the bed.

"Drink," he whispered.

Jack was about to do so, but the doctor snatched the glass out of his hands.

At the same time, he struck a match and lighted the gas.

"Now, let us see," he exclaimed.

Weak and sleepy as he was, this action on the part of the doctor roused Jack, whose eyes settled on the Italian.

"Bambino!" he cried, shuddering as if his gaze had rested on a black snake.

The doctor had removed the cork of the bottle and tasted its contents on the tip of his tongue.

"Strychnine!" he ejaculated.

Bambino, finding he was detected and his scheme frustrated, gnashed his teeth with baffled rage.

It was high time for him to endeavor to escape, and he made his way toward the door.

"No you don't, my friend," exclaimed the doctor, barring his exit.

Bambino, as we know, was a man of unlimited resources.

He drew from his vest a long, polished dagger which scattered a thousand flashes as he brandished it in the gas-light.

"*Santa Maria!*" he cried. "Steel talks, signor."

The doctor was in no way disconcerted, for he quickly produced a pistol.

"Yes, my good fellow," he rejoined, "and here is an iron dog that can bark."

Bambino made a rush upon the doctor, who fired, but his bullet missed its mark and he received the point of the dagger in his arm.

The coat was cut open, the skin slightly ripped and blood flowed, though no serious injury was done.

This was a fortunate miss for the Italian, who at once made his escape down the stairs, and into the street, where in the darkness he easily eluded pursuit.

"Are you hurt, doctor?" asked Jack.

"Only got a scratch, a mere flesh wound. Do you know the fellow?" was the reply.

"Unfortunately I do; he is a hired assassin."

"This in the bottle is a deadly poison, you have escaped by a miracle."

The pistol-shot had aroused the whole house, and every one came rushing into the room.

In a hurried manner the doctor explained what had happened, and having cleared the room, gave Jack a composing draught.

Alfred Van Hoosen was much chagrined that such a dastardly crime should have been attempted in his house, and notified the police.

No arrest was made, however, for every effort to find the Italian was unsuccessful.

Time passed on, and in ten days, Jack was quite well, though still a little weak.

His friends came to see him every day, and he determined to return to his hotel.

Having announced his intention to Alfred, he thanked him very warmly for his kindness. All traces of animosity had faded away, and he was in reality a friend of the family.

Lena smiled upon him, and was sincerely rejoiced at his recovery, which at first, with a woman's nervous anxiety, she had despaired of.

As he was going away, Alfred drew him on one side.

"You won't think me rude," he said. "But I should like to ask you a few questions."

"By all means," replied Jack.

"In the first place, who is this Italian and why does he persecute you?"

"He attempted my life on board ship; I have reason to think he put the wallet belonging to Mr. Cobb in my pocket; he frightened the horse and he endeavored to poison me."

"But why? It is incomprehensible to me."

Jack hesitated for a moment, and colored slightly.

"I will tell you, since you urge me," he replied. "Lord Maltravers and myself are rivals for your sister's hand."

"Ah! I suspected as much."

"Bambino, the Italian, is the paid spy and assassin of Maltravers."

Alfred Van Hoosen appeared confused, and a look of vexation crossed his face.

"I have heard of Lord Maltravers from my mother," he said; "of course I was prejudiced against you, at first, on account of that affair of Mr. Cobb's; now that is all removed."

"Thank you," replied Jack. "I am glad to hear you say so, because I want to stand well with you."

"We Americans are quite as punctilious and particular as you English," said Van Hoosen; "and I can tell you that the best families think as much of themselves as you aristocrats who are descended from the Normans."

"Why should you not?"

"Well, we are friends. You have proved yourself a man, Harkaway, and I shall always esteem you."

"May I beg one favor?" exclaimed Jack.

"Anything in my power, to grant, you can command," was the warm reply.

"It is useless to disguise the fact that I love your sister, and I have every reason to believe that she is not indifferent to me. Will you use your influence with her, on my behalf?"

The expression of vexation which Jack had previously remarked deepened on Alfred's face.

"I will do so," he replied; "but I fear it will not avail you."

"Will you explain the reason?"

"Yes, it is as well to be candid with you: my mother, whom both Lena and myself respect beyond every one and everything else in the world, has made up her mind that my sister shall contract a distinguished alliance."

"What do you mean by that? I am a gentleman and I have a moderate income."

"Don't think for a moment," Alfred hastened to say, "that I intended to cast any reflection upon you. My mother tried in Paris to make Lena marry a French count, and now she has set her heart on an English lord."

Jack felt a quivering at the heart.

"Noblemen are scarce in this democratic country," he said.

"Admitted; but my mother has already selected her future son-in-law."

"Will you kindly tell me who this fortunate scion of the aristocracy is?" inquired Jack, in a cold, hard voice.

"It is your enemy."

"Lord Maltravers?"

"The same," replied Alfred Van Hoosen.

Jack flushed with indignation.

"But, my dear sir, from what I have already told you," he exclaimed, "the man is a scoundrel."

"True; and we must band together to save Lena. I am with you all the time. Yet the danger is imminent. We have had a dispatch."

"From his lordship?"

"Yes, and he is expected here to-day."

Jack looked blankly at Van Hoosen.

"Maltravers to be here to-day?" he ejaculated. "I fought a duel with him in France, and I thought the sword-thrust I gave him, would disable him for some time to come."

A servant entered the room in which they were sitting.

"What is it, John?"

"Lord Maltravers is down-stairs, sir, and Mrs. Van Hoosen requests your presence."

The young men looked at one another.

"Say I am indisposed," exclaimed Alfred; "desire my mother to make my excuses."

"Yes, sir."

"And John—where is my sister?"

"Miss Van Hoosen is out, sir," replied the servant.

Alfred put his arm in that of Jack and drew him out of the room.

"Come," he said, "I will walk with you to your hotel. I want to talk to you on the way."

They passed down-stairs and out into the street, Jack's only consolation for the news he had just heard, being the knowledge that the brother of the girl he loved was his friend.

As they walked along, Alfred said: "I did not finish asking you all the questions I wanted to. What brought you and your friends over here?"

"Frankly," answered Jack, "I came to see your sister. My friends came over to find buffaloes in New York."

Alfred Van Hoosen burst into a roar of laughter.

"Buffaloes in New York!" he said. "You surely are not serious."

"Indeed I am."

"Why, you might as well look for Indians on Staten Island. Is it possible that educated Englishmen, such as any friends of yours must be, can be so ignorant?"

"The average Englishman," replied Jack, "knows about as much of America, as he does of Kamschatka."

"Who are these friends of yours?"

"You have seen them, when they called at the house during the time I was sick. There is Captain Cannon, Mr. Twinkle, Professor Mole and Harvey, though the latter is not as foolish as the rest."

Alfred reflected a moment.

"We will have some fun with them," he said. "Of course you can post Harvey."

"How?" inquired Jack.

"An uncle of mine, who is at one and the same time very rich and very eccentric, has a farm in New Jersey, not very far from New York, and his pet idea is to tame the buffalo and make him subservient to husbandry."

"Has he any on his farm?"

"A score or more. Uncle is away in Philadelphia. The farm is in charge of an old servant of the family, with whom I can do what I like."

"What's your plan?"

"I will invite your friends to a grand buffalo-hunt in New Jersey."

"But your uncle!"

"Never mind him; I am his favorite nephew and he has made his will in my favor."

"He may revoke it."

"Not he. The old boy loves a joke too well," replied Alfred. "Shall we do it?"

"Willingly."

"That is settled, then. I will make all my arrangements to-day, and if you will be good enough to invite your friends on my behalf, we will start early to-morrow."

"So soon?"

"Why delay? a little fun will relieve your mind."

"But with regard to Maltravers?"

"Leave him to me. I am your friend. You do not wholly understand the service you did me in riding my horse to win. You saved me from financial ruin, and made a friend of me for life."

"Yet he will meet your sister. You will be away and your mother's influence may

—"

"Be easy, Harkaway. If I have any voice in the matter, he shall never marry Lena!" exclaimed Van Hoosen.

"If—"

"Well, I mean, if the court knows herself and I think she does. Good-by. I will go home, see how the thing works, and talk to Lena. To-morrow you shall hear what she says."

This speech of Alfred Van Hoosen's cheered Jack up considerably. Since he had made friends with Alfred and been an inmate of his mother's house, his love for Lena had doubled in intensity. He felt that he could not live without her.

The presence of Lord Maltravers in New York was a standing menace against the accomplishment of his marriage with Lena. He had a bitter, unscrupulous and unrelenting enemy to deal with. It had already been shown that he would stop at nothing.

With a heart full of conflicting emotions, Jack went to his hotel.



CHAPTER XI.

FORTUNE-TELLING.

When Alfred Van Hoosen quitted Harkaway he dropped in at the Union Club and played a couple of games of billiards.

He played very badly, for his thoughts were intent on anything but the game.

"Beaten you again," said his friend; "what is the matter with you this afternoon?"

"My right hand has lost its cunning."

"Play another?"

"Not to-day, you will have to excuse me," said Alfred.

Two gentlemen entered the room and approached Van Hoosen, one saying:

"Ah! Van, glad to see you. I want to make you acquainted with my friend, Lord Maltravers. Just arrived from England. He has brought a letter of introduction to me and tells me that he met your people in Paris."

Alfred shook hands with his friend, who was named Sinclair, and was well known as a banker in Wall street, while he bowed somewhat stiffly to the peer.

The latter placed a glass in his eye, and stared somewhat rudely at Van Hoosen.

"Pleased to know you, you know," he exclaimed. "But I thought you were out of form; your mother sent up for you, but you were indisposed; preferred playing billiards to seeing me, eh?"

"I can choose my own occupation, I guess," replied Alfred, who did not like his lordship's manner.

The tone in which he was addressed was offensive.

"Oh! certainly; I can forgive anything to the brother of such a charming sister."

"I don't want you to forgive me anything. Lord Maltravers," said Alfred haughtily, "and I beg, once for all, that you will not dare to take the liberty of mentioning Miss Van Hoosen's name in a billiard-room."

"But it's a club, you know."

"That makes no difference; don't do it."

"Eh?" said his lordship, calling the eye-glass into requisition again.

"Don't *dare* to do it."

"Did you say dare?"

"Certainly I did. Is it necessary to repeat it?" replied Alfred, turning away.

Maltravers stared after him, and taking up a cue began to knock the balls about, remarking as he did so: "Queer people, these Americans."

Sinclair ran after Alfred, and caught him at the door.

"What's got into you?" he asked.

"Oh! nothing," was the evasive answer.

"I didn't think you would insult a friend of mine."

"Excuse me, I have my reasons. The fellow was not too conciliatory to me, and I'm not running after English lords just now. Good-afternoon."

Alfred left the club, more than ever inclined to support the cause of Jack Harkaway.

Dinner was ready, when he reached home, and when the meal was over, he had an opportunity of speaking to his sister.

Mrs. Van Hoosen had gone to the opera, having accepted a seat in Lord Maltravers's box, but Lena remained at home under the plea of a severe headache.

The brother and sister sat on a lounge together, and Alfred slipped his arm round her waist.

"You have stayed home, my baby," he said, "because you didn't want to meet *him*."

"Whom do you mean?" asked Lena.

"This English puppy, Lord Maltravers. Is it not so, sis?"

"Yes, dear," she replied. "When did you see him?"

"To-day, at the club, and we came near having a row."

"What about?"

"He mentioned your name, and I told him that I did not care to have my sister spoken of in a public place."

"That was right," said Lena.

"Tell me, my pet, which do you like best, Maltravers or Harkaway?"

Lena blushed scarlet.

"I esteem Mr. Harkaway very much," she replied.

"Esteem?" he repeated. "Is not that cold?"

"Well, as far as love goes, I do not know that I love any one."

"Yet you have lots of admirers."

"Have I?"

"Why, certainly you have, and a pretty girl like you deserves them. But tell me, do you care for this upstart lord?"

"Mamma says he has the blood of forty generations in his veins, and is the representative of one of the first noble families in England."

"I know mamma's weakness, and I am ashamed of it; but let me put it to you plainly. If you had your choice of the two men, which would you rather marry?"

"What do you think?" replied Lena with an arch smile.

"Harkaway."

"You are welcome to your opinion. I will not contradict you. Yet, Alfred, I cannot offend our mother, and I must be civil to a man, I freely admit, I do not like."

"If you ever marry him, I'll never speak to you again."

"That would be a terrible punishment," said Lena, "for you know full well, how much I think of you, Alfred."

"I do know it, sis, but my advice to you is to consult your own happiness."

"I cannot be happy if I offend mamma."

"But you cannot be happy if you marry Lord Maltravers."

"That is the dilemma," said Lena, "and how am I to get out of it?"

Alfred Van Hoosen shook his head.

"Give me a few days to think the matter over," he replied, "and perhaps I can see some way out of the difficulty. One thing I know, I would rather see you drop down dead at the altar, than become the wife of that man."

"Oh! Alfred. What dreadful language!"

"You do not know so much about him as I do. I am Harkaway's friend now, and I don't want you to encourage Maltravers. You will do that much for me?"

"I can make no promise."

"Why not?"

"I must obey mamma—oh!" she added, while the tears flooded her eyes, "I wish I had never been born!"

"That is a foolish wish."

"No. You have never known what it is to struggle between inclination and duty," said Lena.

"That will do. I am satisfied with that answer!" cried Alfred Van Hoosen. "Be true to yourself, sis, and trust to my inventive faculties to make you happy."

He kissed his sister affectionately, and she sought the privacy of her own chamber.

In a little while she grew tired of being alone, and threw aside a book which she had endeavored to read.

Ringling her bell, she summoned her maid whom she had brought from Paris with her; this was a bright little brunette named Fifine.

"Did ma'm'selle ring?" she asked.

"Yes, tell me what to do with myself. I am *distrante*."

"Is it that ma'm'selle will go to the theater?" asked Fifine. "But no, she can not go alone. *Tiens!* Why not have your fortune told?"

"Where?" said Lena, struck with this novel suggestion.

"There is one clairvoyant in this street, who always tells true. She is called Vesta Levine."

"Have you been there?"

"*Oui*, ma'm'selle, and she tell me I shall some day marry a prince, with so much money he can not spend it."

"That is encouraging," said Miss Van Hoosen with a smile. "Give me my hat; we will go to your fortune-teller, for I should like to know whom I am likely to marry."

"In France," exclaimed Fifine, "women never marry; it is the men who marry them. What is the difference? marriage is a lottery."

Lena was quickly attired. With her face hidden by a thick veil, and accompanied by her maid she went to visit the clairvoyant who was spoken of so highly.

She had no faith in the art of fortune-telling, and believed astrology to be all nonsense, but in every woman's breast there is a slight undercurrent of superstition.

Consequently she fancied, in spite of her reason, that there might be something in it.

The madame's house was not far from that in which she resided, and five minutes walking brought her to it.

Fifine rung the bell, and they were ushered by the domestic, into a room dimly lighted.

Here they waited fully ten minutes, when a curtain was thrown aside, the gas was turned up as if by magic; and the madame, without speaking, beckoned them into an inner room.

They obeyed the silent summons, the curtain fell behind them, and an undefinable feeling of dread came over Lena.

Madame Levine was a well-preserved woman of forty, with a pale, delicate, classic face, and large dreamy eyes. She was simply attired in black silk and wore no jewelry.

The inner apartment in which they found themselves was plainly furnished. Reclining on a couch was a young girl who appeared to be asleep.

This was Adèle Bellefontaine, the poor insane victim of Lord Maltravers's deceit, who had been placed with the clairvoyant for care and protection.

Madame Levine was not long in discovering that the girl possessed remarkable mediumistic properties, and she soon tested her powers; the result being so encouraging that she kept her in a trance half the time.

"Be seated, ladies," said the clairvoyant. "If you wish your fortune revealed, my fee is five dollars. You will address your questions to the medium who is on the

lounge."

Lena Van Hoosen handed her the money, and the madame sat down at a small harmonium, from which she drew sweet and plaintive strains.

The music was not loud enough to drown the sound of the voices, and Lena, in low, trembling tones, said: "Shall I ever be married?"

"Yes," replied Adèle.

"To whom?"

"An Englishman."

She thought of Harkaway and Lord Maltravers, who were both of that nationality.

To which of the two did the medium refer?

"Two men love you," continued Adèle.

"I know it, but for heaven's sake which of the two will be my fate?" cried Lena, who was scarcely able to suppress her emotion.

Adèle's fingers nervously clutched the gold locket which hung round her neck.

"Come!" she said.

Lena Van Hoosen advanced like one in a dream.

"Look," continued Adèle.

Unclasping the locket she gazed upon the face within.

"Lord Maltravers!" she gasped.

"It is he whom you will marry," replied the medium.

Lena staggered back and fell heavily on the floor.

The revelation was too much for her, and she fainted away.

Adèle continued to lie in a trance and was apparently unconscious of all that was going on around her.



CHAPTER XII.

MRS. VAN HOOSEN SACRIFICES HER DAUGHTER TO HER AMBITION.

When Lena Van Hoosen recovered her senses she found herself in the outer room which she had just entered. Her maid Fifine was engaged in bathing her forehead with Florida water and fanning her face.

"Where am I?" she gasped.

"In the house of the clairvoyant, ma'm'selle," answered Fifine.

"Where is Madame Levine?"

"Gone. She took the medium away, and they went out together."

"Oh! why did you bring me here?" said Lena, wringing her hands piteously.

"Ma'm'selle wished to know whom she would marry, and it seems to me that the English suitor is rich and handsome."

"Be silent."

Fifine shrugged her shoulders.

"For my part, I wish he would love me well enough to marry me," she continued.

"You are impertinent. Let us go home," replied her mistress.

Just as she had arranged her shawl and was about to take her departure, Madame Levine entered the apartment.

"Are you satisfied?" she inquired.

"I am bewildered. I know not what to think," answered Lena.

"Oh! as for that, you can always rely upon the predictions of the medium, who is really remarkable."

"But she told me I should marry the man I hate."

"Then it will be so."

"Can you explain how she came to have the portrait of Lord Maltravers in her locket?" asked Lena.

"That is a mysterious locket," said Mme. Levine; "in ordinary times it is

perfectly blank. When the medium wishes to think of any particular individual, the face is represented on the glass."

Lena smiled, incredulously.

"I cannot believe that," she said.

The madame touched a small bell, and its silvery cadence had scarcely died away when the servant attached to the house entered.

"Bring down Adèle," she exclaimed.

The domestic bowed and departed.

"Oh!" said Lena, under her breath. "Her name is Adèle."

Presently Adèle Bellefontaine, pale and delicate, entered the room, with an absent air.

She did not seem to notice any one.

"Child," exclaimed Madame Levine.

Adèle started and pressed her hand to her head as if in pain.

It was clear that the clairvoyant possessed a strange influence over her.

"You called me," she replied.

"I did. Show that lady your locket."

Adèle walked with a childish manner and offered the locket to Lena, who, with trembling fingers, opened it.

A cry of astonishment escaped her, for the surface of the locket was perfectly plain.

"There is nothing there," she said.

"Is not that precisely what I told you?" replied Mme. Levine.

Like one in a dream Lena put her hand on her head, shuddered, and quitted the house.

"How beautiful she is!" she muttered, thinking of Adèle.

She was completely mystified, for it did not occur to her that the madame, seeing the peculiar effect the portrait in the locket had upon her, had taken the precaution to remove it while she was lying senseless in the adjoining room.

Lena reached home a short time before her mother returned from the opera, and waited in the drawing-room to receive her.

Mrs. Van Hoosen did not come back alone.

She was accompanied by Lord Maltravers.

"You look *distraite*, my dear," said Mrs. Van Hoosen. "I hope your head is better?"

"A little, mamma," replied Lena, flushing, as she extended her hand to Maltravers, adding, "How do you do? it is some time since we met."

"Yes, indeed. It seems an age to me."

"Did you like the opera, mamma?"

"I cannot say I did. It was Lohengrin. Wagner may have his admirers, but for my part I do not care for the music of the future."

Saying this, Mrs. Van Hoosen retired to take off her bonnet and left the young people together.

Lena sat on the sofa, and toyed with a fan.

"I hope you do not consider my presence an intrusion, Miss Van Hoosen," exclaimed Maltravers.

"Oh, no; any friend of my mother's is welcome to me," she answered.

"Is not your reception a little cold?"

"Not that I am aware of."

He left the chair in which he was sitting, and ventured to take a seat by her side on the sofa.

Lena moved away, and pulled up the skirts of her dress as if she were afraid of his touching them.

"May I take this opportunity of telling you how dear you are to me?" he said.

"I have heard that before, my lord," she replied.

"Lena—let me call you Lena—I love you madly, passionately, and I offer you my hand, my heart, my coronet and my fortune."

"I wish to remain single," she answered.

"It is your mother's wish that you should marry me. We have had a conversation

about it."

"Lord Maltravers," replied Lena, "I can never love you. Would you take the hand, where the heart can never be?"

"Oh, yes. If I can only call you mine, I will teach you to love me; believe me, dearest, love will come in time."

"Never!"

"Is it possible that you love another?"

Lena looked up indignantly, almost angrily.

"You have no right to pry into the secrets of my heart," she replied.

"I know how it is," said Maltravers, bitterly, "you love that fellow, Harkaway."

"Suppose I do care for Mr. Harkaway—what then?"

"You shall never be his."

"Allow me to ask you a question, my lord," she exclaimed. "Have you never loved before?"

"Never, until I saw you."

"Who is Adèle?"

At this question he turned pale, and it was only by the exercise of a great effort that he mastered his emotion.

She saw him change color and gnaw his nether lip and drew her own conclusions.

"I do not know any one of that name," he replied. "What induces you to ask me?"

"Never mind. Perhaps it was a silly fancy of mine."

"Once more; will you be mine?" he urged.

"Give me time to think."

"I want your answer now."

"You shall have it in a week. I cannot talk further, now," replied Lena. "Pardon me if I leave you."

Lord Maltravers took up his hat.

"I shall not intrude further upon you; in a week I shall call for your answer. Please say good-night to your mother for me," he exclaimed.

Seizing her hand he raised it to his lips and imprinted a passionate kiss upon it.

As he left the room he added, under his breath: "She shall yet be mine, in spite of every thing."

Scarcely had she drawn a sigh of relief at his welcome absence than her mother entered.

There were tears in Lena's eyes, and she was pale and tremulous.

"Where is Lord Maltravers?" asked Mrs. Van Hoosen.

"He has gone."

"I hope, my child, you have not offended him."

"No," said Lena, laconically.

"Did he talk to you on a delicate subject?"

"He did."

"That is right. I gave him permission to do so. What answer did you give him when he asked you to become his wife?"

"I told him he should have my answer in a week, and I gave him to understand that I could never love him."

"I am sorry for that, for I have set my heart on your marrying that man. You must become Lady Maltravers or I will disown you. Girls do not know what's good for them."

"Pity me, mamma," cried Lena.

"I will not; pity would be wasted on so silly a girl. Think of the brilliant match I have arranged for you! There are very few young ladies who would refuse Lord Maltravers with his ancient lineage, fine form and splendid income."

"I do not love him."

"Pshaw! People do not marry for love nowadays. Accept his lordship in a week or prepare to leave my house forever."

"I will obey you, mamma," replied Lena.

Mrs. Van Hoosen bent over and kissed her affectionately.

"That is my own dear girl," she said. "I am content now, and to-morrow I will arrange for your wedding outfit."

That night Lena cried herself to sleep, for she had allowed her mother to sacrifice her to her ambition.

Jack Harkaway was lost to her forever and she could never know what happiness was again.

The week passed, Lord Maltravers called, and was coldly but formally accepted by Lena.

It was settled that the marriage should take place in a month, and the papers contained the following announcement:

"ENGAGED.—Lena Van Hoosen, daughter of the late Cornelius Van Hoosen, to Lord Maltravers of the peerage of Great Britain."

This to all appearance sealed her fate.

CHAPTER XIII.

"A BUFFALO-HUNT."

Alfred Van Hoosen kept his word in relation to the buffalo-hunt, and early on a fine morning the party took the cars for his uncle's farm in Jersey.

Captain Cannon and Mr. Twinkle were in high spirits, and even Mr. Mole looked forward to some excellent sport.

Jack and Harvey pretended to be as enthusiastic as the rest, while Van Hoosen discoursed upon the danger attending such a hunt as the one they were about to engage in.

When the old homestead was reached, Alfred apologized for the absence of his uncle, who was still away in Philadelphia, and did the honors of the house himself.

Old Stock, the steward, who had been posted by Alfred, spread an excellent lunch on the table, and provided rifles and ammunition for the party, but none of them, except Alfred, Jack and Harvey, knew that the cartridges were all blank.

It would never have done to kill the buffalo, for Alfred's uncle would not have pardoned such an outrage.

Champagne flowed briskly, and every one was in high spirits.

"Are there many buffalo, sir, in Jersey?" inquired Captain Cannon, of Alfred.

"Considerable," replied Alfred. "But not so many as there were. They are gradually being killed off."

"When in India," continued the captain, "I shot a tiger before breakfast, regularly, every day, for a year."

"Come, come! That is drawing the long bow," said Mr. Twinkle. "I shot a lion once a week, while in Africa, for six months, but a tiger every day, is too much."

"Fact, I assure you, sir."

"I can quite believe it," said Professor Mole. "For when I was in China I used to kill a score of alligators, every day, just to keep my hand in."

"Well, gentlemen," exclaimed Alfred, "suppose you show your skill on the

buffalo."

They all jumped up, grasped their rifles, took a supply of cartridges, and started for the park in which the big game were grazing.

It was raining slightly, and Mr. Mole provided himself with an umbrella, which did not add to his sportsmanlike appearance.

The professor also carried a note-book, in which to record any interesting fact concerning the day's hunt, so that he could send a report to the President of the Travelers' Club.

"Fine undulating country," he wrote. "Buffalo-grass observable. Jersey the favorite home of this remarkable animal."

After walking half an hour they came upon an old bull who was standing under a tree.

"Ha! What have we here?" cried Captain Cannon.

"That's a buffalo," replied Van Hoosen.

"Dear me, I should have taken it for a cow. How savage he looks!"

"Yes. The buffalo in his wild, untamed state is very ferocious. Now, gentlemen, Harkaway, Harvey and myself will stay here, while you three go up and stalk the game. If he escapes *you*, we will bring him down."

"Thank you," replied the captain. "Advance, my friends. This is a glorious moment."

It was observable that Mr. Twinkle trembled violently and could scarcely hold his gun.

The three advanced together slowly, but neither would go ahead of the others.

Van Hoosen made a signal to Jack and Harvey, who followed him into a thicket.

Here old Stock, the steward, was securely hidden, awaiting their coming.

"What's in the wind now?" asked Jack.

"We're bound to scare your friends, and I want you to dress up as Indians. Stock has everything ready for us, even to a pot of red paint."

Jack struck an attitude.

"Heap big Injun, ugh!" he exclaimed, amid much laughter.

They quickly proceeded to disguise themselves, tied feathers in their hair, put on their war-paint, and slung blankets over their shoulders.

While they were dressing the three buffalo-hunters were approaching the old bull, who watched them with as much curiosity as they displayed with regard to him.

"Twinkle," said the captain, "you are entitled to the first shot."

"N-no," replied Twinkle, with chattering teeth. "Think you ought to have the honor."

"I decline it."

"Then by all means let Mr. Mole attack the beast. How fierce he looks, and what terrible horns he has! Go in, Mole, and slay him!"

"That is for you to do," replied Mole. "I will lie down in the grass where he can't see me."

"What is the use of that?"

"Don't you see? I can take a steady shot at the savage creature and he won't know what hit him."

The professor did not waste any more time in words. He threw himself down in the long grass, while Captain Cannon retired behind the unfortunate Twinkle.

The latter had never in his life shot anything bigger than a sparrow in spite of all his boasting, and he was thoroughly alarmed.

"Bless me!" exclaimed the captain. "Where are Harkaway and the other fellows?"

"Not gone, are they?" inquired Twinkle.

"I can't see them anywhere."

"The cowards! They have run away and left us to face the music! That's *mean*," said Twinkle.

The bull at this moment left the shelter of the tree and advanced toward the intruders on his domain.

"He's a-coming!" gasped Twinkle.

"Fire!" said the captain.

Mr. Twinkle grasped his gun fiercely, shut his eyes, turned his back to the

buffalo, and fired.

The blank cartridge struck Captain Cannon, hurting him considerably in a very tender portion of his body—not in front neither.

"Oh-h!!! I'm shot!" he said, clapping his hands to the place and dropping his gun.

"Shot! did I hit you?" asked Mr. Twinkle, innocently.

"Did you? Why, you confounded idiot, I'm covered with blood. Look here!" the captain gasped, indignantly.

He withdrew his hands from the wound and regarded the ruby fluid grimly.

"I'm very sorry."

"Sorry be hanged! What good will that do me? Perhaps I shall die, or lose my leg; anyway, I know I sha'n't be able to sit down in comfort for a week."

"I apologize. It—it sha'n't occur again," replied Twinkle. "I don't know how it happened. This is a horrid old gun. I never shot with such a funny gun before."

"It's my opinion you're afraid, sir," shouted the captain. "Why don't you load up?"

"I distinctly refuse to do so, sir," retorted Twinkle; "and after the injurious language you have used to me, sir, I shall retire from this shoot and leave you to kill the buffalo yourself."

Saying this, he ran away and hid himself behind a neighboring tree.

The captain looked after him contemptuously.

Meanwhile the bull was getting nearer, and it was necessary to do something to check his progress.

Taking a steady aim, Captain Cannon discharged his piece, and was surprised to see the animal remain unharmed.

Loading up, he fired again and again, but the beast did not fall, though he grew enraged, and uttering a defiant snort, charged.

The captain ran with all his might and succeeded in reaching a tree, behind which he sheltered himself.

"Shoot him, Mole!" he cried. "You've a capital chance; let the brute have it, under the foreleg."

The professor fired, but with no better luck than the others; and the bull, having

his attention diverted, took a survey of his new enemy.

Snorting again, he charged at the professor, who sprung to his feet, threw away his gun, and for want of a better weapon, opened his umbrella.

Probably the buffalo had never before seen this offshoot of civilization, for he was much alarmed.

Turning tail, he fled ignominiously from the field of battle, and was soon lost to sight.

"Bravo," cried the captain.

"Victory!" shouted Mr. Twinkle.

They emerged from their shelter and warmly congratulated the professor on his exploit.

"It was a happy thought," said Mole. "I will make a note of it. 'The buffalo, though impervious to bullets, will fly at the sight of an umbrella.'"

"I think we had better go home," exclaimed Twinkle.

"And I second that motion," replied the captain; "for my wound is becoming stiff and painful. We have actually seen a buffalo and had a terrific encounter with it. This will be sufficient to report to our society."

"Quite," remarked Mole. "I am perfectly satisfied."

Suddenly they were startled by a fearful yell, which made them jump.

Looking round, they beheld three red Indians in all their majesty of paint, feathers and tomahawks.

"Oh!! look!!!!" exclaimed Twinkle, "we shall all be robbed and murdered!"

"Indians!" said the captain. "Why did not Mr. Van Hoosen warn us of this danger? I thought the wretches were kept on their reservations and guarded by government troops."

"They can't scalp me," remarked Mole.

"Why not?"

"I wear a wig, to which they are welcome, if they will only spare my life."

"Whoop! la whoop!" yelled the Indians, dancing about in eccentric circles.

Twinkle fell on his knees, and clasping his hands begged for mercy.

"Oh! good, kind gentlemen!" he said. "Have pity on a poor Englishman far away from home, who only came out here in the interest of science."

"Ugh! take scalp, want heap scalp to put in wigwam," replied an Indian.

"I've very little hair, sir; it is scarcely worth taking."

"My white brother is a squaw, he has the heart of a dog; the pale-face is a coward; ugh! I have spoken."

Captain Cannon and Mr. Mole followed Twinkle's example and sunk on their knees.

They looked very comical in this undignified position.

The Indians stood over them, each selecting his victim and threatening him with a tomahawk in one hand and the scalping-knife in the other.

Jack knocked off the professor's hat and making a rapid circle with his knife, lifted the wig.

"Ha! white man heap big fraud," he exclaimed as he hung the wig at his belt.

"I'm very sorry, sir," replied Mole. "But I couldn't help growing bald. It's my misfortune, not my fault—nature did it—all my family lose their hair quite early in life."

"Give watch, money!"

"Certainly, with the greatest pleasure in life," said Mole, emptying his pockets.

He handed out some currency, a watch and chain, chewing tobacco and a small flask of spirits.

"What this? fire-water, hey?"

"Yes, good, kind sir. It's old rye whisky."

"If bad, Indian kill lying pale-face," said Jack, tasting the whisky and handing it to Harvey and Van Hoosen, who evinced their satisfaction by guttural sounds and grunts.

Harvey contented himself with cutting Mr. Twinkle's hair as short as he could, and Van Hoosen did the same for the fire-eating captain.

They then tore up their hats and the close-cropped looked as if they had just come out of jail, while Mole's polished crown shone in the sunshine like a ball of ivory.

Mr. Twinkle and the captain had to give up all their valuables, which they did gladly, thinking they were very lucky to escape with their lives.

"White men crawl on belly, like snake, and kiss Indians' feet," exclaimed Jack.

"I don't care about doing that," replied Mole.

Jack flourished his knife.

"White dog want to die?" he asked.

"Oh! no. Not yet. I'll do it," cried Mole, hastily.

Jack retreated several paces, and the professor crawled toward him, kissing his feet.

Van Hoosen and Harvey made their captives do the same thing.

"Whoop!" cried Jack, "we leave the white squaws now."

He took another drink out of the flask, his companions did the same, and then they vanished in the thicket as mysteriously as they had come.

"That was a narrow escape," said the professor.

"Yes, indeed," replied Captain Cannon. "I shall have a fine story to tell when I get back to London. First, I killed a savage buffalo bull, in the wilds of New Jersey."

"You didn't kill him," observed Mr. Twinkle.

"Didn't I?"

"No, indeed. I think that honor belongs to me."

"Any way, you shot something and that was myself. I'll forgive you, if you will let me say, without fear of contradiction, that I slew the buffalo."

"You may as well tell a good lie while you are about it," said Mr. Mole. "I always do."

"I have remarked that already," observed the captain.

"A small falsehood is a contemptible thing, but there is some glory in a big one."

"In what way can I amend mine?"

"Say that in the encounter with the bull he tossed you on his horns, and you can show your wound in corroboration of the story," replied the professor.

The captain did not relish this allusion to his wound, which was situated in an inglorious portion of his anatomy.

Mr. Mole picked up the flask, which was empty, and having discovered this fact, his disgust found vent in words.

"These Indians are the meanest wretches I ever met with," he said.

"What have they done now?" inquired Mr. Twinkle.

"Emptied the flask—drained it *dry*, sir, by Jove! I had intended to solace myself with a quiet drink, but human aspirations are ever destined to be dashed to the ground."

He sighed deeply.

"Let us go back to the house and enjoy Mr. Van Hoosen's hospitality," suggested Mr. Twinkle.

"I believe that motion was seconded and carried, a few moments ago," said the captain.

"It was," replied the professor.

"Then I will give the word of command. By your right, march! And if I ever come out buffalo-hunting in the Jersey wilds again, may the Lord forgive me."

The three men marched disconsolately toward the house, and arranged among themselves to say that they had encountered a band of Indians, who, after a severe fight, overpowered them by the sheer force of numbers.

"Let me tell the story," exclaimed Mole, "and you corroborate all I say."

"Good!" cried the captain and Mr. Twinkle.

"I don't mind a little romancing," continued Mole. "It comes naturally to me, and I know it requires an effort on your part, gentlemen."

The sportsmen smiled and quickened their pace, as they were anxious to reach the homestead, and enjoy the good things which they felt sure Mr. Van Hoosen would regale them with.

When they arrived at the house, they were met at the door by Alfred, Jack and Harvey.

"What sport did you meet with, sir?" asked Harkaway.

"Splendid, my dear boy," replied Mr. Mole. "You missed it."

"Is that so?"

"We killed the buffalo bull—at least, he was hit and went away into a thicket to die. If it had not been for a tribe of Indians who attacked us, we should have had a capital day's gunning."

"Did the Indians fight you?"

"Yes, sir," answered Mr. Mole. "We were absolutely surrounded by fifty of the red fiends, but we showed a determined front and beat them off."

"Did you kill any?"

"Did we. Well, I should smile if we did not," answered Mr. Mole.

"Where are the dead?"

"Ask their comrades. When they saw they were defeated, they retired in disorder, but they carried their dead with them."

"Carried off the dead?"

"Yes. I will give them the credit for that."

"But how did it occur that your wig is gone and these gentlemen have had their hair cut short?" inquired Harkaway.

Mr. Mole looked a little confused.

"Oh! I will explain that," he said; "on our way home we were attacked by a horde of tramps."

"A horde?"

"Yes, about a score, and being exhausted by our encounter with the Indians we surrendered at discretion."

"That was rough on you, sir. It was indeed. Did the tramps rob you of anything?"

"All we possessed; but we beat the Indians, and if we had been possessed of any cartridges we should have driven off the tramps."

"That is a very good story," said Jack.

Mr. Mole looked indignant.

"What do you mean by that insinuation?" he exclaimed. "Do you doubt my honor?"

"Oh! no. Not for a moment."

"Then why is it a good story?"

"Simply because it is the best lie, Mr. Mole, that I have heard for a long time."

Captain Cannon struck his breast with his hand and Mr. Twinkle looked unutterable things at Jack.

"I am concerned in this allegation," said the captain.

"Did I allege anything?" asked Jack.

"Yes, sir, and I deny the allegation and despise the allegator."

"That's a stale joke," replied Jack. "But look here, gentlemen, if the Indians cut your hair or took Mr. Mole's wig, we can return the hirsute appendages. If the tramps robbed you of money or valuables we can give them back."

"You!"

"Yes, sir," continued Harkaway; "what do you say to this?"

"And this?" cried Harvey.

"And this?" added Van Hoosen.

They severally displayed the spoils they had taken, placing them on a table.

The consternation and dismay of the three pretenders was funny in the extreme.

"Then you were the Indians!" said the professor; grasping the tail end of the joke feebly.

"We were," answered Jack.

"But how did you do it?"

"Oh! we dressed up, being determined to have some fun with you, and as there was no harm done, I hope you will forgive the joke."

"I do," replied the professor; "and I may add that I knew it was you, Jack, all along."

"You did?"

"If I hadn't known it, do you think I would have allowed you to take my wig."

"Allowed me?"

"Yes. It was the only one I had, and a bald-headed old man is not a cheerful spectacle, nor calculated to inspire respect."

He took up his wig and fitted it on, after which he appropriated the various articles which had been taken from him.

"Ah! Jack, you think you are a very smart fellow, but I have known you from a boy, and you can't fool me," said Mr. Mole.

"But I did to-day, though," replied Harkaway.

Captain Cannon took what belonged to him, and appeared very indignant.

"Mr. Harkaway," he said, "you and I are members of the same club."

"We are."

"And we came over here to hunt the buffalo in its native wilds and make a report at home."

"You did, but I had other things to attend to."

"Never mind, you have grossly deceived me, and I consider your joke an insult, sir."

"Do you?" said Jack, coldly.

"Yes, sir, I do. Look at my hair! it will take a month to grow. I shall leave this country at once."

"If you do, the country won't miss you. I don't think there will be a general mourning, or that the nation will go into bankruptcy."

Mr. Twinkle put on his hat with a savage air.

"I shall go, too," he said.

"By all means. Go to—Hong Kong or Halifax, if you like."

Captain Cannon put his arm in that of Mr. Twinkle.

"Mr. Van Hoosen," exclaimed Mr. Twinkle, "we are disappointed in you."

"Sorry for that. I generally pan out pretty good," replied Alfred.

"We are going, sir."

"So I heard you say before."

"We will not stay to partake of your hospitality, sir."

"Nobody asked you. I gave you a shot at my uncle's old tame buffalo bull, but you had only blank cartridges, and having done that, I have no inclination to do

anything further for you."

"Blank cartridges!" ejaculated the captain.

"The deuce," said Mr. Twinkle. "That was lucky for you, Cannon, when I fired round the corner; I might have settled you, altogether."

"Come!" replied the captain, grandly.

"One word before you go, gentlemen," exclaimed Alfred Van Hoosen. "You, as educated men, ought not to have been such idiots as to suppose you would find buffaloes and Indians in New York State or Jersey, and you can't blame me, as a playful American, for having a joke with you, especially as your better-informed friend, Mr. Harkaway, assisted me."

"I have nothing to say," replied Captain Cannon.

"Nor I," replied Mr. Twinkle. "For my part, I don't like the country, and the people are—"

Alfred Van Hoosen stared at him, fixedly.

"Are what?" he asked.

Mr. Twinkle made just the least little nervous start.

"Oh! perfect gentlemen, of course," he added.

"Come!" again said the captain. "The gentlemen shall hear from us."

"By cable, I guess," laughed Alfred.

"Do you join us, Mr. Mole?" asked the captain, not noticing the remark of Van Hoosen.

"Well—no," answered the professor. "I knew it was a lark all through, and as I never bite off my nose to spite my face, I will forgive Jack this time, and stay to lunch with my very good friend, Mr. Van Hoosen."

He held out his hand.

"No animosity, Al?" he added.

"Not the slightest in the world, my dear fellow," replied Van Hoosen.

Captain Cannon and Mr. Twinkle walked out of the room together, fully determined to return to England by the next steamer.

As they went, Alfred sung, the others joining in the chorus:

"We'll settle on the banks
Of the lovely Ohio,
Through the wild woods we'll wend
As we hunt the buffalo"

And the refrain rung in their ears all the way to the depot:

"As we hunt the buff-a-lo."



CHAPTER XIV.

MASTER AND SLAVE.

Lord Maltravers was naturally very much elated at his success in winning Lena Van Hoosen's consent to marry him.

He was really very much in love with the young lady, and intended to settle down and live a quiet life with her.

That he had got rid of Adèle Bellefontaine forever, he did not doubt for a moment.

Everything progressed favorably with him, as his plans gradually approached their fruition.

A few days before that appointed for the marriage, Bambino entered his master's private room, while he was at breakfast.

He sat down with an air of easy familiarity, which was very unusual with him.

"What do you want?" asked Maltravers, looking up from his paper.

"My discharge," replied Bambino.

Lord Maltravers put a glass in his eye and regarded him curiously.

"Your what?" he asked.

"My discharge. Is it necessary for me to repeat it?"

"But, my good fellow, you are my life-long star. I may need you in the future."

"I care not. Let me go."

"Certainly not. If you persist in your determination to leave me, I shall go at once to the Italian Consul, and let him know that Bambino, the escaped murderer, is in New York."

"What then?"

"There is a price on your head."

"Well?"

"You will be sent back to Italy, and pass the remainder of your natural life at the

galleys."

"Yes, that's true," said Bambino, calmly.

"Reflect, my friend," continued Maltravers. "However fond you may be of hard work and black bread, however much you may be enamored of the whip of the taskmaster, and notwithstanding the charm a hot sun may have for you, I will venture to say, that my service is more agreeable."

"I wish to quit your service, señor."

"And I say again, I will not permit you to do so. It is not always that one can pick up such an accomplished villain as you are."

"Do I suit you so well?"

"So well, that I will not part with you."

"I am a finished villain?" Bambino asked, in a strange voice.

"Perfect in every respect."

"You have no fault to find with me?"

"None."

Bambino smiled quietly, as if pleased with an original idea which had just occurred to him.

"Give me fifty thousand dollars," he exclaimed, "and I will not trouble you any more."

Lord Maltravers started from his chair, and seized a cane.

"Dog," he said, "am I to stand this impertinence?"

"Yes."

"You say 'yes!' do you know of what you are talking?"

Bambino rose and displayed his dagger.

"Cospetto!" he cried. "Touch me not. If you so much as lay your little finger on me, I will stab you to the heart."

Maltravers dropped the cane.

"Oh! decidedly," he said, "I shall have to go to the Italian Consul."

"No, my lord," replied Bambino. "It is I, who will have to go to the British

Consul."

Maltravers turned pale with rage.

"Do you threaten *me*, you low scoundrel?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I do."

"What can you say, except that I hired you to commit a crime—that is, I employed you to kill Jack Harkaway?"

"I shall not go upon that."

"If you did no one would believe you."

"Possibly not," said Bambino, calmly. "But, my lord, suppose I said that you *had a wife alive*."

Again Maltravers changed color perceptibly.

"If you did you would lie," he replied.

"Oh! no. I am perfectly conversant with your little marriage in France."

"Yes. I have talked to you about it, possibly, in my confidential moments."

"More than that—I know where your wife is at this moment, and I can produce her at the altar when you attempt to marry Miss Van Hoosen."

"You villain!"

"My lord," said Bambino, "you do me honor. I feel proud to be so complimented by you."

He bowed low as he spoke, with mock humility.

"Prove what you allege," cried Maltravers, who was intensely excited.

"That's easy enough."

"Begin!"

"It is not necessary for me to show you my cards," returned Bambino. "I can do what I say, and I will do so, unless you buy me off."

"I refuse to do anything of the kind."

"You defy me?"

"I do."

"Perhaps Mr. Harkaway may be more generous."

"Do you threaten me with an appeal to my rival?"

"Yes, my lord," answered Bambino.

Lord Maltravers was beside himself with rage at this insolent defiance, but he controlled himself by the exercise of a violent effort.

"Let us understand one another," he said.

"By all means."

"You allege that you know of the existence of a lady who claims to be my wife, and you further say, that she is in New York and you can produce her at a moment's notice, so as to stop my marriage with Miss Van Hoosen?"

"Precisely."

"And as the price of your silence you require \$50,000?"

"That is the sum."

"Where is this girl?" continued his lordship.

"I decline to say."

"What's her name?"

"That you know as well as I do. Will you give me the money?"

"No!"

Bambino shrugged his shoulders, as he advanced to the door.

"Then, all I have to do is to declare war to the knife," he said.

"Yes. You cowardly ruffians always use the knife. I prefer the pistol," replied his lordship.

He went rapidly to an escritoire and drew out an ivory-handled pistol.

"This is my answer to you," he cried.

Bambino shrunk back, but he was unable to avoid the ball which his lordship fired at him.

There was an explosion, a puff of smoke and the crafty Italian fell on the floor, the blood welling from a wound in his head.

Hastily Lord Maltravers placed the pistol in the death-like clutch of his victim.

Then he rung the bell violently.

This tragedy occurred at one of the leading hotels and could not be hushed up.

When the waiter answered the bell, his lordship was perfectly calm.

"This man, my servant," he exclaimed, "has been despondent lately, and because I would not allow him to return to Italy, he has committed suicide. Summon the proprietor of the hotel!"

The servant hastened to do so.

When the proprietor arrived, he was told the same story, which he saw no reason to disbelieve, and, an ambulance being sent for, Bambino was taken to the hospital.

No report was made to the police, and for a wonder no reporter got hold of the circumstance.

Lord Maltravers followed his servant to the hospital, and appeared much concerned about his condition.

After the house surgeon had made an examination he was prepared with his report.

"Is it serious?" inquired Maltravers.

"Very," was the reply.

"Will he live?"

"No. The man will die."

Lord Maltravers could scarcely contain his exultation at this announcement.

"Allow me to ask one more question," he exclaimed.

"With pleasure," answered the house surgeon.

"Will the poor fellow recover consciousness before he expires?"

"Possibly he will. I cannot say positively."

"When do you expect death to ensue?"

"Inside of forty-eight hours."

Lord Maltravers went away, slightly disturbed in his mind. If Bambino recovered consciousness for only a brief period, he might talk. There was danger in that.

If he denounced Lord Maltravers as his murderer, and if he pointed out the place where Adèle Bellefontaine was living, his lordship's newly-found happiness would topple over like a pack of cards built into a house by the hand of a child, whose breath subsequently destroys the frail edifice.

Eagerly he longed for the time to pass. Three times that day he called at the hospital. His last visit was at twelve o'clock. Bambino had not yet spoken.



CHAPTER XV.

MR. MOLE PLAYS BASE-BALL.

Captain Cannon and Mr. Twinkle went back to England after the famous buffalo-hunt, feeling themselves insulted by the trick which had been played upon them.

Jack, Harvey and Professor Mole remained at the hotel.

It may readily be imagined that Jack was in no enviable frame of mind.

Alfred Van Hoosen was his friend and wished him to marry his sister, but Lena had promised to espouse Lord Maltravers, and so great was the mother's influence that the day was already fixed.

Jack expected every day that Alfred would come to him and propose some plan by means of which the celebration of the marriage could be prevented.

He waited in vain and fumed and fretted until he grew ill and pale.

Little did he know that at the same time Lord Maltravers was as uneasy as he was himself.

He knew nothing about the dangerous condition of the villain Bambino, and that Maltravers was standing, as it were, on a volcano which might at any time erupt and scatter all his fond ideas to the winds, dash his happiness to atoms and shatter the idol which he had set up for himself to worship.

If Bambino recovered sufficiently to speak, then all hope of a union with Lena Van Hoosen was at an end.

While affairs were in this condition, Mr. Mole made the acquaintance of a young man who was living with his parents in the hotel.

It happened in this way.

The Continental Hotel, on Broadway, was the caravansera which Harkaway and the members of the Travelers' Club stayed at, and the genial proprietor, Mr. Merrifield, was much interested in the eccentric professor.

Meeting him in the hall one morning, seated in a chair with his legs on another, Mr. Merrifield said:

"I thought it was not an English custom, professor, to put your legs up at an

angle of forty-five degrees?

"My dear sir," replied Mole, "there is nothing in this country that an Englishman cannot do and has not done in his own land."

"Can you drink whisky straight?"

"Try me," said Mole, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Can you play base-ball?"

"I think so. The fact is, I am a good cricket player, and I see no reason why I should not play the emasculated game you call base-ball."

"Well now," said Merrifield, "I'll give you an opportunity of showing what you can do in that direction."

"How?"

"A young gentleman living in the house with his parents, whose name is Morris Hart, is captain of the Blue Stockings, and that club is going to play the Red Stockings a match to-day."

"Well?"

"The Blues are short of one out of their nine. You shall take the place of the missing man, if you like."

"I'll do it."

"Mind," said Mr. Merrifield, "you have said you are a good base-ball player."

"Did I say so?"

"Yes, and if you lose the match through your bad play, we shall blame you."

"I understand."

"Of course," Mr. Merrifield continued, "I am not reflecting on your veracity. I know very well that an Englishman never blows. It is only an American that brags about his country and says he can whip all creation."

"Well," replied the professor. "I don't mind repeating that I must be a good base-ball player, because it is a mild edition of what we call 'Rounders,' a game which small boys play and which cannot be spoken of in the same breath with cricket."

"But base-ball is a dangerous game to play."

"Oh! pshaw!"

"People often get arms and legs broken."

"Nonsense. You should see our swift round hand bowling. That would open your eyes a little."

As the professor spoke a young man approached; he was tall, well formed and handsome.

"Ah!" said Mr. Merrifield. "You are the very man I was looking for. Professor Mole, allow me to introduce my friend, Mr. Morris Hart."

They bowed and shook hands.

"Glad to know you, sir," said Morris.

"I am proud and happy to reciprocate that sentiment, my young friend," replied Mr. Mole.

"Morris," exclaimed Mr. Merrifield, "you are short of a man in your match with the 'Reds' to-day, I believe?"

"We are, and I cannot find a substitute anywhere. Guess we shall have to play eight against nine."

"No indeed. The professor volunteers to fill the vacant place."

"Is that so?" replied Morris Hart. "I am real pleased to hear it, but—"

"What?"

"I don't want to disparage the professor's accomplishments. Yet I have always heard that the English did not understand our national game."

Mr. Mole smiled disdainfully.

"Child's play," he said.

"What is?"

"Base-ball."

Morris Hart bridled up at this.

"You won't find it so," he rejoined.

"Not much," said Mr. Merrifield. "You bet your high monkey munk."

"Well, well," exclaimed Mr. Mole, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I will call base-ball a very scientific game, and with your kind permission, I will show you how an old cricketer can play."

"Agreed," said Morris Hart.

This being settled, Mr. Merrifield left them together, and it was arranged that Mr. Mole should go over to the grounds at Hoboken at a certain hour.

Morris gave him the club clothes, blue stockings, etc., which he put in a grip sack and left him, after exacting a promise that he would be on time.

Mr. Mole was no sooner possessed of the cap, shirt, drawers and stockings, than he went to his room and put them on.

Very comical indeed was his appearance, for his long, gaunt, angular form made him look like an animated scarecrow.

Anxious to display himself, he went to Harkaway's room, finding Jack and Harvey engaged in conversation.

"Say, boys," exclaimed the professor, "what do you think of me?"

They regarded him with astonishment.

"What lunacy is this?" inquired Jack.

"Eh!" exclaimed Harvey, "what is it?"

"I give it up," replied Jack.

"Give it up?"

"Yes. Ask me an easier one."

"It must have escaped from a menagerie," said Harvey.

Mr. Mole regarded them with a lofty air.

"No doubt you think yourselves mighty funny," he remarked. "But you can run me, all you like. I am going to show these Yankees how an Englishman can play base-ball."

"You going to play?"

"Yes, boys. I am a Blue shirt, or a cap, or a stocking, I forget which, but I know I'm blue."

"Perhaps you will be black and blue before you get through," said Jack.

"Good for the major," ejaculated Harvey, laughing.

"All right, boys. Have your little jokes with the old man, but you will see how I shall paralyze the Americans with my play."

"I wish you luck," answered Harkaway, "and would go with you, only I expect Van Hoosen here."

"Is there any fresh news about the marriage?" asked Mole.

"None. Mrs. Van Hoosen has made up her mind that Lena shall marry Maltravers," replied Jack.

"Misguided girl!"

"She is, indeed. I have every reason to know that she does not love him, and only a mistaken sense of duty to her mother makes her accept him."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"What can I do? The marriage is to take place to-morrow."

"So soon?"

"Yes. I give you my word I am nearly crazy, for I love that girl better than my life."

Mr. Mole heaved a deep sigh.

"I loved once," he said, "and my wife used to go for my scalp, which had the effect of destroying love's young dream."

"I should think so," replied Harvey.

"But, my dear sir," exclaimed Jack, "you will admit, I hope, that married life is the happiest state of existence."

"I'll admit nothing."

"No happiness is to be found outside of the home circle."

"It depends on a man's temperament, also on how a man is brought up. A Philadelphian is happy at home, a New Yorker is ignorant of the meaning of the word 'Home,'" replied Mr. Mole.

"Oh! pshaw," said Jack, impatiently. "Have sense. Tell me if there is any bliss comparable to that of having a sweet little darling always in the house when you want her?"

"Suppose she is there when you do not want her?"

"I can not admit any such supposition. Go and play your game."

"I will."

"You and Maltravers ought to be in the same game."

"Why?"

"Because it is 'base.'"

"Oh!" cried the professor. "What have I done to deserve this? You have called it 'base.' I must go and get a 'ball' after that."

He walked to a closet in which he knew Jack kept sundry bottles of wine and liquors, and helped himself to a draught of brandy.

"Well, boys," he exclaimed, "I must leave you, and you can bet your high monkey munk, as friend Merrifield says, that I will do all that lays in my power to uphold the honor of old England, and the flag that for a thousand years has braved the battle and the breeze."

Waving his arm grandly he quitted the apartment, and making all his preparations, started for the place appointed for the match.

The Blue Stockings were a pretty strong team and had beaten the Reds the year previously, but it was said the Reds had improved greatly, and a spirited contest was expected.

Mr. Mole knew nothing whatever about the game, but was wise enough to keep his mouth shut, until he was spoken to.

His side lost the choice of innings and had to take the field.

The professor became much interested in seeing the men run from base to base, and did not look out keenly enough.

What was the consequence?

A ball struck him with fearful force below the knee.

He ought to have stopped it or caught it, but he didn't, and he fell to the ground with a broken leg.

"Oh! oh!" he cried, "I'm killed."

Morris Hart ran up to see what was the matter.

"Why didn't you stop the ball?" he asked.

"It came so fast, I couldn't," groaned the unhappy professor.

"I thought you were used to fast bowling and could play the game."

"So I thought."

"It's my opinion you're a first-class fraud."

"Don't abuse me, there is a good fellow," said Mole. "Send for an ambulance and have me taken to the hospital: I'm in great pain and can't walk."

"If that is so, pardon me."

"My leg is broken."

"I'm sorry, but I always knew it took an American to play base-ball."

"Give me cricket," moaned Mr. Mole. "It is a decent and respectable game. You don't want to get your life insured before you engage in it."

Morris Hart could not refrain from smiling; but he hurried away to get a conveyance which would take Mr. Mole to the hospital.

He would have sent him to his hotel, but the professor wished to have the best advice he could get, and he knew he was sure of having excellent treatment at a hospital.

Accordingly he was taken to a hospital in New York and put to bed, when the surgeon set the broken leg and assured him that in a few weeks he would be able to get about again on crutches.

"Heaven help me," said Mole. "What a fool I am getting in my old age. Here am I in a strange country, and ought to have known better than to indulge in the barbarous games of the people. Confound base-ball and the man who invented it; but it serves me right. I have no one but myself to blame."



CHAPTER XVI.

BAMBINO IN THE HOSPITAL.

Mr. Mole was in the accident ward, and many poor wretches were sighing and groaning around him.

In the next bed on the right-hand side was a man who appeared in a comatose state.

Calling the nurse he said, "What is the matter with that man there?"

"He is dying," was the reply.

"Is that so?"

"It's a case of suicide. He was the Italian valet of an English nobleman, they say."

"What is the nobleman's name?"

"Lord Maltravers."

Mr. Mole, at this announcement, gave a start which nearly displaced the splints around his leg.

"Bambino!" he ejaculated.

As he said this; the man in a dying condition looked up with wide-open eyes.

The mention of his name seemed to have aroused him from the state of stupor into which he was plunged.

"Yes. I am Bambino," he said, in a faint voice. "Who calls me?"

"I," replied Mole.

"Who are you? My eyes are dim. I cannot see you. All is a blank."

"A friend."

"What would you with me, friend?"

"Who shot you?"

This was a random question on the part of the professor, but it touched the right chord.

"My master," replied Bambino, for it was he, and Mr. Mole by a strange fatality had been placed in the same ward and in the bed next to the scoundrel.

"Why did he shoot you?"

"Because he was going to marry a young lady in New York and I told him he had a wife alive and that it would be bigamy. I wanted money to keep quiet and he would not give it me. Then I threatened to produce the first wife, so he shot me."

The nurse was standing by, listening to the strange conversation.

"Did you hear that?" inquired Mole.

"Yes, sir," she replied.

"Pay particular attention to it if you please, as it is of the utmost importance to a friend of mine and you will be required possibly as a witness."

"Who is this first wife?" pursued Mole, "and what is her name?"

"A French woman, Adèle Bellefontaine, living with Madame Vesta Levine, the clairvoyant, in New York city!"

The heavy lids fell down over the eyes and the man lapsed into a state of semi-consciousness.

It was then about nine o'clock in the evening.

If the professor's leg had not been broken, he would have got up and hastened to the Continental Hotel to apprise Jack Harkaway of that which would have been amply sufficient to stop the impending marriage on the morrow between Lena Van Hoosen and Lord Maltravers.

The next day they were to be married and if ever that marriage took place, Jack's heart would be broken.

Bambino's utterances were not the ravings of delirium, far from it; he spoke coherently enough, and had given sufficient information to enable Jack to stop the marriage.

Adèle Bellefontaine—Madame Vesta Levine, the clairvoyant—that was enough.

Surely there could be no difficulty in finding either or both of them.



CHAPTER XVII.

JACK MAKES A LAST APPEAL.

It was the morning appointed for the marriage.

Harkaway was miserable and disconsolate.

He had not seen Mr. Mole since the day before, and had only heard that he was hurt and had been taken to the hospital.

So he said to Harvey: "Morris Hart tells me that old Mole got his leg broken playing base-ball. I suppose it is not very serious or we should have heard from him. Won't you go and see him, Dick?"

"Certainly," replied Harvey.

Scarcely had he gone, when Alfred Van Hoosen came in. Jack eagerly grasped his hand.

"Will she see me?" he asked.

"Yes. I have sufficient influence over her to induce her to do that," was the reply. "I have induced her to consent to breakfast with us at the Brunswick."

They quitted the house together and Jack went on to the Brunswick, while Alfred Van Hoosen engaged a carriage to go to the house and bring his sister.

It was in a private room that Jack awaited their coming. Slowly passed the minutes.

At length there was a rustle of silk, that indescribable *frou-frou* which the skirts of a woman always make, and Lena Van Hoosen, looking pale and with traces of tears on her cheeks entered.

"Lena!" exclaimed Jack.

She extended her hand which Jack grasped warmly.

"I have come at the solicitation of my brother," she replied, "to bid you farewell."

"Forever?" he asked.

"Yes. I thought I owed this much to you, but I wish it understood that we can

only meet in future as strangers.

"I am to be married to Lord Maltravers. It is against my will, I admit that—"

"Oh! Lena," interrupted her brother, passionately. "You always professed some liking for me. Why will you persist in this ill-advised match?"

"Simply because it is my duty. My mother insists upon it. I sacrifice my inclination and my love."

It was evident from her manner and appearance that the poor girl was suffering terribly.

"Is there no hope for me?" asked Jack, as he choked back a sob.

"None," she answered in a stony voice. "Learn to forget me."

"I cannot do it. I have every reason to believe that I have been something to you. Can you so easily forget me?"

She dared not look him in the face.

"Do not ask me," she said. "I have come at your wish and my brother's to wish you farewell."

At this moment an organ in the street began to play a funereal dirge, and it sounded like the knell of all his hopes.

Alfred offered his arm to his sister and they passed out together.

For some time Jack remained in an attitude of passive despair, then he walked down-stairs.

In his preoccupied state, he did not see where he was going, and in the corridor he pushed against a man.

The man was Lord Maltravers who had come there to breakfast.

"Harkaway," said his lordship.

"Yes, and your enemy," was the reply.

"I know it, my good fellow, and I'm proud of it."

"Don't call me your 'good fellow,'" said Jack, while the blood rushed to his face.

"I shall call you what I please," exclaimed Lord Maltravers, with cool insolence.

Jack controlled himself, and the two men stood glaring at one another. Under no circumstances can men hate so intensely as when they are rivals for the

affections of a woman.

"Isn't it about time, Mr. Harkaway, that you returned to England?" said Lord Maltravers, with his glass in his eye.

Jack gnashed his teeth.

"You are trying to insult me," he exclaimed.

"I hoped I had succeeded," was the reply.

"By Heaven you have," Jack cried, unable to control himself any longer.

Clinching his broad sledge-hammer fist, he stepped back a pace and dealt the peer a heavy blow in the face.

Maltravers rolled over and fell on the floor.

Striding over his prostrate body with a contemptuous air, Jack quitted the place.

When he reached home he found Harvey in the hall.

"I was waiting for you, Jack," he said. "Had any luck?"

"None at all."

"Couldn't you persuade the lady that you were better than that fellow Maltravers?"

"No. She would obey her mother."

"Never mind. There are as good fish in the sea, as ever."



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BRIDAL.

The day appointed for the marriage had at length arrived, and Lena Van Hoosen was about as miserable a girl as there was to be found in New York city.

With Lord Maltravers she could never be happy. But she thought it her duty to sacrifice herself in deference to the wishes of her mother.

The marriage was arranged to take place in Mrs. Van Hoosen's house, at five o'clock in the afternoon.

Only a few intimate friends of the family and some relatives had been invited.

Alfred Van Hoosen at first refused to attend, but Lena begged him not to keep away, and very reluctantly he consented to be on hand.

At half-past five Lord Maltravers arrived and apologized for the marks on his face by saying that his horse had run away with him and that he had been thrown in Central Park.

Lena paid very little attention to him, as he presented her with some magnificent diamonds which her mother placed around her neck and wrists, but not even a smile illumined her countenance, which was as pale as death.

At length the clergyman arrived, and as the clock softly tinkled the hour of five, the couple took their position, in front of him, and with open book he commenced the ceremony.

Mrs. Van Hoosen was delighted, for her ambitious schemes now seemed on the verge of being realized.

Indeed she was the only person in the room, except the guests, who seemed at all happy.

Lord Maltravers was restless and uneasy, looking constantly toward the door, as if he feared some interruption to the ceremony.

Alfred bit his lip and frowned, as he regarded Maltravers with anything but a friendly air.

Scarcely had the clergyman read half a dozen lines when there was a loud ring at

the bell.

Maltravers started and Lena flushed visibly as if she hoped against hope that something might happen to interfere with this hateful marriage.

The minister went on with the ceremony.

Suddenly there was a commotion in the hall, the sound of footsteps was heard on the stairs, and Jack Harkaway, hat in hand, appeared in the doorway.

Halting on the threshold he said: "Pardon my intrusion, ladies and gentlemen."

Lord Maltravers bridled up.

"You are an uninvited guest, sir," he replied.

"I have taken the liberty of coming here to interrupt this marriage."

Maltravers grew deathly pale.

"Are you aware, my good fellow," he exclaimed insolently, "that you have rendered yourself liable to be removed by the police?"

"Try it," answered Jack.

"Fortunately I provided against a contingency of this kind and have a policeman stationed in the adjoining apartment. If you do not instantly quit the house, I shall—with Mrs. Van Hoosen's permission—tell the officer to do his duty."

Mrs. Van Hoosen bowed her acquiescence.

"Allow me to ask the minister one question," said Jack.

"What is it?" inquired the minister.

"Is it lawful for a man to have two wives?"

"Certainly not."

"Then I forbid this marriage to proceed, for Lord Maltravers has a wife living."

"It is false," cried Maltravers.

"What proofs have you of this allegation?" inquired the minister.

"The lady herself."

The next moment Harvey, with a lady leaning on his arm, made his appearance.

The lady was Adèle Bellefontaine.

"Here is your wife, my lord," exclaimed Jack.

Adèle no sooner saw Maltravers than, clouded though her intellect was, she recognized him.

Rushing forward she fell on her knees and grasped his unwilling hand.

"Oh! do not spurn me from you," she cried. "I am your wife in the sight of God and man and Heaven knows I have always loved you dearly."

"You are an impostor," replied Maltravers.

"No, no. You cared for me once."

"Away!"

"I will not. This time you shall not drive me from you."

Harkaway stepped forward.

"Will you call your policeman now?" he asked.

His lordship glared at him with bloodshot eyes.

"Who killed Bambino?" persisted Jack.

Maltravers staggered as if he had been shot.

"My lord," said Jack, "*Bambino has spoken!* His confession and accusation against you were taken down by a judge. A warrant is already out for your arrest on the charge of murder, for he died this afternoon."

Suddenly Maltravers drew a pistol from his pocket. "Stand back," he exclaimed. "I will not be taken alive."

He attempted to gain the door, but Adèle clung to his hand. "Do not leave me," she plead.

Depressing the muzzle of his pistol he placed it near her head.

In the struggle that ensued, the pistol exploded, and Adèle fell to the floor, shot dead.

Maltravers ran from the room and by his knowledge of the premises succeeded in making an effective escape. The police quickly came, but they were wholly baffled, and though every step was taken to catch the murderer and impostor he disappeared as utterly as if no such man had existed.

It was a sad release from life for the poor, neglected wife, but, better than

the misery of living as she had been. She was buried by kindly hands and sympathetic tears were shed at her grave.

Lena, under the inspiration of Jack's presence, soon recovered her good spirits and in due time became a willing bride and the most loved of wives.

And so Jack Harkaway's career in New York culminated in Jack Harkaway's happiness.

THE END



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Transcriber's Notes:

Added table of contents.

Inconsistent accents (signor vs. señor) have been retained from the original.

Inconsistent spacing (somehow vs. some how) has been retained from the original.

Page 2, added missing apostrophe to "Why the Travelers' Club."

Page 9, added missing close quote after "accept my apology—."

Page 10, added missing period after "discern objects."

Page 11, changed "Not to day" to "Not to-day."

Page 12, changed "think- of Adèle" to "thinking of Adèle."

Page 13, changed question mark to period after "Ask their comrades."

Page 14, changed "his lord- was perfectly" to "his lordship was perfectly."

Page 15, normalized "base ball" to "base-ball" and changed "inquire Mole" to "inquired Mole." Also changed ? to ! after "in New York city!"

Page 16, changed "Is their no hope" to "Is there no hope." Corrected "Comes" to "Coomes" in the listing for book 13 of the series.

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