

FICTION

Oliver Optic

Plane and Plank

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

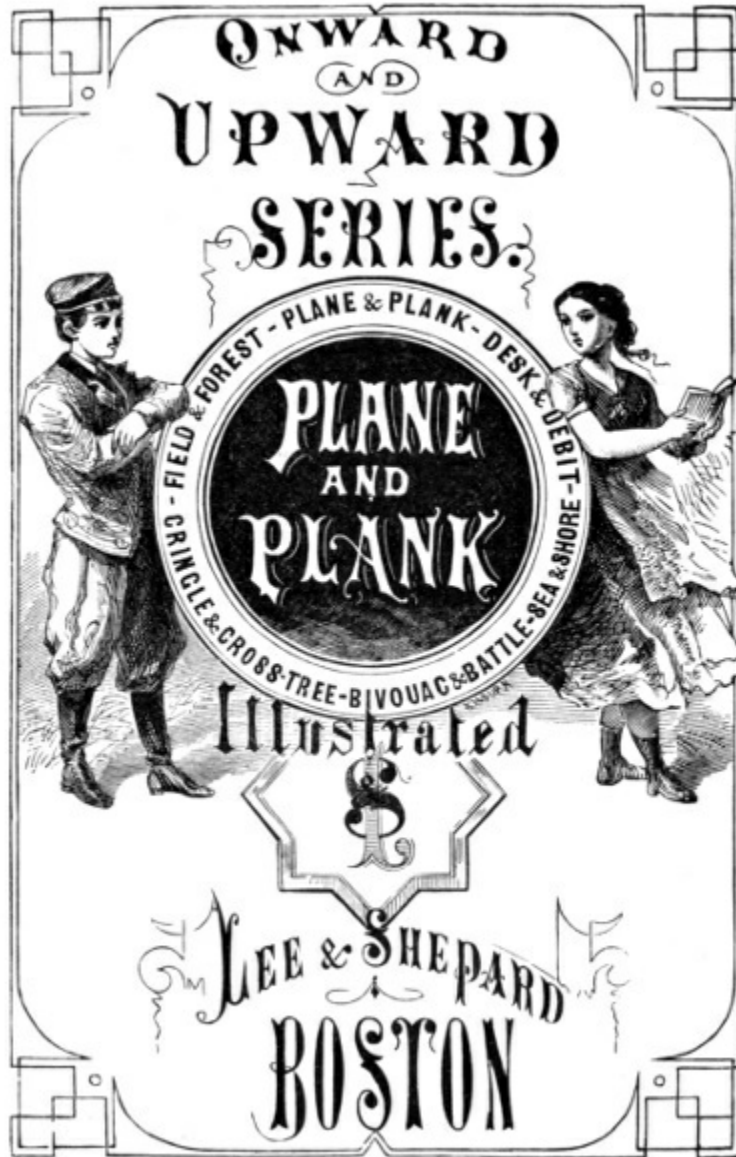
A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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FICTION



ON THE MISSOURI STEAMER. Page 11.



THE UPWARD AND ONWARD SERIES.

PLANE AND PLANK;

OR,

THE MISHAPS OF A MECHANIC.

BY

OLIVER OPTIC,

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG AMERICA ABROAD," "THE ARMY AND NAVY STORIES,"
"THE WOODVILLE STORIES," "THE BOAT-CLUB STORIES," "THE
STARRY FLAG STORIES," "THE LAKE-SHORE
SERIES," ETC.

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TO
MY YOUNG FRIEND
GEORGE W. HILLS

This Book
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

"PLANE AND PLANK" is the second of THE UPWARD AND ONWARD SERIES, in which the hero, Phil Farringford, appears as a mechanic. The events of the story are located on the Missouri River and in the city of St. Louis. Phil learns the trade of a carpenter, and the contrast between a young mechanic of an inquiring mind, earnestly laboring to master his business, and one who feels above his calling, and overvalues his own skill, is presented to the young reader, with the hope that he will accept the lesson.

Incidentally, in the person and history of Phil's father the terrible evils of intemperance are depicted, and the value of Christian love and earnest prayer in the reformation of the unfortunate inebriate is exhibited.

Though the incidents of the hero's career are quite stirring, and some of the situations rather surprising, yet Phil is always true to himself; and those who find themselves in sympathy with him cannot possibly be led astray, while they respect his Christian principles, reverence the Bible, and strive with him to do their whole duty to God and man.

HARRISON SQUARE, BOSTON,

June 7, 1870.

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PLANE AND PLANK;

OR,

THE MISHAPS OF A MECHANIC.



CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH PHIL MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF MR. LEONIDAS LYNCHPINNE.

"What do you think you shall do for a living, Phil Farringford, when you arrive at St. Louis?" asked Mr. Gracewood, as we sat on the hurricane deck of a Missouri River steamer.

"I don't care much what I do, if I can only get into some mechanical business," I replied. "I want to learn a trade. I don't think I'm very vain when I say that I have about half learned one now."

"Perhaps you have half learned several," added my excellent friend, with a smile. "I have no doubt you will make a good mechanic, for you are handy in the use of tools; and you have been thrown so much upon your own resources that you are full of expedients."

"I am always delighted when I have a difficult job to do. Nothing pleases me so much as to study up the means of overcoming an obstacle," I added.

"The first qualification for any pursuit is to have a taste for it. You will make a good mechanic."

"I am only afraid that after I have learned a trade, I shall not care to work at it."

"That won't do," protested Mr. Gracewood. "You mustn't keep jumping from one thing to another. Frequent change is the enemy of progress. You must not be fickle."

"But, after I have learned my trade, or rather finished learning it, there will be no more difficulties to overcome."

"Yes, there will. What trade do you mean to learn?"

"The carpenter's, I think."

"There may be an infinite variety in the trade."

"I know there may be, but there is not. One house must be very much like every other one, I don't think I could be contented to keep doing the same thing over and over again."

"If you wish to succeed, you must stick to your trade, Phil Farringford."

"Should I stick to it if I can do better at something else?"

"You must, at least, be very sure that you can do better at something else."

"Of course I shall; but, if I learn my trade, I shall always have it to fall back upon."

"That is very true; but I wish to impress it upon your mind that fickleness of purpose is fatal to any real success in morals, in science, and in business."

Our conversation was interrupted by the stopping of the steamer at a wood-yard; for I never lost an opportunity, on those occasions, to take a walk on shore. I was nervously anxious to see everything there was to be seen. All was new and strange; and every day, as the settlements on the banks of the great river increased in number and extent, afforded me a new sensation. As I had been brought up far away from the haunts of civilization, even a house was a curiosity to me; and I gazed with astonishment at the busy scenes which were presented to me in some of the larger towns. At St. Joseph we had taken on board quite a number of passengers, and the scene in the cabin had become much livelier than before.

The addition was not wholly an improvement, for among the new arrivals were not a few gamblers. From this time the tables were occupied by these blacklegs, and such of the passengers as they could induce to join them in the hazardous sport, from early in the morning until late at night. The parties thus engaged were surrounded by a crowd of curious observers, watching the turnings of the game, and perhaps calculating their own chances if they engaged in the wretched business. I had looked on myself with interest, and when I saw a man put five dollars into his pocket on the turn of a card, I thought it was an easy way to make money; but then I had an opportunity to see that it was just as easy a way to lose it.

Mr. Gracewood had called me away from my position near the table, after the gamblers had commenced their operations, and cautioned me never to play for money at any game. He explained to me the nature of the business, and assured me that the gamblers who had come on board at St. Joseph were of the vilest class of men. After his lecture I

was not tempted to try my hand with the party at the table. The talk about making and losing money at games of chance introduced the subject of my own finances. I had paid my passage to St. Louis, and had besides nearly one hundred dollars in gold in a shot-bag in my pocket.

While we were talking, I took out the bag, and counted the pieces, as I had done several times on the passage, to assure myself that my funds were all right. My excellent friend told me I must learn prudence, and that I ought not to exhibit my money, especially while we had so many suspicious characters on board. I was alarmed, and looked around to discover who had observed me. One of the passengers, who had come on board at "St. Joe," was promenading the deck, and I had noticed that he passed quite near me several times. He was a young man flashily dressed, but he did not look like a bad man. I put my shot-bag into my pocket, resolved not to show it again, and we continued to discuss the financial question till it led us to the consideration of my future occupation.

The wood-yard where the boat stopped was in a lonely region, and it was just sunset when she touched the shore. Its location was at the mouth of a stream down which the wood was brought in flatboats, though a young forest was growing in the region around the landing. As it was too damp for his wife and daughter to walk, Mr. Gracewood would not go on shore, and I went alone. It was a great luxury to stretch one's legs for an hour on the hard ground after living for weeks on the steamer.

"How long before you leave?" I asked of the captain, as I went over the plank.

"Perhaps not till morning," he replied.

"Do you stay here all night?"

"It's going to be foggy, and I don't think we can run down to Leavenworth, which is not more than seven miles from here. We should have to lie there till morning if we went on."

I was sorry for this, because Mrs. Gracewood had a friend in the place, where we intended to spend the evening, and I was anxious to see the inside of a civilized house. However, we could make the visit the next day, for the boat was to stay several hours at the town. I went on shore, and several of the passengers did the same.

"It's quite smoky on the river," said a young man, coming up to me as we landed.

"Yes; the captain says he shall probably have to lie here till morning," I replied.

"That's too bad," added my companion, the St. Joe passenger whom I had observed on the hurricane deck when I was counting my money. "I meant to go to a prayer-meeting in Leavenworth this evening."

"A prayer-meeting!" I repeated, my interest awakened; for I had heard Mr. Gracewood speak of such gatherings, though I had never attended one.

"When I came up the river three days ago, they were holding them every evening in the chapel; and I am anxious to attend."

"I should like to go very much."

"I think I shall go as it is," continued the young man, looking at his watch.

"How can you go if the boat remains here?"

"I can walk. It is not more than three or four miles across the bend of the river."

"I should like to go with you very much," I answered.

"I should be very glad of your company."

"If you will wait a few moments, I will speak to Mr. Gracewood."

He consented to wait, and I hastened to the saloon. When I had stated my desire, Mr. Gracewood rather objected.

"You don't know the person with whom you are going," said he.

"I think I can take care of myself, sir. But I don't think there can be any danger in going with a young man who is willing to walk four miles to attend a prayer-meeting."

"Perhaps not. I should really like to go to one myself."

"I don't think there can be any danger," interposed Mrs. Gracewood. "If we could get a vehicle here, we would all

go."

"There is the captain. I will ask him if one cannot be obtained," said Mr. Gracewood.

The captain said there was no vehicle suitable to convey a lady, but he would send a party of three in the steamer's boat, if they would pay the expenses of the two oarsmen in Leavenworth for the night.

"But can't you send five as well as three?" asked Mr. Gracewood, who did not object to the expense.

"The boat is hardly large enough to carry them besides the two oarsmen. I lost my boat going up the river, and I had to take such a one as I could find," replied the captain.

"But I would rather walk," I added. "I will meet you in the town."

"Very well, Phil Farringford. Go to the landing when you arrive, and wait for us."

I promised to do so, and joined the young man on the shore. We started immediately for our destination, and passing through the grove of young trees, we reached the open prairie, over which there was a wagon track.

"I don't happen to know your name," said my companion.

"Philip Farringford; but my friends call me Phil."

"Farringford; I know a man of that name in St. Louis," replied he. "He used to be a large steamboat owner, but he has gone to ruin now."

"Gone to ruin?"

"Yes, drank hard, and lost all his property. He is a poor, miserable fellow now."

"Had he a family?"

"He had a wife, but she left him years ago. She was a very pretty woman, they say, though I never saw her."

"Did you ever hear that he and his wife were on board a steamer which was burned on the upper Missouri?"

"Never did."

Very likely this man was the owner of the steamer after which I had been named; but it was not probable that he was in any manner related to me. My curiosity was satisfied, or rather my new friend could give me no further information in regard to him.

"There was a steamer of that name burned on the Missouri about eleven years ago," I added.

"Well, I was a boy then, and did not come to St. Louis till years after."

"I should like to ascertain something about that boat, Mr.--You didn't tell me your name."

"Just so; I did not. My name is--my name is Lynchpinne," he replied, with some hesitation, so that I wondered whether he had not forgotten his name--"Leonidas Lynchpinne."

I thought it was a queer name, but an instinct of politeness prevented me from saying so.

"What do you wish to know in regard to that steamer, Phil?" he asked.

"Some of my relations were on board of her, and I should like to ascertain whether they were saved or not."

"Farringford will know all about it, if you can catch him when he is sober, which is not very often. I will help you out with it when we get to St. Louis."

"Thank you, Mr. Lynchpinne. I shall be under very great obligations to you if you can help me."

I thought my new friend was a very obliging young man, and I was glad to know him, especially as he was in the habit of attending prayer-meetings.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH PHIL MEETS WITH HIS FIRST MISHAP.

Four miles was a short walk to me, and when we reached Leavenworth, I was as fresh as when we started. The town, then in the third year of its existence, had a population of two thousand, and some substantial buildings had already been erected.

"Where is the landing-place?" I asked, as we entered the town.

"It is not far from here," replied Mr. Lynchpinne. "But that boat won't be here for an hour or two yet."

"But I would rather go there at once."

"There is no hurry; but we will go down in a few minutes. I want to inquire at what time the prayer-meeting commences."

"I will go directly to the landing, if you will tell me the way. I won't keep you waiting, and I will see you at the meeting."

"Don't be in a hurry. It is only a little past six, and the boat won't arrive for an hour, certainly. I will go down with you in five minutes," persisted my companion.

"I would not have my friends wait for me a moment," I added.

"We shall have to wait an hour for them. We will go up to the hotel, and engage a room, for we may not find one after the meeting."

He conducted me through the principal street of the town, and I gazed with interest at the shops, houses, and people.

"How much farther have we to go?" I asked, when I judged that the five minutes had expired.

"Only a short distance; but we are going towards the river all the time."

"We passed a hotel just now."

"That is not the one I stop at when I am here. The prices are too high for me. I have money enough, but you know a young man ought to be economical on principle."

I thought this was very good logic, and I fully subscribed to it; for, though I had almost a hundred dollars in my pocket, I wished to save as much as possible of it. Mr. Lynchpinne turned down a cross street, and presently stopped before a large two-story frame house, the lower part of which was a shop of some kind; but it was closed. On the outside of the building there was a flight of stairs leading to the second story.

"We will go up here and inquire about the prayer-meeting," said my new friend. "It won't take but a moment."

"Very well; but don't be long. I will wait here till you come down."

"No; come up."

"I had just as lief wait here."

"But this is the place where we shall sleep. A friend of mine lets out some rooms here to lodgers. We can sleep here for fifty cents each, and it would cost a dollar at the hotel."

"All right; you engage a room for both of us."

"But come up. If you should want to go to bed before I am ready to come in, you won't be able to find your room, if you don't go and look at it now."

I thought we were wasting more time in debating the matter than it would take for me to look at the chamber, and I followed him up the stairs. We entered the building, which was of considerable dimensions. I groped my way, after my friend, through long entries, which were not lighted, until, after turning two corners, he halted and knocked.

"Who's there?" called a voice from within.

"Lynch," replied my guide. "Lynch is the short of Lynchpinne," he added to me.

"Come in!"

I heard the springing of a bolt on the door before it was opened.

"Go in, Phil," said my companion, placing himself behind me, and gently forcing me into the apartment.

The room was not more than twelve feet square.

The only furniture it contained was a chair and a small toilet-table. The former was placed in one corner, and the latter directly in front of it.

"Is there to be a prayer-meeting this evening?" asked Mr. Lynchpinne of the man who sat behind the table.

"Of course."

"At what time?"

"Half past seven. What have you there?" continued the man behind the table.

"A dove who has the yellow."

"Right; we will begin the meeting now then," added the man, producing a little silver box, open on one side, so that I could see it contained a pack of cards.

This was the first intimation I had that anything was wrong. The sight of the cards roused my suspicions, as well they might. I had heard the snap of the bolt as the man locked the door when we entered. I looked about me, and discovered that there were no windows in the room, though there was another door besides that by which we had entered.

"Put that up," said Mr. Lynchpinne. "You know that I never gamble."

"I thought you wanted to open the meeting."

"I don't know what you mean," added my companion, who certainly looked very innocent.

"O, you don't!"

"Of course I don't. My young friend and I must stay in town over night, and we want a room. Have you any left, Redwood?"

"Not a room."

"Can't you find one?" persisted my friend.

"Everything on this floor is let by the week."

"There's the corner room in the attic," said the man who had opened the door when we entered.

"Show it to them, Glynn," added Redwood, who appeared to be the proprietor of the establishment.

"I know where it is. Give me a light, and I won't trouble you," said Lynchpinne.

Glynn opened a door which led to another room, and soon appeared with a rusty iron candlestick, and the stump of a candle, which he lighted.

"Come, Phil, we will see the room," said Lynchpinne, when we were in the entry.

"What sort of a place is this?" I demanded. "I don't like the looks of it."

"Nor I," he replied. "I should judge by the looks that Redwood gambles."

"I think I won't stay here. I don't want to be in a gambling-house."

"Humph! It will be just the same if you go to the hotel. Let us look at the room, at any rate."

"You have seen it before."

"But I wish you to see it; then, if you don't like to stay here, we will go to the hotel."

I followed him up the narrow flight of stairs, and at the end of an entry, which extended the whole length of the building, we entered a chamber. It contained a rude bed, a chair, and a wash-stand.

"Not very elegant accommodations," said Lynchpinne, as we surveyed the room; "but when I can save half a dollar without any real sacrifice of comfort, I do so."

"I had as lief sleep here as anywhere," I replied. "Wouldn't it have been more economical to stay on board the steamer?"

"Doubtless it would; but I wanted to come, and so did you. We will do it as cheap as we can--that's all."

"I'm satisfied."

"Then I will put this candle on the chair, with a couple of matches by the side of it, so that we can come in without any assistance."

"Let us be in a hurry, for I am afraid that boat will get to the landing before we do," I added, impatiently.

"You need not concern yourself about her. We shall have to wait half an hour when we get to the river. But I am all ready."

"So am I."

"I hope you haven't much money about you, Phil," said my companion, as he placed the candle on the chair.

"I have a little. But why do you say that?"

"Because there are a great many bad men about these new towns; and some of them would not scruple to rap you over the head for your money. Besides, there will be a crowd on the steamboat levee, and we may have our pockets picked. I think I shall hide my money in the bed."

Suiting the action to the word, he took his wallet from his pocket, and thrust his arm into the bed up to the shoulder.

"No one will think of looking there for it," he added, as if thoroughly satisfied with what he had done. "I advise you to do the same."

"I don't mean to leave my money here," I replied. "I don't like the looks of the people in this house."

"Nor I; but they will not think of such a thing as looking into the bed for money. Take my advice, Phil."

"No; I think I can take care of what money I have," I answered.

"You haven't been about this region so much as I have, or you wouldn't run any risks," he continued; and I thought he was very persistent about the care of my funds.

"That may be, though I think my money will be safer in my pocket than in that bed. But come, Mr. Lynchpinne. We are wasting our time, and we had better hurry down to the river."

"How much money have you, Phil?" asked my companion.

"I have enough to pay my way for a few days longer," I replied, moving towards the door.

"I hate to see a fellow come into a place like this and lose all his money."

"You needn't trouble yourself at all about it. If I lose it, I won't blame you, for you have certainly given me abundant warning."

"At least put your money in a safe place on your person before we go out."

"It's all right," I answered, placing my hand upon my pocket, where the shot-bag which held my funds was deposited. "But hurry up, and let us go to the landing."

"Is that where you keep your money?" he added. "You are certain to lose it all if you carry it in that pocket. Put it inside your vest, and then button your coat."

"There is no pocket inside of my vest."

"No matter for that. Tie it up in your handkerchief, and fasten it to your suspender. Do anything with it, except to leave it in that pocket."

I rather liked his suggestion, though I was not quite satisfied with the degree of interest he manifested in the safety of my money. I took out the shot-bag, and wrapped it in the handkerchief, and was about to deposit it in the place he had indicated, when, with a sudden spring, he snatched the bag from me, kicked over the chair on which the candle had been placed, and fled from the room. I was in total darkness; but I leaped forward to grapple with the assailant, for I was determined not to lose my money without a struggle to recover it.

I was taken wholly by surprise, for I had not suspected that a young man who was in the habit of attending prayer-meetings would be capable of any dishonest act. As I leaped forward to the door, it was closed before me. The villain had made his calculations beforehand, and moved with greater facility than I could. I heard him lock the door upon me, and I immediately realized that I was a prisoner in the strange house. Then I understood the nature of my kind friend's solicitude about my funds. He had been laboring all this time to induce me to produce my shot-bag, so that he could snatch it from me.

I heard his footsteps in the long entry, as he retreated from the scene of his crime. I took hold of the door, and tried to pull it open; but though it was a sham affair, I did not succeed. If I shouted, I should doubtless call up Redwood, or his assistant; and I came to the conclusion that the house was a den of robbers and gamblers. I decided to exercise my skill still further upon the door.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH PHIL SLIPS OFF HIS COAT, AND RETREATS IN GOOD ORDER.

It is scarcely necessary for me to say that I was exceedingly indignant at the trick played upon me by Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne; and I was not at all comforted by the reflection that he had used the cloak of religion to cover his designs. He had seen me counting my gold on board of the steamer; and the wisdom of Mr. Gracewood's advice on that occasion had already been demonstrated. If I had not carelessly exhibited the contents of my shot-bag, the unpleasant event which had happened to me could not have occurred.

I went to work upon the lock of the door. I have said that I am fond of encountering a difficulty; but I must say that the difficulty of opening that door was an exception to the general rule. I did not enjoy it at all. I fingered over it a while in the dark, with no success, and with no prospect of any, till it occurred to me that the candle and the matches which my companion had placed in the chair were available. I felt about the floor till I found them, and soon had a little light on the subject. The partition was a very superficial piece of work, and I saw that, if I could not spring the bolt of the lock, I could pull the door open.

The door did not come within half an inch of the threshold, and there was a space equally wide at the top. I pulled the bottom out with my fingers till I could thrust the handle of my knife in at the side. The door was thin, and sprang easily under the pressure. When I got a fair hold, I pulled it open, tearing out the fastening from the frame of the door. The creaking and cracking produced by the operation amounted to a considerable noise; but I made haste to use the advantage I had gained before any of the villanous occupants of the house discovered me.

Taking the candle in my hand, I walked through the long entry towards the stairs by which I had come up. But I had gone but half the distance before I discovered the man Glynn hastening in the opposite direction. He was a burly fellow, and I suddenly experienced a feeling of regret that I was not on the other side of him, for I was satisfied that any conquest I might gain over him would be by the use of my legs rather than my fists.

"What's that noise here?" demanded Glynn, halting in the middle of the passage.

"I made some noise in opening the door of the room."

"Lynch says some one is breaking into the rooms. Are you the one?"

"No; I didn't break in; I broke out. But if you will excuse me, I will go, for I am in a hurry to get to the river."

"Never saw a rogue yet that was not in a hurry."

"What do you mean by that?" I demanded.

"Some one has been breaking into our rooms, and I only want to catch the fellow that did it."

"I am not the fellow."

"Lynch says you are."

"Where is Lynch?"

"Gone out; I don't know where. What have you been doing up here?"

"I have been robbed of my money by the fellow you call Lynch; and I only want to get hold of him," I replied.

"That won't go down here," said Glynn, shaking his head.

"Well, I shall go down, any how."

"Not yet, till I see what you have been about here," added he, as he took me by the wrist, and walked in the direction from which I had just come.

Fully persuaded that I should make nothing by resistance, I determined to await my opportunity, rather than spend my strength in a useless battle, in which I was liable to have my head broken. He led me to the room I had just left, the door of which was open. The splintered door-frame betrayed my operations at once.

"Did you do that?" demanded Glynn, savagely.

"I did."

"Then you are the chap I've been looking for," said he, squeezing my wrist till the bones cracked.

"Lynch snatched my money, and then locked me into the room, while he ran away. That's the whole story."

"I tell you that won't go down," added Glynn, giving me a rude shake.

"Isn't this the room to which you sent him and me, and didn't you give him the key?"

"And didn't you break down this door? That's what I want to know."

"I have said that I did; and I have explained the reason of it."

"Redwood may settle the business to suit himself. Come down to the office."

He walked me through the long entry, and down the stairs to a room adjoining that we had entered before. Glynn explained to the man I had seen with the silver box in his hand, and who was doubtless the proprietor of the house, what had occurred in the attic.

"I see," said Redwood. "This is a very pretty story; and this boy wants to hurt the reputation of the house by declaring that he has been robbed here. As you say, Glynn, that won't go down."

"But it is true," I protested.

"You know it isn't true. How old are you, boy?"

"Thirteen."

"How much money did you lose?" asked Redwood, with an obvious sneer.

"Nearly a hundred dollars."

"In wildcat bank notes, I dare say."

"No, sir, in gold."

"That's a likely story! Boys of thirteen don't travel round much in these times with a hundred dollars in gold in their trousers' pockets."

"But I had the money, and I have been robbed in this house."

"I don't believe a word of it. But you have been breaking down my doors, and trying to get into my rooms. There isn't much law here, but you shall try on what little there is."

"I can prove all I say by my friends on board of the steamer."

"It's too late to do anything to-night, Glynn. You must keep him till morning. Lock him up in No. 10."

"I'm not going to be locked up in No. 10," I protested, my indignation getting the better of my discretion, for I could not help thinking of Mr. Gracewood and his family fretting and worrying about me all night; and a sense of the injustice to which I was subjected stung me to the soul.

"Perhaps you are not; but we'll see," replied Redwood, with his hand on the knob of the door which opened into the room I had first entered with Lynchpinne, and in which I heard voices.

"Is the man I came with in there?" I asked, pointing to the door.

"No; take him round to No. 10, Glynn."

"Come along, youngster," said the man, as he seized me by the collar of my coat, and dragged me out into the entry.

I was powerless in the grasp of the stout fellow, and he led me along the entry till we had almost reached the door by which we had entered the building. At a door on the right, marked No. 10, in red chalk, my custodian halted. Setting his candlestick upon the floor, he applied the key to the door, for he still held me by the collar with one hand. I had no taste whatever for being locked up in No. 10, which I saw was an inner chamber, like the gambling apartment I had first visited.

While Glynn was unlocking the door, a piece of strategy occurred to me, which I instantly adopted. Like the prudent shipmaster, who is sometimes compelled to cut away a mast to save the ship, I was obliged to sacrifice my coat to obtain my liberty. Throwing my arms behind me, I slipped out of the garment, and sprang to the outside door, leaving

the coat in the hands of Glynn. Fortunately the door was ajar, and throwing it open, I fled down the stairs with a celerity which doubtless astonished my burly jailer.

"Stop, you rascal!" shouted Glynn; but, without pausing to consider the polite invitation, I promptly declined it.

"The next instant the iron candlestick struck me in the back, but inflicted no damage upon me. It was followed by another missile, which I did not identify, and then by my coat. I do not think the fellow meant to return the garment I needed so much on a cool night; but, having it in his hand, he threw it at me, as he had everything else within his reach. I grasped the coat, and ran down the street, closely pursued by Glynn. Finding I was attracting the attention of people in the street, two or three of whom attempted to stop me when they saw a man was pursuing me, I turned into a cross street. I ran with my coat on my arm, and soon distanced my clumsy pursuer. I turned several times, but I had no idea where I was or whither I was going, and I soon found myself out on the prairie.



PHIL ESCAPES FROM GLYNN. Page 40.

No one was near me, and I was satisfied that Glynn had abandoned the chase. I put on my coat, and walked leisurely in the direction which I thought would lead me to the river. I was vexed and discouraged at the loss of my money. My first mishap gave me some experience of the disadvantages of civilization, for in the field and forest from which I had come, we had no gamblers, or thieves, except the Indians. It would be a very pretty story to tell Mr. Gracewood, that I had not been smart enough to take care of myself, in spite of my boast to that effect, and that I had lost all my money, except a little change in silver, which I carried in my vest pocket. It was exceedingly awkward and annoying, and I was almost ashamed to meet my excellent friend.

I continued to walk, keeping the houses of the town on my left, expecting soon to see the river. But it seemed to me that the longer I walked, the more I did not see it, and the less became the probability that I should see it. In a word, I could not find any river, and I concluded that I was journeying away from it, instead of towards it. The houses on my left diminished in number, and I saw that all the lights were behind me. I thought that, by this time, Glynn had given up the chase, and was probably busy in attending to the wants of the gamblers in Redwood's den. Turning to the left, I walked towards the centre of the town, and soon struck a broad street, which had been laid out, and on which an occasional house had been erected.

This course brought me to the middle of the place, and in front of the hotel. I ventured to inquire the way to the

river. Taking the direction pointed out to me, I reached the landing-place without further difficulty. I found the place where the steamers stopped, but there was no boat to be seen. I visited every point above and below the landing; I inquired in shops and offices, and of everybody I met; but I could not discover the steamer's boat, and no one had seen it or heard of it. It was very strange, and I was perplexed, but not alarmed. A trip of seven miles in a boat, even in the evening, was not a very perilous undertaking, and I was not willing to believe that any accident had happened to my friends.

I had seen a clock in one of the stores where I had called, and I knew it was half past eight. The boat must have arrived at least an hour before, if it had come at all; but I had almost reached the conclusion that my friends had abandoned the excursion. But if they had come, Mr. Gracewood would go to the prayer-meeting, expecting to find me there, and I went in search of such a gathering.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH PHIL ENDEAVORS TO REMEDY HIS FIRST MISHAP.

I went up to the centre of the town, where I had seen a church; but it was closed, and all its windows were dark. I inquired for the other churches, and visited the rest of them; but I could find no prayer-meeting. Those whom I asked had not heard of any meetings. By this time I concluded that I was an idiot to believe that the prayer-meeting was anything but a ruse on the part of Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne, otherwise Lynch, which was probably his true name, and which he had doubtless extended for my especial benefit.

I was disgusted, and heartily wished I had not left the steamer. I made up my mind that it was not safe to trust any stranger, even if he said he was in the habit of attending prayer-meetings; but I ought to add that I have always found it safe to trust those who really attend them, and really take an interest in them. I had been duped, deceived, robbed. I wanted my money back, and I was quite as anxious to see Lynch as I was Mr. Gracewood.

I walked up to the hotel, and looked at every body I saw in the public rooms, hoping that my fellow-passenger had concluded to pay a dollar for his lodging, instead of fifty cents at the gambling den, which I thought he now could afford to do, with his funds replenished with the contents of my shot-bag. He was not there, and I went over towards the house where I had been robbed. I approached the locality very cautiously, for I was not anxious to confront the burly Glynn.

I examined the building at a respectful distance, and tried to fix the location of the attic chamber where Lynch had plundered me; but I had twisted about so many times in the long entries that I was unable to do so. Occasionally a man, or a party of men, went up the steps, and I supposed them to be the lodgers in the house. I watched those who went in and those who came out, in the hope that I might see Lynch. I did not see him, and perhaps it was just as well for me that I did not, for, as I felt then, I should certainly have "pitched into him."

I could not do anything to help myself. I was tempted to arm myself with a club and go into the lodging-house in search of the rascal who had robbed me; but this would have been very imprudent. It was possible that Lynch was still in the house, and that he would occupy the room in the attic. I could not help thinking that Redwood was his confederate, and that my money would be shared between them. They seemed to understand each other perfectly, and I recalled the remark of my companion, incomprehensible to me when it was uttered, that I was "a dove with the yellows." A dove is the emblem of innocence, and the yellows I took to be a metaphor, based upon the color of the pieces in my shot-bag.

It was clearly more prudent for me to wait till the next morning before I attempted to do anything; and, having satisfied myself of the correctness of my conclusion, I decided to wait, with what patience I could, for the assistance of my friends the next day. The night was advancing, and I had no place to sleep. I had not money enough left to pay even for a cheap lodging; and it was rather cool to camp on the ground without a blanket. But I had a berth on board of the steamer, if I could find my way back to her. I was not so tired that I could not walk four miles.

I started for the wood-yard, and, with less difficulty than I expected, I found the road over the prairie. As I trudged along in the darkness, I thought of all the events of the evening. It was a pity that the world contained any such rascals as "Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne;" but I was confident that the next time I met one of his class I should be a match for him, and would not even go to a prayer-meeting with him. It was possible that this worthy had returned to the steamer, relying upon Redwood to retain me till after the steamer had left the town; but I did not depend much upon finding him in his state-room.

Reaching the wood-yard, I went on board of the steamer. Though it was nearly midnight, the gamblers on board were still plying their infamous vocation. I went to the table, and satisfied myself that Lynch was not among them. I visited the state-room which Mr. Gracewood had occupied with me since we left Council Bluffs, where the number of passengers increased so that I could no longer have a room to myself. He was not there; and there was no light in the room occupied by his wife and daughter. I was not willing to believe they had left the boat till I obtained this evidence.

The bar of the steamer was still open, for wherever the gamblers were whiskey was in demand. I asked the bar-keeper where the captain was, and learned that he had retired; but the clerk was still up, and I soon found him, for I wished to ascertain where Lynch's room was.

"Well, Phil, you are up late," said the clerk, as I walked up to him; and in the long trip I had become well acquainted with him.

"I have been down to Leavenworth," I replied.

"Why did you come back? We shall be there early in the morning."

"I had to come back. Do you take the names of all the passengers?"

"Yes; we have to put all the names on the berth list."

"Is there one by the name of Leonidas Lynchpinne?" I asked.

"Certainly not," he replied, laughing.

"Or any name like it?"

"I will look, if you wish."

"Do, if you please, and I will tell you why I ask."

We went to the office, and he examined his list.

"Lyndon Lynch--"

"That's the man," I interposed. "Lynch. Which is his room?"

"No. 24."

"I should like to know whether he is in it, or not," I added.

"He came on board at St. Joe," said the clerk, as we walked to No. 24.

Lynch was not there, and the other occupant of the room was playing cards at the table. I sat down with the clerk, and related to him all the events of the evening. Occasionally he smiled, and even laughed when I spoke of going to a prayer-meeting. I felt cheap to think I had been duped so easily, and was a subject for the merriment of the clerk.

"You will never see your money again, Phil," said he, when I had concluded.

"Why not? Don't they have any law in these civilized regions."

"You can have all the law you want when you find your man. This Lynch is probably one of these blacklegs. They are miserable scoundrels, who float about everywhere."

"But the man who kept the lodging-house was in league with him."

"Very likely; but it don't appear from your story that he had anything to do with the robbery. Your own evidence would acquit him."

I did not derive much comfort from the clerk's remarks, though I could not help acknowledging the truth of what he said. However, the loss of a hundred dollars would not ruin me, uncomfortable and inconvenient as it was. I could draw upon Mr. Gracewood, who had fifteen hundred dollars of my funds in his possession. But I intended to make an effort the next day, while the boat lay at Leavenworth, to find Lynch, and have him lynched, if possible.

"But why did you come back, Phil?" continued the clerk. "Mr. Gracewood and his family went down in the boat."

"I couldn't find them, or the boat. I was almost sure they had not started."

"They went."

"It's very strange I could not find the boat. I inquired of twenty persons, and no one had seen or heard of it. Do you suppose anything could have happened to them?"

"It is not probable, though of course it is possible. The current of the river is very swift, and the shores are rocky. But they had two of our deck hands with them, and I should say that any accident was next to impossible."

I was of his opinion, though I could not help worrying about them. I went to my room and retired. I was very weary; but, though disposed to consider still further the events of the evening, I fell asleep in spite of myself. When I awoke the next morning, the boat was lying at the landing in Leavenworth. It was only a little after sunrise, but the hands were busy loading and discharging freight. I hastily dressed myself, wondering how I could have slept so long; but I had walked not less than fifteen miles the preceding evening, and perhaps it was more strange that I waked so early.

"Have you found the boat, captain?" I asked, with breathless interest, as I hastened to the main deck, where I found the master of the steamer.

"No, Phil; and I am a good deal worried about your friends," he replied.

"Why, where are they?"

"I have no idea; but I have been up and down the levee from one end of the town to the other, and I can't find the boat. I don't understand it."

"I could not find it last night. I asked twenty persons, but no one had seen such a party as I described," I added.

"Do you know the name of the person they intended to visit?"

"I do not. I may have heard it, but I don't remember anything about it."

"The boat will not start before noon, and we may hear of them before that time," said the captain.

"Did you look along the shore as you came down?" I asked.

"Not particularly; but if they had been on the shore the pilot would have seen them. The clerk told me you lost your money last night, Phil."

"Yes, sir;" and I repeated my story to him.

"We will take an officer and visit the house," added the captain.

"The sooner we go, the more likely we shall be to find Lynch," I suggested.

"We will go at once, then."

Captain Davis and I landed, and walked up to the hotel. An officer was procured, and I led the way to the lodging-house. We entered without announcing our visit, and proceeded to the office, as Glynn had called the room in front of the gambling den.

"So you have come back, youngster," said the burly assistant.

"Where is the man that calls himself Lynch?" demanded the officer.

"No such man here," replied Glynn. "Don't know him."

"I suppose not," said the officer, ironically. "What room did you take with him, young man?" he added, turning to me.

"I don't know the number, but I can lead you to it."

"What's the matter?" asked Glynn, innocently.

"This young man was robbed in your house last night."

"Was he really, though?" added the assistant.

"You know that he was."

"He told me he was, but I didn't believe it. The youngster went to a room with a man, and I heard some one breaking down doors. I caught this youngster up there alone. But if he was robbed, that's another thing," continued Glynn, who seemed to have a very proper and wholesome respect for the officer. "I will go up to that room, and see if Lynch is there."

"You needn't trouble yourself," said the prudent official. "I will go myself."

"I'll go up and show you the way."

"Where is Redwood?"

"Not up yet. I will call him."

"No; I will call him myself when I want him."

Glynn led the way up to the attic, and I was tolerably confident, from his manner, that we should find Lynch in the room. We found the door locked, in spite of the damage I had done to it.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH PHIL VAINLY SEARCHES FOR THE GRACEWOODS.

"Of course you know whether the man we are looking for is in this room or not, Glynn," said the officer, when he found that the door was locked.

"Pon my word I do not," protested the assistant.

"Did you let the room to any other person?"

"I did; but Lynch may occupy it with him, for aught I know. These fellows all run together, and I don't know who are in the rooms. We let them for a dollar a night, and don't care who sleeps in them."

The officer knocked at the door, and was promptly answered by a person whose voice did not sound at all like Lynch's. My hopes were failing, and I would have taken half my money, and given a receipt in full for the whole, if I could have made such a trade.

"Open the door," said the officer.

Even this request was promptly complied with, and we found the bed occupied by only one person. Glynn protested that he had not seen Lynch since he gave him the key and the light early in the evening; and, whether he believed him or not, we were forced to accept his explanation. We saw Redwood afterwards, and he appeared to be as innocent as his immaculate assistant. Both of them apologized to me for the rude treatment to which I had been subjected, and declared that they had made a bad mistake in taking me for a house-breaker, since I was now vouched for by no excellent a person as Captain Davis, of the steamer Fawn. If they ever saw Lynch again, they would hand him over to the officers of the law. It was for their interest to do so, because the reputation of the house was greatly injured by having a person robbed within it. They would do what they could to recover my money; and if they succeeded, where should they send it?

Captain Davis could not help laughing at this speech, and told me I need not trouble myself to leave any address. Both protested that they were in earnest; and certainly their logic was correct, whether they were sincere or not. If the local newspaper stated that a person had been robbed of a hundred dollars at Redwood's lodging-house, the fact would deter others from going there, for even gamblers and other fast men would object to having their money stolen. We left the house, and I gave up my money as lost; but I was willing to believe that I had purchased a hundred dollars' worth of wisdom and experience with it, and so I had a fair equivalent.

In the street I found the officer was not disposed to abandon the case. He had a reputation to make in that new land; and perhaps it was worth more to him than to me to find the money. I was entirely willing that he should increase his credit as a thief-taker by restoring my property, and I warmly seconded his endeavors. We watched the lodging-house till dinner time, but without seeing any one who looked like Lynch. In short, the officer made no progress in establishing a title to the position of chief of police when the office should be created in the new and growing city.

I returned to the steamer at the landing, and of course my first inquiries were for Mr. Gracewood and his family. To my astonishment and grief, not a word had been heard of them. Captain Davis had caused a thorough search to be made in the town, without obtaining the slightest clew to them. I was amazed, and so were others who were interested in the fate of the absent ones. It was incredible that any calamity had overtaken them by which the whole party had been lost. If the boat had been upset, the deck hands at least could have saved themselves.

I forgot all about my money in my anxiety for my friends. I could not believe that they had been lost; it was too sad and too improbable to be considered, and I rejected the supposition. But the mystery weighed heavily upon me. The steamer was ready to proceed on her voyage, and the passengers were grumbling at the delay; but Captain Davis was unwilling to proceed without the absentees. In the middle of the afternoon he cast off his fasts, when a portion of his passengers, who had not paid their fare, threatened to leave the boat, and take another which was in sight above the town. But, instead of continuing on his way down the river, he headed her up the stream, in order to examine the shores for any signs of the lost family.

I was deeply interested in the fate of Mr. Gracewood, his wife and daughter, for they were really the only friends I had in the world. I had been saved from a burning steamer by old Matt Rockwood, and was brought up by him in his cabin. I knew nothing of my parents, but old Matt had been a father to me, and the coming of Mr. Gracewood furnished me with a competent instructor in manners, morals, and the various branches of learning. After the death of old Matt, my good friend had been strangely joined by his wife and daughter, and I had lived one season with the family. As the

winter approached, we had left our home in the wilds of the far west, and were now on our way to St. Louis. These events all passed in review through my mind, as I thought of the Gracewoods who had so strangely disappeared.

Old Matt Rockwood had left a considerable sum of money in his chest, which, with the profits of our farm and wood-yard, amounted to over sixteen hundred dollars, when the accounts were finally settled. Fifteen hundred of this sum was in the keeping of Mr. Gracewood, though I held his note for it, and was in no danger of losing it, though he should never appear again. But I had no selfish thoughts. I was interested only in the safety of my friend and his family. The daughter, pretty Ella Gracewood, had been my constant friend and companion at the settlement. I had rescued her from the Indians who had captured her, and it would have broken my heart to know that any calamity had overtaken her.

The Fawn went up the river in spite of the grumbling of the passengers. We passed the steamer coming down the stream; but Captain Davis declared that he should be on his way to St. Louis before the other boat could get away from Leavenworth. Like all other western steamboat masters, he said and did all he could to get and keep his passengers. Extending from the mouth of the stream, where our steamer had passed the night, there was a cut-off, through which the boat, with Mr. Gracewood, had come. The water rushed through it like a sluice, and probably by this time it is the main channel of the river.

"Stop her!" shouted Captain Davis to the pilot, as the boat was passing the outlet of this cut-off.

"What is it, captain?" I asked, startled by the order, and fearful that he had discovered some evidence of a disaster.

"There is an oar," said he, pointing to the shore.

I saw the oar, which had washed up on the bank of the river. The boat was run up to the point, and it was identified as one belonging to the missing boat.

"That is something towards it," said the captain, as the oar was examined on board. "If they didn't lose the other one they could get along well enough."

"Perhaps they did lose the other," suggested the mate.

"It is not very likely they lost both oars," added Captain Davis.

"Do you suppose the boat upset?" I asked, with my heart in my mouth.

"Certainly not. If it did we should have found the boat, or heard from the men. The whole party could not have been drowned in a narrow place like that," replied the captain, confidently.

"What do you think has become of them?" I continued.

"Nothing worse than being carried down the river could have happened to them. I'm sure of that. It's absurd to think that three men should be lost in a stream not a hundred feet wide. Go ahead, pilot!" shouted the captain.

"Down stream?" asked the man at the wheel.

"Yes; we shall pick up the party somewhere below."

The Fawn came about, and to the great satisfaction of the growling portion of her passengers, resumed her voyage down the river. I did the best I could to convince myself that no catastrophe had overtaken my friends. When we came to Leavenworth, we found that the steamer we had passed--whose name was the Daylight--was not there. If she had stopped at all, she had not remained there more than a few minutes. Captain Davis was annoyed at this circumstance, for she would take the passengers and freight that were waiting at the various points on the river below, which would otherwise have been taken by the Fawn. I saw him go down to the main deck, where the furnaces and boilers were located, and in a short time I was conscious that they were crowding the boat up to her highest speed. A race had commenced, not so much to ascertain which of the two boats was the fastest, as to obtain the freight and passengers that were awaiting transportation at the towns below us. I felt no interest in the trial of speed, which at another time might have afforded me a pleasant excitement. From the hurricane deck I watched the shores, to obtain any tidings of the missing boat or her passengers.

At Delaware City the Daylight made a landing; but the Fawn, to my surprise and chagrin, did not stop. It was possible that the Gracewoods had been carried down to this point in their unmanageable boat, and had landed here.

"Why don't you make a landing here? Captain Davis?" I inquired.

"Because the Daylight has gone in ahead of me, and I shall get no freight or passengers if I don't keep ahead of

her."

"But Mr. Gracewood and his family may be here."

"It is not improbable. I feel that I have done all I could for them."

"You might stop."

"I can't sacrifice the interest of my owners, Phil. If the Gracewoods are there, they can take passage in the Daylight. They will not suffer any great hardship, while my boat may lose hundreds of dollars by the delay."

"I shall be in misery till I hear from them."

"You need not be. I am sure no serious accident has happened to them. I want the two men I sent in the boat, but I couldn't stop to get them, even if I knew they were at Delaware City. But we shall hear from your friends before long. The Daylight will drive her wheels hard to keep up with us. I see she hasn't much freight, and she will stop at every place of any size."

"But if you keep ahead of her all the time, how shall we get any news from her?"

"The Fawn is faster than the Daylight, and I can afford to let her pass me at any place where I can obtain freight enough to make it an object. If the Gracewoods are on board of her, they will make themselves known as she goes by. There will be a good deal of freight at Kansas City, where we shall arrive to-night. You will probably find the Daylight there in the morning."

I was satisfied with the captain's explanation, and I hoped the morning would justify his expectations. We made no landings till we reached Kansas City, about eight o'clock in the evening. There was a crowd of passengers there, who rushed on board as soon as the plank was laid down. The freight was immediately taken on board. I was very tired after the exertions and excitement of the day and of the preceding evening, and I went to bed, hoping and expecting to see the Daylight at the landing when I awoke in the morning. I slept very soundly, in spite of the grief and anxiety that weighed upon me; and it is fortunate that Nature will assert her claim, or we might sometimes wear ourselves out with fruitless repinings.

When I came to my consciousness in the morning, I discovered that the boat was in motion. The monotonous puff of the steam-escape pipes saluted my ears. Half dressed, I went out upon the gallery of the boat, but I could see nothing that looked like Kansas City, or the Daylight. The deck hands had been taking in freight when I went to sleep; but how long the boat had been in motion I could not tell.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH PHIL WANDERS ABOUT ST. LOUIS, AND HAS A GLEAM OF HOPE.

When I had completed my toilet, I hastened to find Captain Davis. I was indignant at his course in leaving Kansas City, and I felt that he had been guilty of treachery to me and to the Gracewoods. I went all over the boat, from the wheel-house to the main deck; but the captain was not to be seen. The engineer, in answer to my inquiry, told me Captain Davis had been up till after midnight, and probably had not yet turned out.

"What time did the boat leave Kansas City?" I asked.

"About eleven o'clock; possibly it was half past eleven."

"Did you see anything of the Daylight?"

"Not a thing; and you won't see her till we have been in St. Louis two or three days," replied the engineer. "She can't keep up with the Fawn. Besides, we are full of freight and passengers now, and shall make no long stops anywhere."

"That's mean," I growled, as I left the engineer.

I wanted to cry with vexation; but I had made up my mind that it was not manly to shed tears. I walked up and down the hurricane deck till breakfast time. This exercise had a tendency to cool my hot blood, and I considered the situation in a calmer state of mind. I could be of no service to the Gracewoods, and the father of the family was abundantly able to take care of them. If I could only have been assured of their safety I should have been satisfied.

I went to breakfast; but Captain Davis did not appear till most of the passengers had left the table. I suspected that he did not wish to see me; but that did not prevent me from taking a seat at his side, even at the risk of spoiling his appetite.

"You told me you should not leave Kansas City till the Daylight arrived, Captain Davis," I began.

"Not exactly, Phil. I told you she would probably be there in the morning, or something of that kind."

"Why did you leave, then, before morning?"

"Because my passengers were indignant at the delay I had already made for your friends."

"It was mean."

"Steady, Phil."

"It was mean to serve me such a trick."

"You seem to think, Phil, that we run this boat simply for your accommodation. You are slightly mistaken. I have done more now than most captains would have done. However, I suppose you feel bad, and I won't blame you for being a little cross."

"I didn't mean to be cross," I added, rather vexed that I had spoken so hastily. "I do feel bad. I have lost my money, and lost my friends."

"And I have done the best I could to help you find both."

"You have, Captain Davis. Excuse me for speaking so hastily."

"All right, Phil; but it's a poor way to blame your friends when things go wrong."

"I know it is. Mr. Gracewood had all my money except what I lost, and I haven't a dollar left."

"Well, your passage is paid to St. Louis, and, when the Fawn arrives there, we will see what can be done for you."

"Thank you, sir. You have been very kind to me, and I am sorry I said anything out of the way."

"That's all right now. I have no doubt your friends will come down in the Daylight, and then all will be well with you. Keep cool, and don't fret about anything."

I tried to follow this advice, but I found it very hard work. I talked over all the possibilities and probabilities with the

captain, and I was almost convinced that I was worrying myself for nothing. We should arrive at St. Louis in a couple of days more, and the Daylight would soon follow us. I watched the ever-changing scene on the shores of the river with far less delight than when Ella Gracewood sat at my side. We passed large towns and small ones, and I saw the capital of Missouri, with its State House and other public buildings. Early on the morning of the third day after leaving Kansas City we passed into the Mississippi. A little later in the day we were approaching the great city of St. Louis.

I gazed, with wonder and astonishment, at the vast piles of buildings. I saw the crowds of people hurrying to and fro on Front Street, which borders the river; and I could not help feeling what an insignificant mite I was in the mass of humanity. At the Castle, where I was brought up, I was a person of no little consequence; but here, if I were to figure at all, it must be as a zero. The people on board of the Fawn seemed to catch the infection of bustling activity, for they began to hurry back and forth, collecting their baggage, and making preparations to land.

The boat ran up to the levee, and another lively scene ensued. Hackmen struggled for the passengers, and porters and draymen added their share to the din. I was bewildered, and gazed with my mouth wide open at the bustling life before me. In about an hour the passengers had all disappeared, and I was almost alone on the boiler deck, from which I viewed the panorama of civilization, so new and strange, which was passing before me. The drays were carting off the freight which we had brought, some of it from the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains. The captain had told me I might occupy my state-room, and take my meals with him in the cabin, till the arrival of my friends. I had nothing to do but wait, and when the scene in the vicinity of the Fawn became rather tame, I went on shore. The levee for half a mile was flanked with steamboats, and in several places the excitement I had just witnessed was repeated.

Leaving Front Street, I walked up Market Street, till I came to the Court House. Following Fourth Street, I halted, absolutely bewildered by the magnificent proportions of the Planters' Hotel, which I believe has since been destroyed by fire. But there was no end to my amazement, and I will not attempt to paint the impressions of a green boy as he gazed for the first time upon the elegant public buildings of St. Louis, and at the splendid private residences. All day long I wandered about the city, with my mouth, as well as my eyes and ears, wide open. I gazed at the rich displays of dry goods in the shop windows, and concluded that the people of the city were made of money if they could afford to buy such gorgeous apparel. I looked for hours at the pictures at the print-sellers', and stared at the costly equipages in which elegantly-dressed ladies were riding. I only returned to the steamer when my legs ached so that they would hardly sustain the weight of my body.

In the cabin, at supper, I astonished the captain with a glowing account of what I had seen, just as though the scene was as new and strange to him as to me. The next day I repeated my explorations; but at dinner time I examined all the steamers at the levee to satisfy myself that the Daylight had not yet arrived. I ventured inside of the Planters' Hotel, and some of the public buildings, and the interior of them was even more wonderful to me than the exterior had been.

Two days familiarized me in some degree with the wonders of the great city, and after that I was able to walk through the streets with my mouth shut. I felt that I ought to be at work. It was time for me to commence my new career of existence. In my walks through the city, I had stopped frequently to observe the work where new buildings were in process of erection. After examining the work for a while, I came to the conclusion that I had a great deal to learn before I could be a carpenter. However, I intended to make a beginning as soon as I could.



PHIL AND CAPTAIN DAVIS. Page 67.

"The Daylight is just coming in, Phil," said Captain Davis, as I came in to supper after the tramps of the second day in the city.

"I am so glad!" I exclaimed.

"Eat your supper, Phil, and I will go with you then to the place where she lies."

"Do you suppose the Gracewoods are on board of her?"

"I have no doubt they are; but I should not be at all alarmed even if they were not."

"Why not?"

"They may have missed the boat; but we won't guess at anything again. The Daylight passed us just as you came on board, and will make a landing below."

I bolted my supper, and was so excited I could not have told whether I was eating bread or shavings. When the captain had finished his meal, we hastened down the levee, and were soon on board of the Daylight. The passengers were just going on shore, and I watched the stairs by which they were descending to the main deck to catch the first glimpse of any familiar face. But I was disappointed; and when the last one came down, my heart sank within me.

Captain Davis ascended to the cabin, and I followed, actually trembling with anxiety. We found the clerk in his office, at work upon the manifest.

"Did you take on any passengers at Delaware City?" asked Captain Davis.

"Yes; a dozen of them."

"Any by the name of Gracewood?"

"No," replied the clerk, after he had consulted the list.

"Are you sure, sir?" I asked, unwilling to believe the unpleasant statement.

"Very sure."

"Please to look again," said I.

"You must excuse me; I am very busy. There is the list; you can examine it for yourself."

I looked over the names, but that of Gracewood did not occur.

"They are not here, Phil," said Captain Davis.

"No, they are not," I replied, gloomily.

"We will wait a little while, till the hurry is over, and then we may ascertain something about your friends."

We went out upon the boiler deck, where we could overlook everything that transpired. The deck hands were landing freight and baggage, and everybody was hurrying as though his life depended upon his celerity.

"I shall believe they were all drowned if I don't hear something from them soon," I said.

"That is not at all probable, and I shall not believe anything of that kind till I have positive evidence of it. It is just as easy, and a great deal more pleasant, to think everything is right with them, instead of wrong, until we get the facts."

"You haven't the same interest in the matter that I have, captain."

"That may be; but I don't believe in making myself miserable about anything on mere guesswork. I think it is all right with your friends. But I must say, if you don't hear from them to-day, we must make different arrangements for you, for my owners intend to send the Fawn down to New Orleans with a freight which we take on at Alton. We shall go up there to-morrow."

"What will you do with Mr. Gracewood's goods and baggage?"

"Send them to the storehouse. There!" exclaimed he, suddenly, as he pointed to a man who was wheeling a box on shore. "That is one of the hands who went with the Gracewoods in the small boat. And there is the other. We shall soon know what has become of your friends."

The fact that these two men had come down in the Daylight was hopeful, at least, and Captain Davis and I hastened down to question them; but the master of the steamer would not release them from their work, and we were obliged to wait till the hurry was over before we obtained the coveted information.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH PHIL HEARS FROM HIS FRIENDS, AND VISITS MR. CLINCH.

The two deck hands, who had worked their passage down on the Daylight, were relieved from duty as soon as the baggage of the passengers had been put on shore. They followed Captain Davis to the Fawn, where we drew from them all the information they had in regard to the Gracewoods.

"Where are the passengers who went with you?" was the first question which the captain asked, when we started up the levee.

"At Delaware City, sir. The lady was sick, and not quite able to come down in the Daylight," replied one of the men.

"Sick!" I exclaimed.

"Sick; but not very bad, I believe. She caught a cold coming down the river," answered the spokesman.

"Where is she?"

"At a house in the town; I don't know whose it is."

"Was the young lady sick?" I inquired, anxiously.

"No; she was first rate."

"But how came you at Delaware City?"

"We couldn't help going there, Captain Davis," replied the spokesman of the two, who was evidently embarrassed.

"You couldn't help it?" said the captain.

"No, sir; we could not. The current was very swift."

"Explain yourself, man. I didn't suppose I had sent a couple of hands in the boat with those passengers who couldn't handle a pair of oars."

"I didn't think so, either. We did as well as any men could; the gentleman will tell you so when you see him."

"Well, what did you do? What was the matter?" demanded the captain, impatiently.

"There was a line stretched across that cut-off. I suppose the man that owned the island used it to haul his bateau across by; for it was a seven-mile current in the place."

"It was all of that," added the other man, by way of fortifying the statement of his companion.

"Go on," said the captain.

"Well, sir, the boat ran on to that line, and it carried her bow clear out of water," continued the spokesman. "In fact, the water came in over the stern, and wet the lady who sat farthest aft. I sprang forward to trim the boat, for I did not know what the matter was then. In my hurry I lost my oar overboard. I couldn't help it, for I was thinking only of saving the ladies from drowning, for both of them were screaming with fright."

"That's so," said the other man. "They were scared out of their wits."

"When I went to the bow, I couldn't tell what the matter was. I took the other oar, and sounded with it, to see if we were aground, and then I felt the rope. It was caught just under the bow, where there was a break in the iron shoe. I put the end of the oar on the line, and crowded it down so that the boat could slide over it. But the blade of the oar was split, and the line was jammed into the crack. The boat went over, and when I tried to pull in the oar, it was fast. The current took the boat, and gave me such a jerk that I had to let go, or go overboard."

"And you left the oar fast to the line?"

"Yes, sir; I couldn't help it."

"Perhaps you couldn't; but go on."

"We went on in spite of ourselves. The current carried the boat through the cut-off into the river. I tried to pull up one of the thwarts, to use as a paddle, but we couldn't start them. It was very dark and foggy, as you know, captain,

and we couldn't see where we were. We watched our chances as well as we could, and tried to get hold of something."

"Why didn't you sing out?"

"That's what we did. But the current carried us over the other side of the river from Leavenworth, and I suppose no one heard us; at any rate no one came to help us. The poor lady who had got wet in the cut-off was shivering with cold, and we tried everything we could think of to stop the boat; but still we kept going down stream, whirling round now and then."

"Well, how did you stop her at last?" demanded the captain, finding that the spokesman was disposed to be rather diffuse in his narrative.

"After we had been going about two hours--Wasn't it two hours, Dick?"

"It wasn't less than that."

"No matter how long it was. Go on," interposed the captain, who did not care to listen to a discussion on this point.

"Well, sir, we almost run into a man who was crossing the river in a bateau, with a lot of groceries. We shouted to him, and he run his boat alongside of us. We made fast to him, and he pulled us to the shore. He told us we were on the other side of the river from Delaware City. Mr. Gracewood made a trade with him to take us over to that place, and I helped him row over, towing the boat astern of us. I reckon the gentleman paid him well for his trouble."

"Where did they go then?" asked the captain.

"They went to a house in the town. The lady was all used up, and had chills and fever that night; but they thought she was better in the morning. They sent up to Leavenworth for a doctor."

"Then she was very sick," I added.

"No; the doctor didn't say so. He thought she would be out in a week."

"Where did you go then?" asked the captain.

"We found a place to sleep on the levee. Mr. Gracewood gave us five dollars apiece, and--"

"And you got drunk," suggested the captain.

"No, sir; we did not. I won't say we didn't take something, for we were cold."

"Why didn't you go up to Leavenworth, where you knew the boat would be in the morning?"

"We meant to do that in the morning, as soon as it was daylight; but Dick was afraid the Fawn might get there and start down the river before we could tramp up to the place. Besides, we wanted to know how the lady was, so as to let you know; and we didn't like to go to the house so early in the morning," added the spokesman, glancing at his companion.

"I thought it was safer to wait on the levee till the Fawn came down," said Dick. "We supposed, of course, she would stop there."

"I was of the same mind myself," continued the spokesman. "We waited till most night, when the Daylight made a landing; and then we saw the Fawn coming; but she stood off from the levee, and went down the river at full speed. I hailed her as loud as I could, but she took no notice of me. The captain of the Daylight let us work our passage down."

"Where is the boat?"

"On board the Daylight."

"How was Mrs. Gracewood when you left Delaware City?" I inquired.

"She was too sick to leave in the Daylight; but the doctor thought she might be able to take a boat in two or three days," replied Dick.

"Now go and get the boat," added the captain.

"They may not come for a week," said I, as they departed.

"Perhaps not; but you can't tell much about it from the story of these men."

"Don't you think they told the truth?"

"In the main, they did; but in my opinion they got drunk. If not, they would have returned to Leavenworth. Probably they have stretched the story a little. At any rate, you can't tell how sick the lady is from anything they said."

"She got wet in the boat, and took cold, I suppose."

"I suppose so."

The news from my friends was not very cheering, but it was a relief to be assured that no calamity had overtaken them. I would have gone to them at once if I had had the money to pay my passage; and I said as much to Captain Davis.

"That would be a useless step, Phil," he replied. "If the lady is sick, you can do them no good. It would be a waste of money for you to do so."

"If I had it, I should be willing to waste it in that way," I added.

"Then it is fortunate that you haven't it, Phil. What do you mean to do here in St. Louis? Does Mr. Gracewood intend to support you?"

"I don't intend to be supported by any one," I answered, perhaps with a little indignation; "I mean to support myself."

"What do you intend to do?"

"I am going to learn the carpenter's trade, if I can find a place."

"All right, Phil. That's a sensible idea. I didn't know but you expected to be a gentleman, as most of the boys do who come from the country," said the captain. "Come with me, my boy, and we will see about a place."

"That's just what I want, captain--a chance to learn the carpenter's trade. I know something about it now."

I followed the captain on shore, and we went to a quiet street in one of the humbler sections of the city, where he rang the bell at a house.

"Is Mr. Clinch at home?" asked Captain Davis of the woman who answered the summons.

"Yes, sir; he has just come in from his work. Won't you walk in?"

We entered the house, and were shown to a very plainly furnished parlor, where Mr. Clinch soon appeared. He was clothed in coarse garments, but he had a very intelligent countenance, and I liked the looks of him.

"O, Captain Davis," exclaimed the carpenter, grasping the hand of my companion, "I am glad to see you."

"It always does me good to take your honest hand, Clinch. This young man is Phil Farringford, and he comes from the upper Missouri. He is a smart boy, and wants to learn your trade."

Mr. Clinch took me by the hand, and gave me a cordial greeting.

"I don't take any apprentices, now," he added. "I find it don't pay. As soon as we get a boy so that he can drive a nail without pounding his fingers, he wants a man's wages, or runs away as soon as he is worth anything to me."

"If I make a trade, sir, I shall stick to it," I ventured to say.

"You look like an honest young man, but I can't take apprentices, as we used to in former years."

"Phil knows something about the business now," interposed the captain. "He is handy with tools, and is as tough as an oak knot. He knows what hard work is, and has just come out of the woods."

"But I can't take a boy into my family," continued Mr. Clinch; "I haven't room, and it makes the work too hard for my wife."

"He might board somewhere else," said the captain.

"That indeed. I like the looks of the boy."

"If you can do anything for him, I shall regard it as a favor to me," added my friend.

"I should be very glad to serve you, Captain Davis. I want more help, but a boy isn't of much use. How old are you,

Phil?"

"Thirteen, sir."

"You look older. What can you do?"

I told him what I could do; that I could handle a saw, axe, hammer, and auger; that I had built a bateau, made boxes, and done similar work. He seemed to be very sceptical, but finally agreed to give me three dollars a week, which he thought would board and clothe me, if, upon trial, I proved to be worth that. He told me where he was at work, and wished me to be on hand the next morning.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH PHIL GOES TO WORK, AND MEETS AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

"Everything depends upon yourself now, Phil," said Captain Davis, as we walked back to the steamer. "When Clinch finds that you are worth more than three dollars a week, he will give you more."

"I didn't expect any more than that," I replied. "If it will pay my board for a time, I shall be satisfied. I will do the best I can, and I hope my wages will be increased very soon."

"Now you want a boarding-house," continued the captain. "I don't know where to look for one, but I suppose you will not think of living at the Planters' Hotel?"

"Not exactly, sir."

We entered a grocery store, near the house of Mr. Clinch, where the captain was acquainted, and he inquired for a suitable boarding-place for a boy like me.

"If he's a good boy, I know just the place for him," replied the grocer.

"He is as good a boy as there is in the world," answered the captain, with a zeal that caused me to blush.

"Mrs. Greenough, who lives over my store, spoke to me, a few days ago, about a boy. She is an elderly woman, whose husband died about a year ago, leaving her this house. She has no other property except her furniture, and the rent of this store about pays her expenses. She is a little timid, and does not like to be alone in the house at night. She is a nice woman, and perhaps she will take your young man to board. She wanted one of my young men to occupy a room up stairs, but both of them live at home."

"We will go up and see her. This boy is going to work for Clinch to-morrow, and this will be a good locality for him."

"Just the place," added the grocer, as he conducted us up stairs to the rooms of Mrs. Greenough.

The house was a small one, and the store occupied the whole of the ground floor, except a small entry. It was three stories high, with a flat roof, and I judged that the tenement could not contain more than four rooms. We were taken up stairs, and found the lady in her little parlor. She was about fifty years old, and did not appear to be in good health. The grocer explained our business, and having vouched for the good character of Captain Davis, he left us.

"I didn't think of taking a boy to board," said Mrs. Greenough. "I thought if I could get one of the young men in the store to sleep in the house, I should feel safer. But I don't know but I might take him, if he is a very steady boy."

"Steady as a judge, Mrs. Greenough," replied Captain Davis. "He's going to be a carpenter."

"Is he? My poor husband was a carpenter," added the lady, wiping a tear from her eye. "I am a lone woman now."

"Phil will be good company for you. He knows more than most boys of his age. He has fought through one campaign against the Indians, and is a dead shot with his rifle."

"Not always, captain," I remonstrated.

"He has brought down his man, at any rate. He speaks French, and--"

"O, no, I don't, captain. I have studied it, and can read it a little."

"I don't talk any French," added the old lady, with a smile; so that won't make any difference. I thought, at one time, I would take a boy who would help me, and work a little for his board, but I concluded I couldn't afford to do that; for I don't have anything but the rent of the store to live on."

"Well, Mrs. Greenough, you can split the difference. Phil can't afford to pay much for his board. He can help you a little in the morning and at night."

"I haven't much to do, except to bring up the wood and water from the cellar, which is down two flights, and it's rather hard work for me, for I'm not very strong."

"I shall be very glad to help you, Mrs. Greenough," I added.

"How much can you take him for, madam?" said the captain, beginning to be a little impatient.

The old lady had not made up her mind on this important subject, and the captain suggested two dollars a week as a fair price, if I helped about the house when I had time. She was satisfied with this amount, and I am sure I was; so the bargain was closed. Mrs. Greenough wanted to know more about me, and the captain spoke so handsomely of me, that my modesty will not permit me to quote his testimony. I walked back to the steamer with Captain Davis, and after thanking him, from the depths of my heart, for all his kindness and care, I took my leave of him. He told me he should send all the effects of Mr. Gracewood to the storehouse of his owners, where they could be obtained on his arrival. He advised me to write to my friends at once, and I promised to do so that night. Taking the box, which contained the few articles of value I possessed, under my arm, and the rifle I had brought from my forest home, I hastened to my new boarding-house.

Before I did anything else, I wrote the letter to Mr. Gracewood, and carried it to the post-office. On my return, Mrs. Greenough showed me my room. It was on the third floor, in the rear of her own apartment. I must say that it looked like a boudoir in a palace to me. It was plainly but very neatly furnished. She told me I could put my clothes in the drawers of the bureau; but I answered that I had none to put there, except a single woollen shirt, and a pair of socks, which I had washed myself on board of the steamer. I wore a suit of "civilized clothes," as we called them at the settlement; and I had a pair of woollen shirts, and two pairs of socks. My landlady thought my wardrobe was rather scanty, but I considered it all-sufficient, and did not worry because I could not follow the fashion.

I opened my box, and took from it the little dress and other garments which I had worn when old Matt Rockwood picked me up, on the Missouri River. Mrs. Greenough's curiosity was excited, and I told her all I knew about my past history. She was deeply interested in the narrative, and asked me a great many questions about the Gracewoods, which I answered to the best of my ability. I was well pleased with my new home. My landlady was very kind and motherly, and when I retired that night, I thanked God for his kindness in directing my steps to such a pleasant abode.

When I awoke the next morning, I heard a church clock striking five. I rose and made my simple toilet in less time than I could have done it even a year later. I went down into the kitchen, which was the room Mrs. Greenough occupied most of the time, and made a fire in the stove. I had done everything I could find to do when the landlady came down.

"You are quite handy about house, Phil," said she, with a cheerful smile.

"I ought to be. I used to keep house at the clearing. I can cook and wash."

"What can you cook?"

"I can boil potatoes, bake or roast them; I can fry and boil bacon, and I can bake bread. We didn't have so many things to work with as you do here."

"Can you make pies and cake?"

"No; we never had those things at the clearing until Mrs. Gracewood came there."

"They were rich folks, you said."

"Yes; they have plenty of money; but it did not do them much good out in the woods. I should like to hear how Mrs. Gracewood is."

"I hope she is better. When they come you will have some strong friends."

"Yes; but I intend to take care of myself. They will go among big folks, where I cannot go; but I hope I shall see Miss Ella sometimes."

"Of course you will."

"She is a beautiful young lady," I added, warmly.

"But you may find your father and mother one of these days."

"I hardly expect to do that; I doubt whether they are living."

"From what you say, I should think you might find out who they are. Of course they had some relations somewhere, and perhaps they will be willing to take care of you."

"I don't want any one to take care of me; I mean to take care of myself. Mr. Gracewood has fifteen hundred dollars belonging to me."

"Well, that's comfortable. If you should be sick, you will not want for anything."

We talked over the past and the present till breakfast was ready. The fried bacon and potatoes looked like old friends, and I did ample justice to the fare. I am not sure that my landlady was not alarmed when she realized my eating capacity, as compared with the price I was to pay for my board. At half past six I started for the building which Mr. Clinch was putting up. It was a large storehouse, near the levee.

"Good, Phil! I'm glad to see you on hand in season," said my employer.

"I mean to be on time always, sir."

"I'm paying my best men two dollars a day now," added Mr. Clinch.

"Does that young man get two dollars a day?" I asked, pointing to a boy of eighteen or nineteen, who was putting on his overalls in front of the building.

"No; that's Morgan Blair. He came down from Illinois last spring. I give him a dollar a day. He doesn't know the business, and that is more than he is worth. You will work with Conant."

Calling one of the workmen who answered to this name, he directed him to take me under his charge. The frame of the building was up, and we were to be engaged in boarding it.

"Come along, my boy; we will take the stiffening out of you in about two hours," said Conant, as he led the way to the stage.

"All right; when I break down I will give you leave to bury me."

"Do you think you can lift your end of a board?"

"I can; and lift both ends, if need be."

"You have got the pluck, but it's hard work for a boy."

"I will keep my side up."

Mr. Clinch had given me a hammer and a bag of nails, which I tied around my body, as I saw the other men do. I was strong and tough, and could easily handle any lumber used on the work. I carried my end of each board up to the frame, and I am sure I drove as many nails as Conant. But I will not describe the process by which the building was erected. I did my full share of the work until noon.

"Don't you want to go to bed now?" asked Conant, when we knocked off.

"Go to bed! No. Why should I?"

"Ain't you tuckered out?"

"No, not at all; I don't feel quite so fresh as I did this morning, but I shall be all right again when I get my dinner."

"You are a tough 'un, then."

"Well, Conant, how does Phil get along?" asked Mr. Clinch, as we came down from the stage.

"Tip-top; he has done a man's work--twice as much as Morgan," replied Conant, with more magnanimity than I had given him credit for.

"All right. Phil, I am glad you are getting along well. It will be easier work when we get the building covered."

In going home to dinner, I went pretty near the steamboat levee. A boat had just come in, and I wanted to know if it had come from the Missouri, for I was very anxious to hear from the Gracewoods. I hastened towards the landing. I met the passengers as they came up, and on inquiry of one of them learned that the steamer was from St. Joe, but she had not stopped at Delaware City; so of course the Gracewoods could not have come in her.

I was about to leave, when I perceived Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne coming across the levee. I thought that I had business with him, and I hastened to resume the relations with him which had been interrupted at Leavenworth.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH PHIL MEETS A SEEDY GENTLEMAN BY THE NAME OF FARRINGFORD.

Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne, otherwise Lynch, had a small valise in his hand, and was sauntering leisurely along, as though earth had no sorrow for him, and he was not responsible in St. Louis for an infamous act done in Leavenworth. I wanted my money; in fact, I needed it. For Mrs. Greenough's remarks had assured me that my wardrobe was entirely inadequate to the requirements of civilized life.

"How do you do, Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne?" I began, making towards him.

He glanced at me very contemptuously, and continued on his way. I had expected to astonish and confound him, but the result did not realize my anticipations. It was decidedly a look of disdain that he bestowed upon me, which I thought was adding insult to injury. So far I was disgusted with his conduct; but I had no idea of abandoning the purpose I had in view.

"I want to see you, Mr. Lynchpinne," I continued, following him, and taking position at his side.

"Who are you?" he demanded, halting, and giving me another contemptuous look.

"Don't you know me, Mr. Lynchpinne?"

"My name is not Lynchpinne."

"Lynch, then. Don't you know me?"

"No."

"Yes, you do."

"You impertinent puppy!"

"O, yes! All that's very pretty, but I want my money."

"What money? What do you mean, you saucy young cub?"

"Perhaps I am saucy; so was Nathan when he said to David, 'Thou art the man!' and that's just what I say to you."

"Go about your business," said he, angrily, as he resumed his walk.

"My business, just now, is to get back the money you stole from me; and I'm going to stick to it, too."

"Stole! How dare you use that word to me?"

"Because I believe in speaking the truth, even when it is not pleasant to do so."

"Clear out, and don't come near me again."

"Hand over my money, and I shall be glad to do so."

"If you don't leave, I'll call a policeman."

"I wish you would. I should like to tell him my story. If you don't call one, I shall, as soon as I see him. I'll follow you till your legs or mine give out."

"You evidently take me for some other person, boy," said he, halting on Front Street, perhaps afraid that we might meet a policeman--a thing which has been known to happen.

"No, I don't; I take you for Lynch, the man that stole my money, and I want a policeman to take you for that, too."

"See here, boy; I can't be annoyed in this manner in the public street," he replied, in a kind of confidential tone. "What do you want of me?"

"I told you what I wanted--my money."

"I know nothing about your money. If you want to see me, come to the Planters' Hotel at eight o'clock this evening, and I will meet you."

"I think not. I don't mean to lose sight of you, Lynch."

"If you don't clear out, I'll chastise you on the ground for an impudent puppy."

"Well, sir, when you get ready to chastise, you begin," I replied, as I glanced at his slender form. "If I don't keep up my end, you can have the money you stole."

"How dare you--"

But he checked himself, for two or three persons had already stopped; and their example was so contagious, in a populous city, that there was danger of collecting a crowd, to which my sensitive friend seemed to have very strong constitutional objections. He moved on, and I followed him into Market Street. I was anxious to meet a policeman, that I might state my case to him, and invoke his aid; but the officers, justifying all the traditions of their craft, were somewhere else, because they were wanted in Market Street.

Lynch quickened his pace, and turned into Fourth Street; but I kept close to his heels till we were near the Planters' Hotel. I concluded that he was going to this grand establishment, and that he expected to shake me off within its sumptuous walls. I did not believe he would, though the want of an officer was a sore inconvenience to me. Just as he was about to cross the street, a shabby genteel and very seedy gentleman confronted him.

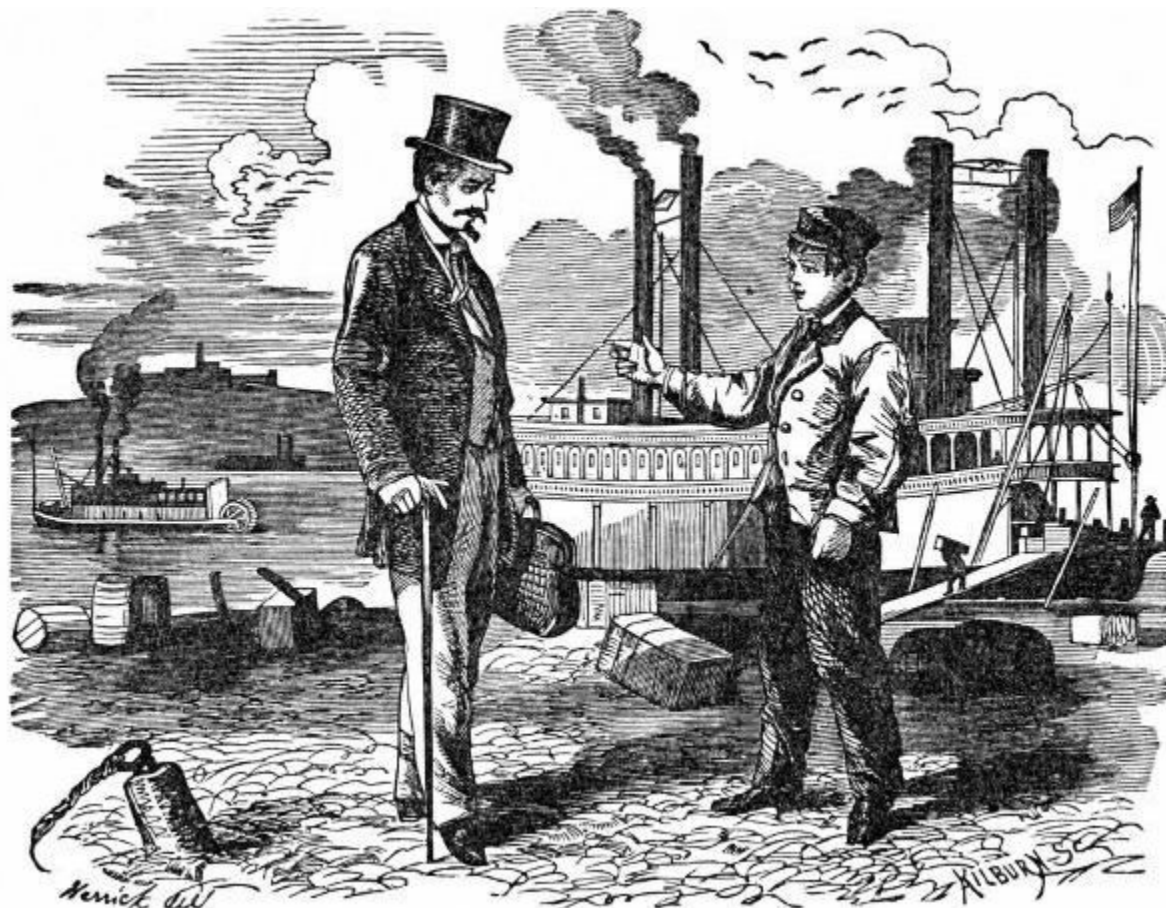
"How are you, Lynch?" exclaimed the dilapidated individual, extending his hand.

"How do you do, Farringford?" replied Lynch.

Farringford! This must be the decayed steamboat owner of whom Lynch had before spoken to me. He was apparently about forty-five years of age, and he looked as though the world had used him very roughly.

"I'm glad to see you, Lynch," said Farringford. "I'm always glad to see an old friend. I'm hard up, and I want to borrow a dollar."

Lynch took two half dollars in silver from his pocket. Perhaps the present generation of young people never saw a half dollar; but it is true that there was a time when such a coin was in general use! He handed the money to the seedy gentleman, and then said something to him in a whisper, which I could not hear, though I had planked myself close by the side of the villain. Lynch then turned to cross the street, and I started to follow him.



"See here, my lad," said Farringford, grasping me by the arm.

"Let me alone!" I cried, struggling to escape, fearful that I should lose sight of Lynch.

"Hold still, my lad. I only want to speak to you," replied Farringford, in cheerful tones, though he did not relax his grasp. "Don't be afraid. I won't hurt you. I've known you ever since you were a baby."

"Known me?"

I was startled by his words, for they seemed to have some relation to the mystery of my being.

"Certainly I have, Phil."

"Do you know me?" I demanded, forgetting, for the moment, all about Lynch and my hard money.

"Known you from your babyhood, my lad," said he, glancing towards the hotel.

This act reminded me of my business again. I turned my face towards the hotel. Lynch had disappeared.

"That's all, Phil; you can go now," said Farringford, laughing.

"What do you mean, sir?"

"That's all, my lad. I only stopped you to prevent you from following my friend."

"You said you knew me."

"Never saw you or heard of you before in my life," chuckled he, evidently pleased at the trick he had played upon me.

I left him, and rushed into the hotel. I looked for Lynch in all the public rooms, but I could not find him. I inquired at the office for him, and the clerks answered me, very curtly, that no such person was in the house. I asked a porter, who sat near the entrance, describing Lynch. He had seen the gentleman, but did not know where he was; he had not taken a room or registered his name, and had probably gone away again. It seemed to me that everything was going against me. I had to go home to dinner, as I could spend no more time in looking for him then; but I determined to renew the search in the evening.

As I walked down Fourth Street, I overtook Farringford, who had evidently spent a portion of the dollar borrowed of Lynch for liquor. I accosted him, for I thought that I might recover my money through his agency, as he evidently knew Lynch.

"Ah, my lad! You didn't find him," chuckled the toper.

"I did not. I have heard of you, Mr. Farringford, and I can put you in the way of making some money."

"Can you? Then I'm your man. Most distinctly, I'm *your* man," he replied with emphasis. "There's only two things in this world that I want, and those are money and whiskey. If I get the whiskey, I don't care for the money; and if I have the money, I can always get the whiskey."

"I should like to meet you somewhere this evening, for I am in a hurry now."

"I will be in the bar-room of the Planters' Hotel at seven o'clock this evening, if you have any money for me. But what's it all about? Can't you tell me now?"

"I haven't time now."

"Very well. Planters' Hotel--bar-room--seven o'clock. I'll be there if they don't turn me out before that time. If they do, you will find me in the street."

Although I was not very confident he would keep his appointment, it was the best I could do. If he failed to be there, he was evidently a character so noted, that I could easily find him. I hastened to my dinner, and reached Mrs. Greenough's rather late. I explained the reason of my tardiness, which was quite satisfactory. My landlady hoped that I should recover my money, and I hoped so too--a degree of unanimity which does not always exist between landlady and boarder.

I was on the work as the clock struck one, but I had to do some running that noon, in order to protect my reputation. Conant did not drive business in the afternoon as he had in the forenoon, when I think he intended to wear

me out. We worked steadily, and I kept my end of the board up. I was not sorry to hear the clock strike six, for I was tired, though perhaps not more so than Conant himself. I went home, ate my supper, did my chores in the house, and at seven o'clock I was in the bar-room of the Planters' Hotel. It was no place for a boy, or a man either, for that matter. No one was what could be called, in good society, disreputably drunk, unless it was the seedy gentleman whom I met by appointment; and even he was able to handle himself tolerably well. No doubt he would have been more intoxicated if he had not drunk up the dollar he had borrowed; but his wits were not wholly stupefied.

"Well, my lad, you have come, and so have I," said Farringford, when I entered the room. "Both come, and that makes two of us, all told."

"Yes. I wanted to see you about--"

"Stop a minute, my lad," interposed he, putting his trembling hand upon my shoulder. "Let us go to work right. When I used to run steamboats, we had to put in wood and water before we could get up steam."

"When did you run steamboats?" I asked.

"Ten or fifteen years ago. I was a rich man then; but now I'm as poor as a church mouse with his hair all singed off. I am; but I'm jolly; yes, I am jolly. Let's proceed to business."

"Did you own a steamboat--"

"Stop, my lad; I owned half a dozen of them. But that's no matter now. Do you happen to have a dollar in your pocket--one dollar, my lad."

"No, sir; I have not."

"Not a dollar?"

"No, I have not."

"Do you happen to have half a dollar in your pocket, my lad?"

"Not even half a dollar, sir."

"Your name is--somebody told me your name," said he, musing.

"Phil, sir."

"Phil, do you always speak the truth?"

"I always endeavor to do so," I replied.

"I hope so. Truth is mighty, and must prevail. You should always speak the truth."

"As you did, to-day, when you said you had known me from my babyhood."

"Boys must speak the truth, whether men do or not. Did you speak the truth when you said you had not even half a dollar?"

"I did."

"Have you any money?"

"I have thirty cents."

"Then lend me a quarter."

"It's all I have."

"We can't do any business till this little matter is attended to," said he, with tipsy solemnity. "You shall be paid, my lad; you shall be paid--when I pay the rest of my creditors."

Finding it impossible to proceed any farther without complying with his request, I reluctantly gave him the quarter; but I felt guilty in doing so. He went to the bar, drank, and returned to the corner where he had left me.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH PHIL LISTENS TO A VERY IMPRESSIVE TEMPERANCE LECTURE.

Farringford was very chipper when he returned to me. He had drank half a tumbler of whiskey, and appeared to be prepared, to his own satisfaction, for any business which might be presented to him.

"Now, my lad, I'm ready. I'm refreshed. I'm invigorated. I'm inspired. In a word, I'm prepared for the consideration of the important matter you proposed to bring before me," said he.

"I am very glad to hear it, sir; I wish to tell you--"

"Stop a moment, my lad. You have a name, doubtless. Do you happen to remember what it is?"

"Very distinctly, Mr. Farringford. You may call me Phil."



PHIL MEETS A SEEDY INDIVIDUAL NAMED FARRINGFORD. Page 109.

"Phil; that is very good as far as it goes. Phil may stand for Philip, Phillimore, Philippians, Philosophy."

"It stands for Philip with me, sir."

"Philip; I had a brother once of that name, but he is no longer living. If he were, he would blush to own his brother. But no matter; that is all past and gone. You can proceed with your business, Philip."

Placing his elbows upon the little table between us, he rested his chin upon his trembling hands, and fixed his gaze upon me. He was a singular man, and, tipsy as he was, I was deeply interested in him.

"You know Lynch, the person you met opposite the Planters' Hotel to-day noon."

"I know him, Philip; but, in a word, I don't know any good of him. Go on."

"That man robbed me of all the money I had, except thirty cents--nearly a hundred dollars."

"Philip, you told me you were in the habit of speaking the truth; or rather that you endeavored to speak the truth."

"Yes, sir; I do endeavor to speak the truth. I am willing to go a point farther, and say that I have thus far been very successful."

"The statement that Lynch robbed you of nearly a hundred dollars implies the statement that you had nearly a hundred dollars," said he, with his tipsy solemnity, which was amusing. "It is self-evident that he could not have robbed you of this money, if you had not had it."

"Certainly not sir. I did have it."

"Where and by what means should a boy of your tender years obtain nearly a hundred dollars? In a word, Philip, where did you get your money?"

"It was a part of what was left me by my foster-father, who died last spring. I had it with me to pay my expenses till I could get into business and pay my way. I expect my friends will be in St. Louis in a few days, and then I shall be able to prove all I say. In the mean time I refer to Captain Davis, of the steamer Fawn."

"That's all straightforward, Philip, and for the present I accept your statement as true. You were robbed of nearly a hundred dollars by this man, Lynch, of whom I know no good thing, except that he lent me a dollar to-day, which I shall return to him when I pay the rest of my creditors."

"Could you find this man, Mr. Farringford?" I asked.

"Doubtless I could. He may be seen, almost any night, at the gambling-houses."

"Will you help me get my money back?"

"Wherefore should I soil the dignity of a gentleman by becoming a thief-taker?"

"Because you will do me a favor, and promote the ends of justice by doing so."

"Very true, Philip; you rightly apprehend the character of the gentleman you address. Whatever I may seem to be, no man can say that Edward Farringford ever soiled his soul by a dishonorable or a dishonest act."

"If you can induce Lynch to give me back my money, I will pay you twenty-five dollars."

"Twenty-five dollars!" exclaimed he. "Two hundred and fifty drinks! Philip, I will do the best I can for you; not for the sake of the money, but to subserve the ends of justice, and to save a deserving young man from want and hardship. The cause is a good one."

"It is, sir. If you do not succeed, I shall call upon the police as soon as my friends arrive."

"It is well, Philip. Lynch will return the money rather than be driven from St. Louis."

"You understand that he must pay the money to me," I added, as it occurred to me that I should never see it if it came into the hands of the dilapidated gentleman before me.

"Wouldn't it be just as well that he should pay it over to me, and I will pass it to you?"

"Just as well, sir; but he will want some assurance from me that this is the end of the matter. I prefer that he should pay it to me."

"You are right, Philip. It shall be paid to you. Stop!" exclaimed he, with a sudden start.

"What is the matter, Mr. Farringford?"

"This business is wrong."

"Wrong?"

"Wrong! No living man has been, or shall ever be, able to say that Edward Farringford stained his soul with a foul, dishonorable act."

"Do you think it would be wrong, sir?"

"It would be compounding a felony," he added, solemnly.

I did not know what he meant by this technical phrase, but I could not see that it was wrong for me to get my money if I could. Mr. Farringford asked me when, where, and in what manner I had been robbed; and I related my adventure on the night I was at Leavenworth.

"You are the only witness, Philip, and it would be difficult to prove the crime. I will see Lynch. I will charge him with the base deed, and be governed, in my further proceedings, by the circumstances of the case. Where do you live, Philip?"

I gave him the address of Mrs. Greenough, and told him where I was at work. I was satisfied that the promised reward would stimulate him to great activity in the pursuit of Lynch, and I had some hope that he would be successful. Having disposed of the important part of my business with my seedy companion, I was rather curious to know more about him. I almost dared to believe that he could give me some information in regard to the steamer which had been burned on the upper Missouri, and from which I had been saved by my foster-father.

That steamer had borne the name of this man, and he had been her owner. Of course he knew all about her, and it was possible, even probable, that he knew who had lost a little child in the fearful calamity. I actually trembled when I thought of it, when I considered that, at the opening of this singular man's lips, I might be told who and what my father was, and whether my parents had perished or not. It was an anxious moment, and my heart was in my throat. I had not the courage to ask the momentous question, and Farringford rose unsteadily from his chair, to leave me.

"Stop a moment, Mr. Farringford, if you please," I interposed; and he dropped back into his chair.

"Isn't our business finished, Philip?"

"Yes, sir; but I have been told that you were formerly a large steamboat owner."

"Who told you so?"

"You did, for one. If you don't object, I should like to ask you something about those steamers," I continued, with much embarrassment.

"Do you wish to go into the steamboat business, Philip? If you do, some of my old captains are still on the river, and I can get you a situation. But I must have one more drink before I say anything."

"I wouldn't take any more, sir," I ventured to say.

"It is a necessity of my being, Philip."

He rose from his chair, and went to the bar. I saw him drink another half tumbler of whiskey. He tottered back to the table where I sat. Such a wreck of a man I had never seen. Though his step was unsteady, he was not overcome by the potions he had taken. His nerves, rather than his brain, seemed to be affected.

"I haven't drank much to-day, Philip. I wasted half the dollar I borrowed in getting something to eat," said he, dropping into his chair. "It is a bad habit, my boy. Never take any whiskey, Philip: in a word, never begin to drink liquor, and you will never have to leave off; for it is a great deal harder to leave off than it is to begin. This is disinterested advice: in a word, it is the counsel of one who knows all about drinking."

"I would stop it if I were you, Mr. Farringford."

"If you were Edward Farringford, you could no more leave off drinking liquor, and drinking all you could get, than you could leave off eating. I can live without eating much, but I can't live without drinking."

"I think you can leave off, sir; I hope you will try."

"You speak like a boy. You never drank any whiskey. You don't know what a fiend it is. You don't know what a horrible necessity it is to a man whose nerves are shaken, only to be steadied by this liquid fire; whose stomach, chilled and frozen, can only be warmed by this blast from Tartarus. You don't know anything about it. I hope you never will. Philip, I hope you never will."

He covered his face with his hands, and when he raised his head, I saw that he had been weeping. His eyes were filled with tears, and I pitied him from the deepest depths of my heart.

"Beware, Philip! Beware!" said he, solemnly. "Never touch a drop of whiskey, wine, or even ale,—not the tenth part of a drop,—if you are dying for the want of it. Die, but don't touch it."

"I hope I never shall."

"Hope! Don't hope! Sign the pledge; swear on the Holy Bible; go down on your knees, every morning and every night, and pray that Almighty God will help you, and save you from the curse. Don't trifle with it, Philip. Be in earnest, and when you feel weak, commend yourself to God, and think of Edward Farringford."

He covered his face with his hands again, and wept so bitterly, that the little table danced under the convulsive agony which shook his frame.

"Look at me, Philip!" said he, raising his head again. "Behold the wreck of a man! If there had been no whiskey in the world, or if I had never tasted it, I could have welcomed you to the most elegant mansion in St. Louis. I could have pointed you to a dozen steamers, on the Missouri and Mississippi, which were all mine. I could have presented you to my wife, the most beautiful and accomplished woman in the city, now driven out from my presence. More than this, Philip, I could have pointed you to my boy, my son, my only child, who perished in the cold waters of the Missouri, because I was too drunk to save him!"

I need not say how startled, how thrilled I was by this agonizing narrative. The bar-room was crowded, and noisy with the violent debates of excited politicians, and the gabble of men warmed by their cups into unusual hilarity, so that no one appeared to notice Farringford, though he uttered his impressive warnings in a loud tone. But I was too much moved and thrilled myself to heed what others said or did. The toper wept, and then tried to shake off the remembrance of the past.

"Where was your son lost, Mr. Farringford?" I asked, choking with emotion.

"On the upper Missouri. He was a child under three. His name was Philip, like yours. He was named after my brother, who died ten years ago. Enough of this. I am almost crazy When I think of it."

The broken-down toper was my father!

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH PHIL TAKES HIS FATHER TO HIS NEW HOME.

My father! I had found him; but the finding of him in such a miserable, degraded, besotted being as he who was before me seemed to be the greatest mishap, the most overwhelming misfortune, that could possibly have overtaken me. He was the first white man I had ever seen really intoxicated. I was mortified and disheartened as I looked at his pale, thin face, and regarded his trembling limbs.

What should I do? I could not tell him that I was his son. I could not throw myself into his arms and weep tears of joy, as I had imagined the impressive scene, in case I should ever find either of my parents. I wanted to weep; I wanted to give myself up to a transport of grief, if not despair, as I realized the terrible truth that the degraded being before me was my father.

"Philip, I've told you more than I ever uttered before. You looked into my face, and seemed so interested that I was tempted to tell more than I intended," said he, wiping away with his coat sleeve the tears that stained his sunken cheeks. "No matter; we will be jolly now. I can get another drink in a cheap grog-shop for the half dime I have in my pocket."

To my surprise he laughed as easily as he had wept, and shook off, with astonishing facility, the burden which had weighed him down. He rose from his chair, and tottered towards the door. I followed him out into the street.

"Where are you going now?" I asked.

"Going to get a cheap drink," he replied, with a kind of chuckle. "I shall be all right then; and we'll go and look for Lynch."

"Don't drink any more to-night, Mr. Farringford," I pleaded, taking his arm.

"I must!" said he, vehemently. "I might as well tell you not to eat after you had been without food for a week, as you tell me not to drink. I must have whiskey, or die."

"Then die!" I added, using his own words.

"Die?"

"That's what you said to me."

"I might do that, Philip," he replied, stopping suddenly in the street, as if the idea impressed him favorably.

"Of course I did not mean that, sir," I interposed.

"But it would be better to die than live as I live. I have only one cheap drink left--one glass of camphene whiskey, which seems to burn my very soul. In a word, it is better to die than to live, for such as I am."

"No; there is hope for you," I pleaded, leading him along through the street.

"Hope? No more than for a man who is already dead, Philip. I shall take my cheap drink, and then I shall be penniless again. It may be twenty-four hours, perhaps forty-eight, before I can raise another dollar or another drink. Then I shall suffer with horrors I cannot describe, till I can get more whiskey."

"Where do you live?"

"Nowhere."

"Where do you board?"

"I don't board," he replied, with his usual chuckle.

"Where do you sleep?"

"Wherever I happen to drop. In the police station; on board a steamboat; in a shed; anywhere or nowhere."

"But where were you going to-night?" I asked, shocked at this revelation of misery, so horrible and strange to me.

"I was going to the gambling-houses to find Lynch."

"But after that?"

"Anywhere that my fancy leads me."

"Come with me," said I, unwilling to abandon him.

"Where?"

"To my house--where I board."

"No, Philip."

"You shall sleep with me to-night."

I knew that Mrs. Greenough would not wish such a lodger as he, but I was determined to do what I could for him; and, if she would not permit him to sleep with me, I would go out with my miserable parent. I wanted to see him when he was sober. He had told me that his wife had deserted him, and I wished to learn more about her. I could not allude to a theme so sacred while he was in his present condition. Hopeless as the task seemed to be, I intended to use all the powers which God had given me in reforming him.

I led him in the direction of my boarding-house, and he seemed to be as willing to go one way as another. After he had delivered himself of the emotions which crowded upon him at the bar-room, he spoke lightly of his misfortunes, and chuckled whenever he alluded to any circumstance which was particularly degrading in his condition.

"Where do you obtain your meals, Mr. Farringford?" I asked, as much to keep his attention occupied as to gratify my own curiosity.

"I don't obtain many," he replied, lightly.

"But you must eat."

"Not when I can drink. I don't average more than one meal a day. I can't afford to waste my money, when I have any, in eating."

"Do you live on one meal a day?"

"I don't get that always."

"Where do you get that one?"

"Anywhere I can. They have meals on board the steamers lying at the levee and waiting to start. They never turn me off when I sit down to the table. If I'm very drunk, they give me my meal at a side-table; but that don't happen often, for I don't want to eat when I can get plenty to drink."

How insufferably miserable and degrading was the life he led! And he was my father!

"How long have you led such a life?" I inquired, with a shudder.

"Not long, Philip. Do you know, my lad, that I'm telling you all this to save you from whiskey? I'm not drunk now. I know what I'm about; and I would go ten miles to-night to save any fellow-creature, even if it was a nigger, from being as bad as I am. I would, Philip; upon my honor and conscience I would."

"That proves that you have a kind heart," I replied; and even as he revelled in his shame and misery, I was glad often to observe these touches of fine feeling, for they assured me that, in his better days, he had been a noble and generous man.



PHIL INTRODUCES THE ELDER FARRINGFORD TO HIS LANDLADY. Page 130.

"My heart is right, my boy. Like all drunkards--Yes, Philip, I'm a drunkard. I know it; and I call things by their right names. Like all drunkards, I've been growing worse and worse; but it's only a few months since I went into the street, and had no home, no place to lay my head at night."

I led him to Mrs. Greenough's house. He said nothing more about the "cheap drink," for I had kept his mind busy on the way. I had a night key, and I admitted him to the entry, where I asked him to wait until I spoke with my landlady. In as few words as possible I informed her of the discovery I had made, and distinctly added that my father was intoxicated.

"Will you allow me to take care of him in my room, Mrs. Greenough?" I asked.

"Yes, indeed!" she replied, with unexpected readiness. "Bring him into the kitchen, and I will do everything I can for him."

"Thank you, Mrs. Greenough. You are very kind. I had no right to expect this of you."

"I know how to pity such poor people, Phil," said she, shaking her head sadly; and I afterwards learned that her late husband had been a drunkard for a number of years, and had been saved by the great Washingtonian movement.

"My father does not yet suspect that I am his son. Will you be so kind as not to mention the fact to him?" I continued.

"Just as you wish, Phil," she answered, as I hastened down stairs.

Mrs. Greenough held the lamp in the entry while I conducted my tottering companion up the stairs. I introduced him in due form to her.

"Madam, I am your very obedient servant," said he. "I am happy to make your acquaintance--more happy than you can be to make mine."

"I'm very glad to see you; come in," she added, placing her rocking-chair before the fire for him.

He seated himself, and glanced around the room. Mrs. Greenough asked if he had been to supper. He had not, and

he did not wish for any; but the good lady insisted that he should have a cup of tea. In spite of his answer, he ate heartily of the food set before him, and seemed to be refreshed by it. For an hour he talked about indifferent subjects, and then I took him to my room. Mrs. Greenough gave me some clean clothes for him, which had belonged to her husband, declaring that she was glad to have them put to so good use. He intimated, as he glanced at the neat bed, that he should like to wash himself. I carried up a pail of warm water, and leaving him to make his ablutions, I went down to the kitchen again.

"I hope you will excuse me for bringing him here, Mrs. Greenough," said I, feeling that I had been imposing upon her good nature.

"You did just exactly right, Phil. You had no other place to take him to; and you didn't want to leave the poor creature in the street. I will do everything I can for him."

"I am very much obliged to you, and as soon as Mr. Gracewood comes, I will have something done for him."

"Are you sure he is your father?"

"I have no doubt of it, Mrs. Greenough. What he said assured me of the fact; but he thinks I am dead."

"Where is your mother? Was she lost?"

"No; he says she was driven away from him by his bad conduct. I don't know where she is."

My landlady was willing to take care of the sufferer for a few days, if he could be induced to stay at the house; and we talked about the matter till I thought he had gone to bed, when I went to my room. By this time the effects of the liquor he had drunk were hardly perceptible; but his nerves were terribly shaken. Mrs. Greenough had given me a dose of valerian, which she said would do him good. He drank it without an objection, and soon went to sleep. I was tired enough to follow his example, after I had put the room in order.

When I awoke in the morning, my father had dressed himself, and was pacing the room, in the gloom of the early morning. He was entirely sober now, and his frame shook as though he had been struck with palsy. I was alarmed at his condition. He told me he must have whiskey, or he should shake himself to pieces.

"Don't take any more, sir," I pleaded.

"Nothing but whiskey will quiet my nerves," said he, in trembling tones.

"You shall have some strong tea or coffee; or perhaps Mrs. Greenough can give you something better."

"I don't want to drink, Philip; no, I don't," he replied, in piteous tones; "but you cannot understand the misery of my present condition. It is worse than death."

"But you will be better soon if you let liquor alone."

"I can't let it alone. Every instant is an hour of agony. Have you any money?"

"Only five cents."

"I have five cents. I will get a cheap drink."

"No, don't!" I pleaded. "Wait here a little while. I will make a fire, and see what can be done for you."

I went down stairs, and by the time I had made the fire Mrs. Greenough appeared. I told her how much my poor father was suffering. She seemed to understand the case exactly; and as soon as the tea-kettle boiled, she made some strong wormwood tea, which I gave to our patient. I had some hope when he declared that it had helped him. He ate a very light breakfast, and appeared to have no appetite. My good landlady spoke words of hope to him, and said she had taken care of one who was precisely in his condition. If he would only be patient, and trust her, she would cure him. He promised to stay in the house during the forenoon; and I went to my work, hoping, but hardly expecting, to find him there when I came home to dinner.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH PHIL LISTENS TO A DISCUSSION, AND TAKES PART IN A STRUGGLE.

My work on the building was no lighter than it had been the day before; but I had done so much hard labor in the field and forest that it did not wear upon me. I observed everything that was done by the skilled workmen, and endeavored to profit by what I saw. I felt that I was learning something every hour, and I was pleased to know that Mr. Clinch was entirely satisfied with me. At noon I hastened home, anxious to know the condition of my father.

"How is your patient, Mrs. Greenough?" I asked, as I entered the kitchen where she was cooking the dinner.

"I am sorry to tell you, Phil, that he is gone."

"Gone!"

"Yes; I had to go over to the provision store for something for dinner. Mr. Farringford promised faithfully to remain in the house; but when I came back he had left. I was not absent more than fifteen minutes."

"I am very sorry for it; but it can't be helped," I replied, sadly.

"I am to blame, Phil. I ought to have locked the door, and taken the key with me."

"Don't blame yourself at all, Mrs. Greenough," I interposed. "You have been very kind to him and to me, and I am greatly obliged to you."

"Perhaps you will be able to find him again."

"I will try this evening. I'm sorry I have not more time to take care of him."

"If you will get him back again I will do the best I can, and when I go out I will lock the door."

"Perhaps it is no use to try to do anything for him," I added.

"He is your father, Phil; and you must do and keep doing for him. Let us hope and pray that he may be saved."

After dinner I went to my work again; and that afternoon we finished boarding the building.

"Can you lay shingles, Phil?" asked Mr. Clinch.

"I never did lay any, but I know I can after I have seen how it is done."

"Conant shall show you how," he added.

I went upon the roof with my fellow-workman. As, in the short time I had worked with him, I had carefully observed all his instructions, and been obliging and respectful to him, Conant was very willing to show me how to work. But the operation of laying shingles is very simple, though it requires considerable care and skill in breaking joints, so that the water shall not work through. I saw how it was done, and, though I worked rather slowly at first, I was soon able to lay the shingles to the satisfaction of my instructor. As I got the "hang of the thing" I worked more rapidly, and before night I could lay as many as Conant. We lined the length of the roof, and while he began at one end, I began at the other. At first we came together pretty near my end, but I gradually increased the distance until we met in the middle, showing that I did as much work as my instructor.

"Well, Phil, how did you get along shingling?" asked Mr. Clinch, when I went down the ladder at six o'clock.

"Pretty well, I think, sir," I replied. "I shall learn how in time."

"Learn how!" added Conant; "he can lay as many shingles in a day as I can."

"If I can it is all because Conant showed me so well that I couldn't help doing it," said I, wishing to acknowledge my obligations to my kind instructor.

I saw that he was pleased with the compliment; and I have always found that a pleasant word, even from a boy, helps things along amazingly in this world. It was better and fairer to attribute a portion of my success to Conant's careful and patient teaching than to claim all the credit of it myself. It was doing justice to him without injuring me, and was a cheap way to make a strong friend.

"I'm glad to have a fellow like you to work with, Phil," said Conant, as we walked up the street together. "Clinch put

that Morgan Blair into my charge to show him how to work; but he knew so much more than I did that I couldn't teach him anything. His head is made of wood."

"I'm always very thankful to any one who will show me how to do anything."

"I see you are, Phil, and it's a real pleasure to teach you anything."

"Thank you; I think we shall agree together first rate."

"So do I; but I don't like these boys who know more than the law allows."

We parted at the corner of the next street, and I went home to supper. My father had not returned to the house, and I did not expect he would do so. I was sorry I had not inquired about my mother when he was with me; but I had no good opportunity, and was confident that I should see him again. After supper I left the house, and went to the Planters' Hotel, where I expected to find him; but it was only when he had a dollar or two that he went there.

"Have you seen Mr. Farringford to-day?" I timidly asked one of the bar-tenders, who was disengaged.

"He has been here two or three times to-day," replied the man.

"Do you know where he is now?"

"I haven't the least idea. He hangs round Forstellar's, I think."

"Where is that?"

"It is a gambling-house," he added, giving me the street and number.

"What does Mr. Farringford do?" I asked, rather startled at being directed to a gambling-house.

"Do? Nothing," said the man, contemptuously. "He used to be a runner for a gambling-house, and followed this business as long as he could keep sober enough to do it."

"What is a runner?"

"One that ropes in customers to a gambling-saloon," laughed the bar-tender. "Farringford used to make money enough to pay for his liquor at it; but lately he keeps so drunk that no one will go with him. What do you want of him?"

"I wanted to see him."

"Do you know him?"

"I did not know him till yesterday. He knows a man who has some money that belongs to me," I replied.

But I was thankful that a customer came to prevent him from asking me any more questions. I was shocked to hear that my father had been connected with a gambling-house. He evidently did not think that the business of a "runner" was disreputable, when he assured me that no one could accuse him of a dishonest or a dishonorable deed. But he was only the wreck of a man, and it would have been strange indeed if his moral perception had not been impaired by his long course of dissipation. I hastened to the place which had been described to me by the bar-tender. The establishment had a bar-room on the lower floor, with a private staircase to the apartments above, where games of chance were played.

I went into the bar-room, and saw well-dressed gentlemen passing through the private door to the stairs. I looked about the place a short time. If my father was in the building, he was up stairs, and I decided to attempt the passage. At the foot of the stairs a man stopped me, and told me that no boys were allowed in the rooms above. I was willing to believe that, considering the character of the house, this was a very wholesome regulation; but I wished to find my father. I asked the sentinel if Mr. Farringford was up stairs. He did not know; if he was I couldn't see him. I inquired for Lynch then, but could obtain no satisfaction. I insisted upon seeing one or both of these men with so much zeal that the inside sentinel ordered me to leave the premises. I gently and respectfully remonstrated; but the fellow took me by the arm, and walked me out into the street. As I had no rights there, I did not resist.

I was rather indignant at this treatment, though I ought not to have expected decent conduct on the part of the officials of such an establishment. I decided not to abandon my purpose, though any satisfactory result was rather hopeless just then. I planted myself on the opposite side of the street, and watched the house, taking note of every one who went in or came out. I meant to stay there till midnight if necessary, for I judged from the answers of the inside sentinel that the persons for whom I had inquired were there.

My patience held out till the clock struck eight, when a policeman, by some strange fatality, happened to pass the place. He was on the other side of the street, and glanced into the bar-room as he passed. I determined to walk at his side, and tell him my story, so far as it related to the loss of my money. I crossed over for the purpose of joining him, hoping to induce him to enter the gambling-house with me. As I reached the front of the establishment, two men came out, both of them making use of rather sharp language. Their voices attracted my attention.

One of them was Lynch, and the other was Farringford.

"I will not have my steps dogged by such a fellow as you are?" exclaimed the former, angrily.

"Don't make a noise, Lynch," said Farringford. "If you do, I'll refer the matter to a policeman, and send for the boy."

"Nonsense! I've told you I know nothing about the boy or his money," added Lynch, moving down the street in the direction of the river.

Deeply interested in the discussion, I followed the parties closely enough to hear every word they spoke. From what Lynch said I learned that they had already discussed the subject at the gambling-house; and I judged that the robber had fled in order to escape the importunity of the other.

"The boy speaks the truth, and if you don't give his money back I will make St. Louis too warm for your comfort," retorted Farringford, warmly.

"I don't want to be bored with this matter any more," said Lynch. "If you will clear out I will give you a dollar to get drunk upon."

"I ask no man to give me anything. That won't do; I want the money for the boy."

"Why should you bother your head about the boy?"

"He's my boy, and I won't see him wronged by any one."

"Your boy!"

"Yes, my boy! He's my son," persisted Farringford.

"Nonsense! You have lost your wits."

I thought I had lost mine too. I could not believe that Farringford intended to speak the truth when he said I was his son. He could not possibly have known that I was his son. But my heart leaped up into my throat when it flashed upon my mind that my father had opened the bureau drawer in my room, where I had placed the locket and the little clothes I had worn when I was picked up on the Missouri River. Yet this was not probable, for I had locked the drawer, and put the key in a safe place. I was more inclined to think that Farringford called me his son in order to explain his interest in my affairs. I followed the two men to the levee, where they suddenly halted near a street lamp. I dodged out of their sight, and kept walking back and forth near them; but, as I was a boy, they did not seem to notice me, or at least to consider my presence of any importance.

"I am willing to get rid of you, Farringford, at any reasonable price," said Lynch. "I will not be dogged another foot farther."

"Then give me back the ninety-seven dollars and a half you stole from my boy," added Farringford.

"Don't say that thing again to me. I will give you five dollars if you will bore me no more."

"No; I want the whole."

"Once for all, then, will you clear out, or not?"

"Once for all, I will not till you give up the money you stole from my boy."

"Then take the consequences," said Lynch, as he sprang upon the tottling Farringford.

My blood boiled then, and leaping upon Lynch, I bore him to the ground. He released his hold upon my father when he felt my grasp upon him.

"Police!" I shouted, as I lay upon my victim.

He struggled to shake me off; but I held on, for I knew that I must keep the advantage or lose my man.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH PHIL HAS ANOTHER MISHAP, AND IS TAKEN TO A POLICE STATION.

I had measured the form and estimated the muscle of Lynch before I paid my respects to him. He had threatened me when I met him on the preceding day, and I came to the conclusion that, after passing through one Indian campaign, I should not run away from such a puny fellow as he was. As a boy I was strong, as a man he was weak, and having him under me I had all the advantage. He struggled but a moment, and then changed his tone.

"Don't make a row, Phil," said he, panting under the exhaustion of his efforts.

"You do know me, then," I replied, puffing not less than he.

"I do. Let me up, Phil, and I will give you your money."

"I don't think I shall take your word again," I added, with a candor becoming the exciting occasion.

"Let me up, Phil; there will be a crowd around us in a moment."

"No matter; I won't let you up till you give me some security for your good behavior."

"Better let him up as quick as possible," interposed Mr. Farringford. "There are some men coming down the street."

"I will hold on to him till he makes it safe for me to let him go," I replied.

"Put your hand into my breast pocket, and take out my pocket-book. It contains over two hundred dollars," said Lynch.

I followed his directions; but I was not satisfied in regard to the contents of the pocket-book. It might be stuffed with brown paper for aught I knew, for I had read about some of the tricks of swindlers in great cities, in the newspapers, since I came to St. Louis.

"Take it, Mr. Farringford, and see what is in it," I added, handing it to my father.

"Let me up, Phil," pleaded Lynch.

"Not yet, Mr. Lynchpinne."

"If you are not satisfied, take the purse out of my side pocket. It contains fifty or sixty dollars in gold."

I took the purse from his pocket, and it was heavy enough to be filled with gold.

"Now let me up, Phil. Don't get up a row here."

I was not quite satisfied that we had a sufficient security for the money I had lost, and I wished my father to examine the purse after he had reported on the contents of the pocket-book.

"What's the row?" demanded a couple of men coming out of the street by which we had reached our present position.

"Let me up, Phil," said Lynch, in a low tone.

"Let him up," said my father, in a tone so earnest that I could not disregard it.

Lynch sprang to his feet, and began to brush the dirt from his clothes.

"What's the trouble?" repeated the two strangers.

"No trouble," replied Lynch. "Come, we will go up to Forstellar's and settle the matter."

Without waiting to have the matter discussed, Lynch started at a rapid pace, and my father and I followed him. The two strangers, who manifested a strong interest in the proceedings, again demanded an explanation; and as they received none, they came up the street after us.

"I'm not going to any gambling-house to settle the matter," said I, placing myself at the side of Lynch.

"Where will you go?" demanded he, impatiently.

"Come to my boarding-house."

"No; I am not going to be led into any trap."

"There is no trap about it. You will see no one but a woman."

"I don't care about going to a private house."

"And I don't care about going to a gambling-saloon."

"You have all my money. Do you mean to keep the whole of it?"

"If I should it would be serving you right; but I don't intend to take any more than belongs to me. Will you go to the Planters' Hotel?" I asked.

"Why not go to Forstellar's? It is nearer, and I am in a hurry."

"I won't go into such a place if I can help it."

"You need not go up stairs--only into the bar-room."

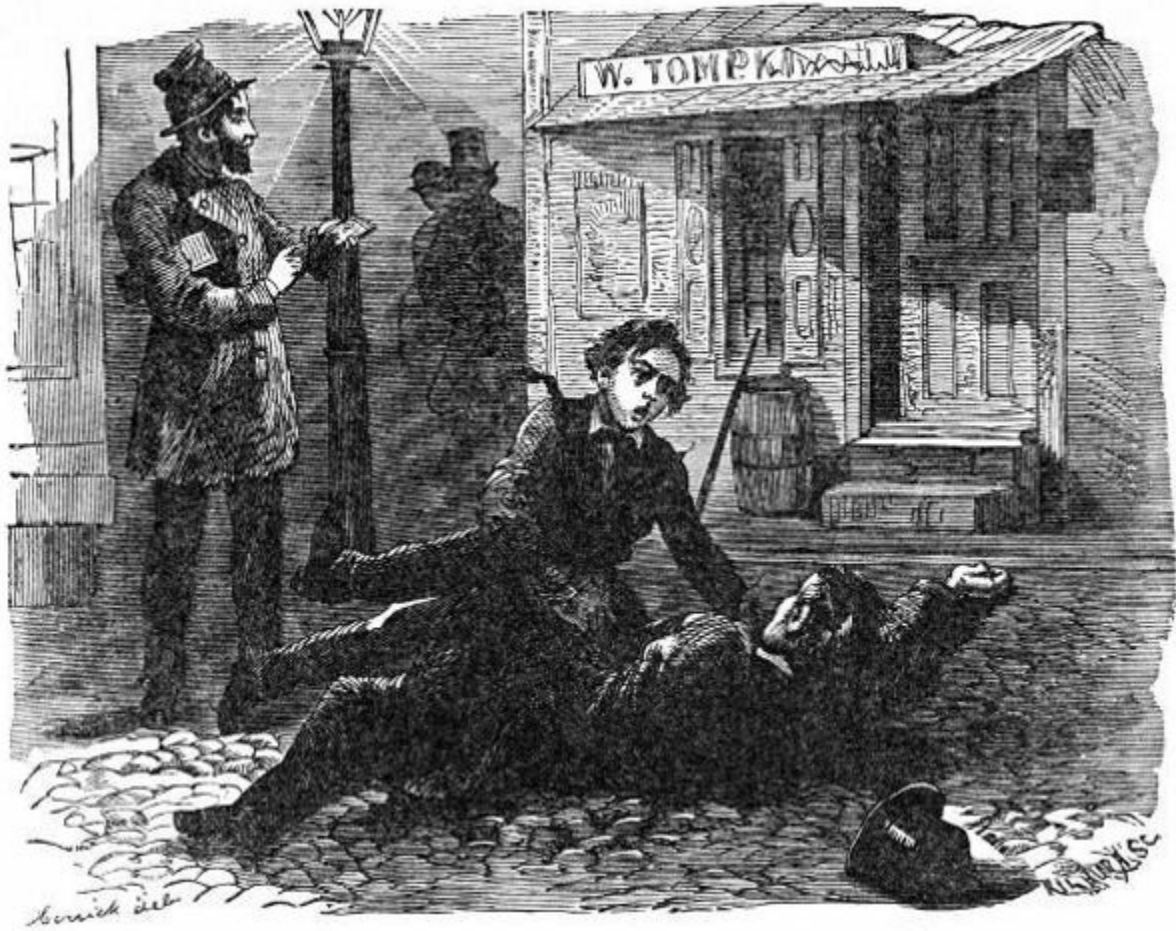
"No; I won't go where you can call in the aid of your friends."

"Very well; I will go to the Planters' Hotel," he replied.

As we were walking up the street we passed a policeman. I had come to feel a peculiar interest in this class of men; and from the fact that I had met two of them in the same evening, I concluded that the traditions stored up against them were false. It is not quite possible for a police officer to be everywhere at the same instant; and, as there are a thousand places within his beat where he cannot be, to the one where he is, the chances are altogether against his being always where he happens to be wanted. I say that, having seen two policemen in the same evening, I felt a renewed respect and regard for the order, and I naturally looked behind me as I passed the second one, in order to obtain a good view of the man.

I was not exactly pleased to notice that the two men who had followed us from Front Street stopped him, or rather induced him to join them; and the three followed us. I had no doubt the inquisitive strangers made our little party the subject of a familiar conversation with the policeman, as they walked up the street. However, I did not feel much concerned about the circumstance; for, having been brought up beyond the practicable reach of the law, I had no suspicion that I had done anything wrong; and a new mishap was necessary in order to convince me of the error of taking the law into my own hands.

I mentioned the fact to Lynch that a policeman was following us. He did not take the matter so coolly as I did, and I am not sure he did not regret that he had taken the trouble to relieve me of my shot-bag. I was very well pleased with myself, and thought I had managed my case remarkably well. I had full security for the money I had lost, and ten minutes in the hotel would enable me to recover possession of my funds. The next day was Saturday, and I intended to purchase some new clothes, so that I could go to Sunday school, to church, and to the prayer-meeting on the evening of the holy day. All these things were new to me, and the anticipation of them was very pleasant. I meant, with my money, to put my wardrobe in a condition that would satisfy Mrs. Greenough, who had promised to go with me to the Sunday school, and to all the meetings.



PHIL GETS LYNCH AT A DISADVANTAGE. Page 147.

"Come, hurry up," said Lynch, while I was passing these pleasant reflections through my mind. "That policeman will make trouble for us."

"I'm not afraid of him."

"But I am," replied my companion, sharply. "If you get me into a scrape, it will go harder with you than with me."

I did not see how that could be, but I was willing to meet the views of Lynch as long as no treachery was apparent in his conduct. If he wished to leave us, he could do so, for we had all his money. We reached the Planters' Hotel, closely followed by the policeman and the two strangers. When we were about to enter the bar-room, the officer stepped in front of us, and stopped our further progress.

"I learn that an assault was committed, under suspicious circumstances, near the levee," said the officer. "I should like to know about it."

"I was robbed of my purse and pocket-book," replied Lynch, promptly.

"Who did it?" demanded the officer, with energy.

"This man and this boy," answered Lynch.

"It is no such thing!" I protested, startled at the charge of my unprincipled companion.

"But that young fellow was holding him down," interposed one of the strangers. "He let him up just as Gray and I came out of Plum Street."

"That's so," added Lynch, in the tone and manner of a martyr. "They took from me all my money, and were going to take my watch when they were interrupted."

"It is a false and groundless accusation," said Mr. Farringford, vehemently.

"Ah, Farringford, are you in the scrape?" exclaimed Mr. Gray.

"I am not in the scrape. There is no scrape," replied my father, very much agitated, for he probably realized better than I did the nature of our proceedings.

"I will conduct you all to the police office, and we will look into the matter," said the official, as he took me upon one arm, and my father upon the other.

Lynch walked with the two gentlemen, one of whom, it appeared, was connected with the Metropolitan Police Department, which explained his interest in the affair. I heard him telling his story to them, and I had no doubt they were greatly edified by it. We arrived at the station, and were presented to a sergeant of police, who imposed upon himself the task of investigating the affair. Mr. Gray stated that he had found me holding Lynch upon the ground, while Farringford was looking into a pocket-book under the street lamp.

"What have you to say?" said the sergeant to Lynch.

"I was going across the levee to a steamboat, when this man and boy sprang upon me and knocked me down before I knew what they were about," replied Lynch. "They took from me my pocket-book, which contains over two hundred dollars, and my purse, with fifty or sixty dollars in it, mostly in gold."

"Do you know either of these parties?" asked the sergeant.

"I know Farringford--everybody knows him," replied Lynch. "I don't know the boy."

"I am sorry to see that Farringford has been reduced to anything of this sort," added Mr. Gray, glancing at the trembling inebriate.

"Gentlemen, I am willing to wait till this transaction can be investigated for the vindication of my character," replied Farringford, straightening himself up as much as his tottering limbs would permit.

"Give me your name, if you please," said the sergeant to Lynch.

"My name is Lynch."

"Full name, if you please."

"Samuel Lynch."

"*Alias* Leonidas Lynchpinne," I added; "the name he called himself by when I first saw him."

"Your business, if you please?" continued the official, as he wrote down the name.

"I have no regular business at the present time."

"That's so!" exclaimed Farringford. "His business is very irregular. In other words, he is a blackleg, at Forstellar's or on the river."

"No matter what he is; you can't knock him down and rob him in the streets of St. Louis," said the sergeant. "Have you either the pocket-book or the purse, Farringford?"

"I have the pocket-book," replied my father, producing it.

"Did you take this from Mr. Lynch?" asked the officer, as the pocket-book was handed to him.

"I did not."

"His son did," said Lynch, with a sneer.

"What do you mean by his son?" demanded Mr. Gray, with a smile.

"He told me the boy was his son."

"When did he tell you so?" asked the sergeant, quietly.

"After he had knocked me down," replied Lynch, wincing under the question, which was evidently put for a purpose.

"Then you talked over their relationship while the boy held you on the ground?" suggested Mr. Gray.

"No; Farringford only called the boy his son."

"What did he say to him?"

"He called him his son, and told him to hold me fast."

"Before he took your pocket-book from you?"

"No; afterwards, while he was looking to see what was in it."

"This is not the way robberies are usually committed," added the sergeant. "I never heard of one robber holding a man down while the other looked to see what the pocket-book contained."

"Did Farringford call you his son?" asked Mr. Gray, turning to me.

"Yes, sir, he did; but not while I held Lynch down. It was while we were in Plum Street," I replied.

"What trick were you engaged in?" demanded Mr. Gray, rather sternly. "Why did he call you his son?"

"I am his son. He is my father," I answered.

Farringford looked at me with an expression of disapproval, as if to reproach me for the falsehood he believed I had uttered.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH PHIL RECOVERS HIS MONEY.

"You don't mean to say that Farringford here, whom everybody in St. Louis knows, is your father--do you?" continued Mr. Gray, apparently amazed at the absurdity of the proposition, while his friend and the sergeant laughed heartily.

"That is precisely what I mean to say," I replied, in the most determined tone.

Farringford shook his head, and was apparently sorry that I had turned out to be such an abominable liar.

"What is your name?" inquired the sergeant.

"Philip Farringford."

I had taken especial pains not to give my full name to my father when he questioned me, and he doubtless supposed that I had invented the name for the occasion. He looked at me, and shook his head. Very likely, by this time, he was willing to believe I had deceived him, and that I had lost no money, for if I could lie about one thing I could about another.

"Do you justify this young man in calling you his father, Farringford?" said Mr. Gray.

"I am sorry to say I cannot. Gentlemen, I have endeavored to act in good faith," replied my father. "I have always found that the truth would serve me better than falsehood."

"Did you call him your son?"

"I did, but used the expression as a kind of harmless fib to carry my purpose with this Lynch, who had robbed the boy of nearly a hundred dollars."

"It is false!" exclaimed Lynch.

"Keep cool, if you please, sir," interposed the sergeant. "We have heard your story, and now we will hear the other side."

"Philip may have deceived me, but I believed that he had been robbed, and I did the best I could to get his money back, after he had pointed out to me the man who took it from him. Certainly he is not my son. I never saw him till yesterday; and I am sorry he has thought it necessary to repeat my fib, or falsehood, if you please," continued Farringford.

"Nevertheless, I hope I shall be able to prove in due time that he is my father," I added.

"But, my lad, everybody knows that Farringford has no children," said Mr. Gray.

"Never mind that now. I want to know whether any robbery has been committed," interposed the sergeant, impatiently.

"Let the boy tell his own story," replied Mr. Gray.

"Here is Lynch's purse," I began, handing it to the sergeant.

"Then you did take these things from him?"

"I did; but he told me to put my hand in his pocket and take out the pocket-book and the purse."

"Very probable!" sneered Lynch.

"It's all true," said Farringford.

"Well, go on, young man."

"I was coming down the Missouri River in the steamer Fawn--"

"She arrived last Tuesday morning," interposed Mr. Lamar, the gentleman with Mr. Gray.

"Yes, sir. I was with Mr. Gracewood and his family."

"What Gracewood?"

"Henry."

"Is he a brother of Robert Gracewood of Glencoe?"

"I don't know. He had a brother in St. Louis," said Mr. Lamar, who was an elderly gentleman, and appeared to know everybody and everything.

"He bought a place at Glencoe a year ago."

"His wife's brother was a Mr. Sparkley."

"It's the same man. But he separated from his wife years ago, cleared out, and has not been heard from since."

I explained that the family had been reunited, and were on their way to St. Louis. I had endeavored to find Mr. Gracewood's brother, but without success, in order to inform him of what had occurred up the river. The fact that he had moved from the city explained why I had not found his name in the Directory. I continued my story, with frequent interruptions, much to the disgust of the sergeant, who was interested only in the criminal aspect of the case. I told how Lynch had robbed me at Leavenworth, how I had identified him in St. Louis, and followed him and Farringford from Forstellar's to Front Street.

"Every word of that story is true so far as it relates to me," said Farringford.

"I watched Lynch and Farringford, the former trying to get rid of the latter all the time, until at last he laid violent hands upon him," I continued. "I couldn't stand it any longer; I went up behind Lynch, threw my hands around his neck, and stuck my knees into his back till he went down. He begged me to let him up, and promised to restore my money if I would. Then, when I was not willing to let him up without some security, he told me to take his pocket-book and purse. That was just what was going on when these gentlemen came out of Plum Street."

"Then you did not knock him down till he laid hands upon Farringford?" added the sergeant.

"No, sir; I did not till he took hold of my father."

"Your father!" exclaimed Mr. Gray. "The rest of your story is so straightforward that I hoped you would abandon that fiction."

"It is no fiction."

"It matters not to me whether it is fact or fiction," interposed the sergeant. "I only wish to know whether or not a crime has been committed in St. Louis. If the boy knocked this Lynch down in order to save Farringford from injury, it is no crime, whether father or not."

"I cried, 'Police!' as loud as I could, as soon as we struck the ground," I added.

"Can you identify your money?" asked the sergeant.

"Not every piece of it; but there was a five-dollar gold coin, with a hole through the middle, dated 1850. The clerk of the Fawn would not take it for my passage for five dollars."

The officer poured the gold from the purse upon the table, and instantly picked out the coin I had described, which Lynch had perhaps found it as difficult to pass as I had. He looked at the date, and declared it was 1850.

"That is very good evidence, my boy," said the officer, bestowing a smile of approval upon me. "Can you give me any more."

"If you can find Captain Davis, of the Fawn, he will say that I left the boat with Lynch."

"Where is he?"

"He has gone up to Alton with the Fawn. When Mr. Gracewood comes, he will tell you the same thing."

"Your witnesses are not at hand. In what boat did you come down the river?"

"In the Fawn."

"And you, Mr. Lynch?"

"In the Daylight."

"Where from?"

"St. Joe."

The sergeant continued to question and cross-question Lynch for half an hour. His statements were confused and contradictory, and being based upon falsehoods, they could not well be otherwise. It appeared that the Daylight, in which he had arrived, came down the river immediately after the Fawn, which made my story the more probable.

"I do not see that any crime has been committed in St. Louis," said the officer, after his long and patient investigation.

"Then you don't call it a crime to knock a man down, and take his purse and pocket-book from him?" added Lynch, in deep disgust.

"I believe the young man's story," replied the officer. "If your money had been taken from you by force, you would not have walked quietly through the streets with those who robbed you, passing an officer on your way without hinting at what had happened. The young man's story is straightforward and consistent, except as to his relations with Farringford, which is not material. I am of the opinion that you commenced the assault upon Farringford."

"Not so."

"Both Farringford and the young man agree in all essential points."

Lynch growled and protested, but finally declared that he was satisfied to let the matter drop where it was. He had recovered his money, and he could not complain.

"But I have not recovered mine, and I am not satisfied," I added, feeling that the discharge of Lynch was total defeat to me.

"You were robbed in the territory of Kansas, and not in the city of St. Louis," replied the officer.

"Must I lose my money for that reason?"

"Certainly not; but the complaint against Lynch must be made at Leavenworth, and a requisition from the governor of the territory must be sent here."

The case was full of difficulties, and Lynch, in charge of a policeman, was sent out of the room to enable us to consider the best means of proceeding. I could not go back to Leavenworth very conveniently, and it would cost me more than the amount of money I had lost. We decided to let the matter rest till the next day, and Lynch was called in again.

"I propose to detain you till to-morrow, when Farringford will complain of you for an assault," said the officer.

"I would rather give a hundred dollars than be detained," said Lynch.

"We don't settle cases in that way. Of course we intend to reach the robbery matter in some manner."

"I will give the boy the money he claims to have lost," added the culprit.

"If you wish to restore the money, you can," replied the sergeant.

"I do not admit the truth of his story."

"Then you shall not give him any money. You shall not be swindled here."

"If I admit the--"

"Don't commit yourself unless you choose to do so. Whatever you say may be used as evidence to convict you."

"You put me in a tight place," said Lynch. "If I commit myself, you will prosecute me. If I don't commit myself, I cannot give the boy the money."

"I did not say I should prosecute you. The crime, if any, was committed beyond the limits of this state. I cannot enter a complaint. The young man may do so if he thinks best."

"Can I make Phil a present of a hundred dollars?" demanded Lynch, desperately.

"You can do as you please with your own money," answered the officer.

The robber counted a hundred dollars from his pocket-book, and handed it to Mr. Lamar, who declared that the amount was right, and the bills were good. It was passed to me; but I declined to receive any more than I had lost, and changing a bill, I returned two dollars and a half.

"I will make no complaint for assault now," said Farringford.

"Then I cannot detain him. If the young man chooses to complain of Lynch in Leavenworth, he is still liable to prosecution."

"I will risk that," said Lynch, more cheerfully.

"You can leave," added the officer.

The rascal promptly availed himself of this permission, and left the office.

"I am sorry to have a case settled in that manner. I know that man as a notorious blackleg," continued the officer.

"I don't see that it could be settled in any other way now," replied Mr. Gray. "We have done nothing to prejudice the interests of justice. The young man can prosecute now."

"I can't afford to go to Kansas to do so," I replied.

"We will keep watch of him," said the sergeant.

We all left the office together. The two gentlemen who had manifested so much interest in the affair were unwilling to part with Farringford and me. Mr. Gray asked me what had induced me to say that Farringford was my father.

"It's a long story, gentlemen; and I have to convince him as well as you of the truth of what I say. If you will go to my boarding-house I will do so."

I told them where it was, and they consented to accompany me. When we reached the house, Mrs. Greenough was astonished at the number of my visitors, but I conducted them all to my chamber.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH PHIL PRODUCES THE RELICS OF HIS CHILDHOOD.

Having seated my party in my chamber, I told the last part of my story first. I began by saying that I had been brought up on the upper Missouri, by Matt Rockwood, relating all my experience down to the present moment, including the history of the Gracewoods.

"That's all very well, Phil; but where were you born?" asked Mr. Gray. "You left that part out, and told us everything except that which we wished to know."

"I don't know where I was born. You must ask my father?"

"Do you still persist in saying that Farringford is your father?"

"I still persist."

"But he has no children."

"I had one child," interposed Farringford, trembling with emotion, as well as from the effects of inebriation.

"I remember," said Mr. Lamar. "You lost that child when the Farringford was burned."

"Yes," replied my father, with a shudder.

"Will you state precisely how that child was lost, sir?" I continued. "I would not ask you to do so if it were not necessary, for I know the narrative is painful."

"I suppose you claim to be this child, which, if I remember rightly, was a girl," added Mr. Lamar.

"No; it was a boy," responded Mr. Farringford.

"Gentlemen, I shall leave you to draw your own conclusions, after you have heard the rest of the story."

"Can it be possible that you are my lost child, Philip?" said my father.

"Let us see the evidence before we decide," I replied. "Now, how was the child lost?"

"My wife's brother, Lieutenant Collingsby, was stationed at a fort on the upper Missouri. My wife was anxious to see him, and we started in one of the steamers I owned then, with our little boy two years old," Mr. Farringford began. "The boat had our family name, and was the finest one I owned. We enjoyed the trip very much. I didn't drink very hard at that time, gentlemen, though I occasionally took too much in the evening, or on a festive occasion. On the night the steamer was burned, we were within thirty miles of the fort to which we were going, and where we intended to remain till the Farringford returned from her trip to the mouth of the Yellowstone. I know my wife did not undress the child, because we hoped to reach the fort, and spend the night at the barracks.

"Expecting to part with the passengers that evening, we had a merry time; and I drank till I was, in a word, intoxicated. I supplied whiskey and champagne for everybody on board, not excepting the officers, crew, and firemen, who would drink them. Even the two or three ladies who were on board partook of the sparkling beverage. Wishing to reach the fort as early as possible, I told the firemen and engineers to hurry up when I gave them their whiskey. They obeyed me to the letter, and the furnaces were heated red hot. I do not know to this day how the boat took fire; but I do know that a barrel of camphene, belonging to some army stores on board, was stove, and its contents ran all over the forward deck.

"All hands worked hard to save the boat; but they worked in vain. The pilot finally ran her ashore. I pulled down a door, and carried it to the main deck aft, while my wife conveyed the child to the same point. The fire was forward, so that we could not leave the boat by the bow, which had been run on shore. I placed my little one upon the door, wrapped in a shawl, with a pillow on each side to keep it from rolling into the water. The captain was to help my wife, while I swam behind the door, holding it with my hands. In this position, partially supported by the raft, I expected to be able to propel it to the shore. My plan was good, and would have been successful, without a doubt, if I had not been intoxicated.

"When I was about to drop into the water, the stern of the boat suddenly swung around, and I lost my hold upon the raft. I had been lying upon the edge of the deck, with my leg around a stanchion, my head hanging over the water; and I think my position, in addition to the fumes of the liquor I had drunk, made me dizzy. I lost the door, and I think I

partially lost my senses at the same time. The steamer, as she swung around, slipped from the abrupt shore which held her. This movement created a tremendous excitement, amounting to almost despair, among the passengers and crew. The door was carried away from the steamer, and I lost sight of it. When I was able again to realize my situation, I tried to discover the door, but in vain. I threw a box, which the captain had prepared to support my wife, into the water, and leaped in myself.

"The current swept the steamer down the river. I paddled my box to the shore, and landed."

"On which side did you land?" I asked.

"On the north side. I ran on the bank of the river, looking for my child. The glare from the burning steamer lighted up the water, but I could see nothing floating on the surface. I was the only person who had left the boat so far, and I followed her till, two or three miles below the point where I had landed, one of her boilers exploded, and she became a wreck. About one half of the passengers and crew were saved on boxes, barrels, and doors. By the aid of the captain my wife was brought to the shore. I shall never forget her agony when I told her that our child was lost. She sank senseless upon the ground; but she came to herself after a time. I wished that I had perished in the flood when I realized the anguish of losing my only child. I could not comfort her; I needed comfort myself. I spent the long night in walking up and down the banks of the river, looking for my lost little boy. Below the place where most of the passengers landed I found many doors and other parts of the boat; but I could not find my child.

"I reasoned that the current would carry the raft which bore up my child to the same points where other floating articles were found, and I was forced to the conclusion that my darling had rolled from the door and perished in the cold waters. I shuddered to think of it. Before daylight in the morning another steamer appeared, coming down the river. We hailed her, and were taken on board. She proved to be one of my boats, and I caused the most diligent search to be made for my lost little one. About a mile below the point where the Farringford had been run ashore we found a door, with one pillow upon it, aground on the upper end of an island. This discovery was the knell of my last hope. Of course the child had rolled from the door and perished. I wept bitterly, and my wife fainted, though we only realized what seemed inevitable from the first. We discovered this door about daylight, and it was useless to prolong the search. The evidence that my child was lost was too painfully conclusive.

"My wife wished to return home. We were going on a pleasure excursion, but it had terminated in a burden of woe which can never be lifted from my wife or from me. I drank whiskey to drown my misery. I was seldom sober after this, and I lost all my property in reckless speculations. I became what I am now. My wife never would taste even champagne after that terrible night. She in some measure recovered her spirits, though she can never be what she was before. After I had lost everything, and could no longer provide a home for her, she returned to her father. I have not seen her for five years; but I do not blame her. She was a beautiful woman, and worthy of a better husband than I was. You know the whole story now, Philip. These gentlemen knew it before."

"Not all of it," added Mr. Lamar. "And now we can pity and sympathize with you as we could not before."

"No; I deserve neither pity nor sympathy," groaned my poor father, trembling violently. "If I had not been drunk I should have saved my child."

"Perhaps it is all for the best, since the child was saved," said I.

"It is impossible!" exclaimed Farringford. "I cannot believe it. There was no one in that lonely region; and, if my child had reached the shore, it must have perished more miserably of starvation than in the water."

"You say your wife did not undress the child, because you expected to reach the fort that evening," I continued. "Do you know what clothes it had on?"

"I ought to know, for I have tearfully recalled the occasion when I last pressed it to my heart, after supper that awful night. It wore a little white cambric dress, with bracelets of coral on the shoulders."

"Anything on the neck?"

"Yes; a coral necklace, to which was attached a locket containing a miniature of my wife."

"In what kind of a shawl was it wrapped when you placed it on the door?" I asked, as I unlocked the bureau drawer in which I had placed the precious relics of my childhood.

While he was describing it I took the shawl from the drawer.

"Is this it?"

Farringford trembled in every fibre of his frame as he glanced at the article.

"It looks like it. I do not know whether it is the same one or not."

I trembled almost as much as the poor inebriate in the excitement of the moment.

"I should hardly consider that sufficient evidence," said Mr. Gray. "There are thousands of shawls just like that."

"I intend to furnish more evidence," I replied, producing the stained and mildewed dress I had brought from the settlement. "Do you know that dress, Mr. Farringford?"

"It certainly looks like the one my child wore."

It was examined by the gentlemen; but they thought the evidence was not yet conclusive, and I took the bracelets from the drawer.

"Did you ever see these before?" I asked, handing them to the palsied drunkard. "You will see the initials P.F. on the clasps."

"I have seen these, and I know them well. They were given to my child by my brother Philip," replied he, with increasing emotion.

"There may be some mistake," suggested Mr. Lamar. "Hundreds and thousands of just such trinkets have been sold in St. Louis."

"But these have the initials of my child upon them."

"P.F. may stand for Peter Fungus, or a dozen other names," replied Mr. Gray. "The evidence is certainly good as far as it goes, but not conclusive."

"What should you regard as conclusive, sir?" I asked, rather annoyed at his scepticism, which I regarded as slightly unreasonable.

"Evidence, to be entirely conclusive, must be susceptible of only one meaning," added Mr. Lamar. "The articles you have produced may have belonged to some other person, though it is not probable."

"I don't know that I shall be able to satisfy you, but I will try once more," I replied, taking the locket from the drawer.

I handed the locket to Farringford. He grasped it with his shaking hands, and turned it over and over. He examined the necklace with great care, and then tried to open the locket. He trembled so that he could not succeed, and I opened it for him. He glanced at the beautiful face upon which I had so often gazed by the hour together.

"My wife!" exclaimed he, sinking into his chair, and covering his face with his hands, sobbing convulsively like a child. "You are my son!"

"Perhaps not," interposed Mr. Lamar, very much to my disgust.

But my poor father was satisfied, and sprang forward to embrace me. The excitement was too much for his shattered nerves, and he dropped fainting into my arms. We placed him upon the bed, and I went for Mrs. Greenough.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH PHIL STRUGGLES EARNESTLY TO REFORM HIS FATHER.

The skilful ministrations of Mrs. Greenough soon restored my father to himself. He had probably eaten nothing since he took his breakfast with me early in the morning, and his frame was not in condition to bear the pressure of the strong emotions which had agitated him.

"My son!" exclaimed he, as the incidents which had just transpired came back to his mind.

"My father!" I replied.

He extended his trembling hand to me, and I took it. It would have been a blessed moment to me if I could have forgotten what he was, or if I could have lifted him up from the abyss of disgrace and shame into which he had sunk. I hoped, with the blessing of God, that I should be able to do this in some measure. I determined to labor without ceasing, with zeal and prayer, to accomplish this end.

"I pity you, my son," said my father, covering his eyes with his hands. "It can be no joy to you to find such a father."

"I should not be sincere, father, if I did not say I wished you were different."

"Philip,—if that is really your name,—I will reform, or I will die," said he, with new emotion. "I have something to hope for now. The good God, who, I believed, had deserted me years ago, has been kinder to me than I deserved."

"He is that to all of us, father."

"Where did you get this locket, young man?" asked Mr. Lamar, who evidently believed there was still a possibility that a mistake had been made.

I replied that I had found it in the chest of Matt Rockwood, who had taken me from the door in the river; and I repeated that part of my narrative which I had omitted before.

"You need not cavil, gentlemen," interposed my father. "I am satisfied. I can distinguish the features of my lost son. If you knew my wife, you can see that he resembles her. Look at the portrait, and then look at him."

"I have seen Mrs. Farringford, but I do not exactly remember her looks," added Mr. Lamar.

"Matt Rockwood is dead; but there is a living witness who saw the child he found only a day or two after it was picked up," I continued.

"Who is he?"

"Kit Cruncher; he is at the settlement now, and has known me for eleven years. Mr. Gracewood, whom I expect in St. Louis soon, has known me for six years, and has heard Matt Rockwood tell the story of finding the child."

"If I am satisfied, no one else need complain," said my father. "There are no estates, no property, nor a dollar left, to which any claim is to be established. I am a beggar and a wretch, and an inheritance of shame and misery is all I have for him."

"But you forget that your wife is still living, Farringford," added Mr. Lamar. "Her father is a wealthy man, and his large property, at no very distant day, will be divided among his three children."

"Very true; I did not think of that. I have so long been accustomed to regard her as lost to me that I did not think my boy still had a mother," answered my father, bitterly. "But when she sees him, she will not ask that any one should swear to his identity. She will know him, though eleven years have elapsed since she saw him."

"But where is she?" I asked, anxiously.

"I do not know, Philip."

"When did you see her last?"

"It is four or five years since we met."

"But haven't you heard from her?"

"Once, and only once. After she left me, and went back to her father, I tried to see her occasionally, for I have never lost my affection and respect for her. I annoyed Mr. Collingsby, her father, trying to obtain money of him. Three years ago the family moved away from St. Louis, partly, if not wholly, I know, to avoid me, and to take my wife away from the scene of all her misery."

"Where did they go?"

"To Chicago, where Mr. Collingsby was largely interested in railroad enterprises."

"Is the family still there?"

"I do not know."

"They are," added Mr. Gray.

"But my wife is not there," said my father. "Some one told me, a year ago, he had met her in Europe, where she intended to travel for three years with her brother and his wife. Really, Philip, I know nothing more about her. I wish I could lead you to her."

I was indeed very sad when I thought that years might elapse before I could see her who had given me being.

"I will make some inquiries, Phil, in regard to the Collingsbys," said Mr. Lamar.

"Are you satisfied, sir, that I am what I say I am?" I asked.

"I have no doubt you are, though perhaps your case is not absolutely beyond cavil. The old man who died might have found the body of the child, and taken the clothes and trinkets from it; but that is not probable."

"But I can produce a man who has known me from my childhood," I replied.

"You can, but you have not," added he, with a smile.

"I will produce him if necessary. I hope you will see Mr. Gracewood when he arrives."

"I will, if possible. But, Farringford, was there no mark or scar of any kind on the child which will enable you to identify him?"

"I know of none. Perhaps his mother does," answered my father. "But I tell you I am satisfied. I ask for no proof. I know his face now. It all comes back to me like a forgotten dream."

"Very well; but, Farringford, you have something to live for now," added Mr. Lamar.

"I have, indeed," replied the trembling sufferer, as he glanced fondly at me. "I will try to do better."

"When you feel able to do anything, we shall be glad to help you to a situation where you can do something to support your boy," said Mr. Gray.

"I can take care of myself, gentlemen. I am getting three dollars a week now, and I hope soon to obtain more," I interposed.

"Three dollars a week will hardly support you."

"I shall be able to get along upon that sum for the present. Mrs. Greenough is very kind to me."

The two gentleman said all they could to inspire my poor father with hope and strength, and then departed. I was very much obliged to them for the interest and sympathy they had manifested, and promised to call upon them when I needed any assistance.

"I am amazed, Philip," said my father, when our friends had gone.

"I knew that you were my father when we met in the evening at the Planters' Hotel," I replied. "You remember that you told me you had lost a child on the upper Missouri."

"I did; I was thinking then what a terrible curse whiskey had been to me. You looked like a bright, active boy, and I desired to warn you, by my own sad experience, never to follow in the path I had trodden. I did not suspect that I was talking to my own son; but all the more would I warn you now."

"You thrilled my very soul, father, with your words, and I shall never forget them. I shall pray to God to save both you and me from the horrors of intemperance."

"Philip, I have resolved most solemnly, a hundred times, to drink no more; but I did not keep my promise even twenty-four hours."

"Is your mind so weak as that?"

"Mind! I have no mind, my son. I haven't a particle of strength, either of body or mind."

"You must look to God for strength," said Mrs. Greenough, who had listened in silence to our conversation.

"I have, madam; but he does not hear the prayer of such a wretch as I am."

"You wrong him, Mr. Farringford," replied the widow, solemnly. "He hears the prayers of the weakest and the humblest. You have no strength of your own; seek strength of him. My husband was reduced as low as you are. For ten years of his life he was a miserable drunkard; but he was always kind to me. Hundreds of times he promised to drink no more, but as often broke his promise. I became interested in religion, and then I understood why he had always failed. I prayed with my husband, and for him. He was moved, and wept like a child. Then he prayed with me, and the strength of purpose he needed came from God. He was saved, but he never ceased to pray. He redeemed himself, and never drank another drop. Before he died, he had paid for this house, besides supporting us very handsomely for ten years."

"That is hopeful, madam; but I am afraid I am too far gone. I have no wife to pray with me," said my father, gloomily.

"I will pray with you."

Throwing herself upon her knees before a chair, she poured forth her petition for the salvation of the drunkard with an unction that moved both him and me. I heard my father sob, in his weakness and imbecility. He was as a little child, and was moved and influenced like one.

"You must pray yourself, Mr. Farringford," said she, when she had finished. "You must feel the need of help, and then seek it earnestly and devoutly."

"I thank you, madam, for all your kindness. I will try to do better. I will try to pray," said he. "Could you give me some more of the medicine I took last night and this morning? It helped me very much."

"Certainly I can. I will do everything in the world for you, if you will only stay here and try to get well."

She left the room, and went into the kitchen to prepare the soothing drinks which the excited nerves of the patient demanded.

"I will reform, Philip. I will follow this good lady's advice. Give me your hand, my son," said my father.

"O, if you only would, father! This world would be full of happiness for us then. We could find my mother, and be reunited forever."

"God helping me, I will never drink another drop of liquor," said he, solemnly lifting up his eyes, as I held his trembling hand.

Mrs. Greenough opportunely returned with the medicines, and with a folded paper in her hand. As my father took his potion, she opened the paper, which was a temperance pledge, on which was subscribed the name of "Amos Greenough."

"This is the pledge my husband signed, with trembling hand, ten years before his death. It was salvation to him here--and hereafter. Will you add your name to it, Mr. Farringford?" said Mrs. Greenough.

"I will."

"Not unless you are solemnly resolved, with the help of God, to keep your promise," she added. "Not unless you are willing to work, and struggle, and pray for your own salvation."



PHIL'S FATHER SIGNS THE PLEDGE. Page 193.

"I am willing; and I feel a hope, even now, madam, that God has heard your prayer for a poor wretch like me."

"Sign, then; and God bless you, and enable you to keep this solemn covenant with him."

She took the writing materials from the bureau, and my father, with trembling hand, wrote his name upon the pledge.

"May God enable me to keep it!" said he, fervently, as he completed the flourish beneath the signature.

"Amen!" ejaculated Mrs. Greenough. "May you be as faithful as he was whose name is on the paper with you."

"Stimulated by his example, and by your kindness, I trust I shall be," said my father.

Mrs. Greenough then provided a light supper for him, of which he partook, and very soon retired. I told my kind landlady that I had recovered my money, and should now be able to pay my father's board for a time. She had not thought of that matter, and would be glad to take care of him for nothing if she could only save him. As I went to bed I could not but congratulate myself upon finding such a kind and devoted friend as she had proved to be.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH PHIL MEETS THE LAST OF THE ROCKWOODS.

The next day my father was quite sick; but Mrs. Greenough was an angel at his bedside, and I went to my work as usual. I was filled with hope that the wanderer might yet be reclaimed. Though I longed intensely to see my mother, I think if I had known she was in the city I should not have sought to find her, for I desired to carry to her the joyful news of the salvation of my father. When I could say that he was no longer a drunkard, I should be glad to meet her with this intelligence upon my lips. But she was wandering in distant lands. Plenty and luxury surrounded her, while I was struggling to earn my daily bread, and to take care of my father. The fact that she was in affluence was consoling to me, and I was the more willing to cling to my father in his infirmities.

When I went to work that morning I was introduced to a plane and a plank--to test my ability, I supposed, for the men had not yet finished shingling the roof. A plank partition was to be put up in order to make a counting-room in one corner of the storehouse. I had never in my life seen a plane till I came to St. Louis; but I had carefully observed the instrument and its uses. Conant told me how to handle it with ease and effect, and instructed me in setting the iron, so as to make it cut more or less deeply, according to the work to be done.

It was hard work, harder than boarding or shingling; but I made it unnecessarily severe for the first hour, and though it was a cool day, the sweat poured off me in big drops. I had not yet got the hang of the thing; but when Conant came from the roof for a bundle of shingles, he looked in to see how I succeeded. A little more instruction from him put me on the right track, and I worked much easier; in a word, I learned to use the plane. After removing the rough side from the plank, it was a relief to handle the smoothing-plane, and I polished off the wood to my own satisfaction and that of my employer.

In the afternoon I was sent upon the roof again to lay shingles, and we finished that part of the job before night. At six o'clock all the hands were paid off for their week's work. I felt considerable interest in this performance. I had worked three days, and at the price agreed upon I was entitled to a dollar and a half.

"I shall not want you any longer, Blair," said Mr. Clinch to the young fellow of whom Conant had spoken so disparagingly to me. "I owe you six dollars; here is the amount."

"You don't want me any longer?" replied Blair, as he took his wages.

"No."

"Why not?"

"You don't suit me. I can't afford to pay you six dollars a week for what you do," answered the employer, bluntly. "You don't understand the business, and you don't try to learn it. That boy there does twice as much work in a day as you do."

I did not think it right to hear any more of this conversation, and moved away. Though I was pleased with the compliment, I was sorry to have it bestowed upon me at the expense or to the disparagement of another. I walked around the building, but I was soon sent for to receive my wages.

"Phil, you have done remarkably well," said Mr. Clinch; "and I want to use you well. You handle a plane well for one who never saw one before, and I think you were born to be a carpenter."

"Thank you, sir," I replied. "You give me all the credit I deserve."

"And I give you a dollar a day for your work, for you have done twice as much as I expected of you," he added, handing me three dollars. "I supposed you would be in the way at first, and I only took you to oblige Captain Davis."

"I have done the best I knew how, and shall always do so; but I don't ask any more than you agreed to give me. I am entitled to only half of this."

"Yes, you are. I agreed to give you more if you were worth it. Conant says you have done a man's work most of the time. Of course you can't do that on the average. But you will be worth about a dollar a day to me, now that I have discharged Morgan Blair."

"Thank you, sir; you are very kind."

"Kind! Nonsense! I am only doing the fair thing by you. When I think you are worth more than a dollar a day, I

shall give it to you. On the other hand, I shall discharge you when I don't want you, or when you are lazy or clumsy. I always speak my mind."

I saw that he did, to Blair as well as to me, and I was very thankful for having obtained so good an employer. I was determined to merit his good will by doing my duty faithfully to him.

I went home, and found my father more comfortable than in the morning; but he was still very sick, and unable to leave his bed. In the evening I went out to purchase a suit of clothes, which I so much needed. I obtained a complete outfit, which would enable me to attend church the next day, looking like other young men of my age, in the humbler walks of life. Mrs. Greenough had been very particular in urging me to be prepared for church and Sunday school, and had even offered to lend me money to purchase the needed articles. I told her I had never been to church in my life, and I was very glad of the opportunity.

When my bundle was ready I turned to leave the store. A young man, whose form and dress looked familiar to me,-- though I did not see his face, for he was looking at the goods in a glass case,--followed me into the street.

"Phil," said he; and I recognized the voice of Morgan Blair, the young man who had been discharged that afternoon by Mr. Clinch.

I paused to see what he wanted, though I was not very anxious to make his acquaintance after what I knew of him.

"What is it?" I asked.

"I want to see you about a matter that interests me," he added.

"What is that?"

"They say you came from way up the Missouri River. Is that so?"

"That's so."

"Conant said you did. I want to know something about the country up there, and I suppose you can tell me."

"What do you want to know?"

"I have an uncle up there somewhere, and I want to find him if I can."

"Do you know in what region he is located?" I inquired.

"I do not; that is what I want to ascertain. Conant told me you came from that country, and I meant to talk with you about it; but you put my pipe out, and I was discharged to-day. I saw you go into that store, and I thought I would wait for you."

"What do you mean by putting your pipe out?"

"Didn't you put my pipe out?"

"I didn't even know that you smoked."

"You are rather green, but you have just come from the country. I meant that you caused me to be discharged."

"I did?"

"You heard Clinch say that I did not do half as much work as you did?"

"Yes; I heard that; but it was not my fault."

"I didn't do any more than I could help, and you put in all you knew how. If you hadn't come, Clinch never would have suspected that I wasn't doing enough for a boy. I don't believe in breaking your back for six dollars a week. But never mind that now. When can I see you and talk over this other matter with you?"

"I can tell you now all I know," I replied.

"I think I shall go up the Missouri, if I have any chance of finding my uncle."

"You can't go up this season. No steamers leave so late as this. When did you see your uncle?"

"I never saw him, and I shouldn't know him if I met him to-night. He has been up in the woods for twenty years, I believe."

"What is his name?"

"Rockwood."

"Rockwood!" I exclaimed, startled by his answer.

"Yes; my mother was his sister."

"What was his other name?"

"Matthew. He left Illinois before I was born; but my mother heard from him about ten years ago. Somebody--I don't know who it was--saw him at a wood-yard, and he sent word by this person that he was alive and well, but did not think he should ever come back to Illinois. His name was Matthew Rockwood. Did you ever hear of such a man?"

"I have, and I knew him well."

"You don't say so!" replied he, astonished in his turn. "Where is the place?"

"On the Missouri, between Bear and Fish Creeks."

"Well, I don't know any better now than I did before. What was the old man doing?"

"He has been hunting, trapping, and selling wood; but he is not living now."

"Dead--is he?"

"Yes; he died last spring."

"You don't say it!"

"There was some trouble with the Indians in that region, and he was shot in a skirmish with them."

"The last of them is gone, then," added Blair.

"Matt Rockwood had a brother--did he not?"

"He did have--but he is dead; and my mother died two years ago. And so uncle Matt is dead too?"

"Yes."

"The man that told my mother about him thought he must be making money out there, for he sold a great deal of wood to the steamers. Do you know anything about it?"

"I know all about it."

"You lived near him, then?"

"I lived with him. To tell the whole story in a few words, I was brought up by Matt Rockwood, and I was at his side when he was killed by the Indians. But here is my boarding-house, and I don't care about going any farther."

"But I want to know more about my uncle."

"Come in, then."

I conducted him up stairs to Mrs. Greenough's kitchen; and, after ascertaining that my father was still very comfortable, I seated myself with Morgan Blair.

"It is a little odd that I should stumble upon you," said he.

"Rather," I replied; and it seemed to be another of my mishaps, for in him had appeared an heir to Matt Rockwood's little property, which had come into my possession.

I told him all about his uncle; how he had lived and how he had died.

"Did he have any property?" asked Blair.

"Why do you ask?"

"Why do I ask? Well, that's a good one! My father and mother are both dead, and I suppose I am the last of the Rockwoods. I am now out of business, with less than ten dollars in the world; and why do I ask whether my uncle had any property?"

"He had his farm--a quarter section of land," I added.

"How much is it worth?"

"Perhaps it is worth as much as it would cost you to go up there and back."

"That's hopeful."

"There were a couple of horses, a lot of hogs, a log house and barn, and the farming tools."

"Well, what are they worth?"

"They are worth considerable to a person who wishes to live up there."

"But I don't wish to live up there."

"Then they are worth whatever you can sell them for. Kit Cruncher has the farm; but I think you will find that squatter sovereignty prevails up there; and a man in possession, without any claim, is better off than a man with a title, but not in possession."

"Then I have no chance, you think?"

"On the contrary, I know that Kit Cruncher is an honest man, and if you prove your claim, he will either pay you the fair value of the place, or give it up to you."

"But didn't my uncle have any money?"

"Yes; he left about nine hundred dollars in gold," I replied.

"Whew!" exclaimed Blair, opening his eyes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH PHIL CALLS UPON MR. LAMAR, AND DOES NOT FIND HIM.

I had heard nothing from Mr. Gracewood since my arrival in St. Louis. He had in his possession all the moneyed property which had come to me from the estate of Matt Rockwood. I had placed no little dependence upon the fifteen hundred in gold, which I regarded as my inheritance; and now an heir appeared, who certainly had a better legal claim than I had.

"Nine hundred dollars!" exclaimed Morgan Blair again, and with as much satisfaction as though this large sum was already in his own hands.

"And after his death we sold off wood and produce enough to amount to over seven hundred dollars more."

"Better and better," added Blair. "Go on, Phil; perhaps you can make it up to two thousand."

"I can't very easily make it any more," I replied.

"Well, I'm satisfied as it is. Now, can you tell me where this money is?"

"A friend of mine has fifteen hundred dollars in gold, and I have his note for it."

"Exactly so; and perhaps you won't object to handing the note over to me, and telling me where I can find your friend."

"I must say that I do object."

"You do?"

"Certainly I do."

"But I am the last of the Rockwoods. Don't you think I look like my uncle Matt?"

"I don't see it."

"Nor I; but my mother said I did. Be that as it may, you must see that this money belongs to me, and not to you."

"I don't even see that."

"Don't be mean about it, Phil."

"I don't intend to be. I have told you the whole truth, and now I don't care about talking any more on the subject."

"That's rather cool. You have my money, and you won't give it to me."

"Certainly not; I don't know anything about you. I never even heard old Matt say he had a sister."

"That's nothing to do with me. He did have one, and I am her son."

"It's no use to say anything more about it. When Mr. Gracewood, who has the money, arrives, I will speak to him about it."

"But I can't wait."

"You must wait."

"Couldn't you let me have a little of it?" persisted he.

"No, I could not. You haven't proved your claim yet."

"I will prove it."

"When you have done so, the money shall be paid."

"But I must go to Vandalia to obtain the proof; and I haven't money enough to pay my expenses."

"I can't help that."

"Haven't you any money?"

"I have, and I intend to keep it for my own use."

"But the money is mine. I am the last of the Rockwoods. I know you have nearly a hundred dollars; or you had before you went into that shop. That money is mine, and when you spend a dollar of it you steal it. That's what's the matter."

"I think you have said enough about it, and we will end up the matter here," I replied, disgusted with his impudence, and wondering how he knew that I had nearly a hundred dollars.

I refused to say anything more, and he threatened me with the terrors of the law, and even with his individual vengeance. He teased me to let him have fifty dollars on account, and declared he would have me arrested if I did not comply. Finally I put on my cap, and he followed me into the street, for I found I could get rid of him in no other way. As soon as he was outside of the door, I made a flank movement upon him, and returned to the house, shutting him out as I entered. He did not trouble me any more that night, but I expected to see him again soon.

I was inclined to believe that he was what he represented himself to be, for I did not see how he could know anything about Matt Rockwood. It was very singular that he had stumbled upon me so blindly, and I regarded my fortune as already lost. I was sorry that Matt's heir had appeared, for I had considered how convenient this large sum of money would be when I began to look for my mother. I had thought, as soon as my father's reformation was in a measure assured, of going to Chicago to see my grandfather, Mr. Collingsby. My wages, even at six dollars a week, would no more than pay my father's and my own board. But I was fully determined to be honest; and, if the fifteen hundred dollars belonged to Morgan Blair, he should have it, as soon as he satisfied me that he was the "last of the Rockwoods," even without any legal forms. The next day my father was a little better, and sat up a portion of the time. Mrs. Greenough nursed him most tenderly, and insisted that I should go to Sunday school and to church in the forenoon. I dressed myself in my new clothes, and when my father saw me he smiled, and seemed to be proud of his boy. I went to Sunday school at the church which my landlady attended; and I realized all my pleasant anticipations of the occasion. I was put into a class of boys of my own age, and listened attentively to the instructions of my teacher, who, I afterwards learned to my surprise, was one of the wealthiest merchants in the city, though he was very plain in his manners and in his dress.

What was so new and strange, and withal so exceedingly pleasant to me, is familiar to all my readers, and I need not describe it. Mr. Phillips, my teacher, had an attentive scholar in me, and immediately took an interest in me. He promised to call and see me some evening, and presented me a class book for use in the school and at home. I was astonished at his kindness and condescension, when Mrs. Greenough told me who and what he was. The services in the church were not less novel and interesting to me; and I am sure that I was deeply impressed by the prayers, the singing, and the sermon. In the afternoon I staid at home with my father, and Mrs. Greenough went to church. I read the Bible and the library book I had obtained at the Sunday school to him, and he was as much interested as I was. In the evening I went to the prayer-meeting; and when I retired I felt more like being good and true than ever before.

On Monday I was at the plane and plank again, and when night came I was never so tired in my life, not even when I had tramped through the woods for a day and a night. I did not go out; but Mr. Lamar and Mr. Gray called to inquire for my father. As I had told them all about my relations with Matt Rockwood, and that I had the money he had left, I ventured to ask their advice in regard to the claimant who had appeared in the person of Morgan Blair.

"Don't pay him a dollar," said Mr. Lamar, who was a very prudent man, as I had learned before.

"I have no doubt he is the nephew of Matt Rockwood," I replied.

"If he is, he must prove his claim. Do nothing, Phil, without the advice of your friends, especially Mr. Gracewood."

"As he has the money, I shall not be likely to do anything."

"The fellow may be an impostor," suggested Mr. Gray.

"I think that is impossible. He came to me simply to inquire about the country on the upper Missouri, and said he had an uncle up there. Then he gave me the name of Matthew Rockwood. If he were an impostor, he could not have done that."

"Perhaps it is all right as you say; but don't pay him anything till we have the evidence," added Mr. Lamar.

My friends left me, and the door had hardly closed behind them before Morgan Blair called to see me. He pressed me to let him have fifty dollars to enable him to go to Vandalia; but I continued to refuse, and as before he waxed angry and threatened me.

"It's no use, Blair. I shall not let you have a dollar. I have consulted Mr. Lamar and Mr. Gray, and I act under their

advice. If you want to do anything about it, go and see them."

"I don't know them, and don't want to know them. My business is with you, and I will follow you till you give me that money. It belongs to me, and I ought to have it."

"You can do as you think best; but following me won't do any good. If you will wait till Mr. Gracewood comes, he will be able to settle the question. He was with us when your uncle was killed. Perhaps Matt spoke to him about his sister."

"Do you doubt my word?"

"No; but if I should pay this money to you, Matt's brother might come after it."

"I tell you he is dead."

"That must be proved."

"I suppose I shall have to prove that I'm not dead myself, by and by."

"If you can prove the rest as easily, as you can prove that, you will be all right. When I hear from Mr. Gracewood I will let you know."

"I can't wait."

"Very well; then go to work at once in the right way."

"What's that?"

"Go to the territory where your uncle lived and died, have an administrator appointed, and he can legally claim the effects of Matt Rockwood," I replied, rehearsing the information imparted to me by Mr. Lamar.

"I can't go up there."

"Go to a lawyer, then, and he will advise you what to do."

"I haven't any money to pay a lawyer. I haven't a dollar left. I lost nearly all I had."

"Lost it? Where?"

"At Forstellar's," he replied.

"Gambling?"

"Well, I played a little. I wanted to make a little money somehow."

"But you didn't make any?"

"Made it out of pocket."

"I should go to work if I were you."

His confession gave me a new revelation in regard to his character, and I was the more determined not to let him have a dollar. He pleaded, begged, and threatened; but I was firm, and he left me.

When I came home to dinner the next day, I found a letter from Mr. Gracewood in reply to mine. With trembling hands I opened it. The writer began by saying that he was very glad to hear from me, and that he had worried a great deal about me. Mrs. Gracewood had been very sick, but was now slowly improving. He did not think he should be able to leave for St. Louis for two or three weeks. Ella was well, and sent her regards to me. This was favorable news, and I was very much rejoiced to receive the letter. I wrote immediately, giving him a full account of what had happened to me since we parted, and sent the letter by the next mail.



PHIL READING THE BIBLE TO HIS FATHER. Page 212.

My father improved very slowly, but I was not sure that his illness was not a blessing to him, for he was unable to go out of the house, and the process of weaning him from whiskey was thus assisted very materially. On Saturday night, after I had been paid off, I found a letter at the house. I opened it, and looked first at the signature, which was Pierre Lamar. He wrote that he wished to see me about the money matter of which I had spoken to him, and desired me to call at a place in Fourth Street which he designated. In a postscript he requested me to bring the note which Mr. Gracewood had given for the money.

After supper, with the note in my pocket, I hastened to the place indicated. It appeared to be a dwelling-house, and I rang the bell at the front door, which was presently opened by a man in a white jacket. I asked for Mr. Lamar, and was assured that he was in his room. I was conducted up three flights of stairs, and the man knocked at a door. I thought Mr. Lamar ought to be able to afford better accommodations for himself; but the door opened, and I entered the room.

I looked for my friend; but instead of him, I saw only Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne and Morgan Blair.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH PHIL FINDS HIMSELF A PRISONER IN THE GAMBLERS' ROOM.

I was not suspicious; I had no idea that any one intended to wrong me. I was even willing to believe that Morgan Blair was sincere, and really thought that I ought to advance him money from the estate of his uncle, even before he had proved his claim. After all, it is pleasant to believe that no one intends to injure you; it is even better to be occasionally deceived than to be always suspicious.

I went up the stairs in the house to which the note from Mr. Lamar had given me the address without a suspicion that anything was, or could be, wrong. I had never before seen the handwriting of my correspondent, and had no reason to suppose that the note was a fraud upon me. Though I had had a sharp experience of the villany of men since I came from my home in the wilderness, I was still a child in the ways of the great world.

I entered the room to which I had been conducted by the man in a white jacket, and the door was instantly closed behind me and locked. The apartment was an attic chamber, on the fourth floor of the house, and contained the ordinary furniture of a bedroom. Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne, otherwise Lynch, sat in a rocking-chair, smoking a cigar. Blair had slipped in behind me when I entered in order to secure the door; and having done this, he took a chair near the blackleg. On a small table, over which hung the gas-light, was a silver box, such as I had seen in the hands of Redwood at Leavenworth. It contained a pack of cards, and another lay upon the table. There was also a dice-box, and some other gambling implements, of which I do not even know the names. I concluded, from the position of the parties and the articles on the table between them, that Lynch had been giving the young man a lesson in the art of winning money.

"How are you, Phil Farringford?" said Lynch, with a sort of triumphant smile, which indicated the pleasure he felt at the success of his trick.

"How are you, Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne?" I replied, cheerfully; for I felt it to be my duty to demonstrate that I was not alarmed at my situation.

The demonstration was not a feint, either. I felt an utter contempt for Lynch, and, now that I realized his rascality, for Morgan Blair. I had fought the savage Indians in the forest, which had developed my courage, if nothing more. I glanced around the room, and saw at the grate an iron poker, with which I thought I might neutralize the odds against me, in case the interview resulted in anything more dangerous to life and health than mere words. The letter, in its postscript, as though it had been an afterthought, requested me to bring Mr. Gracewood's note. Blair had asked me to give it up to him. I was inclined to think that the parties before me wanted this note, though I could not imagine what earthly use it could be to them.

"You need not call me by that name any longer," added Lynch, biting his lip, and evidently vexed to find that I was not intimidated by my situation.

"As you gave me the name of Leonidas Lynchpinne, I shall consult my own inclination, rather than yours, in the use of it."

"You will change your tune before you are an hour older, Phil."

"If I do I shall take the pitch from you."

"You are here at my summons, my lad."

"I see now that I am; brought here by a lie and a swindle, which seem be your stock in trade."

"Don't be impudent, Phil."

"If you speak to me like a gentleman, I will answer you in the same way. You need not put on airs."

"I have business with you, Phil."

"I have no business with you; and I respectfully decline having anything whatever to do with you."

"Your declination is not accepted. I want to tell you that I never forget a friend or forgive an enemy."

"I have fought Indians before, and though I don't like the business, I can do it again."

"Do you call that talking like a gentleman, Phil?"

"No gentleman ever utters an Indian sentiment."

"You are in my power, Phil, and you had better come down from that high horse."

"I'm not in your power, and never shall be till I become a thief, a blackleg, and a swindler," I replied, calmly, as I glanced at Morgan Blair, who, I thought, was completely in his power.

"What!" exclaimed Lynch, springing to his feet, his face red with anger.

I fell back two or three steps, and quietly took up the poker, which rested against the bracket at the side of the grate.

"What are you going to do with that?" demanded he.

"That will depend upon circumstances."

"Drop that poker!"

"For the present I shall regard this poker as a part of myself; and I hope you will so regard it."

"You impudent puppy!"

"Foul words are cheap, defiling only him who utters them," I added, quoting a sentence from the instructions of Mr. Gracewood.

"I'm not to be trifled with, Phil," said Lynch, taking a small Derringer pistol from his pocket.

"That's just my case," I answered, elevating the poker.

"Look here, Lynch," interrupted Morgan Blair, rising from his chair in evident alarm, "if you are going to use pistols and such things, I won't have anything to do with the scrape."

"Shut up, Blair!" replied Lynch.

"I won't!"

"You are a fool!" exclaimed the older villain, dropping into his rocking-chair with an expression of utter disgust upon his face.

I felt that I was fighting my battle very well indeed, and I was encouraged in the course I had chosen.

"I don't want any shooting where I am," said Blair. "I'm willing to lick him within an inch of his life, if he don't play fair, but I don't want him shot."



PHIL DEFIES LYNCH. Page 224.

"I don't intend to shoot him, unless he attacks me with that poker. I want to show him that two can play at his game," added Lynch. "Will you drop that poker, Phil?"

"I will not."

"If you undertake to use it, I want you to understand that pistol balls travel faster than pokers."

"Very true; and if you are satisfied with your pistol, I am with my poker. I am ready to end this meeting at any time."

"I am not ready to end it. I have business with you. I don't forgive an enemy."

"I do, when he deserves to be forgiven."

"None of your cant! I'm not going to a prayer-meeting with you now."

"It would do you good to go to one; and I know of no one who needs to go any more than you."

"If you can hold your tongue long enough, we will proceed to business, Phil."

"I have no business to proceed to; and I'm going to speak as I feel inclined," I replied, resting the poker in a chair near me.

"I have business with you, if you have not with me. As I told you, I never forgive an enemy."

"As I told you before, that is an Indian sentiment."

"Will you hold your tongue?"

"No, sir, I will not."

"You knocked me down in the street, and took my money from me."

"At your request I took it; and you were kind enough to pay me the balance in my favor when we parted at the police station," I replied.

"You must give me back that money, Phil."

"Not if I know it. Let me remind you that the money belonged to me, and that I did not charge you any interest upon it for the time you had it."

"The money wasn't yours. It belonged to Matt Rockwood. You stole it; and I intended to get all I could for my friend here, Morgan Blair, to whom all of it belongs."

"You and your friend seem to understand each other very well, except so far as the pistol is concerned."

"I act for him. He is a young fellow, and don't know much about the ways of the world."

"He appears to be learning very rapidly."

"He is the rightful heir of the man up the river, whose money you have. I expect you to give it up to him."

"And I expect to do so myself, just as soon as he proves the claim. Though I think I have a better right to the money than he has, I will give it up whenever he satisfies me that he is the nephew of Matt Rockwood. If this is your business with me, you can't get ahead any farther with it to-night."

"Have you the note with you--the note of Mr.--What's his name?"

"Mr. Gracewood," added Blair.

"I respectfully decline to answer," I replied.

"But you must give it up before you leave this house."

"Then I shall stay here longer than you will want to board me."

"I don't intend to board you," sneered Lynch. "You will neither eat nor drink till you give up this note, and the hundred dollars you got out of me at the police station."

"So far as the money is concerned, I spent a part of it, and the rest I left at my boarding-house."

"You can give me an order on your landlady for what you have left, and Blair will go and get it."

"I will not give him that trouble."

"You prefer to stay here--do you?"

"I do; this isn't a bad place to stay, and I can stand it here a while."

"Consider well your situation, Phil. This is my room. I board here when I am in town, and--"

"It's good enough for me, if it is for you."

"It is a gambling-house, and the people who live here are my friends. I can bring in half a dozen men to help me."

"Bring them in," I replied, laughing, though I confess that I was not very much amused.

"It's no joke."

"It will not be for you when you are done with it. When my father misses me, he will be very likely to send for our friends, Mr. Lamar and Mr. Gray."

"In a word, Phil, will you give me that note?"

"In a word, I will not; and in another word, I will fight just as long as I have a breath in my body, if you or anybody else attempts to meddle with me."

"Phil, you go to prayer-meetings, and claim to be honest," continued Lynch, changing his tone when he found that he did not terrify me.

"I do go to prayer-meetings when I can, and I try to be honest."

"I hope you will keep on trying. By the merest accident Blair stumbled upon you, and turns out to be the heir of the man whose money you have. He is the last of the Rockwoods. Do you think it is honest to keep him out of his money?"

"I'm not so sure now that he stumbled upon me."

"Didn't he ask you something about the upper Missouri, and tell you he had an uncle there? and didn't he tell you the name of his uncle before you had mentioned it?"

"He certainly did; but since I have found out what company he keeps, I begin to think you posted him up, and sent him to stumble upon me."

"That's absurd."

"Not at all. Didn't you hear me tell the whole story in the police station, Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne?"

"I never saw him till after that," replied Lynch, angrily, as he picked up the pistol, which he had laid upon the table. "It is useless to reason with you. Come, Blair, we will leave him here to think about it till morning."

The villain moved towards the door, pointing his pistol at me. It was capped, and I supposed it was loaded. Blair unlocked the door, and retreated into the entry. Lynch followed his example, and as it was possible that he might fire at me, I did not deem it prudent to be the aggressor. I heard the door locked upon me.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH PHIL IS STARTLED BY THE SIGHT OF A FAMILIAR FACE.

I actually laughed when I heard the bolt of the lock snapped upon me; partly because I thought it was better to laugh over my mishaps than to cry, and partly because the trick of which I had been made the victim was simply ridiculous. Perhaps, if I had been a boy brought up in the city, and had never been thrown upon my own resources in times of peril, I might have taken a different view of the matter. I can easily believe that many boys would have been intimidated, and given up the money and the note. Lynch ought to have known me better, though I had been a lamb at Leavenworth.

I seated myself in the rocking-chair, and looked around the room. There was a luthern window in it, which opened upon the roof. A cheerful coal fire burned in the grate, and the room was quite comfortable. I examined the silver card box on the table, and the other articles there; but I was not much interested in them, and soon gave myself up to a consideration of the situation. Of course the whole trick was intended to intimidate me; but I positively refused to be intimidated. I supposed my persecutors would soon return, and renew the onslaught.

For my own part, I could not see what they intended to gain, even if they obtained the note against Mr. Gracewood. It was stupid of them to imagine that he would give up the money to total strangers. Still they must have believed he would let them have the gold, for they could not have taken all this trouble for the seventy dollars which I had. But it was no use to speculate upon their intentions. The note was safe in my pocket, and the money at my boarding-house. If I had supposed there was any possibility of the villains obtaining the former, I would have burned it on the spot, for I knew that Mr. Gracewood would pay the money whether there was any legal document to show for it or not.

I rose from my chair, and walked to the door, in order to examine it. This same Lynch had once before locked me into a room, and it was possible that I might break this door open, as I had done on the former occasion. But I found this was a different piece of work from that at Leavenworth. It fitted well in the frame. I tried the handle, and found that it was securely locked.

"No use, Phil," said a voice in the entry, which I recognized as that of Morgan Blair.

It appeared that my late fellow-workman was stationed as a sentinel at the door to prevent my escape.

"Where's Lynch?" I asked, placing my mouth at the key-hole.

"Down stairs. Are you ready to give up the note?"

"No."

"When you are, let me know."

I made no reply, but walked to the window to see what the prospect was in that direction. I did not wish to stay in my prison a great while, for I knew that my father would worry about me if I did not return soon. I was in the hands of the enemy, and I was afraid that Lynch would keep me in the room till the middle of the night, and then, with the aid of others, overcome me, and rob me of the note. I was not so well satisfied with the situation as at first, when I could realize the possibilities of the occasion.

The window opened upon a steep roof. I raised the sash very carefully, so that Blair might not know what I was about. But, then, I had hardly a hope of being able to escape in this direction; for I did not see how it was possible for me to descend to the street. However, I should be out of the reach of my inquisitors, even if I passed the night on the cold slates of the roof. I climbed out of the window, and my head swam when I looked down the fearful depth below me. I was on the rear slope of the roof, and beneath me was the back yard of the house.

The darkness rather favored me, for I could not so readily measure distances, and in a short time I became accustomed to the giddy height, though I thought it best not to look down. Holding on with one hand at the side of the luthern window, I closed the lower sash, and dropped the upper one. Grasping the inside of the window-frame for support, I climbed up till my feet were placed upon the top of the two sashes. I could then reach the roof of the luthern window. A ledge on the top of it afforded me a good hold, and I drew myself up, though with considerable difficulty, and my breath was all gone when I reached the point, exhausted by the violence of my exertions.

I lay where I was a few moments to recover my wind and my strength. I had placed the poker on the roof before I ascended, for I was afraid that I might yet have to fight a battle. I had worked very carefully, so as not to disturb the sentinel at the door of the room; and, so far as I could judge, I had been successful, for I heard nothing of him. I was on

the top of the luthern window; and, so far as the inquisitors were concerned, I was safe. I preferred to stay there, though the night was quite chilly, rather than in the chamber of Lynch. But if I could have my choice, it would suit me better to go home, and sleep in my own bed.

About half way between the luthern window and the ridge-pole of the house there was a skylight. The light shone up through it, and I concluded from its position that it was used to light the entry where Blair was keeping guard over the door. Lying down on the slated roof, with my feet resting upon the luthern window, I found I could reach the upper end of the skylight with my hands. I looked through the glass into the entry below, and saw a gas-light burning there. Under me was the door of the gambling-chamber, but Blair was not there. I tried to raise the skylight; but it was secure, and could not be moved. It was at least fourteen feet above the floor, and the space between the glass and the ceiling of the entry was boxed in, forming a ventiduct for the passage of the air.

If I could have opened the skylight, it would have been hardly prudent for me to drop down fourteen feet upon a hard floor, with the additional peril of encountering my enemies in going down the stairs. I could not see Blair, and I concluded that he had heard me, in spite of all my precautions, and had gone to procure the aid of Lynch. Whether this view was correct or not, I decided to act upon it, and increase the distance between myself and my persecutors. Grasping the upper part of the skylight, I dragged myself up to the point where I had placed my hands. Here I paused to breathe again.

While I was waiting I heard voices through the skylight. Looking through the glass, I saw Lynch and Blair, the latter unlocking the chamber door. I immediately concluded not to rest any longer, and laying hold of the ridge-pole, I drew myself up, and took a seat astride the saddle-boards. The block extended as far as I could see in the gloom of the night. With my hands upon the saddle-boards, I hopped along like a frog till I was satisfied that I was out of the reach of any pursuers. But I began to be very anxious to reach *terra firma* once more, and I continued to hop till I came to a four-story block with a flat roof. This was hopeful, and passing from the steep slope I found myself in a very comfortable position.

I could discover no signs of any pursuers behind me; and I concluded that the inquisitors were not enterprising enough to follow me in the perilous track I had chosen. Pleasant as was my present location compared with the slippery sides of the slated roof, I was not disposed to spend the night there. But I did not think it safe to jump down into the street, for I knew that the pavement could stand the shock of such a descent better than I could. On one of the roofs there were planks laid down, and places for lines, and I concluded that it was used for drying clothes. At every house I found a scuttle, and some of them were not fastened; but I did not like the idea of being captured as a burglar, and sent to the station-house to remain over Sunday. I walked to the end of the block, where a cross-street interrupted my further progress in that direction.

Between the several tenements which composed the block there were brick walls rising about a foot above the flat roof. They were the dividing lines between the houses. I observed that the house at the corner of the cross-street occupied as much space as three of the others, and was planked all over, with stanchions for clothes-lines. I concluded that the building was used for a purpose different from the others. I went to the front, and looked down into the street. There were a couple of gas-lamps before the door, and people were constantly arriving and departing. I satisfied myself that the house was a hotel.

In the rear of the roof there was a kind of crane, with a couple of ropes reaching to the ground. I reasoned that the apparatus was used for hoisting up baskets of clothes. I also found a scuttle door, which was not fastened, and I began to consider whether I should go down by the rope or by the stairs. I did not like the idea of dangling in the air fifty feet from the ground on the one hand, or of being captured as a thief on the other. If I went down the rope, it might drop me in some back yard, where I might be liable to suspicion if discovered. On the whole, I concluded that the stairs were the safer expedient, and I carefully opened the scuttle door.

The steps led down to a well-lighted entry; and, having satisfied myself that no one was there, I descended, taking the precaution to hook the door behind me, which some careless servant had neglected to do, though I was not disposed to blame her for the neglect. Passing down the steps, I came to a long entry, from which opened on each side the sleeping-rooms. The stairs were at the other end, and I walked as lightly as my thick boots would permit through the hall. At the stairs I heard the sound of voices on the floor below, and I paused. I concluded that the upper floors were used for sleeping-rooms, and that no one would remain long in the entry. Presently I heard a door open, and then the sound of footsteps on the stairs below. As all was still again, I ventured to descend the steps to the next hall.

I had hardly reached this floor before a gentleman came out of one of the rooms; but he passed me, and went down stairs without taking any notice of me. I was now on the third story, and must descend two more flights in order to reach the street. I was not a thief, and there was no stolen property upon me. But men in white jackets were always whisking about in hotels, as I had observed at the Planters'. I determined to be ready with an answer if any of these

fellows challenged me, and to tell the whole truth if I was detained.

I had hardly reached this conclusion before a waiter in a white jacket confronted me, looked at me suspiciously, and demanded my business.

"Where is Mr. Rockwood?" I asked, using the name most familiar to me.

"That's his room over there, where the door is open," said he, pointing towards the other end of the hall, and then continuing on his way up stairs.

I walked in the direction indicated, intending to rush down stairs as soon as the waiter was out of hearing. I went as far as the open door, and looked into the apartment. A gentleman sat in an arm-chair, reading a newspaper. A glance at him startled me more than anything that had ever occurred to me before.

That gentleman was Matt Rockwood, it seemed to me, dressed in his best clothes. He glanced from his paper into the entry, as I paused there. The face, the expression, the white beard,—everything about him was Matt Rockwood.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH PHIL FINDS HIMSELF SIXTY-FIVE DOLLARS OUT.

I repeat that I was startled when I saw the gentleman in the room with the open door. He was the very image of Matt Rockwood, who had taken me from the cold waters of the upper Missouri, and brought me up in his log cabin. Of course I could not believe it was old Matt, for I had seen him fall before the rifle-shot of the Indian, and had wept bitterly over his grave when his remains were committed to the earth.

The gentleman before me was dressed better than old Matt ever clothed himself; but his face was as brown from exposure, and his brow as deeply indented with wrinkles. If I had not known that my foster-father was dead, I should have been willing to declare, at the first glance, that this gentleman was he.

"What do you want, young man?" said he, as I paused rather longer than politeness would tolerate before his door.

His voice was that of Matt Rockwood; and, as I do not care to prolong a sensation, I at once jumped to the conclusion that the person before me was the brother of my foster-father, though Morgan Blair had assured me that he also was in his grave.

"If you please, sir, I would like to speak to you," I replied to his question.

"Come in," he added, laying aside his newspaper. "What is your business with me?"

I entered the room, which was a parlor, and from it a bedroom opened on one side. The apartments were very handsomely furnished, and as the gentleman before me was very well dressed, I concluded that fortune had dealt more kindly with him than with Matt.

"Are you Mr. Rockwood?" I asked, gazing earnestly at him.

"I am."

"Mr. Mark Rockwood?"

"Yes."

"You had a brother, sir?"

"I had."

"And a sister?"

"No; or rather I had two, but both of them died in their childhood," he replied, evidently astonished at my line of questions.

He had no sister, and Morgan Blair's story, as I had suspected after I found him in the company of Lynch, was all a fiction.

"Have you heard from your brother within a few years?" I inquired.

"Not for twenty years. But who are you, young man?" he demanded, evidently supposing that I had known his brother.

At this moment the waiter of whom I had inquired for Mr. Rockwood appeared before the door and looked in.

"What do you want, John?" asked the old gentleman.

"Nothing, sir; the young man with you inquired for your room, and I came to see if he found you," replied the servant, retiring.

"Who are you, young man, and why do you ask me these questions?"

"I have seen your brother Matthew since you have, and I did not know but you might wish to hear about him, though I haven't any good news for you."

"You knew Matthew, then?"

"Yes, sir; I lived with him about ten years. In fact, he brought me up."

"But the last I heard of him, he had gone up the Missouri River."

"Yes, sir; and it was there that I lived with him."

"Where is he now?" asked Mr. Rockwood; and I saw that he was considerably moved.

"I am sorry to say I have no good news to tell you."

"Is he living?"

"No, sir; he died last spring. But I want to tell you, before I say anything more, that no better man than your brother ever lived."

Mr. Rockwood was silent for a few moments. Doubtless the intelligence I communicated revived the memories of the past, when they had been children together.

"I am glad to hear you speak well of him, young man, for really you could not say anything more pleasant of him," said Mr. Rockwood, at last. "Since he is dead, nothing can be more comforting than to know that he was a good man. Matt was always honest and straightforward; but he was almost always unfortunate, he failed in business, and left this part of the country discouraged and disheartened. I hope he was never in want, or anything of that kind."

"No, sir; he always had plenty; and when he died he left some property."

"I'm very glad to hear it, for I have had times when I worried a great deal about it. I tried to find out where he was, but I never succeeded. Were you with him when he died?"

"I was, sir," I replied, not a little embarrassed; for I did not like to reveal the manner of his death.

"Was he sick long?"

"No, sir; he had been troubled with the rheumatism for two or three months; but he was able to be about on crutches at the time he died."

"Did he die of rheumatism?"

"No, sir; he did not die of any disease, nor suffer any pain."

"What do you mean, young man?"

"He was shot, and instantly killed, in a fight with the Indians."

"Poor Matt!" exclaimed Mr. Rockwood, averting his gaze from me.

"I was as near to him as I am to you now when he fell. He never moved or breathed after he went down," I added.

"Well, he had lived his threescore and ten, and perhaps one could not pass away any easier; but it is grating to one's feelings to know that his brother was shot."

I related to him very minutely the history of Matt Rockwood; and he listened, as may well be supposed, with the deepest interest.

"And so you found your father?" said he, as I concluded the narrative.

"Yes, sir; and I hope yet to save him from himself."

"I hope so; and I am willing to do all I can for you and for him."

"Thank you, sir. As I said before, sir, your brother left about a thousand dollars in gold, and by selling wood and produce we made the amount up to about sixteen hundred dollars. A young man, by the name of Morgan Blair, says he is the son of Matt's sister, and claims this money."



PHIL BEFORE THE DOOR OF THE SOUTHERN PLANTER. Page 244.

"Matt had no sister," replied Mr. Rockwood, smiling.

I told him what had happened to me that night; but, as I related the story in a good-natured vein, he was rather amused at it.

"Then you did not come to this hotel to see me?"

"No, sir; I blundered upon you;" and I explained how I had happened to be before his door when he discovered me, and why I had paused there longer than I intended.

He laughed heartily at my story, but I noticed that he suddenly became sad whenever I alluded, directly or indirectly, to his brother.

"We will take care of Mr. Morgan Blair in due time," said Mr. Rockwood. "Now, Phil, what do you do?"

"I am a carpenter."

"Where do you live?"

I gave him Mrs. Greenough's address, and he wrote it down in his memorandum book.

"But I must go home, sir; I ought to have gone long ago. I am afraid my father will think something has happened to me," I continued.

"Well I think something has happened to you. But I will not keep you any longer. I will go home with you, if you have no objection."

"I should be very glad to have you, sir."

"I should like to see your father."

While he was putting on his overcoat, I took Mr. Gracewood's note from my pocket, and tendered it to him.

"What's that, Phil?" he asked.

"It's a note for fifteen hundred dollars--the money your brother left and the proceeds of the sale of some of his property."

"This is the note that those ruffians wanted?" he replied, taking the paper and reading it.

"I think a little of it belongs to me, for I earned it after the death of your brother."

"O, my boy, you shall have the whole of it! I will never touch a penny of it."

"But it does not all belong to me."

"Every mill of it," said he, earnestly. "You took care of my brother when he was sick, and he brought you up. You have a better claim to his property than I have, or should have if I needed it, which I do not."

"You are very kind, sir."

"Only just."

We went down stairs, and I saw that all the people in the hotel treated Mr. Rockwood with "distinguished consideration." At his request, the landlord called a carriage, and I went home in state. I had never been in a carriage before, and I regarded it as a very pleasant mode of conveyance.

"I am sorry I did not see you before, Phil, for I must leave for the south in a day or two," said Mr. Rockwood, as the carriage drove off.

"Do you live at the south?"

"Yes; I have been in Mississippi almost twenty years. I have a large plantation there. I made my fortune down there; but I don't think I shall remain there much longer. The climate don't agree with my wife as well as St. Louis. I have been investing money in this city for several years, and when I can sell my plantation I shall come here to live. I own that hotel and the block of buildings with the flat roof over which you passed. I have to come here two or three times a year to look after the property; and my family generally spend the summer here. I hope I shall see more of you, Phil."

"Thank you, sir."

"If you were a little older, I could give you something better to do than carpentering."

"I like that business, sir, and don't care about leaving it at present."

The carriage stopped at Mrs. Greenough's, and we went up stairs. I was obliged to show my wealthy friend into the kitchen, for there was no fire in the parlor. However, there was not much difference between the two rooms.

"I am so glad you have come home, Phil!" said my landlady, descending the stairs when she heard me. "We have been really worried about you."

"I am all right," I replied; and then I introduced Mr. Rockwood.

Mrs. Greenough apologized for meeting him in the kitchen. She was obliged to stay with Mr. Farringford so much of the time that she did not keep a fire in the parlor. She would make one, if he would excuse her; but the distinguished gentleman declined to excuse her, and thought the kitchen was very comfortable and very pleasant.

"And so you got out, Phil," she added, turning to me.

"Out? How did you know anything about it?" I inquired, very much surprised to find that the intelligence of my adventure had preceded me.

"Why, a policeman has been here with your note."

"My note! What note?"

"Didn't you write a billet to me?" she continued, bustling about to find the important document.

"I am not aware that I did," I replied.

"Why, yes, you did, Phil. Where is it? I must have left it up stairs. I will go up after it."

"But I haven't written any billet," I protested.

"I will show it to you," said she, hastening up stairs to find the note.

"Your friends appear to have doubled on you, after all," laughed Mr. Rockwood.

"I don't understand it, though I remember that in order to save the rascals the trouble of attempting to get any money out of me, I told them I had left my balance at home."

Mrs. Greenough returned with the note, and handed it to me. I read it with astonishment and indignation. My name was signed at the end of it; but, of course, no part of the contents was written by me. In the note I was represented as informing the good lady that I had been arrested, and conveyed to the station-house; but I could be bailed out till Monday by depositing sixty-five dollars with the sergeant of police.

"Who brought this?" I asked.

"A man who said he was a policeman."

"Did you know him?"

"No; but after consulting a long time with your father, we sent the money."

"You did!" I exclaimed.

I concluded that I was sixty-five dollars out.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN WHICH PHIL RETURNS TO THE DEN OF THE ENEMY.

I felt that I could afford to lose sixty-five dollars better than ever before; but I did not like the idea of being swindled. It was especially repugnant to be overreached by such scoundrels as Lynch and Blair, though the latter appeared to be only the tool of the former.

"I did not like to give the man the money, but your father thought that, as he was a policeman, it was all right," Mrs. Greenough explained. "Your father was very much worried when he heard you were arrested."

"I have not been arrested," I replied.

"Your father wishes to see you," added the landlady.

"I will go up with you, if you please," said Mr. Rockwood.

We went up to my father's room, where I introduced my new friend to him. It required some time, of course, to explain who and what the planter was, and how I had made his acquaintance.

"Then you have not been arrested," said my father.

"No; but I was kept a prisoner by these scoundrels."

"We must attend to them," added Mr. Rockwood, consulting his watch.

"Dear me! there is the door-bell again!" exclaimed Mrs. Greenough. "Who can it be at this time of night!"

"It is only half past nine," added the planter, as I took a light to answer the bell. "I think Mrs. Greenough had better go to the door, for I don't believe these scoundrels will be satisfied with sixty-five dollars."

At this suggestion Mrs. Greenough answered the summons, and soon returned with another note--from me! I opened it, and read that I had been arrested in connection with the claim of Morgan Blair, and that when the police sergeant heard there was a note, which represented the property claimed, in my possession, he thought it was better to have it deposited with the chief of police for safe keeping.

"These fellows evidently think you have not yet returned to your home, Phil," said Mr. Rockwood.

"I don't blame them much for thinking so, for I expected to stay on those roofs all night; and I think I should if you had not been so wise as to put a hotel in the block," I replied.

"The man asked if Phil was at home before he gave me the note," said the landlady, "and I evaded the question."

"What shall we do?" asked my father, raising himself in the bed.

"Phil and I will pay a visit to these rascals," answered the planter. "Have you an envelope?"

"Yes," I replied, producing one, with some paper.

He folded up a sheet of paper, put it in the envelope, and requested the landlady to direct it to the chief of police.

"Where is this messenger?" asked Mr. Rockwood.

"He is waiting in the kitchen."

"Very well, Mrs. Greenough. If you will close the door, so that we can get into the street without his knowledge, we will follow him up and attend to this business."

The landlady went down stairs, and when she had closed the kitchen door, the planter and myself crept softly down stairs, and went into the street. We placed ourselves where we could identify the messenger when he came out of the house. He was evidently satisfied that the envelope contained the document for which he had been sent, for he immediately followed us out of the house. He was a well-dressed man, as we saw by the light of the corner street lamp. He wore a light-colored overcoat, so that we could easily follow him as he passed through the streets. Mr. Rockwood went behind him, while I walked on the other side of the street, and kept up with him. He went, as I supposed he would, to the house to which I had been enticed earlier in the evening. He went in by the aid of a night-key, and doubtless believed that he had fully accomplished the mission upon which he had been sent.

"You are younger and more active than I am, Phil," said Mr. Rockwood, when the man had entered the house and closed the door behind him. "If you will stay here, and follow any of the rascals if they come out again, I will get an officer."

"Véry well, sir."

The planter hastened to his hotel, and I stationed myself where I could see who left the house. My friend was not absent more than a quarter of an hour, and returned with two officers, whom the landlord of the hotel had procured for him. One of them was in uniform, and the other a detective in plain clothes. I concluded that Mr. Rockwood meant business, and instead of my spending Sunday as a prisoner, this would be the fate of those who were trying to swindle me.

"That's a gambling-house," said the policeman in uniform, when I pointed out the door where the man entered.

"Undoubtedly it is a gambling-house," replied the detective, gazing inquiringly at me, as though he was not quite satisfied with the story related to him by Mr. Rockwood; "but even a gambling-house has certain rights, which may not be disturbed without proper cause."

"Proper cause!" exclaimed Mr. Rockwood. "Don't I tell you that this young man has been robbed and abused by the villains in this house?"

"You will excuse me, sir, but it is possible to be mistaken. If I understand you, Mr. Rockwood, you met this boy for the first time about two hours ago."

"But I have entire confidence in him. He is the son of Edward Farringford."

"Perhaps he is, though I do not believe it; but that is nothing to recommend him. His story is absurd on the face of it."

"My story is true, sir, every word of it," I interposed, indignantly.

Mr. Bogart, the detective, asked me a few questions in regard to my escape from the building, and I repeated all the particulars. He shook his head, and declared that he was unwilling to enter the house upon the strength of such a story. It would damage his reputation as an officer, and his superiors would not justify the measure.

"I'll tell you what I will do," he continued.

"Well, what will you do?" demanded Mr. Rockwood, impatiently.

"I will go with this young man to the top of the house, where he left the chamber of the gambler. I will follow him into the house by the window through which he came out."

"I don't think you can get in at the window."

"I suppose not," said Mr. Bogart, with a palpable sneer.

"But I will go with you, and show you the window," I added.

"I wish you would," replied the officer, who evidently believed that I should give him the slip before I verified my position.

Mr. Rockwood and the policeman were to remain in the street and keep watch of the house during our absence. If the gambler's messenger who had gone to the house of Mrs. Greenough appeared, he was to be arrested.

Mr. Bogart and myself went to the hotel, where, after my companion had spoken to the landlord, we ascended to the roof.

"Now, young man, if you will go ahead, I will follow you," said the detective.

"I hope you are used to climbing," I replied.

"Don't borrow any trouble on my account; I will follow anywhere that you will lead."

"All right, sir; I hope I shall soon be able to prove all that I have stated."

"I hope so," replied he, in a tone which assured me that he did not expect anything of the kind.

I led the way across the flat roof, and at the next block we mounted the ridge-pole of the pitch roof. Mr. Bogart cautioned me to move with care, so as not to disturb the inmates of the houses beneath us. I was soon in position to

see the bright light streaming up from the tenement to which I had been decoyed by the villains.

"That's the house," said I, pointing to the light.

"Did you come up through that scuttle?" he asked.

"No, I came up over the top of the luthern window."

"Impossible!" exclaimed he, glancing at the window.

"It is true; and I suppose I shall have to go in that way," I continued; and I explained minutely how I had made my exit from the chamber.

"Lead on. We will examine the house," said Mr. Bogart.

On a nearer approach to the roof of the gambling-house, I discovered that the glass scuttle was open, and I concluded that Lynch and Blair had been upon the roof in search of me. When I reached the opening I found a ladder conveniently placed for my descent, if I chose to avail myself of its aid. I looked down into the entry, where the gas-light still blazed cheerfully. The door of Lynch's room was open, and I could distinctly hear the voices of my late captors.

"They took me into that front room," I whispered to my doubting companion.

"This looks a little as though your story was true," said Mr. Bogart.

"Will you follow me down this ladder?"

"No, not yet. I wish to get a little better idea of what these fellows mean. Are you afraid of them?"

"No; not a bit," I answered, raising the poker which I had picked up where I left it on the roof.

"Will you go down alone?" he asked.

"Yes, if you desire it."

"I will keep the run of you, and see what is done. If you get into trouble with them, just whistle as loud as you can, and I will join you."

"But suppose they take away the ladder?"

"Then I will go down as I came up, and enter the house by the front door. Don't be afraid of anything."

"I'm not afraid."

"I will be near you. I want to know what these fellows mean to do. If they close the door, I will go down the ladder into the entry."

Suddenly my companion appeared to have become very enthusiastic in the business upon which we were engaged. Though he did not say so, I was satisfied that he was convinced of the truth of my statement.

"What shall I do?" I asked, rather puzzled by the tactics of the detective.

"Do whatever they wish you to do; but don't let them know that you have been off the roof since you escaped.

"Why not?"

"I cannot stop to explain now; only I don't think these rascals have taken all this trouble with you for fifty or a hundred dollars; and they mean to use you as a cat's paw for something else."

"I know they do," I replied, in a whisper. "They want the fifteen hundred dollars in gold, for which I hold a note signed by Mr. Gracewood."

"No matter now," said he, impatiently. "Go down, and give them all the rope they want."

"Shall I give them the note, which I have in my pocket?"

"I haven't heard about the note. If you had told me the whole story before now, I should have known better what to do."

We retreated a few paces from the skylight, and I told him all about the note and the object of Lynch. I assured him

that Mr. Rockwood was the legal heir of the property.

"The note is of no consequence then," said Mr. Bogart. "Give it to them, but don't indorse it, and I will see that it is returned to you. We have them now. They can't escape us. Now, go down, and let them have their own way, but with some show of opposition."

I descended the ladder, and stood before the open door of the chamber, when I saw Lynch, with his feet on the table, smoking. Morgan Blair sat opposite him. They discovered me as soon as I landed in the hall, and made haste to place themselves between me and the stairs, in order to cut off my escape. As I did not wish to escape, I gave them no trouble in this direction, but entered the chamber.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN WHICH PHIL MEETS A PALE GENTLEMAN WITH ONE ARM IN A SLING.

"I thought you would come back, my dear Phil," said Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne, as he placed himself in the doorway before me. "I knew you had so much respect and regard for us that you would not break our hearts by being long absent. By the way, Phil, how is the weather on the roof?"

"It is rather cool," I replied, seating myself in the vacant chair, "but not quite so cool as you are, Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne."

"Phil, be virtuous, and you will always be happy; that is the secret of my uninterrupted cheerfulness; that enables me always and everywhere to be perfectly calm and collected. Be honest, just, and upright, Phil; and then the man don't live that can make you tremble, or, in other words, shake in your boots. But besides being all these, Phil, you should be charitable and humane, especially the latter. I am humane, Phil, and that adds to the sum total of my bliss on earth."

"You must be an exceedingly happy man, Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne," I added; and I saw that he had been drinking some exhilarating beverage since I left him.

"O, I am--happy as the day is long, and the night too. You were so very imprudent, Phil, as to make your exit--in other words, your departure--from this room by the way of that front window. You might have fallen upon the hard pavement in the street below; and then how I should have wept over your brief but wasted life!"

"You are very affectionate."

"Affection is the staple fodder of my existence, Phil. By a process of reasoning which I need not attempt to develop to your unpractised understanding, I arrived at the conclusion that you would be compelled to remain all night on the roof of this and the adjacent houses, unless something was done for you. Dreading lest, benumbed with cold, you should attempt the fearful feat of returning to this humble apartment by the same means you used in leaving it, I placed that ladder at the skylight for your use. After all the wrongs, injuries, and insults you have heaped upon me, I took this means to prevent you from sacrificing yourself on the hard pavement below. That is what I call humanity, and I offer it to you as an exemplification of that noble attribute."

"Thank you; and I will endeavor to profit by your example, at least so far as it illustrates the attribute of humanity. If you have nothing more to say to me, I will take my leave of you."

"Stay, Phil; I have more to say to you," he interposed. "Be honest, and you will be eccentric--I mean, you will be happy."

"I am glad to hear such lessons of practical wisdom from you, Mr. Leonidas Lynchpinne," I replied, hoping he would soon come to the point, if he had any point, as Mr. Bogart had suggested.

"You appreciate true wisdom, Phil. Good! Then you will give that note to this honest young man."

"Certainly I will give it to him when he proves his claim."

I concluded that he was not satisfied with the blank paper sent in the envelope.

"I knew you would be just, Phil, after the good advice I have given you; for you are not a bad boy at heart, though you have been led away by evil influences. If you stay with me a while, you will be reformed, and then you will lead a good and true life, and then you will be eccentric--happy, I mean. Won't you smoke a cigar, Phil?"

"No, I thank you; I never smoke."

"That's right, Phil. It's a filthy practice, besides leading to other vices more to be condemned," said he, lighting a fresh cigar. "Now, Phil, about that note, which justly and rightly belongs to my good friend Morgan Blair. Do you happen to have it about you?"

"Yes; I have it in my pocket," I replied, acting upon the advice of Mr. Bogart.

"Capital! Things always work right for those who are faithful and humane. I'm faithful and humane. Now, we are going to bring you two good and true witnesses, who will convince you that Morgan Blair is the son of Matt Rockwood's sister. We have taken a great deal of pains to send to Vandalia for them, and they will be here to-night--this very night, Phil. That's all we want to see you for."

"Very well; I should like to hear what they have to say."

"You shall hear them. I will go down and bring them up," he added, rising from the chair.

He had hardly got up before the door was darkened by what to me seemed to be an apparition. It was a gentleman with an overcoat thrown loosely over his shoulders. He wore no other coat, and no vest. I saw that his left arm was suspended in a sling. His face was very pale, and he looked very much like my excellent friend Mr. Gracewood, though a second glance assured me it was not he. When he discovered me, he started back, and was disposed to retreat.

"You have company, Mr. Lynch," said the pale gentleman. "I will come another time."

"Come in, Mr. Gracewood. Come in!" replied Lynch, placing the rocking-chair for the visitor, who was evidently an invalid.

Mr. Gracewood! It certainly was not my kind friend; but the resemblance was strong enough to assure me that he was a relative, if not a brother.

"Is this the way you keep my secret?" said the pale gentleman, reproachfully, as he retreated a pace into the entry.

"O, it's all right here. This is Phil Farringford, of whom I spoke to you," added Lynch.

"So much the worse!" exclaimed the invalid, impatiently.

"But he is the very essence of discretion and reserve. Your secret is as safe with him as with me," protested the gambler.

"The mischief is done, whatever it may be. You have called me by my name."

"May I ask if you are a relative of Henry Gracewood?" I inquired, so much interested in the pale gentleman that I forgot everything else.

"His own brother, and his only brother," replied Mr. Gracewood, bitterly. "I would not have him know that I am here for his fortune and mine, though I am guilty of no crime against him."

"Mind that, Phil," interposed Lynch; "and remember that discretion is the better part of valor, and sometimes the better part of virtue. This honest gentleman has been unfortunate, but not guilty."

I could not understand how a person in his situation, apparently an invalid, should happen to be in a gambling-house, and it seemed to me that the secrecy he coveted was an indication of something evil. He declared that he was guilty of no crime against his brother. Respect and regard for the good friend of my early years prompted me not to betray him, at least before I knew more about him. Then it occurred to me that the detective on the roof, or perhaps in the entry by this time, might discover more than it was desirable for him to know.

"Do you know where my brother is now, young man?" asked the invalid.

"He is at Delaware City, where his wife is sick," I replied, giving him the details of the illness of Mrs. Gracewood.

"You can talk it over between you," interposed Lynch. "I have an engagement with the governor of Missouri and half a dozen congressmen; and I hope you will excuse me for half an hour."

Mr. Gracewood nodded, and Lynch and Blair left the room. I had no doubt Mr. Bogart, in the entry, would attend to their movements, and I did not trouble myself about them. I told my companion all I knew about his brother.

"I had a letter from him this autumn, saying he expected to return to St. Louis before winter. He spoke about you, and about his wife and daughter. I have heard nothing from them since."

"He would have been here a fortnight ago if his wife had not been sick."

"Young man, do you know the character of this house?" said Mr. Gracewood, looking at me very sharply.

"I do, sir, very well indeed; and the character of the man who has just left us."

"How do you happen to be in such a place, then?"

"I was enticed here by Lynch, who wanted to plunder me of certain property in my possession; but I understand him, and he won't make anything out of me."

"Perhaps you wonder that I am here," he added, looking upon the floor, as though he considered his own position more equivocal than mine.

"I confess that I do, sir, especially as you look like an invalid, and I see you have your arm in a sling."

"I would not have my brother know that I am here for all the world, for I judge from the tone of his letter that a great change has come over him. He talks to me of the mercies of God, which I feel that I need more than all else on earth. I am overwhelmed with shame at my situation."

Mr. Gracewood covered his face with his hand, and I heard him groan in bitterness of spirit. I pitied him, for whatever he had done, he was a penitent, and I was sure that God's mercy could reach and comfort him.

"If you wish, I will tell you how I happen to be here," I added, intending, if possible, to divert his mind from the woe that overwhelmed him.

"No, young man; I do not care to know. As you may see my brother before I do, I had better tell you how I happen to be here," he added. "I have been gambling, and I have lost thousands and tens of thousands of dollars. I have even impaired my fortune; and if this calamity had not overtaken me,"--and he pointed to his wounded arm,--"I might even have spent my brother's fortune, which, perhaps you know, he placed in my keeping. I sold stocks and bonds in which I had invested his money, and lost the proceeds at the gambling table.

"In my home at Glencoe, I cursed my own folly and wickedness in wasting my substance in games of chance; but I hoped to redeem my heavy losses. I was fully resolved, when I had done so, never to play again. But the judgment comes when we least expect it. I found, when I looked over my accounts in the quiet of my chamber at Glencoe, that I had lost about twenty thousand dollars' worth of stocks and bonds belonging to my brother. I was appalled, for both his property and mine was largely invested in real estate, and I had not the ready money to make good the deficiency. A few days before, an offer was made me for a piece of property in this city. I proposed to sell it for thirty thousand, and was offered twenty-five. Under the pressure of this need to repair my brother's fortune, I hastened to the city, and closed the bargain at the lower price.

"The purchaser came to me with the money in his hand as soon as I could have the papers prepared. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when the business was completed, and I had twenty-five thousand dollars in my pocket. It was too late to deposit it in the bank that day, and meeting one whose acquaintance I had made at Forstellar's, I came here. I lost a thousand dollars before I fully realized what I was doing. Then I refused to play any more. The one with whom I had come was angry with me. In a word, we had a quarrel, and in his wrath he attempted to stab me; but I warded off the blow with my arm, which was severely wounded.

"The ruffian escaped; but I was taken to a chamber, and a surgeon sent for. Then I thought of the large sum of money in my possession, and the character of the place, and--"

Mr. Gracewood suddenly placed his hand against his breast, and, without another word, fled from the room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH PHIL MEETS AN OLD FRIEND, AND MR. LEONIDAS LYNCHPINNE COMES TO GRIEF.

I could not imagine what had so suddenly driven Mr. Gracewood from the room. He left as though he had been shot from a gun, and did not utter a word in explanation of his conduct. On the impulse of the moment I followed him. In the entry I looked for Mr. Bogart, in order to report progress to him; but I did not see him. The ladder was still standing at the skylight, but the detective was not in sight upon the roof, and though I called his name as loud as I dared to speak he did not respond.

I descended the stairs to the next floor, where I had understood the room of the invalid was located. The door of his apartment was open, and I discovered Mr. Gracewood in the act of ransacking his bed. He was very nervous and excited, and I saw that the hand he was able to use trembled violently.



THE LOST MONEY. Page 281.

"What is the matter, Mr. Gracewood?" I asked, as he continued to tumble over the mattress and the pillows.

"All is lost!" exclaimed he, in the tones of despair.

"What is lost?"

"My money!" he gasped, in a hoarse whisper.

"Do you mean to say that it is gone!" I asked, startled at the suggestion.

"All gone!" groaned he. "Twenty-four thousand dollars!"

"But where did you put it, sir?"

"Between the two beds, when Lynch sent for me to come up into his room."

"Did he send for you, sir?" I interposed.

"He did."

"Then it was a plot to rob you, sir."

"I fear that it was; but I was careless. I had hardly been out of my room before; but when I did leave it, I took my money with me. I had become accustomed to its possession, and I did not think of it. I did not believe Lynch was a bad man. He was very kind to me, and attended to my wants after I was hurt."

"Did he know you had this money?"

"I did not tell him, but I think he did. He must have stolen it."

"Don't be alarmed, sir. I don't think you will lose it," I added.

"It is gone already, and I shall never see it again."

"Perhaps you will, sir."

"No, never! The men in this house are all villains," said he, bitterly, as he dropped into a chair, apparently from sheer exhaustion, and in utter despair.

"No, sir; I happen to know that the eyes of a detective were upon him at the very moment when he left the room above. I have no doubt he has been arrested by this time."

"Detective?"

"Yes, sir;" and I gave a brief account of the manner in which Lynch had swindled me, and stated the purpose for which I had returned to the house.

"But I shall be exposed!" exclaimed Mr. Gracewood, bitterly. "I would rather lose my money than have my wife and children know that I have been gambling, and that I frequent such places as this. I wrote them a miserable lie--that I was obliged to go to Memphis--to explain my absence. If God will forgive and spare me this time, never will I be guilty again!"

"Calm yourself, sir. I am sorry you have done wrong; but seeing and repenting the wrong half undoes it--so your brother taught me."

"I shall never be at peace again in this world," groaned the sufferer. "But let the money go; I can sell another estate, though a third of all I had is gone already."

"The money is not gone, Mr. Gracewood. I am satisfied that Lynch is arrested by this time."

"So much the worse! I shall be exposed."

"Perhaps not. Let us look the matter over. Why did Lynch send for you to go up into his room?"

"He sent me a note by the young man who was with him. Here it is," he added, rising and taking a piece of paper from the table.

I took the paper, which contained a few lines, as follows: "I have seen the young fellow, Phil Farringford, who was with your brother. If you will come up to my room, I will tell you what he says."

"You seem to have known about me before," I added, when I had read the note.

"As I said, this Lynch took care of me when I was hurt. I did not intend that any one here should know my name, but I think he read it where the tailor had written it on the inside of my coat; at any rate, he called me by name. I think he must have seen me take the package of bank notes from my pocket and put it under the pillow, before the surgeon came. When the doctor left, and I was more comfortable, he told me that he had met my brother on board of a steamer up the Missouri, and said there was a boy with him whom he had since seen in the city. I was very anxious to know when my brother was coming, so that I might be prepared to see him.

"Lynch did not know where my brother was, and I asked him if he knew where to find you. He thought he should be able to see you, and to-night I was very glad to learn that he had succeeded, and I hastened up stairs to obtain the intelligence of the absent one."

The plan of the villain appeared to me to be past finding out. I concluded that I had been sent for to assist in some manner in the plundering of the unhappy gentleman. But they had done the job, so far as I could see, without any help from me, unless my presence was intended to lure the victim from his room, and thus enable them to do the work. Why

they had skirmished by robbing me of sixty-five dollars was not at all clear to me. I explained to Mr. Gracewood that I had left Mr. Rockwood and an officer outside of the house.

"I will go down and see if they are there now," I added. "Perhaps I shall be able to tell you something about Lynch."

"Don't leave me, young man. I am miserable."

"But I want to know what has become of Lynch."

"No matter; let him go. Do not allow them to expose me."

I did not wonder that this man's conscience stung him, and that he dreaded to have his name in the newspapers in connection with his presence at the gambling-house. The only safety for men, young or old, is to keep away from evil haunts. Those who enter gambling-houses from curiosity may be impelled to repeat the visit from stronger motives.

While I was discussing the question with the miserable man, I heard footsteps in the entry. I opened the door, and found Mr. Rockwood and the detective, who had come to look for me.

"We have nabbed them both, Phil," said Mr. Rockwood. "They are in irons at the next station-house. And a big haul it was, too."

"Whose room is that you came out of just now?" asked Mr. Bogart.

"It is occupied by a gentleman who is stopping here," I replied.

"Do you know what Lynch stole from that room?"

"I do--a package containing twenty-four thousand dollars. Did you see him take it?"

"I did," answered Mr. Bogart. "But I don't understand this business."

"Neither do I."

"Where is the gentleman? I want to see him."

"I wouldn't see him to-night. He is quite sick, and suffering terribly."

"I want to tell him that his money is safe."

"I will tell him that."

"And that the thief is in custody. When he is able, he must appear, and claim his money."

Fortunately Mr. Bogart was in a great hurry; and when I assured him I had no fears in regard to my own safety, he left me in the house, with Mr. Rockwood. Before he went he took the occasion to apologize to me for doubting my story, earlier in the evening. Leaving Mr. Rockwood in the entry, I went in to see Mr. Gracewood again. He was exceedingly nervous and uneasy when I told him that his money was safe.

"And the whole story will be out in the newspapers on Monday morning," said he, gloomily.

"I don't know much about these things. I am willing to do anything that is right for you," I replied.

"I deserved to be exposed, but I have not the courage to meet the ordeal."

"Mr. Rockwood is waiting for me in the entry. He is a wealthy and influential gentleman. His brother and your brother were neighbors and intimate friends on the upper Missouri. If you will see him, I think he could serve you."

At first he was very unwilling to meet any one, but at last he consented. I stated the case to Mr. Rockwood in the entry, and then introduced him to the sufferer.

"Don't distress yourself, my dear sir," said Mr. Rockwood, when the misery of the other was manifested. "The best of men have their misfortunes."

"I cannot call that a misfortune which is brought upon me by my own folly and wickedness," replied Mr. Gracewood.

"But the best of men have their failings. Your secret is safe with me, and I shall only hope that you may be stronger in the future than in the past."

"With the help of God, this will be a lesson to me that shall make me a better man than ever before," added Mr.

Gracewood, fervently.

"But you shall not stay another night in such a place as this, my dear sir," continued Mr. Rockwood, earnestly. "The very atmosphere of the den is poison."

"I dare not leave it."

"My hotel is only a few steps from here. You shall have my rooms, and no one need ever know that you are there."

"You are very kind. I had no right to expect such generous treatment from an entire stranger."

"Your brother and my brother were the best of friends for many years; we will imitate their example, and be friends for their sake."

Mr. Rockwood insisted upon his arrangement, paid the invalid's bill, and sent for a carriage to convey him to his new quarters. We dressed the miserable man, and helped him into the vehicle. The driver was directed to stop at the private door on the cross-street, and Mr. Gracewood was conducted to the rooms of his new friend without attracting any attention.

"I used to stay at this hotel myself," said Mr. Gracewood, when he was seated in the planter's great arm-chair.

"It is a good house, and you shall have every care you need."

Having seen the invalid so comfortably provided for, I thought it was about time for me to go home. I promised to call the next day, and left the room. I felt as though a mighty secret had been confided to me; but I could not see how Mr. Gracewood could escape the exposure he so much dreaded. I could not understand how he had thus far escaped it, if he frequented gambling-houses. Certainly he was thoroughly conscious of the sin of which he had been guilty, and peace would follow penitence and reform.

I descended the stairs to the lower floor of the hotel, and was hastening by the office when I discovered my excellent friend Mr. Henry Gracewood walking up and down the hall, smoking his pipe. My heart thrilled with emotion as I hastened to greet him. He grasped my hand with a warmth that assured me he had lost none of his old regard for me.

"I am glad to see you, Phil Farringford," said he. "Come right up stairs, and see Mrs. Gracewood and Ella."

He led the way to a suit of rooms adjoining those of Mr. Rockwood, and it seemed to me that the catastrophe which the invalid so much dreaded could not long be postponed.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH PHIL FINDS THE PROSPECT GROWING BRIGHTER.

The meeting with the family of Mr. Gracewood was none the less pleasant because it was entirely unexpected. I had been expecting and hoping to see them, till I was afraid the winter would set in and compel them to remain where they were till spring, for Mrs. Gracewood was too ill to bear the fatigues of the long journey by land. I thought that Ella looked prettier than ever, and the welcome she gave me was worth all the patient waiting I had bestowed upon it.

The lady looked very pale and sick; indeed, a great change had come over her since we parted, only a few weeks before. I saw that she had been very sick, and that she was still very far from being in her usual health. Though she had been brought up tenderly and delicately, she had done the house-work, with the assistance of Ella and myself, at the settlement during the summer. For my own part, I felt quite alarmed about her, she looked so pale and sick. She was reclining upon the lounge when I entered, but she rose to greet me.

"I am glad to see you, Phil Farringford, for I have thought a great deal about you since we parted so strangely," said Mr. Gracewood. "Your letter afforded me a great deal of satisfaction."

"I have worried a great deal about you and your family, sir," I replied; "and it gives me new life to see you again. When did you arrive?"

"We did not get ashore till after nine o'clock, too late to go out to Glencoe, where my brother lives at the present time."

I wanted to tell him that his brother was in the very next room; but I did not think that I had the right to complicate the affairs of others, and I said nothing.

"What have you been doing, Phil?" asked Mr. Gracewood.

"I am a carpenter now; I work at the Plane and Plank, and am doing first rate," I replied.

"I have a long story to tell you, but I suppose it is rather late to begin it to-night."

"I am afraid it would be rather trying to the nerves of Mrs. Gracewood, and we will postpone it," he replied, glancing at his wife.

"Do let me hear it, Phil," interposed Ella.

"I shall be very glad to tell you all about it, Ella; but it is too late to-night; I must go home now."

"Where is your home, Phil?"

"I board with a widow lady, who is one of the best women in the world. She has acted like a mother to me. I will come in the morning and see you again."

I took my leave of the family; but as Mr. Gracewood followed me down stairs, I had no opportunity to see Mr. Rockwood, as I had intended, to inform him of the new arrival. I hastened home, and found my father and Mrs. Greenough very much worried at my prolonged absence: but I had a story that was worth telling to relate, and it was midnight before we retired.

After breakfast the next morning I dressed myself in my best clothes; and I could not help thinking that Ella would be willing to believe I was not a bad-looking young fellow. My father was very feeble, but it was a satisfaction to know that he was improving. Mrs. Greenough was unwearied in her efforts to restore him to moral and physical health. Probably his illness in a measure spared him from the cravings of his appetite for drink. He sat in his easy chair a large portion of the day reading the Bible, and such good books as our kind landlady provided for his needs.

I hastened to the hotel to see my friends as soon as I could get away from home. I called upon Mr. Rockwood first, and he assured me that his patient was doing very well, but had not yet left his bed.

"I am afraid things are getting a little tangled here, sir," I suggested.

"What do you mean, Phil? Does anything go wrong?" asked Mr. Rockwood.

"There was an arrival last night at this hotel," I continued, in a low tone.

"Who?"

"Mr. Gracewood, from the upper Missouri," I replied, in a whisper.

"Is it possible!"

At this moment the invalid tottered through the open door, and stood before us.

"I knew it!" said he; "I knew it!"

"What?" inquired Mr. Rockwood.

"That my brother had come. You need not attempt to conceal it from me. I heard his voice all night long. He is in the next room."

The planter looked at me, and I looked at him. It was not probable that the invalid had heard his brother's voice all night long; and it was possible that, whatever the fact might be, he was laboring under a delusion.

"Be calm, Mr. Gracewood," said the planter.

"Calm? I am as calm as the surface of a summer lake. Don't you see that I am calm? I fear nothing now. I will not be a knave, and I will not be a hypocrite. I heard my brother's voice last evening before I went to sleep, and the sound of it haunted me all night. I will tell him the whole story, for I will not let him believe that I am better than I am. If God will forgive me, I know my brother will."

Mr. Gracewood explained the course of his thoughts during the long and weary night he had passed. It was but the old story, that he who sins must suffer; and his experience made me resolve anew to be always true and faithful to the truth and the right; for if the conscience can sting here, in the midst of the allurements of the world, what will it not do in the hereafter?



REUNION OF PHIL AND HIS FRIENDS. Page 292.

Mr. Gracewood declared that he was ready to see his brother, and the sooner the better. I was sent to prepare my excellent friend for the interview. I found the family in their parlor, and was cordially greeted by all of them. I told Mr. Gracewood that I had made the acquaintance of old Matt's brother, and that he was a planter. I then asked him to go with me and see him. He consented, but in the entry I paused to tell him more.

"There is another brother here," I added, as he closed the door of the parlor behind him.

"Another of Matt's brothers?"

"No, your brother."

"My brother!"

"Yes, sir; I am sorry to say he is in rather poor health."

"Where is he?"

"In the next room to yours. He is with Mr. Rockwood, who owns this hotel."

"Let me see him at once. I hope he is not dangerously sick."

"No; but he is more troubled in mind than in body."

"Is he insane?"

"No, sir; he blames himself very much for something he has done."

"What has he done?" asked my friend, very much troubled.

"He has been gambling; but he regrets it so sincerely, that I am sure he will be a better man than he ever was before. You shall see him now, and I know you will be very gentle with him."

"It is not for me to condemn him; I can only condemn my own errors," said my Christian friend, as I led him into Mr. Rockwood's rooms.

The invalid rose as he entered, and extended his hand to his brother, while the great tears rolled down his pale, wan cheek.

"I am glad to see you, Robert," said Henry. "I am sorry you are sick."

"I am sick at heart."

But I did not stay to hear the confession of the penitent. Ella went to church and to Sunday school with me; and after the latter I conducted her back to the hotel; for, besides the pleasure her company afforded me, I wished to know the condition of affairs between the brothers. As I had expected, they were easily reconciled. My excellent friend had no malice in his heart; and though his brother's error must have given him a severe shock, he was willing to cover the past with the repentance that succeeded.

I dined with the family, and went to church in the afternoon; but I spent the evening with my father. He was more cheerful than he had been for several days, and assured me he had found a peace in the truths of the gospel which he had never realized before. He was really happy; and if there was ever a changed man in the world, he was the one.

"Philip, I am well enough to think of the future," said he. "It worries me, too."

"It need not."

"I may not be able to do anything for some time, for I am very weak. I suppose I must be made over anew."

"Don't disturb yourself at all about that," I replied. "I am getting six dollars a week, and that will pay our board."

"I cannot live on your hard earnings, Philip," he added, shaking his head. "I feel guilty even now; and I should not have come here to be a burden to you, if I had not been a wreck of what I was once."

"I assure you, father, it will be the greatest pleasure on earth for me to do what I can for you. I may not get a dollar a day all the time, but I have fifteen hundred dollars, sure, now."

"I hope I shall soon be able to do something for myself, Philip. For the last week I have dared to hope that your mother might come back, and that we might be as happy as we were before I dashed down all my earthly hopes."

"I hope so, father; nothing could make me so happy as to live with my father and mother."

"Perhaps I may get a situation as a clerk, and earn enough to support me; though it is hard, at my time of life, to go back and commence where I began twenty years ago. But I deserve all that can befall me, and I will be as humble as my circumstances are. God has been merciful to me; he has spared and redeemed me."

"Do you know where my mother is?" I asked, burning with the old desire to see and know her.

"I do not. They have taken pains to keep all knowledge of her from me. I was told that she was in Europe, and I have no doubt such is the case. I should like to let her know that our lost little one has been mercifully restored, but I cannot do even that; and I will not ask her to live with me again until I have made myself worthy to do so."

Somehow God always sends good angels to those who, in trust and faith, are trying to help themselves. The door bell rang, and Mrs. Greenough admitted Mr. Rockwood.

"I am glad to see you again, Phil," said he. "I wished to see your father, and I wanted to tell you to be at the police station to-morrow forenoon at ten o'clock."

"I will be there, sir, if Mr. Clinch will let me off."

"He must let you off. If he won't, I shall send an officer to summon you."

"I have no doubt he will let me go."

"Your evidence is necessary to convict Lynch. I am told that the young fellow wants to make a confession."

"I should like very much to hear it, for I don't know even yet why those fellows followed me up so closely."

"We shall know to-morrow.--How do you feel, Mr. Farringford?" added Mr. Rockwood, turning to my father.

"Better, sir; I hope to be out in a few days."

"You were once a very able business man, and I have no doubt you know as much now as you ever did. I have been looking for a man who is competent to take charge of my property in St. Louis. You are the right man, if--"

"If I keep sober," added my father, when the planter paused. "I have no claim whatever upon your confidence; but I assure you I believe it is quite impossible for me ever to drink another drop of liquor."

This important matter was discussed for some time, but it ended in the appointment of my father as agent of the planter. When our visitor had departed, the future looked bright and pleasant; and it seemed to me that the day was drawing nearer when our family should be reunited under one roof.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH PHIL LISTENS TO THE CONFESSION OF HIS PERSECUTOR, AND ENDS PLANE AND PLANK.

I went to my work on Monday morning, and Plane and Plank were to employ me for the day. Certainly I never went to work so cheerfully in my life, for somehow all my mishaps seemed to have been turned into blessings. When I found my father a miserable drunkard and outcast, that seemed to me the greatest mishap which could possibly befall me. But now he was a new man, through the blessed ministrations of Mrs. Greenough; and through him I hoped to find the highest of earthly bliss in our reunited family.

My mishaps with the villains who had stolen my money, and who had probably intended to force me into a course of crime, had given me such a powerful friend as Mr. Rockwood. My father had been appointed his agent, with a salary at the rate of twelve hundred dollars a year for the first three months, with a promise of an increase, if he was faithful and steady. I fully believed that my father was sincere, and that, as he said, it would be quite impossible for him to drink another drop of liquor. I believed it, because I knew that he prayed to God morning, noon, and night for strength; and I was sure that he whom God helps cannot fail.

Mr. Clinch gave me permission, at nine o'clock, to be absent the rest of the day, if necessary. He was curious to know what business I had at the courts, and I told him enough of the story to enable him to understand the situation.

"I was sure that Morgan Blair was getting into bad ways," said Mr. Clinch. "I tell you, Phil, when a young fellow is lazy, and don't take any interest in his business, he is getting into a bad way. All I want to know about a boy is, whether he feels an interest in his business or not. Then I can tell pretty well about his morals."

"I think he fell into bad company, sir."

"Of course he did; idlers always fall into bad company. A young fellow must have a taste for bad company before he can be led a great ways out of the right track. The first bad company a young fellow keeps is himself. If he don't begin there, he won't begin anywhere else. Those are my sentiments."

Mr. Clinch talked to me while I was preparing to go to the station-house; and when I was ready I hastened to the place appointed. I found Mr. Rockwood and both the Gracewoods there, with Lynch and Blair in irons. They looked pitiable enough now. They had been arrested at the very moment when they considered themselves entirely successful in their wicked enterprise, and of course the shock of disaster was very heavy.

"You are an old one, Phil Farringford," said Lynch, with a sickly smile. "You have brought me to grief finally. If I can get out of this scrape, I don't know but I should be willing to go to a prayer-meeting with you."

"It would do you good," I replied. "Why were you so determined to rob me, Lynch?"

"Because I thought you were a great deal fatter pullet than you turned out to be. I heard you and that gentleman," he added, pointing to Mr. Henry Gracewood, "talking pretty large about your money. As you exhibited some of it, I was satisfied that you really had the gold, and I thought it would do me more good than it would you. However, you were so full of fight that I gave it up till you vexed me so here in the city. After I had given you back your hundred dollars, I was determined to be even with you. Then I followed, and made the acquaintance of my good friend Morgan Blair."

"Yes; and I wish you had been at the bottom of the Mississippi before I had ever seen you," blubbered Blair, his eyes filling with tears.

"After listening to that highly interesting story about the Rockwoods, I decided that my friend Blair should be the last of the Rockwoods. You were very obstinate, Phil; very. After that affair at the station-house, I made the acquaintance of Mr. Gracewood. I supposed, at first, that he was the one who had signed that note of yours, Phil. I wanted the note then, but I soon found that I was mistaken. About the same time I found the wounded man had a large sum of money upon him, and I was more anxious to get this. I told Mr. Gracewood that I knew a young man who had seen his brother, and then I got the whole story."

"What did you want of me?" I asked.

"That's the point; I wanted you, because you knew Mr. Gracewood's brother. He would trust you, for you go to prayer-meetings. He told me all about his brother; and I thought if I could get that note, he would pay it; but that was to be Blair's perquisite--what he could get of it. The sick man told me he had the care of his brother's property, and would pay anything on his account that was right."

"But did you mean to have me help you steal the twenty-four thousand dollars?" I demanded.

"That was what I wanted you for; and when we left you in the room, I went down to see Mr. Gracewood. I intended to tell him, as a friend, that it was not safe to keep such a sum in such a house. I meant to advise him to send it to the bank by you."

"And then to rob me?"

"Well, you needn't call it by such a hard name; but you never would have got out of the house with the money. I have played and lost, and now I make the best of it. When you left the room, we heard you on the roof; but I expected you back very soon, for I knew you could not escape in that direction. I was humane too, for I was afraid you would break your neck, and spoil all my plans; I placed the ladder at the skylight, so that you could return without danger."

"Why did you send to my boarding-house for my money?"

"Simply to ascertain whether you were there. When you came back, I sent a note down to Mr. Gracewood, and thus brought you together. While you were talking together, I went down into Mr. Gracewood's room, in order to ascertain, if I could, where he kept the package of money. Of course I did not suppose he had left it there; but, to my surprise, I found it between the two beds. I took possession, and Blair and I left then. I intended to be a hundred miles from St. Louis before daylight the next morning. Instead of that, we were nabbed by this excellent gentleman as soon as we stepped upon the sidewalk."

"I was watching you all the time," added the detective.

"And the game is up, and lost," said Lynch.

"A very stupid game it was, too."

"It may look so now; it did not then. It would not have been a hard job to persuade a sick man in a gambling-house to send his money to the bank for safe keeping."

"I don't think it would," said the invalid.

"Did you expect him to trust Phil at sight?" asked the detective.

"Not at all. Phil goes to prayer-meetings, and I thought he would be willing to spend most of the time, from Saturday night till Monday morning, with the sick brother of his best friend. By Monday noon he would have been willing to trust him with all he had in the world."

"I think he would," added Henry Gracewood.

"If he had sent me to the bank with the money, it would have gone there," I said, confidently.

"Perhaps not," replied Lynch.

"There would have been a big fight, at any rate," I continued. "I would not have given up the money while I had an arm left."

"Well, gentlemen, it is time to take the prisoners before the court," said Mr. Bogart.

They were taken to the court; Lynch pleaded guilty, and Blair, after telling a pitiful story of the manner in which he had been led away, put in the same plea. In due time the older villain was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, and the novice to one year. Mr. Gracewood recovered his money, and I did mine. Thus the wretch who had been persecuting me since he came on board the steamer on the Missouri to the present time, was disposed of.

The brothers Gracewood remained at the hotel a week. The case of the penitent was known to the public, and to his own family. Those who loved him forgave him; and he could afford to be independent, in a measure, of the opinions of others. His fortune was still ample for his support in elegance and luxury, and his brother lost nothing by his misdeeds.

Mr. Henry Gracewood paid me the fifteen hundred dollars, which, by the kindness of Mr. Rockwood, became my property. It was deposited in three savings banks. The health of Mrs. Gracewood was very much impaired by her illness, and the most skilful physician in the city recommended a change of climate, advising her to live in the south of France during the winter. This was a heavy blow to me, for I had counted upon the society of the Gracewoods, especially of Ella. The season was advancing, and the family were obliged to hasten away. With a heavy heart I bade good by to them, and it was years before I saw them again.

I attended to my work diligently and faithfully, and gave entire satisfaction to my employer. But I found that Plane

and Plank was hard work, and city life did not agree with me as well as that in the wilds of the upper Missouri. Still, I was very happy, though I was troubled with a longing desire to see my mother.

With the money restored to me after the arrest of the robbers, I purchased a suit of nice black clothes for my father; and when he was dressed in them, he looked like the new man that he was. He was paler and thinner than when I had first seen him, but I was proud of his appearance. Though not in robust health, he was able to enter at once upon the duties of his position as the agent of Mr. Rockwood.

We continued to live at Mrs. Greenough's, who felt quite as much interest in both of us as though we had been her nearest relatives. A smaller room over the entry was fitted up for me, and my father took my chamber. Here he kept his account-books, and did all his writing. I suppose that he was often tempted to drink, but I am certain that he never yielded. He always attended every service at the church. Mrs. Greenough had both reformed and converted him, though I think my presence had some influence with him.

I had work at my trade all winter; but my father insisted upon paying my board as well as his own, and I saved nearly all my money. I went to an evening school, and studied book-keeping. In fact I spent most of my leisure hours in study. I reviewed my old branches. My father was a very well educated man, and assisted me in my efforts to improve my mind. He instructed me in the usages of business, and helped me with my accounts.

In the spring, Mr. Lamar offered my father a much larger salary than he was receiving; but his employer promptly doubled his present pay, so well was he satisfied with his services. During the summer season, besides taking charge of the rents and repairs of the tenements, he built several new houses for Mr. Rockwood, which were leased to good tenants. His position was, therefore, one of great responsibility, but he was competent to fill it. He did his employer's business as though it had been his own.

We were both doing exceedingly well, and were in the main contented and happy, though I could not be entirely satisfied while my mother was separated from us. I said so much about this subject, that my father wrote to Mr. Collingsby, in Chicago, informing him that "the long-lost son" had been found. No answer was received; and another letter was written, which, however, produced no better result. Evidently Mr. Collingsby did not believe the statements contained in the letters, and he took no notice of them. Foiled in this manner, we were compelled to drop the matter for the time.

I worked at my trade for two years; and at the end of that time, although I was only fifteen, I did not think there was much more for me to learn in that business. Probably I should have continued to work at it, however, if Mr. Clinch had not abandoned his trade to go into the lumber business in Michigan. I had learned book-keeping pretty thoroughly, and I did not care to find a new place as a carpenter. I was rather desirous of practising what I had learned on the subject of accounts, and, with the advice of my father, I concluded to abandon, for the present, the PLANE and PLANK.

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