

## BULLS AND BEARS.

[Continued.]

## CHAPTER XI.

SHOWING AT WHAT COST OUR HERO  
ESCAPED DROWNING.

THE boat lay at the wharf, a pretty little craft of six or eight tons, with a mainsail and jib. It was a delightful afternoon; a gentle westerly wind swept over a placid sea, and the sky was as clear as the mirror that reflected its exquisite blue. Greenleaf and Miss Sandford took their seats amidships, leaving the stern for the boatman. The ropes were cast off, and the sailor was about stepping aboard, when it was discovered that the fishing-lines had been left behind. Old Tarry was dispatched to bring them, and he rolled off as fast as his habitual gait allowed him. When he was fairly up the hill, Miss Sandford said,—

"You know how to sail a boat, don't you?"

"Yes," said Greenleaf, "I have frequently been out alone; but I thought I would not take the responsibility of a more precious freight."

"It would be delightful to have a sail by ourselves."

"Charming, truly! Our salt-water friend may be a very estimable person, but we should be freer to talk in his absence."

"Suppose you try it. I will sit here, and you take his place."

Greenleaf hesitated; the proposal was a tempting one, but he had no great confidence in his own skill.

"The sea is like a pond," continued his companion. "We can sail out a short distance, and then return for our pilot, if we like."

Greenleaf allowed himself to be persuaded. He shoved off the boat, hoisted sail, and they were soon lightly skimming the waters of the bay. They rounded the rocky point and stood for the east-

ward. Their boatman soon appeared on the shore and made frantic gestures to no purpose; they looked back and rather enjoyed his discomfiture.

Never did the sea have such a fascination for Greenleaf. He held the rudder and drew the sheets with a feeling of proud mastery, deeper and more exciting than the horseman feels on the back of his steed. These first emotions, however, gradually lost their intensity, and he resigned himself to the measureless content which the gentle motion, the bland air, and the sunny sky inspired.

What had been the character of Miss Sandford's regard for Greenleaf hitherto would be a difficult question to answer; it is doubtful whether she knew, herself. She had been pleased with his conversation and manners, flattered by his graceful and not too obsequious attentions, and proud of his success in his art. Living upon the pleasures of the day, without a thought of the future, she had never seriously reflected upon the consequences of her flirtation, supposing that as in every former case, there would come a time of *ennui* and coolness. Besides, she had felt the force of her prudent sister-in-law's suggestion, that a man without an estate would never be able to supply the necessities of a woman of fashion. With all her *quasi* advances a degree of reserve was mingled, and she persuaded herself that she should never become entangled beyond the power of retreat. But Greenleaf was not an easy conquest. She was aware of her influence over him, and employed all her arts to win and secure his devotion; as long as the least indifference on his part remained, she was unsatisfied. But in this protracted effort she had drifted unconsciously from her own firm anchorage. Day by day his society had grown more and more necessary to her, and her habitual caution was more and

more neglected. The conduct of Greenleaf, without any design on his part, had been such as to draw her on irresistibly, until their positions had become reversed; she was now fascinated beyond self-control, and without a thought of the future, while he was merely agreeable, but inwardly cool and self-possessed. Still at times the strange thrills returned as the soft light of her eyes fell upon him, and the intoxication he felt at his first meeting with her again drowned his senses in delight.

They did not talk very freely that summer's day. The heart when full rarely pours itself out in words. A look, a pressure of the hand, or (if such improprieties are to be imagined) a kiss, expresses the emotions far better than the most glowing speech. It was enough for Marcia, steeped in delicious languor, to sway with the rocking boat, to feel the soft wind dallying with her hair, and to look with unutterable fondness at her companion.

As long as the ceremonies of society are observed, and people are kept asunder a room's distance, so that only the mind acts, and the senses are in repose, reserve may keep up its barrier. Words lose their electricity in passing through a cool tract of air, and Reason shows all things in her own clear white light. But establish a magnetic circle by contact, let hand rest in quivering hand, while eye looks into melting eye, and Reason may as well resign her sway. When the nerves tingle, the heart bounds, and the breath quickens, estates, honors, family, prudence, are of little worth. The Grundys, male and female, may go hang; the joy of the present so transcends all memory, so eclipses hope even, that all else is forgotten.

The boat careened somewhat, and Marcia changed her seat to the opposite side, quite near to Greenleaf. His right hand held the tiller,—his left, quite unconsciously, it would seem, fell into her open palm. The subtle influence ran through every fibre. What he said he did not know, only that he verged towards the momentous subject, and committed himself so far that he must either come plain-

ly to the point or apologize and withdraw as best he might. *Could* he withdraw, while, as he held her soft hand, that lambent fire played along his nerves? He did not give up the hand.

Poor little Alice! Her picture in his breast-pocket no longer weighed upon his heart.

The breeze freshened, the boat rose and fell with easy motion over the whitening waves. The sun ~~all~~ at once was obscured. They looked behind them; a heavy black cloud was rising rapidly in the west. Greenleaf put the boat about, and, as it met the shock of the sea, they were covered with spray. To go back in the wind's eye was clearly impossible; they must beat up, and, hauling as close to the wind as possible, they stood towards Swampscot. For a mile or two they held this course, and then tacked. But making very little headway in that direction, the bow was turned northward again. In coming about they shipped so much water, that Marcia, though by no means a coward, screamed out, "We are lost!" She flung herself into the bottom of the boat and laid her head in Greenleaf's lap like a frightened child. He soothed her and denied that there was danger; he did not venture to tack again, however, for fear of being swamped, but determined to run northwardly along the coast in the hope of getting ashore on some sandy beach before the fury of the storm should come. The boat now careened so far that her gunwale was under water; he saw that he must take in the mainsail. With some difficulty he persuaded Marcia to hold the tiller while he let go the halliards. The mainsail came down with a run, and the boat kept on with the jib only, though of course at a slower rate. They were still two or three miles from shore, and the storm increased momentarily. They saw Lynn Beach without hope of gaining it, the wind driving them northward. Neither could Greenleaf run into the little bay of Swampscot. In spite of his efforts the boat shot by Phillips's Point, and he must therefore run upon the rocks beyond the

Point or make for Marblehead harbor. But the latter was an untried and dangerous course for an inexperienced boatman, and, grim as the coast looked, he was obliged to trust to its tender mercies for the chance of getting ashore. The rain now fell in blinding torrents, and a blackness as of night brooded over the sea. Greenleaf was utterly bewildered, but held on to the tiller with his aching, stiffening hand, and strove to inspire his companion with courage. The boat was "down by the head," on account of the wind's drawing the jib, and rolled and plunged furiously. Behind were threatening billows, and before were ragged, precipitous rocks, around which the surges boiled and eddied. Greenleaf quailed as he neared the awful coast; his heart stood still as he thought of the peril to a helpless woman in clambering up those cliffs, even if she were not drowned before reaching them. Every flash of lightning seemed to disclose some new horror. If life is measured by sensations, he lived years of torture in the few minutes during which he waited for the shock of the bows against the granite wall. Marcia, fortunately, had become insensible, though her sobbing, panting breath showed the extremity of terror that had pursued her as long as consciousness remained. Nearer and nearer they come; an oar's length, a step; they touch now! No, a wave careens the boat, and she lightly grazes by. Now opens a cleft, perhaps wide enough for her to enter. With helm hard down the bow sweeps round, and they float into a narrow basin with high, perpendicular walls, opening only towards the sea. When within this little harbor, the boat lodged on a shelving rock and heeled over as the wave retreated. Greenleaf and his companion, who had now recovered from her swoon, kept their places as though hanging at the eaves of a house. They were safe from the fury of the storm without, but there was no prospect of an immediate deliverance. The rock rose sheer above them thirty or forty feet, and they were shut up as in the bottom of a well. The waves

dallied about the narrow entrance, shooting by, meeting, or returning on the sweep of an eddy; but at intervals they gathered their force, and, tumbling over each other, rushed in, dashing the spray to the top of the basin, and completely drenching the luckless voyagers. This, however, was not so serious a matter as it would have been if their clothes had not been wet before in the heavy rain. The tide slowly rose, and the boat floated higher and higher against the rock, as the shadows began to settle over the gulf.

In spite of the peril they had encountered, and their present discomfort and perplexity, Greenleaf now experienced an indescribable pleasure. Marcia was exhausted with fatigue and terror, and rested her head upon his shoulder. Unconsciously, he used the cheering, caressing tones which the circumstances naturally prompted. It was an occasion to draw out what was most manly, most tender, most chivalric in him. The pride of the woman was gone, her artifices forgotten. In that hour she had looked beyond the factitious distinctions of society; she had found herself face to face with her companion without disguise, as spirit looks upon spirit, and she felt herself drawn to him by the loyalty which a superior nature inevitably inspires.

A slight movement of the boat caused Greenleaf to turn his head. Just behind him there was a shelf not three feet above the gunwale; beyond that was a second step, and still farther a winding fissure. After measuring the distances again with his eye, to be sure that he should raise no illusive hope, he pointed out to Marcia the way of escape. Their conversation had naturally taken an affectionate turn, and Greenleaf's delicate courtesy and hardly ambiguous words had raised a tumult in her bosom which could no longer be repressed. She flung herself into his arms, and with tears exclaimed,—

"Dear George, you have saved my life! It is yours! Take me!"

The rush of emotion swept away the last barrier; he yielded to the impulse; he clasped her fondly in his arms and

gave his heart and soul to her keeping. Carefully he assisted her up by the way he had found, and when at last they reached the top of the cliff, both fell on their knees in gratitude to Heaven for their preservation. Then new embraces and protestations. Rain and salt spray, hunger and fatigue, were of little moment in that hour.

Near the cliff stood a gentleman's villa, and to that they now hastened to procure dry clothing before returning home. They found the welcome hospitality they expected, and after rest and refreshment started to walk to Swampscot, where they could obtain a carriage for Nahant. But at the gate they met Easemann and Mrs. Sandford, who, alarmed at their long absence, had driven in a barouche along the coast in hope of hearing some tidings of the boat.

The wanderers were overwhelmed with congratulations, mingled with deserved reproofs for their rashness in venturing forth without their pilot. On the way home, Greenleaf told the story which the reader already knows, omitting only some few passages. Easemann turned and said, with a meaning emphasis,—

"I thought so. I thought what would happen. You aren't drowned, to be sure; but some people *can't* be drowned; better for them, if they could!"

Greenleaf made no reply to the *brusque* sarcasm, but drew Marcia closer to his side. He could not talk after such an adventure, especially while in contact with the woman for whom he had risked so much.

Poor little Alice!

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

THE flurry in the money-market gradually increased to a storm. Confidence was destroyed, and business at a stand. The daily bulletins of failures formed the chief topic of conversation. The merchants and bankers, especially those who held Western lands, Western securities, or Western credits, went down one after

another. Houses tumbled like a row of bricks. No class was safe at a time when the relations of debtor and creditor were so complicated and so universal. Stocks went down with a run. Bullion was not disappointed in his calculations, and Fletcher, in spite of his insane whims upon the subject of chances, proved himself shrewd, vigilant, and energetic. Flushed with success, he made bolder ventures, and the daily balances grew to be enormous. Within the first fortnight, Bullion had given Fletcher notes for over five thousand dollars as his share of the profits. The brokers, even, were astonished at the silent but all-powerful influence that pressed upon the market, bringing the best stocks down till they sold like damaged goods at a sheriff's auction. But Tonsor, the lucky agent, kept his counsel. Daily he attended the sales at the Board, with apparently exhaustless resources, *bear-ing* pitilessly, triumphantly, until the unlucky bulls came to think the sight of his face was an ill omen.

Of all men, Sandford felt this steady, determined pressure most keenly. To sustain the credit of those in whose affairs he was concerned, he was obliged from time to time to put under the hammer stocks which had been placed in his hands. Every sale showed the value of these securities to be sinking, until it really seemed that they would come to be as worthless as the old Continental currency. But neither he nor other sufferers had any remedy;—stocks were worth only what they would bring; prices must take care of themselves; and the calm, determined bids of Tonsor were like the voice of Fate.

In his extremity, Sandford thought of Monroe, and remembering his own personal responsibility for the sum he had received, he determined to "hedge." So he sent for Monroe; he showed him the notes, all amply secured, if any man's name could be said to give security.

"You see," said Sandford, "how careful I have been. Two good names on every note. They may fail, it is true. So

stocks may go for a song, and universal bankruptcy follow. See, there is a note signed by Flint, Steel, & Co., and indorsed by Lameduck, — another by Kitley and Co., indorsed by Burnt-wick, — and this by Stearine & Star, indorsed by Bullion. Every dollar will yield at least the eight per cent. I promised."

"The names are good, I should think, — as long as anybody is good," said Monroe. "Still I should feel safer with a mortgage, or even with stocks; for if these do go down, they will come up again."

"Stocks!" said Sandford, with an air of contempt. "There isn't a bank that is worth *that*," — snapping his fingers. "They keep on their legs only by sufferance; if put to the test, they could not redeem their notes a day. The factories are worse yet, — rotten, hollow. Railroads, — eaten up with bonds and mortgages."

"Well, perhaps you have done wisely. Time will show."

"I sent for you," said Sandford, "because I knew you must be anxious. I gave you a part of the interest, you know. You'll take these notes? You approve of my judgment?"

"I must, I suppose. Yes, — you can make the transfers to me, if you like. They may as well remain with you, however."

Sandford drew a long breath with a sense of relief. If he were to be hard pushed, these notes would serve for collateral securities.

Monroe left the office, not quite so cheerful as when he came. He remembered his mother's regrets at the disposition of the money, — their all. His own health had been failing. His relative, whom he went to see, was dead; and now that his cousin had accepted his invitation to come and live with him, he felt an increased solicitude about the future.

Sandford's main anxiety now was to provide for Stearine's note, which he felt assured the promisor could not meet. He dared not let the loss fall upon the

Vortex until every expedient had been tried; for such an affair would lead at once to an unwelcome investigation of the Company's accounts. He determined first to see Bullion, to whom the note was due. He found that gentleman cool, tranquil, and not at all frightened, as he supposed he would be, at the idea of a protest. The truth was, that Bullion had already made so much in his operations, that he could easily "lift" the note; but as long as his capital was yielding such golden returns, he was not disposed to use it in that way until obliged to do so. Besides, he believed, from Sandford's anxiety, that he would himself make an effort to raise the money elsewhere. He was quite easy, therefore.

"Stearine must look out for his own paper; if he don't, he must go down. If I have to pay it, I shall any way get a dividend out of him, and, what is better, get a few days' time. Time *is* money, these days."

There was no course for Sandford, then, but to sell or hypothecate the shares of stock he held. Then the thought of the still falling prices frightened him. The stocks he had to sell were already quoted far below their usual price, and he, in common with all the street, had heard of the secret irresistible influence that was bearing down upon the daily sales. If Tonsor should come into market against him, the consequences might be ruinous. It was out of the question for him to stand up against any further serious depreciation.

To Tonsor he went, in the hope of persuading or buying him off from his destructive course. As he entered the broker's door he saw Fletcher hand over a package of bills, and just caught the words, "Forty-five thousand." What was Fletcher doing? He remembered that he had not met his old agent for some days, and he knew well that such a scheming brain would not be idle in a time like this. A light flashed upon him. Was Fletcher in the conspiracy? If he knew and shared in the scheme, the secret should be wrenched from him.

Mr. Sandford affected, therefore, to have come to see Fletcher only, and drew him into a corner.

"Fletcher, what's in the wind? Don't Danforth & Co. do their own buying and selling? They don't employ Tonsor, do they?"

"You don't expect me to tell their business, do you?"

"Well, no,—not exactly. I thought you might have dipped in on your own account."

"That's a good joke. How should I have the funds?"

"Any chances to invest, Fletcher? I'll give liberal commissions."

"Chances are plenty for those that have money."

Fletcher started as though he would return to his place of business. But Sandford dropped his smooth and honeyed tone and spoke more decidedly.

"You can't blind me, Fletcher. You know what the bears are doing. They are ruining everything, knocking down prices, destroying credit, using what little money there is for speculation, thriving on the distress of the public. It's no better than highway-robbery; and it's my belief you are concerned in the plot."

"You had better go to the nobs, and not talk to me. You might as well pitch into the tellers or messengers when the banks suspend payment."

"No,—I shan't let you off. The 'nobs,' as you call them, dare not be seen in this matter; they will pocket the chestnuts, but they will get some cat's-paw to rake them out of the ashes."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

Fletcher was astonished at his own temerity as soon as he had uttered the words; but his prosperity and the support of Bullion had given him some courage.

"Do? you scoundrel!" said Sandford, in a rage that rarely overtook him. "What am I going to do? I'll break every bone in your skin, if you don't give up this plot you are in. Do you *dare* to set yourself to put *me* down? Don't let any of your tools *dare* to run my

stocks! If you do, I'll go to a magistrate and have you arrested."

"When I am arrested, my good Sir," said Fletcher, with a face pale as death, but with lips firmly set, "I advise you to have your accounts ready. For I shan't be in the jug a minute before you'll have to show your papers and your cash-book to the Company."

Sandford staggered as though he had received a blow from a bruiser. He gasped for breath,—turned pale, then red,—at length with difficulty said, "You defy me, then? We shall see!"

"You have it;—I defy you, hate you, despise you! I have been your slave long enough. Do your worst. But the instant you move, I promise you that a man will look after you, d—d quick."

Sandford looked around. Tonsor was calmly counting the pile of bank-notes before him. It was near eleven. The Board would soon commence its session. He stepped into the street, slamming the door after him.

"Pretty well, for a beginning!" said Fletcher, meditating,—*"a shot betwixt wind and water. So much for Bullion's advice. Bullion is a trump, and Sandford be hanged!"*

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SED REVOCARE GRADUM!—

THE fatigue, drenching, and terror of the unlucky day's sail produced their natural effects upon a rather delicate constitution. Miss Sandford was ill the following day, and, in spite of the doctors, a fever set in. Her sister-in-law was assiduous in her attentions, and Greenleaf called daily with inquiries and tender messages. While thus occupied, he had little time to consider the real state of his feelings towards the new love, still less to reflect upon his conduct towards the old. For the first time in his life he became a coward. If he meant to abide by his last engagement, honor should have led him to break the unwelcome news to Alice as best he might, and extricate himself from his false



and embarrassing position. If he still loved the girl of his first choice, and felt that his untruth to her was only the result of a transient, sensuous passion, it was equally plain that he must resolutely break away from the beautiful tempter. But he oscillated, pendulum-like, between the two. When Marcia began to recover, and he was allowed to see her in her chamber, the influence she had at first exerted returned upon him with double force. In her helplessness, she appealed powerfully to the chivalric sentiment which man feels towards the dependent; her tones, softened by affection and tremulous from weakness, thrilled his soul; and the touch of her hand was electric. When he returned to his studio, as he thought of the trustful, unsuspecting, generous heart of Alice, he was smitten with a pang of remorse too keen to be borne. He tried to look at her picture, but the face was to him like the sight of a reproving angel. He could not look steadily upon the placid features; the calm eyes turned his heart to stone; the sweet mouth was an accuser he dared not face. But when next he saw Marcia, all was forgotten; while under her spell he could have braved the world, only too happy to live and die for her.

For days this struggle continued. His art had no power to amuse him or engross his thought. His friends were neglected,—Easemann with the rest. His enemy could not have wished to see him more completely miserable. He knew that he must decide, must act; but whatever might be his determination, he had a most painful duty to perform. Let him do what he might, he must prove himself a villain. He loathed, detested himself. Sometimes he was tempted to fly; but then he reflected that he should in that way prove a scoundrel to two women instead of one. For three weeks he had not written to Alice, and the last letter he had received from her was now a month old. He took it from his pocket, where it lay among the perfumed and tinted evidences of his unfaithfulness. It

was a simple thing, but how the gentle words smote upon his heart!

“MY DEAR GEORGE, (*her dear George!*)—How I wish I could be with you, to rejoice over your success! You are really a great artist, the papers say, and are becoming famous! Not that I love you the more for that. If you were still unknown to the world, still only a lover of beauty for its own sake, and content with painting for your own pleasure, I am not sure that I should not love you the more. But you will believe me, that I am proud of your success. If I am ambitious, it is for you. I would have the world see and know you as I do. Yet not as I do,—nobody can do that. To the world you are a great painter. To me—ah, my dearest George!—you are the noblest and truest heart that ever woman rested upon. Nobody but me knows that. I shall be proud of the homage the world gives you, because at the same time I shall say, ‘That is my betrothed, my husband, whom they praise; what his heart is, no woman knows but me’”—

He could read no farther. His emotions were too powerful to be borne in silence. He yielded, and, strong man as he was, bowed his head and wept. The tears of childhood, and oftentimes the tears of woman, lie shallow; they come at the first bidding of sorrow or sympathy. But it is no common event, no common feeling, that prevails over man; nothing less than a convulsion like an earthquake unseals the fountain of tears in him. Whoever has seen the agony of a manly nature in groans and tears and sobs has something to remember for a life-time.

It was a long night,—a night of unutterable suffering, struggle, and doubt. The hours seemed shod with lead. Sleep seemed banished from the universe. But with the coming of dawn the tempest was stilled. In the clear light of day the path of duty seemed plain. He felt sure that in his heart

of hearts he loved Alice, and her only. He would go at once to Marcia and tell her of his perfidy, implore the forgiveness of silence and charity, and bid her farewell. When he had reached this conclusion he became calm. As he looked out from his window, he saw the world awake from slumber, and he shared in the gladness of Nature. He even rejoiced in the prospect of deliverance from his wretched condition, although he well knew the humiliation he must pass through to attain it. He waited impatiently for the hour when he could present himself before Marcia, own his duplicity, and take leave of her. He felt strong in his new resolution. All vacillation was past. He could face any temptation without one flutter of inconstancy towards his first-love.

Greenleaf was not the only one in the city with whom the night had passed heavily. The cloud still hung over the mercantile world. Failures, by dozens, were announced daily. Men heard the dismal intelligence, as in time of pestilence they would hear the report of the dead and dying. No business-man felt secure. No amount of property, other than ready money, was any safeguard. Neighbor met neighbor, asking, with doleful accent, "Where is this going to end?" The street, at 'change hours, presented a crowd of haggard faces, furrowed with care, their eyes fixed and despairing. Some looked white with apprehension, some crushed and tearful, others stony, sullen, or defiant. Whatever was bravest had been drawn out in manly endeavor; whatever was most generous was excited to sympathy and brotherly-kindness; whatever was most selfish was stimulated by the fierce desire for self-preservation; whatever was most fiendish was roused by blind rage and useless resentment. In the halcyon days of plenty and prosperity men know little of each other; trade has its accustomed way; balances are smoothly adjusted; notes are given and paid with smiling faces; one would think that honor and manliness were the commonest of

qualities. Now, every man was put to the severest proof, and showed the in-born and essential traits of his nature. Like a ship's crew on a raft, alone on the ocean without provisions, they looked at each other as they were. There, in their extremity, were to be seen calm resignation, unmanly terror, moody despair, turbulent passion, and stealthy, fiendish glances that blinked not at cannibalism itself.

Mr. Sandford, almost for the first time in his life, had been rendered nervous with apprehension. To be sure, he was not one of the "sleek-headed men that sleep o' nights"; he was always busy with some scheme; but, heretofore, success had followed every plan, and he had gone on with steadfast confidence. Now the keenest foresight was of no avail; events defied calculation; misfortunes came without end and without remedy. It was the moment of fate to him. He had gone to the last verge, exhausted every resource, and, if there were not some help, as unlooked for as a shower of gold from heaven, he must stop payment,—he, whose credit had been spotless and without limit, whose name in the financial world was honor itself, whose influence had been a tower of strength in every undertaking. It was not without a struggle that he brought himself to look this inexorable fact in the face. Marcia and his sister-in-law heard him as he paced the room through the night; they had noticed his abstracted and downcast air the preceding evening; and at breakfast the few words that escaped from between his firm-set lips were sufficiently ominous. It was the first morning that Marcia had appeared at the table, and in her feeble condition the apprehension of danger was intense and overpowering. Mrs. Sandford tried in vain to change the conversation, by significant glances towards the invalid; but the brother was too much absorbed to notice anything outside of the gloomy circle that hemmed him in. Muttering still of "ruin," "beggary," and similar topics, so admirably adapted to cheer the



convalescent, he swallowed his breakfast like an animal, left the room without his usual bland "good morning," and slammed the street-door after him.

A fit of hysterics was the natural consequence. The kind and sisterly widow bore, rather than led, Marcia to an upper room, propped her with pillows in an arm-chair, and employed every tender and womanly art to soothe her excited nerves. Calmness came, but only with exhaustion. The door-bell rang. Mrs. Sandford gave an inaudible direction to the servant. But Marcia exclaimed, "It is George! I heard his step on the pavement. I must see him. Let him in." Mrs. Sandford remonstrated to no purpose, and then went to her own room.

It was "George." He entered the room with a pale face, and a look betokening both suffering and resolution. He was evidently struck by the appearance of Miss Sandford, rightly judging that she was not able to bear what he had come to tell her. He would have uttered a few commonplace courtesies, and deferred his weighty communication to another time. But Marcia's senses were preternaturally sharpened; weak as a vine without its trellis, instinct seemed to guide her to clasp by every tendril the support to which she had been wont to cling. She noticed a certain uneasiness in Greenleaf's demeanor; ready to give the worst interpretation to everything, she exclaimed, in a quick, frightened manner, "George, dear George, what is the matter? You are cold, you are distant. Are you in trouble, too, like all the world?"

"Deeply in trouble," he answered gravely,—still standing, hat in hand.

"Trouble that I cannot soothe?"

"I am afraid not."

"And you won't tell me?"

"Not to-day."

"Then you don't love me."

Greenleaf was silent; his lips showing the emotion he strove to control. Her voice took a more cheerful tone, as if she would assure herself, and, with a faint smile, she said,—

"You are silent; but I am only childish. You *do* love me, — don't you, George?"

"As much as I ever did."

A mean subterfuge; for though it was true, perhaps, to him, he knew it was a falsehood to her. She attempted to rise from her chair; he sprang to support her.

"You are so gloomy, reserved, to-day!" she continued.

Still Greenleaf was silent. He aided her to resume her seat; but when he had done so, she detained him, seizing his arm and then his hand. His heart beat rapidly, and he turned away his head to avoid the fond but keen scrutiny of her eyes,—at the same time gently, but ineffectually, attempting to free his hand. Once more he resolved, since the conversation had taken such a turn, to risk the consequences, and prepare her mind for a separation. But a sudden thought struck her, and, before he could frame a sentence, she spoke:—

"You have heard bad news this morning?"

He shook his head.

"No,—I know you are not mercenary; I would not wrong you with the suspicion."

"What suspicion, pray?" he asked, turning suddenly towards her.

"You have not heard?"

"I have heard nothing."

"Pity my foolishness. But my brother is in difficulty; he may fail; perhaps has failed even now. Pray, don't chide me for my fears. All the world goes with the rich and the prosperous."

"The world has very little company just now, then," said Greenleaf, with a grim smile. "But assure yourself," he continued; "the dowry of my wife is a matter I have never considered. *With the woman I love*," said he, with deep emphasis, "honest poverty is what I do not dread."

Interpreting this fervent declaration in the natural way, Marcia reached forth her arms with sudden fervor, drew him nearer, and covered his forehead, lips,

and cheeks with kisses. Every kiss fell like a spot of mildew on his flesh; her caresses filled him with shame. Could he undeceive her? In her feeble condition, the excitement into which she had been thrown by her brother's danger was all she could bear. False as his position was, heartless and empty as his soothing words and caresses were, he must continue to wear the mask, and show himself as he was at some time when she had no other trouble to weigh her down. Still she chid his gloomy reserve, his absent air, and mechanical movements. Was he weak, if under such influences his fixed resolves bent?—if his nerves felt the old thrill?—if his voice took a softer tone?—and if he parted from her with something of his former tenderness? He tried to excuse himself to his conscience by the plea, that the deception once begun must be kept up until it could be ended with safety. For he saw that her heart was really bound up in him. She no longer kept up the brilliant fence of repartee; she had abandoned all coquettish arts, and, for once at least, was sincerely, fondly, even foolishly, in love. Home he went, sadder than before, his conscience yet more aroused, and his resolutions farther than ever from accomplishment.

Poor little Alice!

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF.

MR. SANDFORD walked towards his office, that fine autumn morning, in no amiable mood. Nature seemed to protest against his angry violence; the very stones of the pavement seemed to say,—“He need not thump us in that way; *we* can't pay his notes.” The trees along Mount-Vernon Street rustled their leaves with a shudder, as he passed under them; they dropped no benison upon a face which even the golden morning could not lighten. “Let him stride on!” said they; “we shall be more cheerful in company with the maids washing the sidewalks or taking out the children (blessed darlings!) for an airing.” Canaries

ceased their songs in the windows;urchins stopped their hoops and stood on the curbstones, eyeing the gloomy man askance. When he passed the Granary Burying-Ground, he saw a squirrel dart down a tree, and scamper over the old graves in search of some one of his many stores; then rising on his haunches, he munched the pea-nut which he had unearthed, (the gift of some schoolboy, months ago,) as much as to say,—“We know how to look out for hard times; but what have you done with *your* pea-nuts, old fellow, that you look so cross? Can't get 'em, eh? You should put 'em where you'll know where they are.” A whisk of his tail and he flew up the tree. The lesson was lost upon the financier. At the office-door he met Bullion,—his face a trifle more ruddy, his eye with a colder glitter, and his queer eyebrow pointing with an odder significance.

“How are you, Sandford?”—A very short nod.—“Cool, this morning.”—Standing with his dumpy legs apart, he nibbled at the ivory head of his cane.

“Mr. Bullion,” said Sandford, “you must help me. You must lift that note. Come, I know you can do it,—and I'll make it worth your while.”

“Can't do it; you want a long extension, I s'pose.”

“Say three or four months.”

“Time is money, as I told you before. In four months, with forty thousand dollars, I could—do pretty well,” ending the sentence in a lower tone, that indicated a desire to keep his first thought back.

“In a time like this, Mr. Bullion, it is the duty of every man to assist his neighbor to the extent of his ability. If there is no forbearance, no brotherly aid, how are the complicated settlements of a mad community like this to be made? There is not money enough to pay what must be paid.”

The eyebrow was stiffly pointed as Bullion answered,—

“I do forbear. I must forbear. Stearine owes me; you indorse; you can't pay, neither of you. I sha'n't get the money. I must go without.”

It was an injured tone.

"Then why do you let it go to protest?"

"Only a form, Sandford. Usage of the mercantile world. Very irregular not to do it. Sorry, but can't help it."

Mr. Sandford's patience was exhausted.

"It is my turn to-day, Bullion; I have no further resource; I am ruined. You feel strong and look upon my distress in triumph. But your turn will come. Mark my words. Within a fortnight I shall see you rushing down State Street in despair; your property will be swept away with a flood, and you will be a beggar,—as you deserve to be. Damn your stony heart!"

It was the first outburst of profanity from Mr. Sandford,—too fastidious, usually, to allow himself the use of such expletives.

"Sorry to see you excited, Sandford. Best to keep temper. Guess you and Fayerweather will raise the money. Pity Stearine hadn't wick enough in him to stand alone. Rather a poor candle, he is,—he! he! Morning!"

The gray eyes twinkled, the eyebrow whisked, and the sturdy legs bore the creditor away.

Entering the office, Mr. Sandford tried to assume a cheerful look. He looked over the list of failures, in the "Independent," with something of the interest which a patient in a hospital would feel when overhearing the report from the dead-house. Was there no one of the bald or grizzly-haired gentlemen who smiled so benignly whom he could ask for aid? Not one; he knew their circumstances; they had no money at command; all their property was locked up in investments. He thought of the many chairmen and directors in benevolent associations with whom he was connected. No,—they were either men of moderate means, or had some son or nephew or brother in business whose credit they must uphold. How gladly would he barter all his parchment testimonials for one good "promise to pay"!

He groaned almost audibly, and wondered how he could pass the time till the close of bank-hours. The suspense was a torture as keen as the calamity itself.

A visitor entered; it was Plotman. He came with a cheerful, even exulting, look.

"Good news, Sandford!"

"News!" exclaimed Sandford, impetuously. "What news? How much?"

In his absent state he forgot that Plotman was not aware of his thoughts, and associated good news only with an accommodation to serve his present need. But his fluttering expectations were dashed to the ground with the reply.

"'How much,' did you say? A clean majority over all. Your name stands at the head of the ticket."

"I am obliged to you," replied Sandford, sadly, "but I don't think I can accept the nomination."

"Well, that is rather strong," said Plotman. "You'd best keep your modesty for the papers; it's thrown away on me."

"I really can't bother with politics."

"Why in the Devil, then, did you lay your corns to get the place, and make me all this trouble for nothing?"

"I am really sorry, Plotman; but, to tell you just how it is, I am so much involved in this fearful monetary pressure that I have no time nor heart for anything else."

"Confounded spooney!" muttered Plotman, between his teeth. "If I'd known he was so weak in the knees, I'd have gone in for Spreadeagle, who offered a handsome figure."

"Come in to-morrow, Plotman, and we'll talk about it. I can't think about it now. I'll make all right with you."

Still muttering, the disappointed politician departed, leaving Sandford in a deeper abyss than before. To prevent unwelcome visits, the latter left word with his clerks that he could see no one whatever.

To wile away the time, he took out his cash-book and private papers. There was about a thousand dollars in bank.

"It will be best to draw that," thought

he, "for there's no knowing what may happen."

And the office-boy was dispatched with a check for the amount.

"Let us see what other resources. There are Monroe's notes,—ten thousand dollars. I can raise something on them. I'll borrow from Tonsor, who seems to have funds enough."

He sent a clerk and succeeded in obtaining eight thousand dollars for five days, by depositing the notes.

"If worst comes to worst, I have nine thousand to fall back upon. Now, what next? Fletcher's note for five hundred, with the rather peculiar admission at the beginning. I wonder, now, what he would give for this little paper? Possibly he is in funds. He's a scheming devil and hasn't been idle in this gale of wind. I'll send for him."

Fletcher entered with an air of confidence.

"Well, Mr. Sandford, you don't bear malice, I see. If you didn't want to get a saucy answer, you shouldn't have threatened, the other day."

"You were hardly civil, Fletcher," said Sandford, gravely, "and rather forgetful, besides. If I were you, I wouldn't bluster until a certain piece of paper was safe in my possession."

"Do you suppose I ever forget that paper, or how you bullied it out of me? But you know that at the time when I used that five hundred dollars, I had money enough, and felt as sure of returning it the next day as you do of paying the ten thousand you had of Monroe."

Sandford started.

"How did you know whose money I had?"

"Never mind. I hear a great many things. As I was saying, I didn't steal the money, for you didn't miss it till I told you; and if I hadn't been a coward and a fool to boot, I should never have signed that cursed paper."

"I have it, though. The law calls it a confession of theft."

Fletcher winced.

"You have told me that often enough

before. You needn't touch me on the raw to make me remember it."

He waited, but Sandford made no reply. Fletcher continued:—

"Well, what is it? You've something on hand, or you wouldn't have sent for me."

"You propose to pay sometime, I believe?"

"Of course, I do. I've offered to pay times enough, you know. I can get the money in ten minutes."

"Can you! How much?"

"Why, the five hundred and interest."

"I rather think the document is worth more money."

"You'd take my heart's blood for it, I know. But you can't get any more money than I have got."

"You were very ready in promising five hundred in ten minutes. It seems to me that in an hour you might raise a larger sum."

"Do you suppose I am a capitalist?—that I own Fogarty, Danforth, and Dot?"

"I'm sure, I can't tell. Stranger things have happened."

"I wonder if he suspects my connection with old Bullion?" thought Fletcher.

"I'll make you a fair proposition, Fletcher. I need some money, for a few days. Get me thirty thousand dollars for a week, say; I'll pay a liberal interest and give up the paper."

"I can't do it. The figure is altogether above me. You don't want me to rob my employers?"

"Rob" is a hard word, Fletcher. No, I counsel no crime. You don't want anything more to think of. But you may know some chance to borrow that sum?"

Fletcher mused. "If Sandford comes to a man like me for such a sum, it must be because he is devilish hard up; and if I get him the money, it would likely be sunk. I can't do it."

"No, Mr. Sandford, it's out of the question. Everybody that has money has twenty applications for every dollar."

"Then you'd rather see this paper in an officer's hands?"

Fletcher's face blanched and his knees

shook, but he kept his resolution in spite of his bodily tremor.

"I have been like a mouse cuffed between a cat's paws so long that I don't care to run. If you mean to pounce upon me and finish me, go ahead. I may as well die as to be always dreading it. But you'll please remember what I said about overhauling your accounts."

Sandford found his man firmer than he had expected. He changed his tactics.

"Fletcher, as you can't do what I want, how much will you give outright for the little obligation? You shall have it for fifteen hundred dollars. Come, now, that's reasonable."

"Reasonable as the fellow who puts a pistol to your head on a dark night in the middle of Cambridge bridge."

"Tut, tut! Don't talk of highway-robbery! I think I am letting you off cheap."

"How do you suppose I can raise fifteen hundred dollars?"

"That is your affair."

"You are as cruel as a bloodhound after a runaway nigger."

"I have once or twice remonstrated against your use of harsh words."

"What's the use of being mealy-mouthed? I owe you five hundred dollars. Every dollar beyond that you get from me you rob me of; and it doesn't matter whether it is a pistol or a writ that you threaten me with."

"You persist in a violent tone."

"I can't talk to suit you, and I shall stop. We shall never agree. I'll tell you, though, what I will do. I'll give you a note, to-morrow, for a thousand dollars, on short time, with a good name."

"Money, Fletcher!—money! I don't want any note."

"Well, I'll see what I can do. Perhaps I *can* get the money."

"And, Fletcher, I advise you to settle the affair to-day. It has stood quite long enough. Just devote to-day to this little matter. Come in before two,—not later than three, at any rate. Perhaps your employers might advance it,—that is, rath-

er than have their clerk compromised. Suppose I lay the matter before them?"

Fletcher's rage broke out afresh. He gnashed his teeth and foamed at the mouth. If he had had a weapon, it might have fared hard with his oppressor. But his anger was inarticulate,—too mighty, too tumultuous, for words. He left the office, his eyes glowing like a cat's, and his fringy moustache trembling over his white teeth.

Mr. Sandford was somewhat exhilarated, and rubbed his smooth hands with energy. "I think he'll come back," thought he. "Failure is inevitable. Let it come! We must bear it as we can. And for a ruined man I don't know of any consolation like a little ready money. Now to play my last cards. These shares which I own in the Vortex are worth more to-day than they are likely to be to-morrow. It would be a shame not to dispose of them while they will bring something. Fayerweather and the others who have agreed to buy at ninety per cent. are at the Board. I'll get a new hand to take them in. They won't suspect, for they think Stearine's note has been extended."

He called a junior clerk and dispatched the shares to a broker to be sold for cash on account of whom it might concern. He then locked himself in the back office to be free from troublesome visitors, keeping a cautious lookout for Fletcher, whom he expected, and for the clerk who was to bring the money. His chief anxiety was lest Mr. Fayerweather should come before the sale was effected; and he was in a fever until the money was brought to him. Through the window he saw his friends Monroe, Bullion, and others, who called for him and were denied by his order; he chose to remain unseen.

Fletcher did not return. In going out he met Bullion, and, telling him that he had to pay Sandford a thousand dollars, asked for a part of the money due him.

"Don't be a fool," replied that sturdy financier. "Sandford will fail to-day, probably. That's the reason for his hurry to get the money. Let him sweat.

Keep your funds. You can pay his assignee any time these six months to come."

It was near two o'clock. Mr. Sandford had in his pocket the proceeds of the Vortex shares, the loan from Tonsor, and his balance from bank,—a comfortable sum altogether; and he thought it not prudent to risk the whole by waiting for Fletcher, who, after all, might not come. So, seeing the coast clear, he put on his surtout and walked out of the front door with an unconcerned air.

The notary came with the inevitable protest. Mr. Fayerweather was the astounded individual who received it. A sudden light broke upon him. He was swindled. He took out the Vortex shares which he had just bought by agreement, and, turning to the transfer-book, found

that they were Sandford's. The Secretary had weathered the President with a vengeance.

The lawyer to whom the protested note came happened to hold other claims against Mr. Fayerweather and the Vortex, and, naturally judging that the Company might be involved in the difficulties of its officers, he commenced suit without a moment's delay. Ill news flies fast. In an hour after the first writs were served, suit was brought by Tonsor and other creditors, and the office was shut. The safe was found to hold nothing more valuable than duplicates of policies, the Company's bank-account was overdrawn, its stocks and bonds were sold or pledged, and its available assets consisted of the office-furniture, a few reams of paper, and half a dozen sticks of sealing-wax.

[To be continued.]

## "THE NEW LIFE" OF DANTE.

[Continued.]

### II.

WERE the author of the "*Vita Nuova*" unknown, its story of youth and love would still possess a charm, as standing in the dawn of modern literature,—the first book in which modern sentiment finds free expression. It would be of interest, as contrasted with the later growth of the sentimental element in literature, which speedily exhibits the influence of factitious feeling, of self-conscious effort, and of ambitious display. The sentiment of the "*Vita Nuova*" is separated by the wide gulf that lies between simplicity and affectation from the sentimentality of Petrarch's sonnets. But connected as it is with Dante's life,—the first of that series of works in which truth, intensity, and tenderness of feeling are displayed as in the writings of no other man,—its interest no longer arises merely from itself

and from its place in literature, but becomes indissolubly united with that which belongs by every claim to the "*Divina Commedia*" and to the life of Dante.

When the "*Vita Nuova*" was completed, Dante was somewhat less than twenty-eight years old. Beatrice had died between two and three years before, in 1290; and he seems to have pleased himself after her loss by recalling to his memory the sweet incidents of her life, and of her influence upon himself. He begins with the words:—

"In that part of the book of my memory before which little can be read is found a rubric which says: *Incipit Vita Nova* ['The New Life begins']. Under which rubric I find the words written which it is my intention to copy into this little book,—if not all of them, at least their meaning."

This introduction, short as it is, exhib-