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By P. M. HALE.

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HER FORTUNE.

[Carlotta Perry.]

Will he come this year—will he come the next?
Will he come to-day? She lightly blew
With sweet red lips the thistle-down,
Whispering, Tell me—oh, tell me true!

Does he love me well—does he love me well?
No doubt in her heart the maiden knew,
But in whispers soft she said again,
Thistle-down, thistle-down, tell me true!

For every maid in the wide world knows
That sweet, pure prophecy. Dolly drew
Her little mouth into rosebud shape,
Saying, Oh, thistle-down, tell me true!

Yes, he loves you well. Oh, he loves you well!
When will he come? He will come to-day!
This is the answer the thistle-down
Gives to her heart, as it flies away.

And Dolly that night, at the garden-gate,
And Harry, the farmer, brave and brown,
Look into each other's eyes and say,
"A prophet true is the thistle-down."

THE CONSPIRACY.

[Warren's Diary of a Detective.]

The repudiated or unacknowledged claims upon the British Government, some of them for fabulous sums, amount to a respectable national debt, and scores of individuals fall into poverty and untimely graves, in vain pursuit of a glittering bubble, ever dancing before their eyes, and ever just—only just—beyond their reach. The advent of a new First Lord of the Treasury is the signal of a general revival from uneasy slumber of demands, which, shamefully ignored or neglected by his predecessor in office will, write the unteachable solicitors, "be sure to meet with due appreciation from the distinguished statesman, to whom the favor of a gracious sovereign and the suffrages of an enlightened people have intrusted the honor and interests of the great British nation—which honor and interests can never be more effectually promoted than by doing justice to the meanest alike with the mightiest of that sovereign's subjects." It is surprising, too, or at least it would be surprising to those who do not from experience know how slight a thread of colored cobweb will retain persons otherwise sane in the consuming idleness, gradually changing to equally idle despair, of the fool's paradise of visionary hope,—to observe upon how slight and fanciful a foundation they continue to erect their air-drawn castles. I once knew a mathematician, of all men in the world, whom the following merely formal note uplifted to the seventh heaven from the slough of despond into which he was fast sinking, with some hope on his friends' part that he would at last touch the bottom, and rebound therefrom by his own latent energy into the clear and healthful atmosphere of genuine working-day life:

"I am directed by Lord Melbourne to acknowledge the receipt of your memorial and accompanying vouchers, and to state that the matter shall receive his earliest attention."

In less than six months afterwards the mathematician was a confirmed lunatic! Since I left the police force, I have been more familiar with these hallucinations, and it happened that once whilst therein, I was brought, in the exercise of my vocation, in contact with one of the most importunate, inexorcisable of the "ghosts" by which the halls and passages of the Treasury and other public offices are constantly haunted; an intimacy which, it will be seen, led to curious revelations and results.

This person, one Alexander Tyrrell, was about thirty years of age, and had inherited, two or three years before I made official acquaintance with him, about eight hundred pounds in cash, and a claim upon the English Treasury for the same number of thousands, from his father, which claim, as far as I could or cared to understand the bill of particulars—set forth in the bundle of documents exteriorly known, at all events, to every clerk and messenger at the Treasury, and by them facetiously denominated "The Kelp Papers,"—was for losses sustained by Tyrrell, senior, a manufacturer of kelp from sea-weed, on the coast of Kent, who, at the suggestion or command of Sir John Moore, during the alarm previous to Trafalgar of French invasion, gave up his premises, buildings, &c., for the use and occupation of the troops assembled there; incurring thereby the destruction of an immense quantity of partially prepared kelp, and the ruin of his business. Tyrrell's father died in 1830, just as he was more sanguine of success than he had at any time been during the previous five-and-twenty years, in consequence of Earl Grey's succession to office, and the bequest of a thousand pounds, by a distant relative, enabling him to press the siege at the Treasury with greater vigor than ever. Death, albeit, always unwelcome, and never more so than when the hand grasps, or its owner fancies it is about to grasp, the prize of all life's exertion, suddenly interposed at the critical moment, his coming having probably been hastened by the agitation into which the change of ministry and the unanticipated legacy threw the old man's care-cankered mind and body; and his only son, Alexander, found himself, after his father's debts and funeral charges had been paid, in possession of eight hundred pounds in money, and a bill for eight thousand, drawn upon but not accepted by the British government. Now Alexander Tyrrell was a young man of compressed but naturally elastic genius, who, thus suddenly liberated from parental control and the much sterner gripe of poverty, forthwith expanded into a swell of first-rate brilliancy; and carried on the war with such spirit, that at the end of less than two years, he found, upon a rough calculation, hurriedly gone into, after awakening one morning in the custody of a sheriff's officer, that he was worth about twenty pounds in cash, after relieving himself of the said officer, wherewith to face about two thousand pounds of debt! Thus beset Alexander Tyrrell bethought himself of his important claim upon the national exchequer; and the treasury clerks, who had congratulated themselves upon the death of "Old Kelp," were surprised and disgusted by the apparition of Kelp the younger, who moreover quickly manifested a combative persistence in his purpose, which the rudest rebuff, the most supercilious insolence, utterly failed to repress or mitigate. More than that, the obstinate claimant of eight thousand pounds, which he assured them "was a vital necessity of his cruel and unexampled position," began at last to assume, concurrently with the cultivation of his moustaches, an air of occult menace, darkly interpreted by warning hints at the risks incurred by official personages who systematically perverted or dammed up the fountain of justice. Matter for merriment this to any one moderately skilled in physiognomy that had once seen his good looking, good humored, knavish face, wherein braggart was written plainly enough, but of courage, moral or physical, not the faintest sign.

Whether, however, from fear or fussiness, one of the officials, choosing to treat the affair seriously, had Alexander Tyrrell taken before a Magistrate, by whom he was bound over to keep the peace towards all the king's lieges, and notably the British government and its employès, an undertaking which the terrified young man gave with a firm resolution, I am quite sure, not to break it. He was not, however, forbidden to strut solemnly past the office doors, as the clerks were arriving or leaving, and glare at them with all the Byronic-satanism he could force into his weak light-hazel eyes—a pastime which, in conjunction with a continuous succession of anonymous letters, written in a woman's hand, but it was not doubted dictated by him, and addressed to the lords and secretary of the treasury, caused an intimation to be given to the authorities of Scotland Yard, that it would be well to keep a sharp eye upon Alexander Tyrrell's movements, and the more heedfully, that it was reported he had connected himself with the Chartist politicians who were agitating the country. I was selected for this service, and of course entered upon it at once, though with no great alacrity, till my zeal was quickened by a glimpse of circumstances, pointing to more serious issues than swaggering Alexander Tyrrell's imaginary murderous or treasonable designs. True, he occasionally attended the meetings in John Street, but more from complaisance towards his sworn friend David Closs, managing clerk ic a city attorney's office, and enthusiastic champion of the five points, than from any pleasure or interest he himself took in Chartist oratory, wildly as he cheered every denunciation of government villainy and oppression. The sad truth was, that the deposition of the ministry and transference of the treasury to the friendly gentlemen that dispensed their liberal eloquence from the John Street platform, would, taking the most sanguine calculation, be brought about too late for him; for so pressing were his needs, that delay was destruction—ruin! His experience in furnished lodgings had been, I found, during the last twelve months, large and various, and in so swiftly a descending scale that his present domicile was a back attic in Great Windmill Street, which moreover his landlady had given him peremptory notice to quit, lest peradventure her sheets and blankets should go the three-golden balls' way of her lodger's last shirt. Thus desperately circumstanced, Alexander Tyrrell may be forgiven, sworn though he had eternal enmity to the vile British government, for presenting himself at the Albany Barracks, and intimating his willingness to enlist in the Guards. Being very young-looking for his age, and standing nearly six feet in his stockings, he was provisionally accepted, received earnest of the king's bounty, and my surveillance of the gentleman's movements, was, I imagined, at an end. I was mistaken: it was about to seriously begin. A still young, and no question very handsome woman, before her fresh, country complexion—she was from Christchurch, Hampshire—and bright, girlish eyes had been grimed, quenched by constant daily and nightly toil in a wholesale millinery manufactory, and other beauty-marring agencies, presented herself at the barracks in a state of semi distraction and informed the commanding officer that Tyrrell was in his thirty second year, and bound by a solemn engagement, sealed by a fatal pledge, to marry her directly he received the first instalment of the money due to him from the government. She gave the name of Lydia Lockwood; and it being known that I took especial interest in the new recruit, I was commissioned to ascertain the truth or falsehood of her story. It was true enough, poor girl! She loved the fellow with the devoted apprehensiveness with which a solitary woman cast into the ingulfing whirlpool of London labor life attaches herself to a man who from motives of real or simulated affection promises to lift her up from those gloomy depths to the peace and sunshine of a cheerful home. Her faith, too, in his honesty of purpose towards herself, was but momently shaken by his attempt at enlistment, and she unhesitatingly sold her scanty furniture to a broker in order to raise the smart-money required, she was told, to insure Tyrrell's discharge. This she offered him; but, much to my surprise, when a few days afterwards I chanced to hear of the circumstance—and I should suppose to her's also—he declined receiving it, the commanding officer having, he informed her, determined, in consequence of her representations, to cancel his provisional engagement without charge. Money, however, it was soon apparent he must have somewhere obtained, and to a large amount, inasmuch, that he and his now inseparable crony David Closs, who had moreover suddenly lost his situation, forthwith entered upon a course of riotous living; that Tyrrell himself dressed again as in his buckish days, and presented Lydia Lockwood with the means of making quite a fashionable appearance! A riddle to read this, especially as Closs was indebted to his employer when discharged—had been therefore discharged, and only saved from appearing at a police office by compassion for his wife and family. The attorney, Mr. B——, apprized of the dashing style of life assumed by his late clerk, bethought him that he might not have discovered the whole extent of that person's defalcations, and a more rigorous investigation was gone into, without, however, producing any enlightening result, and the mystery but for an accident might have remained unsolved. The two friends, who had been indulging with their usual freedom at the Wrekin tavern, got into a brawl with some of their boon associates, when going home, which ended in a fight, and a night's lodging at a police station. There, as the custom is, they were searched, and a note was found in Tyrrell's pocket, a copy of which I was in possession of early the next morning. It was from Closs, and had been received early the previous day. I transcribe it verbatim:—

"Dear Tyl:—If there is much more of Lydia Lockwood spooneyness, we shall both of us have a capital chance of finding ourselves double-ironed in Newgate. That's a fact. That vulture Levy was waiting for me when I got home last night, and an infernal jobation he gave me. He swears we obtained his three hundred pounds by false pretences, and that if the bill is not paid on the day it falls due, and it wants but about three weeks till then, he will give us both into custody forthwith. A pleasant prospect, eh? What with the drink I was full of, and the old brutal villain's threats and abuse, my head so aches and throbs that I can scarcely lift it from the pillow to scribble this note. I shall, however, be at the Wrekin to-night, when I hope to hear that you have made up your mind to go in and win. By ——, it's enough to make one's hair stand on end to find that dread of a wench's tears and tongue stands between a sensible man and twenty thousand pounds! If that young feather-headed fool did not know me personally, I myself would run the risk of transportation to clutch such a prize, whilst you, lucky dog that you are in not being tied up—not at least by a legal halter—run no risk whatever. There must, mind you, be no more shilly-shallying: Newgate or twenty thousand pounds is about the size of it, and a fellow must have a queer sort of nut on his shoulders that in such a case hesitates for choice. We'll have a roaring jollification to-night, and to-morrow or next day you must be off, per mail, to Bristol. Yours faithfully,

D. C."

Closs and Tyrrell were discharged upon payment of a fine; and neither appeared to suspect that the strictly "private and confidential" note had been looked into; or perhaps Tyrrell had not told his crafty friend that he had it about him. However that might have been, I was instructed to accompany Tyrrell to Bristol, and take a hand at the game by which the confederates proposed to transfer twenty thousand pounds from some other person's possession to their own. The "vulture Levy's" case and grievance were easily fathomed. Closs, whom Levy knew as B——'s managing clerk, had introduced Tyrrell to the usurer as a person who was entitled to, and would shortly receive, a large amount of money from the treasury, but who, meantime, was in pressing want of three hundred pounds, which representation had induced Levy to advance the required sum upon Tyrrell's note for four hundred pounds. With, however, that rogue-rob-rogue affair, I had not to concern myself; neither, to confess the truth, did I set about that which was confided to me in very dexterous fashion. Tyrrell, whose handsome, well-stocked portmanteau bore a plate upon which was engraved "Alexander Champneys Tyrrell, Esq., Hill Street, Berkeley Square," secured an inside place to Bristol by the night coach instead of the mail, and I, finding that the said passenger-coach was then full inside and out, and that the faster mail would reach Bristol full an hour before the coach, determined, after first seeing Tyrrell off, to travel by mail. I did so, and was in punctual though covert attendance when the night-coach reached that city; but, to my chagrin and dismay, without Alexander Champneys Tyrrell, Esquire, who, for some reason, unguessed of by me, had alighted at Swindon, where, one of the passengers, from some remarks and inquiries he had made, thought he intended remaining some time. Very strange that Tyrrell, intending to go no further than Swindon, should pay his fare, as he had done, to Bristol; and was his halting there a trick or an after-thought? Did he, perchance, know and recognize me whilst watching him from the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, and in consequence, thus double, as it were, to throw me off the scent? I could hardly believe that could be the case, so careful had I been to keep well in shadow during the whole time that I had been upon his track; but whether so or not, it was essential to lose no time in again striking the trail; and by eleven o'clock in the forenoon of the same day, I was in Swindon, then a quiet country village, where I learned from the landlord of the Swan Inn, that a gentleman answering to the description I gave had breakfasted there, and directly afterwards hired a post-chaise, which had taken him about eight miles on the Warminster Road, to the Black Horse, a road-side public house, where he had alighted and discharged the chaise. In something less than three hours I reached the Black Horse, on foot, not to attract notice or inquiry, and found myself again too late and completely at fault. A gentleman from London had been there, hired a lad to show him where the Bennetts lived, been absent something over two hours, and, soon after returning to the Black Horse, had hailed a return Bath post-chaise that happened to pass, and set off therein for that city. I further ascertained that John Bennett was a farmer and widower in middling circumstances, who had two grown-up daughters living with him, one a comely young woman that folk said would shortly become the wife of William Rowcliffe, a native of that part of Wiltshire, but who, for some time past, had been living with his mother at Bristol. It was on my tongue to ask if there was any talk of a fortune having been left to the comely young woman or her sister; but I restrained myself, and, being too much knocked up to think of journeying further that day, I determined upon inventing some excuse for calling personally upon John Bennett before following Tyrrell to Bath. I accordingly waited early the next morning upon Mr. Bennett—a sour, hard-grained, wiry fellow, and about as great a niggard of his words as he was by reputation of his money. "No; I have no old wheat to sell, nor barley either. The gentleman that called yesterday was not a buyer, and therefore cannot have forestalled you. Yes, that young woman is my daughter. As to handsome, why, handsome is as handsome does; and as that seems all you have to say, I have something else to do than stand gossiping here;" and so saying, the curmudgeon slammed the door—which he held in his hand whilst we were speaking—in my face.

A practised reader of the meanings of men does not, fortunately, depend altogether upon speech for their interpretation; and the brief perusal I had obtained of the faces of Mr. Bennett and Clara Bennett was not without its value. Both father and daughter—I saw only the elder of the two sisters—were much and pleasurably, yet anxiously, excited. This the man's dilated, glittering glance, and his nervous clutch of the door handle, resembling that of one suffering from the reaction of a previous night's debauch—the varying complexion of the young woman as she gazed at me with intense suspicious scrutiny—now bright and glowing, now shadowy and pale as stone, but for the hectic spots that lent a fire they needed not to her piercing black eyes, plainly testified; whilst that the previous day's visitor was in some way connectd therewith required no further proof than Alexander Champneys Tyrrell's fashionable card, held in her fidgeting, restless fingers. Neither could I doubt that Tyrrell suspected or feared that a police-agent was at his heels—a fear suggested by the possibility which might have occurred to him that David Closs's confidential note had passed under "detective" scrutiny, and that my visit, the visit of any questioning stranger, had been in consequence adroitly provided against; though in what light his ingenuity had placed the probability or possibility of such a visit, or the purposes and character of the visitor, I, of course, could form no conjecture.

Further inquiry having elicited nothing in respect of the Bennetts towards enlightening me as to Tyrrell's object in turning out of his way, as it seemed he had done, to have some half hour's conference with them, I hired a gig, and followed the quarry to Bath. There no tidings of the gentleman could be obtained, and I went on to Bristol, where, for a time, the same ill-fortune attended me. Tyrrell could neither be seen nor heard of; no one that I questioned knew either a Mrs. Rowcliffe or her son, and I was mentally debating the expediency of inserting an advertisement in the local papers to the effect that a person of that name, formerly resident in the neighborhood of Swindon, Wiltshire, might, by sending her address to Richard Sampson, Esq., 16 Wine Street, hear of something to her advantage. This, however, was so every-day, transparent a ruse that, supposing the Rowcliffes to be connected with the enterprise in which Tyrrell was engaged—which, after all, was a wild surmise of mine, for which I could have given no intelligible reason—could hardly fail of being seen through and defeated by a man whom the consciousness of a guilty purpose would render especially keen-sighted in the detection of such very common man-traps; and I was still undecided, when fortune or accident remedied the mischance, that had so long, reckoning by my impatience, separated Tyrrell and myself from each other. I met him one afternoon about three o'clock in Redcliffe Street, and so sudden and unexpected was the *rencontre* that I could not help starting and changing color as my eyes met his—a want of presence of mind which, however, convinced me of what I had been in some doubt of, namely, that I was personally unknown to the fashionably-attired gentleman whose stare and simper—as in condescendent reply to my respectful question he assured me I was mistaken in supposing him to be Captain Augustus Fancourt, of the —— regiment, then quartered in Bristol—were delightfully pleasant and refreshing. He was accompanied by a young, vulgar coxcomb, very sprucely attired, and displaying in his strutting gait and pretentious manner, a consequence as new and ill-fitting as his fine, ready-made clothes. They were on their way to the coach office, which they reached just in time to secure two outside places by the morrow's day coach to London. Those were the only vacant seats; but determined not again to lose sight of my slippery customer, I managed to make a private arrangement with the coachman, who, for a consideration, agreed to take me up at some distance on the road, and run the chance of an information against the proprietors of the "Eclipse" for carrying more than the stipulated ten outsiders, a venture which, fortunately for the tentative mission in which I was engaged, he, on that particular day indulged in somewhat to excess. At the place where I was directed to await the coach I found a youngish, decently dressed workingman, John Fentum by name, bound for London by the same conveyance; and, under favor of a similar bargain to mine, though entered into by him from an economical motive. The "Eclipse" soon made its appearance, and its driver at length yielding to our importunity, agreed to give us a lift as far as Bath. Room was made for me in front, immediately behind the coachman, and by the side of Tyrrell and his youthful friend—a remarkably wordy young blade, I should say, at all times, but more abundantly so than usual it appeared on that occasion, and after the passing away of a flush of angry vexation, excited, or I deceived myself, by the unexpected and unwelcome sight of Fentum, who had quickly climbed up to the dickey: his natural eloquence being stimulated by an unusual flow of spirits, the exhilarating fineness of the day, and the flattering smiles of a pretty and prodigiously genteel young woman on the box-seat

After the fashion of a malapert youth, he was equally conversant with all topics; talked of the Carlist War of Succession, then raging in the Peninsula, with Tyrrell—an indirect recognition of that gentleman's military moustache; to me, but loftily, with patronizing condescendence, of the new reformed House of Commons, which he pronounced to be a despicable failure; and to the damsel on the box-seat of James's or Bulwer's last novel; the whole profusely interspersed with hints, quite as interesting to me as they could be to the said damsel, charmingly conscious as she did her best to look, that the young gentleman, whom a whim and the genial weather had, for once, induced to travel on the outside of a stage-coach, had lately come into possession of a large fortune. Not unamusing all that, and might be instructive, the more probably that Tyrrell anxiously strove to confine his *protégé's* eloquence to national themes; at last with success, and the inflated young man, seizing the favorable opportunity afforded by the coach passing over a track of greensward, burst out with a flaming apostrophe to "Glory and Greece! The Sword, the Banner, and the Field!" *apropos* of what I do not remember; but if not quite intelligible, it was very sonorous, and the admiring silence which followed its delivery remained unbroken, till a voice from the dicky called out "Billy, I say, Billy!" each "Billy" emphasized by a poke in the small of the elocutionist's back with the point of John Fentum's umbrella; which person, stretching himself over the roof of the coach, claimed acquaintance, in that very disgusting fashion, with the suddenly extinguished orator, whose face, flaming with shame and rage, was, however, kept determinedly in the direction of the spires of Bath, spite of his remorseless tormentor's persistent iteration of "Billy," presently amplified into "I say, Billy, your mother served me a pretty trick this morning: fobbed me off with two stale buns at the price of new ones: a shameful imposition, I call it!" uttered in so ludicrous a a tone that every soul on the coach—the victim, of course, excepted—burst at once into explosions of laughter, which were only repressed by the tact of the coachman, who, any thing but desirous under the circumstances, of irritating a legitimate passenger, or permitting others to do so, caused his leaders to suddenly prance and curvet after a fashion that instantly checked the general mirth; and when the alarum had subsided, it was time for me and Fentum, in accordance with our understanding with the coachman—Bath being less than half a mile distant—to descend from the roof of the "Eclipse," and not attempt to resume our places till at about the same distance on the other side of that city.

"Who is that chattering puppy, whose comb you cut so cleverly?" I asked Fentum, as we trudged on after the coach.

"Who is he? Why, William Rowcliffe, whose mother keeps a bread-and-bun-shop in Broadmead, and a friendly chap, too, till the fortune they say he's come to sent his brains a-ballooning. He cocked up his nose, and pretended not to know Jack Fentnm, when I met him yesterday with his grand friend; but I have paid him quite twenty shillings in the pound upon that score. As to his mother, she's a very decent, good sort of woman: and it's all chaff, mind you, about the stale buns."

"I suppose so. By-the-way, is that swell in moustaches the friend you speak of?"

"Yes: he's a government man, and brought down the news of William Rowcliffe's fortune."

"A government man, is he? What kind of a government man?"

"Ah, there you nonplush me. I only know that Mrs. Rowcliffe told me herself that she had seen letters with 'On His Majesty's Service,' printed on the outside, directed to him, and signed by prime ministers. He's a first-rate nob, depend upon it, and I wish now that I had not carry-combed young Rowcliffe's tender hide quite so roughly."

"It might have been as well, perhaps, not to have done so. Are you sure of work when you reach London?"

"Very far from sure, worse luck."

"Where shall you hang out till you do? Perhaps I could recommend you to cheaper lodgings."

"It ain't likely, mister, that you could, seeing that I shall take up with my married sister, at No. 9 Rupert Street, Haymarket. That is the West End, is it not?"

"Well, perhaps so, considering it is neither the east, south, or north end. Is Mrs. Rowcliffe, the widow, a marrying woman, think you?"

"A marrying woman! Oh, I say, mister, you are a squinting round that corner, are you? But it's no go, my friend; Mrs. Rowcliffe's a widow bewitched, though she don't advertise herself in that capacity, and folk generally don't care to talk about it."

"A widow bewitched!"

"Yes; meaning thereby that her husband is gone abroad upon government account, for having once upon a time forgot to sign his right name. But so much talk, do you know, Mister Londoner, makes my throat feel uncommon dry."

"No doubt it must do so; and here, luckily, is the 'Ring of Bells,' where we can moisten it."

I left Fentum in the enjoyment of that agreeable pastime, and walked quickly to the inn, where the "Eclipse" changed horses, and the passengers were permitted to snatch a hasty breakfast, which, on that morning, was partaken of by John Bennett and his daughter Clara, both in gala dress, and the young woman—girl, rather—who seemed to be in fragile health, all smiles and blushes. They were of course there by appointment, and I noticed that Alexander Champneys Tyrrell was superabundantly gracious towards both father and daughter; whilst the ostensible lover, Rowcliffe, looked glum and uneasy, as wishing to be gone rather than prolong or dally with the flying moments. The criterion by which I judged was, however, a very imperfect one, being merely the reflection of their faces and gestures in the large chimney-glass of the breakfast-room, obliquely visible from the slightly opened folding-door through which, being, of course, anxious that neither Bennett nor his daughter should glimpse their late visitor, I furtively peeped at the party whose conversation, amidst the clatter of knives and forks, was unintelligible, though not so entirely so but that I gladly comprehended Bennett and his daughter had no intention of accompanying their friends to town. I remained but a few minutes in observation; and, hastening off, was overtaken in due time by the coach, and at about seven o'clock the same evening I saw Alexander Champneys Tyrrell, Esq., and William Rowcliffe, Esq., safely housed at the Hummums Hotel, Covent Garden, where, less than two hours afterwards, they were joined by David Closs and Lydia Lockwood, both dashingly dressed, and, it seemed, in gleeful good humor. The plot was thickening, and rapidly too.

True, but what *was* the plot; what catastrophe did it foreshadow, and which were the villains, which the victims of the play? Puzzling queries these, and not even partially answered by the occurrences of the next fortnight: continuous parties of pleasure; visits to the theatres, at which William Rowcliffe was always Lydia Lockwood's beau; and researches on our part at Doctors' Commons, from which it resulted that no legacy, large or small, had fallen to any one of the name of Rowcliffe or Bennett. It almost seemed that we were laboring under some inexplicable delusion, chasing shadows, not tangible realities; and I was in the very act of writing to the commissioner, begging him to appoint some other officer to pursue the wearying, bootless investigation, when a lady, desirous of speaking with me, was announced.

"No lady, Mr. Waters," exclaimed the person that followed close behind the servant girl; "no lady, but a wretched, wronged, outraged woman! Do you not recognize me?" she added, tossing passionately aside, and tearing by her violence the costly veil which covered her face. "I know you very well."

"Lydia Lockwood!"

"Yes, Lydia Lockwood, one of the conspirators whom you, stanch blood-hound of the law, have been, I more than suspect, for some time closely tracking. Well, sir, I am here to inform you that there are two conspiracies afloat, in one of which I am a cheater—in the other the cheated!"

"If this, Miss Lockwood, be a confession, let me warn you that all you say may be—"

"Used against me hereafter," broke in the infuriate woman, whose eyes glared with a fiery rage that cast a light as of insanity over her white, haggard countenance, though her speech was constrainedly calm and measured—unnaturally so. "Be it so; there is no terror for such a wretch as I in any 'hereafter' over which magistrates have power. Yet will I not be tamely, unresistingly sacrificed: other and guiltier lips than mine shall taste the bitter potion of which it was hoped, is hoped, I alone shall be compelled to drink. But enough of vain words. You have really discovered nothing as yet, with all your practiced cunning."

"Nothing of very great importance."

"Nothing of the slightest importance; nor without me could you do so till it were too late to profit by that knowledge. The avenging lightning will be hurled by my hand—my hand alone! Now hearken, sir, and heedfully. Tyrrell imparted to me that it had come to his friend Closs's knowledge, in the course of business, that one Rowcliffe was entitled to a large sum of money that had lain unclaimed for a long time in the Funds or Consols, and which he could only obtain by Closs's aid. That being so, it was but fair, they argued, that Tyrrell and Closs should have a share in the prize, and, that they might be certain of doing so, it was arranged that Tyrrell should go to Bristol, acquaint Rowcliffe in general terms with his claim, bring him to London, profess great friendship for him, and, with my help entangle, fascinate him. Oh, I could tear my heart out to know that, in giving credence to such trash, I showed myself to be the vain fool they took me for: I was even to half-promise myself in marriage to the susceptible inexperienced simpleton—and, with them, work upon him till he consented to share the riches that had, as it were, dropped to him from the clouds. That accomplished, the promise which has lured me to ruin, destruction, crime, was to be immediately fulfilled, and—but" suddenly broke off the unhappy young woman, and, speaking with accelerated rapidity, "but I need not waste sentiment upon Mr. Waters. Well, all this was a tissue—warp and woof—of unmitigated lies. William Rowcliffe was entitled to no money; but a girl was, one Clara Bennett, who it was known, loved Rowcliffe—puppy and simpleton that he is—but that is nothing new; and the plan of the confederates was—more correctly Closs's plan, for he alone had the brains to conceive it—was this: Tyrrell was to see the Bennetts at Swindon—ah! you know all about that, I dare say—under pretence of procuring William Rowcliffe's address, which was already so well known to them that Closs knew both him and his mother personally; he had been, I think, engaged in defending the elder Rowcliffe, who was convicted of some crime. Well, Tyrrell, having obtained the address, and accidentally mentioned Rowcliffe's pretended accession of wealth, was to affect, whilst passing himself off as a very great man, sudden but involuntary admiration of the girl; with a view, of course, to an ulterior well-meditated purpose. Everything fell out as desired and anticipated. Rowcliffe's empty head was turned with his imaginary high fortune; Clara Bennett was no longer good enough for him, and the insolent booby told her so to her face, as he himself boasted to me last Thursday afternoon, a few hours after her arrival, I am sure at Tyrrell's suggestion, in London, accompanied by her father. A terrible scene ensued; the young woman fainted, and, upon recovering, found that, though the recreant swain was gone, Alexander Champneys Tyrrell remained, who had no longer any hesitation in declaring his devotion for her; and the upshot was, that the scorned and slighted girl, urged by her father, dreading to encounter the sneers that would await her should she return home unmarried, fell into the trap set for her; and on the day after to-morrow Clara Bennett will be Mrs. Tyrrell! Only think, will have the honor of being Alexander Champneys Tyrrell's lady-wife! ho, ho! Well, one can but laugh to think how strange a world this is we live in, and what fearful slips sometimes occur 'twixt cups and lips. 'Pon my word that is rhyme, if you take it in time—is it not, clever Mr. Waters?"

The longer I listened to Lydie Lockwood the stronger grew my conviction that she was positively insane; or that—but no, that was not the excitement of drink; not originally or chiefly, at all events.

"Your disclosures, Miss Lockwood," I hesitatingly began, "would—"

"To the devil with your *Miss* Lockwood!" she fiercely interrupted. "To the devil, did I say? ah! true words are often spoken in jest; false ones by solemn oaths! You were going to say, no doubt," she added, with renewed vivacity, "that I could foil those wretches without your help. True; but it glances across me that my purpose might not hold, and that it were well to place the matter beyond my own power. I shall not tell you, either, how I discovered all this. Enough that I have discovered it, and by—. Well, good-bye; at ten in the morning after to-morrow, remember, if I should forget it—which, however, is not very likely—that the parson will ask if there is any just cause or impediment why Alexander Tyrrell and Clara Bennett should not be joined in holy wedlock. Just cause! O thou all-seeing Christ!

She was gone.

A few sentences will finish this narrative. Clara Bennett and her father, apprised by me of the true state of affairs, left London for Swindon the next evening; and in the following day's evening papers there appeared this paragraph:—"DETERMINED SUICIDE.—Early this morning a young woman was seen to throw herself off Westminster Bridge into the river: she was drowned. Her name is Lydia Lockwood!"

A FRENCH SENSATION.

Ingenuity of Gallic Criminals.

[Paris Cable Letter.]

A sensational trial, bristling with truly Borgian enormities, began last week in the Assize Court of the Seine. An exotic individual named Mielle, alias *L'Homme femme*, alias *La Grosse Nana*, was tried for the murder of a well-to-do poultry merchant named Lebon.

The evidence shows that Mielle and Lebon entered the former's apartments at No. 23 Rue de Lyon. Shortly afterward the concierge heard the voice of a man crying, "Help, help!" "*A l'assassin!*" "*Au secours!*" A body was heard falling with a heavy thud; then came a sort of death rattle.

The concierge, terrified, exclaimed, "Mielle is murdering somebody!" and ran to Mielle's rooms. Mielle replied, "It is nothing." The concierge said, "If it is nothing, then open the door." This Mielle refused to do. The concierge ran out and got a policeman. Mielle then opened the door of his apartment, and with a pleasant smile, said:—"My dear friend, I have just had a little family quarrel. We are all liable to such quarrels, and mine is now happily ended."

The policeman was satisfied and retired.

Soon afterward Mme. Mielle entered the room and seeing her husband covered with blood and his shirt torn to shreds, asked, "You devil, what have you been doing now?" Mielle said, "A friend of mine came to see me and got drunk and tried to jump out of the window. To prevent a catastrophe I had to fight him. Hence the debris."

Mielle then locked his wife in her bedroom and was heard working with carpenter's tools for several hours. Mielle then disappeared. A long black trunk was also removed from his rooms at the same time.

This happened last April. On May 9 a sailor fished out of the Seine, near the statue of Henri Quatre, the upper part of a man's body, the vertebral column bearing marks of having been severed by a carpenter's saw. Next day another sailor discovered near the same place a man's head. Ten days after, a pair of thighs, then a pair of feet and a pair of arms were found floating in the Seine, all these sections bearing the marks of having been separated by means of a saw. These fragments of the corpse, when put together, enabled the police to identify them as the remains of Lebon, the poultry merchant.

It now appears that Mielle, while his wife was locked up in her bedroom, had sawn the body of his victim into about twenty sections and packed them into a long black trunk, which he threw into the Seine on April 29.

Mielle was discovered by gendarmes at Barsur-Aube. He plunged into the river and swam across to the other bank. The gendarmes did the same, but Mielle was a good swimmer and distanced his pursuers. After an exciting two mile chase over fences and ditches he was finally captured. Lebon's watch, jewelry and money were found in Mielle's pocket.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

WHAT IT DID IN SIXTY DAYS.

Public Acts.

CHAPTER 1. An act for the relief of the sureties of William R. Young, late sheriff of Buncombe county.

J. R. Jones, surety, authorized to collect in behalf of the sureties on Young's bond, arrears of taxes for 1881, '82 and '83. Usual provisions in case of affidavit of payment. If Jones dies or becomes incapable, sureties may select another.

2. An act to stop a special election in school district number eleven in Cabarrus county.

As the citizens of the district desire an act to establish a graded school, an election for special tax to supplement school-fund, ordered to be stopped.

3. An act to repeal section 3424 of The Code, relative to fishing in the waters of White Oak and New rivers.

Section making it unlawful to use in White Oak and New rivers nets with meshes less than one and a half inches, repealed.

4. Act for the relief of W. J. Maddrey, late tax-collector of Northampton county.

Authorized to collect arrears of taxes for 1879 and 1880. Usual restrictions. Authority to cease December 31, 1885.

5. An act to give the county of Madison an additional week of court.

Court to begin first Monday of March and August and to continue three weeks. Provision for jurors and witnesses to appear and an additional jury for third week.

6. An act to amend section 2727 of The Code.

In special elections for Congress, returns to be canvassed as soon as Secretary of State notifies members of the Board of State Canvassers that all are received; not later than ten days.

7. An act to establish the Edenton Graded School.

Incorporation of schools—for whites. Organization and details. Apportionment of school money. School to be kept forty weeks, if possible. Patrons to elect trustees to succeed those named in the act.

8. An act authorizing the recording of certain wills in the county of Haywood.

Certain wills on file in Haywood Superior Court Clerk's office, but record lost. Clerk required to record such wills, with evidence of former probate, and wills deemed duly probated.

9. An act to allow James R. Blacknall, late sheriff of Durham county, to collect arrears of taxes.

Authorized to collect arrears for 1881, '82 and '83. Usual restrictions as to persons making affidavit of payment. Bond not relieved.

10. An act for the relief of A. J. Price, sheriff of Union county.

Authorized to collect arrears for 1881, '82 and '83. Usual restrictions. Bond not relieved.

11. An act to amend section 1262 of The Code of North Carolina.

Registration of conveyances made valid when probate made before any clerk of a court of record of another State.

12. An act to change the time of holding the Superior Court of Davie county, and providing one additional week for each term thereof.

Davie Superior Court (spring term) to begin last Monday in February and continue two weeks; fall term, last Monday in August, one week; Yadkin, second Monday in March, one week, and first Monday in September, two weeks. Process made returnable accordingly.

13. An act to authorize the commissioners of Halifax county to fund and pay the debt of said county which has not been funded.

Six thousand dollars of bonds authorized: provisions for special tax for interest and sinking fund; $1,500 may be sold to pay small claims. Provision for payment of bonds.

14. An act to amend an act entitled "an act to authorize the commissioners of Halifax county to fund and pay the debt of said county," ratified twelfth day of March, 1883.

Tax to be levied in June instead of August. Action of commissioners in June, 1883, validated. Excess of tax applied to outstanding bonds.

15. An act to amend chapter two hundred and sixty-three of the Laws of one thousand eight hundred and eighty-two [three], in relation to the drainage of streams in Forsyth county.

County Commissioners to appoint five commissioners, upon petition of one-fifth of land-owners on any stream. Usual regulations concerning hands to be furnished, &c., for drainages.

16. An act to repeal chapter three hundred and thirty-seven, Laws of one thousand eight hundred and eighty-three, repealing the act allowing the commissioners of Rockingham county to levy a special tax.

Repeal of act authorizing Rockingham county to levy special tax.

17. An act to provide jurors for the Superior Court of New Hanover county.

Special venire of a number to be designated by Judge to be drawn by member of County Commissioners from day to day and summoned by Sheriff.

18. An act to amend section 3408 of The Code.

Gill nets permitted in Scuppernong river, Tyrrell county.

19. An act to amend section 677 of The Code of North Carolina.

Corporations (except railroad, banking and insurance) to be formed by setting forth name, business proposed, place, length of time, subscribers' names, capital stock and shares. No tax on benevolent, religious, scientific or literary associations. Clerk may amend articles.

20. An act to allow the Louisburg Railroad Company to settle with the board of directors of the penitentiary for work done for said company by convicts, with coupon bonds of Louisburg township or of the town of Louisburg.

Explains it