

BOOK XVI.

FIRST NIGHT OF THEIR ARRIVAL IN THE CITY.

I.

The stage was belated.

The country road they traveled entered the city by a remarkably wide and winding street, a great thoroughfare for its less opulent inhabitants.

There was no moon and few stars. It was that prelude hour of the night when the shops are just closing, and the aspect of almost every wayfarer, as he passes through the unequal light reflected from the windows, speaks of one hurrying not abroad, but homeward. Though the thoroughfare was winding, yet no sweep that it made greatly obstructed its long and imposing vista; so that when the coach gained the top of the long and very gradual slope running toward the obscure heart of the town, and the twinkling perspective of two long and parallel rows of lamps was revealed--lamps which seemed not so much intended to dispel the general gloom, as to show some dim path leading through it, into some gloom still deeper beyond--when the coach gained this critical point, the whole vast triangular town, for a moment, seemed dimly and despondently to capitulate to the eye.

And now, ere descending the gradually-sloping declivity, and just on its

summit as it were, the inmates of the coach, by numerous hard, painful joltings, and ponderous, dragging trundlings, are suddenly made sensible of some great change in the character of the road. The coach seems rolling over cannon-balls of all calibers. Grasping Pierre's arm, Isabel eagerly and forebodingly demands what is the cause of this most strange and unpleasant transition.

"The pavements, Isabel; this is the town."

Isabel was silent.

But, the first time for many weeks, Delly voluntarily spoke:

"It feels not so soft as the green sward, Master Pierre."

"No, Miss Ulver," said Pierre, very bitterly, "the buried hearts of some dead citizens have perhaps come to the surface."

"Sir?" said Delly.

"And are they so hard-hearted here?" asked Isabel.

"Ask yonder pavements, Isabel. Milk dropt from the milkman's can in December, freezes not more quickly on those stones, than does snow-white innocence, if in poverty, it chance to fall in these streets."

"Then God help my hard fate, Master Pierre," sobbed Delly. "Why didst thou drag hither a poor outcast like me?"

"Forgive me, Miss Ulver," exclaimed Pierre, with sudden warmth, and yet most marked respect; "forgive me; never yet have I entered the city by night, but, somehow, it made me feel both bitter and sad. Come, be cheerful, we shall soon be comfortably housed, and have our comfort all to ourselves; the old clerk I spoke to you about, is now doubtless ruefully eying his hat on the peg. Come, cheer up, Isabel;--'tis a long ride, but here we are, at last. Come! 'Tis not very far now to our welcome."

"I hear a strange shuffling and clattering," said Delly, with a shudder.

"It does not seem so light as just now," said Isabel.

"Yes," returned Pierre, "it is the shop-shutters being put on; it is the locking, and bolting, and barring of windows and doors; the town's-people are going to their rest."

"Please God they may find it!" sighed Delly.

"They lock and bar out, then, when they rest, do they, Pierre?" said Isabel.

"Yes, and you were thinking that does not bode well for the welcome I

spoke of."

"Thou read'st all my soul; yes, I was thinking of that. But whither lead these long, narrow, dismal side-glooms we pass every now and then? What are they? They seem terribly still. I see scarce any body in them;--there's another, now. See how haggardly look its criss-cross, far-separate lamps.--What are these side-glooms, dear Pierre; whither lead they?"

"They are the thin tributaries, sweet Isabel, to the great Oronoco thoroughfare we are in; and like true tributaries, they come from the far-hidden places; from under dark beetling secrecies of mortar and stone; through the long marsh-grasses of villainy, and by many a transplanted bough-beam, where the wretched have hung."

"I know nothing of these things, Pierre. But I like not the town. Think'st thou, Pierre, the time will ever come when all the earth shall be paved?"

"Thank God, that never can be!"

"These silent side-glooms are horrible;--look! Methinks, not for the world would I turn into one."

That moment the nigh fore-wheel sharply grated under the body of the coach.

"Courage!" cried Pierre, "we are in it!--Not so very solitary either; here comes a traveler."

"Hark, what is that?" said Delly, "that keen iron-ringing sound? It passed us just now."

"The keen traveler," said Pierre, "he has steel plates to his boot-heels;--some tender-souled elder son, I suppose."

"Pierre," said Isabel, "this silence is unnatural, is fearful. The forests are never so still."

"Because brick and mortar have deeper secrets than wood or fell, sweet Isabel. But here we turn again; now if I guess right, two more turns will bring us to the door. Courage, all will be well; doubtless he has prepared a famous supper. Courage, Isabel. Come, shall it be tea or coffee? Some bread, or crisp toast? We'll have eggs, too; and some cold chicken, perhaps."--Then muttering to himself--"I hope not that, either; no cold collations! there's too much of that in these paving-stones here, set out for the famishing beggars to eat. No. I won't have the cold chicken." Then aloud--"But here we turn again; yes, just as I thought. Ho, driver!" (thrusting his head out of the window) "to the right! to the right! it should be on the right! the first house with a light on the right!"

"No lights yet but the street's," answered the surly voice of the driver.

"Stupid! he has passed it--yes, yes--he has! Ho! ho! stop; turn back. Have you not passed lighted windows?"

"No lights but the street's," was the rough reply. "What's the number? the number? Don't keep me beating about here all night! The number, I say!"

"I do not know it," returned Pierre; "but I well know the house; you must have passed it, I repeat. You must turn back. Surely you have passed lighted windows?"

"Then them lights must burn black; there's no lighted windows in the street; I knows the city; old maids lives here, and they are all to bed; rest is warehouses."

"Will you stop the coach, or not?" cried Pierre, now incensed at his surliness in continuing to drive on.

"I obeys orders: the first house with a light; and 'cording to my reck'ning--though to be sure, I don't know nothing of the city where I was born and bred all my life--no, I knows nothing at all about it--'cording to my reck'ning, the first light in this here street will be the watch-house of the ward--yes, there it is--all right! cheap

lodgings ye've engaged--nothing to pay, and victuals in."

To certain temperaments, especially when previously agitated by any deep feeling, there is perhaps nothing more exasperating, and which sooner explodes all self-command, than the coarse, jeering insolence of a porter, cabman, or hack-driver. Fetchers and carriers of the worst city infamy as many of them are; professionally familiar with the most abandoned haunts; in the heart of misery, they drive one of the most mercenary of all the trades of guilt. Day-dozers and sluggards on their lazy boxes in the sunlight, and feline wakeful and cat-eyed in the dark; most habituated to midnight streets, only trod by sneaking burglars, wantons, and debauchees; often in actual pandering league with the most abhorrent sinks; so that they are equally solicitous and suspicious that every customer they encounter in the dark, will prove a profligate or a knave; this hideous tribe of ogres, and Charon ferry-men to corruption and death, naturally slide into the most practically Calvinistical view of humanity, and hold every man at bottom a fit subject for the coarsest ribaldry and jest; only fine coats and full pockets can whip such mangy hounds into decency. The least impatience, any quickness of temper, a sharp remonstrating word from a customer in a seedy coat, or betraying any other evidence of poverty, however minute and indirect (for in that pecuniary respect they are the most piercing and infallible of all the judges of men), will be almost sure to provoke, in such cases, their least endurable disdain.

Perhaps it was the unconscious transfer to the stage-driver of some such

ideas as these, which now prompted the highly irritated Pierre to an act, which, in a more benignant hour, his better reason would have restrained him from.

He did not see the light to which the driver had referred; and was heedless, in his sudden wrath, that the coach was now going slower in approaching it. Ere Isabel could prevent him, he burst open the door, and leaping to the pavement, sprang ahead of the horses, and violently reined back the leaders by their heads. The driver seized his four-in-hand whip, and with a volley of oaths was about striking out its long, coiling lash at Pierre, when his arm was arrested by a policeman, who suddenly leaping on the stayed coach, commanded him to keep the peace.

"Speak! what is the difficulty here? Be quiet, ladies, nothing serious has happened. Speak you!"

"Pierre! Pierre!" cried the alarmed Isabel. In an instant Pierre was at her side by the window; and now turning to the officer, explained to him that the driver had persisted in passing the house at which he was ordered to stop.

"Then he shall turn to the right about with you, sir;--in double quick time too; do ye hear? I know you rascals well enough. Turn about, you sir, and take the gentleman where he directed."

The cowed driver was beginning a long string of crinating explanations, when turning to Pierre, the policeman calmly desired him to re-enter the coach; he would see him safely at his destination; and then seating himself beside the driver on the box, commanded him to tell the number given him by the gentleman.

"He don't know no numbers--didn't I say he didn't--that's what I got mad about."

"Be still"--said the officer. "Sir"--turning round and addressing Pierre within; "where do you wish to go?"

"I do not know the number, but it is a house in this street; we have passed it; it is, I think, the fourth or fifth house this side of the last corner we turned. It must be lighted up too. It is the small old-fashioned dwelling with stone lion-heads above the windows. But make him turn round, and drive slowly, and I will soon point it out."

"Can't see lions in the dark"--growled the driver--"lions; ha! ha! jackasses more likely!"

"Look you," said the officer, "I shall see you tightly housed this night, my fine fellow, if you don't cease your jabber. Sir," he added, resuming with Pierre, "I am sure there is some mistake here. I perfectly well know now the house you mean. I passed it within the last half-hour; all as quiet there as ever. No one lives there, I think; I never saw a

light in it. Are you not mistaken in something, then?"

Pierre paused in perplexity and foreboding. Was it possible that Glen had willfully and utterly neglected his letter? Not possible. But it might not have come to his hand; the mails sometimes delayed. Then again, it was not wholly out of the question, that the house was prepared for them after all, even though it showed no outward sign. But that was not probable. At any rate, as the driver protested, that his four horses and lumbering vehicle could not turn short round in that street; and that if he must go back, it could only be done by driving on, and going round the block, and so retracing his road; and as after such a procedure, on his part, then in case of a confirmed disappointment respecting the house, the driver would seem warranted, at least in some of his unmannerliness; and as Pierre loathed the villain altogether, therefore, in order to run no such risks, he came to a sudden determination on the spot.

"I owe you very much, my good friend," said he to the officer, "for your timely assistance. To be frank, what you have just told me has indeed perplexed me not a little concerning the place where I proposed to stop. Is there no hotel in this neighborhood, where I could leave these ladies while I seek my friend?"

Wanted to all manner of deceitfulness, and engaged in a calling which unavoidably makes one distrustful of mere appearances, however specious, however honest; the really good-hearted officer, now eyed Pierre in the

dubious light with a most unpleasant scrutiny; and he abandoned the "Sir," and the tone of his voice sensibly changed, as he replied:--"There is no hotel in this neighborhood; it is too off the thoroughfares."

"Come! come!"--cried the driver, now growing bold again--"though you're an officer, I'm a citizen for all that. You haven't any further right to keep me out of my bed now. He don't know where he wants to go to, cause he haint got no place at all to go to; so I'll just dump him here, and you dar'n't stay me."

"Don't be impertinent now," said the officer, but not so sternly as before.

"I'll have my rights though, I tell you that! Leave go of my arm; damn ye, get off the box; I've the law now. I say mister, come tramp, here goes your luggage," and so saying he dragged toward him a light trunk on the top of the stage.

"Keep a clean tongue in ye now"--said the officer--"and don't be in quite so great a hurry," then addressing Pierre, who had now re-alighted from the coach--"Well, this can't continue; what do you intend to do?"

"Not to ride further with that man, at any rate," said Pierre; "I will stop right here for the present."

"He! he!" laughed the driver; "he! he! 'mazing 'commodating now--we hitches now, we do--stops right afore the watch-house--he! he!--that's funny!"

"Off with the luggage then, driver," said the policeman--"here hand the small trunk, and now away and unlash there behind."

During all this scene, Delly had remained perfectly silent in her trembling and rustic alarm; while Isabel, by occasional cries to Pierre, had vainly besought some explanation. But though their complete ignorance of city life had caused Pierre's two companions to regard the scene thus far with too much trepidation; yet now, when in the obscurity of night, and in the heart of a strange town, Pierre handed them out of the coach into the naked street, and they saw their luggage piled so near the white light of a watch-house, the same ignorance, in some sort, reversed its effects on them; for they little fancied in what really untoward and wretched circumstances they first touched the flagging of the city.

As the coach lumbered off, and went rolling into the wide murkiness beyond, Pierre spoke to the officer.

"It is a rather strange accident, I confess, my friend, but strange accidents will sometimes happen."

"In the best of families," rejoined the other, a little ironically.

Now, I must not quarrel with this man, thought Pierre to himself, stung at the officer's tone. Then said:--"Is there any one in your--office?"

"No one as yet--not late enough."

"Will you have the kindness then to house these ladies there for the present, while I make haste to provide them with better lodgment? Lead on, if you please."

The man seemed to hesitate a moment, but finally acquiesced; and soon they passed under the white light, and entered a large, plain, and most forbidding-looking room, with hacked wooden benches and bunks ranged along the sides, and a railing before a desk in one corner. The permanent keeper of the place was quietly reading a paper by the long central double bat's-wing gas-light; and three officers off duty were nodding on a bench.

"Not very liberal accommodations"--said the officer, quietly; "nor always the best of company, but we try to be civil. Be seated, ladies," politely drawing a small bench toward them.

"Hallo, my friends," said Pierre, approaching the nodding three beyond, and tapping them on the shoulder--"Hallo, I say! Will you do me a little favor? Will you help bring some trunks in from the street? I will satisfy you for your trouble, and be much obliged into the bargain."

Instantly the three noddies, used to sudden awakenings, opened their eyes, and stared hard; and being further enlightened by the bat's-wings and first officer, promptly brought in the luggage as desired.

Pierre hurriedly sat down by Isabel, and in a few words gave her to understand, that she was now in a perfectly secure place, however unwelcoming; that the officers would take every care of her, while he made all possible speed in running to the house, and indubitably ascertaining how matters stood there. He hoped to be back in less than ten minutes with good tidings. Explaining his intention to the first officer, and begging him not to leave the girls till he should return, he forthwith sallied into the street. He quickly came to the house, and immediately identified it. But all was profoundly silent and dark. He rang the bell, but no answer; and waiting long enough to be certain, that either the house was indeed deserted, or else the old clerk was unawakeable or absent; and at all events, certain that no slightest preparation had been made for their arrival; Pierre, bitterly disappointed, returned to Isabel with this most unpleasant information.

Nevertheless something must be done, and quickly. Turning to one of the officers, he begged him to go and seek a hack, that the whole party might be taken to some respectable lodging. But the man, as well as his comrades, declined the errand on the score, that there was no stand on their beat, and they could not, on any account, leave their beat. So Pierre himself must go. He by no means liked to leave Isabel and Delly

again, on an expedition which might occupy some time. But there seemed no resource, and time now imperiously pressed. Communicating his intention therefore to Isabel, and again entreating the officer's particular services as before, and promising not to leave him unrequited; Pierre again sallied out. He looked up and down the street, and listened; but no sound of any approaching vehicle was audible. He ran on, and turning the first corner, bent his rapid steps toward the greatest and most central avenue of the city, assured that there, if anywhere, he would find what he wanted. It was some distance off; and he was not without hope that an empty hack would meet him ere he arrived there. But the few stray ones he encountered had all muffled fares. He continued on, and at last gained the great avenue. Not habitually used to such scenes, Pierre for a moment was surprised, that the instant he turned out of the narrow, and dark, and death-like bye-street, he should find himself suddenly precipitated into the not-yet-repressed noise and contention, and all the garish night-life of a vast thoroughfare, crowded and wedged by day, and even now, at this late hour, brilliant with occasional illuminations, and echoing to very many swift wheels and footfalls.

II.

"I say, my pretty one! Dear! Dear! young man! Oh, love, you are in a vast hurry, aint you? Can't you stop a bit, now, my dear: do--there's a sweet fellow."

Pierre turned; and in the flashing, sinister, evil cross-lights of a druggist's window, his eye caught the person of a wonderfully beautifully-featured girl; scarlet-cheeked, glaringly-arrayed, and of a figure all natural grace but unnatural vivacity. Her whole form, however, was horribly lit by the green and yellow rays from the druggist's.

"My God!" shuddered Pierre, hurrying forward, "the town's first welcome to youth!"

He was just crossing over to where a line of hacks were drawn up against the opposite curb, when his eye was arrested by a short, gilded name, rather reservedly and aristocratically denominating a large and very handsome house, the second story of which was profusely lighted. He looked up, and was very certain that in this house were the apartments of Glen. Yielding to a sudden impulse, he mounted the single step toward the door, and rang the bell, which was quickly responded to by a very civil black.

As the door opened, he heard the distant interior sound of dancing-music and merriment.

"Is Mr. Stanly in?"

"Mr. Stanly? Yes, but he's engaged."

"How?"

"He is somewhere in the drawing rooms. My mistress is giving a party to the lodgers."

"Ay? Tell Mr. Stanly I wish to see him for one moment if you please; only one moment."

"I dare not call him, sir. He said that possibly some one might call for him to-night--they are calling every night for Mr. Stanly--but I must admit no one, on the plea of the party."

A dark and bitter suspicion now darted through the mind of Pierre; and ungovernably yielding to it, and resolved to prove or falsify it without delay, he said to the black:

"My business is pressing. I must see Mr. Stanly."

"I am sorry, sir, but orders are orders: I am his particular servant here--the one that sees his silver every holyday. I can't disobey him. May I shut the door, sir? for as it is, I can not admit you."

"The drawing-rooms are on the second floor, are they not?" said Pierre quietly.

"Yes," said the black pausing in surprise, and holding the door.

"Yonder are the stairs, I think?"

"That way, sir; but this is yours;" and the now suspicious black was just on the point of closing the portal violently upon him, when Pierre thrust him suddenly aside, and springing up the long stairs, found himself facing an open door, from whence proceeded a burst of combined brilliancy and melody, doubly confusing to one just emerged from the street. But bewildered and all demented as he momentarily felt, he instantly stalked in, and confounded the amazed company with his unremoved slouched hat, pale cheek, and whole dusty, travel-stained, and ferocious aspect.

"Mr. Stanly! where is Mr. Stanly?" he cried, advancing straight through a startled quadrille, while all the music suddenly hushed, and every eye was fixed in vague affright upon him.

"Mr. Stanly! Mr. Stanly!" cried several blandish voices, toward the further end of the further drawing-room, into which the first one widely opened, "Here is a most peculiar fellow after you; who the devil is he?"

"I think I see him," replied a singularly cool, deliberate, and rather drawling voice, yet a very silvery one, and at bottom perhaps a very resolute one; "I think I see him; stand aside, my good fellow, will you; ladies, remove, remove from between me and yonder hat."

The polite compliance of the company thus addressed, now revealed to the advancing Pierre, the tall, robust figure of a remarkably splendid-looking, and brown-bearded young man, dressed with surprising plainness, almost demureness, for such an occasion; but this plainness of his dress was not so obvious at first, the material was so fine, and admirably fitted. He was carelessly lounging in a half side-long attitude upon a large sofa, and appeared as if but just interrupted in some very agreeable chat with a diminutive but vivacious brunette, occupying the other end. The dandy and the man; strength and effeminacy; courage and indolence, were so strangely blended in this superb-eyed youth, that at first sight, it seemed impossible to decide whether there was any genuine mettle in him, or not.

Some years had gone by since the cousins had met; years peculiarly productive of the greatest conceivable changes in the general personal aspect of human beings. Nevertheless, the eye seldom alters. The instant their eyes met, they mutually recognized each other. But both did not betray the recognition.

"Glen!" cried Pierre, and paused a few steps from him.

But the superb-eyed only settled himself lower down in his lounging attitude, and slowly withdrawing a small, unpretending, and unribboned glass from his vest pocket, steadily, yet not entirely insultingly, notwithstanding the circumstances, scrutinized Pierre. Then, dropping

his glass, turned slowly round upon the gentlemen near him, saying in the same peculiar, mixed, and musical voice as before:

"I do not know him; it is an entire mistake; why don't the servants take him out, and the music go on?---- As I was saying, Miss Clara, the statues you saw in the Louvre are not to be mentioned with those in Florence and Rome. Why, there now is that vaunted chef d'oeuvre, the Fighting Gladiator of the Louvre----"

"Fighting Gladiator it is!" yelled Pierre, leaping toward him like Spartacus. But the savage impulse in him was restrained by the alarmed female shrieks and wild gestures around him. As he paused, several gentlemen made motions to pinion him; but shaking them off fiercely, he stood erect, and isolated for an instant, and fastening his glance upon his still reclining, and apparently unmoved cousin, thus spoke:--

"Glendinning Stanly, thou disown'st Pierre not so abhorrently as Pierre does thee. By Heaven, had I a knife, Glen, I could prick thee on the spot; let out all thy Glendinning blood, and then sew up the vile remainder. Hound, and base blot upon the general humanity!"

"This is very extraordinary:--remarkable case of combined imposture and insanity; but where are the servants? why don't that black advance? Lead him out, my good Doc, lead him out. Carefully, carefully! stay"--putting his hand in his pocket--"there, take that, and have the poor fellow driven off somewhere."

Bolting his rage in him, as impossible to be sated by any conduct, in such a place, Pierre now turned, sprang down the stairs, and fled the house.

III.

"Hack, sir? Hack, sir? Hack, sir?"

"Cab, sir? Cab, sir? Cab, sir?"

"This way, sir! This way, sir! This way, sir!"

"He's a rogue! Not him! he's a rogue!"

Pierre was surrounded by a crowd of contending hackmen, all holding long whips in their hands; while others eagerly beckoned to him from their boxes, where they sat elevated between their two coach-lamps like shabby, discarded saints. The whip-stalks thickened around him, and several reports of the cracking lashes sharply sounded in his ears. Just bursting from a scene so goading as his interview with the scornful Glen in the dazzling drawing-room, to Pierre, this sudden tumultuous surrounding of him by whip-stalks and lashes, seemed like the onset of the chastising fiends upon Orestes. But, breaking away from them, he seized the first plated door-handle near him, and, leaping into the

hack, shouted for whoever was the keeper of it, to mount his box forthwith and drive off in a given direction.

The vehicle had proceeded some way down the great avenue when it paused, and the driver demanded whither now; what place?

"The Watch-house of the---- Ward," cried Pierre.

"Hi! hi! Goin' to deliver himself up, hey!" grinned the fellow to himself--"Well, that's a sort of honest, any way:--g'lang, you dogs!--whist! wheel! wha!--g'lang!"

The sights and sounds which met the eye of Pierre on re-entering the watch-house, filled him with inexpressible horror and fury. The before decent, drowsy place, now fairly reeked with all things unseemly. Hardly possible was it to tell what conceivable cause or occasion had, in the comparatively short absence of Pierre, collected such a base congregation. In indescribable disorder, frantic, diseased-looking men and women of all colors, and in all imaginable flaunting, immodest, grotesque, and shattered dresses, were leaping, yelling, and cursing around him. The torn Madras handkerchiefs of negresses, and the red gowns of yellow girls, hanging in tatters from their naked bosoms, mixed with the rent dresses of deep-rouged white women, and the split coats, checkered vests, and protruding shirts of pale, or whiskered, or haggard, or mustached fellows of all nations, some of whom seemed scared from their beds, and others seemingly arrested in the midst of some

crazy and wanton dance. On all sides, were heard drunken male and female voices, in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, interlarded now and then, with the foulest of all human lingo, that dialect of sin and death, known as the Cant language, or the Flash.

Running among this combined babel of persons and voices, several of the police were vainly striving to still the tumult; while others were busy handcuffing the more desperate; and here and there the distracted wretches, both men and women, gave downright battle to the officers; and still others already handcuffed struck out at them with their joined ironed arms. Meanwhile, words and phrases unrepeatable in God's sunlight, and whose very existence was utterly unknown, and undreamed of by tens of thousands of the decent people of the city; syllables obscene and accursed were shouted forth in tones plainly evincing that they were the common household breath of their utterers. The thieves'-quarters, and all the brothels, Lock-and-Sin hospitals for incurables, and infirmaries and infernoes of hell seemed to have made one combined sortie, and poured out upon earth through the vile vomitory of some unmentionable cellar.

Though the hitherto imperfect and casual city experiences of Pierre illy fitted him entirely to comprehend the specific purport of this terrific spectacle; still he knew enough by hearsay of the more infamous life of the town, to imagine from whence, and who, were the objects before him. But all his consciousness at the time was absorbed by the one horrified thought of Isabel and Delly, forced to witness a sight hardly endurable

for Pierre himself; or, possibly, sucked into the tumult, and in close personal contact with its loathsomeness. Rushing into the crowd, regardless of the random blows and curses he encountered, he wildly sought for Isabel, and soon descried her struggling from the delirious reaching arms of a half-clad reeling whiskerando. With an immense blow of his mailed fist, he sent the wretch humming, and seizing Isabel, cried out to two officers near, to clear a path for him to the door. They did so. And in a few minutes the panting Isabel was safe in the open air. He would have stayed by her, but she conjured him to return for Delly, exposed to worse insults than herself. An additional posse of officers now approaching, Pierre committing her to the care of one of them, and summoning two others to join himself, now re-entered the room. In another quarter of it, he saw Delly seized on each hand by two bleared and half-bloody women, who with fiendish grimaces were ironically twitting her upon her close-necked dress, and had already stript her handkerchief from her. She uttered a cry of mixed anguish and joy at the sight of him; and Pierre soon succeeded in returning with her to Isabel.

During the absence of Pierre in quest of the hack, and while Isabel and Delly were quietly awaiting his return, the door had suddenly burst open, and a detachment of the police drove in, and caged, the entire miscellaneous night-occupants of a notorious stew, which they had stormed and carried during the height of some outrageous orgie. The first sight of the interior of the watch-house, and their being so quickly huddled together within its four blank walls, had suddenly

lashed the mob into frenzy; so that for the time, oblivious of all other considerations, the entire force of the police was directed to the quelling of the in-door riot; and consequently, abandoned to their own protection, Isabel and Delly had been temporarily left to its mercy.

It was no time for Pierre to manifest his indignation at the officer--even if he could now find him--who had thus falsified his individual pledge concerning the precious charge committed to him. Nor was it any time to distress himself about his luggage, still somewhere within. Quitting all, he thrust the bewildered and half-lifeless girls into the waiting hack, which, by his orders, drove back in the direction of the stand, where Pierre had first taken it up.

When the coach had rolled them well away from the tumult, Pierre stopped it, and said to the man, that he desired to be taken to the nearest respectable hotel or boarding-house of any kind, that he knew of. The fellow--maliciously diverted by what had happened thus far--made some ambiguous and rudely merry rejoinder. But warned by his previous rash quarrel with the stage-driver, Pierre passed this unnoticed, and in a controlled, calm, decided manner repeated his directions.

The issue was, that after a rather roundabout drive they drew up in a very respectable side-street, before a large respectable-looking house, illuminated by two tall white lights flanking its portico. Pierre was glad to notice some little remaining stir within, spite of the comparative lateness of the hour. A bare-headed, tidily-dressed, and

very intelligent-looking man, with a broom clothes-brush in his hand, appearing, scrutinized him rather sharply at first; but as Pierre advanced further into the light, and his countenance became visible, the man, assuming a respectful but still slightly perplexed air, invited the whole party into a closely adjoining parlor, whose disordered chairs and general dustiness, evinced that after a day's activity it now awaited the morning offices of the housemaids.

"Baggage, sir?"

"I have left my baggage at another place," said Pierre, "I shall send for it to-morrow."

"Ah!" exclaimed the very intelligent-looking man, rather dubiously, "shall I discharge the hack, then?"

"Stay," said Pierre, bethinking him, that it would be well not to let the man know from whence they had last come, "I will discharge it myself, thank you."

So returning to the sidewalk, without debate, he paid the hackman an exorbitant fare, who, anxious to secure such illegal gains beyond all hope of recovery, quickly mounted his box and drove off at a gallop.

"Will you step into the office, sir, now?" said the man, slightly flourishing with his brush--"this way, sir, if you please."

Pierre followed him, into an almost deserted, dimly lit room with a stand in it. Going behind the stand, the man turned round to him a large ledger-like book, thickly inscribed with names, like any directory, and offered him a pen ready dipped in ink.

Understanding the general hint, though secretly irritated at something in the manner of the man, Pierre drew the book to him, and wrote in a firm hand, at the bottom of the last-named column,--

"Mr. and Mrs. Pierre Glendinning, and Miss Ulver."

The man glanced at the writing inquiringly, and then said--"The other column, sir--where from."

"True," said Pierre, and wrote "Saddle Meadows."

The very intelligent-looking man re-examined the page, and then slowly stroking his shaven chin, with a fork, made of his thumb for one tine, and his united four fingers for the other, said softly and whisperingly--"Anywheres in this country, sir?"

"Yes, in the country," said Pierre, evasively, and bridling his ire.

"But now show me to two chambers, will you; the one for myself and wife, I desire to have opening into another, a third one, never mind how small; but I must have a dressing-room."

"Dressing-room," repeated the man, in an ironically deliberative voice--"Dressing-room;--Hem!--You will have your luggage taken into the dressing-room, then, I suppose.--Oh, I forgot--your luggage aint come yet--ah, yes, yes, yes--luggage is coming to-morrow--Oh, yes, yes,--certainly--to-morrow--of course. By the way, sir; I dislike to seem at all uncivil, and I am sure you will not deem me so; but--"

"Well," said Pierre, mustering all his self-command for the coming impertinence.

"When stranger gentlemen come to this house without luggage, we think ourselves bound to ask them to pay their bills in advance, sir; that is all, sir."

"I shall stay here to-night and the whole of to-morrow, at any rate," rejoined Pierre, thankful that this was all; "how much will it be?" and he drew out his purse.

The man's eyes fastened with eagerness on the purse; he looked from it to the face of him who held it; then seemed half hesitating an instant; then brightening up, said, with sudden suavity--"Never mind, sir, never mind, sir; though rogues sometimes be gentlemanly; gentlemen that are gentlemen never go abroad without their diplomas. Their diplomas are their friends; and their only friends are their dollars; you have a purse-full of friends.--We have chambers, sir, that will exactly suit

you, I think. Bring your ladies and I will show you up to them immediately." So saying, dropping his brush, the very intelligent-looking man lighted one lamp, and taking two unlighted ones in his other hand, led the way down the dusky lead-sheeted hall, Pierre following him with Isabel and Delly.