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CHAPTER VII.

I did not faint, though for a time my brain whirled, and my senses seemed going; yet through all I had one feeling—that each moment was more precious than gold, and this brought thought and speech back to me. I lifted up my head, and passionately bade her tell me all. There was a moment's silence, which I could scarcely bear, and then she began:

"You remember when I came to Ravensbourne, and said I was a widow and a dressmaker. Both were lies, for I had never been a dressmaker, and my husband was then living at Ravensbourne, and his name was Foster. You start; wait to hear all, and then say if you can pity me. Wicked as I am, if it had not been for that man it might never have happened, for I was innocent and happy in the days when I was a young farm-servant down in the West; but I married him, and then my misery began. Yet I bore all patiently for the sake of two children, till he left me, and took service as a gentleman's valet, and went off to France with him. I did not know it till afterwards; and there I was left in England penniless with my little babies to keep. I worked early and late for them, but I could earn little; and very soon I heard them wail for bread, which I could not give them. My heart was nearly breaking, when a neighbor offered to take the children for a year, while I went to earn a living in service, and, if possible, to find my husband. She was a hard, rough woman, and asked large payments out of my wages; but what could I do? So I left my precious children with her, and easily found a place as maid to a lady just going to Paris. I told her my story, and she was very kind in helping me; and at last, after long seeking, I found my husband. He had left his first master, and was now with an English gentleman living in Paris. He was very angry with me for following him abroad, and swore that he would help neither me nor the children.—Still I stayed, hoping he might soften, though I seldom managed to see him; and at last, when I had been there about five months it seemed as if my hopes had come to pass, for he came to me, and told me kindly that he wanted me to leave my mistress, and engage myself to his master.—How light my poor heart grew; and though my mistress distrusted my husband, and warned me, yet I went with him gladly.

"Well, I saw my new master, Mr. Ravensbourne, and he took me at once, and for three days all went on quietly; and then I spoke again to my husband, and begged and prayed him with many tears to come back to England with me. He said little at the time; but the next day, when I was busy with my work, my master sent for me, and when I went to his study, my husband was with him. They were talking together, but stopped as I came in, and I stood silent and frightened, I don't know why. My master had seemed stern and hard when first I saw him, but I thought him more so now, as he told me in a harsh voice that he knew my wishes, and would engage that my husband would agree to them if I in return would promise to do something for him. I listened with a fresh hope in my heart, and answered that I would do anything if only my husband would come home with me to our children. Mr. Ravensbourne looked at him, and then my husband came up to me and said that he would do what I pleased if I obeyed Mr. Ravensbourne. I saw there was something still to be told, though I little dreamed what it was, and again I earnestly promised to do my utmost. Then Mr. Ravensbourne walked to the door, bolted it, and coming up to me, said, that I must first take an oath that, whether or no I did his will, I would never reveal it to living man; and oh, I took that dreadful oath, and now I am breaking it.

"I can't tell you how he then told me the wicked deed he had planned—that I should steal a little child from his home. I refused with horror, in spite of my husband's passion and Mr. Ravensbourne's cold anger.—Then they tried another plan; they reminded me of my children, and held out fair promises of a home and money to feed and clothe them; and Mr. Ravensbourne told me that the boy would be safe and well cared for, and that all he wanted was to get possession of Ravensbourne, and he made me decide whether some one else should be chosen to carry him off, and I still live on in wretchedness, away from my children, or whether I would do this, and have them with me. Then I yielded with bitter grief and shame; and Mr. Ravensbourne told me I should be well rewarded; but looking darkly at me, added, 'But if you fail me now you shall suffer for it bitterly through your children.' O the miserable days that followed; I dared not draw back, for his fierce words made me tremble for my own boy and girl, over whom I knew he could have power through my husband, and yet the thought of the deed to be done was with me day and night. Gradually I got used to it. Sorrow had hardened me; and the remembrance of how little any one had cared when my children were starving, made me harder still. At the end of three weeks I came back to England, and there I found my darling boy dying. I do not know that he had been ill treated; but it was the last drop in my cup; and I went down to Ravensbourne, longing to do my work, and have my child with me, for I was well nigh desponding at leaving him. I was to set up as a dress-maker in the village till I could get a place at the house; and I was still there when my husband got engaged as groom. Two months after, I came; but my heart smote me afresh when I saw that gentle lady and her child; and I could never bear to look at them afterwards. I think if my husband had not been there I should have given up my place, but I feared him so. Well, at last he told me it must be done at once, lest the old squire should die first, and then there might be suspicion. He would not tell me where he meant to take the child; but he swore that he was not going to harm it, and added, laughing, that neither Mr. Ravensbourne nor he had any notion of risking their necks in the matter. He had asked for a holiday for that day, and meant to hire a cart at Hillborough, under pretence of driving to York and back, and then come and wait outside in the darkness for me to bring the boy to him; and now, how was the child to be got out of the house. When it came to that, my husband looked at me and said: 'You are clever enough; you can plan it if you choose, and to-night you must choose; so now go, and let me know within an hour exactly when I am to wait.' We had been talking in an outhouse; and I went slowly in, feeling that the hour had come. My husband was right; I had wit enough to find means, though hardly wickedness to use them; and even as I walked, a way came into my head. I stopped a little, but remembered my sick boy, and that some one else would do it if I did not; and turning back, bade my husband be at the laundry door at nine o'clock.

"That afternoon, when I came to your room, I had heard Master Gerald crying to go to the water, and that first put it into my head to pretend that he had drowned himself. The evening came, and I stayed in my lady's room, filling the large wicker-baskets with clothes. I heard her go to the nursery and call you, and then she went down, and the nurse came and went again. Now was my time; no one was likely to come up again just then, and then I knew the servants were at supper. I listened at the door: all was quiet, and catching up my baskets, I hurried into the nursery. The child slept soundly, and hardly stirred as I lifted him from his crib, and laid him down in the basket among the clothes. Then I threw some more over him, and with desperate strength lifted the basket and carried it off to the laundry. As I put my burden down, the latch of this door was lifted, and my husband looked in. I pointed to the basket, and he stepped up to it and tossed off the clothes. The child was roused and turned partly round, but in an instant my husband had caught him up, pressed him so close against his shoulder that he could neither struggle nor scream, and carried him away. I could bear no more, and catching up the little scarlet cloak which I had brought on purpose, I fled back, and threw it blindly into the stream, and as I did so, I heard the faint rattle of the wheels as the cart drove off. Then I remembered that the light was still burning in the laundry, and running back, I turned all the clothes on to the shelf, put out the lantern, locked the door, and returned to the house. It seemed as if a wild courage had come to me, for I went calmly into supper, and talked and laughed as though nothing had happened, till I saw *her*, and then, then I felt the agony that never left me since. My wickedness did not even do me the poor service I had hoped, for the very next day I heard that my boy was dead. He had died while I was selling my very soul for his sake. Ah, how often I longed to tell, but dared not, for my husband told me I could never prove it, and should only be shut up as a mad woman, since I could not tell any one where to find the child. Then Mr. Ravensbourne came to England, and gave me a house and money, and sent for Sally; and he said the same things to me when he first came, and again after Sally's accident, and twice since when he had been here, for they have always doubted me, and dared not send me away out of their sight. Ah, I used to fear to see you, lest he should know; and then the thought of that dear lady's kindness to Sally was like a dagger to me. I have only seen my husband once for three years; for Mr. Ravensbourne thought it safe that he should go, and right glad he was to be rid of me."

There was a sound down stairs, and Mrs. Weston sprang up in bed: "Tell me," I said in agony, "only tell me where the child is."

Her eyes were glazing, and her breath came short. "He is at Stapleford, in Hampshire. They think I don't know; but it chanced that the post-boy one day gave me a letter that was meant for my husband, and I found out by that. Stay—look in yon chest—in the left-hand corner there's a little box with a key in it."

I found it, and brought it to her. She lifted the lid, and within lay a worn letter. She passed it into my hand. "Take it, and find him out; and oh, forgive me, and be kind to my poor Sally."

I hastily called the child, for the woman was going fast, and did not know her. Once more she gasped: "Don't visit it on Sally;" and five minutes after she lay a corpse in my arms. I closed the eyes which had been looking so beseechingly into mine, composed her figure, and then turned to go, for I dared not delay a moment. I could not take the poor sobbing child with me, but promised to send some one at once; and then putting the precious letter in my bosom, I hurried out of the house. On I went as fast as my feet would go, meeting no one, till just as I crossed the stile one of the keepers passed near and gave me good morning. I had no voice to answer, and rushed on. At first my mind was in such tumult that I could not think, and could scarcely feel, but gradually it grew more clear; and by the time I unlatched the garden-gate, I had decided what to do. I must go and find the child. Hampshire seemed like the Indies to me; still I knew it was near London, and I must go at once there. I dared not write or lose an hour, for Mr. Ravensbourne might hear of my visit. So I unlocked the house-door, and went straight to the kitchen, where Jessie was singing over her work. I only told her I must go at once on a journey, and begged her to ask no questions, and say nothing about it till I came back, only to take the greatest care of my lady. Then I went to my own room, counted my stock of money, made up a bundle of clothes, and last of all knocked at my lady's door. She was awake; and standing by her bedside, I told her that I had just heard news that would force me to leave her for a few days; and I asked her to spare me at once. I saw her surprise.

"Can't you tell me about it, Hannah?" she asked.

"Not now, dear lady; some day perhaps I may, but I have no right to speak of it now: only I must make a long journey, and I have but very little money."

She pointed to the table. "There is my purse, use it as you like; only come back soon, and kiss me before you go."

I bent over her, and for a moment I could scarcely keep back my tears, as I looked into her sweet, sad face. I had no gloomy fears for her now. She could not be going to die just when I was bringing her back her child. I would not take a cart to Hillborough, lest it should raise a talk in the village; so I walked by quiet lanes as fast as I could, only stopping as I turned out of the main street, to beg a neighbor to go to the cottage in the park, for that Mrs. Weston had been very ill the night before. The sun shone brightly as I got into Hillborough, and in an hour's time a cart was carrying me towards York; while I leaned back, trying to believe that Gerald was indeed alive, and thinking of all that had happened. It seemed months since I slept so quietly in my lady's room, and now how much there was still to be done. I must make my way to London, find Mr. Harrington, and get him to help; but oh! if I should not be in time, and again and again I looked back to see if I was followed. Late at night we got into York. The coach started at six o'clock in the morning, so till then I must wait; and finding a decent lodging, I tried to sleep. But it was hopeless; the thought that my lady might again be happy, that our darling was living, made me dizzy; and I paced the room, now picturing their meeting, now shuddering as I remembered Jaspar Ravensbourne. His brother's words came to my mind, and I thought how little he had dreamed of such cruelty as this. At length the morning dawned, and we were off, and drawing every minute nearer to London. That day passed, and the night drew towards a close, and my mind was more at rest, for we were only forty miles from London. The twilight was drawing on, and I had closed my eyes, and leaned back to rest my aching head, when a shout from behind roused me. The coach drew to one side, a traveling-carriage with four horses dashed by, and within it sat, as I saw in that instant, Mr. Ravensbourne. The lamp shone full on his face; our eyes met, and I saw he knew me, and the next moment they were lost in the darkness.

CHAPTER VIII.

The terrible despair of that moment I can never forget. To lose all when it was almost in my grasp; to feel that my journey, which had seemed so successful, was now hopeless, was more than I could bear; and sick at heart, I pressed my forehead against the window as the coach rumbled on. Ten miles more, and then it stopped, and a rough country lad handed up a paper, calling out that a gentleman left it with him for a person in the coach. "Hannah Pearce," read out the guard, and I claimed it. Inside were these words: "My horses travel faster than yours. It is worse than useless for you to go on, since nothing would so instantly destroy the object of your journey." Should I take the warning? I shuddered at his threat; for I felt that now, on the brink of discovery, he would stop at nothing. Yet I could not return home without an effort. I took out the letter which I had carried in my bosom, and looked at it. It was ill-spelt and ill-written, and there was little in it beyond a demand for money for the child's keep, and the address. No, I must go on there, even if I arrived too late. I longed to scream—to lash the horses, the men—anything. Yet there I sat, my hands clenched, my eyes staring out into the darkness, while the coach crept on, oh, so slowly! It was night now, and we were close on London, when in the road before us I heard shouts, and saw lights gleaming. A number of dark figures were standing round a broken carriage and fallen horse, and as we drove up one sprang forward from the group and hailed the driver. I did not hear his words, but I knew his voice well, and with intense thankfulness I heard the answer, "No room; after time." Another instant, and we were past. For a while I trembled lest we should stop for him; but no, the lights grew dim, and we were making our way to London, leaving Jaspar Ravensbourne behind. I heard one of my fellow passengers guess that if he were in haste the traveler would mount one of the horses and ride on. I knew he might even now be close upon us, but I could think no more—all seemed a dream to me. I remember dimly springing from the coach, and nothing further, till I was following a guide through noisy, crowded streets. I suppose I had given him the right address, but I don't know, for all was mist till I stood in Mr. Harrington's dining-room and told my tale. At first, I think, he fancied me mad; but when he had looked at the letters he sprang up. "You have done well, nobly; but now not a minute must be lost." He rang, gave his orders, and in an hour he and I were on our way again. I was utterly worn out now; past fear or hope, as I leaned back hardly able even to answer Mr. Harrington's rapid questions. The gray morning light had dawned on us, when his hand touched mine, and he said quietly, "We are at Stapleford," and pointed to a peaceful country village that lay before us. We drew up at a roadside inn; he inquired of any person bearing the name of Redfern, and they showed us a farmhouse by the hillside. Then Mr. Harrington said he would go on alone, and left me sitting in the carriage.

My weariness was over now, and I sat up, every nerve quivering with impatience. Hours seemed to have passed over me, when I turned my head, for the sixth time, to look along the road we had traveled; and there, there on the brow of the hill was Mr. Ravensbourne's carriage. It was far off, but I knew the yellow wheels; and oh, if it should be here before we got off! The people of the house were his friends; they would never give up the boy if he resisted. I could not wait there; and bidding the postboy drive up the narrow lane towards the farmhouse, I sat straining my eyes after the distant carriage. The lane was sheltered by trees, and they could scarcely see our chaise, I knew, as yet; but they were coming on fast. What should I do? I dared not go up to the farm, lest they should suspect; but at last I heard welcome steps; there were voices, and Mr. Harrington turned the corner with another, who seemed a farmer, and between them walked the boy we had mourned for three years—taller, browner, and in different dress, but still my own little master. I dared make no sign, for the man was eying me with doubtful glances, while Mr. Harrington quietly helped the boy in, and pressed something into the farmer's hand. Then he gave the order to drive on, and as we turned I saw the yellow wheels for an instant through the trees. We were just off, when the man called after us with a question. Mr. Harrington answered, and the carriage stopped; then it was off again, and we were driving down the lane. I clutched Mr. Harrington's hand and hoarsely whispered; "He is coming up the lane: we can never get past, unless we turn another way." He understood in a moment. A little further on was another lane, branching off to the right, and leading towards London. If we could only reach it in time! Mr. Harrington stood up, bade the postboy whip on his horses, and turn to the right. We reached it—we were round the corner, and galloping on; then we both looked back. The yellow carriage passed the entrance to the lane before we were out of sight, but no one looked out of it, or saw us. We were safe! and falling back in the chaise, I fainted away.

It was long before I came to myself, feeling the cool air blowing on my brow, and Mr. Harrington's voice speaking kindly. I opened my eyes in bewilderment, and there sat my darling Gerald, looking at me with wondering, frightened eyes. We were near London, but we had come by by-lanes part of the way, to avoid Mr. Ravensbourne. All was safe, as Mr. Harrington assured me; and I believed him. Gradually the child seemed to know me, and clung to me when I kissed and fondled him, looking up at me with his mother's eyes. We settled that I should go home first to prepare my lady; and after a night's rest at Mr. Harrington's I started, and on the sixth evening after my departure, I again passed the little green gate, and oh, how happy I was! My lady gave a cry of pleasure at the sight of me; and holding out her hands, drew me to her. She asked a few questions, but I only said that all was right, and I would tell her to-morrow, and so we parted for the night, for I could not trust myself just then to speak the joyful news.

All the next morning I kept as much as possible away from her, lest the strange joy in my manner should reveal anything too soon. I heard from Jessie that Mr. Ravensbourne had been away, and had not yet returned: but I said nothing to her, for I did not well know how much of the story to tell; so I went about my usual work, and attended on my lady till late in the day, and then I went into the parlor with my work, and sat down by her side. It was nearly sunset, and before the evening closed he would be with us; yet I knew not how to begin without a shock, which might kill her, for now as I looked in her face, I felt how little she could bear. The first words were from her. "Now, Hannah, tell me about your journey." I said that I had been called to see one whom I had never hoped to meet again. It had been a great joy, a great surprise; and I went on to say how startling even a glad surprise sometimes was—how much better it would be if we were prepared for anything. She answered me quietly, and I saw that my words did not come home to her, and I was troubled. Then I tried afresh, saying that a little surprise was waiting her, as Mr. Harrington would be with her that evening; I had met him in town, and he wanted to see you on business. She answered that she should be glad, for he was always kind. "Indeed he is," I said "and he has grieved sorely for you. He was speaking to me yesterday," I pursued, trying to check the trembling of my voice, "and he said how strange it was that nothing had ever been found. He said it sometimes gave him hope."

My lady's hand was on my arm instantly, and she whispered hoarsely: "Hannah, how can you talk of hope! Do you forget my anguish because I bear it silently? How can you be so cruel?" And leaning forward she covered her face with her hands. My eye fell on the clock; it pointed to seven; in ten minutes they would be here; yet she was the first to speak. "Forgive me, Hannah; but you don't know what terrible suffering it is. I have tried to be resigned, but I *cannot* speak of hope."

"Dear madam," I said, "I would not speak of it without cause—but strange things happen: the lost come home, and the dead are found alive."

There was a sound of coming wheels, and my heart beat like a hammer. My lady looked at me with a strange light in her blue eyes. "Hannah," and her voice was almost fierce, "you know something—you have heard of my child."

The wheels came nearer, then stopped, and bending over her, I said, "I do know. He is not drowned—he is alive and well." I looked up; two figures stood in the doorway. "He is here, dear lady; speak to him."

With a wild cry she started to her feet, and that same minute Mr. Harrington put the boy into her arms. There was a dead silence, and when she lifted her face it was almost ghastly. "Where am I?" she asked slowly. "Is he alive? Am I alive? Say it again," she repeated, as we told her; and then she stooped over him with passionate kisses and hungry looks at the bright boy-face. Suddenly she tottered. "How was it? Tell me! Oh, I am dying;" and as I threw my arm around her, she fell almost senseless against me.

I laid her on the sofa, bathed her temples, and then as life came slowly back to her I whispered to Mr. Harrington that it would be best to leave her alone with her boy. So we two crept away, and left him sitting close by her side. His cousin had told him much, and his blue eyes was full of pity and softness as he watched her. We went and sat on the stairs, listening anxiously, but all was quiet, and after a while I went to the door and looked in. My lady lay, with a radiant smile on her white face, listening to the child's low talk, and never turning her eyes from him, and I left them again. When I came to look the second time, the boy had fallen asleep with his head against her arm, and she was watching him, her eyes bright with excitement. I dared not disturb her, and yet I feared, I feared. Once more I peeped in, and this time her head had fallen back on the pillow, and she slept calmly, with a half-smile upon her placid face. So we left them together all that night; and the next morning, pale though she was, there was a smile upon her lip and a sparkle in her eye which I had not seen for many a day. That morning a letter was brought me; I opened it, and read: "You have triumphed at last, but I have had a long revenge for old insults and injuries. I shall not return to Ravensbourne. You will hear of me no more.—J. R." When I showed this to my lady, she only said that she was happy, and forgave him, now that she had her boy again. In a few weeks we all went back to Ravensbourne. For the sake of the family honor, my lady wished that little should be told, and nothing was ever known certainly in the village but that the boy whom we had thought drowned had been found alive and far away from home. For fourteen happy years we lived at Ravensbourne, and then my dear lady died in her own home; and with her son beside her. After that, I came to live at this lodge, for Mr. Gerald said I must never work again, and he always comes once a week to see me when he's at Ravensbourne. Sally Weston came with me. She had always lived at the Hall in my lady's care till her death, and she was very fond of us both. Before her, we never spoke of old times.

I suppose it must have been eight years after we went back to Ravensbourne, that a letter came in a strange handwriting from America. It was written by a backwoodsman, to say that one who had worked as his comrade was lately dead, and that an old pencil had been found on him bearing the name of Jaspar Ravensbourne, Ravensbourne Park. No one had known anything of him, so they wrote to Ravensbourne; and this was the last we ever heard of him.

Last Words.

Not a few great men have, of course, departed without giving utterance to any very remarkable last words, but still, generally speaking, their last recorded utterance will be found—viewed by the light in which they uttered them—to be wise, suggestive, tender and profound. We append a few:

Surely, there is something very pathetic in those last words of Dr. Adam, of Edinburg, the High School head master: "It grows dark, boys; you may go." Every one knows that the few last words which Goethe uttered were truly memorable: "Draw back the curtains," said he, "and let in more light."

At the time of Humboldt's death the sun was shining brilliantly into the room in which he was lying, and it is stated that his last words, addressed to his niece, were these: "*Wie herrlich diese Strahlen, sie scheinen, die Erd, zum Himmel zu rufen!*" (How grand these rays: they seem to beckon earth to Heaven!)

Sir Walter Scott, during his last illness, more than once turned to Lockhart, and exclaimed with great fervor to him, "Be a good man, my dear." When we recollect the character of the man who uttered them, is not there a little sermon in these words?

Dr. Johnson's last words, addressed to a young lady standing by his bedside, were: "God bless you, my dear." And "God bless you! Is that you, Dora?" were Wordworth's last words.

There is a singular identity, also, between the last utterances of Mrs. Hannah More and of the historian, Sir James Mackintosh. The last words of both consisted of one word, and both alike breathe the same spirit of happiness. "Joy" was the last utterance of the former, and "Happy" that of the latter. "I am ready," were the last words of the great actor, Charles Mathews. John Knox, about eleven o'clock on the night of his death, gave a deep sigh, and exclaimed, "Now, it is come." These were his last words, for in a few moments later he expired.

General Washington's last words were firm, cool, and reliant as himself. "I am about to die," said he, "and I am not afraid to die." Noble words these! There is something in them which reminds us of Addison's celebrated request to those around him "to mark how a christian could die."

Etty, the great painter, quietly marked the progress of dissolution going on within his frame, and coolly moralized thereon.—His last words were: "Wonderful—wonderful, this death!" and he uttered them with perfect calmness.

Thomas Hood's last words were: "Dying, dying;" as though, says his biographer, "he was glad to realize the sense of rest implied in them.

Amongst the last utterances of another great wit, Douglas Jerrold, was the reply which he made to the question "How he felt?" Jerrold's reply was quick and terse, as his conversation always was. He felt, he said, "as one who was waiting, and waited for."

When we remember Charlotte Bronte's stormy and sorrowful life, lightened for only a few brief months towards its close by her marriage with her father's curate, Mr. Nicholls, there is a melancholy plaintiveness in her last words. Addressing her husband, she said: "I am not going to die, am I? He will not separate us; we have been so happy."

Poor Oliver Goldsmith's last words are very plaintive. "Is your mind at ease?" asked the doctor. "No, it is not," was poor Goldsmith's melancholy reply. This was the last sentence he ever uttered, and it is sorrowful, like his life.

One of Keats' latest utterances is full of a singular pathos and beauty. "I feel," he said, on his death bed, "I feel the flowers growing over me."

Tasso's last words—"In manus tuas Domine," (into thy hands, O Lord, do I commit my spirit,) are eminently religious. They were uttered by him with extreme difficulty, and immediately afterwards he expired.

Napoleon's last words assuredly exhibit "the ruling passion strong in death." On his death bed he became delirious. He issued orders to his troops, and imagined that he was conducting a great battle. "Tete d'armee," were the last words which escaped his lips.

A remarkable instance of "ruling passion strong in death" is to be found in the account left us of the death of Mozart, the great composer. Although Mozart was enfeebled by a fortnight's illness, still, when he felt that his last moments were approaching, he desired the "Requiem," (which was among the latest of his productions) should be sung around his bed by some friends, of his, performers at Snickaneder's theatre. He himself sang the alto part, Snock the soprano, and Hofer the bass. Shortly afterwards he expired. This instance of the "ruling passion," we opine, has, in penny-a-liner's phrase, "been rarely equalled and never surpassed."

Who that ever read them can forget those noble last words which Bishop Latimer addressed to his fellow-sufferer, Bishop Ridley, when both were about to perish in the flames at Oxford? Addressing Bishop Ridley, he said—"Be of good cheer, Brother Ridley; this day we light a candle in England which shall never be extinguished."

That great man and incorrigible jester, Sir Thomas More, perished, it will be remembered, on the scaffold. Observing, as he was ascending the scaffold, that it appeared very weak, he turned to the lieutenant, and said to him merrily—"I pray you, Mr. Lieutenant, that you see me safe up; and as for my coming down, why, let me shift for myself."

King Charles II. also died with a joke upon his lips; his death had been expected for sometime before it occurred, and thus many of his courtiers had been kept up all night. He apologized to those who stood round his bed for the trouble he had caused them; he had been, he said, a most unconscionable time in dying, but he hoped they would excuse it.

There is an incident related of the death-scene of Sir Charles Napier, the great Indian warrior, which is so curious and suggestive, that (although strictly speaking it does not come under the category of "last words," since no word was spoken by Sir Charles) we cannot resist referring to it here. It appears, then, that the Twenty-second Foot was the regiment with which Sir Charle's chief victories were achieved, and to which he was most strongly attached. Just as the old warrior's spirit was passing away, Mr. M'Murdo, his son-in-law, seized the tattered, shot-torn fragments of the colors of the Twenty-second Regiment, and waved them over the dying warrior. A grim smile of satisfaction crossed Sir Charle's face as this was being done, and thus his spirit passed away.

Zwingle, the great German reformer, was killed in battle during the year 1531. His last words are cool and brave. Gazing calmly and with undaunted courage at the blood trickling from his death-wounds, he calmly exclaimed: "What matters this misfortune? They may indeed kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul."

And now that we are speaking about the last words of warriors, who can fail to recollect those noble last words of Nelson? "I thank God," said he, "that I have done my duty." And so, with the great guns booming overhead, proclaiming the victory so dearly bought, he died.

In the year 1591, Sir Richard Grenville was serving in an English fleet against Spain. They were assailed by a Spanish fleet of far superior force. The Revenge, (Sir Richard's vessel) was taken, and Sir Richard Grenville himself was carried, mortally wounded, on board the Spanish admiral's ship. But in a few days he felt that death was at hand, and spoke these memorable words in Spanish, that all who heard him might bear witness to their fervor: "Here die I, Richard Grenville, in a joyful and a quiet mind; for that I have ended my life, as a good soldier ought to do, fighting for his country, queen, religion and honor; my soul willingly departing from this body, leaving behind the lasting fame of having behaved as every valiant soldier is in duty bound to do."

A Useful Contraband.—A lady in Washington desiring to procure a 'help,' made application at the head-quarters of the 'contrabands,' on Capitol Hill, when the following colloquy ensued between herself and a female contraband who had escaped from service, in Virginia:—

Lady—Well, Dinah, you say you want a place. What can you do? Can you cook?

Contraband—No, m'm mammy, she al-lays cooked.

Lady—Are you a good chambermaid?

Contraband—Sister Sally, *she* allays did the chambers.

Lady—Can you wait in the dining-room and attend the door?

Contraband—La, no, m'm; Jim, that was his work.

Lady—Can you wash and iron?

Contraband—Well you see m'm, Aunt Becky, *she* allays washed.

Lady—Can you sew?

Contraband—Charity, *she* allays sewed.

Lady—Then what in the world did you do?

Contraband—Why, I allays kep the flies off missis!

Thomas Cromwell.—The Lord Protector's great grandson—was a grocer on Snowhill, and his son, Oliver, the last male heir of the family, an attorney of London. Several of the Protector's grand daughter's children sank to the lowest class of society. One, after seeing her husband die in the workhouse of a little Suffolk town, died herself a pauper, leaving two daughters; the elder the wife of a shoemaker, and the younger of a butcher's son, who had been her fellow-servant. Another of the Great Oliver's great grand-daughter's had two children, who earned their scanty bread by the humblest industry, the son as a small working jeweler, and the daughter as the mistress of a little school at Mildenhall.