

"He gave me this, and a kiss," he said every word a sob; and Mary Houghton pressed it to her heart. Then, as a quick step sounded on the porch, she hastily thrust it into a drawer.

"What shall we say?" she asked.

"I do not know. Heaven will direct us for the best," he replied.

The step did not pause for ceremony, but came in, and up the stairs as if on some pressing errand. Then the door opened and Harry Houghton ran in—his curls wet with the fog of the morning, his cheeks rosy as from a rapid ride, his eyes dancing with excitement.

His father and mother stood speechless and bewildered filled with a new alarm. But the boy was too busy with his own thoughts to observe his reception. Thick and fast came his words, questions waiting for no answers and narrative never pausing for comment.

"What is this Bixby shouted to me when I met him about robbers? And what is there such a crowd at the bank about? Did I come sooner than you expected me? We had a glorious time at Tinborough you know, and when we were through dancing I decided to drive home at once. And a few miles out I met Silas in his gig driving like mad, and he shouted at me till he was out of hearing but I could not catch one word in a dozen. But before anything else, I want to beg your pardon for my roughness last night. I am old enough to know better, but I was angry when I spoke; and I have been thoroughly ashamed of myself ever since. You will forgive and forget, won't you father? Hallo, I didn't suppose you felt so badly about it, mother, darling."

Mary Houghton was clasping her son's neck, crying as she had not cried that night. But the Cashier, slower in seeing his way as usual, stood passing his hand across his brows for a moment. Then he spoke:

"Henry where is your grandfather's watch?"

"There, did you miss it so quickly? I meant to get it back before you discovered it was gone. I will have it after breakfast. The fact is, I was not myself when I left the house last night with temper, and Harrison Fry offered me two hundred dollars for it and, to be paid next week, and in my temper I let him take it to bind the bargain. I was crazy for money, and I sold him my pistol, too. I regretted about the watch before I had fairly quit the village; but he broke his engagement and did not go with us to Tinboro' after all; so I have had no chance to get it back again till now."

"Harrison Fry!" exclaimed Foster Houghton; and his hands clasped and his lips moved in thankful prayer.

"But if you don't tell me what is all this excitement in the village, I shall run out and find out for myself," cried the boy, impatiently. "You never would stand here asking me questions if the bank had been broken open in the night."

Foster Houghton put his hands on his boy's shoulder and kissed him, as he had not done since his son's childhood. Then he took from its hiding place the watch, and hung it on Harry's neck, his manifest emotion checking the expression of the lad's astonishment.

"There is much to tell, you will think I have to ask your forgiveness rather than you mine. But my heart is too full for a word till after prayers. Let us go down."

Then the three went down the stairs the mother clinging to the boy's hand, which she had never relinquished since her first embrace. Foster Houghton took the massive Bible, as was his daily custom, and read the chapter upon which rested the mark left the morning before; but his voice choked and his eyes filled again when he came to the lines:

"For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

Silas Bixby galloped into Tinborough two minutes late for the owl train; and the fugitive was too sharp to be caught by the detectives who were put on the watch for him by telegraphic messages. In a few hours all Elmfield had discovered that Harrison Fry was missing, and had made up its mind that he was the escaped confederate in the burglary. The Blue River National Bank offered a reward for him but he has never yet been found. The zealous constable found compensation for the loss of one prisoner in the discovery that the other two were a couple of the most skillful and slippery of the metropolitan cracksmen, known among other aliases as Gentleman Graves and Toffey Ben. Silas Bixby's courage and discretion received due tribute from counsel, press, and public during the trial that

ensued the next month in the Tinborough Court-House; and by some influence it was managed that Mrs. Houghton was not called to the stand, nor was Foster Houghton closely questioned in regard to the manner in which the third robber had escaped from his custody on the steps of the bank.

Harry Houghton went to Lake George that summer, starting a day after the departure of Grace Chamberlain; but this year they got together, and the programme of the tour includes Niagara and Quebec.

Romance of life in Washington.

YOUNG HAMILTON CAMP, known as Ham Camp, came up to the capital from the backwoods, about as awkward and green a youth as you ever ran away from. He was poor and was of a poor family, and had educated himself by working during the summer to have means of schooling in the winter. He found himself here, bent on office, with a few hundred dollars in his pocket, and no end of confidence in himself—He took the measure of men, and what is more, the measure of women, and planned his campaign accordingly. It was original. Sleeping in an attic, and regulating his diet on the most economical scale, he expended his means on a tailor and dancing-master.

"And I should say that Ham Camp was a donkey."

"Wait a bit. He appeared at all the receptions, balls and parties to which he gained access, and as he soon came to be recognized as an ornament, balls and parties opened before him. At all of them he was very attentive to the lovely and accomplished daughter of the Hon. —, of the Cabinet."

"I see the old story of love lifting the lowly."

"Wait a bit. He had the adroit flattery of the ears. He listened with intense interest to all the little troubles of Miss —, and came in time to be necessary to her happiness in the ball-room.—He never breathed a word of love, or what was more important to him of office. The season drew to a close, and Ham Camp found himself out of money. He suddenly disappeared from society. One day Miss — met him on the avenue, and held out her two little hands."

"Where have you been, you naughty man?" she said.

He made no response, but as they walked along, he quietly gave her what she had long before given him, a confidence, and told her of his ambition, poverty, and hinted at his love. A few days after he was appointed to the best office in the department over which the Hon. Father presided.

"And they lived in peace and died in adipose—As the children say."

"Not to any extent. Ham was very attentive to the daughter, but he never told his love. Less than a year after his appointment a change in the administration drove the Hon. papa from his place."

Ham saw the trouble coming, and was prepared. He did not court the successor, but he did court most assiduously the rich widow Japonica, then on the crest of fashionable society in Washington. She did not encourage him in his love, but better still, became his warm supporter. So that when Ham was bowed out of his nice place, it was to go into another and better."

"And he sold himself to the widow."

"Not much. She married a first-class mission, with a title, and went abroad."

"Good lord, is this man going to court everybody and marry no one?"

"He married at last. The war came on, and a shrewd money-getting little creature by the name of Cranks, died one day leaving a fat widow, and some fatter contracts. Ham. Married the widow, and the contracts, and now he is a millionaire. Next winter he proposes to buy his way to the Senate, and help to rule this troubled land."

"What a cold-blooded rascal; and I suppose little Miss —, his first love, died of a broken heart?"

"It may have been broken. Every woman's heart sooner or later is broken. Be that as it may, it did not prevent her marrying one of the richest men in all these United States—and she is the gayest creature you ever saw."

And so ends the eventful history.

The late Dean of Cape Town, in relating his experience with tracts, found that the charity inculcated in them led one of his penitents to say:—"I'm a changed man, sir, through them tracts. Once I cared for neither God or devil; and now I loves them both alike!"

HOW I FOUND HER:

OR

JABEZ SMITH'S DIARY.

MY name is Smith—"one of the few immortal names that were not born to die"—Jabez Smith, and I am not a married man, though I expect to be one soon. My hair stands on end like the quills upon the fretful porcupine, when I think upon the doom that awaits me. It is hard, for one so young, so beautiful, and with such bright hopes as were mine but a few short hours ago, with the world all before me, as one might say, with the exception of what is behind me, to be thus doomed to drag out a weary existence as the husband of a woman I never saw but once, who is ten years my senior, and has only one thing to recommend herself to my love—her name, which was Jones.

But to my story. I must tell it for I can find relief no other way, and I have but a few minutes to do it in. The marriage ceremony is to take place at two o'clock this afternoon. The minister is engaged, and my particular friend William Williamson has just left me for the purpose of obtaining the marriage certificate. I am alone with my thoughts.

Where, O where is Maria? I know not, but ah! let me forget her. She can never be mine. It is three years since these eyes of mine dwelt upon her beautiful countenance, since she told me that she loved me. During those long years I have been a wanderer in distant lands, with nothing but her dear letters and a comfortable salary to comfort me.

I made her acquaintance while I was principal of the P— High School. She was one of my pupils. When she graduated it was our idea to marry, and open an academy for young ladies and gentlemen where we could instruct the young idea in the art of shooting on the most approved plan.

But before the arrival of the day that was to make us both supremely happy, I received such a very liberal offer from a Mr. Jordan, the father of one of my pupils to become his son's tutor and traveling companion, while the lad made a tour through Europe, for the benefit of his health, which had become much impaired by study, that I thought, and Maria agreed with me, that it would be very foolish of me not to accept. And so, bidding adieu to the dear girl, who had wound herself like a corkscrew through the very core of my heart, I kissed her upon both cheeks, and promising to be true to her, as well as to the rest of the Joneses, whom I loved sincerely for her sake, I tore myself away from her, and that very day, in company with my pupil, embarked in the Asia for Liverpool.

For three years, as I remarked before, I traveled or sojourned in Europe, and, although I saw many beautiful women, I am happy to state that the needle of my heart never for one instant "wobbled," but pointed steadily to the north star of my existence, Maria Jones.

Meantime that dear creature amused herself (she was always fond of amusement), by teaching school in the rural districts, and in writing to her dear Smithy, as she called me, and in reading the letters I sent her, containing glowing descriptions of the various countries, cities, peoples and incidents, that I visited and met with in my journey; and so the time passed.

At last, I stood once more upon the soil of my own native land.

What my feelings were I shall not attempt to describe. It would take too long. It is enough to say that I was supremely happy in the thought that I was once more near my own Maria, and that in a few days, at most, I should press her beautiful form to my wildly throbbing heart.

With the utmost despatch I transacted what little business I had in the city, and then started for the village of M—, where I expected to find my Dulcinea. Alas! she had gone from there, no one knew whither. All that I could learn was that her brother had returned from Australia, immensely rich, and that he was going to settle somewhere in his native country, and Maria was to live with him.

Hardly knowing which way to turn or what to do, I tarried in M— nearly a week, in a state of dreadful uncertainty. But in the meantime I wrote to my old friend William Williamson, informing him of my return to "my dear native land." His answer reached me before I had decided upon any particular plan of action. It contained an invitation for me to visit him immediately at his home in the town of Becklinburg, where he was

keeping bachelor's hall, his family being away.

Without more ado, I immediately packed up, and started for Becklinburg, via New York and New London per steamer.

The steamer train, as it is called, reaches Becklinburg about four o'clock in the morning; and at that hour of this very morning I found myself landed at a dark and dismal depot, from which I hurried out into the street, in search of my friend Williamson's house.

I have been here in Becklinburg many times before, and I am quite familiar with the streets of the town, or at least I was three years ago, and time has made but few changes. To be sure the town is larger, and quite a number of buildings have been erected in my absence, as I noticed this morning while walking through its deserted streets. I noticed in particular, that some one had built a house on the lot adjoining my friend Williamson's, and so much like his in every respect, that it would have been difficult for a stranger to distinguish between them.—However, I had visited the house too often to experience any difficulty on that score, or at least I thought so, for I pride myself a great deal upon the fact that I never forget a face that I have once seen, a road that I have once traveled, or a house whose threshold I have once crossed.

When I reached Williamson's gate I was undecided what course to pursue.—It was really too bad to ring a man up at four o'clock in the morning, even if he was your friend, if I could effect an entrance without; and I knew I could, as I had done it many a time before, in company with Williamson, when we were boys and slightly wild, perhaps.

Around the house ran a veranda, the top of which was easily reached by some trellis work at the side, and from there I could step into one of the chamber windows without troubling any one. This I resolved to do.

I succeeded in climbing to the roof of the veranda without any serious difficulty, and with but little noise, and then a few cautious steps brought me to the window of Williamson's room, which I raised noiselessly and entered, not without some trepidation, although as I knew my friend had never been in the habit of keeping firearms about him, the danger, even if he should awaken, was slight.

Once in the room I paused to listen, for it was so dark that I could make nothing out but the dim outlines of the bed and furniture. I believe I trembled slightly, but the regular breathing of the occupant of the bed reassured me, and so cautiously closing the window I advanced into the room.

Still Williamson slept. Peering through the darkness, I could discover his form lying very near the edge of the bed, having plenty of room for me to get in on the other side without disturbing him, or at least I thought so, remembering that he was a heavy sleeper.

It was with a chuckle of satisfaction and delight that I threw off my clothes, thinking meanwhile what would be the surprise of Williamson when he awoke in the morning. I could hardly restrain from laughing outright, as my fancy pictured the sleeper's wonderment and perhaps alarm, or that which would be his, to find a bedfellow. Would he take me for the ghost of Smith, and run screaming away, or—just at this moment the sleeper turned over, and I became quiet as a mouse—hardly daring to breathe; but he did not awake, and I, having completed my preparations, crept softly toward the bed, cautiously turned back the sheet, and slipped in.

Egad! how the bedstead creaked.—Williamson flopped over but he did not wake. He moaned musically, and then he muttered "Smithy," and I knew he was dreaming of me.

My grandmother used to tell me that if you pinch a sleeping person's toe he will answer any question he may ask. I had never tried it; but here was certainly an excellent opportunity. I began to search for Williamson's toe, but very carefully. Slowly I slipped my hand beneath the sheets, slowly I—

"What the—Moses!"

"Murder! Help! help! help!"

It wasn't Williamson.

I sprang out on the front side, and the other party sprang out on the back side of the bed, yelling murder, and crying for help at the top of her voice—it was a female voice, or the voice of a female,—while I stood shivering with the cold, and trembling with fear, endeavoring to persuade the lady to "hush up," declaring that I was a gentleman of honor, and that it was a mistake, and that what was not right we'd make all right in the morn-

ing, but I really don't believe she heard a word I said; and just as the lady became exhausted with screaming, and might have been persuaded to listen to reason, I heard footsteps at the door.

There is nothing like presence of mind in a case like this. Some people wouldn't have known what to do at this juncture. I did. With the greatest presence of mind I seized my pantaloons and jumping into them (I never had a pair to go on with more ease), I very coolly made a dash at the window, dashed through it, of course dashing it all to smithereens, and landed myself handsomely on the roof of the veranda, my face, hands and legs beautifully ornamented by "cuts;" but I did not stop to admire these, but with the greatest celerity I made my way down the trellis work to the ground, followed by cries of "robbers!" "thieves!" etc., from my unknown bedfellow, and a fat pulpy gentleman in a red nightcap, who had popped himself out of the window with a laup in one hand and a "seven-shooter" in the other, who began to "let it off" just as soon as I disappeared from his view.

"Bang, bang, bang!" He discharged every barrel, but fortunately he was a poor shot at long range. He missed me, but awakened his neighbors. Lights flashed up in the houses on both sides of the street. Windows flew up and night-caps popped out to see what was the matter.

Fortunately for me, at this moment I saw a face appear at a window in the next house, that seemed familiar. It was Williamson. I sprang forward and leaping the garden wall called to him to come down.

"Who is it?" he cried.

"Smith—Jabez Smith," I replied as softly as I could.

"Where'd you come from at this time, and in such a plight, Smith?"

"Don't stop to ask questions now, but come down and let me in."

"Go around to the door, then."

I did so, and was admitted. Williamson closed the door behind me, staring at me in the greatest astonishment.

"What in thunder, does this mean, Smith?" he cried, grasping my hand.—"your face and hands are covered with blood, and—ha, ha, ha—where are your pantaloons?"

I looked down. Egad, I had jumped into the unknown's balneario skirt!

"Where have you been?"

"I've been roaming, I've been roaming, my dear boy, and I lost my reckoning and slipped into bed with a female in the next house, thinking it was you; and I dashed myself through a window; and I've been shot at, and if we can't hush this matter up, I'm ruined. Hide me, William, hide me from the terrible man next door."

Williamson pulled me into the parlor, and throwing himself on the sofa roared with laughter.

"Don't laugh or you'll betray me.—Bless me, there's the doorbell!"

"Hush! keep quiet. Wait here, and I'll go and see what is wanted," said Williamson, beginning to be alarmed.

"Don't betray me—don't."

He took the lamp, and closing the door after him, left me alone.

It was a moment of terrible suspense for me. If I had been seen to enter Williamson's house, if they searched and found me there, what would be the consequence? I dared not think. I had been guilty of something worse than burglary, and although I might be able to prove that I was innocent of any bad intentions, still my situation was dreadful to contemplate. At this moment I heard a strange voice at the hall door.

"But I tell you I saw him enter this house, Mr. Williamson," cried the voice, in a tone that assured me that the speaker was terribly in earnest; "and although I have not a search warrant, unless you mean to harbor a thief, you certainly can have no objections to my satisfying myself that he is not here."

"But he certainly wasn't a thief," said my friend.

"How do you know that, Mr. Williamson?"

"My friend was nonplused.

"Come," said he, "come in and I will explain it all."

"You explain it? What, are you the man?"

"No, but it was a friend of mine.—Close the door, and let us keep this matter entirely to ourselves."

"Certainly, if your friend is an honorable man, and is willing to do the right thing."

"But it is a mistake, you see."

"Yes, and a very bad one, Mr. Wil-