

# The Montrose Democrat.

"WE ARE ALL EQUAL BEFORE GOD AND THE CONSTITUTION."—James Buchanan.

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## English Monarchs.

First William the Norman;  
Then William, his son  
Henry, Stephen and Henry;  
Then Richard and John;  
Next Henry, the third;  
Edwards, one, two, three;  
And again after Richard,  
Three Henrys we see.  
Two Edwards, third Richard,  
Two Henrys, sixth Edward,  
Queen Mary, Queen Bess;  
Then James, the Scotchman,  
Then Charles, whom they slew,  
Yet received after Cromwell,  
Another Charles too;  
Next James the second  
Ascended the throne;  
Then good William and Mary  
Together came on.  
"Till Anne, Georges four,  
And fourth William all past,  
God sent us Victoria,  
May she long be the last."

From the Golden Rule.

## AGNES ARNOLD; OR, THE STORY OF A WILL.

BY SAMUEL YOUNG.

### CHAPTER IX.

#### THE REVELATION.

The lawyer remembered that, at the departure of his client, he manifested considerable uneasiness at the time, and seemed to be on the watch for some person in the vicinity. This had aroused suspicions in his mind, which he thought might lead to something explanatory of the deep mystery hanging around his client's case.

But the difficulty was to obtain a clue to the cause of the action on the part of Luke Arnold. It was curious to see him peering out before he ventured to go forth, and it was very strange to observe his abrupt departure. Fortune might yet favor him, and he would bide his time.

Since our hero had opened his law office, he had failed, to attend the parties, so-called, and other places of amusement, as much as formerly, and his companions missed him very much from their coteries, and the ladies were in agony in being thus deprived of his delightful presence. But Joseph never once thought of these frivolous matters. For this he may be termed a selfish fellow, and subject himself to very ungenerous remarks; but he cared not for these. His mind was engrossed in one only subject, and that was the unravelling of the mysterious Will case, and the first he had ever tried. On his table were several scented notes, inviting his presence at a social reunion, or a gathering of his male friends for a social party of pleasure; but his reply was brief to all—business before anything else.

Having returned from his trip to W—, and fully satisfied that he was now in a fair way to save his client from any very great trouble in having the Will properly proved, and entered upon probate, and he thought the probability of securing the property to the present claimant was, to say the least, very doubtful.

About eight o'clock that evening, Joseph found himself on his way to the residence of Mary De Vere. It was true, he did not go for the purpose of extending to that aged lady any further assistance in the way of charity, nor from any idle motive, or to gaze upon their poverty. No, indeed! The young lawyer had a higher purpose in view. And to accomplish this was the object of his visit at this time. He had been careful to provide himself with suitable weapons of defence, for the locality into which he was going was so notoriously dangerous, that he deemed it only safe to prepare himself for such emergencies as had recently occurred.

As he stepped up to the door of the hotel, he passed for a moment, but hearing nothing unusual from within, gave a rap on the door. In a moment it was opened, and Aggy presented herself. When she recognized Joseph, a glow of pleasure lighted up her face, and she bade him enter. "He was somewhat surprised to find a third occupant of the wretched room, but he was soon in possession of the facts which had transpired since his former visit, and he cheerfully entered into conversation with the invalid."

"He is very weak," said the kind hearted girl, "and he had better not talk much."

"Well, I shall not intrude myself upon him; but a few simple questions will suffice to answer my purpose." And our hero conversed with him on matters relating to his present condition, and the causes leading thereto.

It appears that during the evening on which he was so badly hurt, he had been in company with two or three persons drinking, and after he had become somewhat intoxicated, they invited him to accompany them down street for a walk. To this he had assented, and the result was the blow and the stab."

"And can you assign no cause for this?" asked Joseph. "It is strange that men would thus seek to take your life without some motive."

"There was a motive—no doubt, a substantial one. These men belong to the worst gang of rowdies in the city, and who, for a few dollars, would be guilty of almost any act."

"And what reason have you for thinking that your life was sought by these men for a reward?" queried Joseph, his interest becoming excited.

"The strongest reason in the world. The same man who incited them to do it, once hired an assassin to lodge a bullet in my brain, but the attempt failed."

Here, reader, we have Tom Branton—the same man who had performed an act of villainy for Luke Arnold, and whose life had been sought by that man, in order that his fearful secret might be forever hidden in the grave.

"My friend, you are a stranger to me," said Joseph, in a sympathizing voice, "and it seems that you are surrounded with constant danger. It is your duty to take such steps as will effectually prevent a recurrence of these attempts upon your life."

"How am I to do it? The man who seeks my life stands high in the world, and my poor voice could never reach him," and the man sighed heavily. "But," and he raised

himself as he spoke, and elevated his clenched hand above his head, "but there's an hour of retribution approaching, and perhaps what I can tell will sink him lower than I have fallen—and that is low enough, God knows."

He sank back upon the pillow, exhausted. Aggy and her foster-mother were silent witnesses of this scene. Aggy was about to interfere, to keep our hero from prolonging the conversation, but Joseph waived her back with his hand.

"A few words more, Aggy, and I will have done with him. Be not alarmed."

Joseph paused until the sick man had recovered, when he bent over him, and kindly taking his right hand in his, stooped down, and asked, in a whisper—

"Will you not confide to me the name of the man who you say is placing your life in jeopardy? I will keep it profoundly secret if you wish. Can you trust me?" and Joseph gazed earnestly into the face of the invalid.

"Send your ear lower," and the invalid whispered two words into his eager ear.

"Is it possible?" cried the lawyer, starting up. "Then you know him?"

"Know him?" said Branton, with a shiver, "know him! Alas! too well I know him. He has been the bane of my existence. He has placed a devil within my breast which torments me continually. I shall never know peace in this world, and I fear none in that which is to come."

"Nay, my good friend, do not despair. There is hope for you. There was hope for the thief, even in the last hour."

"Yes, yes, for a thief," exclaimed the man, as though his soul was enduring terrible pangs, "yes, for the thief—but not for the murderer."

"Murderer!" and Joseph started back from the bed, as if a serpent had stung him; and Aggy and her foster-mother fled toward the door in alarm.

The thought was terrible. A murderer beneath their humble roof, the recipient of their kindness! Had his hands been stained with human blood?

"Terrible, indeed!" said Joseph. "But, Aggy, be not alarmed. Perhaps this is but a will delirium which has seized his brain, and conjures up strange fancies."

"Merciful father, that your words were only true! But, alas! I feel too deeply the awful truth, which forever tortures me, whether asleep or awake."

Joseph again drew nigh. He looked upon the now flushed face and burning eyes of Branton. He must know the terrible secret from the guilty man.

"Will you not unburthen your soul of this awful crime of which you speak? I will promise you that I will not inform on you to anyone your arrest. I will rather use my best efforts to save your life, if it be in danger for this crime."

"I will tell you—tell you all, for this poor bosom has borne the pressure of the fearful secret too long. Listen to my story—for I will be brief—and judge for yourself how far I am guilty of the crime. It is over ten years since I was in the employ of Luke Arnold, of W—, in Luzerne county. I was engaged as his housekeeper. Two years previous to my leaving there, John Arnold, the brother of Luke, died, and left all his vast property to his only daughter, Agnes. The will made provision that, in case of the death of Agnes, all the property should pass into the hands of Luke. At the expiration of two years, this man, Luke Arnold, came to me in a confidential manner, and told me that it was his wish to have his niece Agnes removed quietly from his home, so that she might never return. He offered me one thousand dollars to take her away in such a manner that no person would be aware of it. The money tempted me to fall in with his scheme, and I undertook the removal of the girl. It was understood that, if by my accident the life of the innocent girl should be destroyed, so much the better; but if that failed, to convey her to some distant place, and there desert her. I started with the child, fully resolved to destroy her, but my heart failed me, and I loathed the deed, and I never returned to W—, but securing a berth on shipboard, went to sea, and did not return here for five years. At the end of that time, I came to this city, without money, and without friends. I dared not go back to W—, and falling into bad company here, I soon sank to the lowest degradation. An attempt was made upon my life, at the instigation of Luke Arnold, who discovered me here. But I escaped. I met him again, and he again hired me to take the girl, and I have no doubt, my life was sought again; but again have I escaped. Luke Arnold has a heart as black as night, and for money would parse at no act to obtain it. He loves money, and makes it his God. You have briefly my secret."

Joseph was utterly confounded. While Branton was speaking, Mary De Vere drew closer to the bedside, and listened eagerly to every word as it fell from the lips of the speaker, and Aggy could hardly control her emotions, for she felt that this story of wrong had something in it which related to herself.

"The mystery no longer surrounds the case," were the quickly uttered words of Joseph. Then turning to Branton, he said, "You regard yourself in the light of a murderer, in having been the instrument, in the hands of Luke Arnold, in removing this child?"

"I do," and Tom Branton buried his face in the pillow, as if to hide the terrible truth from his mind.

"What would be your feelings if this child still lived, and would soon be fully restored to all her rights?"

"Ah! I would not exchange my position for all the world's wealth. A kingdom could not buy the happiness which that fact would bring me."

"Then, my poor friend, let me use that joy into your soul. That girl still lives, and will, ere long, be proclaimed the rightful heir to the wealth of which a villainous relative seeks to deprive her."

"Say you so—still lives?" Bring her to me, that I may look upon her—beg her pardon, and die."

"Nay, sir, there is happiness even for you. Live on; you shall see all these things consummated."

"Thank God!" and Branton, overcome with the feelings which this last assurance produced, sank back upon his pillow, unable to utter his joy in words.

But what were the feelings of Aggy and her foster-mother, as these strange revelations

fell upon their astonished ears? Feelings too deep for utterance had taken possession of them, and they stood awe-struck. The thought was so great, the prospect so brilliant, that the pale girl was speechless.

The foster mother caught Joseph by the arm, and gazing intently into his face for a moment, asked—

"And is this true?"

Joseph was disposed to smile at her astonishment, but knowing that it would be the greatest happiness to the aged woman to be confirmed in the truth of what she had just heard, assured her that it was all true.

"God be praised!" and the poor woman was to overcome by her emotions, that she could say no more, but sought a seat, and sank into it, apparently powerless.

Aggy, my poor girl, you seem bewildered. This is glorious news for you. Do not doubt the goodness of Providence. His ways are inscrutable, but always marked with wisdom. Though you have suffered wrong, and through that wrong, endured much privation, yet your days of suffering are passing away, and all is bright and cheering on your future pathway. Come sit down beside me, and let me have a few moments' private conversation with you, in view of what has passed this evening."

They sat down together and held a conversation of considerable length, in an undertone, and at its conclusion, they arose. It was now late, and Joseph must be sending his way home. Before leaving he had a few words with poor Branton, who thanked him from his heart, for the consolation he had received from his assurance, and he now asked that his life might be spared to confront Luke Arnold at the proper time, and place, and punish him for what he had done in the past. Joseph did not introduce Aggy as his niece, but left the future to bring that about. Joseph bade them all good-night, and retired.

### CHAPTER X.

#### MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

The usually quiet town of W— was somewhat relieved of its monotony by the appearance of a beautiful and very interesting young lady, unaccompanied by any person save an aged mother. They took up their residence at the best hotel in the place, and the young gentlemen were on *qui vive* in regard to the sudden, though very welcome addition to the society of W—. It was reported that the young lady was an heiress, and this fact added to her beauty, rendered her an object of admiration to those who, having no fortune of their own, wrote very amply disposed to look for it in others, where, especially, the chances were so good as the young lady was called, was frequently the guest of the best families in the place, and among the rest, she was pressingly invited to take tea at the house of Luke Arnold.

Luke Arnold heard the lady's name bruited about, but it never raised a suspicion in his mind. He saw her aged mother, and, like Joseph Custar, at his first interview, for Aggy, passed by when he met her, for the comparison could go no further.

Miss Arnold and her mother were hospitably entertained at the Arnold mansion, a splendid home, by the way, surrounded by all the luxuries and beauties which a quiet suburban residence should possess. The afternoon and evening glided delightfully away, and the hour of departure had arrived. A carriage was in waiting to convey the visitors to the hotel, when Mr. Arnold, in a pleasant conversational tone, called Mrs. Agnes to his side, and said to her, "It is strange," he said.

"It does seem strange," replied Agnes, looking archly into his face, and smiling, "and it is still stranger, Mr. Arnold, when I understand that you had a niece whose name was the same as mine."

"That is true," said Luke in a deprecating voice. "But the poor girl is gone from the world. Her fate was no doubt a hard one."

"Why so, Mr. Arnold?" asked Agnes, wishing to lead him on, as she had evidently an object in view in doing so.

"She was heiress to fifty thousand dollars and was dearly beloved by the whole house. She was our pet."

"Indeed she was the light of our home," said Mrs. Arnold, and a tear started in her eyes.

"Poor thing. And have you never heard of her?" asked Luke emphatically, and if he had spoken his thoughts he would have added, "and I hope I never will," but he paused ere his thoughts found utterance.

"I remember," said Agnes, "of often seeing a young girl in Philadelphia, whose name was Agnes—often I have conversed with her when she came to the kitchen door, seeking old servants. She told me she had once been happy—lived in a fine house and all that—but had been driven away and brought to this city, and deserted."

"Our poor Agnes, I am sure," said Mrs. Luke Arnold, and fresh tears started to her eyes.

"Can't be," said Luke, and his voice quivered as he spoke. "If it were our lost girl, she would have found some means to get home—such a short distance."

"Poor, poor child, what she must have suffered—and perhaps died from want," and Mrs. Arnold melted again.

"I think she is still living," said Agnes. "It is not very far since I saw her. She had learned to sew and was working for the clothes."

"Indeed!" and Luke Arnold trembled all over. "Are you not mistaken, Miss Arnold?"

"No, sir, the girl is the same. She has a hard time of it. Without friends in the world, she is struggling to gain a miserable subsistence."

"Oh dreadful!" Mrs. Arnold bent over appealing look upon her husband—but he said no more. His mind was too busy with the fast crowding thoughts, that rose up like ghosts to frighten him.

Agnes had accomplished her purpose. Alarm had taken possession of Luke Arnold, and he feared that his long cherished secret would be revealed. It was a night of torment to him.

The ladies were escorted to the carriage and bade adieu to their entertainers.

Luke Arnold did not close his eyes to slumber that night. His mind was upon the matter. Every sound alarmed him, and he would start as if some terrible vision was passing before him. Then, was Luke Arnold's hour of salvation? Had he then retraced his steps—had he then sought to restore the lost

girl to her rights—had he then foregone his purpose of dishonestly enriching himself, he might have been happy, and secured that peace of mind which was now forever passing away. But the Rubicon had been passed, and instead of calm reflection his mind was teeming with desperate purpose to accomplish what he had undertaken.

So it is ever. That man who will permit himself once to commit a wrong, opens the way for fresh innovation and before he is aware, his moral character is stained with crimes which would have made him shudder to contemplate, when his heart was pure. Man is prone to err, and it requires to keep him from the commission of wrong. Such is humanity.

### CHAPTER XI.

#### THE APPROACHING CRISIS.

The scene enacted in the parlor of Luke Arnold on the previous evening soon found its way among the gossip-loving portion of the community, and proved to be more than a nine days' wonder. Many things were revived which had been forgotten, and the sudden disappearance of the innocent Agnes was talked about, and now curiosity aroused. Fresh suspicions were awakened—and many facts traced to living sources, which years ago had been hushed up, lest their repetition might affect the reputation of Luke Arnold.

He stood high in the community and whose kindness to the pretty young heiress was a matter of remark among all who were on terms of intimacy with the family.

One fact had been entirely overlooked at the time of the unexplained disappearance of Agnes. Tom Branton, who for many years had been in the employ of Luke Arnold, at the same time left his place, but no one ever thought of connecting him in any way with the mysterious disappearance of the heiress. In many similar stories were brought to light, bearing upon the interesting subject. Luke Arnold felt deeply the position in which circumstances had suddenly placed him. He knew that suspicion was directed at him—and he felt as a criminal only can feel who knows his guilt, and fears the evidence which will convict him of the charges laid against him.

The amiable wife of Luke Arnold suffered much from the reflection which occupied her mind since the conversation in the parlor. It was her unutterable conviction that Agnes Arnold, the lost heiress, still lived; and she urged upon her husband the necessity of at once making some efforts to reclaim her. To this she appeals Luke was deaf. To attempt this would overthrow his whole fabric of hope which he had been years in building. And not only so, but it would ruin him in character.

He must appear as a felon before all honest men—and with a conscience already seared with an infamous act, and his reputation sullied by the breath of suspicion, what could he do but fly from those who knew him?

"If I can but obtain the probate of the will and at once be put in possession of the property, methinks I will be safe. Before this time the only man I feared is out of the way. As for the girl, she can never appear against me, for she is no friend who will step in to interfere in her behalf. I will write at once to my lawyer to come on and have the business ready to hand. Raymond will be here in a day or two, and then I may bid defiance to the world."

Luke Arnold wrote to his lawyer, Joseph Custar, requesting his immediate presence, and on receipt of the letter Joseph sent a line to Mr. Raymond, wishing him to return home at once.

In the meantime, Tom Branton was rapidly gaining strength and was preparing to accompany the lawyer to W—. Joseph had everything properly arranged to proceed in the matter and only waited until Branton should recover and Raymond return home before he would begin the proceedings.

The young lady and her mother still remained at the hotel, and the interest which had been aroused in regard to them still continued to increase; and even some still hinted that the young lady Lore resembled Luke to the Arnold's of that vicinity, and went so far as to assert that there was a strong probability that she was really the heiress. But these were only surmises and had nothing solid to rest upon.

Even Mr. Luke Arnold heard these things hinted at and he grew uneasy. He felt the importance of at once closing up the matter, and for this purpose he wrote to the lawyer and the wife of the lawyer and the wife of the lawyer, and he was fearful in view of recent events, that something might occur to interfere with his schemes, and at times would give way to the deepest despondency. He felt nervous and easily alarmed, and when he noticed the suspicious glances which met him at every turn, he felt very uncomfortable. He began to see difficulties where none existed before. He knew well that, if his right as claimant under the will, in his asserted rights must inevitably follow; and if this should occur and there were any living witness whose testimony could create a doubt as to the justice of his claim, or throw a suspicion over his past action, then would his chances be impaired—and this very doubt and suspicion be enough to render him an uneasy possessor, as well as the object of continual charges. Would he subject himself to this? He would not. He would have his claim honestly proclaimed a villain to the world, but not only himself, but destroy forever the happiness of his family!

### CHAPTER XII.

#### THE QUARREL.

Having all his arrangements completed, Joseph started for W—. For several days he had been maturing projects in his mind, and felt confident that everything would result as he anticipated. He was comfortably lodged in the town, and as matters must soon be brought to a close, he had no time to lose. He had seen the beautiful Agnes Arnold and

her mother—spent an hour in a delightful *te de tele* with them, and bade them adieu for the evening, with many regrets that he was compelled by business to deprive himself of further pleasure in their company for the present. Several young gentlemen who were there were of the decided opinion that the young and handsome Philadelphia lawyer had made an impression on the heart of Miss Arnold, and thus lessened their own chances of securing a hold upon her affections.

"Deuced unlucky," poor honor, that this Philadelphia gent made his appearance at this moment. I flattered myself that I was making an impression—but such is my luck."

This soliloquy Mr. Adonis Eglington, a very elegant and very fascinating young gentleman of W—, but alas, he was doomed to grievous disappointment.

That evening Luke Arnold called to see Joseph Custar. Joseph appeared pleased to see him, and was informed by his client that Mr. Raymond had returned and everything was ready to have the will authenticated and entered upon probate.

"Are you sure the case is clear—nothing in the way?" and Joseph seemed to wear a suspicious look as he bent his scrutinizing gaze upon Luke.

"In the way," said Luke, starting, "what do you mean, Mr. Custar? Have you made any discoveries which might give us any trouble?"

"That depends somewhat on the way we look at matters. There have been hints thrown out, which, if true, have any grounds, will give us considerable trouble."

"Well, upon my word, that appears strange. If you had any hints affecting my claims, why did you not inform me sooner? You have let matters go too far before consulting me."

Luke was angry—and looked uneasily upon his lawyer. Had he heard any of the reports respecting the girl being alive, or worse, which would ruin him in character? Luke really felt alarmed, which, added to his anger at the prospect of defeat, just on the eve of victory, was enough to make him feel very unhappy.

"These hints have reached me from various quarters and though nothing more perhaps than merely supposition, yet I have felt inclined to attach some importance to them," said Joseph Custar, and he kept his eye fixed on his client, to mark the effect of his words.

"You think them important, eh? Well, and if they are so, will they amount to anything?"

And Luke was all anxiety to hear the decision of his lawyer.

"They are not only important, Mr. Arnold, but if proof can be brought to sustain them, they will give you cause to another claimant under this Will."

"And who is that, Custar, who?"

Arnold advanced close to the lawyer as he spoke.

"Agnes Arnold."

"Who?" exclaimed Luke, while he stood a picture of despair.

"Agnes Arnold!" cried the client with a desperation in his tones. "It is impossible, Custar, she does not live to make a claim."

"How you know that, Luke Arnold?" demanded Joseph with emphasis, and looking him straight in the eye as he spoke.

"I suppose so," was the uncertain response.

"Luke Arnold, and as the lawyer spoke he rose to his feet and pointed his finger at it. "I tell you, Luke Arnold, you are known to the world as an honest man, but thus far—whatever of evil nature to you has been kept from your knowledge—because you stand fair against mere insinuations. Thus you came to me, your pretensions made me think you honest, and I undertook your case. But many events have very recently transpired, which lead me to think that you have only presented your false character."

"Sir," as Luke Arnold spoke, he clenched his hands in a menacing manner and strode to the side of the lawyer. "Sir, do you mean to charge me with wrong in this matter?"

"I undertake this case as a lawyer, but never for a moment thought that I must aid in consummating a villainous project. I find, sir, that a great wrong exists somewhere, and that to serve you further, would implicate me in perpetrating wrong. I decline most emphatically to act for you longer."

"Custar," and Luke's face instantly assumed an imploring expression. "For heaven's sake, do not desert me now."

"Answer me a single question. Your reply may change my mind in regard to my decision. Do you know, or did you ever know a man named Thomas Branton?"

The color instantly deserted the face of Luke, and he shrank back from the lawyer as though a demon menaced him. It was several moments before he could find words to reply.

"Branton, Branton, why yes, he was my hostler once."

"How long since?"

"About ten years—"

"Enough. If I am correctly informed he left your house at the same time that your niece disappeared; did you discharge Branton, or was he entrusted with funds and ran off with the money? Luke Arnold, solve this mystery!"

Luke Arnold was thunderstruck. He could not speak. It was true, then, that his secret was out and that the hand of fate was against him.

"Take my advice, Arnold, and withdraw your pretensions to this property. It is not too late; you can save yourself from infamy and ruin. Will you pause?"

Luke was overcome with contending emotions. If he paused now he might save himself, but then all the wealth which he had promised himself, would pass like a dream from his grasp. No, no, he would stand firm to the end, and yet triumph over all. There could no witness appear against his claim, and he felt sure of success, although the difficulty grew more overwhelming every day. Yes, he would struggle on. If he failed it could be no worse—and if he won, then the reward would amply compensate him for what he must endure.

Joseph had waited to hear the decision of Luke Arnold, and it came.

"I will never yield my claim until compelled by law and evidence. You have my answer."

"We part. You have chosen a fatal con-

clusion," and Joseph motioned his late client to withdraw. Arnold retired without a word.

Joseph at once took the proper steps to contest the Will with Luke Arnold. Arrangements were made for a speedy trial—and in a day or two the decision would be made known.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### CONCLUSION.

The day of trial had dawned. It was a day fraught with the most important interests and results. The whole community were on the tip-top of expectation. The friends of Luke Arnold were confident he would gain the suit and be unable to discover in what way he could be deprived of that which he considered his rights. Others sagely shook their heads and thought that something would transpire on the trial, which would upset his pretensions, and leave him without a hope. Such were the various feelings maintained, and the subject was freely discussed pending the trial.

On the evening preceding the trial, Joseph Custar held a conversation with Agnes in relation to the important case, and she expressed her fears that perhaps she would be unable to fully establish her identity as the heiress, and the failure to do so, would plunge her into still deeper misery. But her fears were removed by the arguments of the lawyer, and she resigned herself to whatever destiny awaited her.

Agnes had noted well the part she was now playing. She had appeared as she had described in accordance with the suggestions of Joseph. The design was to arouse suspicion in the minds of the community, as well as perhaps alarm Luke, who reposed in such fancied security. This had been accomplished, and the natural inquiry in the minds of the people led them to form very different conclusions touching the past conduct of Arnold, and cast a suspicion around him, which would to a great extent impair his prospects.

The Register's court was in session. The judges were seated upon the bench, the lawyers were busy preparing to hear with awe and take notice of testimony. Every inch of spare room was occupied by the interested citizens. Silence was strictly observed, and all waited with interest the commencement of the proceedings. The Court was fully prepared to receive the business before it.

Joseph Custar, who was now the counsel for the contestant of the Will, arose. He gazed upon the multitude of people around, and for a moment his heart swelled within him. It was to be his first attempt to address a court, and he felt a strange sensation as he paused to collect his thoughts.

He felt the importance and responsibility of his case, and he calmed his mind for the effort. All eyes were bent upon him and he knew that much depended on what he would utter. We shall not attempt to give his words as they fell from his lips, but we will merely state in brief what his position was. After addressing the judges, and stating the object he had in view in bringing this suit, he went on to say that, never had there been a better case presented to the judgment of a court, but that like a villain and fraud were so mixed up in it, was true that the character of the man who set up his claim to the provisions of the Will stood high, no stain had ever publicly been attached to him, the world had known him only as an honorable citizen. But he would, in the course of this trial, remove the veil which concealed his private life, and show as black a record as ever stained the annals of humanity. He would prove by incontrovertible evidence that Luke Arnold, at the time of the sudden disappearance of Agnes, his niece, was aware of the moment of her departure and that further, he had paid one thousand dollars to have the girl carried away so that she might never return, and that the agreement for her removal even extended to the taking of her life, if required to place her beyond the possibility of return. He would prove by a living witness, that the person who had taken the girl, was twice attempted at the instigation of Luke Arnold.

A thrill of horror pervaded every heart in the court-house, and all eyes were bent upon Arnold who sat beside his lawyer. Luke paled for a moment, but instantly recovered, and though he could not meet the gaze directed at him, he managed to banish that anxiety which guilt will impress upon the features.

"These facts," continued Joseph, "will be proven. I wait to hear the opposite side, when the proper witnesses will be called."

The lawyer whom Luke Arnold had employed, after Custar had declined, now arose. He was a man of forty-five, and rather prepossessing in his appearance. He spoke without effort, and though having but a brief period to prepare for the trial, he spoke well.

He presented the character of his client as a wall of brass against the onslaught of the opposing counsel, and he felt confident that he would come out of the ordeal, unscathed. He said that the reliance of the opposition was based upon flimsy suppositions, the merest hints of busy gossipers, and had no substantial basis whatever. His client's past history was a clear guarantee of the purity of purpose now, and that he had no other object in view than merely to obtain possession of the estate, and the place of honor in the town, which had become legally his, in the absence of the other claimant named in the Will now under consideration. He asked that the court would receive the prayer of the petitioner, and place him in possession of the property.