

THE FACE OF ROSENTEL.

CHARLES HOWARD MONTAGUE.

CHAPTER X.

The tide flowed back and forth beneath the thickening ice, and the winter were on. Maxey's new pupil was making much progress. The safe was true, in another sense, of Maxey himself. Sometimes in the interest and pre-occupation of their mutual labors their heads would get very close together. This was so entirely accidental and unpremeditated an occurrence that the fact that a sudden interruption at such times started a blush into the faces of each seems strange and unaccountable. But it was unquestionably the fact. A knock at the outer door one afternoon was attended by this result. They had been bending over a sketch by a window in the rear room, and both became suddenly conscious that they were betraying unthought confusion. Maxey was so painfully aware of his own betrayal of sentiment that he was very glad of the opportunity offered to conceal it by answering the summons at the door.

He stepped into the vestibule and partly closed the entrance to the rear chamber before he looked into the outer corridor. Two men stood by the stair railing. When he saw them, the artist's heart gave a great bound. One man he knew by sight; the other he knew by intuition. The foremost man was the sly landlord of 40 Flood street. The other, who remained a little in the rear, was a curious specimen of humanity. He appeared to be between 40 and 50 years of age. His face was smooth, his skin very pale and sallow. His cheeks sank into two cavernous hollows. His hair was long and of an obstinate straightness. He bared his ears and swept his coat collar. In perfect keeping with the rest of his appearance, his eyes looked as though they might have been of a definite color in his boyhood, but had faded out from long usage. So did his hat, his coat and what was visible of the remainder of his habit. There were a telltale glossiness and a waxy, waxy threadiness about them all. If there was a frown and utterly cast down atmosphere surrounding his face, this was equally true of his hat and shoes. His ancient coat was buttoned up about his neck with such an evident attempt to conceal the absence of a collar or the dirtiness of his linen that the only possible excuse for having taken so much pains about the matter seemed to be to allow the observer a chance to amuse himself with a speculation as to which of the two was the fact. And with all this there were hard lines in the man's face which spoke of unhappiness, even perhaps despair.

Mr. Belfry bowed as soon as the door was opened. With a placid wink, of which his companion was blissfully unconscious, he said:

"I believe you was the man, sir, that wanted a man to write letters for you?"

"I believe I was," returned the artist.

"And if you have found me the person I want I shall be greatly obliged to you. Let the gentleman come in. Perhaps you wouldn't mind yourself taking a seat in the vestibule?"

The landlord gave Maxey a sly look and a profound bow. He motioned his companion forward, and when the door was closed immediately turned the key in the lock, drew a chair up against it and sat calmly down with his back to it.

The faded and forlorn individual did not notice this action, as it was done behind him. He had come into the hall, had removed his hat and was bestowing one or two smoothing touches upon his obstinate hair, eying Maxey rather stealthily the while.

"You did not mention the gentleman's name," said the artist.

"His name is Dye," returned the sly Belfry.

At this the lips of the stranger unclosed to give slow and distinct utterance, in a dull, somber voice, to the corroborative statement.

"Mr. Leander Dye, sir."

"Dye? Dye? Rather an odd name, that. But I think I have heard it before. I think I have. Come in, Mr. Dye, come in. I have recently taken it upon myself to become the protector and guardian of a certain young person to whom I shall take great pleasure in introducing you."

Maxey threw open the door communicating with the rear room and stepped in. The next instant the young woman and the man confronted each other.

The meeting affected them differently. Annette was so overcome that she was obliged to cling to the piano for support. Mr. Dye, even under the shock of the first meeting, did not start, nor was anything added to the natural pallor of his countenance. He merely turned his head, saw the man who had brought him there sitting with his back against the door, cast a faded glance over the gen-

tle face of Maxey began to regret having subjected her to the shock. In his anxiety to overwhelm the man he had not considered the possible effect on the woman. Still the worst was over, and he could only proceed.

"I suppose you won't deny that you know this lady?" he said in a voice that was meant to be very uncomplaining and stern.

"Sir, it would be utterly useless for me to deny anything."

Mr. Dye had not cast a second glance at his former daughter, nor did he do so now. He made his answer in the most grave, even dignified tones. He punctuated perfectly. There was a little pause after the "sir" and a full stop at the "anything." This calmness, which might be either the calmness of determination or of despair, rather disconcerted the artist. He had often imagined himself the central figure in such an interview, but he had never dreamed of a man like Mr. Dye.

"Nevertheless I will break his guard yet," he thought.

After a minute's silence Mr. Dye went on in the same measured tones in which self-consciousness and helplessness were strangely intermingled.

"Touching the lady now under your charge, when I once disengaged in permitting to be known by a name by no means a synonym for integrity and uprightness, I do not hesitate to say that I am exceedingly well rejoiced at seeing her in such apparently excellent health. She is a good girl, sir; she is everything the term implies, and yet, sir, you must be aware of the almost painful relations that exist between us, and being aware of them and of the fact that they are so strong that she left my house voluntarily, for the avowed reason that a longer life with so unbecoming a person as myself was unbearable, you can scarcely be surprised that our meeting is not more mutually pleasurable and cordial."

Mr. Dye occasionally hesitated an instant for a word, but generally his dull, somber voice flowed on, measurably and unintermittently, as if he were delivering himself of a speech that was quite familiar to him. His dignified bearing was in such marked contrast to the dominant air of faded gentility that pervaded him as to be almost painfully ludicrous. Maxey gazed at him steadily and said:

"You don't know where she went when she left your house?"

"Sir, she never made a confidant of me. Do not misunderstand me. I am not reproaching her. I was utterly unfit for and unworthy of her confidence. I always avoided her, as she had instinctively avoided the good. She was right to go. I entered only a feeble protest. I am aware, sir, that it may seem inhuman and artificial coming from me, but even at the risk of seeming inhuman and artificial I desire to say in taking my farewell of the young lady under your charge—for you can scarcely wish to prolong an interview that is manifestly so painful to her—that I am heartily, devoutly, sincerely sorry that she ever threw her into the way of such a worthless mortal as myself, and that I earnestly hope that her future may be as bright and unclouded as her past was dark and unfortunate."

"So you confess your share in the crime without equivocation?"

"Sir, I can only confess the truth, but as I am not a man of vanity that would have little weight. If you have any evidence at all of any wrong dealing on my part, an ignorant and uneducated jury would undoubtedly do your work and convict me of anything. I look like a villain. I have all the suspicious and unexplainable habits of a villain. Twelve average men would say at once: 'He is a villain. Let us punish him.'"

"And you haven't a shadow of a suspicion of what you would be accused?"

"Sir, of what use is it to question me? If I say no, you will not believe me. If I say yes, I should only lay myself open to further questions, which it would be impossible for me to answer, and then you would not believe me. In any case I should be a liar and an equivocator in your eyes. The shortest way is to call the police at once. Sir, I have used alcohol very freely of late years, and it has partially succeeded in achieving the result to secure which I learned to like it—in blunting my senses and brutalizing my intellect, but I have yet remaining to me, I think I may say without exaggeration, sufficient penetration and sagacity to understand that a gentleman like yourself does not take such pains to become possessed of the person of a social outcast like myself unless he believes such a step of supreme importance. Doubtless you have your theories?"

"Doubtless I have. You have parried my question very ingeniously, Mr. Dye. Let me see what you will say to the next. You speak of the truth in the matter. What is the truth?"

"Sir, I will answer you unreservedly. I connect my presence here, but without some degree of naturalness, you must admit, to the interest you take in the young lady whom I have reared as my daughter. While I can have no idea of

what your suspicions are or of what you would convict me, inasmuch as you speak of the police I infer that it must be something of a criminal nature. The truth in relation to that matter is Annette is not my child, and I have no claim or authority over her. I never even legally adopted her. If she has borne my name, it was because my late wife wished it for the child's own sake. She believed that it would be humiliating for the child to be brought up in the knowledge that she had no name; that she was in truth a waif whose parentage was unknown. I would have given much if the name we gave her had been worth more for her own sake, but it was the best that we could do under the circumstances."

"Who were Annette's parents?"

"God knows."

"And you?"

"Sir, I am not in his confidence."

"You talk that way and expect me to believe you?"

"Sir, on the contrary, I do not. Neither do I wish to be understood as including in profane levity. I have not the most respect for the Deity. He has, he can have none for me."

Maxey was astounded. It was not alone the coolness of the man, but the audacity and despair with which he seemed to speak. In spite of himself, the artist began to believe him. For a moment he could not regain courage enough to return to the attack. Mr. Dye lifted his faded eyes inquiringly in the contemplation of his hat.

"You don't believe me?" he said.

"It seems hardly possible."

"Sir, it is the truth. For myself I would not trouble to speak. For her sake I will say to you that I take my oath before Almighty God, as I hope for mercy in the world to come, that I do not know who her parents were."

He said this solemnly and impressively. It produced a profound effect on Maxey, who had never drifted away from the religious teaching of his youth. The name of the Deity was a very solemn thing in his eyes. He could not understand why it should not be in the eyes of all men. Nevertheless he mastered his rage to restrain his wrath.

"If this be true, why then did you appear so excited on the night when you put this child into your wife's arms? Why did you plead with her so earnestly never to reveal that the child was not your own? Why did you even say that if the truth were known it might bring you to the gallows?"

Surprises like this may startle the calmness of efficiency, but there are few surprises sufficiently strong to overcome the calmness of despair. Mr. Dye was utterly unmoved. He replied in his somber tones:

"Sir, you must be aware that the morbid when approaching dissolution enters frequently into a stage of hallucination. The mind wanders. If it were worth while to defend myself, I should say that my poor wife was not herself; that she exaggerated."

This was simply unanswerable, and strangely enough it was the first time it had occurred to Maxey. The artist felt the groundwork of his hopes giving way beneath him, but he forced himself to assume a skeptical air and to proceed.

"You can tell me, I suppose, how you became possessed of this child?"

"Sir, I can assurely."

"In the name of goodness, vary your form of address a little," cried Maxey, exasperated by the inevitable profanity "sir." Mr. Dye looked up with mild surprise in his faded eyes.

"Since it amuses you, sir, I will."

"It is unnatural, and you put it on for effect."

"You are a gentleman, sir. I cannot contradict you."

"By kind enough, then, to go on."

"It was a dark night, sir," said Mr. Dye, looking as though he were drawing the whole scene out of the ruffled surface of his forlorn hat. "I was coming home from a low resort. I stumbled up my steps unsteadily and fell over a bundle that was lying outside my door. It was little Annette, stupified by the effects of some drug which had been given her. I took her in to my wife, and that poor, unfortunate woman who wrecked her life when she married me conceived an affection for her at once. We never had any children. She desired to keep her. I permitted her to do so. That is the whole story. Do not think I wish to be short with you. I will answer any question you think it worth your while to address to me."

"You leave the city immediately after you found the child?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"My business, perhaps it would be franker to say my means of livelihood, necessitated it."

"What has been your means of livelihood?"

"Swindling in all its various forms." Maxey sat staring in bewilderment for some minutes.

"By what methods?"

"By the meanest methods. Do you wish me to give a catalogue of my crooked ways? It would no doubt be instructive to you."

"Never mind that," cried Maxey, with sudden energy. "Answer me this: Were you concerned in the attempt to murder this child Annette?"

Mr. Dye sprang to his feet with a force that overturned his chair and stood with a horrified look fixed on the artist's face. His lip trembled and his voice faltered when he asked:

"Is that—is that your suspicion?"

"I am not here to talk of suspicions. I am asking you a plain question, susceptible of a plain answer."

Gradually the horrified look faded out of his face. The lack luster eyes sought the surface of the hat again. He turned and carefully restored the chair to an upright position before he replied:

"I would rather, I would much rather, in any other form, but go on, sir, go on even in this. If there has been such an attempt, arrest me, try me, convict me, hang me. I am utterly unworthy of the least respect, as you realize. A man who would steal would kill. He would shoot down even the young and innocent girl who trusted him. Go on, sir. I shall not oppose you."

"I am half a mind to take you at your word," cried Maxey, rising and impatiently pacing the floor.

"I shall not resist you, sir."

"Do you mean to tell me that you do not know of the foul attempt on this poor girl's life on the sea road the very day you disappeared from town?"

Mr. Dye made no reply at once, but a harsh, grating sound issued from between his lips. Maxey even thought he heard him murmur through his clenched teeth:

"The black heart! The black heart!"

But his faded glance was scarcely lifted from the forlorn hat ere he became passive again.

"I can only say to you, sir, that I never heard of this thing before."

"Don't you read the newspapers?"

"Not except by accident. I have no interest in the world whatever."

"Do you never hear people talk?"

"I have heard nobody talk about this, but I have been away where I would be little likely to."

"Why did you go away?"

"Because it was necessary for me to have money. I have been engaged in an attempt to raise money by dishonest means—an attempt which failed as disastrously as it deserved. It was my belief until I came here that Annette had indeed voluntarily absented herself from my abode, as she had threatened to do. If you will ask the landlord at 40 Flood street, he will tell you that I left money in his charge to be given to her if she returned during my absence. I had, I could have, no possible ill will for that unfortunate girl. Neither was her life such that she could have acquired enemies. You speak in riddles, sir. You will be asking too much that you should tell me the circumstances? But, no, you will not do that, for I am the man suspected."

"I think circumstances warrant a suspicion that you know more than you will admit. Nevertheless, lest I do an injustice, I will tell you what you ask."

He told it. Mr. Dye listened motionless till the end. When it was over, he remained silent.

"Have you nothing to say to this?" asked Maxey. "Do you suspect nobody?"

"I have nothing to say, sir."

"Nothing?"

"Not a word."

"Well, then," cried Maxey excitedly, "there is only one course open to me."

He was interrupted by a knock at the door. Annette, whose eyes were not yet free from tears, inspired his attention for a moment. He went into the parlor with her.

Miss Maxey, dressed for the street, sat in one corner of the room, apparently preoccupied, though the unusual color in her cheeks was evidence enough that she was disturbed by more than ordinary emotions. The artist barely noticed her. He was too much under the power of the new and contending feelings that filled his soul when Annette spoke to him to heed anything else, for Annette opened her heart to him and laid bare her sweet and forgiving nature as she never had done before. And she pleaded for the token of his regard for her which he was the least in the world desirous of granting. But what could he do under the spell of her presence? How could he say "No" even when the granting of his prayer would allow to elp through his fingers the first real key to the mystery of the sea road which he felt he had ever held? The beautiful face turned toward him so beseechingly, the dark eyes emphasized her words so eloquently that he had no power to resist.

She could not forget that Mr. Dye had brought her up, had given her a home; that he stood to her in place of a father. She could not bear to think of his being persecuted or molested on her account. If he would not speak, let him remain silent. The past was passed. Would not Mr. Maxey give her his promise not to allow up that dark matter further? Mr. Maxey did not want to, but for her sake Mr. Maxey would, and he did.

"I promise you," he said at length.

"I will detain him no longer. I will tell him that he is at liberty to go where he pleases, and that I do it for his daughter's sake."

"Oh, no, please don't tell him that. It is not necessary that he should know that I interceded for him. I would rather not."

"Very well then," said Maxey. "So be it."

He left the room and dismissed Mr. Belfry from his post in the hall.

As he was holding the door open for the sly landlord to pass out, Miss Maxey swept by him on her way to the street, and as she went she flashed into her brother's face a look of mingled pity and contempt which made him feel decidedly uncomfortable.

"She thinks I have yielded to Annette too readily," he reflected, "and no doubt she is right. No doubt I have."

Still he could not retract his promise now. He went into the room where the somber man still sat.

"Mr. Dye, I have only one more question to ask you. Have you told me everything which you believe it is necessary for me as the guardian of Annette to know?"

"Sir, I have nothing more to say."

"I have done, sir."

Mr. Dye arose, calm and unmoved now as he had been at first, smoothed off his hat with his glistening sleeve, put it upon his head and made the following speech:

"I desire, first, sir, to warn you, if you wish to retain me, to have me arrested. Necessity is a stern law. I must eat. If there is nothing for me here, I shall not remain here. I do not much think, in view of the manifold vicissitudes of life, and the uncertainties of the appellations which control human events, that if you let me go today it is at all probable you will ever see me again."

"You are at liberty to go where you will," said Maxey. "If you have told me the truth, there is no reason why you should not. If you have lied to me, settle it with your conscience."

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"And that is the end," thought the artist, with some bitterness, "of my experience as a detective."

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[TO BE CONTINUED.]

What you would be accused?"

"Sir, of what use is it to question me? If I say no, you will not believe me. If I say yes, I should only lay myself open to further questions, which it would be impossible for me to answer, and then you would not believe me. In any case I should be a liar and an equivocator in your eyes. The shortest way is to call the police at once. Sir, I have used alcohol very freely of late years, and it has partially succeeded in achieving the result to secure which I learned to like it—in blunting my senses and brutalizing my intellect, but I have yet remaining to me, I think I may say without exaggeration, sufficient penetration and sagacity to understand that a gentleman like yourself does not take such pains to become possessed of the person of a social outcast like myself unless he believes such a step of supreme importance. Doubtless you have your theories?"

"Doubtless I have. You have parried my question very ingeniously, Mr. Dye. Let me see what you will say to the next. You speak of the truth in the matter. What is the truth?"

"Sir, I will answer you unreservedly. I connect my presence here, but without some degree of naturalness, you must admit, to the interest you take in the young lady whom I have reared as my daughter. While I can have no idea of

what your suspicions are or of what you would convict me, inasmuch as you speak of the police I infer that it must be something of a criminal nature. The truth in relation to that matter is Annette is not my child, and I have no claim or authority over her. I never even legally adopted her. If she has borne my name, it was because my late wife wished it for the child's own sake. She believed that it would be humiliating for the child to be brought up in the knowledge that she had no name; that she was in truth a waif whose parentage was unknown. I would have given much if the name we gave her had been worth more for her own sake, but it was the best that we could do under the circumstances."

"Who were Annette's parents?"

"God knows."

"And you?"

"Sir, I am not in his confidence."

"You talk that way and expect me to believe you?"

"Sir, on the contrary, I do not. Neither do I wish to be understood as including in profane levity. I have not the most respect for the Deity. He has, he can have none for me."

Maxey was astounded. It was not alone the coolness of the man, but the audacity and despair with which he seemed to speak. In spite of himself, the artist began to believe him. For a moment he could not regain courage enough to return to the attack. Mr. Dye lifted his faded eyes inquiringly in the contemplation of his hat.

"You don't believe me?" he said.

"It seems hardly possible."

"Sir, it is the truth. For myself I would not trouble to speak. For her sake I will say to you that I take my oath before Almighty God, as I hope for mercy in the world to come, that I do not know who her parents were."

He said this solemnly and impressively. It produced a profound effect on Maxey, who had never drifted away from the religious teaching of his youth. The name of the Deity was a very solemn thing in his eyes. He could not understand why it should not be in the eyes of all men. Nevertheless he mastered his rage to restrain his wrath.

"If this be true, why then did you appear so excited on the night when you put this child into your wife's arms? Why did you plead with her so earnestly never to reveal that the child was not your own? Why did you even say that if the truth were known it might bring you to the gallows?"

Surprises like this may startle the calmness of efficiency, but there are few surprises sufficiently strong to overcome the calmness of despair. Mr. Dye was utterly unmoved. He replied in his somber tones:

"Sir, you must be aware that the morbid when approaching dissolution enters frequently into a stage of hallucination. The mind wanders. If it were worth while to defend myself, I should say that my poor wife was not herself; that she exaggerated."

This was simply unanswerable, and strangely enough it was the first time it had occurred to Maxey. The artist felt the groundwork of his hopes giving way beneath him, but he forced himself to assume a skeptical air and to proceed.

"You can tell me, I suppose, how you became possessed of this child?"

"Sir, I can assurely."

"In the name of goodness, vary your form of address a little," cried Maxey, exasperated by the inevitable profanity "sir." Mr. Dye looked up with mild surprise in his faded eyes.

"Since it amuses you, sir, I will."

"It is unnatural, and you put it on for effect."

"You are a gentleman, sir. I cannot contradict you."

"By kind enough, then, to go on."

"It was a dark night, sir," said Mr. Dye, looking as though he were drawing the whole scene out of the ruffled surface of his forlorn hat. "I was coming home from a low resort. I stumbled up my steps unsteadily and fell over a bundle that was lying outside my door. It was little Annette, stupified by the effects of some drug which had been given her. I took her in to my wife, and that poor, unfortunate woman who wrecked her life when she married me conceived an affection for her at once. We never had any children. She desired to keep her. I permitted her to do so. That is the whole story. Do not think I wish to be short with you. I will answer any question you think it worth your while to address to me."

"You leave the city immediately after you found the child?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"My business, perhaps it would be franker to say my means of livelihood, necessitated it."

"What has been your means of livelihood?"

"Swindling in all its various forms." Maxey sat staring in bewilderment for some minutes.

"By what methods?"

"By the meanest methods. Do you wish me to give a catalogue of my crooked ways? It would no doubt be instructive to you."

"Never mind that," cried Maxey, with sudden energy. "Answer me this: Were you concerned in the attempt to murder this child Annette?"

Mr. Dye sprang to his feet with a force that overturned his chair and stood with a horrified look fixed on the artist's face. His lip trembled and his voice faltered when he asked:

"Is that—is that your suspicion?"

"I am not here to talk of suspicions. I am asking you a plain question, susceptible of a plain answer."

Gradually the horrified look faded out of his face. The lack luster eyes sought the surface of the hat again. He turned and carefully restored the chair to an upright position before he replied:

"I would rather, I would much rather, in any other form, but go on, sir, go on even in this. If there has been such an attempt, arrest me, try me, convict me, hang me. I am utterly unworthy of the least respect, as you realize. A man who would steal would kill. He would shoot down even the young and innocent girl who trusted him. Go on, sir. I shall not oppose you."

"I am half a mind to take you at your word," cried Maxey, rising and impatiently pacing the floor.

"I shall not resist you, sir."

"Do you mean to tell me that you do not know of the foul attempt on this poor girl's life on the sea road the very day you disappeared from town?"

Mr. Dye made no reply at once, but a harsh, grating sound issued from between his lips. Maxey even thought he heard him murmur through his clenched teeth:

"The black heart! The black heart!"

But his faded glance was scarcely lifted from the forlorn hat ere he became passive again.

"I can only say to you, sir, that I never heard of this thing before."

"Don't you read the newspapers?"

"Not except by accident. I have no interest in the world whatever."

"Do you never hear people talk?"

"I have heard nobody talk about this, but I have been away where I would be little likely to."

"Why did you go away?"

"Because it was necessary for me to have money. I have been engaged in an attempt to raise money by dishonest means—an attempt which failed as disastrously as it deserved. It was my belief until I came here that Annette had indeed voluntarily absented herself from my abode, as she had threatened to do. If you will ask the landlord at 40 Flood street, he will tell you that I left money in his charge to be given to her if she returned during my absence. I had, I could have, no possible ill will for that unfortunate girl. Neither was her life such that she could have acquired enemies. You speak in riddles, sir. You will be asking too much that you should tell me the circumstances? But, no, you will not do that, for I am the man suspected."

"I think circumstances warrant a suspicion that you know more than you will admit. Nevertheless, lest I do an injustice, I will tell you what you ask."

He told it. Mr. Dye listened motionless till the end. When it was over, he remained silent.

"Have you nothing to say to this?" asked Maxey. "Do you suspect nobody?"

"I have nothing to say, sir."

"Nothing?"

"Not a word."

"Well, then," cried Maxey excitedly, "there is only one course open to me."

He was interrupted by a knock at the door. Annette, whose eyes were not yet free from tears, inspired his attention for a moment. He went into the parlor with her.

Miss Maxey, dressed for the street, sat in one corner of the room, apparently preoccupied, though the unusual color in her cheeks was evidence enough that she was disturbed by more than ordinary emotions. The artist barely noticed her. He was too much under the power of the new and contending feelings that filled his soul when Annette spoke to him to heed anything else, for Annette opened her heart to him and laid bare her sweet and forgiving nature as she never had done before. And she pleaded for the token of his regard for her which he was the least in the world desirous of granting. But what could he do under the spell of her presence? How could he say "No" even when the granting of his prayer would allow to elp through his fingers the first real key to the mystery of the sea road which he felt he had ever held? The beautiful face turned toward him so beseechingly, the dark eyes emphasized her words so eloquently that he had no power to resist.

She could not forget that Mr. Dye had brought her up, had given her a home; that he stood to her in place of a father. She could not bear to think of his being persecuted or molested on her account. If he would not speak, let him remain silent. The past was passed. Would not Mr. Maxey give her his promise not to allow up that dark matter further? Mr. Maxey did not want to, but for her sake Mr. Maxey would, and he did.

"I promise you," he said at length.

"I will detain him no longer. I will tell him that he is at liberty to go where he pleases, and that I do it for his daughter's sake."

"Oh, no, please don't tell him that. It is not necessary that he should know that I interceded for him. I would rather not."

"Very well then," said Maxey. "So be it."

He left the room and dismissed Mr. Belfry from his post in the hall.

As he was holding the door open for the sly landlord to pass out, Miss Maxey swept by him on her way to the street, and as she went she flashed into her brother's face a look of mingled pity and contempt which made him feel decidedly uncomfortable.

"She thinks I have yielded to Annette too readily," he reflected, "and no doubt she is right. No doubt I have."

Still he could not retract his promise now. He went into the room where the somber man still sat.

"Mr. Dye, I have only one more question to ask you. Have you told me everything which you believe it is necessary for me as the guardian of Annette to know?"

"Sir, I have nothing more to say."

"I have done, sir."

Mr. Dye arose, calm and unmoved now as he had been at first, smoothed off his hat with his glistening sleeve, put it upon his head and made the following speech:

"I desire, first, sir, to warn you, if you wish to retain me, to have me arrested. Necessity is a stern law. I must eat. If there is nothing for me here, I shall not remain here. I do not much think, in view of the manifold vicissitudes of life, and the uncertainties of the appellations which control human events, that if you let me go today it is at all probable you will ever see me again."

"You are at liberty to go where you will," said Maxey. "If you have told me the truth, there is no