HANS AND FRITZ.

Hans and Fritz were two peasants who lived [illegible] the world, in debt and in price; [illegible] their property and bear the share [illegible] were them. [illegible] no fruits of their labor were [illegible] and [illegible].

Hans [illegible] of a neighbor and got [illegible] a part of the debt. [illegible] a call upon Fritz to which a loan, to help him to pay for his beautiful [illegible].

Fritz kindly counted the money to Hans, and gave the required amount to his friend, signifying his own simple language to quite — "Perhaps it can bother to make us a note."

The note was drawn up in their primitive way, Hans gave from Fritz before witness [illegible]. When the question arose, the note being made, "Pich, can hobb dot paper until it was paid?"

"You gesse dot," says Fritz, "and den you will know."

"You can put dot money," says Hans, "Dot will so; dot makes dot disappears I had got to pay. Dot perhaps you for note and dot money come day."

A month had expired when Hans, as agreed, paid back the amount, and from debt he was freed. Says Fritz, "Now dot settles us." Hans replies, "Yaw."

"Now who takes dot paper accordings by law?"

"I gesse dot, now, dat's it?" says Fritz, "den you will."

"I says remembers you had dot to say."

Says Hans, "Dot can not, you now shust so blate. Dot I knows not to do can, I borrows again."

☞ Answer in Appletons' Journal for May.

THE SECRET CHAMBER.

CHAPTER II. (CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.)

It must not be supposed, however, that the father and son had a long ways to go to have time for all these thoughts. Thoughts travel at lightning speed, and there was abundant leisure for this between the time that they left the door of Lindores' room and going down the corridor, no further off than to Gowrie's own chamber, naturally one of the chief rooms of the house. Nearly opposite this, a few steps further on, was a little neglected room devoted to lumber, with which Lindores had been familiar all his life. Why this nest of old rubbish, dust and cobwebs should be so near the bedroom of the head of the house had been a matter of surprise to many people: to the guests who saw it while exploring, and to each new servant in succession who planned an attack upon its ancient stores, scandalized by finding it to have been neglected by their predecessors. All their attempts to clear it out, however, had been resisted, nobody could tell how, or indeed thought it worth while to inquire. As for Lindores, he had been used to the place from his childhood, and therefore accepted it as the most natural thing in the world. He had been in and out a hundred times a his play. And it was here, he remembered suddenly, he had seen the bad prisoner of Karl Robert which had so curiously come into his eyes on his journeying here, by a mental movement which he had identified at once as unconscious cerebration. The first feeling in his mind, as his father went to the open door of this lumber-room, was a mixture of amusement and surprise. What was he going to pick up there? some old pentacle, some amulet or scrap of antiquated magic to act as armour against the evil one? But Lord Gowrie, going on and setting down the lamp on the table, turned round upon his son with a face of agitation and pain which barred all further amusement, he grasped him by the hand, crushing it between his own. "Now, my boy, my dear son," he said, in tones that were scarcely audible. His countenance was full of the dreary pain of a broken one who has no share in the excitement of personal danger, but has the more terrible part of watching those who are in deadly peril. He was a powerful man, and his large form shook with emotion; great beads of moisture stood upon his forehead. An old sword with a cross handle lay upon a dusty chest among other dusty and battered relics. "Take this with you," he said, in the same inaudible, breathless way whether as a weapon, whether as a religious symbol Lindores could not guess. The young man took it mechanically. His father pushed open a door which it seemed to him he had never seen before, and led him into another vaulted chamber. Here even the limited powers of speech Lord Gowrie had retained seemed to forsake him, and his voice became a mere hoarse murmur in his throat. For want of speech he pointed to another door in the further corner of this small vacant room, gave him to understand by a gesture that he was to knock there, and then went back into the lumber room. The door into this was left open, and a faint glimmer of the lamp shed light into this intermediate place, this debatable land between the seen and the unseen. In spite of himself Lindores' heart began to beat. He made a breathless pause, feeling his head go round. He held the old sword in his hand, not knowing what it was. Then, summoning all his courage, he went forward and knocked at the closed door. His knock was not loud, but it seemed to echo all over the silent house. Would everybody hear and wake, and such to see what had happened? This caprice of imagination seized upon him, oustings all the firmer thoughts, the steadfast calm of mind with which he sought to have encountered the mystery. Would they all rush in, in wild disorder, in terror and dismay, before the door opened? How long it was of opening? He touched the panel with his hand again. This time there was no delay. In a moment, as if thrown suddenly open by some one within, the door moved. It opened just wide enough to let him enter, stopping half way as if some one invisible held it, wide enough for welcome, but no more. Lindores stepped across the threshold with a beating heart. What was he about to see? the skeletons of the murdered victims? a ghostly chamber of horror? a house full of bloody traces of crime? He seemed to be hurried and pushed in as he made that step. What was this world of mystery in which he was plunged, what was it he saw?

He saw nothing except what was agreeable enough to behold: an antiquated room hung with tapestry, very old tapestry of rude design, its colours faded into softness and harmony; between its folds here and there a panel of carved wood, rude too in design, with traces of half-worn gilding; a table covered with strange instruments, parchments, chemical tubes, and curious machinery, all with a quaintness of form and dimness of material that spoke of age. A heavy old velvet cover, thick with embroidery faded almost out of all colour, was on the table, on the wall above it, something that looked like a very old Venetian mirror, the glass so dim and crazed that it scarcely reflected at all; on the floor an old soft Persian carpet, worn into a vague blending of all colours. This was all that he thought he saw. His heart, which had been thumping so loud as to almost choke him, dropped that tremendous upward and downward motion like a steam piston; and he saw calm. Perfectly still, dim, unoccupied; and yet not so dim either; there was no apparent source of light, no windows, curtains of tapestry drawn everywhere, no lamp visible, no fire, and yet a kind of strange light which made everything quite clear. He looked round, trying to rally at his senses, trying to say to himself that it was the most curious place he had ever seen that he must show Flarrington some of that tapestry that he must really bring away a panel of that carving when he suddenly saw that the door was shut by which he had entered—say, more than that, unobtrusive, covered like all the rest of the walls by that strange tapestry. At this his heart began to beat again in spite of him. He looked around once more, and woke up to more vivid being with a sudden start. Had his eyes been incapable of taking in its full outspace? Unconscious? Who was that in the great chair?

It seemed to Lindores that he had seen neither the chair nor the occupant when he came in. There they were, however, solid and unmistakable; the chair carved like the panels, the man seated in front of the table. He looked at Lindores with a calm and open gaze, inquiring him. The young man's heart seized in his throat for a moment, it seemed to him as he gazed and his mind made out that other to speak. He tried to speak, laboring with a voice that would not sound, and strive, line too painful to form a word. "I see how it is," said what he wanted to say. It was Karl Robert's face that was looking at him; and startled as he was, he dragged forth his philosophy to support him. What could it be but cerebral delusion, unconscious cerebration, occult seizure by the impressed and struggling mind of this rare countenance? But he could not hear himself speak any word as he stood convulsed, struggling with dry lips and choking voice.

The Appearance smiled, as if knowing his thoughts—not unkindly, not malignly, with a certain amusement mingled with scorn. Then he spoke, and the sound seemed to breathe through the room not like any voice Lindores had ever heard, a kind of utterance of the place, like the rustle of the air or the ripple of the sea. "You will learn better to-night; this is no phantom of your brain; it is I."

"In God's name," cried the young man in his soul; he did not know whether the words ever got into the air or not, if there was any air.—"In God's name, who are you?"

The figure rose as if coming to him to reply; and Lindores, overcome by the apparent approach, struggled into utterance. A cry came from him—he heard it this time—and even in his extremity felt a pang the more to hear the terror in his own voice. But he did not flinch, he stood desperate, all his strength concentrated in the act; he neither turned nor recoiled. Vaguely gleaming through his mind came the thought that to be thus brought in contact with the unseen was the experiment most to be desired on earth, the final settlement of a hundred questions; but his faculties were not sufficiently under command to entertain it. He only stood firm, that was all.

And the figure did not approach him; after a moment it subsided back again into the chair—subsided, for so it seemed, not the faintest, accompanied its movements. It was the form of a man of middle age, the hair white, but the beard only crisped with grey, the features those of the picture—a familiar face, more or less like all the Randolphs, but with an air of domination and power altogether unlike that of the race. He was dressed in a long robe of dark colour, embroidered with strange lines and angles. There was nothing repellant or terrible in his air

nothing except the noiselessness, the calm, the absolute stillness, which was as much in the place as in him, to keep up the involuntary trembling of the beholder. His expression was full of dignity and thoughtfulness, and not malignant or unkind. He might have been the kindly patriarch of the house watching over his fortunes in a seclusion he had chosen. The palace that had been beating in Lindores were stilled. What was his panic for? a gleam even of self-ridicule took possession of him, to be standing there like an absurd hero of antiquated romance with the rusty, dusty sword-good for nothing, surely not adapted for use against this noble old magician—in his hand.

"You are right," said the voice, once more answering his thoughts; "what could you do with that sword against me, young Lindores? Put it by. Why should my children meet me like an enemy? You are my flesh and blood. Give me your hand."

A shiver ran through the young man's frame. The hand that was held out to him was large and shapely and white, with a straight line across the palm—a family token upon which the Randolphs had prided themselves. A friendly hand; the face smiled on him, fixing him with those calm, profound, blue eyes. "Come," said the voice. The word seemed to fill the place, melting upon him from every corner, whispering round him with softest persuasion. He was lulled and calmed in spite of himself. Spirit or no spirit, why should not he accept this proffered courtesy? What harm could come of it? The chief thing that retained him was the dragging of the old sword, heavy and useless, which he held mechanically, but which some internal feeling he could not tell what prevented him from putting down. Superstition, was it?

"Yes, that is superstition," said his ancestor, serenely; "put it down and come."

"You know my thoughts," said Lindores; "I did not speak."

"Your mind spoke, and spoke justly. Put down that emblem of brute force and superstition together. Here it is intelligence that is supreme. Come."

Lindores stood doubtful. He was calm; the power of thought was restored to him. If this benevolent venerable patriarch was all he seemed, why his father's terror? why the secrecy in which his being was involved? His own mind, though calm, did not seem to act in the usual way. Thoughts seemed to be driven across it as by a wind. One of these came to him suddenly now.

> How there looked him in the face,
> An angel beautiful and bright,
> And how he knew it was a fiend."

The words were not ended, when Earl Robert replied suddenly with impatience in his voice, "Fiends are of the fancy of men; like angels and other follies. I am your father. You know me; and you are mine, Lindores. I have power beyond what you can understand; but I want flesh and blood to reign and to enjoy. Come, Lindores."

He put out his other hand. The action, the look, were those of kindness, almost of longing, and the face was familiar, the voice was that of the race. Supernatural! was it supernatural that this man should live here shut up for ages? and why? and how? Was there any explanation of it? The young man's brain began to reel. He could not tell which was real—the life he had left half an hour ago, or this. He tried to look round him, but could not; his eyes were caught by those other kindred eyes, which seemed to dilate and deepen as he looked at them, and drew him with a strange compulsion. He felt himself yielding, swaying towards the strange being who thus invited him. What might happen if he yielded? And he could not turn away, he could not tear himself from the fascination of those eyes. With a sudden strange impulse which was half despair and half a bewildering half-conscious desire to try one potency against another, he thrust forward the cross of the old sword between him and those appealing hands. "In the name of God!"

Lindores never could tell whether it was that he himself grew faint, and that the dimness of swooning came into his eyes after this violence and strain of emotion, or if it was his spell that worked. But there was an instantaneous change. Everything swam around him for the moment, a giddiness and blindness seized him, and he saw nothing but the vague outlines of the room, empty as when he entered it. But gradually his consciousness came back, and he found himself standing on the same spot as before, clutching the old sword, and gradually, as though a dream, recognised the same figure emerging out of the mist which was it solely in his own eyes? had enveloped everything. But it was no longer in the same attitude. The hands which had been stretched out to him were busy now with some of the strange instruments on the table, moving about, now in the action of writing, now as if managing the keys of a telegraph. Lindores felt that his brain was all astir and set wrong; but he was still a human being of his century. He thought of the telegraph with a keen thrill of curiosity in the midst of his reviving sensations. What communication was this which was going before his eyes? The magician worked on. He had [illegible] turned towards his visitor [illegible] made moved with unceasing [illegible] And Lindores, as he grew [illegible] the position, began to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]