The Voice of the Sluggard.

Have you brought my boots, Jemima? Leave them at my chamber door.
Does the water boil, Jemima? Place it also on the floor.
Eight o'clock already, is it? How's the weather—pretty fine?
Eight is tolerably early; I can get away by nine.
Still I feel a little sleepy, though I came to bed at 1.
Put the bacon on, Jemima; see the eggs are nicely done!
I'll be down in twenty minutes—or, if possible, in less;
I shall not be long, Jemima, when I once begin to dress.
She is gone, the brisk Jemima; she is gone, and little thinks
How the sluggard yearns to capture yet another forty winks.
Since the bard is human only—not an early village cock—
Why should he salute the morning at the hour of 8 o'clock.
Stifled be the voice of Duty; Prudence, prythee, cease to chide,
While I turn me softly, gently, round upon my other side.
Sleep, resume thy downy empire; reassert thy sable reign!
Morpheus, why desert a fellow? Bring those poppies here again!
What's the matter *now*, Jemima? Nine o'clock! It cannot be!
Hast prepared the eggs, the bacon and the matutinal tea?
Take away the jug, Jemima. Go, replenish it anon;
Since the charm of its caloric must be very nearly gone.
She has left me. Let me linger till she reappears again,
Let my lazy thoughts meander in a free and easy vein.
After sleep's profounder solace, naught refreshes like the doze.
Should I tumble off, no matter; she will wake me, I suppose.
Bless me, is it *you*, Jemima? Mercy on us, what a knock!
Can it be—I can't believe it—actually 10 o'clock?
I will out of bed and shave me. Fetch me warmer water up!
Let the tea be strong, Jemima. I shall only want a cup!
Stop a minute! I remember some appointment by the way,
'Twould have brought me mints of money; 'twas for 10 o'clock to-day.
Let me drown my disappointment, slumber, in thy seventh heaven.
You may go away, Jemima. Come and call me at 11!

—*Leeds Mercury.*

PAULINE.

Ceneri was leaning back in his chair with a kind of dreamy look on his face, smoking slowly and placidly, taking, as it were, everything he could out of the luxury of a good cigar. I asked him to drink some more wine. He shook his head, then turned and looked at me.

"Mr. Vaughan," he said; "yes, it is Mr. Vaughan. But who and what am I? Where are we? Is it London, Geneva, or elsewhere? Shall I wake and find I have dreamed of what I have suffered?"

"I am afraid it is no dream. We are in Siberia."

"And you are not come to bear me good news? You are not one of us—a friend trying at the peril of your life to set me free?"

I shook my head. "I would do all I could to make your lot easier, but I come with a selfish motive to ask you some questions which you alone can answer."

"Ask them. You have given me an hour's relief from misery; I am grateful."

"You will answer truly?"

"Why not? I have nothing to fear, nothing to gain, nothing to hope. Falsehood is forced on people by circumstances; a man in my state has no need of it."

"The first question I have to ask is—who and what is that man Macari?"

Ceneri sprang to his feet. The name of Macari seemed to bring him back to the world. He looked no longer a decrepit man. His voice was fierce and stern.

"A traitor! a traitor!" he cried. "But for him I should have succeeded and escaped. If he were only standing in your place! Weak as I am, I could find strength enough to cling on to his throat till the vile breath was out of his accursed body!"

He walked up and down the room, clinching and unclinching his hands.

"Try and be calm, Dr. Ceneri," I said. "I have nothing to do with his plots and political treasons. Who is he? What is his parentage? Is Macari his name?"

The only name I ever knew him by. His father was a renegade Italian who sent his son to live in England for fear his precious blood should be spilt in freeing his country. I found him a young man and made him one of us. His perfect knowledge of your tongue was of great service; and he fought like a man. Why did he turn traitor now? Why do you ask these questions?"

"He has been to me and asserts that he is Pauline's brother."

Ceneri's face, as he heard this intelligence, was enough to banish lie number one from my mind. My heart leaped as I guessed that number two would be disposed of as easily. But there was a terrible revelation to be made when I came to ask about that.

"Pauline's brother!" stammered Ceneri. "Her brother! She has none."

A sickly look crept over his features as he spoke—a look the meaning of which I could not read.

"He says he is Anthony March, her brother."

"Anthony March!" gasped Ceneri. "There is no such person. What did he want—his object?" he continued feverishly.

"That I should join him in a memorial to the Italian Government, asking for a return of some portion of the fortune you spent."

Ceneri laughed a bitter laugh. "All grows clear," he said. "He betrayed a plot which might have changed a government for the sake of getting me out of the way. Coward! Why not have killed me and only me? Why have made others suffer with me? Anthony March! My God! that man is a villain!"

"You are sure that Macari betrayed you?"

"Sure! yes. I was sure when the man in the cell next to mine rapped it on the wall. He had means of knowing."

"I don't understand you."

"Prisoners can sometimes talk to each other by taps on the wall which divides their cells. The man next me was one of us. Long before he went raving mad from the months of solitary confinement, he rapped out, over and over again, 'Betrayed by Macari.' I believed him. He was too true a man to make the accusation without proof. But until now I could not see the object of the treason."

The easiest part of my task was over. Macari's assumed relationship to Pauline was disposed of. Now, if Ceneri would tell me, I must learn who was the victim of that crime committed years ago, and what was the reason for the foul deed. I must learn that Macari's explanation was an utter falsehood, prompted by malice, or else my journey would have benefited me nothing. Is it any wonder that my lips trembled as I endeavored to approach the subject?

"Now, Dr. Ceneri," I said, "I have a question of weightier import to ask. Had Pauline a lover before I married her?"

He raised his eyebrows. "Surely you have not come here to ask that question—to have a fit of jealousy cured?"

"No," I said; "you will hear my meaning later on. Meanwhile answer me."

"She had a lover, for Macari professed to love her, and swore she should be his wife. But I can most certainly say she never returned his love."

"Nor loved any one else?"

"Not to my knowledge. But your manner, your words are strange. Why do you ask? I may have wronged you, Mr. Vaughan, but save for the one thing, her mind, Pauline was fit to be your wife."

"You did me wrong—you know it. What right had you to let me marry a woman whose senses were disarranged? It was cruel to both."

I felt stern and spoke sternly. Ceneri shifted in his chair uneasily. If I had wished revenge it was here. Gazing on this wretched, ragged, broken-down man, and knowing what awaited him when he left me, would have filled the measure desired by the most vengeful heart.

I wanted no revenge on the man. His manner told me he spoke the truth when he denied that Pauline had ever been in love. As, when last I gazed on her fair face, I knew it would, Macari's black lie had been scouted. Pauline was innocent as an angel. But I must know who was the man whose death had for a while deprived her of reason.

Ceneri was glancing at me nervously. Did he guess what I had to ask him? "Tell me," I said, "the name of the young man murdered by Macari in London, in the presence of Pauline; tell me why he was killed?"

His face grew ashen. He seemed to collapse—to sink back into his chair a helpless heap, without the power of speech or movement, without the power of turning his eyes from my face.

"Tell me," I repeated. "Stay, I will recall the scene to you, and you will know I am well informed. Here is the table; here is Macari standing over the man he has stabbbed; here are you, and behind you is another man with a scar on his cheek. In the back room, at the piano, is Pauline. She is singing, but her song stops as the murdered man falls dead. Do I describe the scene truly?"

I had spoken excitedly. I had used gestures and words. Ceneri's ear's had drunk in every syllable; his eyes had followed every gesture. As I pointed to the supposed position of Pauline, he had looked there with a quick, startled glance, as if expecting to see her enter the door. He made no attempt to deny the accuracy of my representation.

I waited for him to recover. He was looking ghastly. His breath came in spasmodic gasps. For a moment I feared he was about to die then and there. I poured out a glass of wine; he took it in his trembling hand and gulped it down.

"Tell me his name?" I repeated. "Tell me what he had to do with Pauline?"

Then he found his voice. "Why do you come here to ask me? Pauline could have told you. She must be well, or you could not have learned this."

"She has told me nothing."

"You are wrong. She must have told you. No one else saw the crime—the murder; for a murder it was."

"There was another present beside the actors I have named."

Ceneri started and looked at me.

"Yes, there was another; there by an accident. A man who could hear but not see. A man whose life I pleaded for as for my own."

"I thank you for having saved it."

"*You* thank me. Why should *you* thank me?"

"If you saved any one's life it was mine. I was that man."

"You that man!" He looked at me more attentively—"Yes; now the features come back to me. I always wondered that your face seemed so familiar. Yes. I can understand—I am a doctor—your eyes were operated upon?"

"Yes—most successfully."

"You can see well now—but then! I could not be mistaken, you were blind—you saw nothing."

"I saw nothing, but I heard everything."

"And now Pauline has told you what happened?"

"Pauline has not spoken."

Ceneri rose, and in great agitation walked up and down the room, his chains rattling as he moved. "I kenew it," he muttered, in Italian, "I knew it—such a crime cannot be hidden."

Then he turned to me. "Tell me how you have learned this? Teresa would die before she spoke. Petroff is dead—died, as I told you, raving mad."

From his last words I presumed that Petroff was the third man I had seen, and also the fellow-prisoner who had denounced Macari.

"Was it Macari—that double-dyed traitor? No—he was the murderer—such an avowal would defeat his ends. Tell me how you know?"

"I would tell you, but I suspect you would not believe me."

"Believe you!" he cried excitedly. "I would believe anything connected with that night—it has never left my thoughts—Mr. Vaughan, the truth has come to me in my captivity. I am not condemned to this life for a political crime. My sentence is God's indirect vengeance for the deed you witnessed."

It was clear that Ceneri was not such a hardened ruffian as Macari. He, at least, had a conscience. Moreover, as he appeared to be superstitious, he would perhaps believe me when I told him how my accurate knowledge had been obtained.

"I will tell you," I said, "provided you pledge your honor to give me the full history of that fearful crime and answer my questions fully and truthfully."

He smiled bitterly. "You forget my position, Mr. Vaughan, when you speak of 'honor.' Yet I promise you all you ask."

So I told him, as shortly and simply as I could, all that had occurred; all I had seen. He shuddered as I again described he terrible vision.

"Spare me," he said, "I know it all. Thousands of times I have seen it or have dreamed it—it will never leave me. But why come to me? Pauline, you say, is recovering her senses—she would have told you all."

"I would not ask her until I saw you. She is herself again, but I am a stranger to her—and unless your answer is the one I hope for, we shall never meet again."

"If anything I can do to atone—" he began, eagerly.

"You can only speak the truth. Listen. I taxed the murderer, your accomplice, with the crime. Like you he could not deny it, but he justified it."

"How—tell me?" panted Ceneri.

For a moment I paused. I fixed my eyes upon him to catch every change of feature—to read the truth in more than words.

"He vowed to me that the young man was killed by your instructions—that he was—oh God, how can I repeat it!—the lover of Pauline, who having dishonored her, refused to repair his fault. The truth! Tell me the truth!"

I almost shouted the last words—my calmness vanished as I thought of the villain who had, with a mocking smile, coupled Pauline's name with shame.

Ceneri, on the other hand, grew calmer as he grasped the purport of my question. Bad as the man might be, even stained with innocent blood, I could have clasped him in my arms as I read in his wondering eyes the baselessness of the foul accusation.

"That young man—the boy struck down by Macari's dagger was Pauline's brother—my sister's child—Anthony March"

CHAPTER XIII.

A TERRIBLE CONFESSION.

Ceneri having made this astounding announcement, threw his wasted arms across the rough table and laid his head upon them with a gesture of despair. I sat like one stupified, repeating mechanically, "Pauline's brother—Anthony March!" Every vestige of the black lie was swept away from my mind; but the crime in which Ceneri had been concerned assumed more fearful proportions. It was more dreadful than I had suspected. The victim a near blood relation—his own sister's child! Nothing, I felt, could be urged to excuse or palliate the crime. Even had he not ordered and planned it, he had been present; had assisted in hiding all traces of it; had been, until recently, on terms of friendship with the man who had struck the blow. I could scarcely control the loathing and contempt I felt for the abject wretch before me. My burning indignation would scarcely allow me to ask him, in intelligible speech, the object of the cruel deed. But for once and all I must have everything made clear to me.

I was spared the necessity of asking the question I was trying to force to my lips. The convict raised his head and looked at me with miserable eyes.

"You shrink from me. No wonder. Yet I am not so guilty as you think."

"Tell me all, first; the excuses may come afterward, if anything can be urged in excuse of the crime."

I spoke as I felt—sternly and contemptuously.

"None can be urged for the murderer. For me, God knows I would willingly have let that bright boy live. He forsook and forgot his country, but that I forgave."

"His country! his father's country was England!"

"His mother's was Italy," replied Ceneri, almost fiercely. "He had our blood in his veins. His mother was a true Italian. She would have given fortune, life—ay even honor, for Italy."

"No matter. Tell me the whole terrible story."

He told me. In justice to a penitent man, I do not use his own words in re-telling it. Without his accent and stress they would sound cold and unemotional. Criminal he had been, but not so utterly black as my fancy had painted him. His great fault was that in the cause of liberty any weapons were allowable, any crimes were pardonable. We Englishmen, whose idea of tyranny and oppression is being debarred from the exercise of the franchise, can neither understand nor sympathize with a man of his type. We may call the Government righteous or corrupt as we are Whigs or Tories, and one side happens to be in or out; but, at least, we are ruled by our countrymen, elected by some of us for that purpose. Let us be for years and years at the mercy of a foreigner, and we may understand what patriotism in Ceneri's sense means.

He and his sister were the children of respectable middle-class people—not noble, as Macari asserted. He had been given a liberal education, and adopted the profession of a doctor. His sister, from whom Pauline inherited her great beauty, lived the life of an ordinary Italian girl—a duller life, perhaps, than any of them led, as, following her brother's example, she refused to share in gayeties whilst the white-coated foe ruled the land. No doubt she would have been faithful to her mourning for her country had not love come upon the scene. An Englishman named March saw the fair Italian girl, won her heart, wedded her and carried her away in triumph to his native land. Ceneri never quite forgave his sister for her desertion and defection; but the prospects opened before her by the marriage were so great that he made but little opposition to it. March was a very rich man. He was the only son of an only son, which fact accounts for Pauline having, so far as Ceneri knew, no near relatives on her father's side. For several years the young husband and his beautiful dark-eyed wife lived in great happiness. Two children, a son and a daughter, were born to them. When the son was twelve and the daughter ten years old the father died. The widow, who had made few close friends in England, and only loved the country for her husband's sake, flew back to her native land. She was cordially welcomed by her old friends. She was considered fabulously wealthy. Her husband, in the first flush of his passion, had made a will bequeathing everything he possessed to her absolutely. Although children had since come, so perfectly did he trust her that no change had been made as to the disposition of his property. So, with such a fortune at her command, Mrs. March was honored and courted by all.

She had, until she met her future husband, loved her brother above every one in the world. She had echoed his patriotism, sympathized with him in his schemes, and listened to the wild plots he was always planning. He was some years older than she was, and upon her return to Italy she found him, outwardly, nothing more than a quiet, hard-working, ill-paid doctor. She marvelled at the change from the headstrong visionary, daring young man she had left. It was not until he was certain her heart had not forsaken her country that Ceneri allowed her to see that under his prosaic exterior lurked one of the subtlest and ablest minds of all those engaged in working out the liberation of Italy. Then all his old sway came back. She admired, almost worshipped him. She, too, was ready to make any sacrifice when time should come.

What she would have done had she been called upon it is impossible to say; but there is little doubt but her fortune and her children's fortune would have been freely spent in the good cause. As it was she died long before the pear was ripe, and when she died, such was her faith in her brother, everything was left in his hands as sole trustee for her children. In her last moments the thought of her husband's decided English proclivities made her exact a promise that both the boy and the girl should be given an English education. Then she closed her eyes, and the orphans were left entirely to the trustee's mercy.

He obeyed her spoken commands to the letter. Anthony and Pauline were sent to English schools; but having no friends in their father's native land, or all old friends having been lost sight of during her mother's widowhood, the holidays were spent in Italy. They grew up almost as much Italian as English. Ceneri husbanded, invested and managed their fortune with care and in a business-like way. I have no doubt so far as it went, his honesty was unimpeachable.

Then the longed-for moment came! The great blow was struck. Ceneri, who had kept himself out of little abortive plots, felt that now or never he must do all he could for his country. He hailed the coming man. He knew that Garibaldi was to be the savior of his oppressed land. The first rash step had been taken and led to success. The time and the man were at hand. Recruits were flocking by thousands to the scene of war, but the cry was "money, money, money!" Money for arms and ammunition—money for stores, food and clothing—money for bribes—money for everything! Those who furnished the sinews of war would be the real liberators of their country

Why should he hesitate Had his sister lived she would have given all the fortune she possessed as freely as she would have given her life Were not her children half Italians? Liberty laughed at such a small thing as breach of trust.

Except a few thousand pounds, he ruthlessly realized and sacrificed the whole of the children's inheritance. He poured their thousands and thousands into the hands held out for them. The large sum was spent where it was most wanted, and Ceneri averred that he freed Italy by the opportune aid. Perhaps he did—who can tell?

Titles and honors were afterward offered him for his great though secret service. It makes me think better of the man that he refused all reward. His conscience may have told him he had not robbed himself. Any way, he remained plain Dr. Ceneri, and broke with his old leaders and friends when he found that Italy was to be a kingdom, and not a republic.

He had kept, I said, a few thousand pounds. The boy and the girl were growing up, and their uncle thought that even his patriotism permitted him to keep back enough to complete their education and start them in life. Pauline was promising to be so beautiful that he troubled little about her future. A rich husband would set everything right fo her. But Anthony—who was becoming a wild, headstrong fellow—was another affair.

As soon as the youth should reach man's estate, Ceneri had resolved to make a clean breast of his defalcations—to tell him how the money had been spent—to beg his forgiveness, and, if necessary, bear the penalty of his fraudulent act. But so long as any money remained he delayed doing so. The young man, if evincing no sympathy with his uncle's regeneration schemes and pursuit of liberty, fully believed in his integrity. Feeling assured that when he came of age he would succeed to a splendid inheritance, swelled by accumulated savings, he threw away money in a thousand and one extravagant ways, till Ceneri soon saw that the end of the reserve fund was drawing near.

So long as he had money in hand to meet Anthony's demands, he postponed the evil day of confession. The idea, which Macari had tried to work out with my aid, of appealing to the Italian Government for a return of some of the amounts expended, suggested itself to him; but to carry this out it would be necessary to let his nephew know what had taken place—the appeal must be made in his name.

As the inevitable exposure drew near he dreaded it more and more. He had studied Anthony's character, and felt sure that when he knew the truth his one wish would be to take revenge on the fraudulent trustee. Ceneri could see nothing before him but a well-deserved term of penal servitude. If the English law failed to touch him, that of his own country might be brought against him.

It seems to me that until this time he had committed no crime from which he could not absolve himself on the grounds of patriotism; but now the desire to save himself from punishment grew upon him, and he determined to avoid the consequences of his acts.

He had never felt any great affection for the two children. No doubt they had latterly appeared in the light of wronged innocents who would one day demand a reckoning with him. They were in disposition too much like their father for him to be greatly drawn toward them. He despised Anthony for his gay, frivolous life—a life without plans or ambition—and contrasted it with his own. He honestly believed he was doing good work in the world; that his plots and conspiracies quickened the steps of universal liberty. In his dark, secret circle he was a figure of considerable importance. If he were ruined and imprisoned he would be missed. Had he not the right to weigh his own high purposes against the butterfly existence of his nephew?

So he reasoned and persuaded himself that, for the sake of mankind, he might do almost anything to save himself.

Anthony March was now twenty-two. Trusting his uncle; careless and easy-going; so long as his wants had been supplied he had accepted, until now, the excuse made for deferring the settlement of his affairs. Whether his suspicions had at last been awakened or not cannot be said; but recently he had taken another tone, and was insisting that his fortune should be at once placed in his hands. Ceneri, whose schemes called him for a time to England, pacified him by assuring him that he would, during his stay in London, explain everything.

The explanation must indeed be given now, as Anthony's last drafts had reduced the remnant of his father's wealth almost to nothing.

Now, as to Macari's part in the affair, he had been for years a useful and trusted agent of Ceneri's; but most probably without the latter's lofty and unselfish aims. He appears to have followed conspiracy as a trade by which money might be made. The fact, which seems beyond a doubt, that he fought bravely and distinguished himself on the battle-field, may be accounted for by the natural ferocity of the man's nature, which bade him fight for the sake of fighting.

Being mixed up in all his plots he was often at Ceneri's house, wherever for the time being it might be, and on many occasions saw Pauline. He fell in love with her when she was but a young girl, and tried everything he knew to win her heart. To her he was soft and kind. She had no reason to mistrust him, but she utterly refused to give him the love he asked for. The pursuit went on at intervals for years—the man, to give him his due, was constancy itself. Again and again Pauline assured him of the hoplessness of his suit, but after each rebuff he returned to the attack.

Ceneri gave him no encouragement. He did not wish to offend him, and seeing that the girl was proof against his blandishment, let things alone, hoping that Macari would grow weary of urging those requests which were always met by refusals. He believed that he was not seeking Pauline for the sake of the money which should have been hers. Macari knew what large sums Ceneri had poured into the patriot's treasury, and, no doubt, guessed whence they came.

Pauline remained at school until she was nearly eighteen; then she spent two years with her uncle in Italy. It was a dull life for the girl, and she sighed audibly for England. Although meeting him seldom, she was passionately attached to her brother, and was greatly delighted when Ceneri told her that business would take him tor a while to London, and that she might accompany him. She was growing tired of Macari's pertinacity, and, moreover, longed to see her brother again.

Ceneri, for the sake of receiving his many political friends at what hours of day or night he chose, took a furnished house for a short term. Pauline's disgust was great when she found that one of her first visitors was Macari. His presence was so indispeneable to Ceneri that he took up his abode with them in Horace street. As old Teresa, the doctor's servant, accompanied the party and waited upon them, the change to Pauline was a very slight one.

Macari still persecuted the girl without success. At last, almost desperate, he formed the wild plan of trying to enlist her brother on his side. His idea was that Pauline's love for Anthony would induce her to yield to any wish he expressed. He was no particular friend of the young man's, but, having once rendered him a signal service, felt himself entitled to ask a favor at his hands. Knowing that both brother and sister were penniless he had less hesitation in so doing.

He called on Anthony and made his request. Anthony, who seems to have been a proud, arrogant, and not a very pleasant young man, simply laughed at his impertinence and bade him begone. Poor boy, he little knew what that laugh would cost him!

It may have been the retort made by Macari, as he departed in a whirlwind of rage, that opened Anthony's eyes as to the jeopardy in which his fortune was placed. Any way he wrote at once to his uncle, insisting upon an immediate settlement. In the event of any delay he would consult a solicitor, and if necessary take criminal proceedings against the trustee.

The moment which Ceneri had so long dreaded—so long postponed—had come; only now, the confession, instead of being as he intended a voluntary one, would be wrung from him.

Whether he would be amenable to the Italian or English law he did not know, but he felt certain that Anthony would at once take steps to insure his arrest and detention. The latter, if only temporary, would ruin the scheme upon which he was now engaged. At any cost Anthony March must be silenced for a time.

He assured me with the solemnity of a dying man that no thought of the dreadful means which effected this was in his mind. He had revolved many plans and finally settled on one which, although difficult to execute and very hazardous, seemed to give the best promise of success. His intention was, with the assistance of his friends and subordinates, to carry Anthony abroad and deposit him for some months in a lunatic asylum. The confinement was only to be temporary; yet, although Ceneri did not confess to it, I have little doubt but the young man would have been asked to buy his freedom by a promise to forgive the misappropriation of the trust money.

And now as to carrying this precious plan into execution. Macari, vowing vengeance for the words of insult, was ready to aid in every way. Petroff, the man with the scarred face, was the doctor's, body and soul. Teresa, the old servant, would have committed any crime at her master's command. The necessary papers could be obtained or forged. Let the conspirators get Anthony to visit them at the house in Horace street and he should leave it only as a lunatic in charge of his doctor and his keepers. It was a vile, treacherous scheme, the success of which was very doubtful, necessitating, as it must, carrying the victim to Italy. How this was to be done, Ceneri did not exactly explain—perhaps he had not quite worked out the details of the plot—perhaps the boy was to be drugged—perhaps he counted upon his frantic state when he discovered the true position of affairs to give color to the statement that he was of unsound mind.

(To be continued.)

A photograph of lightning has been made in New Orleans.