

Percy B. St. John



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on the Marsh

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By

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Chapter I.

A DASTARDLY DEED.



It was the evening of the 28th of September, 18—.

The good ship *Golden Fleece*, Rider, master, three months and over out from Melbourne, with a cargo of wool, lay at anchor in the lower bay of New York harbor, enveloped in a dense fog.

Her long voyage was over. Her master and crew, together with the few passengers whom she carried, were in a state of equal impatience to tread the streets of the city toward which for many weary days their expectations had been turned.

But at the very moment when these expectations seemed about to be realized the fog had intervened, the most dense known in years, and the *Golden Fleece*, anchored off the lower end of Staten Island, remained waiting for the fleecy cloud to lift.

As the supper bell sounded and the few passengers—five, all told—hurried down the companionway, glad of any diversion 'to relieve the impatience that possessed them one and all, a young man in the dress of a sailor arose lazily from a coil of rope by the side of the mainmast, and moved toward the larboard rail, where, leaning with both elbows resting upon it, stood a man gazing pensively out upon the fog.

»Aren't you going to supper? The bell has already rung?«

The man at the rail—aroused himself with a start.

»Has it? I did not hear. I was wondering when this infernal mist would lift and let us up the bay to our wharf.«

Turning from the rail, he faced the sailor as he spoke.

The effect was startling.

Had the two men been twin brothers the resemblance between them could not have been more marked.

Both were tall and possessed of well-knit, powerful frames. Both had thick black hair and heavy mustaches of the same color, worn upon the upper lip, while in point of age the similarity is the same—let us say twenty-five or twenty-six, and we shall not be far astray.

And yet these two young men were not related—had never met previous to the beginning of this voyage.

The sailor, evidently a Frenchman, was John Delaplaine, the second mate of the Golden Fleece. The passenger, Felix Costar, a young American of French descent, back from the Australian mines.

But the strange resemblance—remarked by all on board— had not been without its effect.

Bet them a strong intimacy had sprung up during the tedious days and weeks of the voyage.

Friendships suddenly formed between strangers are apt to prove dangerous things.

The result of the intimacy developed between Felix Costar and the mate of the Golden Fleece we shall presently see.

»The fog won't lift to-night, I fancy,« said Delaplaine, joining his friend at the vessel's rail. »Unless my calculations are a long way off, we are in for another day.«

»Jack, for heaven's sake, don't say so. You know my anxiety to reach New York and its cause. Another day! Why, man, there is a million involved in this delay for me! The old lady may die while we stay dawdling here.

Come, come, Felix. You are too impatient by half. Why, she may have died a hundred times since we left Melbourne. At ninety-six lives are not insured.«

»That's just where it is, Jack Though I have all the proofs of my identity in my pocket, it is of the highest importance that I should be seen and recognized by my grandmother before she dies. It may save me years of litigation in the courts—don't you understand?«

»Of course I do; but no one could successfully personate you, whose appearance is so strongly marked, unless, indeed, should take a notion to do it myself.«

»And do you think you could succeed?«

»I doubt it. By the way, just for the joke of the thing, let's see how I would look in your coat and hat, and you in my sailor's togs?«

»Try on the coat and see,« replied Costar, stripping off the garment with a laugh.

In an instant the change was performed.

»Pity there's no one here to act as umpire,« said the mate, looking about the deck as he spoke.

But to all appearance the deck of the Golden Fleece was deserted. At the moment, anchored as they were out of the range of any possible passing craft, no lookout had been even set. Both passengers and crew were all below partaking of the evening meal.

The deck was, in fact, in charge of the second mate him self.

»Ha, ha, ha!« laughed Costar. »Why, Jack, you look the gentleman, for a fact. If any man living could pass himself off for me, you are the one, and what would make it all the easier, I have, as you are well aware, confided to you all my private affairs—told you all I know.«

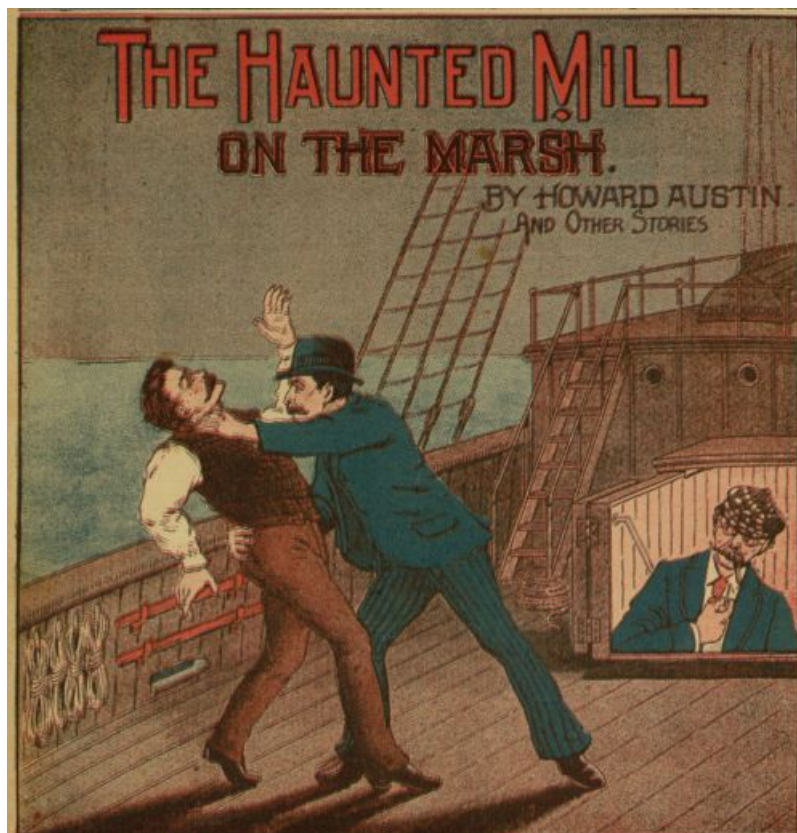
Now, had Jack Delaplaine, second mate of the Golden Fleece, chanced to have cast his eyes behind him a second time he war a at that precise moment have observed emerging from the companionway leading to the cabin below a man whose features bore a strong Hebrew cast.

He was dressed in pantaloons of large black and white checks, a vest of dark blue silk dotted with gold, a velvet shooting jacket, and traveler's cap of the Scotch pattern, with two silk ribbons extending downward upon his neck.

A heavy black mustache obscured his mouth, while a pair of gold-rimmed eyeglasses performed the same office for his eyes.

Between his teeth a cigar was thrust, which, with a match /gvasped in. his hand, he seemed about to light.

But the newcomer was observed by neither Felix Costar nor his friend, the mate.



»Come, give me back my coat, Jack,« said the passenger, with a laugh. »I must get down to supper or—«

»Ah! heaven! What is this? Help! hel——«

It was the cry of a moment.

It had passed.

From the fog-enshrouded waters a faint call for help went, up, and then all was still.

In the dim light of the declining day, one only of the two young men stood upon the deck of the Golden Fleece, peering out into the darkness and fog from over the larboard rail.

He wore the coat of Felix Costar, he wore the hat of Felix Costar.

But for this sailor trousers and his unpolished, that he was Felix Costar any man on ship might have casily believed.

»Dead!« he muttered, fiercely. »Dead! dead! dead! The darkness, the fog, will insure my work, and the Lemaire million is mine.«

He removed stealthily from the taffrail toward the cabin door.

Suddenly upon his shoulder a hand was placed.

»Ah, ha! my good friend Delaplaine, I saw you do it,« hissed a voice in his ear. »Vera fina, vera fina! but for my silence I must be paid. Vat's your little scheme, my dear? Vat's your little scheme?«

Chapter II.

THE RECOGNITION COMES TOO LATE.

»Is she dead?«

»Not yet, I think. At her age nature yields her grip reluctantly. She is one in a thousand. Neither you nor I, my dear Miss Smith, will ever see ninety-six.«

»Doctor, listen to me. You must bring her back to consciousness if it is a possible thing. She has longed to see him for so many months that it seems a downright shame that she should die now just as he has arrived.«

Dr. Ashabel Podds, the presiding genius for the time being of the old mansion on Washington Square, where the rich Madame Lemaire lay dying, proceeded to clean his eyeglasses meditatively as he glanced at a curtained bed in one corner of the elegantly furnished chamber in which, with Miss Susan Smith, Madame Lemaire's companion and nurse, he had already passed the entire day.

»We'll do our best, Miss Smith, we'll do our best,« he said, in a lower whisper. »There's life yet, and while life remains there's always hope. When did this young man arrive?«

»An hour ago, doctor, He, reached the city this morning, coming from Australia on the ship Golden Fleece. He would have been here yesterday but for the fog.«

»And his name?«

»Is Felix Costar.«

»Ah! I see. Son of beautiful Marie Lemaire, madame's oldest daughter, whom she cast off at her marriage some why, bless my soul, how time flies! It must be thirty years ago.

»Yes, doctor, Felix Costar is Marie's son. Madame Lemaire sent for him from Australia that she might see him before she died.«hard

»Ah! I see, I see. And Miss Julie, she that married Max Romer, the opera singer. What has become of her?«

»She is dead, poor thing,« replied the nurse, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron. »Madame has been a hard woman with her children. A hard woman if I do say it, although she was good to me, After Miss Julie ran away with Max Romer, she swore she would never see h 'ain, and she never did. But yesterday, repenting of her hardness, she sent me to the Foundling Asylum to bring to her Julie's youngest child, tha e might provide for it before she died.«

»Dear, dear! Then poor Julie Romer is dead also, as well as her sister Marie?«

»Yes, dead these three months—starved to death, poor thing, while her mother was rolling in wealth! I say it's a downright shame.«

»And Max Romer?«

»Oh, he died three months ago!«

»And that oldest-boy of theirs who went a bit wild and ran away to sea?«

»His ship was lost, and he was never heard of again, doctor. Dear heart! how his poor mother mourned for him until this little baby came to comfort her, bl little angel! Doctor, you ought to see her. She's ups in my room now. But I mustn't stop to talk any longer. I will just slip down into the parlor and tell Mr. Felix what you say.«

»Susan! Susan! what is that you say? Has Felix come at last? Bring him to my bedside, that I may see him before I die.

The words, spoken in feeble and querulous tones, proceeded from the curtained bed.

In an instant both doctor and nurse were by its side, bending over the form which lay beneath the downy coverlids therein.

It was a woman of great age, her face so deeply wrinkled that scarce a feature could be discerned.

And no wonder.

Had it pleased all-wise Providence to have granted to Madame Lemaire four more years of life she would have attained her one hundred year.

It is otherwise willed.

Wealth cannot save Madame Lemaire. She would have freely exchanged her houses, lots, bonds, and railway shares for those four years of life, but death, that inexorable conqueror, makes no bargains of the sort.

But one short half hour had elapsed and by the side of her dying bed stands doctor Podds, the weeping nurse, Mr. Cephas Bolles, her lawyer, hastily summoned, and a young man with shaggy black hair und thick mustache, recognized by Madame Lemaire, the grandson, who had come all the way from Australia in answer to her call.

And the wrinkled, plcid features are placid now-motionless for the first time in many weary weeks.

The life that came into the world nearly a century before has left it at last.

Madame Lemaire is dead!

»That ends it all,« said Dr. Podds, leaning forward and closing the eyes. »What a pity it was too late!«

He glanced sympathetically toward Felix Costar as he spoke, who stood motionless, with pale face and tightly-set lips, his eyes fixed upon a little pile of legal papers which rested upon a table by the side of the bed.

»Too late—too late! Is it really too late?« he murmured, speaking more to himself than to those who stood about him. »Have I done—have I come here from a distant land only to meet with disappointment after all?«

»I sympathize with you, Mr. Costar,« said the lawyer, »I do indeed. Madame Lemaire meant to leave her wealth to you, but naturally desired to see you first. She sent for you by my advice. We heard no tidings. You did not come. Then this infant, the child of her second daughter, was brought to her notice, and as the will reads the property must be equally divided between this little baby girl and her brother if he still lives. We did our best to make her sign the codicil in your favor, but it was no use.«

And Lawyer Bolles gathered up the now useless papers upon which the codicil reversing the last will and testament of Madame Lemaire had been written but never signed.

This codicil, drawn up at the request of the deceased, had bequeathed all to Felix Costar.

But though possessed by sufficient strength to recognize her grandson, Madame Lemaire had been unable to sign the document, but had expired as the pen was placed in her trembling hand.

Had she have lived but one moment longer the young man who now stands with lowering brow and disappointed face by her bedside would have been worth a million.

As matters exist, he now stands second in the will of Madame Lemaire.

The life of the infant, whose cries he heard even now overhead, stands between him and the golden prize snatched by ~ the hand of death from his grasp.

»A gentleman is below who wishes to see Mr. Costar,« whispered a servant, cautiously opening the door of the chamber of death.

Descending, the disappointed heir entered the parlor of the house which a moment ago he had looked upon as his own.

Before the light fire of cannel coal which burned in the open grate stood a man, his legs spread apart, his hands crossed behind his back and spread open to the cheerful blaze.

It is the Jewish passenger of the Golden Fleece, Jacob Morningstar by name.

It is the man who, ascending from the cabin to his evening smoke on deck, chanced to hear that cry for help to which we have already had occasion to allude:

As the eyes of the young man recognized by Madame Lemaire as her grandson, Felix Costar, rested upon the figure of the Jew, a strange transformation overspread his face.

»Disappointment, rage and even fear were there before, but this was a te of joy.

»You've been following me, I see,« he said. shortly, locking the door behind him. »Well, here I am.' You've' found me out. What is it you want?«

The Jew smiled blandly.

His mustache worked nervously upon his upper li he fitted a pair of gold-rimmed eye-glasses upon his nose.

I told you so, my dear,« he answered. »Jacob Morningstar vas not born yesterday. You vas in my power, do not you a forget zat. You vill not tell me your little scheme, huh? I find him out for myself.«

»Well, what have you learned?«

As Felix Costar stood facing the man, over his face there Spread a sardonic smile.

»Vat haf I learned? Vy, zat you are to inherit ze wealth of zis Madame Lemaire. A million zey say! My dear, remember vat I ean tell if it so pleases me. Comey let me into your little scheme and divide.«

»You are mistaken, Mr. Morningstar. Madame Lemaire is already dead. Her wealth goes to an infant grandchild, not to me. While the brat lives not one penny of her million can be mine.«

»So, so!« cried the Jew, with a look of disgust. »Zat is bad —vera bad. But tell me, my dear—suppose zis enfant were to take it into her head to die, vat zen?«

»Then, unless her brother, who is believed by all to be dead, were to happen to take it into his head to return to life, all the property would be mine.«

»Huh! is zat so? And zis child—vere lives she?«

»Here in this house. Hark! don't you hear the brat now yelling in the rooms above?«

Even as Felix Costar spoke, the faint wailing of a child could be distinctly heard in the apartments overhead.

The Jew listened.

Fixing his eyes full upon the young man before him, he placed his forefinger upon his nose.

»Do you vant my help?«

»At what price?«

»Half, my dear, half. For von half of all you get, Jacob Morningstar vill fix your lettle scheme.«

»It's a bargain.«

»Ah! ha! Zat is vera good! vera good! Mr. Felix Costar entertain your friend Mr. —Mr. Levi shall ve say?—in zis house to-night, and by ze rising of to-morrow's

sun zose million of Madame Lemaire shall be von half yours, von half mine—you understand me, huh? You understand ze vay in vich Jacob Morningstar would fix your leetle scheme?«

Chapter III.

THE WILLOW BASKET.

When the good ship *Golden Fleece* reached her wharf at last on the day following that of her detention by the fog, the passengers, as may well be believed, made all possible haste to get on shore.

But it was night before the seamen, standing in wholesome awe as they did of a brutal captain, even thought of demanding leave to step on the wharf or stroll among the sights of the town.

The temper of Captain Rider, never noted for its sweetness, had been sadly ruffled by an untimely event.

We allude to the loss of John Delaplaine, the second mate of the *Golden Fleece*, the night before in the fog.

As the captain and his passengers—all except Mr. Felix Costar, who, feeling sick, it was said, had retired to his stateroom—were seated at the supper table, Jacob Morningstar, a French Jew, and one of their number, having as usual finished his meal in advance of the rest, went on deck to smoke a cigar.

In less than five minutes he came rushing into the cabin with the sad news that the mate, while altering the arrangement of one of the shrouds, had fallen overboard before he, Morningstar, could raise a hand to help him.

Rushing on deck, where they were a moment later joined by Mr. Felix Costar from his stateroom, the passengers and captain of the *Golden Fleece* found this to be the truth.

John Delaplaine, the second mate, had disappeared.

It was this event which had ruffled the temper of Captain Rider, and the visit of a score of newspaper reporters during the day did not help to improve it.

No wonder then, that when Harry Blake, the stowaway lad who had appeared on deck one week out from Melbourne, met with no pleasant reception, when, bundle in hand, he approached the captain and asked permission to leave the ship.

»Go ashore, you blasted stowaway!« he roared, »you may go to blazes for all I care, so that I never see your impish face again. Don't let me catch you around the *Fleece* again, do you hear? If I do, ill hand you over to the police for stealing my grub.«

Now, Harry, who had worked faithfully during the long passage, had expected at parting different treatment from this.

At the age of twenty, however, a boy begins to feel some pride; so he grasped his bundle the tighter, and, touching his cap respectfully to the captain, who was

now shouting and bawling at one of the sailors, just slipped over the side without replying so much as a word.

»Back in New York at last!« he muttered, as he hurried, along the wharf toward South street. »Back after three years' hard work and suffering without so much as one penny to show for it all. Well—well! It's mighty hard, but as it can't be helped, why, I must take it as it comes.«

And he set his teeth bravely, and hurried along the deserted street.

Evidently the boy knew perfectly what he was about—had some definite object in view.

Passing through Wall street he gained Broadway, along which thoroughfare he moved northward with a swinging gait, which was not broken until he turned into Eighth street, and stopped before a somewhat shabby three-story house, the front of which was partially covered with signs.

It was one of those old dwellings so common in New York, the lower portion of which is given over to business, with living-rooms still rented out above.

Harry Blake ascended the steps, and, passing up the stairs, knocked at a chamber door.

It was opened immediately, by a man having the appearance of an artist, wearing an embroidered cap, a dressing-gown, and slippers, with a meerschaum pipe in his mouth.

The sailor boy stared at him in manifest surprise.

»I want Mrs. Romer,« he stammered, »I—I thought she lived here. She used to, some years ago.«

»Romer, Romer—ah! that's the woman that used to live here before I took the rooms,« answered the man carelessly.'

»You won't find her, bub, for she died some months ago.«

»Dead!«

Harry Blake started back as though the man had struck him a blow.

»And Mr. Romer,« he gasped, clutching at the banisters.

»Dead also. Died before his wife.«

And the man closed the door, leaving the boy alone in the dark hallway without.

»Dead!«

The word was on his lips, as like one in a dream, he again; emerged into the street.

»Dead!«

It was still the one thought which filled his mind, when hours afterward, long after midnight, in fact, we find him wandering aimlessly about the streets pale,

haggard and worn, heedless of all that passed about him, caring not whether he died or lived.

»If I could only see Mr. Costar,« he murmured, as he leaned against a low brick wall inclosing the rear yard of a fine old mansion at Fifth Avenue and Washington Square. »He was good to me, and seemed to take an interest in my affairs. He would tell me what I had better do.«

The thought had scarcely crossed his mind, when 'chancing to look up at the rear wall of the mansion above him, he perceived a strange-looking object rapidly descending from one of the windows of the topmost story, keeping close to the wall itself.

It was a willow basket, attached to a rope, by means of which some one was lowering it from the upper window to the ground.

At the same instant the sound of footsteps were heard approaching rapidly from the direction of Washington Square, along the deserted street.

In former years Harry Blake had been sufficiently familiar with New York and its ways.

It needed, therefore, neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet to tell him that in such a transaction as this, in the pees of night, there was something questionable to say the least.

At the end of the low brick wall surrounding the back yard of the mansion there was a narrow alley, given over to the stables, the entrance to which was within arm's length of the spot where the boy now stood.

As Harry Blake gazed at the descending basket, it suddenly passed below the line of the garden wall and disappeared from his gaze.

An instant later a noise upon the inside of the wall before him was heard, as though a ladder had been leaned against it, which some person was beginning to ascend.

»By gracious! there's some crooked work go! on in there!« muttered the boy, aroused from the strange lethargy into which he had fallen at last. I'll just slip into the alley here and see what it means—perhaps I can save the house from being robbed.

He had scarcely done so, when, peering around the corner of the wall, he perceived two rough-looking men approaching, who came to a halt at the very place vacated by himself but a moment before.

In the arms of one of them was a large brown paper parcel, of which he seemed to take especial care.

Placing his body to the wall, one of the men~ whistled softly.

At the instant the head and shoulders of a third man were thrust over the coping above his head.

»That you, boss?« whispered one of the men in the street.

Yes have you got it?« was the reply from the top of the wall.

»Bet yer life we have, We don't miss fire. Let her down and we'll fix you off.«

The willow basket seen by Harry Blake descending from the upper window was instantly lowered from the top of the wall.

Stooping, the man who had spoken took from it what seemed to be a bundle of the same size and shape as his own, which he immediately deposited in its place in the willow basket, that article being drawn up by the man on the wall without an instant's delay.

Before the watching boy had been afforded time to fully realize what had occurred, the two men in the street—one carrying the bundle taken from the willow basket with even more care than the one which he had deposited in its place—had both moved off on the run, while their confederate on the top of the wall descending his ladder had disappeared, bundle, basket, and all.

Creeping out from the shadow of the alley, the boy stood staring at the blank elevation of the wall.

»Am I mad Am I dreaming?« he murmured, beneath his breath. »I saw his face by the light of that street lamp—I can swear to it. He had Mr. Costar's clothes, and was rigged out to look like Mr. Costar himself; but so sure as my name is Harry Blake, it the face of Jack Delaplaine, the dead mate of the Golden Fleece.«

Chapter IV.

FROM OUT OF A WATERY GRAVE.

»How much further haf ve got to go?«

»Not far—only to the top of this hill. Having been here y, I am not likely to be mistaken—there it is, you can see it now.

The speaker is the young man recognized by the dying s her grandson, Felix Costar.

It is the French Jew, Jacob Morningstar, who stands by his side at the top of a slight elevation at the southerly end of Staten Island, o ooking the lower bay.

Two days have elapsed since the death of Madame Lemaire.

By the two men now before us the strange choice of the midnight hour has been made for their visit to this lonely spot.

Below them, the bottom of the rise, extended a broad strip of marsh land, from the base of the hill to the water's edge, at the end of which, its foundation washed by the waves now lashed into foam by an approaching storm, stood the object toward which their gaze was turned.

It was an ancient windmill, built after the style of the mills on the Holland dykes.

The »Haunted Mill on the Marsh,« as it is termed by the few fishermen who dwell on this lonely part of Staten Island, is a familiar object to every yacht-man who has ever cruised along the shore line of the lower bay.

Constructed of wood, in an octagonal form, surmounted by a roof shape like a huge extinguisher, with a weather-vane at one corner bearing the headless representation of a gamecock its gray shingled sides, upon which the lichens cluster, rise high above the level of the marsh, not having known paint in half a century at least.

Surrounding the main building thirty feet above its base a dilapidated balcony overhangs, upon one side a tumble-down old storehouse and several smaller outbuildings, on the other the sea itself; while high up the side facing the bay, the huge arms of the windmill may still be seen extended invitingly in the direction of the winds which sweep over New York bay, with the remains of what was once the grinding gear behind.

Such was the haunted mill on the marsh toward which the two men standing at the top of the hill now bent their gaze.

Of its history we shall speak later on.

As the eyes of laid Morningstar rested upon it he gay vent to a low chuckle.

»Ah, ha! It is yell, my dear—it is vera vell!« he whispered, »Ze informacion given you by Mademoiselle Smith, ze nurs to ze late Madame Lemaire, vas correct to ze letter. Parbleu, but zis is vonderful! To think zat from Australia al ze vay I come to search for zis vindmill, knowing not vere to look, and on ze third day I behold him before my eyes. Do you see, my dear—do you see? You hellup me in my leetle scheme, I hellup you in yours.«

The man by his side muttered a few words inaudibly.

»Well, there it is. Now, what are you going to do about it?« he added, after a moment's pause, turning impatiently toward the Jew, who stood with eyes fixed upon the strange building before him, rubbing his long, skinny fingers together with an appearance of great glee.

»Do about it, my dear,« he exclaim ith a chuckle, »do about it? Vait and you shall see. Il be reech, reech Not reech like you millionaires bop zis ceety of New York, but reech enough to gif me ze footing vonce more in ze vorld, and yen you get ze Lemaire millions and I get half, vich is to be my share, vy ve shall cut a spread, my friend, do not forget zat, for it is ze truth.«

Again he rubbed his hands together, as though washing with invisible soap, and as a matter of emphasis to his remarks, poked his companion playfully in the side, smiling and leering, his mustache twitching nervously, his mouth spreading from ear to ear.

»Morningstar, you make too much talk,« replied the young man, shortly, »In hunting up this old mill I have obeyed your command. What game you propose to play I neither know nor care, but as I don't propose to stay here all night, I would respectfully suggest that if it's all the same to you, you had better get about it and let me go home.«

The Jew laughed.

»Come,« he said, with an abrupt change of manner, »let me be sure that zis is ze place, and I'm ready to begin at once.«

»Sure—why, man, there can be no doubt of it. I had it direct from Susan Smith, the nurse. That building is the Old Mill on the Marsh, built, as I tell you, sixty years ago, by Peter Finisterre, the father of Madame Lemaire.«

»Softly, my dear—softly. Zat is all vera good, but I go to see all ze same.«

And from the inner pocket of his embroidered vest, Jacob Morningstar produced a strange-looking box, and kneeling down placed it before him on the turf.

It was of brass, about six inches square, and ornamented with rich chasings and medallions in representation of ancient Greek warriors stamped upon the lid.

Opening the box, the Jew drew forth a paper, and, striking a match, held it up before its light.

»You are right; it is ze place,« he said, briefly, after a moment's study.

»Come, it is time to go.«

Thrusting the paper coolly in his coat-pocket, and restoring the brass box to its former concealment, he arose, and, followed by his companion, hurried down the hill.

Five minutes later, from the window of the storehouse beneath the old windmill, there shot out upon the dreary expanse of the marsh a beam of light.

It proceeded from a candle held in the hand of Jacob Morningstar, now standing within the building with the man calling himself Felix Costar by his side.

»It is ze room,« he muttered, looking anxiously about him, and then fixing his eyes upon the paper, which he again held in his hand, »Ze description is perfect; zere can be no doubt of him at all.«

Holding the paper in the full light of the candle, he read aloud:

»Main room of storehouse; third panel from second door. Touch knot in the lower right-hand corner, when the panel will fly back, disclosing the coins.

A strangely finished room for a storehouse surely!

The apartment in which they stood was entirely surrounded on every side by panels of solid oak.

They were set in the wall at the height of a man's head passing entirely around the room.

Two doors opened from the room, which was filled with old boxes, barrels and rubbish of every sort, heavily laden with cobwebs and the dust of years, one opening into the interior of the mill, the other out upon the marsh.

So much alike were these panels in appearance that save for the distinguishing mark of the door leading to the mill, they could not be told apart.

Thrusting the paper into his pocket for the second time, the Jew, raising the candle above his head, strode across the floor.

At the same instant, the wind which without had been howling dismally, broke upon the building with all the fury of le, causing it to shake and tremble, as the raindrops fell pattering upon the roof, and the great arms of the old mill creaked without, bending beneath the storm.

At the last! he exclaimed, trembling with excitement, as he ran his hand up and down the third of the oaken panels from the inner door. »At last my expectations are realized. Behold, my good friend, Costar, the paper speaks the truth!«

Pressing his fingers upon the panel, it moved noiselessly back, disclosing a hollow space within, from out of which shot by the light of the candle the shimmer of yellow gold.

For the space behind the panel was filled to the brim with a glittering heap of gold and silver coins!«

»Ah! ze beauties! ze golden beauties!« cried the Jew, thrusting his hand into the midst of the heap, »Mine at last! all mine, my dear, and—Great heaven! vat ails you now?

From the lips of his companion there broke a startled cry, as seizing Jacob Morningstar by the arm he pointed with trembling finger toward the darkened space of the open door.

It was a sight to make the strongest tremble—to turn the blood of any man to ice.

In the dark shadow of that doorway stood the figure of John Delaplaine, the drowned mate of the good ship Golden Fleece, clad in dripping garments, pale and rigid, with one long, thin finger pointing directly at the head of the man to whose murderous hand he owed his death.

Chapter V.

THE TREASURE OF THE HAUNTED MILL DISAPPEARS BUT THE GHOST IS SEEN AGAIN.

Felix Costar gazed upon the apparition of the murdered mate with trembling limbs and staring eyes.

No sound escaped his lips.

Seizing Jacob Morningstar by the arm, he pointed dumbly toward the strange figure standing in the doorway of the haunted mill.

»Sacre! Diable!« cried the Jew, springing back. »By ze beard of Aaron! He is ze man or his ghost!«

Crash! Bang!

Upon the side of the old store house nearest the bay broke at this instant a wave of tremendous force.

The water poured in both by door and window, the glass still remaining unbroken in the latter, offering about as much resistance as would a sheet of paper to its onward rush.

It caused the old mill to shake and tremble, from the broken weather-vane above, to its foundation-stones, deep sunken in the marsh beneath, while the great arms creaked and groaned amid the howling fury of the storm.

At the instant of the breaking of those waters, the ghost of the drowned mate of the Golden Fleece vanished.

Even as the Jew and his companion gazed upon him, he had disappeared as though hurried pack to the watery grave from which he had arisen by the rush of the retreating wave.

The splash of the water had extinguished the light, leaving the old store-house in utter darkness, thus adding to the horror of the situation of the men within.

For the space of-a moment they stood in breathless silence, doubtful as to what was to follow.

Nothing followed.

The wave had now retreated. Without the wind howled furiously. High up on the side of the mill the great arms continued to creak and groan, but within the store-house, other than for these sounds, a death-like stillness prevailed.

The Jew was first to recover himself.

Parbleu! my dear, but zere is some trick play in zis. Zere is no ghost. Vat ve see must be ze leetle scheme of some yon to frighten us. Hah! vat you say? Some

smuggler, maybe, vat leef in zis old barracks. Zey can't seare zis child, I tell you. No, not for ze sum of von cent.«

»No, no, Morningstar,« whispered the man who still clutched at his arm in hollow tones. »It was he I tell you. You saw him as well as I did. We both recognized his face, how then can there be a mistake?«

»Pshaw! nonsense! Imagination, my child! all imagination. Ve tinks of him at ze moment and ze face of zis trickster takes ze appearance of his. Zat is all. You believe me, hah? I tell you I speaks ze truth.«

»But what are we to do? We can't remain here.

Ve vill remain here until we packs up zose coins. Zey are here within reach, of our hands. I tell you ze ghost in ze warm place cannot scare me off. Haf you a match.

Yes. Here is one. What would you do?«

Vy light ze candle, of course. If zere is gosts within sound of my voice let zem bevare for I haf ze good revolver now in my hand.«

These words spoken in bold, defiant tones elicited no response from the darkness which surrounded them.

Utter silence reigned, save for the howling of the storm.

Striking the match upon the woodwork of the storehouse wall, the Jew touched it to the candle, which sent forth a feeble glimmer of light.

Jacob Morningstar had not spoken the truth.

A revolver was a thing he did not possess.

The candle alone rested in his hand.

Granting that his explanation of the strange apparition seen by himself and his companion was true, his boastful words seemed to have produced the desired effect.

They stood alone in the old storehouse.

The figure which had so startled them both was no longer to be seen.

But this was not all.

Where the doorway opening into the mill had been, there was now nothing save a blank partition of blackened deal staring them in the face.

Both the ghost and the door in which he had stood, pale and rigid with revengeful finger pointed at their heads, had alike disappeared.

Glancing about him in the feeble light of the candle, as he waved it above his head, the Jew uttered an exclamation of mingled rage and surprise.

»Hold! my friend! Ze demons have been here at vork! Ze treasure! Ze pretty golden coins! Vere are zey? Parbleu! I say it! Ze coins haf gone vith ze ghost!«

He sprang toward the side of the apartment even while speaking, and struck his fist upon its dusty wali with cries of impotent rage.

For that wall presented one smooth unbroken surface of rough, unplanned boards.

Its paneled side together with the opening in which the coins had been discovered, had as utterly disappeared as though they had never been.

»My God! What can it mean!« whispered Costar, in a trembling voice. »Were we dreaming, Morningstar? Have we seen that hidden treasure at all?«

»Haf ve! haf ve!« cried the Jew, furiously, stamping his foot at the same time upon the rotten floor. 'Did I not see zem? Did I not touch zen? Ask me zen eef I haf ze dream?«

»But the panels—the open space? Where are they?«

»Gone vith ze ghost and ze door in yich he stood. Ha! zey think to play ze trick! Hef I only had ze ax, ze hammer, I show zem! But no! Ze bad luck! Zere is noting of ze kind in here.

Among the rubbish of the storehouse, as was to be expected, no tools were to be found, not even a stone with which to strike a blow.

And while Jacob Morningstar rushed about whining and chattering, Felix Costar approached the strange will which had suddenly risen up before them and examined it critically.

It was composed of rough, closely-jointed plank of great thickness, reaching in one unbroken lire from ceiling fo floor, plotting out the door leading. to the mill and the oaken panels, behind which the treasure had been discovered as effectually as though they had never been.

But this was not the strangest part of it.

The wall was covered with the dust of years, and fitted so closely those forming the back and front of the storehouse as to render the conclusion Irresistible that it had been firmly nailed to its place at the building ot the mill.

Thee young man turned from his inspection shudderingly.

Had the whole appearance, the oaken panels, the heap of glittering coins, all been but a part of this strange vision?—a phantasmagoria summoned into existence by the ghost of the murdered mate of the Golden Fleece?

It certainly so seemed to him, and he stated his belief to the Jew.

»Rubbish—stuff—nonsense!« cried that individual, excitedly. 'I tell you, my friend. zat I tinks notings. I know zat zose antique coins are real. Have I all ze vay from Australia come in ze following of ze delusion? No, no! Jacob Morningstar is

not yet quite a fool. And, vat is more, I haf ze papers in my pocket now to prove zat my vords are true.«

»But how did you find out, away off in Australia, that the coins were hidden in this old mill? Come, my friend, I am prepared to believe a great deal so far as the sagacity of your race is concerned, but that is rather too tough a yarn.«

»Ah, zat is my leetle scheme. Vat I know I know. Howl know him is my beezness, not yours. But I shall haf zose coins, my good friend Costar. Iam baffled now, I confess, but {shall come to zis mill again, and vill haf zem, eef it cost my life.«

» But what will you do?«

»Do? I vill preak down zat partition vat has dropped down before ze panels and ze coins.«

‘And you think that is what has happened?«

»Vy, of course. Vat else can it be? Did ve not see ze panels as in ze paper described? Did I not touch my hand to ze coins zemselfes?«

Felix Costar shook his head.

I don’t believe it,« he said, hollowly. »I tell you, Morningstar, the whole thing was a. delusion. Except in your imagination and mine, neither coins nor panels have any actual existence.«’

»You are ze lunatic! ze madman!

»I may be, but I tell you plainly, I am not mad enough to remain any longer in this accursed place. Ye Gods! how the wind howls! Come on, man. Thank Heaven they have left one door still open for us, and out of it I go.«

And Felix Costar rushed through the door of the old storehouse, still remaining out into the darkness of the storm.

Throwing down the candle in speechless rage, the Jew hastily followed.

The plain fact of the matter was, that, in spite of his seeming boldness, not even a guarantee of the immediate possession of the coins hidden behind the vanished panel would have been any inducement for him to remain alone.

»Vot vould you do? Go off and gif it up?« he exclaimed angrily, joining his companion, who stood unsheltered from the pelting rain, gazing up at the sides of the mill.

»Hush! hush!« whispered Costar in a trembling voice. »Look up at the mill there! I mean at that little window on the line of those flapping arms, away up under the roof!«

»Vell, I sees ze leetle vindow? Vot’s ze matter vith him?«

»Morningstar, is it my imagination, or do you see what I see, a man’s face looking down upon us from that window now even as I speak?«

»Mon Dieu! yes! I see it! It is ze ghost again!«

There was ne difficulty in discerning the appearance now.

To the eyes of both men it was plain to a startling degree.

For at the same moment a bright light shot out from that little window of the Haunted Mill on the Marsh, shining forth with dazzling brightness upon the surface of the dashing waves.

Directly in its radiance the face of the murdered mate appeared, pale to ghastliness, as was also the outstretched finger of vengeance pointed from the height of the window at the head of Felix Costar, who stood shaking as with an ague at the edge of the marsh below.

Chapter VI.

HARRY BLAKE GETS HIMSELF INTO TROUBLE.

Let us now return to the sailor boy, Harry Blake, whom left under, the garden wall of the great mansion at Fifth avenue and Washington Place, behind which the man who had lent his assistance to the strange affair of the willow basket had just disappeared.

And this brief retrospect is necessary, as being closely connected with the movements of Mr. Jacob Morningstar, it will so to show the reader in what manner that astute individual had spent at least a portion of his time during the interval between his compact the man recognized by the dying Madame Lemaire as her grandson, Felix Costar, and the night of the day succeeding, upon which occurred the strange happeninga at the Haunted Mill on the Marsh.

As already stated, Harry Blake, peering from the alley, beheld the face of the man who had lowered the willow basket with its unknown contents from the wall that of John Delaplaine, the murdered of the ship Golden Fleece.

Now Harry Blake had good cause to remember the face of Mate Delaplaine.

When the face of a man is impressed upon one's mind in the shape of blows, kicks and cuffs he is not apt to forget it.

Upon his back, legs and arms the sailor boy could have shown at least a dozen dark bruises for which he was indebted to this same Mr. Delaplaine.

Was it likely, then, that he could forget the face of the brutal and tyrannical mate?

Most likely.

Still Harry knew nothing of the movements of Mr. Felix Costar after he had stepped upon the shore.

He did not stop to question whether or not the man who had, under such singular circumstances, appeared at the top of the garden wall might be this passenger who so strongly resembled the mate.

It is even doubtful if Felix Costar ever entered his thoughts at all.

It was the mystery of the affair which had first drawn the attention of the boy away from his own sad thoughts.

At the sight of that face upon the wall, the mystery was increased a hundredfold.

As the two men—one carrying with evident care the handle he had taken from the willow basket—hurried off across Washington Square, Harry Blake sprang from his concealment, running along beneath the wall.

»By gracious! there's something crooked going on that house!« he muttered.

»I'll bet it's burglary, and that miserable brute Jack Delaplaine is not dead at all. That it was his face I saw I am willing to stake my life.«

It was in his mind at that moment to follow the two men who could still be seen hurrying across the square in the blaze of the electric lights; and stopping the first policeman he encountered, give them over to his charge.

Whether he would have succeeded in this movement, even had he attempted it, is doubtful, to say the least.

The opportunity to carry out his plan did not occur.

He had not advanced ten steps under the shadow of the wall, when a green gate set in its side was suddenly thrown open, and a man stole cautiously out.

The movement was followed by sounds indicating that some person was locking the gate from within.

The newcomer was a man of middle age, flashily dressed, and possessing a cast of countenance of the most marked Jewish type.

By the light of the street lamp at the edge of the curb, Harry at once recognized in him Mr. Jacob Morningstar, his low-voyager on the Golden Fleece.

Now Harry Blake felt an antipathy toward Mr. Morningstar.

From his observation of the man during the long voyage of the Fleece, he had come to regard him as one to be both dis ed and feared.

What led him to draw these conclusions it would have been difficult to have told.

They were less the reasonings of a man than the oftentimes er instincts of a boy. Crouching in the shadow, he watched his movements stealthily.

So this man was concerned in the burglary also.

Harry now felt more certain than ever that the face seen by him was that of Mate Delaplaine than before.

That it lay in his power to track these scoundrels and bring them to justice he saw plainly.

Acting in accordance with a keen sense of duty, which had in a great measure controlled his movements from his earliest boyhood, Harry Blake instantly came to the conclusion that this and no other, was the proper course for him to adopt.

Without stopping even to glance behind him, the Jew hurried across Washington Square in the direction of the two men who had paused by the side of a little clump of bushes.

»I can find out where you are bound with your boodle, if nothing else, you hooked-nose thief,« muttered the boy, stealing after him. »I made up my mind

you were crooked when I first saw you on the deck of the Fleece, but upon my word, I did not think you were quite as crooked as all this.«

In following the movements of the man before him, he had undertaken a larger contract than he was aware.

No sooner had the cheerful Mr. Morningstar reached the two men who still lurked by the side of the clump of bushes, than all three started off at a swinging pace.

Hurrying across the Square until they reached West Third street, they turned the corner into Thompson street, and walk until they reached the point of its end, along which thoroughfare they now hurried, going steadily west until the North River front was reached.

And Harry Blake was still behind them.

Keeping closely in the shadow of the buildings, dodging from one side of the street to the other, running alongside the rows of empty trucks and wagons drawn up alongside the curb, at one time, and shooting with lightning speed and noiseless footfall across the intervening streets at another, over all this extended ground he had followed the man unseen.

He had not met one policeman in the entire distance.

And although this speaks anything but well for guardians of the peace, it was perhaps after all fortunate for the boy, as the sequel will show.

Even had he been fortunate enough to encounter one, it is more than doubtful if his story would have been believed.

As Jacob Morningstar and his companions arrived at the seas of Spring street and West, they came to an abrupt halt.

Before them, skirting the waterfront, rose the dark outlines of the pier sheds, with great steamers, bound at sailing days for various European and South American ports, lying moored alongside, while upon West street itself, rows of low, irregular buildings could be seen, devoted to the storage of old iron, plaster, ship stores; with not a few given to the sale of rum.

Hurrying along the street, perhaps half the length of the block, the three men paused again before a building of the latter sort.

It was a low, tumble-down frame rookery, with an old-fashioned alley-gate opening at the side.

At this late hour the saloon was, of course, closed.

The nature of the business transacted therein was plainly indicated, however, by a dingy sign, which told of pure wines and liquors, and fresh, cool lager beer!

Between the men another hasty consultation followed.

Then opening the alley-gate, all three disappeared within.

As they did so, from his place of concealment behind an empty truck, Harry Blake sprang toward the saloon.

»So that's old Morningstar's hotel,« he muttered, peering through the cracks in the gate. »By gracious! it's a nice one, ain't it now. Where all the New York policemen keep themselves, I'm sure I don't know.«

Through the crack in the gate little could be learned, except that it formed the means of reaching a dilapidated hovel immediately in the rear of the saloon.

So that's old Morningstar's hotel, he muttered, peering through the cracks in the gate. By gracious! it's a nice one, ain't it now. Where all the New York policeman keep themselves, I'm sure I don't know.

Through the cracks in the gate little could be learned, except that it formed the means of reaching a dilapidated hovel immediately in the rear of the saloon.

»That fixes me,« thought the boy. »I've no sort of notion of following them in there in the dark. I might go——«

But the thought was destined to find not even mental expression.

Without affording the boy time to spring back even one step, the alley gate was suddenly flung open.

»Mon Dieu! but it is zat young rascal, Harry Blake!« whispered the voice of Jacob Morningstar, in agitated tones. »I tought some von do follow us! In ze name of ze adversary, boy, vot you do here?«

It was the Jewish passenger of the Golden Fleece who held him as in the grip of a vise.

At the same instant there came hurrying through the alley the two men whom he had accompanied across-town.

One was a sailor from the Fleece, Bill Radd by name, the other a man Harry had never seen before.

»A spy! a spy!« whispered the Jew, excitedly. You know ze boy, Monsieur Radd; it is Harry Blake of ze Fleece, he do here, I ask you, close at our heels?«

»Let me go!« mumbled Harry, from beneath the pressure of the hand still against his mouth. »I've a right to be in the public street, I guess, as well as any of you.«

Seizing the boy about the throat with his disengaged hand, the Jew pressed it until he was black in the face.«

»Ve must kill him,« he whispered, fiercely. 'He has a motive in following us. I feel it, I know it. Bill Radd, zis is as much for you as for me.«

»Do you want to pay for the job, boss?« demanded the third man, pushing the sailor to one side.

»Pay for it! Of course I do. Zere is a fortune involved in zis night's vork, my dear. Zis boy, he kick over our fish kettle, huh? If ve don't look sharp, he spoil it all, I tell you ze truth.«

»He will, hey?« replied the man, savagely. 'Boss, we'll see about that. It's your boodle that talks, an' don't you forget it. I'm going to call in a couple of dock snoozers from across the way to give us a lift. Once in their hands, this here boy will have to make short work of his prayers.«

Chapter VII.

THE DOCK SNOOZERS-A CHILD'S FUNERAL IN THE FRENCH QUARTER OF NEW YORK CITY.

Harry Blake was possessed of as brave a heart as any boy in the city of New York.

But there are times and seasons when even the bravest heart sinks with fear.

It was such a time with our young hero.

He realized now that it was too late that he had got himself into a dangerous scrape.

One great, hairy hand of Jacob Morningstar was still pressed upon his mouth; the other squeezed his throat until it seemed to him that each breath was to be his last.

And yet we only state the truth when we say that the passion of rage outweighed the feelings of fear which now possessed his soul.

Could he have but changed places for one instant with the Jew, and been given the strength of a man, it would have been purely a question of endurance between them—Mr. Morningstar would have received no mercy at his hands.

Meanwhile, the rough-looking man had stealthily opened the alley-gate and started across the street toward the great pier sheds on the opposite side.

Had the boy realized the full import of this man's threat, uttered at the close of the last Chapter, he would have seen the peril of his 'situation more clearly than was already the case.

He knew little of this portion of the city, however, and, as a consequence, had never heard of the »Dock snoozers« before.

Now these were perhaps the worst class of ruffians the city can produce.

Wretched outcasts, without homes or families, utterly devoid of even the first principles of honesty, fearing neither God nor man.

They can be seen on any summer night by those who desire to study the great city and its devious ways, stretched at full length on the platforms before the pier sheds along the North River front, clothed in the filthiest of rags, sleeping off the effects of the day's debauch.

For ten cents these wretches would have robbed a person; for the small sum of a dollar they would have freely engaged to take a human life.

And it was to summon to his aid such creatures as these that the accomplice of the Jew had gone.

»Hold on there, Judge!« howled the sailor, Radd, looking at the purple countenance of the boy with some slight expression of sympathy. »Don't you think you have gone just a bit too fast? You'll have the lad choked next thing you know, then we will be in a scrape for a fact.«

Thus admonished, the Jew in a slight degree relinquished his hold.

»I don't care to kill ze cub if he whispered. »Mebbe ve had out how much he knows.«

It was an opportunity which by of shrewdness would have been instantly embraced.

But shrewdness was one of the qualities remaining uncultivated in the mind of Harry Blake as yet.

In an instant he had twisted himself from the grasp of Morningstar and sprang toward the alley-gate.

»I'll fix you for this, you housebreaking scoundrel!« he cried, bursting with rage. »I saw you and your pals robbing, that. house on Fifth avenue, and I mean to hand you over to the police, if I can.«

It was the thoughtless speech of a brave but foolhardy boy.

The foot of Harry Blake had scarcely touched the sidewalk without the alley, when a stunning blow on the forehead sent him sprawling to the stones.

In the space of an instant his body had been dragged within the alley by the heels, the gate being immediately closed.

»Ram a hankercher in the kid's mouth!« whispered one of three burly tramps, who now stood over him, addressing the Jew, who with Bill Radd and his accomplice pressed alongside.

Tearing a perfumed silk handkerchief from his coat pocket, Jacob Morningstar crammed it into the mouth of the prostrate boy, whose hands and legs were instantly tied.

»There, that'll keep him quiet, boss, I reckon,« whispered; the tramp, breathing heavily, rendering a strong odor of stale beer perceptible in the alley. »Be you the stampy cove what wants to pay for this here job?«

»Yes—yes, my good friend,« whispered the Jew, rubbing his hands. »Zis boy is in my vay. Vat you dakes, and he troubles me no more?«

»Oh! that's your game, is it?« said the tramp hoarsely. »Now look-a-here, neighbor, them as employs the 'Dock: Snoozers' perfeshunally must expect to pay. It's twenty-five dollars a piece for me and my two pals, and the drinks all around.«

»You shall have it, my friend,« snapped Morningstar, producing a fat leather wallet. »I'm ze most liberal man in de vorid. Only make it sure zat I see zis boy not

again, and you shall have ten-dollars pesides.«

The Dock Snoozer consulted a moment with his companions in an undertone.

»What do you say to running him off the end of the dock in a leaky skiff, tied up just as he is? I knows where I can put my hand on just sich a craft. It's bound to sink before it gets out into the stream, and the weight of his body will keep it down.«

»The very thing!« cried the Jew, eagerly. Where's the boat now?«

»Down here by the Atlas pier, boss, held up with a rope beside an old mud scow.«

»But there is no danger that you will be seen?«

»Nary, boss. Besides, that's our lookout, not yourn.«

»It must be done,« muttered the Jew, beneath his breath. »The poy has seen too much by half, and if what I suspect concerning him is ze truth, why zen all ze more it is ze vone thing ze most essential zat he must die.«

The Dock Snoozers regarded the mutterer impatiently.

»Look-a-here, boss, is it biz or not?« demanded their spokesman. 'We can't stay loafing here all night.«

The Jew started.

»It is beezness!« he whispered, with emphasis. Zere's your money, my good friend. Remember, zis boy is to be seen alive by me never again, Do vith him as you propose. Monsieur Radd, go vith zem, my friend, and see zat ze job is properly done.«

The Dock Snoozers seized the body of the helpless boy, handling it as easily as they would a bag of grain.

The alley-gate was flung open by the sailor Radd, and all four started across the street.

And Jacob Morningstar stood watching them, rubbing his hands with fiendish glee.

»Zat's it—zat's it!« he muttered to himself. »It could not be better as it vas. If I am right in ze matter of zat boy, vy zen in ze vork of zis night two birds with von stone haf I killed. Parbleu! but it is beautiful! it works so vell vith my leetle scheme.«

* *
*

Crape still hangs from the doorbell of the mansion of the late Madame Lemaire, although that aged lady was yesterday laid at rest.

The day of the funeral was that preceding the nocturnal visit of Felix Costar and Jacob Morningstar to the Haunted Mill on the Marsh.

That the ghosts of that mysterious building have Spare that precious pair of schemers is evident, for with bared ow stand at the entrance of the mansion, as two middle-aged Frenchman tenderly convey a tiny coffin down the steps.

How is this?

Another funeral from the Lemaire mansion as soon ag this?

Such is exactly the case.

Madame Lermaire died late in the afternoon. September 29th, 18—.

On the morning of the 30th, Susan Smith, the faithful companion of the aged lady, upon entering the room where slept Julie Romer, the infant granddaughter of the aged French lady, in charge of a nurse, found the child dead in its crib.

The nurse slumbered like the last of the seven sleepers in the bed by its side.

Upon awakening the woman nothing could be learned.

She had last seen the child at midnight-it was then alive and perfectly well.

Now so occupied had Susan Smith been with her attentions upon her dying mistress, that she had scarcely found time to even look at this unhappy but a few days previous that it might inherit the vast wealth of the dying Madame Lemaire.

So little had she seen of it, in fact, that she had not even become familiar with its features, and yet she wept bitterly over the dead body of the child, for she had known and loved its mother, Julie Romer, in days gone by.

Now, for a generation, all children of the house of Lemaire had been buried in the old churchyard of St. Boniface, not ten blocks away, carried by bearers on a little bier in true French style.

The coroner having been summoned, and pronouncing the child's death the result of natural causes, under the direction of Mr. Krug, the French undertaker from South Fifth avenue, attached to the church of St. Boniface, the funeral of this infant was now about to take place in accordance with what would have certainly been the wishes of Madame Lemaire had she been still in life.

The little coffin was carried tenderly to the sidewalk and placed upon the bier.

As this was accomplished, Felix Costar, dressed in the deepest black, with a broad-weed about his hat, descended the steps in company with his friend, Mr. Morningstar, and laid a wreath of immortelles upon the coffin lid.

The rain was pouring in torrents, for upon the city had burst, the evening before, the equinoxial gale.

It splashed mournfully upon the sides of the little cofiin, driven against them by the force of the wind from the slanting roof of the bier.



Raising the handles of the bier between them, the undertaker and his assistant moved slowly with their solemn burden across Washington Square and down South Fifth avenue, through the heart of the French quarter to the church where the funeral ceremony was to be performed.

Susan Smith, the only mourner, followed behind weeping bitterly, disdaining even the shelter of an umbrella to protect her from the pelting rain.

Such is the French custom at the funeral of a child.

It had been rigidly followed by Madame Lemaire, and was adopted in this instance by Felix Costar out of respect to the known wishes of the dead.

The passenger of the Golden Fleece threw himself back in the carriage in which he was to follow to the church.

Jacob Morningstar sat opposite to him, rubbing his hands and chuckling with glee.

»Ah, ha! my good friend, ze leetle scheme has vorked!« he whispered. 'See, zere goes ze million of Madame Lemaire all nice and snug in ze box. Ve fail in our scheme at ze Haunted Mill on the Marsh, but ve succeed in zis. Ze king is dead, long live ze king! whose name is Felix Costar now. It is half for you and half for me, vich is ze best part of it all.«

Evidently Mr. Morningstar has forgotten that there was a brother of the dead infant, mentioned as joint. heir to all this wealth in the dead Frenchwoman's will.

If Harry Romer still lives, the millions of Madame Lemaire belong not to Mr. Felix Costar, but to him.

But is Harry Romer still alive?

That is something no one knows.

Harry Rome? turned sailor boy three years ago and ran away to sea.

Chapter VIII.

A BATTLE WITH DEATH.

»Chuck the kid in, Redney; don't stand there. polly-foxing about it no longer, but jest chuck him right in the boat.«

»That's all might, Bike, but supposin' we get ketched?) Run your eye up onto the street and see if you see a cop a-beating down.«

»Nary. There's not a livin' soul on the hull block.«

»Then over he goes! There! it's done! Help me to shove off the boat with this here pole, Bike. So—now, she takes the current. Good-by, young feller! Give me love to any friends of mine you may happen to meet below.«

The speakers were the two Dock Snoozers, summoned to the help of Jacob Morningstar in the alley beside the West street saloon.

At the moment of utterance of the first remark, the tallest and dirtiest of the precious pair stood upon the string-piece of the — Line pier with the helpless body of the sailor boy, Harry Blake, extended in his arms above a broken and leaky skiff, which, secured to the pier by a rope, floated filled half up to the gunwale in the water below.

It is done!

The act is accomplished.

Gagged, bound, power for resistance, unable to utter even one cry for help, the unhappy youth falls splashing into the frail-craft, which, impelled' by shove from the man Redney, now shoots out into the stream.

Troublous as had been the short life of Harry Blake, never before had he found himself in a position so trying as this.

His situation was terrifying to the last degree.

Few men there are who can face death with equanimity, even in the quiet of their own home and surrounded by relatives and friends.

What, then, could be expected of this youth now called upon to face the Great Destroyer under circumstances so terrifying as these?

And yet Harry Blake bore up bravely.

Save for a slight sinking sensation about his heart—and piv was gone in a moment—he experienced no intensity of fear.

In his present depressed state of mind, he felt that he had little to live for—that it made put slight difference whether he lived or died.

He realized, now too late, the folly of which he had been guilty in allowing himself to fall into the hands of these scoundreis.

He knew them for what they were.

Could he have expected that they would stand tamely by and submit to threats of exposure uttered by the lips of a boy.

And as he lay there helpless in the bottom of the skiff, the water rising to his ears and covering his feet and hands, he could see the Dock Snoozers, Redney and Bike, hurrying up the pier without so much as casting a look behind them.

Doubtless they were gone to seek the Jew and receive the reward.

Drifting, drifting, drifting!

Out into the broad North River in the dead of night, in a leaky boat, without oars—powerless to move hand or foot to save himself from his impending fate.

Men have lost reason in situations less trying—have taken their own lives in the horror of dull despair.

But, Harry Blake was made of sterner stuff.

Indifferent as he was to life in his present frame of mind, he had no idea whatever of tamely submitting to his fate.

That the chances were all against him he fully realized; still there was always the one chance in a thousand—that faint hope yet remained.

The broad expanse of the river, alive with saucy, puffing tugs, loaded barges, great ships and steamers during the hours of daylight, was now dark and deserted, the lights of New York on one hand and Jersey City on the other, shed feeble radiance upon the blackness of the scene.

Meanwhile the boat, yielding to the impulse of a strong ebb tide, swept with its helpless burden out toward the broad expanse of New York Bay.

Pier after pier passes in grim procession.

The electric lights of the Battery, the distant glimmer of those on the Brooklyn shore, and even those that twinkle faintly upon Governor's Island are now left behind.

For the waters of the bay are reached at last, and with the vanishing lights of three cities the last hope of being seen and rescued by some passing craft has departed from the mind of the boy.

To move is impossible.

So firm are his bonds that he cannot even turn himself in the bottom of the boat.

And the leaky craft slowly but surely settles in the water, deeper and deeper—every inch brings him nearer to the world beyond.

Now, it is during such times as these that thought flashes through the mind with a rapidity before unknown.

Through the mind of Harry Blake ran, with lightning, speed, thoughts of acts long forgotten—of everything he ever said or did.

Father, mother, his boyhood days—all rose up before him; and foremost among all other thoughts was the memory of one sad scene, when, in a moment of hot, boyish anger, he had quarreled with that father, who, though poor as poverty itself, had always treated him kindly, and, without so much as one farewell word, had left his home by night and ran away to sea.

It was this memory that brought the tears.

Bitter, bitter tears, shed from vain regret for an act now beyond the power of recall; and this memory was still uppermost in his mind when, perhaps, two hours later—perhaps three—the helpless youth found himself passing through the Narrows, out upon the broad expanse of the lower bay.

For the boat still floated.

That it should remain upon the surface seemed incredible, so loaded with the ever-rising water had it become.

The increase was slow—slow but sure.

Had the boy maintained his first position, it would even now be higher than the level of his mouth.

With great difficulty, however, he had cere himself into a half-sitting posture, his head hanging partly over the gunwale of the boat, now sunken almost to a level with the surface of the waves.

The long agony is nearly over, the end is soon to come.

That the leaking skiff cannot hold its own many moments is a thing too plain to admit of a doubt.

Those moments passed, and then—

Swish, swish, swish!

From the port side of the boat—that behind his head—the dull sound of oars breaks upon his ears.

If he could only call for help! If he could only give utterance to one last soul-despairing cry!

Swish, swish, swish!

The sound draws nearer—nearer!

Will the rowers see him? and if they do Great heavens! have pity upon this helpless boy!

The end has come. The water-logged skiff can bear nd more.

It has sunk beneath the weight at last, and Harry Blake, bound and helpless in the darkness of night, battles with death in the chilling waters of New York Bay!

Chapter XIX.

THE HOTEL DE MILL.

When the Honorable, the High Board of Directors of the Grand Lodge of Cold Water Drinkers in the United States, undertook to cause to be enforced by the New York police an obsolete law still remaining on the statute-book, descended from goodness knows what far distant times, requiring that every establishment selling liquid refreshments should be known as an inn or tavern, and should be provided with at »least three beds and entertainment for man and beast,« then it was that old Bill Judge took from over the door of his saloon the sign which had so long hung there—the »Bristol Shades,« and substituted for it another bearing the simple inscription, »Hotel de Mill.«

Now, the saloon of old Bill Judge was located on West street, just above Spring, not five doors above the alley in which, through his boyish rashness, Harry Blake had fallen into the treacherous hands of Mr. Jacob Morningstar and his companions.

It drove a thriving trade in all that refreshes the inner man, from a porterhouse steak, cooked as only old Bill Judge knew how to cook it, to a plug of tobacco, a glass of beer, or a mollicum of good old rye.

Indeed, so long and favorably known was the establishment in question among the sailors of the great European steamers, the longshoremen and the freight-handlers upon the adjoining docks, that the quarters, dimes and nickels flowed as rapidly into the till behind the black bar in the Solon above as did water into the whisky barrels in the cellar below.

And there was reason for this.

Not to know Bill Judge and his »Hotel de Mill« was, among, the gentry who frequent this portion of the waterfront of the city of New York, to argue oneself unknown.

Whatever may be said of the private character of old Bill Judge—and it was certainly none of the best—he was quite a personage in his way.

A public benefactor, as it were.

A patron of the fine arts.

Especially the manly art of self-defense.

For in the long, long ago, when the closely-cropped white, hair of the short, thick-set, smooth-shaven, old fellow who: daily attended to the wants of the patrons of the Hotel de Mill was still a chestnut brown, Bill Judge had been what is

vulgarly termed a »slugger,« and had knocked his man »silly« time, time and again.

Hence his professional cognomen, the »Bristol Bantam«; hence the former name of his 'caravansary, the »Bristol Shades,« and its present title. the »Hotel de Mill,« for it had long been the chosen resort of the gentry who aspire to honor, in the ring through the prowess of their »maulies,« and many: was the encounter—a »quiet little mill,« as they termed it—held even now in the privacy of the ex-prize-fighter's own apartment above-stairs, far removed from the danger of a sudden and unlooked for descent by the blue-coated officers of the law.

Even the walls of the saloon bore testimony of this hero's past greatness, in the shape of ancient colored prints, representing the Bristol Bantam in the act of polishing off the, Devonshire Pet, the Chichester Chicken and the Manchester, Mouse, in the presence of an admiring crowd of spectators gathered on the outside of a rope which formed the ring.

And to these living witnesses of his prowess in the past, as_ may be readily believed, the Bristol Bantam lost no opportunity to refer, with the added remark that he was »for any of them yet,« only his »arms were a trifle stiff.«

Upon the night so prolific in startling adventures for our youthful hero. Harry Blake, old Bill Judge, having closed the Hotel de Mill after the last guest had departed—the hour was ane something after two—found himself amid the tables, chairs, barrels, bottles and casks which formed the furnishing of his establishment, entirely alone.

To be sure, there was the fair Miss Mollie, a blushing damsel of some eighteen summers, known as old Bill's »handsome daughter,« and treated with the highest of respect by all who patronized the saloon, but she had retired hours ago, and it is only natural to suppose that the proprietor of the Hotel de Mill to do the same.

But suppositions are oftentimes deceitful, and apt to lead those who follow them widely astray.

Instead of raking down the light fire already started—for September nights are apt to be chilly—in the tall stove which occupied the center of the room, the erstwhile Bristol Bantam, having seen that every bolt and lock was secure, stole quietly out of the rear door, without waiting to even catch up his hat, and crossing the back yard with its litter of old boxes, empty beer kegs, champagne baskets, and the like, opened a small gate connecting with a narrow alley running parallel with West street in the rear of this particular block, and putting his fingers between his teeth, whistled twice in a peculiar way.

Scarce had he done so when a man stole from behind an empty truck occupying a position nearly facing the gate on the other side of the alley, and, without a

word of greeting, followed the ex-pugilist into his saloon.

In appearance the new-comer was anything but inviting.

Short, thick-set, with bronzed cheeks and tangled beard of yellowish white, shaggy blue coat, trousers once dark, but now, save where two great patches had been let into the original cloth, so besmeared with dirt that no trace of the original color remained, sou'-wester hat, and great cow-hide boots. Such was the personal appearance of this midnight guest at the Hotel de Mill.

Beneath his arm he carried a heavy bundle of foreign apparel of his appearance, securely tied in what seemed to be a sort of waterproof cloth.

»Hello Beasley, h'old pal!« exclaimed the Bristol Bantam, slapping this perfect specimen of an old grizzled sea dog upon the back as he closed and locked the door behind them. »Hi knowed you'd keep your h'appointment with your h'old Nh'uncle Judge. Now, then, what's the game to-night?«

»The sailor, flinging down his bundle with the air of a man wearied of his load, removed his sou'wester and wiped his head with a red bandana of the largest size.

»Silk, pardner,« he replied, briefly. »Silks and satins of the finest kind, with a few sparklers thrown in for luck, and Satan's own time I've had 'in gettin' them up, too; twicest I came near getting ketched. If you don't divide up fairer nor what you did last time. I swear I never'll run the risk of steering for your blamed old fence again. Give us some whisky, will you? I'm drier nor a hull crate of salt herrin', and have been a-skuikin' out in that blamed old alley till I'm chilled clean through to the bone.«

»H'anything you say, Beasley,« returned Bill Judge, reaching over the bar and producing bottle and glass. »You know well enough that you have h'only to h'ask for what you don't see h'in the 'otel de Mill, an' it's yourn, though, 'pon my word. Hi don't know what you mean when you talk about not dividing fair. Don't you know Bill Judge has traveled on his reputation for fairness since the day he licked the Devonshire Pet in '48, an' will continue so to travel! till the h'end o' time?«

In reply, the man simply grunted. Then pouring himself out a full tumbler of raw spirits, he turned it down without even pausing for breath.

»Now, no taffy, Bill Judge,« he said, laconically, at the same time giving his bundle a kick. »I want you to understand that it's halves this time, or there can be no dealings betwixt us again. There's the goods, look at 'em for yerself, and tell me what they are wuth.«

Without waiting for further invitation, the Bristol Bantam, stooping over the bundle, whipped out a knife and cut the springs.

A moment later, and upon the floor of the Hotel de Mill a gorgeous array of the most expensive silks and glistening satins lay displayed.

»Them's fine, Beasley.« he said, surveying the goods with the eye of an expert. »H'out with the sparklers h'and I'll name a price, me boy.«

Thrusting his hand deep into the pocket of his shaggy coat, the sailor produced a small! brown paper, which, being spread out upon the bar, was found to contain a blue one, which being opened in turn, a number of glittering diamonds of great brilliancy and value sparkled beneath the single gas-burner turned down to a mere flicker above.

»There they be. No dodgin', now. What's the hull pile wuth?«

Bill Judge examined the stones critically, one by one. Then turning to the floor. he silently studied the marks upon the bolts of satin and silk.

»Ow'd three thousand for the hull business strike you, Beasley?« he asked, surveying the heap. »H'it's more'n they're wuth, a blamed sight, but I want a man to be satisfied when he deals with me.«

»It don't strike me at all. It won't leave me a hundred dollars when I've settled with the owners. Don't you suppose my time an' the risk I run is wuth nothin' at all?«

»But Hi must make suttin, Beasley. My risk his has great h'as your'n.«

»Tain't nuthin' of the sort. I've had enough of yer shenanegan, Bill Judge. It's four thousand cash down, or I take 'em away.«

»Man, dear, do you want to ruin: me? Suppose Hi get ketched? Suppose—good heaven's, what's that?«

I get ketched? Suppose-good Lord, what's that?

It sounded very much like a knock at the saloon door, and what was more, it was repeated again and again, with the addition of a gruff voice, calling old Bill Judge by name.

In an instant the proprietor of the Hotel de Mill had flung the bolts of silk into a closet, while the man Beasley, seizing the diamonds, crumpled the blue paper about them in his great hairy hand.

»Lay h'outside hin the back-yard a minute till I see who it is,« whispered Judge, pushing the sailor toward the rear of the saloon, »Hi'll give you the word when the coast is clear.«

Now, in all probability, it was the intention of this highly reputable dealer in silks and diamonds to obey this command, but as it happened that upon their entrance to the saloon the expugilist had not only locked the rear door, but had pocketed the key, the way out into the back yard was not, as one might say, altogether clear.

But there was no time to retrace his steps.

Bill Judge was already at the door leading to the street, undoing its bolts and bars, and finding himself thus cornered, Mr. Beasley sank noiselessly behind a tier of spirit casks, and, scarce breathing, awaited results.

That the visitors were men, and two in number, he could be by the sound of their feet upon the sanded floor of the saloon.

His fears that the intruders were officers of the law were dispelled by the first remark that was made.

»Well, Uncle Bill, 'm on time, you see. This gent is my friend, Mr. Morningstar, and in this here bundle's the kid.«

At the same instant there echoed from the saloon beyond the feeble cry of an infant, evidently held in the speaker's arms.

»Bill Radd, Hi'd most forgot ye, but hall' the same Hi'm pleased to see ye. Mr. Morningstar, your most h'obedient. H'anything I can do to sarve ye shall be done.«

»Den take care of zis enfant, my dear, as you promise to Monsieur Radd, till you hear from me again. It vill pe tollars in your pocket, I promise you. Here's von hundred now, and zere vill be von hundred each month. You understant zat you hellups me in my leetle scheme.«

The words were spoken with a marked Hebrew accent.

That the speaker was one of the »chosen people« there could not be the slightest doubt.

Further conversation followed, and as the words fell upon the listener's ears he raised himself to an upright position and peered at the group in the saloon from, over the barrels, his eyes glistening with the animosity of a snake.

»Ha, ha! I've got you where the hair is short at last, you sly old fox,« he muttered, shaking his fist at the unconscious proprietor of the Hotel de Mill, who stood before the Jew, and another man, in the dress of a sailor, who held a whining infant in his arms. »I'll know whose young one that is, if it takes a leg, and if you don't deal with Jim Beasley fair and square, you'll find your nice little prospect of a steady income nipped, as it were, in the bud.«

Chapter X.

HARRY BLAKE FINDS HIMSELF STILL IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING.

»What do you think of it, Waddie?«

»Blamed ef I altogether like it, Jim.«

»Nor me. It was all well enough to bring one stranger in here, and put him onto our secret, mebbe, but two's too much—a blamed sight too much for me.«

»Well, we can't refuse to save life, Jim. The fust feller 'would ha' croaked in another second if we hadn't a-fished him out'n the bay, and as for that there boy, why, so trussed up was the poor young wretch, that there wasn't no breath left in his body at all when that feller Bangs an' myself pulled him inter the boat, He was tied hand and foot and hed a big handkerchief jammed into his mouth, don't ye see?«

»Yes, I see, and I don't like it, neither, While I'm off to the city you must go and bring another stranger into the mill. I don't like it, Waddie, and what's more, I won't have it. That fellow Bangs is a keener, and seems likely to make himself useful, but this here boy has got to go.«

»If he ain't gone already,« muttered Waddie in reply. »He hain't showed no signs of life what I kin see, except to sleep, nee jhe was fetched ashore, and it's my belief that he's about dead.

But the speaker was wrong.

Our hero, Harry Blake, the boy to whom he alluded, was very far from dead.

In that awful moment when he felt the leaky skiff into which he had been thrown by the two Dock Snoozers. sink from under him, and found himself struggling in his helpless condition with the waters of the lower bay, his senses left him.

As consciousness returned, the above-noted conversation, carried on in low, gruff voices, was the first thing fell upon his ears,

Where was he?

He had not the faintest idea—could not even guess.

His head ached, he felt strange \pains in all his bones, but for all that there came over his mind a sense of unspeakable relief—at all events, he was still alive.

The sound of, the voices had now died away, and youthful curiosity getting the better of all other desires, Harry opened his eyes, raised himself to a sitting posture and surveyed his surroundings.

He was undressed, save for an old undershirt many sizes too large for him, and had lain stretched upon a rude cot bedstead, covered with a rough horse blanket, without other clothes.

The apartment was narrow and exceedingly low-studded, a single chair and a pair of drawers hanging on a nail, which he immediately recognized as those which he had himself worn, was all else the room contained.

From an open door beyond a faint light could be seen, while from without a low window by the side of the cot could be distinctly heard the dashing of the waves against the shore.

Now, had it not been for the nature of the conversation which he had just heard, and which seemed to have proceeded from the room in which burned the light beyond the open door, the natural instinct of the boy would have been to either rise at once and investigate his situation, or by his voice make his return to consciousness known.

Instead, he hesitated.

That the remarks of the speaker were directed at himself he felt certain. It was impossible to say into whose hands he had fallen. He resolved to wait—perhaps more would be said.

And as he sat listening a door was suddenly heard to open and shut, and the hearty voice of a man inquiring as to himself:

»Has the boy come to yet?«

»Dunno, Mr. Bangs,« replied the voice of the man addressed as »Waddie«; »he hadn't at last accounts.«

The steps of the newcomer were heard crossing the floor, and a tall, gentlemanly fellow now entered the room.

He was neatly dressed in a black cutaway coat, trousers of dark material, with vest to match.

His hair, which was black, was parted in the middle and hung down thickly over a pair of piercing black eyes, while a heavy mustache of the same color shielded the mouth.

The instant Harry Blake saw him standing by his bedside in the uncertain light, he felt that he had met the man before, though where or under what circumstances he could not have told.

Upon discovering the boy the stranger started slightly.

»Well, this looks more like it!« he exclaimed in a cheerful voice, placing his hand upon Harry's head. »So you've concluded not to die after all, it seems?«

At the sound of these words other footsteps were heard, and two rough-looking men, one an old fellow with a long, white beard, in his shirt sleeves, patched trousers, and wearing a red nightcap, the other dressed in coarse garments, his head covered with a sou'wester, entered the room and approached the bed.

»See, Waddie!« cried the young man, addressing the one of the red nightcap, »the boy is coming out all right. This makes another life that you've saved.«

»Perhaps some of you will tell me where I am?« said Harry, looking from one to another in a bewildered way.

»Shall I tell him, Waddie?« asked the young man.

»'Spose you mought as well. He's bound to find out ef yer don't. You're on Staten Island, young feller, in the Old Wind Mill, as folks call it around here. This here gentleman an' myself we fished you outen the bay. We are fishermen, me'n my partner, Jim Beasley, here. This here's Mr. Bang, a gent wot's stopping with us for a while.«

Meanwhile Mr. Beasley—none other than the midnight visitor to the Hotel de Mill—whose acquaintance the reader formed in the last Chapter, surveyed the boy with an air of disgust.

»Let me question him,« said the young man, gently. »It is confusing to him to see so many faces upon the first moment of returning life.«

Taking the hint, the fishermen retreated to the room beyond, while their companion, drawing the chair toward the bed, seated himself by Harry's side.

»What is your name, my boy?« he asked, pleasantly, »and how came you afloat in that rotten old boat which Waddie and myself saw sink beneath you? How happened it that we found you in the water gagged and bound?«

»My name is Harry Blake. I got in that fix through being fool enough not to mind my own business—that's all.

A strange look passed over the features of the man before him,

»Boy,« he said, sternly, »when you say your name is Harry Blake are you telling me the truth?«

»That's all the name I've got to give,« answered our hero, with a faint flush. »If you want to hear my story I'll tell it to you now.«

The man continued to eye him strangely.

»Go on with your story,« he said at length. »By and by perhaps, I'll have something more to say.«

»I don't understand you.«

»And I don't care to explain. How came you bound in that boat?«

»I just came back from sea, sir, and in wandering around the city saw some men commit a burglary. Very foolishly I followed them, because I knew one of their number. 'I fell into their hands, and, by some of the gang, I suppose it was, got myself tied and gagged. Then they threw me into the boat.«

»You have just come from sea? I thought as much. On what ship, may I ask?«

»The Golden Fleece, from Melbourne to New York.«

»And this burglar whom you knew—do you mind telling me his name?«

»Not at all. His name was Jacob Morningstar; he was one of the passengers on the Fleece. There was a man in the house that helped him that I knew, too. That's what interested me, don't you see?«

»You mean the house that was being burglarized?«

»Yes, It was a great mansion on Fifth avenue, corner of Washington Square. I saw them letting something out of the window in a basket. It was the other fellow, Felix Costar, that handed the bundle over the wall.«

Felix Costar!

The man had sprung to his feet.

»Can you show me that house, boy?« he demanded, fiercely. Can you point out to me exactly how and where this all took place?«

»Of course I can, and will be glad to. But how came you to pick me up? You haven't told me that.«

For an instant the young man, who had been pacing the room; failed to reply.

That something about the story told by Harry Blake had served to strongly agitate him was plain to be seen.

Then, as though controlling himself with an effort, he turned toward the boy again.

»Waddie and I happened to be out in his boat,« he said, simply. »We saw your skiff sink, and fished you out of the water. It is lucky for you that we did.«

»I can believe you, and can't thank you enough. When was this? It seems years since I felt that boat sinking beneath me, but I suppose it is only a few hours ago.«

»You are wrong there; it was early yesterday morning. You were nearly gone, and, after we restored you, you lay in a state of semi-unconsciousness four hours. Then you fell into a deep sleep, from which you have just aroused.«

»What time is it?«

»Twelve o'clock at night.«

»And I have slept all these hours?« cried Harry, with a bewildered air. »I can hardly believe it. Can't I get up and put on my clothes?«

The man laughed.

»Why, the fact is, my boy, you haven't any clothes to put on except those drawers hanging there on the nail. You see, we stripped you in the boat to rub some life into you. We laid your clothes on the stern seat, and, a wave breaking over us, they were washed away.«

»What am I going to do?«

»You mean in regard to clothes?«

»Yes.«

»Oh, you need not worry. I'll see that you are provided with a full suit tomorrow, In the meantime Waddie has picked out a girl's frock. stockings and shoes from a chest of old clothes he has stowed away in the next room that I think will fit you. If you feel like getting up, suppose you put them on until we can do better. They'll keep you warm, at all events, and I'll see what can be done toward getting you something to eat.«

»All right, I'm agreeable. Anything to get off this bed. Besides, I am 'as hungry as a wolf.«

»Lie down for a moment, then, till I see what can be done toward fixing you off in both the matter of food and clothes,«

A few moments later Harry Blake, for the first time in his life guilty of anything even approaching disguise, entered the room where sat the men Waddie and Jim Beasley before a table. upon which burned a solitary candle, fastened to the board by the strength of its own wax, clad in the outer garments of a girl of sixteen.



»Bravo!« cried the young man, approaching at this moment and seizing him by the hand with friendly grasp. »You make an elegant girl. I feel quite inclined to

start up a flirtation with you at once.«

»I feel like a fish out of water,« replied Harry, gazing downward and surveying his unaccustomed garments, while dim Beasley, seated upon his stool opposite old Waddie, with his hands clenched together, eyed him with anything but a favorable glance.

And as the boy and his new-found friend continued to chat, that individual sullenly and passed out of the room.

He had not been absent more than a moment when he came dashing in with countenance speaking both excitement and surprise.

He drew the man Bangs hastily aside, and whispered a few hurried words in his ear.

Both instantly left the apartment, followed by Waddie, who did not appear to understand the case at all.

In a moment Bangs returned, with his face pale and thoughtful.

»Harry Blake, I'm going to let you into a secret,« he said, in low, hurried tones. »Fate has brought us together, and, I believe, for a purpose. Prepare to be surprised.«

Raising his hand to his head, he tore off the thick hair in the form of a wig, while from his upper lip he removed the heavy, black mustache.

From the lips of Harry Blake there escaped a cry of astonishment.

The man who stood before him was either Mr. Felix Costar or John Delaplaine, the drowned mate of the Golden Fleece, but-which, for the life of him, he could not have told.

Chapter XI.

JIM BEASLEY GETS THE BRISTOL BANTAM WHERE THE HAIR IS SHORT.

That the strange happenings which go to make up this narrative of actual events may be properly unfolded, it is necessary that we should turn back in time to the night of the *Bristol Bantam,« the Hotel de Mill.

We left that industrious individual peering from above the barricade of whisky casks at old Bill Judge, his visitor, Jacob Morningstar and the sailor, Radd, who still held the whining infant in his arms.

The proposition to deliver up the child to the care of the ex-price-fighter had, as the reader will recollect, just been made.

This proposition, overheard by Jim Beasley, seemed to afford him great satisfaction, as his face, could it have been seen, would have plainly shown.

»I've got the old fox where I want him now,« he muttered, »I have, by Judas Priest! He knows them fellers, an' I don't; but I know a thing or two of which they little dream. There's some crooked game going on, of that I am sure. Some one has got to buy up Jim Beasley or he'll make Rome howl!«

Meanwhile, the infant had- been deposited upon the bar, where it rested, still whining amid the blankets which covered it, regardless of which, Bill Judge, stepping behind, produced drinks, over which the bargain was consummated, Beasley watching their movements attentively from behind the concealment of the casks.

»You vant to take good care of ze schild, my dear,« said Morningstar, in his quick, snappy way. »Not for thousands of tollars would I zat anysing should happen to harm it you understand? Eef it dies, zat settles it—I pay notings, and you see me no more.«

»Hall right; you need 'ave no fear. My daughter shall look h'after h'it. h'and she's a bully one to nurse!

»Very good. Here is von hundred tollars; zen. For ze rest you shall hear from me soon. Good-night, Monsieur Shudge; it is late and ve haf far to go.«

The Jew stepped toward the door, followed by the sailor Radd.

As he passed beneath the flickering gas-burner Jim Beasley craned his neck over the casks and quickly surveyed his countenance again.

»I know'd it was him,« he muttered, »and now I am sure of it. Nobody could forget a nose like that when once they've seed it afore.«

As a matter of fact, the nose of Mr. Jacob Morningstar was somewhat prominent, resembling more nearly the beak of a parrot than anything else, and viewed in profile as he turned to bid old Bill Judge good-night at the door, it was presented to the eyes of the watcher from the largest possible point of view.

Locking the door behind his visitors, the Bristol Bantam, from whose mind all memory of his silk and diamond customer seemed to have departed, turned to the bar, and taking up the little blanket bundle gingerly, held it up beneath the gas.

»Ho, you little tootsey-wootsey! You're going to prove a good spec to your h'old Uncle Judge,« he exclaimed, chucking the infant—who showed signs of breaking out into a roar—beneath the chin. »A hundred dollars a month! Why, that'll pay my rent, don't you know, h'and no risk h'about it, nuther. Molly 'll be delighted. Hi h'owe Bill Radd one for putting me h'into this—He still, you little midget, h'or Hi'll ram the blanket down your confounded throat!«

But the »little midget« would not lie still.

Instead, it set up a roar. loud enough to wake the dead.

»Hi must wake up Molly, and let her give h'it some pap,« muttered the old man, moving toward a side door communicating with apartments above. »Hi don't know what to do for the little h'imp, blame me if Hi do.«

And the eyes of Jim Beasley followed him as he disappeared with his burden from the saloon.

The door had scarcely closed behind him when that enterprising individual walked boldly from his concealment and helped himself to a second glass of whisky from a black bottle which he took from behind the bar.

»Now, I wonder what it all means?« he muttered, wiping his lips with the back of his hand. »Ain't it tarnation strange that I should happen to get onto that Jew and his little racket, and then run chock abunk against him here in Judge's this very night? It's luck, that's what I call it. I'd be a poor fisherman if I couldn't use what luck sends into my net. Some one's got to pay up, or I'll blow the whole gaff to the cops.«

He helped himself to a third potation of the whisky as he spoke, turning it down his capacious throat like so much new milk, and then proceeding to the closet, deliberately tossed out the silk, bolt by bolt, to its former position on the barroom boor.

Upon the little pile thus formed the last piece had scarce been placed when footsteps were heard on the stairs without, the side door was opened, and the cropped gray beard and smoothly-shaven countenance of the old prize-fighter again appeared.

»Hello, Beasley, 'ave you come h'in h'again?« he said, surveying the pile of silk. »Them gents 'ad a little private business with me, that was all.«

»So I should say,« growled he of the sou'wester. »I thought they would never go. It's blame cold a-hangin' 'round there out in the back yard.«

»His h'it? Well, now, I shouldn't wonder hif h'it was, Have another drink, Beasley, h'and we'll proceed to settle this ere little business transaction of ours h'at once.«

»No, thank you,« replied the virtuous Beasley. »« drink when there's business to be did.«

»Very good; suit yourself. Now, then, how much shall we say—three thousand?«

»Nothing of the sort. The price is riz to forty-five hundred. I won't take a cent less.«

»Ho! you won't, hey? Then you might h'as well tie h'up ae, bundle h'and get h'out, for h'in that case I'm h'off to bed.

»And I won't do that, either,« answered the man, doggedly, flinging himself into a chair. »That's my price, and I mean to have it. There's the silks and here's the sparklers. You've got the money about you, so fork it over. Anyway, there's still five hundred in the business for you.«

At this exhibition of independence on the part of one who had for years been his willing tool, every separate hair upon the cropped plate of the Bristol Bantam seemed to rise with indignation.

»Why, I h'ain't 'eard sich h'impudence h'as this since the time they tried to cheat me h'out of the purse when I licked the Chichester Chicken in the year '53!« he exclaimed, fairly bursting with rage. »Take them things away, Beasley—take 'em away h'at once, h'or H'll call h'in the cops h'and give you h'in charge.«

»You will, eh? Suppose I inform them that you have got a young one what's stole outter a big house on Fifth avenoo up-stairs, and get you five years in the jug? How'd you like that?«

»Beasley! For heaven's sake! What in the world do you mean?«

The man's limbs seemed to tremble beneath him, while his face exhibited every sign of fear.

»Oh, you're very innocent, you are. Never saw so innocent a man in my life. Hold on now, Judge, I know where your Mr. Morningstar, or whatever his name is, got that there young one and you don't. Just-score down one for me.«

»Then you heard --«

»I heard and saw all. Do you think I was fool enough to go out into the back yard when there was a chance to make a stake? Beside, the door was locked and

you had the key yourself.«

»Blast me, so I 'ad,« muttered the ex-pugilist, sinking into a chair. »But Hi say, Beasley, you wouldn't be mean enough to get an h'old pal into trouble? 'You don't really intend to give me away?«

»Not if you deal fair.«

»Hi will deal fair. Hi'll give you your price for this 'ere stuff. Forty-five 'undred h'is a go.«

»That's something like it, Bill, and there's money in it fer you at that. It won't do fer old pardners to quarrel. Now, as you've used me right, I'll do the same by you. You can make more out'n that young one whet you just took upstairs by joining hands with me than by sticking to that blamed Jew what brung it here. I'm tellin' you, for I know.«

»What do you know?«

»That the child was stolen, for one thing. I've got more customers for my smuggled goods than you, Bill Judge. One of them is a reg'ler nob, and smuggles in all the clothes he wears, and lots for his friends beside. I leave 'em at a stable in an alley jest off the lower end of Fifth avenoo. I was up there to-night afore I came here, and just as I was a-comin' through the alley what should I happen to see but that there hooked nose Jew a-letting something down in a basket from the top window of a house which backs on the alley where I stood.«

»No, Beasley!! Never!«

»I did, I tell you. I'll take my afferdavit it was the same man.«

»Could you show me the house?«

»I could, if I chose. If you say it's pardners betwixt us, Bill Judge, I will.«

»Then h'it's a go, Beasley. H'and 'ere's my 'and h'on h'it. The Bristol Bantam h'always Satis 'is man square. A 'undred dollars a month! H'it vill 'ave to be a thousand h'if H'i am going to keep my mouth closed, Beasley, let's 'ave a drink.«

Half an hour later, and the virtuous Mr. Beasley might have been observed departing of the back gate which connected the alley with the Hotel de Mill.

»Ha! ha! a good fifteen hundred better nor I thought,« he chuckled, as he slapped his trousers pocket. »I shall soon grow rich if this keeps on. You think you can play it on me, don't you, you smooth-tongued old bruiser? T'll have you to understand that Beasley's got the Bristol Bantam where the hair is short, and he means to hold onto him, too.«

Chapter XII.

A REVELATION-A SURPRISE.

At the sudden transformation of the man introduced by old Waddie under the name of Bangs, Harry Blake stood lost in amazement.

Was it Felix Costar, or Was it his old enemy, the mate?

Which was dead and which was living?

That one of these men so strangely resembling each other had been lost from the deck of the Golden Fleece s certain.

It was given out on board that Mate Delaplaine had been the one who had disappeared from the ship's deck as she lay anchored in the fog; but had he not seen the mate with his own eyes pass the bundle taken from the willow basket; lowered from the window of that Fifth avenue mansion over the wall?

He certainly had.

What is more, he had felt, no doubt, at that time that his, eyes were resting upon the face of his old enemy, the mate.

As he gazed upon the face of the man before him his mind became involved in doubt.

It might be that of Costar, the passenger, or Delaplaine, the mate.

Which it actually was he would not at that moment dared to have said.

It seemed incredible that Morningstar and his companions could have captured him again, and yet— »

»Well, Harry,« exclaimed the man, who had been silently watching him, »do you know who I am?«

»You look like Mr. Costar, our passenger from Melbourne on the Fleece. »You may be Jack Delaplaine, for all I know.«

At the mention of the mate's name the man's face darkened.

»Your first surmise was right, boy,« he breathed fiercely. »Look at me well and never again mistake me for that wretch, who, unless I greatly mistake, is as much your enemy as mine.

»But they said Jack Delaplaine was dead. I saw Mr. Costar when we landed at the dock. It was believed on the ship that it was the mate who fell overboard in the fog.«

»And the man you saw pass the' willow basket over the wall?«

»At first I thought it was the mate—I had good cause to remember him, for he beat me enough—but as they said he was dead I thought it must be Mr. Costar. I don't know what to think now.«

»I have told you what the truth is. I am Felix Costar. It was that scoundrel Delaplaine who threw me overboard in the fog.«

»And your life was saved?«

»As miraculously as your own. These fishermen, Beasley and old Waddie, chanced to be passing in their boat. It was by their hands that I was rescued from a watery grave.«

»Then it was not really you who left the ship when she reached the dock?«

»It was not. It was the treacherous mate, whose remarkable resemblance to myself caused me to treat him like a friend. He assumed my identity and dressed himself in my clothes.

»You cannot understand it yet,« he added, hastily, for the countenance of the boy bore a look more puzzled than even before. »Come with me. I have no time for explanation. Come, and see Jack Delaplaine face to face with your own eyes.«

He led the way toward the door of the hut, followed by our hero, who had never been more utterly puzzled in his life.

Beyond the door they found themselves in a dark and narrow passage, at the end of which two doors opened, one of which was now closed, and the other open, leading out upon the shore.

Through the opening Harry could see dashing waves, and hear the wind howling in a manner indicative of a gathering storm.

»Remain here, Harry,« whispered his conductor.

He ran swiftly through the open door as he spoke these words, and, to the boy's intense surprise, leaped boldly into the dashing waves.

Dripping from head to foot with the icy water, he sprang across the cover of the dark passage, and again stood by Harry's side.

»Don't think me mad,« he whispered. »I did that for a purpose. Take hold of my hand and let me lead you, and upon no account make a sound or speak a word.

He opened the closed door and led the way through a passage.

»We may talk in safety here,« he said, »providing we confine ourselves to whispers, Let me improve the opportunity by telling you where we are.«

»That's just what I'm dying to find out.«

»We are in the lower part of a building situated on the extreme end of Staten Islands, and known to the people who reside hereabout as the 'Haunted Mill on the Marsh.'

»We have just left one of the out-buildings of the mill, in which Jim Beasley and old Waddie reside, and are passing beneath the main structure to what was once the office and storeroom, situated upon the opposite side. Now keep your eyes

open, and for your life don't speak. I'll raise a gost in the old mill for to-night, at least, which will make the heart of one scoundrel quake.»

He opened a door at the top of the flight of steps noiselessly.

They now stood in a third passage, through an opening at the end of which a faint light could be seen.

It was still another door, and behind could be distinguished the sound of men moving about.

At the same instant two forms rose up before them from the floor beneath their feet.

They were Jim Beasley and old Waddie, who had been peering through a knot-hole in the separating partition.

The feller is in there, whispered the former, in tones scarcely audible. There's a blast Jew with him who is doing something or other to the wall.

Taking Harry by the shoulder, his conductor pointed silently toward the knot-hole down close to the floor, from which the light could be seen streaming forth.

Kneeling noiselessly, the boy applied his eye to the hole.

To his astonishment, not to say terror, he beheld his enemy, Jacob Morningstar, near whom stood a man in every particular the counterpart of he who had called himself Felix Costar, now, as he supposed, standing by his side.

Instinctively Harry Blake aoe from the sight before him toward his conductor.

The man had gone.

Jim Beasley and old Waddie still remained, however, and, in answer to his look of inquiry, the latter pointed silently in the direction of the open door.

The eyes of the boy followed the gesture.

There stood his late companion, all wet and dripping, motionless and uttering no sound.

What was he about?

If the man within the room was really Jack Delaplaine, the mate, was this other endeavoring to work upon his superstitious fears by appearing as the ghost of the man whose life ke had sought to take?

Harry Blake bent his eye to the knot-hole again with the intention of observing the effect of this maneuver upon the men within the room.

Bang!

Through the dark passage there resounded a deafening crash.

The light which had streamed through the knot-hole and through the open space of the door disappeared instantly.

Where that door had been a blank wall of wood now stared the dripping figure of Felix Costar full in the face.

Chapter XIII.

IN THE OLD MILL TOWER-A BEAM OF LIGHT.

Unable to longer restrain themselves, the two fishermen or smugglers, as the reader knows them actually to be—moved hurriedly to their companion's side.

Harry Blake also sprang to his feet.

All four stood in the passage enveloped in total darkness.

»For heaven's sake, Waddie, what has happened?« exclaimed Felix Costar, in a whisper.

»Blamed if I know,« answered Waddie, in the same low tone. »Seems as though something dropped down before the door. I don't understand it at all, but maybe Jim Beasley can tell.«

»What is it, Beasley?« whispered Costar.

From the darkness there came no reply.

Still no answer.

»Some one brushed past me just now,« said Harry. »I think it must have been Mr. Beasley; he seemed to be moving toward the end of the passage.

»That never could have been Jim!« exclaimed old Waddie, in a trembling voice. »This here passage leads up into the mill.«

Then I propose to follow it. If there's trickery here I'm bound to know whose work it is. Come on, Waddie; I'm done with yonder scoundrels for the I_present. I intend to solve this mystery if it takes all night. Lead the way into the mill.«

Not I cried the old man, drawing back. »I live in the hut because it suits my purpose, but I wouldn't go into the haunted mill on the marsh at night or at any other time—no, not for millions in gold!«

»Do you mean to tell me that you don't know the way?«

»Never was further than this in my life. If you'd a-seed what I seen onct you wouldn't want to resk it, nuther.«

»But Beasley has evidently gone that way.«

»Don't believe it. I'll bet a dollar that the ghost of the haunted mill has carried poor Jim off.

Nonsense—rank nonsense! »Have you that lantern with you that was brought from the hut?«

»Yes, here it is. I have it in my hand.«

»Then give it to me!« cried Costar, striking a match. »We'll soon see what all this means, or I'll know the reason why.

He seized the lantern from the hands of the trembling Waddie and touched the match to its wick.

A feeble light illuminated the passage.

Jim Beasley was nowhere to be seen.

Holding the lantern before him, the man hastily examined the partition.

As had been the case with Jacob Morningstar and his companion upon the other side he found it old and dusty.

To all appearance it might have occupied its present position for half a century at least.

»Come!« he exclaimed, abruptly. »I'm going to explore this old rookery from top to bottom—my mind is bent on it. If you are afraid, Waddie, I venture to swear that this boy in girl's clothes is ready to go.«

»Indeed I am,« replied Harry, whose curiosity had been greatly aroused. I'll go with you to the end of the world, Mr. Costar, after what you have done for me.

They had passed half the length of the corridor now—the old smuggler fearful of being left alone, and hurried through the door leading to the hut.

»So you believe me to be Felix Costar at last? said the man, gazing with kindly glance upon our hero's face.

»Yes, indeed. How can I help it after what I saw?«

»What did you see?«

»Jack Delaplaine rigged up like a gentleman and old, Morningstar, the Jew that was aboard the Fleece.«

The man who sought your life and the man who believes he has taken mine, replied the other, bitterly. Harry, you and I must work together, since your enemy and mine are working against us. Unless I greatly mistake our interest lie together in a way that you little dream.

What do you mean by that?

But Felix Costar made no reply, for they had now reached the end of the corridor, and further progress was barred by a door.

It opened readily as he pressed the latch, however, and they found themselves at the foot of a flight of winding stairs.

»Can it be possible that Beasley has gone this way?« the man muttered. You are sure you felt him brush against you in the dark?«

»I did not say that, I felt some one brush past me. I don't know who it was.«

It must have been Beasley. Who else could it have been? " Harry, I begin to suspect that man, although he was instrumental in saving my life.«

»What is he?«

»Hp calls himself a fisherman, but I have my doubts. I have lingered in their hut for a purpose. At first they treated me kindly enough, but to-day this man Beasley seemed to want to get rid of me. He seemed positively angry when he returned from the city early this morning and found that Waddie and I had rescued you and brought you to the hut.«

I know he don't want me around,« said Harry, with a short laugh.

And he related the conversation to which he had been an unseen listener at the moment when his senses began to return.

To this his companion listened with attention.

»There's something wrong,« he said, in a tone of perplexity. »I told theae men a part of my story. When you saw him come running into the hut, it was to tell me that two strangers were coming down the hill.

»I ran out, and around tho corner of the mill saw Jacob Morningstar and the mate. What their business here may be is more than I can tell, bur, knowing the ghastly reputation of the old mill, I instantly resolved to see what the effect of my appearance, all wet and dripping, would be on the mind of that scoundrel who threw me from the deck of the Fleece. Forthis I had a reason, my boy—a reason which I cannot now explain.

But come,« he added, beginning the ascent of the steps, for they had lingered at the foot of the winding stair-case while this conversation had been taking place. »We must be up and doing if we propose to learn anything at all. I intend to follow these stairs, ghost or no ghost, even if they lend me to the roof itself.«

Holding the lantern before him, Felix Costar—for that his companion was really the passenger of the Golden Fleece the boy could see no reason to doubt—began the ascent, followed by Harry, who pressed closely behind.

The stairs were narrow, winding and steep, like the stairs in a tower, or some monument—that of Bunker Hill is as good a comparison as anything else.

And as they continued to ascend, the howling of the rising gale broke upon their ears, mingled with strange creakings and groanings, enough to have struck terror to the heart of the boy had he been alone, but which Costar assured him were caused by the arms of the great windmill, whose highest point they had now almost reached.

But there was no sign of the man Beasley, nor, save for themselves, of any living thing.

»We must be almost at the top now,« said Costar, as, breathing heavily from the tedious ascent, he swung his lantern before him. »It is very strange about Beasley—hello! What have we here?«

It was a round platform, seemingly filling the space within the walls of the tower, from which on one side there opened a window, unguarded by either shutter or sash.

Costar, approaching the window, thrust his head out upon the night.

»There they go!« he exclaimed. »They are running up the hill. It is Delaplaine and the Jew. Your enemy and mine! for heaven's sake, boy! what's the matter now?«

It was a cry of terror which had thus startled the man at the window, proceeding from the lips of Harry Blake.

But before it was uttered the two men on the ground had paused, and, looking back, had caught a glimpse of the head and face of Felix Costar at the window.

It has already been related how at this sight they fled in terror from the Haunted Mill on the Marsh—fled from what both firmly believed to be the ghost of a man even then lying drowned at the bottom of the bay.

As they did so, from out of the shadow of the old mill crept the man, Jim Beasley, who silently stole after their retreating forms.

Meanwhile Costar, turning suddenly from the window at the startled exclamation of his companion, perceived, to his intense astonishment, that the whole platform was illuminated with a blaze of light.

Close against the partition opposite the window stood Harry, trembling like a leaf.

»Look through that hole!« he whispered, hoarsely. »If there is such a thing as a ghost on earth you will see one in that light beyond!«

He pointed toward a small, round opening in the partition, from which the bright light shot forth in one broad and radiant beam.

Chapter XIV.

MR. MORNINGSTAR ANNOUNCES THAT HE HAS COME TO STAY.

It is the morning after the funeral of the child heir of the aged Madame Lemaire, at the old French church of St. Boniface, a ceremony already described.

In the elegantly furnished but antique and somewhat faded library of the mansion at Fifth avenue and Washington Square sits the man now recognized in this house as Felix Costar, comfortably by the side of a cozy grate fire, engaged with the morning paper and a choice Havana cigar.

His feet, which 'rest upon the great tiger-skin rug spread out before the blazing grate, are encased in comfortable slippers made from the wrinkled skin of the alligator, an expensive dressing-gown of flowered Japanese silk is gathered by means of a cord and tassel about his waist.

The smoke curls above him in delicate, fleecy rings as he stretches his feet toward the cheerful blaze; there is an expression of both satisfaction and triumph upon his face.

And no wonder.

Although to the discerning reader it is without doubt perfectly plain by this time that this man is not Felix Costar, but John Delaplaine, the rascally mate of the ship Golden Fleece.

And, farther, that Felix Costar, rescued from a watery grave by the smugglers, Jim Beasley and old Waddie, still lives in spite of this usurper and his murderous endeavor in the person of the young man-who had rescued Harry Blake from a death similar to that which he himself had escaped, and brought him to the Haunted Mill on the Marsh.

To the reader all this is perfectly plain, we reiterate, but Mr. Cephas Bolles, the attorney of the dead Madame Lemaire, knowing none of these attending circumstances, naturally viewed the matter in an entirely different light.

He fully believed when the door of the old mansion closed behind him on the previous evening that he had left the veritable Felix Costar in possession of the great estates of his late client, the deceased monogenarian, to be his sole property as heir, not of Madame Lemaire, but the dead infant, Julie Romer, pending, of course, the necessary forms of proving the will before the surrogate's court.

Nor is it strange that the good old lawyer should have rested in this belief.

Had not this man the papers with which to prove his identity? Had not Madame Lemaire on her dying bed recognized her grandson in him?

Certainly she had; and, what was more, she had endeavored to alter her will in his favor—had been prevented from so doing only by death.

It seemed more than strange to the mind of Mr. Bolles—almost providential, in fact—that the wishes of his aged client should have been so speedily realized through the death of the infant of which she had assumed the charge.

To be sure, if Harry Romer still lived, he would come in for his share; but as has already been stated, during three years nothing had been heard of Harry Romer—not since he ran away to Sea.

No wonder, then, that the bogus Felix Costar, after having partaken of a comfortable breakfast, settled himself down for his morning smoke with a feeling of triumphant exultation.

From a ship's deck to a comfortable establishment like this, from poverty to the possession of millions was a sudden transformation.

The means through which it had been brought about—murder, falsehood and fraud—were powerless to affect this callous nature—they did not concern Jack Delaplaine at all.

The one thing which did concern him was the knowledge that his secret was shared by another.

How to get rid of Mr. Jacob Morningstar, who at this moment entered the room, was the one subject ever uppermost in his thoughts.

Ha! good-morning, my dear!« exclaimed the Jew, approaching the fire, and placing himself back toward it, his thumbs in the arm holes of his vest, as he surveyed the mar before him and his elegant surroundings with an air of great satisfaction.

Zis is something like comfort, now, is it not? Your leetle secheme has worked so vell, vwhile mine, alas! it has miserably failed.«

Delaplaine, throwing down his paper, surveyed the man with an air of disgust.

»You seem to make yourself at home in this house, Morningstar,« he discontentedly said.

»At home! Mon Dieu! but you are right, I am at home. Vy should I not' pe? You owe all zis to me. I only vish I had been as successful in carrying owit my leetle scheme as I haf peen in furthering yours.«

»You refer to the coins_hidden in the Haunted Mill on the Marsh?«

»Of course. Vat else? It's all up mit zem, I fear. Since I vas so careless mit zat prass pox | as to loose it ze night ven ve see zat ghost, I don't see zat zere can be longer any hope.«

»That whole affair is something which perplexes me greatly, I don't believe in ghosts.«

»Nor do I mineself. Yet, my dear, vat ve saw, saw—zere can be no mistake apout zat.«

The impostor shuddered.

»Morningstar, do you think it possible that Felix Costar ean be still alive?« he whispered, with a cautious glance about the room.

»Alive! Nonsense! My good friend, zere is no chance. You did your vork too vell.«

»Then I am at a loss what to think. Even if he were alive and were h Possession is nine points of the law. I have got possession of the old woman's millions, and mean to keep them, too.«

»Bravo! zet's ze vay I like to hear you talk, only don't forget zat ze half of it all is mine. But zose old coins, my dear, I tell you zey are rare—zey are valuable. Zey are worth von hundred tousand tollars—not von cent less.«

»Then some way must be devised to get them, even if we pull the old mill down; you know it is a part of the Lemaire property, having been built by old Peter Finisterre, the father of madame, who mysteriously disappeared forty years ago. That makes it mine, you see, and we will set about an investigation at once, ghost or no ghost. By the way, how came you to lose the brass box?«

»Indeed I cannot tell you, my friend. I suppose I must have dropped it in ze marsh ven ve got scared and ran away.«

»The more fool you for your carelessness. But tell me, where did you get that box in the first place? How came you to be aware of the existence of those coins?«

»Ha! Would you like to know?« exclaimed the Jew, with his short and snappy laugh. 'My friend, zat is very simple. Peter Finisterre was crazy, mad, on ze subject of coins. He collected zem during his lifetime, and as no one of his family felt interested in ze vork, he hid zem in zis old mill.

»He vas vat you call ze miser, but he did not vish zoy should be lost forever, so he sent zat brass box to a pank in Paris, vith directions zat after ze lapse of forty years it should be given to a dealer in old coin, through whom most of*his purchases had been made, yon Jules Fourobert py name.

»Now pefore ze forty years had passed, as any von not a fool might haf known vould be ze ease, Monsieur Fourobert he go to Heaven, or to some ozzer place—it is hard to tell vich. From his son I, also a dealer in coins, bought his stock and all his private papers.

»Not finding Paris to my mind, I emigrated to Australia and settled in Melbourne. Ven I come to examine Zose papers, I find von signed by old miser

Finisterre, telling all about ze prass box, and directing zat ven ze time has elapsed zat Fourobert apply to ze pank, get it, send ze man to America, or go himself, get ze coins in ze place vere he had hidden zem, sell enough to pay him for his trouble, and gif ze remainder to ze National Museum in Paris, to be called ze Finisterre collection until ze end of time.

»Vell, my dear, ze forty years vas up. last fall. I, as ze successor to Jules Fourobert, sent to ze pank in Paris, received ze prass pox, and started to America in search of ze coins.«

»And you mean to give them to the museum?« asked Delaplaine, who had listened attentively to this strange narration.

»To gif zem to the museum! Not much, my dear! I gif ze money for vich zey shail sell to myself, Jacob Morningstarto no one else.«

»Good! Then I will help you to get them, The old mill on the marsh and all it contains shall be deeded to you. That shall be your share in the estates of Madame Lemaire.«

The Jew started.

»Vot you mean?« he demanded, angrily. »I tought it vas to pe halluf and halluf with you and me. The coins are mine already ven I get zem. Zey haf nothing to do with zis other matter at all.«

The impostor arose, his face bearing a look of grim determination.

»See here, my friend,« he said, sternly, »you think you have got a hold on me, but you are mistaken. You cannot prove that I am not Felix Costar. ‘I can bring a dozen witnesses to prove that you addressed me by that name after the accident on the Golden Fleece, through which John Delaplaine lost his life. As for the other affair, I defy you to use it against me. It was all managed, even planned by yourself. The child Julie Rocwe is dead. Dare to say that the body buried yesterday from the church of Saint Boniface was not hers and I'll turn against you. Sing Sing prison is large enough to contain us both.

The face of Mr. Jacob Morningstar grew livid.

His hands clutched nervously at his side.

»You defy me!« he hissed. »Me, zat has helluped you in your little scheme?«

»I do, and I want you to understand it, too. I've had enough of you. I won't divide. The old mill and the coins are yours, as I told you. What is more, I assist you in getting them, but that is all. I want you to annoy me no further. You must leave my house at once. The rod is hold over your head is quite as strong as the one which you mine.«

»Is it, my dear?« cried the Jew, fairly frothing with rage and thrusting his head close to the speaker's face. »Leave your house, indeed. Not much, my dear.

Suppose ze enfant Julie Romer still lives, huh? Do you take me for ze fool? Leave zis house! Oh, no! I am here, and I've come to stay!«

Chapter XV.

THE GHOST OF THE HAUNTED MILL.

It is to the Haunted Mill on the Marsh that we find ourselves again transported.

Upon the little platform at the very top of the tower, close under the roof of the old windmill itself.

Turning from the window through which he had looked out upon the marsh, much to 'the consternation of Jacob Morningstar and his companion, as we have already seen, the ears of Felix Costar were saluted by the frightened exclamation of his youthful companion, the sailor boy, Harry Blake, still dressed, be it remembered, in the clothes of a girl.

»Look through that hole! If there is such a thin, ghost on earth, you will see one in that light beyond.«

It was toward a small, round hole in what appeared to be the outer wall of the mill itself that Harry pointed, through which a bright light shot forth in one broad, radiant beam.

The hoy's face was pale, his limbs seemed to tremble beneath him.

As is the case with every one, boy or man, he could look upon the supernatural only with feelings of dread.

Without the delay of an instant, Costar pressed his eye to the hole from whence the light shone forth.

It was a sight, indeed, truly remarkable which met his gaze.

Instead of looking through the shingled side wall of the old windmill to the outer darkness beyond, as he had reason to believe must be the case from the nature of the construction of the tower, he perceived, to his astonishment, that there existed a narrow apartment beyond the platform and divided from it by a stout partition of wood.

Within the room thus disclosed burned a fire of intense brilliancy, standing fully exposed in a small three-legged furnace of brass.

And so bright was the light of this fire—more nearly resembling that produced by electricity than anything else—that it illuminated the interior of the apartment brighter than the brightness of day.

The room itself was bare of any furnishing, but was filled with strangely-shaped bottles, tubs, crucibles, tasks and other apparatus. Bars and ingots of various metals, such as copper, brass and lead, lay here and there scattered about.

Upon the fire in the brazier great crucibles steamed and simmered, their contents—seemingly melted metal—reflecting back from their shining surfaces the

radiance of the burning coals.

But it was toward none of these things that the attention, of Felix Costar was now directed.

The central figure in this strange grouping presented a sight more startling still.

This was a man, apparently of great age, whose form bent nearly double, hovering about the simmering crucibles, occasionally stirring their contents with a small rod of glass.

His beard, of unusual length, was as white as the driven snow, while hair of the same hue hung in a long tangled mass about a face so strangely wrinkled as to render it an expressionless blank.

It was as though some old alchemist of the middle age, suddenly rising from his grave, had appeared before the watcher at this chink in the tower wall.

»Do you see him?« whispered Harry, excitedly. »For heaven's sake, Mr. Costar, what do you suppose it is?«

In answer, Felix Costar shot his glance up and down the partition.

It was as solid, to all appearances, as that which had suddenly obscured his gaze upon Jacob Morningstar and his villainous friend in the store-house of the old mill below.

No sign of either door or window appeared.

Nothing save the chink in the wall through which the light of the burning brazier shone.

»Harry, my boy, I'm sure I don't know,« he whispered, in excitement. 'There is certainly an old man in there, and as I have no belief in ghosts, I propose to interview him, and learn what all this means.«

He hammered violently on the partition wall, crying in a loud voice.as he did so:

»Hello, there! Hello! A word with you, my friend!«

A dead silence followed.

Save for the echo of his words, thrown back from the dead wall of the tower, and the howling of the storm without, the stillness of death prevailed.

But the words and knocking of Felix Costar produced an effect most startling.

The great beam of light which had been projected through the chink in the partition suddenly and mysteriously disappeared.

The platform upon which they stood, save for the feeble glimmer of the lantern, became shrouded in darkness again.

What could it mean?

To extinguish a fire such as had burned in that brazier required time at least.

Catching up the lantern with a muttered exclamation of astonishment, Costar proceeded to search for the hole in the wall from which the light had shone.

It was a search unrewarded.

As with the light the hole itself had mysteriously disappeared.

In vain he swung the lantern up and down—in, vain, assisted by the bright and youthful eyes of Harry Blake, he scanned the dust-laden wall from top to bottom.

The light of the brazier and the hole through which it had reamed upon them had alike vanished from their gaze.

Again and again Felix Costar struck upon the partition. Again and again he shouted aloud.

Useless waste of energy.

Ho might as well have looked for answer from the dead walls of the old mill itself for all the response that came.

»What can it mean?« whispered Harry, nervously. The man we are looking for is certainly not here. Mr. Costar, don't you think we had better go down?«

Even before his companion could find time to reply, a dull sound, as though of some one walking with muffled tread, was = on the stairs below them in the darkness of the old mill tower.

»Come!« whispered Costar. »Follow me, Harry! There is some one on the stairs, don't you hear?« I'm going to find out what all this means if I die for it. It will take more than the ghosts of the Haunted Mill on the Marsh to strike terror to the soul of a man who has passed through the stirring scenes that I have, now you may depend.«

He sprang down the winding staircase with a bound, waving the lantern before him as he went.

And Harry Blake followed close upon his tread.

It was altogether contrary to his desire that he should be left behind to encounter alone the old greybeard seen by both, be he ghost or be he man.

Scarce had the echo of their hurried footsteps resounded through the tower than the noise which they had heard suddenly ceased.

Upon the staircase nothing was encountered.

They reached the corridor from which their ascent had been begun no wiser than when they had left the platform up under the roof.

»This does beat all!« muttered Costar, pausing for breath. I am ready to swear that I heard some one going down those stairs.

»Then you would only swear to the truth,« was the reply of our hero., *I heard it as well as you.«

»If it was the old fellow we saw stirring those crucibles, he must have been spryer than he looked to be to get ahead of us. I begin to think that in some way we must have passed him on the stairs. Let's look up old Waddie. He has lived in the mill long enough to know it thoroughly, and claims, moreover, to have seen its ghost. Perhaps he. may lm\ e some explanation to give, for—hello! what's the matter now?«

His remark was interrupted by an exclamation from Harry, who, seizing him by the hand, pointed toward that portion of the corridor in which had been situated the door leading to the storeroom, so strangely shut out from their view.

The gesture of the boy was one of excitement.

And no wonder.

The door which had disappeared before their very eyes had now with equal mystery been restored to its former position in the wall.

Both man and boy leaped toward the opening.

Within the storeroom of the old mill a sight, in its way quite as remarkable as that which they had witnessed at the head of the winding stairs, now met their gaze.

In one corner of the apartment, amid the litter of old boxes, barrels and the like, sat seated before a table the figure of the old chemist, bending over a number of small glittering objects spread out before him, carefully examining them by the light of a spluttering candle standing upon the table in their midst.

This time it was not so much the appearance of this aged individual himself that startled them as that on the glittering objects spread out before him, with which his long bony fingers nervously toyed.

Dim as was the light afforded by the candle, it was quite sufficient to enable both Felix Costar and Harry to see that these glittering objects were nothing more nor less than a heap of coins—coins both of silver and gold.

Chapter XVI.

THE BRASS BOX.

For the space of one instant only the strange sight remained visible to the gaze of Felix Costar and Harry Blake.

Sufficient time was not afforded them to cross the threshold which divided the storeroom of the old mill from the dark corridor beyond.

In that instant, in the precise moment when the full realization that the glittering objects upon the table were really the coins they seemed, the aged head which bent over them was suddenly denly raised and a pair of small but piercing eyes returned their astonished gaze.

Instantly the bent and whitened figure tottered to an uP« right position, and with a weird cry stamped one foot heavily upon the floor.

Crash! Bang!

A noise like thunder echoes through the Haunted Hill on the Marsh.

Door, the strange old man, the table beside of which he stood, candle, coins and all, have alike disappeared from before their eyes.

In their stead is only the dull expanse of the partition wall.

With a cry of terror Harry seized Felix Costar by the arm.

»For heaven's sake let's get out of this!« he said. »I don't want to see any more.«

»But I do, and by the Lord Harry I will! How that old wretch got down from the tower, unless he is possessed with wings, is more than I can understand, to say nothing of this door, which appears and reappears like a Jack in the box-hark! Did you hear that? Surely it is the footsteps of some one upon the tower stairs.

Still grasping the lantern, he ran boldly up, ascending even to the platform again, followed by Harry, who had no desire to be left behind.

They might as well have spared themselves the effort.

In five minutes' time they stood in the corridor again, none the wiser.

No one had been encountered upon the tower stairs. They had discovered just nothing at all.

Panting from the unwonted exertion, Costar, by the aid of the lantern, carefully examined the partition again.

It remained as they had last seen it.

Not a trace of the door could be found.

»Now, by all that's good and holy, I'll never rest until I've probed this mystery to the end!« Costar exclaimed, »Never in all my experience did I encounter

anything half so strange. You saw those coins, Harry. I was not dreaming? You saw that wonderful display as well as I?»

»I certainly did,« replied Harry. The whole top of the table was covered with them, There must have been several thousand dollars in gold alone.«

»What did they look like to you—our own money of the United States?»

»No, indeed. They were larger and thicker, many of them. Others again were very small.«

»If they are still there then we shall find out what they are,« muttered Costar. »Come, my boy, we will enter that storeroom by another way and from the outside.«

He opened the door through which they had first entered in coming from old Waddie's hut, and leading the way, Harry following, soon found themselves in the open air.

The storm, long threatened, had broken at last, and rain was pouring in torrents.

Above them, the great arms of the old windmill groaned dismally, as they went themselves to the force of the gale, while, rolling in from the bay beyond, the waves dashed wildly upon the shore, covering them with whitened spray.

»Here is an entrance to the store-room,« said Costar, as, after passing around the mill, they found themselves before an open door. »Thank Heaven, this still remains undisturbed. Now we shall see if any trace is to be discovered of our long-bearded ghost and his display of coins.«

Leading the way into the store-room by the door through which the false Felix Costar and the Jew had effected their escape, he waved the lantern about him on every side.

Save for the rubbish which it contained, the storeroom was in a state of absolute desertion.

Neither ghost nor table, candle nor coins were anywhere to be seen.

»This settles it for to-night,« muttered the man. grimly, »Let us return to the hut, where I will question old Waddie and try to get something to satisfy your hunger.« Mind, not a word, now. Let me do the talking. To-morrow we'll start in on our investigations again. Then we'll see what we shall see.«

He passed out of the storeroom and moved toward the old mill again.

Scarce had they advanced ten steps when a wild, eldritch cry above their heads caused both man and boy to turn their gaze aloft.

From the little window high up on the tower a blaze of light beamed forth.

In the center of its radiance, precisely as by Jacob Morningstar and his companion had been seen the form of Felix Costar himself, stood the bowed and aged figure which twice within the hour had burst upon their astonished gaze.

And as they looked upon it one hand was raised and a small, round object thrown toward them from the window at which the apparition stood.

As it came whizzing through the air the window darkened.

Then Harry Blake, stooping, picked up a curiously conpues brass box, about which a paper was bound with a thread.

Flung from the window high up in the old mill tower by ghostly hand, it had fallen to the ground at his feet.

Chapter XVII.

JACOB MORNINGSTAR MAKES KNOWN HIS TERMS.

As the pretended Felix Costar stood facing his villainous coadjutor over his countenance there swept mingled expressions from rage to hate—from hate to dull despair.

The child alive!

Then the visions of wealth, already seemingly within his grasp, were liable, at a wave of this man's hand, to melt away, ever as ice melts before the summer's sun.

The gigantic structure of fraud, reared by his own bold and criminal action, seemed to totter as a realizing sense of his true position broke upon him.

It is ever thus with wrong-doers—has been so from the beginning, will remain so to the end.

Confronted with the Jew as a witness to his crime, committed on the deck of the Golden Fleece, he had thought to use him, to bend him to his own purposes, which, once accomplished, he would throw him aside, with a small reward, as lightly as a worn-out glove.

He had made no allowance for the shrewdness of the race to which his confederate belonged.

The child alive!

Then the tables were turned indeed.

Instead of his holding a rod over the head of the man before him, it began to look very much as though the long end of the rod in question was pretty firmly grasped by Mr. Jacob Morningstar himself.

»Huh! my dear, how you like it?« demanded that individual, coolly, seating himself before the grate fire and lighting a cigar. »You thought you had picked up von fool, is it not so? You were mistaken it seems. Now, den, vot shall it be between us—peace or var? Schpeak up, and tell me how you like my leetle scheme.«

»Do you mean what you: say?« demanded the impostor, fiercely. »When you told me that the child was flung into the river I believed you. Have you lied to me? Can it be that Julie Romer, heir to all this wealth, still lives?«

»She does; und, vot is more, she is here; at von schmall notice of a minute I can produce her in the surrogate's court.«

»But can you prove her identity? All children look alike.«

»Do you take me for von fool? I haf ze clothes she vore. I haf ze testimony of ze voman, Susan Smith; she vill recognize her, und von thing more I haf understand,

my dear, zat ze enfant vat ve hurry to ze echurch-yard of St. Boniface vas older zan Julie Romer by von year. Kef zey takes ze trouble to open ze grave, zat also can I prove.«

»Morningstar, you have deceived me grossly. I left the matter entirely in your hands, and this is the result.«

»Und a very good result for me, my dear, I read you truly from ze first. I knew you would«try to scheat your friend Jacob ven ze time came to divide. You see I vas ready for you. Listen, und I will tell you ze details. I will let you know how I vork part of ze leetle scheme.«

»Go on,« replied the mate, gloomily. »I may as well know the worst at once.«

»Ze vorst for you but ze best for me,« answered the other, with a chuckle. You vant to know, huh? Zen leesten, zis is ze vay I vent to vork:

»You say zis schild stand between you and ze fortune of madame, your grandmother, as ze vorld believes. All ride, I get rid of ze brat, I tells you. You say, my good friend, go ahead, and half I possess is yours?

»Very good. I goes to my friend, Bill Radd, ze sailor in ze Fleece. Him I know in Australia, vere he vonce kill a man und I save him from hanging. He is my tool; he do vat I say.

»To von hospital goes he now, and through a friend he gets ze body of a little boy vat is in ze dissecting room. I say, "Bill, meet me under ze wall to-night at von.« He say, ' Yes, my good friend, I vill bezere.« Could you do all 'zis do you think?'

»To the blazes with this rehearsal of details, Morningstar. What's done is done. If the child really lives, tell me what you propose.«

»I propose ze half—no less, und I propose my story to finish, too. I creep up ze stairs of zis house in ze dead of night. I ze nurse ze sleeping potion give, so she vake not to disturb us. Bill Radd and his friend are beneath ze vall on time vith ze body in a paper. Vith a rope und a basket I let down ze child Julie Romer to you, who vait in ze yard pelow; ze basket is passed over ze vall and ze change is made. I draws it up and puts ze body from ze hospital in ze bed.«

»Well, we both know all this, so what possible use is there in rehearsing it? You went off to throw the brat into the es as you said. Next day we buried the dead child in its stead.

Just so; but, my dear, I did not throw. I can produce Julia Romer, as I haf told you, at ze notice of a moment. Now, zen, vill you make it half?«

»Well, half it is. I'll deed it to you the moment you bring me proof that this infernal young one is actually dead.«

»Softly, softly, my dear,« cried the Jew, rubbing his hands, as over his face there broke an evil smile. * Let us come to von understanding, here und now. To-morrow night at eight o'clock, meet your lawyer, Monsieur Bolles, to arrange ze detail of ze settlement. For ze property of Julie Romer zere is no difficulty, unless I chose to speak. How about ze share of her brother Harry, huh?

»Well, you can't fix that matter, I suppose. It will be necessary to advertise for the boy. If he don't appear his share is mine.«

»Very good, my dear friend, very good, indeed. Now vot I haf to offer is this: Take me vith you to zat meeting, instruct ze lawyer to deed von half ze estate of Madame Lemaire, including ze old mill, to me.«

»Do zat, and you shall vith your own eyes see ze child, Julie Romer, dropped from ze end dock, and vot is more proofs, actual, of ze death of Harry! Romer, her brother, to you, my friend, vill I pif.«

»You can prove that last!«

The false Felix Costar had leaped to his feet with a bound.

»I can und I vill eef it is peace between us, ze child, Julie Romer, shalt be placed to-morrow by ze rising of ze sun in ze hands of Monsieur Bolles ef it is var.«

Chapter XVIII.

BEASLEY PLAYS THE BRISTOL BANTAM A SHABBY TRICK.

Evil designs in the long run rarely prosper.

Temporary success may seem to attend their development but their ultimate defeat is as certain as the sun is certain to set.

Even as Mr. Jacob Morningstar sat in the library of the mansion of the dead French lady, plotting with his confederate for this unjust bestowal of her wealth, two busy brains were actively engaged in plotting against him, and seeking means to circumvent his plans.

These were the brains of old Bill Judge, the Bristol Bantam, and Jim Beasley, the smuggler of the Haunted Mill.

Each sought means to use the knowledge which they had acquired, in reference to the infant brought by the Jew to the Hotel de Mill, in such a manner as to yield the greatest profit to himself.

But their respective positions differed greatly.

Old Bill Judge could do nothing without the aid of Beasley, and his knowledge of the house from which the child had been stolen; while the smuggler, on the contrary, had begun to comprehend that in telling all he knew he had played the part of the fool—that he had no use for the ex-champion of the pugilistic ring at all.

For a man of his education and position, Jim Beasley was possessed of a shrewdness and cunning somewhat unusual.

He had, as he believed, learned the secret of Morningstar, and he meant to trade upon it for all it was worth.

From the moment when the dark shadows of the corridor without the storehouse of the Haunted Mill on the Marsh, he had perceived that one of the intruders whom his guest, the assumed Mr. Bangs, was seeking to alarm, was none other than the man who had left the child with Old Bill Judge, the night before, his mind was made up.

He would follow this man—shadow him day and night until he learned who and what he was; and, more than all, what the secret he had so strangely acquired was worth.

That he put his purpose into immediate action, we have already seen.

Little did the cheerful Mr. Morningstar dream that at that child's funeral in the church of St. Boniface there was present among the few lookers-on in the antique old sanctuary one at least who suspected the sham.

And Jim Beasley, pursuing his investigations in his own quiet way, had reached a point at last where he felt that he could act.

Two things alone remained to be done.

First, to get rid of the Bristol Bantam. Second, to possess himself of the child.

The course of action to which his powerful mind at length resorted we shall now see.

It was the evening set by the false Felix Costar for his visit to Mr. Bolles, the lawyer, to effect, a final settlement of the Lemaire estates.

At the hour of the appointment—eight o'clock, unless we greatly mistake—Old Bill Judge stood 'behind his bar at the Hotel de Mill, dispensing liquid ruin to the usual crowd of admirers which his fame as a sportsman nightly drew to the place.

To these he had just finished relating—to many of them for the twentieth time, at least—the history of his spirited mill with the Chichester Chicken, when the door opened, and our friend Jim Beasley, sou'wester and all, entering, slouched up to the bar.

»Ello, Beasley, hold pard!« exclaimed the Bristol Bantam, extending his hand. »You're 'ere just in time to join h'us in a drink.

But Mr. Beasley did not seem inclined to accept the invitation.

»I want to speak to you alone a minute, Judge,« was his somewhat mysterious reply.

Now as to the nature of his private communication with the Bantam, we are unfortunately uninformed; but let its tenor have been what might, it was sufficient to cause the proprietor of the Hotel De Mill to delegate his authority for the time being to his daughter Molly, and join the virtuous Beasley in a stroll up town.

An hour later found them together, walking up Fifth avenue_a block or two above Washington Square.

»Now I'm going to leave you to do the talking, Bill,« said the smuggler, as they came to a halt before a handsome brownstone mansion. »You go in and have it out with the Jew, for I'm a man of few words myself.«

»What? Do you mean, alone, Beasley?« demanded the Bantam in tones of surprise.

»Certainly I do. I'm no talker, You can manage the affair best alone. Tell him that you know as how the child was stole, an' if he don't come down handsome you'll give the hull business away to the police, You can talk, Bill, I ain't wuth a cent at speechifying myself, Fix it with him, pardner, as Suits you best. We can divide up later.«

»Well, jes' has you say, Beasley. Yer sure that air's the 'ouse?«:

»Positive. There's the alley from which I saw it all.«

A narrow alley extending along the side wall of the mansion seemed to bear witness to the truth of the man's remarks.

»Then 'ere goes, Beasley,« said the Bantam, mustering courage and moving toward the steps. »I'll bring to hon 'is nibs the most moving harguments I knows hon. Of course you'll wait right 'ere h'until Hi return.«

He ascended the steps of the mansion, and ringing the bell boldly, after a moment's parley with the answering servant, disappeared within the house.

»That fixes you, for the time being, you old scoundrel, muttered Beasley, shaking his fist at the door as it closed upon the Bantam's retreating form. »I'm bad enough, heaven knows, but I'm not so bad as to wish harm to a helpless infant.; Now to get that young one, and to restore her to her own!«

With these remarks, Jim eek instead of waiting for the return of the Bantam, made all possible haste to Eighth street and boarded a west-bound car.

Meanwhile? to return to old Bill Judge.

In answer to his ring at the door of the mansion, an elderly man servant appeared.

»Hi want to see Mr. Morningstar?« said the saloon-keeper, in a patronizing tone. »Tell 'im as 'ow his friend Bill Judge is waiting below, an' wants to talk with 'im on h'important business h'at onct.«

The man stared.

»Haven't you made a mistake?« he began, eyeing the visitor strangely. »But stop—I believe the gentleman you want is in the library upstairs. Walk in, and I will see.«

»Don't seem to know 'is h'own marster,« muttered Old Bill, as the servant, closing the door behind him, left him staring a great stag's head which hung above the hat-rack in the hall.

But the Bristol Bantam was mistaken.

The servant who had now retreated upstairs knew the name of his master perfectly.

The only trouble was that his name did not happen to be Morningstar at all.

It was not to the house from which he had seen the willow basket lowered, that Beasley had enticed his mercenary friend, but to one the name of whose inmates he did not even know.

His motive for so strange an action will be developed later. It is with the fact alone that we now have to deal.

Meanwhile, the ex-pugilist whose ideas of etiquette were somewhat misty, without waiting for an invitation, opened the door of the parlor and proceeded to make himself at home.

Blame shabby to leave a gent standing h'in the 'all,« he muttered. »H'and this 'ere place h'ain't much better. Dash my h'eyes but h'it's h'as dark as a grave.«

There was no light in the apartment into which his offended dignity had prompted him to. penetrate, it is true; nor was it needed, for at that moment followed him into the darkened room.

That it was his patron, Mr. Jacob Morningstar, Bill Judge did not for an instant doubt, although in the darkness' he could not distinguish his features, and he acted upon this supposition at once.

»See 'ere, Mr. Morningstar, a vord in your hear!« he boldly exclaimed, as he moved toward the intruder. »H'i've found hout a thing or two since we met last. H'i know that that 'ere young un was stole from this 'ouse, hand I vant you to h'understand that a 'undred a month h'aint no compensation. You've got to make it a thousand, h'or H'i blow the whole gaff to the cops.«

From the man whose dark outline could just be distinguished before him, a smothered exclamation went forth.

Instantly the parlor door—which had been left slightly open—was closed, and the key heard to click in the lock.

»One moment, my friend,« said a deep voice in the darkness. »With your permission I will light the gas. Meanwhile let me inform you that my name is not Morningstar, but Bolles. Who the mischief are you, anyway, and what business have you in my house?«

A match was heard to crack; from the chandelier above their heads a blaze of light shot forth.

And the Bristol Bantam, to his intense. astonishment, instead of finding himself in the presence of the man he rene saw towering above him the tall, majestic form of New York's most celebrated lawyer, known to him by sight as well as by name—Mr. Cephas Bolles.

Chapter XIX.

THE COIN HUNTERS AT THE HAUNTED MILL ON THE MARCH DISAPPOINTED AGAIN.

The midnight bell of the ancient church at Tottenville, Staten Island, had scarce tolled the hour of twelve, when two men, stealing down the little eminence in the rear of the Haunted Mill on the Marsh, paused before the old storehouse door.

»So ve are here again, my dear,« said the shorter of the pair, whose prominent features of the Hebrew type, presented. an appearance most marked. »Zis time, I hopes ve meet vith more success.«

»I hope so,« was the answer, coming in short, surly tones. ‘ At all events no ghost shall scare us off, I’ve six ounces of cold lead in my revolver here, for any one who wants to try it on. If Felix Costar, alive or dead, appears to me tonight, it won’t be my fault if two claiming that name stand on the face of the earth by the rising of to-morrow’s sun.«

From these remarks it will. not be difficult for the reader to divine the identity of the intruders, nor the nature of their errand at the haunted mill.

They were Jacob Morningstar and his companion in crime, late mate of the Golden Fleece, John Delaplaine my name.

The appointment with Mr. Bolles had been fulfilled that evening.

To the proposition on the part of the supposed Felix Costar to deed one half the estates of the late Madame Lemaire to the Jew, the shrewd lawyer had listened with much surprise.

Being in no position to dictate, he had somewhat reluctantly acquiesced, promising to prepare the necessary papers next day.

But there was that about his manner which excited the apprehension of both.

It was not so much what he said as the manner in which he said it.

Could it be possible that he had begun to entertain suspicions that all was not right?

This thought, uppermost in the minds of both the plotters, prompted them to a common course of action for once.

They determined, upon leaving the lawyer’s house, to visit the old mill that night prepared for any emergency, and if Possible possess themselves of the hidden coins.

If all else fail them, this much of the wealth for which they were scheming would at least be saved.

Thus their presence at the Haunted Mill again at the midnight hour.

Delaplaine, fully armed, carried in addition a hatchet, a hammer and a stout ax, while his companion had burdened himself with a crowbar and a small hand-saw.

»Now to business, Morningstar,« said the mate, as they found themselves once more within the storehouse from which they had fled so hurriedly. 'Everything is precisely as we left it. I begin to believe that the force of that gust of wind which struck this old rookery at the moment in which the candle was extinguished in some way threw that partition down before the panels. The ghost was simply a delusion of our excited brains.«

He had lighted a dark-lantern upon first entering, and now flashed it here and there about the room.

»You are ride, my dear,« replied the Jew, throwing down the crowbar and mopping his brow. »By schimony, zat iron is heavy! I feel as zo I had dragged him von hundred mile.«

»Well, let's get to work. It won't take long to break through the partition. If the coins are still there behind it, we ought to have them out in ten minutes' time.«

»Zat is so, my dear, but first let me get my breath. Vy, of course, zey are dere. Vere else vould zey be? Didn't you see zem'? Didn't I feel zem vith my hand?«

»Well, don't stand there gassing about it,« answered Delaplaine abruptly, as stooping, he picked up the crowbar. »If you ain't disposed to commence operations, I am. I am interested now, seeing that under our new deal, half of these coins belong to me.«

As he spoke he strode toward the side of the apartment, and setting the lantern in a convenient spot, inserting the point of the bar between the partition and the floor, endeavored to pry them apart.

The attempt was useless. The boards refused to allow themselves to be disturbed.

»Whereabouts was the panel?« asked the mate of the Fleece, pausing after repeated attempts to regain his breath.

»There, right before you. Here, take ze saw. Can't you saw ze boards away?«

»Nonsense. Where am I to begin? This partition is solid from ceiling to floor. Looks as though it had stood there since the year of the flood.

»You are ride, my friend. Nevertheless you are wrong. It vos not there ven ve first enter zis place ze ozzer night, zat is somesing vell known to us both.«

In reply, Delaplaine producing the hammer, struck blow after blow upon the boards before him.

At the particular spot pointed out by the Jew, a hollow sound returned.

It was the open panel behind which that glittering display of the gold and silver money of the ancient Greeks and Romans had been seen by both.

Neither could doubt that this was a fact.

»Give me the ax, Morningstar!« exclaimed the mate, with an air of determination. »It will make a thundering noise, but there's no help for it. I'm going to cut my way through.«

And he rained blow after blow upon the partition before him, throwing splinters of the shivered wood to the right and left.

»I've struck it!« he cried, as the ax suddenly penetrating the partition encountered the hollow space beyond. »It's the open panel, as sure as I live. Another moment and the game is ours.«

The boards cracked and splintered.

Wider and wider grew the breach, until Delaplaine, throwing the axe aside, seized the lantern and, holding it to the level of the opening thus formed, peered into the space behind.

It was empty.

Where, on the occasion of their previous visit, coins by the thousand had been seen heaped in one glittering pile, there now remained simply dust and nothingness.

The hidden treasure of the Haunted Mill on the Marsh d disappeared.

Chapter XX.

HARRY ROMER TURNS UP AT LAST.

To return to our hero, the sailor boy, Harry Blake, whom we left in the act of picking up the brass box flung by ghostly hand from the topmost window of the old mill tower.

The time, be it remembered, is the night of the storm—that night upon which all these singular happenings at the Haunted Mill on the Marsh have occurred.

»Did you see that, Mr. Costar?« cried Harry, seizing the box and pointing to the tower window in great excitement. »I saw that old graybeard up there as plainly as I see you now. Look what he has thrown at us! An old brass box, as true as I live!«

He held up the box to the astonished gaze of his companion, who took it in his hand.

It was a curious affair, a box in size 6x6, marvelously chased upon the sides and bearing representations of ancient Greek warriors in the form of medallions set in the lid.

Around it, bound tightly with a thread, was a paper which Felix Costar hastened to remove.

In the meantime the tower window had darkened once more. -

Not a sign of the aged man could be seen.

Holding up the lantern, Costar scanned the paper curiously.

Upon it, in small and curiously-formed characters, penned evidently by a trembling hand, these words appeared, which he hastened to read aloud:

»The right is wrong to-day; the wrong shall be right to-morrow, There is a power overlooking the deeds of men which rules all things for good. Hesitate no longer, Felix Costar. Act your part boldly, and leave the rest to

»THE GHOST OF THE HAUNTED MILL,«

»What can it mean?« whispered Harry, in tones of awe. 'It reads like a communication from the dead.«

»It is a communication from one who knows me evidently,« was the reply; and, moreover, one who knows the full measure of trouble which has come upon me through that rascal Delaplaine.«

»And what do you propose to do?«

»First; to go in out of this rain, which is making my clothes even wetter than they were before; second, to open this box, which has come into our hands so

strangely; and, lastly, to take the ghost's advice.«

He led the way into the store-house once more, and set the lantern upon an empty barrel, which stood bottom upward near the door.

Without a word the cover of the brass box was removed.

A folded paper lay therein.

Holding this up in the light of the lantern, Felix Costar proceeded to read it aloud.

It was the story of old Peter Finisterre and his wonderful collection of coins, which the reader has already heard related by Jacob Morningstar, who had lost the box in his hurried flight from the Haunted Mill.

A minute description of this precious treasure and its value was given with directions that it be bestowed upon the Natural Museum at Paris after the lapse of forty years, which time the date at the head of the paper showed to have elapsed some months before.

The paper describing the location of the hiding-place of the coins was, however, missing.

Nor was there a line giving clew to where they might be sought.

Felix Costar, restoring the paper to the brass box, put the latter in his pocket, and faced his youthful companion with a look of perplexity.

»Well, my boy, what do you think about it?« he asked, at length.

I'm sure I don't know what to think about it. All that has happened within the last twenty-four hours has puzzled me more than I was ever puzzled in my life.«

»I do not wonder that such is the case. I am greatly perplexed also, but not as much so as you. It is time we understood one another, Harry Blake. That our paths run together there can be no doubt. To begin with, are you now satisfied that I am actually the Felix Costar who came with you from Melbourne on the Golden Fleece?«

»Perfectly satisfied. Since I saw you and Jack Delaplaine together, I haven't a doubt left.«

»Very good. Now let me tell you why I came from Melbourne to New York, why Jack Daleplaine sought to get away with me, and what he hopes to gain by passing himself off as me.

»Harry, when the Fleece anchored in New York bay in that fog, I supposed myself to be heir to a great estate. I had been sent for my grandmother, Madame Lemaire, an old lady upward of ninety—what ails you, boy? Why do you look so strange?«

»It was the name, Mr. Costar. Lemaire was the name of my mother before she was married, and—and——«

»I thought as much, Harry. I knew it from the first.«

»Knew what?«

In reply Felix Costar drew a newspaper from his pocket, and, resting his finger upon a few lines in the »Personal Sora placed it in Harry's hands.

The advertisement read as follows:

»One thousand dollars reward will be paid to any person who can furnish the address of Harry Romer, age nineteen, who sailed from New York in the ship Samuel Hopkins three years ago; or, if known to be deceased, the same sum will be paid for proof of death by

Cephas Bolles.

»192 Nassau Street,
Room 20, Third Floor.«

»Do you know that young man?« asked Costar.

»Why do you wish to know?«

»Simply because Harry Romer, in common with his infant sister Julie, was declared heir to the estate of my grandmother, the late Madame Lemaire, which estate your friend, Jack Delaplaine, who is personating me, now usurps.«

Impossible! There is no Julie Romer. Harry Romer was an only child.«

Ha! You seem to know him! You are wrong, my boy, and at the same time you are right. There is no Julie Romer now, because she died night before last. There was an infant bearing that name when my grandmother made her will.«

»Then she was my sister!« cried Harry, passionately. »My baby sister, whom I never saw, born to the parents I so cruelly wronged when, in a fit of anger, I ran away to sea!«

»You are Harry Romer?«

»I am, Mr. Costar. I disgraced my father's name by my foolishness, and I resolved that never until I could make atonement would I bear it again.«

»I am your cousin, Harry, and you stand to-day sole heir to the vast estates of our grandmother, now claimed by the scoundrels who sought to kill us both—the Jew, Morningstar, and Jack Delaplaine, the mate of the Golden Fleece.«

Chapter XXI.

THE BRISTOL BANTAM FORCED TO THE WALL AT LAST.

The expression of mingled surprise and terror depicted upon the face of old Bill Judge, as at the sudden lighting of gas in the darkened parlor into which he had penetrated, he found himself face to face with Mr. Bolles, the renowned lawyer, can better be imagined than described.

He had heard of Mr. Bolles—and who had not. More than that, he knew his countenance perfectly well from a careful study of the illustrated newspapers of the day, in which the portrait of the famous counselor had appeared again and again.

In that instant, when hearing the turning of the key in the door, the Bristol Bantam began to understand that he had got himself into a tighter spot than had been the case in any of his little mills with the Chichester Chicken, the Manchester Mouse, or any other old-time favorite in the ring.

That the words he had uttered were quite sufficient to arouse this man's suspicions he realized fully, and with that quickness of perception that had been the secret of his worldly success through life, he resolved to square accounts with his friend Beasley for the shabby trick he had served him by at once turning informer, if events should make it evident that such was the safest course to pursue.

Meanwhile, the lawyer had been surveying him keenly from head to foot.

»You seem to be laboring under a mistake, my friend,« he said, quietly, »in taking this for Mr. Morningstar's house.«

»So Hi h'am, yer honor, so Hi h'am! I axed the man h'at the door, and 'e told me as how the gent I wanted lived 'ere; leastways, Hi understood 'im so.«

»You understood him wrongly, my friend. This is not Mr. Morningstar's residence, but mine. Nevertheless, that gentleman was here but a few moments ago.«

This was true. In fact, the false Felix Costar, in keeping their appointment with the lawyer, had not departed ten minutes when Bill Judge pulled the bell.

That the proposition to deed half the Lemaire estates to the Jew had aroused the suspicions of Mr. Bolles, we have already seen.

Until now he had never questioned the identity of the imposter until now he had not for a moment doubted that the death of Julie Romer, the infant heir, had occurred in the manner which the world had been led to believe.

That he was destined to have his faith rudely shaken on both these points before the night expired, we shall presently see.

»Beg parding,« mumbled the Bristol Bantam, bowing almost to the floor; »h'if H'i've stepped h'into the wrong pew, squire, all along of a feller, wot steered me amiss, vy, hall there h'is h'about h'it h'is for me to back h'out.«

Fumbling with his hat nervously, he moved toward the door as anxious to depart.

»Stop!«

It was the deep voice of Mr. Bolles that thundered in the Bristol Bantam's ears.

»I want you to understand, sir, that you are not to leave this room until you have fully explained the remark made by you in reference to a stolen child, when you supposed that you were addressing Mr. Morningstar instead of myself.«

But before the frightened Bantam had time to reply, a low knock was heard on the door.

With a quick stride across the apartment, the lawyer opened it cautiously.

»There's two gentlemen to see you, sir,« said the servant, handing in a card. »Shall I show them into the library, as you seem to be engaged?«

As Mr. Bolles glanced at the card, he gave vent to an exclamation of surprise.

»Felix Costar again! and that rascally-looking Hebrew, no doubt, with him. What can have brought them back so soon? Show them in here, Thomas; they are just the men I want to see.

Placing himself between the Bantam and the door, he impatiently awaited the entrance of the visitors.

A new surprise awaited him.

Instead of the man calling himself Felix Costar, and his saturnine friend, Mr. Morningstar, there now entered the parlor a plainly-dressed gentleman, accompanied by a youth of some nineteen years.

Mr. Bolles started back with an exclamation of astonishment.

For an instant even the recollection of Bill Judge vanished from his mind.

»Mr. Bolles, do you not recollect me?« asked the gentleman.

»Recollect you, yes! You were here a moment ago, but differently dressed! How — —«

»Pardon me,« was the quiet reply, »It is at least ten years since we met.«

»Ten years! Are you not Felix Costar, the son of my old flame, Marie Lemaire?«

»I certainly am Felix Costar. In former years I knew you well—too well, in fact, to mistake another for yourself, as it seems you have done in my case.«

»For heaven's sake, what do you mean? Who is this person who has just left my house calling himself by your name?«

»A base impostor, Mr. Bolles,« replied the other, sternly. »Look at my face—study it well. You knew, and once loved my dead mother, should not be deceived by a murderous scoundrel who seeks to impersonate her son.«

»Felix! I know you now!« exclaimed the old lawyer, springing forward and wringing the young man's hand, »My heart warned me against that fellow whose resemblance to you is marvelous. Speak! I am in a maze of bewilderment. What does all this mean?«

In a few brief words Felix Costar told his story, told of the assault upon himself on board the Golden Fleece, of his Providential rescue, and introducing our hero under his true name, he told also what he had seen in connection with the willow basket, and of the attempt made upon his life by the Jew.

As he paused at length, having completed his strange tale, Mr. Bolles again wrung the hands of both.

»God bless my soul! I never heard anything so marvelous in my life!« he exclaimed. »Madame deceived, into believing this scoundrel to be yourself, and—but stay! A little light breaks upon me! Master Romer, what was it taken by those two men from the willow basket which was passed over the wall? That is something you have, not! yet told.«

»It was a good-sized bundle wrapped up in a shawl, sir,« replied Harry, quickly, »and they put another parcel of about the same size back into the basket in its place.«

»The child, Julie Romer abducted, and a dead body substituted in its place! I cried Mr. Bolles, in great excitement. 'The scoundrels—the wretches! Who would believe that such a thing could occur in the midst of a civilized community like this? Where's that fellow that was here a moment ago?«

But the fellow had gone.

The fact was, that the Bristol Bantam, a silent listener to the tale of Felix Costar, learning the true-position of the child placed in his charge by Morningstar, felt that the wisest course he could possibly take was to make himself decidedly scarce.

Watching his opportunity, and realizing that his presence had been forgotten by the lawyer, he slunk into the darkness of the back parlor, and thence by means of a door into the hall.

If he could but pass the lighted space before the open door of the front parlor, he felt that the road out of the house was clear.

But that little if « stood in the way.

It was the very instant in which the thoughts of Mr. Bolles were again directed toward him that he selected for his dash through the hall toward the outer door. i

His hand had scarcely touched the knob, when his collar was seized from behind, a district telegraph instrument in the hall at the same moment ringing sharply for the police.

»The child that you alluded to, scoundrel?« cried Mr. Bolles, pinning the astonished Bantam by the throat with powerful arm against the wall. »Speak! where is it? Tell me the truth, or by: the heaven that is above us both, I'll land you in 'the Tombs!«

Chapter XXII.

MR. JACOB MORNINGSTAR AND HIS FELLOW PLOTTER DISCOVER THAT THE HAZNTED MILL IS CAPABLE OF PRODUCING MORE GHOST THEN ONE.

Gone! gone ze coins gone! Sacre Diable! but zat cannot be!«

It was the exclamation of Jacob Morningstar, as, with pallid features, he thrust his Protruding nose into the aperture cut by Delaplaine through the partition wall.

»Don't I tell you!« cried the mate fiercely. »If you think I am lying take the lantern and see for ourself.«

The Jew seized the lantern thus offered, and thursting it through the broken partition into the open space behind the secret panel, moved it frantically about.

That the mate of the Fleece had spoken truly there could be no question.

Of the thousands of glittering objects seen-nay, even handled by him upon the occasion of his previous visit, not one now remained.

With a cry of rage he sprang back and stamped his foot heavily upon the floor.

»It is ze vork of ze devil! It is ze—mon Dieu! Fader Abraham preserve us! Vat in ze name of ze fiend is ze matter now?«

And well he might ask.

»As his foot touched the floor for the second time, the boards seemed' in a measure to give way beneath him as the strange sound was heard, and the partition wall before them shot up the ceiling with a bang.

The open panel—the doorway in which Felix Costar had appeared—now stood in their proper places exactly as they had seen them at the moment when the gust of wind had extinguished the light.

But before Jacob Morningstar had opportunity to realize what had occurred a low cry of warning from his companion directed his attention to the door leading from (the storeroom to the outer air.

»Look—look!« he whispered, in frightened tones. »The Evil One is in this place, I actually believe. See, there it is again!«

Aye, there it was, and this time not one murderous heart alone was stirred, but two, for in that doorway stood not only the form of Felix Costar, but that of the sailor-boy, Harry Blake, as well.

With stern countenance and extended arms, the two motionless figures pointed directly at the men who had sought to take their lives.

The boasted courage of the mate vanished on the instant, while the Jew, with one yell of terror, sprang away from his companion, and dashed through the inner door, into the darkness of the corridor beyond.

Delaplaine was after him with a bound.

»Morningstar—Morningstar! He's after me again!« he cried, in trembling accents. »For heaven's sake, don't leave me alone!«

Sizing he ea the Jew by the arm, he drew him back into the gloom.

»Keep off—keep off! I didn't do it! It vos not me, I swear it?«

»Didn't do what? It's only me, man! I'm the one he wants, not you.«

»No—no! ze poy—ze poy! Did you not see him? It vos ze Dock Snoozers, not mineself zat put him in ze boat to drown!«

»I believe we are both mad,« whispered Delaplaine, in a trembling voice! »Who was that boy that stood eas him? Have you then also the erime of murder on your soul?«

»It is ze poy, Harry Blake of ze Fleece. Do you not know him? His true name vas Harry Romer. He is ze heir under ze vill.«

»Morningstar! For heaven's sake! What do you mean?«

»I mean zat I see his name on-his clothes von day on ze voyage, and I nevaire forget. I mean zat he play ze spy, zat he see us steal his infant sister away, and zat your leetle scheme might not fail, I had him put to ze river in ze leaky boat.«

»It is a judgment on us both!« whispered the mate, shudderingly. »Ha! they are coming now! Don't you see their figures in the open door?«

Indeed it needed no word from him to apprise his frightened companion of this fact.

Through the door by which they had escaped from the storehouse, the rays of the lantern were feebly shed, and in the dim light thus afforded, the ghostly figures of a boy and man could be seen gliding toward them with extended hands.

With a frightened ery the Jew sprang through the dark corridor heedless as to where it might lead him, his equally frightened companion pressing close behind.

Scarce had he advanced ten steps when he came in sudden and violent contact with a closed door.

In an instant he had flung it open, and they sped up the tower stairs.

The door shut automatically behind them, and with a bang.

Upon the stairs the darkness of Egypt prevailed.

»Stop, stop!« cried the mate, »there's no way out of this you madman! these stairs can have but one ending—the top of the tower of this accursed mill!«

But the Jew paid no heed.

Coward that he was, his terror at the appearance of the boy whose life rested, as he supposed, on his soul, was greater by far than that of his confederate, the mate.

Indeed, the latter, gaining courage as he advanced, felt more and more inclined to return and face the enemy with every step he took.

He realized fully that to this staircase there could be but one ending—the apex of the old mill tower—and he also realized; with equal force, that sooner or later they would be obliged to descend, unless, indeed, they chose to remain in this place of Stygian darkness for the remainder of the night.

Better by far to encounter the ghosts on the ground floor below, where some opportunity of gaining exit from the building remained, but in attempting to stay the steps of the frightened creature before him, he might as well have tried to stay the wind.

»Morningstar, Morningstar, for heaven's sake, think, madman! By ascending these stairs what do you expect to gain?«

»Ha! I am at ze top at last!« shouted the voice of the Jew before him. »Zey cannot catch us here!«

»You fool! if what we saw were ghosts from the purgatory of the condemned, do you think these stairs would stop them?« returned the mate, angrily. As, panting for breath, he mounted to his companion's side. »Here we are, away up at the top of this blessed old tower, and now that's all there is to it. Come, let us return at once.«

»No, no, my dear, don't leave me,« whined the Jew, him tremblingly by the arm. »See, which he look down and see vat is pelow.«

They now stood upon the little platform where Felix Costar and Harry Blake—or Harry Romer as we should now call him—had had so strange an experience a few nights before.

Scarce had they turned toward the window, when a light of dazzling brilliancy, proceeding from an unknown source, illuminated the platform with the brightness of day.

»The stairs! the stairs!« cried Delaplaine, seizing the Jew by the arm and pointing down into the tower beneath them.

»Fool! you would not go back. Now you cannot. My God! My God! our doom is sealed I«

For his exclamation there was abundant cause.

Of all the strange happenings witnessed by these plotters in the Haunted Mill on the Marsh, the strangest now appeared before their eyes.

Where the tower staircase, over which they had passed, had been but one moment before, now appeared the smooth surface of an inclined plane leading down into the darkness below.

»Well, and what do you want in my private apartment, gentlemen?« spoke a thin, tremulous voice behind them. »It is seldom that visitors to the Haunted Mill are bold enough to venture here.«

Both turned abruptly toward the lighted space.

A sight met their gaze well calculated to strike terror even to the stoutest heart.

It was a man of great age who stood before them, bent nearly double, with beard of snowy whiteness extending almost to the floor.

Chapter XXIII.

JIM BEASLEY WORKS OUT HIS LITTLE SCHEME.

Upon leaving the Bristol Bantam after the shabby trick he had played him, the virtuous Mr. Beasley, as we have already stated, hastened to board a west-bound car.

Now we have not styled the smuggler of the Haunted Mill virtuous without reason.

Providing the profit was equal, Jim Beasley invariably leaned to the side of the right in preference to the wrong.

There are some scoundrels who will not even do that.

That such persons are scoundrels from preference need not be said..

Well used to dark and crooked ways of every sort, this man, by his patient investigations, had satisfied himself that the infant left at the Hotel de Mill was none other than Julie Romer, the heir to the Liemaire estates, whose moeck funeral he had attended at the Church of St. Boniface, as we have related before.

As to the methods employed to gain this knowledge, they need not concern us. It is enough to hint that a patient shadowing of the sailor, Radd, and gaining his confidence by the aid of plenty of good whisky, was not the least effective of the efforts made.

His motive for putting Bill Judge on the wrong scent had been simple.

This was to get the ex-pugilist away from the saloon in order that he might, by false representations, get possession of the child, and restoring her to Mr. Bolies, the lawyer in whose charge the matter of the Lemaire property rested, claim for himself a liberal reward.

He little dreamed that the house chosen for his trick on the Bantam, simply because it chanced to have an alley running alongside of it, was the residence of the very Mr. Bolles whom it was his intention to seek out next day.

Like Jacob Morningstar, the bold smuggler had his »little scheme,« and was bent upon working it for all it was worth.«

»In doing so he had sowed the seeds of his own defeat.

The Eighth street car landed him at the Christopher street ferry, from whence he made all possible haste to the Hotel de Mill, at the junction of West street with Spring.

The charming Molly was still in attendance at, the bar, looking closely to the spiritual wants of such customers as still remained.

By this young lady the smuggler was greeted upon his entrance with exclamations of vexed surprise.

»Where's father, Mr. Beasley? Does he expect me to stay behind the bar all night? He ought to know well enough that I have something else to do.«

»Hush, hush, my girl,« whispered Beasley, drawing her to one side. »The old man's caught in a snap at last.«

»What! You don't mean to tell me the cops have got him?« breathed Molly, greatly alarmed.

»But I do, though, and it's all along with that baby what was left here the other night. The police will be here in half an hour. Bill says you are to give me the young one, and for me to take it away.«

»Come right upstairs, Mr. Beasley. My gracious me! but this is dreadful. I told father no good would come of harboring that child.«

Ten minutes later and Jim Beasley might have been observed stealing cautiously from the alley in the rear of the Hotel de Mill with the infant wrapped in a shawl held gingerly in his arms.

He made all possible haste to the Staten Island ferry, and some minutes before midnight arrived in safety at the Haunted Mill.

Here felt that for a short time, at least, the child-could bi with perfect security.

Costar and the boy had left the morning before. Bill Judge had not the faintest idea where the dealer in smuggled goods, with whom he had traded so long, lived, and Old Waddie he felt could be counted on to follow any course_he might lay down.

He entered the hut only to find it deserted.

»Waddie! Hey, Waddie!« he called, laying the now slumbering infant upon the little cot-bed.

But the echoes of the hut alone came_in answer. Old Waddie did not appear.

»Must be outside somewhere,« he muttered. 'Why the mischief can't he stay to hum, and mind the house while I'm away. Now I've got to scour around and look him up.«

Leaving the infant to repose quietly where he had laid it, he panes out of the hut, and made the circuit of the Haunted Mill.

He had scarcely reached the point opposite the outer entrance to the storehouse when his attention was attracted by a loud hammering within the building.

Peering into the storehouse, to his surprise and alarm he beheld Delaplaine and the Jew, Morningstar, whom he immediately recognized, in the act of cutting away the partition wall.

At the same instant the sound of many footsteps was heard behind him, and, turning, the astonished smuggler beheld no less a personage than old Bill Judge himself, in company Felix Costar, our young hero, Harry Romer, and an elderly man whom he failed to recognize, in the act of descending the hill, while in their company—and this in no way served to diminish his terror—he beheld three men well known to himself as belonging to the police:

It was no time for hesitation.

That in some way his share in the abduction of the child had been discovered, was plainly to be seen.

With one bound Jim Beasley sprang back into the shadows of the mill, and running at full speed, dashed into the' hut.

It needed but a single glance to discover that it was deserted.

The infant, which but a moment before he had left reposing »quietly in the bed, had strangely, mysteriously disappeared.

Chapter XXIV.

AT THE OLD WINDMILL ONCE MORE.

The combination of circumstances which led to the presence of Lawyer Bolles and his companions at the Haunted Mill at midnight is speedily told.

Though to hold the Bristol Bantam against the wall after having once got him into that desirable position proved to be no easy task, it was accomplished by Mr. Bolles with the assistance of Felix Costar and Harry.

A moment later the police in answer to the summons sent from the district telegraph instrument, arrived upon the scene.

It needed but one glimpse of their blue coats and brass buttons to cause the Bantam to weaken.

He immediately made a full confession of the whole affair.

Unwilling to trust him from their sight, accompanied by one of the officers, all hands immediately set out for the Hotel de Mill, with the intention of taking the abducted infant in charge.

But disappointment awaited them.

The trick played by Beasley was discovered upon their arrival.

The child was gone.

Then it was, in his righteous wrath, that old Bill Judge joined issue freely with the enemy and offered to aid them in every possible way.

Upon mention of the smuggler's name Felix Costar at once avowed that the child had been conveyed to the Haunted Mill.

Hence their presence on this lonely spot at the midnight hour, for by boat and train they had proceeded to Tottenville, the extreme southwest point of Staten Island, with the least possible delay, and started on foot for the mill.

That Morningstar and the false Felix Costar, going down by the way of Perth Amboy and the Tottenville ferry, were but a few moments ahead of them, they little dreamed.

»There it is!« exclaimed Mr. Bolles. having been joined by two members of the Tottenville police force, they descended the little eminence which edged the marsh. »There's the old mill right ahead of us. I remember it well in my boyhood days, when I used to come here fishing and stopped to talk with that old lunatic, Peter Finisterre.«

»You speak somewhat disrespectfully of my great grandfather, Mr. Bolles,« said Costar, laughing. Still, as I never saw the old gentlemen, I can say that my feelings are not lacerated to any considerable extent. Perhaps, since you

remember him so well, you will be good enough to give us a brief sketch of the old mill and its history, for really I know next to nothing about it myself.«

»By all means,« replied the lawyer. »I know the whole affair perfectly well. The mill was erected many years ago by Peter Finisterre for the purpose of grinding corn.

»Finisterre was then a young man, having just come to America from the French Flemish provinces, where such structures as these are common enough.

»His venture proved a failure from a financial standpoint. Steam had even then begun to supersede all else, and »Finisterre's Folly,« as the windmill was styled, received next to no patronage at all.

»Nevertheless, the old man grew rich,« he continued, »But it was not through grinding corn, but by shrewd real estate speculations in New York city. He was the oddest fish you ever saw. Spent his whole time in gathering up old coins, and all such folly as that.«

»And what became of him?« asked Harry, who had been an interested listener to the lawyer's remarks.

»Well, that's the strangest part of it. One night, about forty years ago, he walked out of the house, saying that he was going on some trifling errand, and from that day to this was never seen again.«

»I've heard that part of the story from my mother,« remarked Costar. »Of course the poor old fellow is dead years and years ago.«

»Dead! I should say so,« replied the law »Tf old Peter were alive he would be—let me see—his daughter, the late Madame Lemaire, was eighty-five when she died, although it was a notion of hers to make herself out older than she actually was, and she called herself ninety. If her father were still living he would now be one hundred and five, for she was his oldest daughter, and he married at nineteen.

They had now reached the entrance to the storehouse.

As they turned the corner of the building, loud sounds of hammering broke upon their ears.

One peep through the open doorway showed them the impostor and his confederate at their midnight work.

It was then that the idea of enacting his role of ghost for the second time occurred to Felix Costar.

He resolved also that Harry should do likewise with the idea of playing upon the superstitious terrors of Jacob Morningstar, who, lantern in hand, was now peering into the open' space behind the panel in search of the coins.

With what results their plan was put into execution the reader is already informed.

No sooner had Delaplaine and the Jew rushed from the storehouse into the dark corridor, than all hands sprang into the storehouse without an instant's delay.

As they did so a portion of the wall of the building suddenly opened, and through a secret door old Waddie burst into their midst.

»Follow me, Felix Costar,« he whispered, in hurried tones, '»and let these gentlemen come with you. The master awaits you in the tower above, whence the scoundrels you seek have already flown.«

As he thus spoke, the old man pointed to a narrow flight of steps ascending upward from behind the secret door.

Chapter XXV.

THE GHOST OF THE HAUNTED MILL REVEALS HIMSELF AT LAST—THE END.

At the salutation of the aged being who had so suddenly appeared before them upon the platform of the Haunted Mill, both Delaplaine and the Jew shrank back toward the little window in the tower with renewed terror and alarm.

Before them the stairs, by means of which they had ascended, had disappeared, as has been related.

A smooth inclined, surface alone remained.

Behind there was the window, it is true, but as a means of escape it was valueless, being fully a hundred feet from the ground.

There thus remained no alternative but to face the ghostly figure before them, or to dash themselves to pieces on the rocks which skirted the line of beach below.

They chose the former, of course.

Nor was the appearance of the old man so terrible, when it came to be viewed more critically in the full glare of the dazzling light which filled the place.

Standing erect, he would have been somewhat above the medium stature; bent double as he was, his beard of patriarchal length reached almost to the floor.

His eyes were bright and glittering, his face one mass of wrinkles from forehead to chin.

Though clad in garments of the coarsest sort, he presented an appearance, nevertheless, of scrupulous cleanliness from head to foot.

»I'm sure I beg your pardon, sir, for our intrusion,« stammered the mate of the Fleece, mustering up sufficient courage to address this singular being at last. 'We had no idea of finding any one here—the stairs 'are gone, you see, or -«

»Hold, liar, murderer, thief!« cried the old man, angrily, as, with glistening eyes, he flung open a little door before unnoticed in the wall behind him.

»You, fellow, and your vile companion have schemed and plotted for the ruin of my family, for the wealth of Madame Lemaire.«

»Indeed, sir, you are mistaken,« answered the mate, tremulously, »I cannot have wronged your family when I never saw you before in my life—do not even know your name.«

»Nor I, Monsieur le Ghost,« chimed in Morningstar, bowing most humbly. »You labor under von grand mistake.«:

»You are liars, both!« cried the old man, in a measure straightening himself up. And what is more, you are fools as well!

»Do you not know that the late Madame Lemaire had no wealth to leave? That she only enjoyed her vast estates on sufferance during the lifetime of her father, by whose toil they were accumulated? They belong not to her, but to myself, Peter Finisterre!«

As he uttered these words he turned slightly and made a sudden gesture within the space beyond the door.

Instantly there came forth a little crowd of persons, filling the platform from end to end.

They were Felix Costar and his cousin, Harry Romer—known to our readers by the name of Harry Blake.

With them also was old Bill Judge, the Bristol Bantam, Cephas Bolles, the lawyer, and old Waddie, bearing an infant tenderly in his arms.

In addition, three policemen, two of the Tottenville and the other of the New York force, came filing in the rear.

»Those are your men, officers!« exclaimed Mr. Bolles sternly. »I charge them both with attempted murder against this gentleman, Mr. Costar, against this young man, Harry Romer, and, worse and most dastardly of all, against this helpless infant which rests in this honest fellow's arms.«

The three policemen sprang forward without a word of parley.

Too late!

The cunning Jew alone rested in their grasp.

For John Delaplaine, the sinful mate of the Golden Fleece, preferring death to a lifetime imprisonment for his many crimes, had leaped through the little window in the tower at the first movement made, and now lay a mangled corpse on the beach below.

* *
*

And old Peter Finisterre still lived.

The one man in thousands—nay, tens of thousands—he had attained the great age of one hundred and five.

As it afterward transpired, worn out by the cares and hollow shams of the world and society, this singular being had retreated to the old mill constructed by himself, and had succeeded in maintaining his existence in secret for more than forty years.

In the strange life he had chosen, he was assisted by old Waddie, a man whom he had known and befriended in youth.

Here, in study and inventive experiments, he had passed his days.

It was his occasional appearance in and about the mill that had given it the unenviable reputation which it bore.

And Waddie kept the secret well.

Not until the rescue of Felix Costar and his arrival at the mill did Peter Finisterre entertain the slightest idea of making his existence known.

But the story repeated to him by his faithful attendant, the conversation overheard between Delaplaine and Morningstar, all of which we have not repeated, as well as the narration of Harry Romer, caused him to change his plans.

It had been his intention to send for Mr. Bolles, and reveal himself, with a view of overturning the plot against those remaining of his race, when the opportune arrival of the lawyer upon the ground had made his way perfectly clear.

In constructing the windmill Peter Finisterre had made the secret chamber opening off the platform for his own especial use.

Here he carried on his chemical and philosophical experiments, having accomplished many valuable inventions, was afterward shown.

Among these was a system of electric lighting without the aid of powerful dynamos, of which the world is soon destined to hear, and which fully explained the sudden illumination with which he was able to surround himself, and which lent so much to the ghostly terrors of the mill.

Further than this, he had constructed a secret staircase from the top to the bottom of the tower, the walls of which were double, and by its aid he could move up and down at will without danger of being seen.

The partition in the store-house was still another invention, This was raised and lowered by the aid of secret springs, one of which had been inadvertently touched by the foot of Jacob Morningstar, when this partition so mysteriously rose, revealing the panels again.

That the main stairway of the tower, so constructed that by pressure on a simple lever in the secret apartment it could be opened out or closed up at will, was still another of the inventions of this strange creature, need not be told.

Notwithstanding his immense age, the faculties of old Peter Finisterre remained as clear as a bell.

Wandering about the mill in company with the faithful Waddie, they had chanced to see Jim Beasley upon the first moment of his entrance to the hut with the child.

By the old man himself, who from the information concerning his family he had recently received, her identity was at once divined; she was conveyed to the secret chamber, while Waddie started out to interview his companion, and to see what could be learned.

In so doing he had detected the arrival of the little party of visitors even before Beasley himself.

Instantly informing his patron, he had by his orders conveyed them to the secret chamber at once.

Meanwhile, alarmed by the sudden appearance of Felix Costar and Harry Romer in the open doorway, Delaplaine and the Jew had fled up the tower stairs.

From within the secret chamber old Peter had detected their arrival upon the platform, and had imprisoned them there by closing the stairs.

And so it all came out at last, the clouds which had so thickly surrounded the lives of Felix Costar and Harry Romer cleared away, as clears the sky after a summer shower.

As had been predicted in the scrawling lines mapped by the centenarian about the brass box as he threw it from the tower window at the feet of his great-grandchildren, the wrong of to-day became the right of the morrow—the ever watchful power above had ruled all things for good.

After the tragic scene in the old mill tower, all had at once descended to the ground.

Upon examining the body of the baffled plotter which lay stretched upon the beach, life was found to be extinct.

By the Tottenville police it was conveyed to that ancient town, and afterward buried in the Potter's field.

As old Peter Finisterre refused to leave the mill, with the dawn of morning all hands returned to New York, he alone remaining behind.

Upon invitation from Mr. Bolles, Felix Costar and Harry Romer at once proceeded to the lawyer's mansion, where Susan Smith, the faithful nurse, was summoned to the aid of the child.

As for Jacob Morningstar and old Bill Judge, both were lodged in the Tombs; and as we may as well dispose of these worthies, let us say right here that while the former received a twenty years' sentence in Sing Sing, the latter managed somehow to escape scot free.

No suggestion of his smuggling operations coming to light, there remained no charge upon which he could be held, and in due time the Bristol Bantam, with feathers somewhat ruffled, returned to the center of an admiring circle at the Hotel de Mill.

That he was full of vengeful vows against Jim Beasley goes without saying; but these in time were forgotten, for that virtuous individual, by whatever means he managed to learn what was going on, made his escape and was never after seen again.

Perhaps Waddie whispered a warning word in the ear of his old companion—it is hard to tell.

Of course, the strange re-appearance of Peter Finisterre proved an entirely new feature in the matter of the Lemaire estates.

The will made by the aged French lady became valueless, as every penny rightfully belonged to him.

This, however, the old man settled in the most effective way imaginable.

»T have done with the world.« he said to Mr. Bolles, upon the occasion of a subsequent interview, when he requested that the lawyer draw up the necessary papers to divide the property into three equal portions, one for Felix Costar, the others for our hero, Harry Romer. and his infant sister Julie, whose life had been so miraculously preserved.

So they left him with Waddie at the old Mill on the Marsh, in the enjoyment of his philosophical experiments, his books and his rich collection of ancient coins.

And here, one year later, he breathed his last in peace, when the coins and all that the secret chamber in the mill contained were, by his especial request, sent to the National Museum of France.

That the results of those long years of study and research, carefully noted in many manuscript volumes, will yet benefit the world the reader may rest fully assured.

Old Waddie did not long survive him.

The faithful servant had not been dead a month when the old mill, mysteriously taking fire in the night, burned to the ground.

Of course, it was never built again, and its site remains a waste to-day.

With the cousins, Felix Costar and Harry Romer, now rich and prosperous, the memories which clustered around it are frequent subjects of discussion when they meet.

But our hero preserves among his choicest treasure one object calculated to arouse those memories more than all things else.

It is a small brass box, curiously chased, kept as a lasting memorial of his aged relative to whom he owed much—the ghost of the **HAUNTED MILL ON THE MARSH.**

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