

very well without us. But I suppose it is in the same manner that we go back to read the pages of a well-thumbed volume. Its familiarity is its charm.

It was with evident reluctance that John Vorst entered upon the pecuniary details of the approaching contest.

'I will confess,' he said, 'perhaps to my shame, that I have never had any great aptitude for affairs. It is true, at one time I hotly contested that claim,—or, rather, my counsel did,' he added with a smile. 'But that was on abstract grounds of justice, in order not to prove myself a swindler; and also because of a sentimental attraction toward that old house in Monroe street, where my boyhood had been passed. Moreover, then, as now, there were others to be considered,—a widowed sister, since dead, who has left children. I have never seen them, because I faded out of active life before they had entered thereupon. There is also a brother of mine, who has taken Holy Orders and resides in England. For their sakes nothing must be left to chance.'

It was, therefore, agreed that Phileas should wire at once to Mrs. O'Rourke; and that, two days later, the two men should travel together to New York.

Phileas Fox was fairly treading on air, in the height of his satisfaction. That long and tedious case, which he had fancied might stretch out interminably, was thus in the way of being settled almost immediately. He sent from the office of the hotel a wire addressed to Mrs. O'Rourke. It ran thus:

'Have front parlor prepared for your old lodger, who returns on Thursday.

'PHILEAS FOX.'

Then he went over to the Cathedral, and knelt in fervent prayer for the successful issue of what remained to be done. After which he permitted himself the luxury of a carriage, and drove out to Mount Auburn and to those other lovely suburbs which have made Boston famous.

His mind, relaxed and at rest somewhat from the strain of anxiety and suspense, turned instinctively to pleasanter things; and he recalled, amongst others, that trip to Staten Island which he had so recently made with the most charming girl in the world. For by this time he had come to regard Isabel in some such light; and he felt a real gratification at the thought that he was so soon to see her again, and to be brought into active relation with her. It occurred to him, with a sudden sinking of his spirits, that the cessation of the case would no doubt bring about the cessation of their intercourse. Their ways led so far apart; he a briefless barrister; while she had been brought up in a wealthy and exclusive sphere, to which he in no sense belonged. Then, with the optimism of youth that gilds all things just as the sun was then gilding and bringing out the iridescent colors of the lovely groups of flowers, he began to wonder if she were, after all, so far removed from him; or if she would be content in a year or two, or when he had made his way somewhat, to share his fortunes and struggle upward at his side. He smiled at the swiftness with which his thoughts had gone forward; and, awaking from his reverie, he strove to give his whole attention to the sights which the driver was showing him.

That evening he dined at the hotel with John Vorst; and, in fact, was so much in his society during those two days that he felt as if he had known him for years. On board the boat returning to New York, the two, who had been so strangely brought into each other's life, talked with a freedom which is not always the result of long acquaintanceship. Upon one subject alone John Vorst maintained an inviolable reserve, and that was wherever the plaintiff in the famous lawsuit was concerned. The name of Martha Spooner Wilson was never so much as mentioned; the relation in which the two had stood to each other, the reason of their separation, and all the rest of that tragic story, remained as a sealed book. If he were aware that the attorney had been informed of all those things, he gave no sign. And it was on only one occasion that he spoke of another matter that was dear to his heart—

that religion which he had so faithfully loved and practised for nearly man's allotted span.

'Our faith,' he said,—'what a splendid heritage it is, and how worthy the consideration of reasoning man! It meets us at every point during the journey of our life, and sets up landmarks. It controls, directs, satisfies and brightens intellectual aspirations; it feeds the heart. Envious the young man who sets out in life under the guidance of that true pilot, that alone can weather storms.'

They sat and conversed thus until the night was far worn. The lights in the saloon were lowered, and the groups had gradually dispersed. There was a solemnity there, under the stars looking down from a deep, calm, azure, where the white clouds scudded here and there like wandering spirits in search of a haven.

'I have often said to myself,' continued the elder man, "'Look up at those stars and doubt if you can." That sidereal world seems the vast witness of truth.'

'And,' thought Phileas, 'some men, like this one before me, are likewise witnesses of truth in the various positions which they fill in life.'

In the early morning, the two men breakfasted at a place on Broadway where the most delicious cream-topped coffee could be had, together with Vienna rolls, crisp, delicate bacon, strawberries and cream. It was an enjoyable meal, over which the pair lingered. John Vorst rejoiced at being back once more in the city which he had known and loved.

'I have been a traveller in my time, Mr. Fox,' he said, 'but I am always well content to find myself in this curious, cosmopolitan thoroughfare, which boasts no beauty, and which, with its feverish bustle and haste, is unendurable to the cursory observer. But there are quiet portions of Manhattan, where tranquillity is almost as obtainable as in the country; and I see it, besides, through the glamor of years. I fancy myself once more thrilling at thought of exhibiting my new topcoat or beaver, my patent-leather boots, or any other article of finery, on the avenue of a Sunday morning. I always see Broadway as I first consciously remember it half a century ago.'

When Phileas rang the bell at Mrs. O'Rourke's door, it was opened by Susan herself. Her face was fairly beaming, though her eyes were streaming with tears. Every trace of care, of weariness, or of cynical doubt, was momentarily gone.

'You see I have brought him back to you!' exclaimed Phileas, indicating his companion.

'And may God in heaven bless you for that same!' answered Susan.

To her late lodger, who was somewhat slower in reaching the upper step, she began a series of curtsies, as though the newly-arrived had been her feudal lord and she his tenant at will.

'Is it yourself, sir?' she cried.

'It is indeed, Mrs. O'Rourke,' replied Mr. Vorst, with corresponding warmth, and seizing the toil-roughened hand of the landlady in a cordial grip. 'I'm glad to see you again.'

'And I'm as proud and glad as—'

She could find no apposite comparison, so she left her sentence unfinished, and fell to wiping her eyes with her apron.

'But of course you got Mr. Fox's telegram?' John Vorst inquired.

'I did indeed, sir; and here's your room ready for you just as the day you left it.'

She threw open the door of the same apartment into which upon a former occasion she had ushered Phileas, and showed the spacious room, clean, well-aired, and as shining as two days' good cleaning could make it.

'It's myself is glad to see you in it once again!' the poor creature repeated enthusiastically.

'You may thank Mr. Fox for that,' laughed Mr. Vorst, expanding, under the warmth of her greeting.

'I do thank him; and morning and night, when