

We answered that we had certainly heard of him, as one of the famous criminals of his day. We knew that he had been a partner in a great London banking-house; that he had not led a very virtuous life; that he had possessed himself, by forgery, of trust-moneys which he was doubly bound to respect; and that he had been hanged for his offence, in the year eighteen hundred and twenty-four, when the gallows was still set up for other crimes than murder, and when Jack Ketch was in fashion as one of the hard-working reformers of the age.

"Very good," said Mr. Trowbridge. "You both of you know quite enough of Fauntleroy to be interested in what I am going to tell you. When the bottles have been round the table, I will start with my story."

The bottles went round—claret for the degenerate youngsters; port for the sterling, steady-headed, middle-aged gentlemen. Mr. Trowbridge sipped his wine—meditated a little—sipped again—and started with the promised anecdote, in these terms:

What I am going to tell you, gentlemen, happened when I was a very young man, and when I was just setting up in business on my own account. My father had been acquainted for many years with Mr. Fauntleroy, of the famous London banking-firm of Marsh, Stracey, Fauntleroy, and Graham. Thinking it might be of some future service to me to make my position known to a great man in the commercial world, my father mentioned to his highly respected friend that I was about to start in business for myself, in a very small way, with very little money. Mr. Fauntleroy received the intimation with a kind appearance of interest; and said that he would have his eye on me. I expected from this that he would wait to see if I could keep on my legs at starting; and that, if he found I succeeded pretty well, he would then help me forward if it lay in his power. As events turned out, he proved to be a far better friend than that; and he showed me that I had very much underrated the hearty and generous interest which he had felt in my welfare from the first.

While I was still fighting with the first difficulties of setting up my office, and recommending myself to my connection, and so forth, I got a message from Mr. Fauntleroy, telling me to call on him, at the banking-house, the first time I was passing that way. As you must easily imagine, I contrived to be passing that way on a particularly early occasion; and, on presenting myself at the bank, I was shown at once into Mr. Fauntleroy's private room.

He was as pleasant a man to speak to as ever I met with—bright and gay and companionable in his manner—with a sort of easy, hearty, jovial bluntness about him that attracted everybody. The clerks all liked him—and that is something to say of a partner in a banking-house, I can tell you!

"Well, young Trowbridge," says he, giving his papers on the table a brisk push away from him, "so you are going to set up in business for yourself, are you? I have a great regard for your father, and a great wish to see you succeed. Have you started yet?—No? Just on the point of beginning—sh? Very good. You will have your difficulties, my friend—and I mean to smoothe one of them away for you at the outset. A word of advice for your private ear.—Bank with us."

"You are very kind, sir," I answered, "and I should ask nothing better than to profit by your suggestion—if I could. But my expenses are heavy at starting, and when they are all paid, I am afraid I shall have very little to put by for the first year. I doubt if I shall be able to muster much more than three hundred pounds of surplus cash in the world, after paying what I must pay, before I set up my office. And I should be ashamed to trouble your house, sir, to open an account for such a trifle as that."

"Stuff and nonsense!" says Mr. Fauntleroy. "Are you a banker? What business have you to offer an opinion on the matter? Do as I tell you—leave it to me—bank with us—and draw for what you like. Stop! I haven't done yet. When you open the account, speak to the head cashier. Perhaps you may find he has got something to tell you. There! there! go away—don't interrupt me—good-bye—God bless you!"

That was his way—Ah, poor fellow! that was his way! I went to the head cashier the next morning, when I opened my little modicum of an account. He had received orders to pay my drafts without reference to my balance. My cheques, when I had overdrawn, were to be privately shown to Mr. Fauntleroy. Do many young men who start in business find their prosperous superiors ready to help them in that way?

Well, I got on—got on very fairly and steadily; being careful not to venture out of my depth, and not to forget that small beginnings may lead in time to great ends. A prospect of one of those great ends—great I mean to such a small trader as I was at that period—showed itself to me, when I had been some little time in business. In plain terms, I had a chance of joining in a first-rate transaction, which would give me profit and position and everything I wanted, provided I could qualify myself for engaging in it by getting good security beforehand for a very large amount.

In this emergency, I thought of my kind friend, Mr. Fauntleroy, and went to the bank, and saw him once more in his private room.

There he was at the same table, with the same heaps of papers about him, and the same hearty, easy way of speaking his mind to you at once, in the fewest possible words. I explained the business I came upon, with some little hesitation and nervousness; for I was afraid that he might think that I was taking an unfair advantage of his former kindness to me. When I had done, he just nodded his head, snatched up a blank sheet of paper, scribbled a few lines on it, in his rapid way, handed the writing to me, and pushed me out of the room by the two shoulders before I could say a single word. I looked at the paper office. It was my security from the great banking-house for the whole amount, and for more, if more was wanted.

I could not express my gratitude then; and I don't know that I can describe it now. I can only say that it has outlived the crime, the disgrace, and the awful death on the scaffold. I am grieved to speak of that death at all. But I have no other alternative. The course of my story must now lead me straight on to the later time, and to the terrible discovery which exposed my benefactor and my friend to all England as the forger Fauntleroy.

I must ask you to suppose a lapse of time after the occurrence of the events that I have just been relating. During this interval, thanks to the kind assistance I had received at the outset, my position as a man of business had greatly improved. Imagine me now, if you please, on the high road to prosperity, with good large offices and a respectable staff of clerks, and picture me to yourselves sitting alone in my private room, between four and five o'clock on a certain Saturday afternoon.

All my letters had been written, all the people who had appointments with me had been received—I was looking carelessly over the newspaper, and thinking about going home, when one of my clerks came in, and said that a stranger wished to see me immediately on very important business.

"Did he mention his name?" I inquired.
"No, sir."
"Did you not ask him for it?"
"Yes, sir. And he said you would be none the wiser if he told me what it was."
"Does he look like a begging-letter writer?"
"He looks a little shabby, sir; but he doesn't look at all like a begging-letter writer. He spoke sharp and decided, sir,—and said that it was in your interest that he came, and

that you would deeply regret it afterwards if you refused to see him."

"He said that, did he? Show him in at once, then."
He was shown in immediately. A middling-sized man, with a sharp, unwholesome-looking face, and with a flippant, reckless manner; dressed in a style of shabby smartness; eying me with a bold look; and not so overburdened with politeness as to trouble himself about taking off his hat when he came in. I had never seen him before in my life; and I could not form the slightest conjecture from his appearance to guide me towards guessing his position in the world. He was not a gentleman, evidently; but as to fixing his whereabouts in the infinite downward gradations of vagabond existence in London, that was a mystery which I was totally incompetent to solve.

"Is your name Trowbridge?" he began.
"Yes," I answered, drily enough.

"Do you bank with Marsh, Stracey, Fauntleroy, and Graham?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Answer my question, and you will know!"

"Very well, I do bank with Marsh, Stracey, Fauntleroy, and Graham—and what then?"

"Draw out every farthing of balance you have got, before the bank closes at five to-day."

I started at him in speechless amazement. The words, for the instant, absolutely petrified me.

"Stare as much as you like," he proceeded coolly, "I mean what I say. Look at your clock there. In twenty minutes it will strike five, and the bank will be shut. Draw out every farthing, I tell you, again; and look sharp about it."

"Draw out my money!" I exclaimed, partially recovering myself. "Are you in your right senses? Do you know that the firm I bank with represents one of the first houses in the world? What do you mean—you, who are a total stranger to me—by taking this extraordinary interest in my affairs? If you want me to act on your advice, why don't you explain yourself?"

"I have explained myself. Act on my advice, or not, just as you like. It don't matter to me. I have done what I promised; and there's an end of it."

He turned to the door. The minute hand of the clock was getting on from the twenty minutes to the quarter.

"Done what you promised?" I repeated, getting up to stop him.

"Yes," he said, with his hand on the lock. "I have given my message. Whatever happens, remember that. Good afternoon."

He was gone before I could speak again. I tried to call after him, but my lips had suddenly got dry, and the words seemed to stick on them. I could not imagine why, but there was something in the man's last words which had more than half frightened me.

I looked at the clock. The minute hand was on the quarter. My office was just far enough from the bank to make it necessary for me to decide on the instant. If I had time to think, I am perfectly certain that I should not have profited by the extraordinary warning that had just been addressed to me. The suspicious appearance and manners of the stranger; the outrageous improbability of the inference against the credit of the bank towards which his words pointed; the chance that some underhand attempt was being made, by some enemy of mine, to frighten me into embroiling myself with one of my best friends, through showing an ignorant distrust of the firm with which he was associated as partner.—all these considerations would unquestionably have occurred to me if I could have found time for reflection; and, as a necessary consequence, not one farthing of my balance would have been taken from the keeping of the bank on that memorable day.

As it was, I had just time enough to act, and not a spare moment for thinking. Some heavy payments made at the beginning of the week had so far decreased my balance, that the sum to my credit in the banking-book barely reached fifteen hundred pounds. I snatched up my cheque-book, wrote a draft for the whole amount, and ordered one of my clerks to run to the bank and get it cashed before the doors closed. What impulse urged me on, except the blind impulse of my hurry and bewilderment, I can't say. I acted mechanically, under the influence of the vague, inexplicable fear which the man's extraordinary parting words had aroused in me, without stopping to analyse my own sensations—almost without knowing what I was about. In three minutes from the time when the stranger had closed my door, the clerk had started for the bank; and I was alone again in my room, with my hands as cold as ice and my head all in a whirl.

I did not recover my control over myself, until the clerk came back with the notes in his hand. He had just got to the bank in the nick of time. As the cash for my draft was handed to him over the counter, the clock struck five, and he heard the order given to close the doors.

When I had counted the bank-notes and had locked them up in the safe, my better sense seemed to come back to me on a sudden. Never have I reproached myself before or since, as I reproached myself at that moment. What sort of return had I made for Mr. Fauntleroy's fatherly kindness to me? I had insulted him by the meanest, the grossest distrust of the honour and the credit of his house—and that on the word of an absolute stranger, of a vagabond, if ever there was one yet! It was madness, downright madness in any man, to have acted as I have done. I could not account for my own inconceivably thoughtless proceeding. I could hardly believe in it myself. I opened the safe, and looked at the bank-notes again. I locked it once more, and flung the key down on the table in a fury of vexation against myself. There the money was, upbraiding me with my own inconceivable folly; telling me in the plainest terms that I had risked depriving myself of my best and kindest friend henceforth and forever.

It was necessary to do something at once towards making all the atonement that lay in my power. I felt that, as soon as I began to cool down a little. There was but one plain, straightforward way left now out of the scrape in which I had been mad enough to involve myself. I took my hat, and, without stopping an instant to hesitate, hurried off to the bank to make a clean breast of it to Mr. Fauntleroy.

When I knocked at the private door, and asked for him, I was told that he had not been at the bank for the last two days. One of the other partners was there, however, and was working at that moment in his own room. I sent in my name at once, and asked to see him. He and I were little better than strangers to each other; and the interview was likely to be, on that account, unexpectably embarrassing and humiliating on my side. Still, I could not go home. I could not endure the inaction of the next day, the Sunday, without having done my best on the spot to repair the error into which my own folly had led me. Uncomfortable as I felt at the prospect of the approaching interview, I should have been far more uneasy in my mind if the partner had declined to see me.

To my relief, the bank-porter returned with a message requesting me to walk in. What particular form my explanations and apologies took when I tried to offer them, is more than I can tell now. I was so confused and distressed that I hardly knew what I was talking about at the time. The one circumstance which I remember clearly is that I was ashamed to refer to my interview with the strange man; and that I tried to account for my sudden withdrawal of my balance by referring it to some inexplicable panic, caused by mischievous reports which I was unable to trace to their source, and which, for anything I knew to the contrary, might, after all, have been only started in jest. Greatly to

my surprise, the partner did not seem to notice the lamentable lameness of my excuses, and did not additionally confuse me by asking any questions. A weary, absent look, which I had observed on his face when I came in, remained on it, while I was speaking. It seemed to be an effort to him, even to keep up the appearance of listening to me. And when, at last, I fairly broke down in the middle of a sentence, and gave up the hope of getting any farther, all the answer he gave me was comprised in these few civil, common-places words:—

"Never mind, Mr. Trowbridge; don't think of apologising. We are all liable to mistakes. Say nothing more about it; and bring the money back on Monday, if you will honour us with your confidence."

He looked down at his papers, as if he was anxious to be alone again; and I had no alternative, of course, but to take my leave immediately. I went home, feeling a little easier in my mind, now that I had paved the way for making the best practical atonement in my power, by bringing my balance back the first thing on Monday morning. Still, I passed a weary day on Sunday, reflecting, sadly enough, that I had not yet made my peace with Mr. Fauntleroy. My anxiety to set myself right with my generous friend was so intense, that I risked intruding myself on his privacy by calling at his town residence on the Sunday. He was not there; and his servant could tell me nothing of his whereabouts. There was no help for it now but to wait till his week-day duties brought him back to the bank.

I went to business on Monday morning, half-an-hour earlier than usual, so great was my impatience to restore the amount of that unlucky draft to my account, as soon as possible after the bank opened. On entering my office, I stopped with a startled feeling, just inside the door. Something serious had happened. The clerks, instead of being at their desks as usual, were all huddled together in a group, talking to each other with blank faces. When they saw me, they fell back behind my managing man, who stepped forward with a circular in his hand.

"Have you heard the news, sir?" he said.

"No. What is it?"

He handed me the circular. My heart gave one violent throb the instant I looked at it. I felt myself turn pale; I felt my knees trembling under me.

Marsh, Stracey, Fauntleroy and Graham had stopped payment.

"The circular has not been issued more than half an hour," continued my managing clerk. "I have just come from the bank, sir. The doors are shut—there is no doubt about it. Marsh and Company have stopped this morning."

I hardly heard him; I hardly knew who was talking to me. My strange visitor of the Saturday had taken instant possession of all my thoughts; and his words of warning seemed to be sounding once more in my ears. This man had known the true condition of the bank, when not another soul outside the doors was aware of it! The last draft paid across the counter of that ruined house, when the doors closed on Saturday, was the draft that I had so bitterly reproached myself for drawing; the one balance saved from the wreck was my balance. Where had the stranger got the information that had saved me; and why had he brought it to my ears?

I was still groping, like a man in the dark, for an answer to those two questions—I was still bewildered by the unfathomable mystery of doubt into which they had plunged me, when the discovery of the stopping of the bank was followed almost immediately by a second shock, far more dreadful, far heavier to bear, so far as I was concerned, than the first. While I and my clerks were still discussing the failure of the firm, two mercantile men, who were friends of mine, ran into the office, and overwhelmed us with the news that one of the partners had been arrested for forgery. Never shall I forget the terrible Monday morning when those tidings reached me, and when I knew that the partner was Mr. Fauntleroy.

I was true to him—I can honestly say I was true to my belief in my generous friend—when that fearful news reached me. My fellow-merchants had got all the particulars of the arrest. They told me that two of Mr. Fauntleroy's fellow trustees had come up to London to make arrangements about selling out some stock. On inquiring for Mr. Fauntleroy at the banking house, they had been informed that he was not there; and, after leaving a message for him, they had gone into the city to make an appointment with their stockbroker for a future day, when their fellow trustee might be able to attend. The stockbroker volunteered to make certain business inquiries on the spot, with a view to saving as much time as possible; and left them at his office to await his return. He came back, looking very much amazed, with the information that the stock had been sold out, down to the last five hundred pounds. The affair was instantly investigated; the document authorising the selling out was produced; and the two trustees saw on it, side by side with Mr. Fauntleroy's signature the forged signature of their own names. This happened on the Friday; and the trustees, without losing a moment, sent the officers of justice in pursuit of Mr. Fauntleroy. He was arrested, brought up before the magistrate, and remanded on the Saturday. On the Monday I heard from my friends the particulars which I have just narrated.

But the events of that one morning were not destined to end, even yet. I had discovered the failure of the bank, and the arrest of Mr. Fauntleroy. I was next to be enlightened, in the strangest and the saddest manner, on the difficult question of his innocence or his guilt. Before my friends had left my office; before I had exhausted the arguments which my gratitude rather than my reason suggested to me, in favour of the unhappy prisoner, a note, marked immediate, was placed in my hands, which silenced me the instant I looked at it. It was written from the prison by Mr. Fauntleroy, and it contained two lines only, entreating me to apply for the necessary order, and to go and see him immediately.

I shall not attempt to describe the flutter of expectation, the strange mixture of dread and hope that agitated me, when I recognised his handwriting, and discovered what it was that he desired me to do. I obtained the order, and went to the prison. The authorities, knowing the dreadful situation in which he stood, were afraid of his attempting to destroy himself, and had set two men to watch him. One came out as they opened his cell door. The other, who was bound not to leave him, very delicately and considerately affected to be looking out of the window the moment I was shown in.

He was sitting on the side of his bed, with his head drooping and his hands hanging listlessly over his knees, when I first caught sight of him. At the sound of my approach, he started to his feet, and, without speaking a word, flung both his arms round my neck.

My heart swelled up. "Tell me it's not true, sir! For God's sake tell me it's not true!" was all I could say to him.

He never answered—Oh, me! he never answered, and turned away his face.

There was one dreadful moment of silence. He still held his arms round my neck; and on a sudden he put his lips close to my ear. "Did you get your money out?" he whispered.

"Were you in time on Saturday afternoon?"

I broke free from him, in the astonishment of hearing those words.

"What?" I cried out loud, forgetting the third person at the window. "That man who brought the message—?"

"Hush!" he said, putting his hand on my lips. "There was no better man to be found, after the officers had taken me—I know no more about him than you do—I paid him well, as a chance messenger, and risked his cheating me of his errand."

"You sent him, then?"

"I sent him."

My story is over, gentlemen. There is no need for me to tell you that Mr. Fauntleroy was found guilty, and that he died by the hangman's hand. It was in my power to soothe his last moments in this world, by taking on myself the arrangement of some of his private affairs, which, while they remained unsettled, weighed heavily on his mind. They had no connection with the crimes he had committed, so I could do him the last little service he was ever to accept at my hands with a clear conscience. I say nothing in defence of his character, nothing in palliation of the offence for which he suffered. But I cannot forget that in the time of his most fearful extremity, when the strong arm of law had already seized him, he thought of the young man whose humble fortunes he had helped to build;

whose heartfelt gratitude he had fairly won; whose simple faith he was resolved never to betray. I leave it to greater intellects than mine to reconcile the anomaly of his reckless falsehood towards others, and his steadfast truth towards me. It is as certain as that we sit here, that one of Fauntleroy's last efforts in this world, was the effort he made to preserve me from being a loser by the trust that I had placed in him. There is the secret of my strange tenderness for the memory of a felon—that is why the word villain does somehow still grate on my heart, when I hear it associated with the name—the disgraced name, I grant you—of the forger Fauntleroy. Pass the bottles, young gentlemen, and pardon a man of the old school for having so long interrupted your conversation with a story of the old time.

The Examiner.

CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. I., MARCH 28, 1859.

THE ELECTIONS.

We have now complete returns of the General Election for Prince and Queen's Counties, as will be seen below; but as yet our information from the sister County of King's is neither as full nor as authentic as we had reason to expect from the time that has elapsed since the election. The contest has been very close in Princetown Royalty and Lot 18—the Postmaster General having been defeated by only seven or eight votes, and for this slender majority the successful opponent was indebted to non-resident voters and interlopers who had no right at all to vote. About twenty-five persons went from Charlottetown to oppose Mr. Davies—their right to vote being generally considered so doubtful, that every man of them had to be sworn; and there were twenty-four special votes given in other parts of Prince County against Mr. Davies, many of which are well known to be fraudulent, spurious and illegal votes. The fact is, however, notorious, that Mr. Montgomery—who was Mr. Davies's opponent, though apparently elected by seven or eight of a majority—owes his election not to the free voice of the resident constituency for which he has been, by singular hocus-pocussing, returned. Mr. Davies would demand a scrutiny and petition the House, but it would be vain for him to do so, when he has too much reason to fear that there will be a corrupt majority determined to prejudice the case against him.

Mr. McDonald has been returned for Georgetown, notwithstanding all the efforts and bribery that have been tried to put Mr. McAulay in his place. One case of the grossest bribery has been discovered, but we forbear to notice it for the present, lest we should mistake some of the facts. Of course the Tories talk pompously about a protest against Mr. McDonald's return—a scrutiny, and an appeal to the House of Assembly—all of which they think must result in their favour, if their majority in the latter place be so lost to every sense of justice as to substitute wrong for right. We confess we have no dependence upon their integrity and impartiality with respect to election contests. But the country shall know by means of a free press if injustice shall be perpetrated in this or any other instance.

No return has yet been made for the third district of King's County—an investigation of votes polled out of their proper polling division having commenced at the Sheriff's Court at Georgetown, on Saturday last; and we learned at a late hour last evening, that the result of Saturday's investigation was the erasure of seven bad votes recorded for Mr. Owen, thereby giving Mr. Walker a majority of 13 votes up to that time. It is, however, exceedingly difficult to determine what the final result will be. The chances are, so far, strongly in favour of Mr. Walker's return; and it is highly creditable to a young man like Mr. Walker, that by the force of his own almost unaided energy and perseverance, he should have succeeded in beating an opponent like Mr. Owen in a district where the latter's influence was deemed nearly paramount, and in which he has boasted so frequently of his brilliant achievement in defeating the late Attorney General, whose position and character is second to that of no man in the Colony. But should Mr. Walker be returned, his seat will no doubt be assailed in the House; and whether the evidence preponderate in his favour or against him, he will be a very credulous man if he should expect an impartial decision.

The *Islander* refers to our notice last week of the "interference of certain Protestant Ministers in the Murray Harbour District," and wants to know "who it was that went from house to house in Mr. Owen's district, and poisoned the minds of his constituents?" We were not aware that Mr. Owen had a district of his own, or a constituency that he had any right to call "his," but we have no objection to answer the question respecting the poisoning affair, by saying that we think no person is more capable of performing that interesting work than Mr. Owen himself, with the help of the political persons before referred to. We presume, however, that an insinuation is intended to be conveyed against the Catholic clergyman of Georgetown; but all we shall say in answer to the insinuation is this—that if the Reverend gentleman alluded to exercised his legitimate influence over his parishioners, when bigotry and intolerance were allowed to overrun the district—when Catholics were outraged by the vilest calumnies against their religion and their clergy—when a candidate was seeking their suffrages who was the pet of the calumniators and the nominee of an Orange Lodge—he did no more than what he ought to have done long ago; and we regret to say that his influence was not used to anything like the extent it might have been.

The electors in the third district of King's County are considerably more than one half Catholic—perhaps nearly two thirds Catholics. Now, if the Catholic clergyman had used his influence to the utmost extent, as the five Protestant ministers had done—which is not denied—and Mr. Owen had got his deserts, not a Catholic vote would have been polled for the nominee of the Political Alliance, and Mr. Walker's election would be beyond doubt. However, Mr. Owen must be pretty well convinced by this time what the Catholic electors can do, when only a part of their force is brought into the field. He will have, we trust, a more convincing proof the next time.

While regretting, in an especial manner, the defeat of Mr. Warburton and Mr. Benjamin Davies, it is some satisfaction to themselves and their friends to know that they are not debarred from taking their seats in the new House by a majority of the unbiassed votes of the resident constituencies whose suffrages they sought to obtain. Mr. Yeo's ledger and Mr. David Ramsay's rum settled the election in the second district of Prince County; while Charlottetown influence, combined with the most impudent frauds practised beyond the limits of the district, was more than a match for the independence and firmness of the Liberal electors of the Royalty and Lot 18.