

ed away the moment she quitted the church, and nothing they could do could restore her. I waited in the hall, for nobody took much notice of me in the confusion, till the doctor came. He went up stairs very quick, and after some time came down again slowly. An elderly-looking woman came down with him; and I heard him say at the door, "There is no hope." As the lady turned back from the door she noticed me, and asked me my business. I said I had come there from Mr Courtney to inquire about his daughter. The lady mused for a moment on this, and then said, "It's a bad business; and I told my brother he was wrong: I don't know how you are to break it to her father," said she.

He stopped here, and could not go on. All this while Mr Courtney was gazing at him with his hands clasped. I admired the firmness with which he received the dreadful intelligence; but I was mistaken. I thought it better that he should know the worst while he seemed so well able to bear it; so I urged the messenger to proceed.

"What was it exactly," said I, "that the lady said to you?"

"She said that the poor girl was—dying!"

I saw that her poor father was choking, but he gave no outward sign of his inward suffering, except by the quivering of his lips. I whispered to the messenger to go away, and then turned my attention to my friend. He motioned to me to put my face close to his and in a hollow voice which made me start, for I never had heard such sounds from human throat before, he said,—

"I will go to her!"

"You forget," I said, trying to soothe him, "that you cannot go to her: we are in prison."

"I will ask the warden," he said; "he cannot refuse me."

He got up from his chair, and, staggering out of his room, I helping him as well as I could, and others assisting as we went down stairs and across the yard, he was shown with me into the warden's room. But he was too much overpowered with his own emotion to speak; so it was I who had to make the necessary explanations: but the officer who acted for the warden said it was quite against the rules, and totally out of the question. It would be equivalent, he said, to an escape; and he should be eddled with the debt.

"But he will be sure to come back," said I; "it is easy to take precautions to prevent an escape. Surely you will not refuse to let a father see his dying child, who has sacrificed herself for him, and perhaps in vain! Such a favor would not be refused to a prisoner in gaol accused of murder; and what terrible crime is there in being guilty of debt to place a man in a worse condition than a murderer?" But all representations, entreaties, expostulations were useless.

It was in vain that Mr Courtney, recovering his voice, appealed to the feelings of the official with an eloquence and a pathos that would have softened the heart of a savage. But I do wrong to compare the customs of savages with the usages of men calling themselves civilized: there is no set of savages on the face of the earth who would practise towards each other the cruelties and barbarities which civilized men, in the name of the law, commit on their fellow-creatures. It was, I say, all in vain; he might as well have spoken to the stone walls of the prison.

I coaxed my poor friend back to his room, but I thought he would have dashed out his brains against the walls in his mad excitement at being stopped by the cruel severity of the law, from visiting his dying girl before she breathed her last. He stamped, and tore his hair, and cursed the law-executors; arraigning even Providence in his phrenzy for permitting such abominations to exist on earth; comparing mankind to fiends who deserved all the calamities that afflicted them, for permitting the exercise of such cruelty on one another as that which now separated him from his child. I rebuked him for this gently, saying that he must not make the many responsible for the sins of the few; and I tried to bring his mind back to a right state, urging him to submit to the dispensations of Providence, who, doubtless, had good reasons for permitting the misery which prevails in the world to continue for a time, in order to work out some wise and benevolent ends, which, to our limited faculties, are mysterious and inscrutable. I succeeded in calming him, or, rather, he was worn out with the tearing conflict of his own grief; and I placed him on the sofa, on which he lay moaning. I sat by the window watching him, and turning over in my mind all sorts of projects, but all wild and impracticable, when, suddenly, I saw a bustle at the entrance of the yard. The people who were entering about flocked to the door-way, as if something extraordinary had happened. Presently after, several men appeared bearing a sofa without a back, and resembling a stretcher, such as is used for transporting bodies which have met with sudden death or accident in the streets. As soon as the sofa was turned round, and the men began to descend the two or three steps leading into the yard, I distinguished on the sofa the body of a female dressed in white, and with her feet wrapped in shawls. I guessed in a moment who that female was; I did not doubt that the death-stricken Louisa, finding her end approaching, had insisted on being conveyed to her father in the prison. And it was so, as I learnt afterwards.

The whole prison was in a state of great excitement, as may be supposed, for Miss Courtney was known by sight to nearly all the inmates, who respected her for her reserved and modest demeanour, and for her devotion to her father. I felt that a terrible scene was approaching; but I was at a loss at the moment how to communicate to Mr Courtney that his

daughter was being carried up stairs. While I was deliberating there was a tap at the door which I opened, when I found the procession on the outside. There was no noise, although the passage was thronged with anxious faces; but somehow the story of the poor girl's devotion—how she had sacrificed herself in the hope of obtaining her father's liberty—had got abroad, and there was a feeling of deep admiration at the act, and of solemn awe at the catastrophe. There were several of the charwomen about who were the usual attendants on the prisoners, and with her assistance I conveyed Louisa into her father's cell, after first apprising him of her arrival. We laid her on her father's couch;—it was evident that she was dying. She had in her hand a paper which she grasped tenaciously, seeming to concentrate all her remaining powers of life in that one act. She tried to speak, but she only muttered some inarticulate words which we could not understand; but we gathered from a feeble gesture which she made that she wished to present it to her father. He took it, but all his faculties seemed paralysed, and he could neither read it nor open it: he held it forward to me.

My own hands trembled very much, and my eyes were so dim that I could hardly see, but I made a shift to read it. The paper was an undertaking on the part of her father's detaining creditor to abandon all his claims on her father on the morning of the daughter's marriage with him. My poor friend looked at the stone walls of his cell, and then at his daughter: he could not speak, but I could see what was passing in his mind: his looks spoke as plainly as words that he would gladly have remained in prison to the end of his life, than purchase freedom at such a price! He knelt down by his daughter's side, and took her hand in his; he kissed it, and then kissed her forehead, and blessed her! The poor girl smiled a heavenly smile of satisfaction as her father blessed her, and made an effort to speak, but she could not. Life was ebbing fast! She made a little motion with her hand, as I stood by crying like a child; but her father shed no tear! I took her hand and I thought I felt a feeble pressure; it was the poor girl's thanks for the little acts of kindness I had shown to her father. I tried to summon up fortitude to speak some words of consolation, and I asked her very gently, if she would like to see a clergyman?

She made another motion with her hand, but whether it was an assent or not I could not tell; and I was about to repeat the question, when I was stopped by a hurried knock at the door, as if given by some one in haste. I went to open it, but before I had time to place my hand on the handle, it was opened on the outside, and a young man entered hastily, followed by another gentleman, tall, and in a military frock coat. The exclamation of Mr Courtney as they entered, revealed at once the name and relationship of the younger one.

"My son!" he exclaimed, in a voice and with an expression of mingled joy and sorrow—"my son! In such a place!—and at such a time! And you too, Morton!" he exclaimed to the other.

"Louisa!" exclaimed Morton. "My God! how is this?"

At this cherished name, and at the sound of the long-loved voice, the dying Louisa sprang up from the couch as if she had received an electric shock, and opening her eyes, which were lit up with a brilliancy that actually seemed to shed light throughout the cell, she fixed them on Morton, and uttered a scream, so loud, so shrill, so full of agony, that it penetrated into our very souls, while the stone walls of the cell seemed to vibrate with the thrilling sound!

"Edmund!" she cried out, as she raised up her arms and stretched them towards him. It was the first word that she had spoken, and it was her last. Edmund Morton flew to her; but at his approach some dreadful recollection seemed to come over her. She hurriedly felt for the third finger of her left hand; she held it up, and pointed to the fatal ring which encircled it. With a frantic gesture she tore it off and flung it from her. I heard its faint tinkle as it struck on the stone floor. Then, placing her hand on her heart, her head slowly bent forward, like a drooping flower, and her body falling slowly back, she sank on the couch; she was dead!

"Who has done this?" said Morton, frantically; "and what is the meaning of this ring? Has she been forced to marry? Can it be?" said he, looking at her father with a fearful look of suspicion.

I laid my hand on him and led him from the cell; the son followed us. I took him to the end of the gallery, by the window, where there was no one to overhear us, and there, in a few words, I told him the truth of the case. He made no reply; but I saw that he clenched his teeth, and bit his lip till the blood started.

"George," he said, "go to your father."

George Courtney mused for a moment, and went in. I did not like to accompany him at such a time of sorrow, so I remained outside; but he had not been in the rooms many seconds before he opened the door hastily, and beckoning me in, pointed to his father.

His father was kneeling by the side of poor Louisa; his hands clasped, as if in prayer, and his head leaning forward and resting on her body. I approached him reverently; but I was alarmed at a certain air of motionless rigidity which his attitude presented. I went up to him and felt his hand; he made no sign! I raised up his head; he made no resistance! I felt his pulse; there was no pulse! The shock had killed him!

I cannot pretend to describe the anguish of his son! "Mother! father! sister!"—he kept on repeating—"all dead!" It was with difficulty that I could force him away from the room to allow the necessary offices to be performed on the bodies of the father and daughter. I got him into my room, where he laid

down on the bed in a state of grief which no solace could reach. I sat up with him all night. He asked repeatedly for Morton. And in the morning when the gate was opened, his impatience to see his friend became excessive, almost to delirium. Alas! the news of his friend came too soon. An old chum of mine called me out of my room soon after the gate was opened, and asked me if the name of the tall gentleman, whom all the prison by some means had learnt was the lover of Louisa, was not Morton, and at the same time pointed out to me an account in the newspaper headed "Fatal Duel." I could not see to read it in the dusk of the passage, so I took the paper into my room. I was afraid to look at it; and I stood by the window, holding the paper in my hand. Young Courtney saw by my look that there was something in the paper which concerned him; and taking it from me, his eye caught the heading of the paragraph, and he ran over it with intense anxiety.

"Thank God," he said, "he is safe!"

"Who is safe?" said I.

"Morton is safe! He has shot the rascal! He will want me now; I must go."

Saying this he hastily left me; and I afterwards learnt that he joined his friend and accompanied him abroad; but he returned in time to attend the funeral of his sister.

I wished that the sorrows of my tale ended here. But I grieve to tell that the suddenness and terrible nature of the shock of hearing of the death of his mother, and witnessing the death of his father and his sister, all in the same moment, produced a fatal effect on the stunned intellects of George Courtney. He lost his reason,—perhaps it was best that it should be so; for to the last moment of his existence, if his memory had been preserved, he could not have forgotten the events of that fatal time: I am sure I never shall.

I never heard of Captain Morton afterwards; George Courtney is still living in a private asylum for the insane. I'm sure I wonder how I am still living, after all I have suffered and witnessed of the sufferings of others! But it cannot be long now before I shall be at rest too; and after my death, the publication of these Chronicles of the Fleet Prison may do good to my fellow creatures, exemplifying some of the consequences of Imprisonment for Debt!

## The London Punch.

MRS. CAUDLE'S CURTAIN LECTURES.

Mrs. Caudle has returned home. The house (of course) "not fit to be seen."

Mr. Caudle, in self-defence, takes a book.

"AFTER all, Caudle, it is something to get into one's own bed again. I shall sleep to-night. What! You're glad of it? That's like your sneering; I know what you mean. Of course; I never can think of making myself comfortable, but you wound my feelings. If you cared for your own bed like any other man, you'd not have staid out till this hour.—Don't say that I drove you out of the house as soon we came in. I only just spoke about the dirt and the dust,—but the fact is, you'd be happy in a pigsty! I thought I could have trusted that Mrs. Closepug with untold gold; and did you only see the hearth rug? When we left home there was a tiger in it, I should like to know who could make out the tiger, now? Oh, it's very well for you to swear at the tiger, but swearing won't revive the rug again. Else you might swear."

"You could go out and make yourself comfortable at your club. You little know how many windows are broken. How many do you think? No: I shan't tell you to-morrow—you shall know now, I'm sure! Talking about getting health at Margate; all my health went away directly when I went into the kitchen. There's dear mother's china mug cracked in two places. I could have sit down and cried when I saw it; a mug I can recollect when I was a child. Eh? I should have looked it up, then? Yes: that's your feeling for anything of mine. I only wish it had been your punch-bowl; but, thank goodness! I think that's chipped."

"Well, you haven't answered about the windows—you can't guess how many? You don't care? Well, if nobody caught cold but you, it would be little matter. Six windows clean out and three cracked! You can't help it? I should like to know where the money's to come from to mend 'em! They shan't be mended, that's all. Then you'll see how respectable the house will look. But I know very well what you think. Yes; you're glad of it. You think that this will keep me at home—but I'll never stir out again. Then you can go to the sea-side by yourself; then, perhaps, you can be happy with Miss Prettyman? Now, Caudle, if you knock the pillow with your fist in that way, I'll get up. It's very odd that I can't mention that person's name, but you begin to fight the bolster, and so I don't know what. There must be something in it, or you wouldn't kick about so.—A guilty conscience needs no—but you know what I mean."

"She was coming to town for a week; and then, all of a sudden she had a letter. I dare say she had. And then, as she said, it would be company for her to come with us. No doubt. She thought I should be ill again, and down in the cabin; but with all her art, she does not know the depth of me—quite. Not but what I was ill; though, like a brute, you wouldn't see it."

"What do you say? Good night, love?—Yes; you can be very tender I dare say—like all of your sex—to suit your own ends: but I can't go to sleep with my head full of the house. The fender in the parlour will never come to itself again. I haven't counted the knives, yet, but I've made up my mind that half of 'em are lost. No: I don't always think the worst; no, and I don't make myself unhappy before the time; but of course that's my thanks for caring about your property. If there ain't spiders in the curtains as big as nutmegs, I'm a wicked creature.—Not a broom has the whole place seen since I've been away. But as soon as I get up, won't I rummage the house out, that's all. I hadn't the heart to look at my pickles; but for all I left the door locked, I am sure the jars have been moved. Yes; you can swear at pickles when you're in bed; but nobody makes more noise about 'em when you want 'em."

"I only hope they've been to the wine-cellar: then you may know what my feelings are. That poor cat too—What? You hate cats? Yes, poor thing! because she's my favourite—that's it. If that cat could only speak—What? it isn't necessary?—I don't know what you mean, Mr Caudle: but if that cat could only speak, she'd tell me how she's been cheated. Poor thing! I know where the money's gone to that I left for her milk—I know. Why what have you got there Mr Caudle? A book? What? If you ain't allowed to sleep, you'll read? Well, now it is come to something! If that isn't insulting a wife to bring a book to bed, I don't know what wedlock is. But you shan't read, Caudle; no, you shan't; no while I've strength to get up and put out a candle."

"And that's like your feelings! You can think a great deal of trumpery books; yes, you can't think too much of the stuff that's put into print; but for what's real and true about you, why you've the heart of a stone. I should like to know what that book's about? What? Milton's Paradise Lost? I thought some rubbish of the sort—something to insult me. A nice book, I think, to read in bed, and a very respectable person he was who wrote it. What do I know of him? Much more than you think. A very pretty fellow, indeed, with his six wives. What? He hadn't six—had he three? That's nothing to do with it; but of course you'll take his part. Poor women! A nice time they had with him, I dare say! And I've no doubt Mr Caudle, you'd like to follow Mr Milton's example: else you wouldn't read the stuff he wrote. But you don't use me as he treated the poor souls who married him. Poets, indeed! I'd make a law against any of 'em having wives, except upon paper; for goodness help the dear creatures tied to them! Like innocent moths lured by a candle! Talking of candles, you don't know that the lamp in the passage is split to bits? I say you don't—do you hear me, Mr Caudle? Won't you answer? Do you know where you are?—What? In the Garden of Eden? Are you? Then you've no business there at this time of night."

"And saying this," writes Caudle, "she scrambled from the bed, and put out the light."

From the New York Courier and Enquirer.

MR. AND MRS. CAUDLE IN THE HANDS OF THE POLICE.

Our foreign files bring sad intelligence for the delighted readers of Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures. We learn from our London papers that both Mrs. C. and her worse half have been arrested, examined before Mr. Jardine, of the London Police and Mrs. Caudle committed to prison, from which, moreover, (and this is the saddest part of the whole narrative), the entreaties of her beloved and affectionate husband could not obtain for her the poor boon of even a temporary release.

We may remark that sundry statements have gone the rounds of the press, to the effect that the lady, Mrs. Caudle had no substantive existence, but was merely a creature of the brain; and that her lectures were never actually delivered, as is alleged in the reports of these which have found their way into the public prints. It is needless to say to those who may read the following report, copied from the police department of the London Times of July 23, that nothing could be farther from the truth.

It seems that Mr. and Mrs. Caudle were brought before Mr. Jardine, one of the Justices, charged with "quarrelling and creating an obstruction" in a public street, at the hour of two o'clock at night, the hour when Mrs. Caudle certainly to preserve her reputation as a "powerful public speaker," should have been otherwise engaged.

"The case," says the Times, "had been deferred, at the request of Mr Caudle, who had a certificate from Mrs. Caudle's medical attendant, alleging that she was suffering from a sort of mental derangement, brought on by excessive irritability." The Times then goes on with its account of the proceedings, in the words following viz:—

On this occasion Mr Caudle ventured, in his wife's absence, to inform his worship that his good lady "was not always an angel;" and the proceedings of yesterday afforded a pretty conclusive demonstration of the fact.

Long before the case came on, Mrs Caudle was heard haranguing her unfortunate partner in the waiting-room attached to the court, it having been found impossible to keep her quiet. On entering the dock she indignantly ordered the gaoler not to lay his hands upon her, and before any witness had been examined, called upon the magistrate for permission to address the Court. It was quite amusing to observe the submissive but useless entreaties of Mrs Caudle to Mrs Caudle, during the inquiry, to keep the latter calm.

A constable of the F division stated that he saw Mrs Caudle, surrounded by several others, opposite a public house, having words with her