

"To repair the wrong I have done thee."

Agnes looked doubtfully, while he still clung convulsively to the gunnel of the boat.

"How wilt thou repair that wrong? Remember, I am now the preserver of thy life."

"By marriage!"

A momentary flush past over her colourless cheek.

"Swear, then, by heaven."

"By heaven!" gasped forth the drowning man.

The word was scarcely articulate as the extorted abjuration was choked by the gushing billows. Agnes drew the now almost exhausted Stanley into the boat, and rowed him in silence to the beach. She had put off in a small skiff* when she heard of his danger, in spite of the menacing storm. He spoke not a word during their painful progress, neither did he attempt to assist her, as he was in such a state of exhaustion that he could scarcely stir. He lay almost motionless at the bottom of the boat. The danger, however, was now past, and he soon recovered his self-possession. He was as reckless in security as fearful in peril, and a few minutes, therefore, restored him to his usual callousness of purpose. He soon began to meditate upon what he had pledged himself to perform, with bitter remorse of spirit. He shivered as well from the drenching rain, which still fell in torrents, as from the distracting reflections which crowded upon his excited mind. Could he fulfil his oath? Impossible! Could he evade it? He must—he had no alternative. Better, he thought, that Agnes should continue dishonoured than that he should be undone. If a balance of disadvantages were made, his would be the largest, were he madly to redeem his pledge. Besides, he could not do impossibilities. He could not convert wrong into right; and extorted oaths, as the nicest casuists agreed, possessed no moral obligation. The sanctions of moral equity were at least in his favour, although the literal requisitions of civil justice might be against him. Better, he thought, break an improper oath than add a culpable performance of it to the sin of having made it. The means, where they are sinful, can never sanctify the end. "I was wrong to swear," said he mentally, "but I repent, and will stop in time, before I add to the wrong an additional sin." This selfish sophistry, which, though unuttered, passed rapidly through Stanley's thoughts, at once determined him; and before he reached the landing, his mind was perfectly made up to consider an extorted oath as not binding, and consequently to leave the injured Agnes to her degradation and her misery.

How soon are the greatest benefits forgotten—the greatest, perhaps, the soonest!

ROMAN WEALTH.

THE opulence of some individuals among the Romans was astonishing. An estimate of the wealth of Crassus may be formed, when we know what Pompey possessed; who was not supposed to be nearly so rich. In order to remove Sextus, the son of Cneus Pompey, from Spain, M. Anthony and Lepidus agreed to a composition with him for the property which had been confiscated, and plundered from the father, after the battle of Pharsalia. They allowed him, after a reasonable valuation, to the amount of *five millions sterling*: his books, plate, and furniture, not being included in the estimate.

Pliny thus speaks of the wealth of some of the Roman Ladies:—

"I myself have seen Lollia Paulina, (late wife,

and after widow, to Caius Caligula, the Emperor,) when she was dressed, not in state, nor for any purpose of solemnity; but only when she was going to a wedding supper, and that not prepared by great persons; I have seen her, I say, so beset and bedecked, emeralds and pearls, disposed in rows, ranks, and with courses, one by another, round about the attire of her head, her cawl, her borders, her peruke of hair, bond-grace and chaplet; at her ears pendant; about her neck in a carcanet; upon her wrists in bracelets; and on her fingers in rings, that she glittered and shone like the sun as she went. The value of these ornaments, she esteemed and rated at four hundred thousand *Sestertii*, (*forty millions sterling*), and offered openly to prove it by her books of account and reckoning. Yet were these jewels, not the gifts of her prodigal husband; but the goods and ornaments from her own house, fallen to her by way of inheritance from her grandfather,* which treasure he had gotten together by the robbing and spoiling of whole provinces.

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"Two only pearls were there, together, the fairest and richest that ever have been known in the world; and those possessed at one time by Cleopatra, the last Queen of Egypt, which came into her hands by means of the great Kings of the East, and were left unto her by descent. This Princess, when M. Antonius had strained himself to do her all the pleasure he possibly could, and had feasted her most sumptuously, and had spared no cost; in the height of her pride, began to abase the expense and provision of Antony: and made no reckoning of his costly fare. When he, thereat demanded, how he could possibly go beyond this magnificence of his; she answered him, that she would spend on him at one supper an hundred thousand *Sestertii*, (*ten millions sterling*.) Antony, who would needs know how that might be, (for he thought it impossible,) laid a great wager with her about it; and she bound it again, and made it good. On the morrow, when this was to be tried, and the wager either to be won or lost, Cleopatra made Antony a supper which was sumptuous and royal enough; howbeit there was no service extraordinary seen upon the board: whereat Antony laughed her to scorn, and by way of mockery required to see a bill, with an account of the particulars. She again said that whatsoever had been served up already was but the overplus, above the rate and proportion in question; affirming still, that she would yet, in that supper, make up the full sum she had named. Yea, herself, alone, would eat above the sum named: and with that ordered the second service to be brought in.

"The servitors who waited at her trencher, (as they had in charge before,) set before her one cruet of sharp vinegar, the strength whereof is able to dissolve pearls. Now she had at her ears, hanging, these two most precious pearls; the singular and only jewels of the world, and even nature's wonder. As Antonius looked wistfully upon her, and expected what she would do, she took one of them from her ear, steeped it in the vinegar, and as soon as it liquified drank it off; and as she was about to do the same with the other, L. Plancius, the judge of the wager, laid his hand on it, and pronounced that Antonius had lost the wager. There was an end of one pearl; but, the fame of its fellow may go with it; for after this brave queen was taken prisoner, and deprived of her royal estate, that other pearl was cut in twain, that in memorial of that supper of theirs, it should remain unto posterity, hanging in the ears of Venus at Rome, in the Temple of Pantheon."

* On the western coast, boats are managed by women with considerable dexterity.

* M. Lollius.