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"PRINCIPLES AND MEASURES, AND MEN BY THEIR PRINCIPLES."

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FROM THE DIARY OF A LATE PHYSICIAN.

THE LAST CHAPTER.

THE DESTROYER.

(CONTINUED.)

It was a lovely Sunday morning in May 18—, on which, returning from an early visit to a patient in the neighborhood of Kensington, I ordered the coachman to walk his horses, that I might enjoy the balmy freshness of every thing around, and point out to my little son, who had accompanied me for the drive's sake, the beauty of Hyde Park, at that point leading off to Kensington Gardens. I could almost have imagined myself fifty miles off in the country. The sun shone serenely out of the blue expanse above upon the bright green shrubs and trees, yet cool and fresh with the morning dew. With the exception of one gentleman who had cantered past us a few minutes before, and a tidy old country-looking dame sitting on one of the benches to rest herself from a long walk to town, we encountered no one. My little chatterer was making some sagacious observation upon the height and number of the trees in Kensington Gardens, when a rumbling heavy noise indicated the approach of a vehicle at a rapid rate. It proved to be a chariot-and four, coming towards us in the direction of Cumberland Gate—tearing along as fast as the postillions could urge their horses. The side-blinds were drawn down, but those in front were up, and enabled me to see—Mrs. St. Helen and Captain Alverley! She was evidently violently agitated, her white dress seemed to have been put on in haste and disorder, her hair was dishevelled—she was wringing her hands, and weeping passionately. He was so absorbed with his attempts to pacify her, as not to have observed me. I drew my breath with difficulty for some moments, the shock of such a dreadful apparition had been so sudden. It seemed as though I had met Satan hurrying away with a fallen angel!

So, then, this was her ELOPEMENT that I had been fated, to see! Yes, the final step had been taken which separated that miserable and guilty being for ever from all that was honourable, virtuous, precious in life; which plunged her into infamy irretrievable;—and her husband—her children!—Fiend! thou *hadst* triumphed!

My exhiliration of spirits, occasioned by the beauty and calmness of the morning, instantly disappeared. It seemed as though a cloud darkened the heavens, and filled my soul with oppressive gloom. 'Papa!' exclaimed my little son, rousing me from the reverie into which I had fallen—'what are you thinking about? Are you sorry for that lady and gentleman? I wondor who they are! Why she was crying? Is she ill, do you think?' His questions at length attracted my attention, but I could not answer him, for he reminded me of little Arthur St. Helen, who was just about his age! Poor children! Innocent offspring of an infamous mother, what is to become of you? What dareful associations will ever hereafter hang around the name you bear!

About eleven o'clock I drove through —— Street, and on approaching Mrs. St. Helen's house, perceived indications, even in the street, of something unusual having happened. On drawing up at the door,—for I determined to call, if only to mention what I had seen,—I saw that there were several persons in the drawing-room, evidently agitated. The servant who opened the door seemed quite bewildered. I was requested to walk, up stairs as soon as he had taken up my name, and soon found myself in the drawing room, in the presence of Miss Churchill, General & Mrs. Ogilvie, the Earl and Countess of Hetheringham, and several other relatives and connexions of Colonel and Mrs. St. Helen. They were all evidently laboring under great excitement. Mrs. Ogilvie was perfectly frantic, walking to and fro, and wringing her hands, the picture of despair. I addaessed myself first to Miss Churchill, who stood nearest me She took my hand, but suddenly quitted it, overcome with her feelings, and turned away.

'My dear Countess,' said I, approaching the Countess of Hetheringham, who was sitting on the sofa, conversing with a lady, her handkerchief now and then raised towards her eyes, but her manner being still somewhat stately and composed—'I fear I can guess what has happened!' taking a chair opposite to her.

'*Eloped*, Doctor! she has, positively!—We are all thunderstruck,' she answered in a low tone. 'We were preparing to go to church when the painful news reached us. We came off hither, and have been here ever since. I have not told any of my daughters.'

'Her companion, I suppose'—

'Of course that wretch Captain Alverley. It is a pity he is to succeed to the title and estates. The Earl, by the way, talks of calling him out, and soforth. I'll take care he does no such thing, however, Don't you think General Ggilvie should do so, if any one?'

'How and when did she go?' I enquired affecting not to hear her last observations. 'I called to say that I suspected what has happened, since I met them this morning early in the Park'——

'Herbert!' exclaimed the Countess, in a less drawling tone than usual, addressing the Earl of Hetheringham, who was conversing with General Ogilvie and another gentleman, in a low earnest tone, at the further end of the room—'Doctor ——— says that he met the fugitives this morning in the Park.'

'Indeed!' exclaimed the Earl, earnestly, as they all three approached us. I told them what I had seen—and they listened in silence.

'Do you think we could mention the affair at the Horse-Guards!' enquired the Earl, turning to General Ogilvie. 'I have a great mind to call on the Commander-in-Chief tomorrow, and represent the infamous conduct of his *aide de-camp* towards a distinguished brother officer!' The general and his companion shook their heads, and the three presently walked away again to a distant part of the drawing-room, where they appeared to resume the conversation which the Countess's summons had interrupted.

'To tell you the truth, Doctor,' she continued, 'I am not much surprised at her turning out in this way'——

'Heavens, Countess! you astonish me'——

'Her father, you know,' contined the frigid Countess, 'was a very so-so kind of character; and gave her no sort of proper education, I have had my daughters educated in the strictest possible way—quite under my own eye? Mrs. St. Helen I tried to train, when she was with us for a short time—but it was useless. I soon saw it was in vain; and she did my daughters no good while she was with them, I assure you.'

'Why, surely, Countess, you never saw any thing improper in her conduct while she was under your care?'

'Oh, why, yes—I mean, but perhaps, exactly; but, to be sure, the girl's head was quite turned with the nonsense the men talked to her, as they do to every new girl—they thought her pretty?' She paused, but I only bowed.

' 'Tis a sad thing for *us*, Doctor, is it not?' resumed the Countess. 'The papers will take care to get hold of it, because of her relationship to *us*—it is really most unpleasant!' At this moment a servant entered, and whispered to Miss Churchill—and she, followed by Mrs. Ogilvie, presently quitted the room. 'I dare say that it is some message about the children,' said the Countess, in the same passionless tone and manner she had hitherto preserved—how I pity *them*, by the way! Poor things, it will be always flung in their teeth; they'll feel the greatest difficulty in settling in life—quite feel for them!'—sighing gently. 'I suppose, by the way, the Colonel will find no difficulty, if he should live to return to England, in obtaining a divorce? But then the exposure is so great!' How long the Countess would have gone on in this strain, I know not; I was heartily tired of it—it seemed, so to speak, utterley *out of tune*: so I rose and bowed, saying I wished to see Mrs. Ogilvie before I left, as she and Miss Churchill seemed extremely excited and hysterical.

'You will not mention this affair more than you can help, Doctor!' said the Countess, with great dignity.

'Rely on my prudence,' I replied carelessly, and quitted the room, perfectly wearied out and disgusted with the tone and spirit in which such a dreadful matter was discussed by one who ought to have felt a most painful interest in it. I directed a servant to show me to the room whither Mrs. Ogilvie and Miss Churchill had gone; & was, within a few moments, ushered into the boudoir. How my heart ached, as I hastily cast my eye over the numerous little elegancies scattered tastefully about the room; and especially when it fell upon a beautiful full-length crayon sketch of Mrs. St. Helen, which hung upon the wall!

'Oh, wretch!' exclaimed Mrs. Ogilvie, observing my eye fixed upon it; and walking hastily up to it, she stood for a few moments with her arms stretched out towards it; and then, burying her face in her hands, wept as if her heart would break. I rose and turned the picture with its face to the wall.

'My brother! my brave and noble hearted brother!' sobbed Mrs. Ogilvie, and sunk, overpowered with her feelings, into a seat.

'Where *is* my mamma?' kept continually enquiring little Arthur St. Helen, whom Miss Churchill was clasping affectionately in her arms, while her tears fell like rain upon his little head. He was the image of his beautiful—fallen mother.

'She's gone, gone, my love! You will never see her again!' she murmured.

'But I'll go and fetch her, if you will only tell me where she is.' Miss Churchill wept, but made no reply.

'Why do you turn my mamma's picture round in that way?' he enquired, looking at me with a haughty air—one that most strongly reminded me of his guilty mother. 'I love my mamma very dearly, and you shall not do so!' Miss Churchill kissed him with passionate fervour, but made no reply. Mrs. Ogilvie rose, and beckoning me to follow her, quitted the boudoir, and stepped into the room adjoining. 'Oh, Doctor! of all the dreadful scenes you have ever seen, can any thing equal this? I would rather—indeed I would—have followed both my brother and his wife to the grave than lived to see this day!—My dear—brave—fond—generous—betrayed brother—read it! read it, if you can! It has quite broken my heart!' and hastily snatching a letter from her bosom, she thrust it into my hands, telling me that Mrs. St. Helen had received it only late last night and in her hurried flight, which it had perhaps occasioned, had left it upon the floor of her dressing-room. The letter was from Colonel St. Helen to Mrs. St. Helen; and was quite damp—it might be with the tears of agony that had fallen from those who had read it. It was as follows:—

"MALTA, April 10th, 18—.

"My sweet Emma! Still two thousand envious miles are between us! Oh that I had an angel's wing to fly to you in a moment! But alas, that is what I have been wishing a thousand and a thousand times since I left you—four long years ago. My lovely Emma! idol of my heart, and shall we indeed be ere long re-united? Shall I again clasp my dear beautiful Emma in my arms—never, never again to be separated? Dearest! a thousand times the wealth of the Indies shall not tempt me again to quit you! * * * I come home a little before my regiment, being a little—mind, love! *only* a little, of an invalid. Don't be alarmed, my sweet Emma, for I assure you, upon my honor, that I am quite recovered. The fact is, that I received, in the battle of A——, an ugly wound in my left arm from a musket-ball, which confined me to a tent, and to my bed for nearly six weeks; and Lord —— in the kindest way, wrote to me to insist upon my returning to England for a year, in order to recruit. I came over land, and am rather fatigued with my journey. An important matter keeps me at Malta for a week; but in the very next ship I start for merry old England! * * And how have you been, my dearsst Emma? And how are Arthur and George? Why do you say so little about them, and about yourself? But I suppose you have got the common notion—that your letters are opened by others than those they are directed to!—How I have guessed what might be the features and expression of my little boys! I have never seen George!—is he really like me?—By the way, I have brought you some beautiful diamonds! I have almost beggared myself (till I arrive in England) to obtain them for my Emma. How I shall delight to see them upon you!

"Unless something extraordinary should happen, you will see me in about a week after you get this letter—it *may* be only a day or two after; and, my own Emma, I most particularly wish that you will be alone during the week immediately following your receipt of this letter—for I must have you all to myself when we meet—as the Scripture has it, 'with our joy a stranger intermeddleth not.' God bless you, my dearest, dearest Emma! and kiss the dear boys heartily for me. Your fond—doating husband,

"ARTHUR ST. HELEN.

I returned this letter to Mrs. Ogilvie in silence, who, with a heavy sigh, replaced it in her bosom.

'She must have read it,' said I after a pause.

'Yes,' she replied, with a shudder of disgust and horror, 'and if she felt herself guilty I wonder she survived it!'

'What arrangements have you made with respect to the children?' I enquired.

She replied, 'that she had already given directions for their removal to her house, where she should keep them till her brother's return;' trembling as she uttered the last word or two.

'I suppose you have heard some of the many painful rumors as to the conduct of Mrs. St. Helen latterly?' said I, in a low tone.

'Yes—oh yes—infamous woman! But the General and I have been travelling on the continent during the last six months, or he would have taken these poor children away from her contaminating presence, even by force, if necessary. I did frequently expostulate with her in the most urgent manner, but latterly she grew very haughty, and replied to me with great rudeness, even'——

'Alas, I fear her heart has been long corrupted.' She shook her head and sobbed. I mentioned the slip of paper I had picked up in my carriage.

'Oh, many, many worse things than that have come to our knowledge since we returned from the Continent! Her disgraceful conduct drove Miss Churchill from —— Street several months ago. Oh, the scenes even she has been compelled to witness! Is there *no* punishment for this vile—this abominable Alverley!'

'Can it be true, Mrs. Ogilvie, that the villain has even had the miserable meanness to borrow considerable sums of money from Mrs. St. Helen?'

'That also I have heard: that she has wasted the property of my poor betrayed brother, and their childsen, in order to supply his necessities at the gaming table; but I cannot go en! I shall go distracted!'

I ascertained that very late in the preceding night or rather at an early hour of the morning, Mrs. St. Helen had returned from Vauxhall, accompanied as usual by Captain Alverley; and immediately upon her enterinfi the house, the above letter from Colonel St. Helen was placed in her hands. Her guilty soul was thunderstruck at the sight of her husband's hand writing. Captain Alverley, who entered with her opened and read the letter; and would have taken it away with him to destroy it, had she not insisted so vehemently upon reading it, that he was forced to comply. She swooned before she had read half of the letter. All I could learn of what happened subsequently was, that Captain Alverley left about three o'clock, and returned in little more than an hour's time; that a travelllng carriage and four drew up at the door about five o'clock; but such was her agitation and illness, that it was not till nearly half past seven o'clock that Captain Alverley succeeded, after a vain attempt to induce her maid to accompany them, in carrying Mrs. St. Helen into the carriage, almost in a state of insensibility. He gave the sullen incredulous servants to understand that their mistress had been summoned off to meet Colonel St. Helen! She had not ventured into the room where her children were asleep, in blessed unconsciousness of the fearful scenes that were going forward.

During Monday the deserted little St. Helens, were removed, accompanied by Miss Churchill, to the residence of Mrs. Ogilvie. the General continuing in——Street to receive Colonel St. Helen, when he should arrive, and—in what way he best might—break to him the disasterous intelligence of his wife's infidelity and flight. As it was uncertain when and from what quarter Colonel St. Helen would reach the metropolis, it was of course impossible to anticipate or prevent his arrival at——street, even had such a measure been desirable. Up to Thursday he had not made his dreadful appearance. On the evening of that day, however, a post-chaise-and-four, covered with dust, rattted rapidly round the corner of—— Square, and in a few moments the reeking horses stood panting at the door of Colonel St. Helen's. Before either of the postillions could dismount, or the servant open the hall-door, or General Ogilvie, who was sitting in the dining-room make his appearance, the chase door opened from within, the steps thrust down, and forth sprung a gentleman in dusty travelling costume—his left arm in a sling—and rushed up to the door of the house. While his impatient hand was thundering with the knocker, the door was opened.

'Is Mrs. St. Helen'—he commenced in eager and joyful accents, which, however, suddenly ceased at the sight of the servant standing pale as death, trembling and silent.

'Why—what's the matter?' stammered Colonel St. Helen—for he of course it was.

'Ah, Ogilvie!' rushing towards the General, who having paused for an instant before presenting himself, now quitted the dining-room and hurried up to the startled Colonel.

'My dear St. Helen!' commenced the General, his agitation apparent. A mighty sigh burst from the swelling bosom of Colonel St. Helen as he suffered himself to be drawn into the dining-room.

What's all this?' he enquired, in a horse, hard whisper as General Ogilvie shut the door. He was for a moment tongue-tied at sight of the long dreaded apparation which now so suddenly stood before him. The Colonel's face became overspread with a deadly hue as he made the enquiry, and his right hand locked that of General Ogilvie in its rigid grasp.

'St. Helen, you must bear it like a man and a soldier,' at length commenced the General recovering himself. 'The chances of war.'——

'Is she dead?' gasped the Colonel without moving from where he stood, or relaxing his hold of General Ogilvie's hand.

'No,' replied the General, turning as pale as his companion.

'Then—what—in the name of God!—tell me' ——whispered Colonel St. Helen, his eyes almost starting out of their sockets while the drops of perspiration stood upon his forhead. At at a word spoken in a low tone by General Ogilvie the Colonel started as if had been stabbed, and then lay extended upon the floor. The General sprung to the bell, and shouted violently for assistance. The room was instantly almost filled with servants. One of them was despatched for me, another for the nearest surgeon. The latter arrived in a very few minutes, and I was in attendance within little less than a quarter of an hour, for the man, knowing my carriage, stopped it as I was entering the street in which I lived. I found Colonel St. Helen propped up in the bed in the arms of General Ogilvie—his coat and waistcoat and neck-handkerchief only had been removed, and his shirt collar thrown open. The heavy snorting sound that met my ear prepared me for the worst. Colonel St. Helen was in a fit apoplexy Within a minute or two after my entrance the jugular vein was opened—that in the arm had given no relief. Oh, that his infamous wife could have been by my side as I gazed upon the lamentable object before me! Here woman behold your handiwork!

He had been ever foremost in the fight—he had braved death in a thousand forms—the flag of victory had often waved gloriously over him—he had quitted the field with honourable wounds his grateful country welcomed her gallant disabled son—his affectionate wife, he thought, stretched fourth her eager arms to receive him—after months of agony, on the wings of love he had flown seven thousand long miles to be—blasted as he now lay before me!

Sad sights have I seen in my time, but when one so sad as this? My swelling heart overpowers me!—Poor Colonel, what can *my* art do for thee?

And thou; Alverley, come hither *thou* for a moment, slayer of the peace and honour of thy brave brother soldier!' quit for a moment the cockatrice, thy companion, to look upon this victim of your united treachery! Oh, out upon thee! thy pressence corrupts the air! *Down, down, to hell!* But no I rave—society will presently welcome you again, gay Alvertey! to her harlot bosom!

Though a large opening had been made in the jugular vein, through which the blood was flowing copously, no impression whatever seemed made, or likely to be made, upon the violence of the attack. I therefore recommended opening the turgid temporal artery—which was done—and a large blister to be applied to the nape of the neck and to the extremities—the usual means resorted to in violent apopletic seizures. I waited for upwards of an hour, and was then obliged to leave my unhappy, but perhaps happily unconscious patient, in apparently the same state in which I found him. I paid him another visit early in the morning—still he lay in extreme danger, having been bled twice during the night, but without any sensible effect. I willingly acceded to the General's desire for an immediate consultation with Sir ———, which accordingly took place about two o'clock.—The result was that we expressed a strong opinion that, unless a decided change took place within an hour or two, the attack would prove fatal. Why should I wish it, I thought—otherwise? What hopeless anguish would be spared him were he never to awake to a consciousness of the tremendous calamity that had befallen him! What could life henceforth be to *him?* How could his grievous wounds be healed, or even staunched? How could his wrongs be repaired, mitigated, or concealed? What bitter agony would the sight of his children even force into his heart. I thought of all this, and for a moment did not feel anxious that success should attend our strenuous efforts to save him. They succeeded, however, and in three or four days time it seemed that the unhappy sufferer would live to become acquainted with the full extent of his misery—to drain perhaps the cup of sorrow to the dregs I was in the room when his eyes gave almost their first look of returning consciousness. Oh, dreadful contrast to the gay and happy man I last saw him before his departure for India! His hair was now somewhat of an iron-grey hue—his complexion had become deeply bronzed by his constant exposure to the rays of an Indian sun. Despite, however, his present extreme exhaustion, and the sunken sallowness of his countenance, it was impossible not to perceive its superior air—the lineaments of that bold and resolute character for which Colonel St. Helen had ever been distinguished. But where was the wonted fire of those dark eyes that were now directed towards me drowsily and unconsciously? Was he then aware of the cause of his illness, or was the frightful truth breaking bitterly and slowly upon his reviving faculties? God grant that the latter might prove to be the case, or the consequences might be disastrous indeed!

For nearly a fortnight he lay in a kind of a lethargy, never once speaking, or apparently taking any notice of what was passing about him. Innumerable calls were made at his house, and enquiries concerning his health by a large circle of attached and sympathizing friends. His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief sent almost daily to know how he was going on. As soon as I thought it advisable, I intimated my anxious wish that he should have the advantage of a change of scene; and as soon as he was able to be removed, travel by easy stages to Cheltenham He simply shook his head, sorrowfully, at the same time raising his hand as if deprecating the mention of it. Of course I hesitated.—The next time I called, his female attendant met me on the stairs and gave me to understand that he had begged the proposal might not be renewed, as he was determined not to quit —— Street. Before leaving him that day, General Ogilvie followed me, and told me that the Colonel, who had not once made any allusion to what had taken place, suddenly enquired, in the course of the morning, in a faint tone, where his children were; and on being informed, expressed a wish to see them. After some hesitation I consented to their being brought the next day, for a few minutes only—the General having assured me that I could not overrate the fortitude of his suffering relative. 'Depend upon it he will bear the sight of them,' said the General 'better than you imagine, though certainly his nerves must have been much shaken.—How shall we arrange it? I should very much wish you to be present, Doctor, if you could contrive it.' I promised not only to be present, but that as I could easily arrange it, I would myself call and bring Mrs. Ogilvie and the children; and so it was decided. The next afternoon about three o'clock, on my return from visiting a patient in the neighborhood of General Ogilvie's residence, I called there but found Mrs. Ogilvie on the point of going out, not having received any intimation of our arrangement. She instantly however, agreed to accompany me. 'And how are your little nephews?' I enquired.

'Oh, they are very well she replied, with a sigh; 'a child's grief is not very deep or lasting; Arthur was as merry the next morning after leaving —— street, as if nothing had happened! Now and then, however, he asks where his mamma is, and when he shall go and see her, or when she will come here?—But when he sees me sometimes suddenly turn aside my head, to hide the tears that force themselves into my eyes, the poor child thinks I am angry with him, and kisses me, throwing his arms round my neck, and saying he will never ask to see his mamma again. He soon however forgets his promises,' added Mrs. Ogilvie with emotion. 'Here they are at present, as merry as they can be,' she continued, opening the folding doors, and walking into a room that looked upon a pleasant garden. 'Alas that they should ever hear of what has caused all our sorrow!'

The two little boys were romping about upon the grass plot in high glee, running after and rolling over one another. How like the elder one was to his wretched mother! The same bright blue eye, the same beautifully formed chin and mouth!—I dreaded the effect of his standing before his father! The younger child, George, as lively as a cricket and as brown as a berry, bore some little general resemblance to his father.

Oh, how could your mother look upon your little faces, and listen to your prattle, and feel your tiny arms embracing her, and forget that she had borne you! That you were the fruit of her womb! That your little lips had a thousand times drawn nuture from her maternal bosom! All the myriad of delicious agonies and ecstasies of a mother! Her generous, confiding, husband!—How could she, knowing all this, recollecting all this, deliberately surrender herself to destruction, and prefer the blighting companionship of a fiend—an adulterer!

'Now, Arthur and George,' said Mrs. Ogilvie, as we approached them in the garden—'you must be good childred; and go and get dressed, and I will take you both out'——

'What! a drive in the carriage? I love the ponies!' replied George, eagerly.

'Yes, my love, we are going to take you to see papa.'

'No, no, I shall not go there! I don't like my papa! He has taken my mama away!'

'No, child, do not talk such nonsence; papa has done no such thing. Poor papa is very ill,' replied Mrs. Ogilvie, tremuously 'and wishes to see his little boys.'

'I don't know my papa,' said the child, pouting, and sliding away from us. 'He's a very, very great way off—but if you'll let mamma go with us, then I don't care.'

'Your papa,' said I, observing Mrs. Ogilvie's emotion, 'does not know where your mamma is!' The child seemed quite puzzled at all this. 'Will you go with us, then?' he enquired, turning to Mrs. Ogilvie.

'Yes, love.'

'Isn't my papa a very great officer?' he enquired abruptly. 'He has killed—oh, such a number of people, I am told! Do you think he will like to see *us?*'

'Yes, indeed, Arthur—and he will love you very dearly!' replied Mrs. Ogilvie, with a faltering voice, leading her little nephews into the house. They were not long in being dressed, and we were presently on our way to town. I began to feel rather more apprehensive of the propriety of allowing the interview when I saw how his mother was running in Arthur's head Suppose he were bluntly to ask his father what had become of her? I whispered my apprehensions to Mrs. Ogilvie, and found them shared by her. She had not seen her brother since his return from India, and declared hersel perfectly incapable of bearing an interview with him at present, even were he able to receive her. As we turned into ——— Street, the children became very restless, and when we reached the house Arthur looked up at it apprehensively, and refused at first to quit the carriage. We succeeded, however, in inducing him to do so, and in pacifying him, and both the children were conducted into the library, where Mrs. Ogilvie undertook to occupy their attention while I repaired to the Colonel's bed-side to ascertain how he was. I found him very little changed from what I had seen him on the preceding day, except that there was an evident restlessness and anxiety about the eyes. Probably he was aware that his children had arrived. General Ogilvie, who rarely quitted the chamber of his suffering brother in law, sat in his accustomed chair beside. I sat down in the one usually placed for me; while my finger was on his pulse, and my eye on my watch, the Colonel said, in a low tone—'They are come, are they not?' I told him that they were below.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)