



# *THE* CRISIS

Winston Churchill

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# **The Crisis**

**Civil War Novel**

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AFTERWORD

# **BOOK I.**

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# CHAPTER I. WHICH DEALS WITH ORIGINS

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Faithfully to relate how Eliphalet Hopper came try St. Louis is to betray no secret. Mr. Hopper is wont to tell the story now, when his daughter-in-law is not by; and sometimes he tells it in her presence, for he is a shameless and determined old party who denies the divine right of Boston, and has taken again to chewing tobacco.

When Eliphalet came to town, his son's wife, Mrs. Samuel D. (or S. Dwyer as she is beginning to call herself), was not born. Gentlemen of Cavalier and Puritan descent had not yet begun to arrive at the Planters' House, to buy hunting shirts and broad rims, belts and bowies, and depart quietly for Kansas, there to indulge in that; most pleasurable of Anglo-Saxon pastimes, a free fight. Mr. Douglas had not thrown his bone of Local Sovereignty to the sleeping dogs of war.

To return to Eliphalet's arrival,—a picture which has much that is interesting in it. Behold the friendless boy he stands in the prow of the great steamboat 'Louisiana' of a scorching summer morning, and looks with something of a nameless disquiet on the chocolate waters of the Mississippi. There have been other sights, since passing Louisville, which might have disgusted a Massachusetts lad more. A certain deck on the 'Paducah', which took him as far as Cairo, was devoted to cattle—black cattle. Eliphalet possessed a fortunate temperament. The deck was dark, and the smell of the wretches confined there was worse than it should

have been. And the incessant weeping of some of the women was annoying, inasmuch as it drowned many of the profane communications of the overseer who was showing Eliphalet the sights. Then a fine-lined planter from down river had come in during the conversation, and paying no attention to the overseer's salute cursed them all into silence, and left.

Eliphalet had ambition, which is not a wholly undesirable quality. He began to wonder how it would feel to own a few of these valuable fellow-creatures. He reached out and touched lightly a young mulatto woman who sat beside him with an infant in her arms. The peculiar dumb expression on her face was lost on Eliphalet. The overseer had laughed coarsely.

"What, skeered on 'em?" said he. And seizing the girl by the cheek, gave it a cruel twinge that brought a cry out of her.

Eliphalet had reflected upon this incident after he had bid the overseer good-by at Cairo, and had seen that pitiful coffle piled aboard a steamer for New Orleans. And the result of his reflections was, that some day he would like to own slaves.

A dome of smoke like a mushroom hung over the city, visible from far down the river, motionless in the summer air. A long line of steamboats—white, patient animals—was tethered along the levee, and the Louisiana presently swung in her bow toward a gap in this line, where a mass of people was awaiting her arrival. Some invisible force lifted Eliphalet's eyes to the upper deck, where they rested, as if by appointment, on the trim figure of the young man in



command of the Louisiana. He was very young for the captain of a large New Orleans packet. When his lips moved, something happened. Once he raised his voice, and a negro stevedore rushed frantically aft, as if he had received the end of a lightning-bolt. Admiration burst from the passengers, and one man cried out Captain Brent's age—it was thirty-two.

Eliphalet snapped his teeth together. He was twenty-seven, and his ambition actually hurt him at such times. After the boat was fast to the landing stage he remained watching the captain, who was speaking a few parting words to some passengers of fashion. The body-servants were taking their luggage to the carriages. Mr. Hopper envied the captain his free and vigorous speech, his ready jokes, and his hearty laugh. All the rest he knew for his own—in times to come. The carriages, the trained servants, the obsequiousness of the humbler passengers. For of such is the Republic.

Then Eliphalet picked his way across the hot stones of the levee, pushing hither and thither in the rough crowd of river men; dodging the mules on the heavy drays, or making way for the carriages of the few people of importance who arrived on the boat. If any recollections of a cool, white farmhouse amongst barren New England hills disturbed his thoughts, this is not recorded. He gained the mouth of a street between the low houses which crowded on the broad river front. The black mud was thick under his feet from an overnight shower, and already steaming in the sun. The brick pavement was lumpy from much travel and near as dirty as the street. Here, too, were drays blocking the way,

and sweaty negro teamsters swinging cowhides over the mules. The smell of many wares poured through the open doors, mingling with the perspiration of the porters. On every side of him were busy clerks, with their suspenders much in evidence, and Eliphalet paused once or twice to listen to their talk. It was tinged with that dialect he had heard, since leaving Cincinnati.

Turning a corner, Eliphalet came abruptly upon a prophecy. A great drove of mules was charging down the gorge of the street, and straight at him. He dived into an entrance, and stood looking at the animals in startled wonder as they thundered by, flinging the mud over the pavements. A cursing lot of drovers on ragged horses made the rear guard.

Eliphalet mopped his brow. The mules seemed to have aroused in him some sense of his atomity, where the sight of the pillar of smoke and of the black cattle had failed. The feeling of a stranger in a strange land was upon him at last. A strange land, indeed! Could it be one with his native New England? Did Congress assemble from the Antipodes? Wasn't the great, ugly river and dirty city at the end of the earth, to be written about in Boston journals?

Turning in the doorway, he saw to his astonishment a great store, with high ceilings supported by columns. The door was stacked high with bales of dry goods. Beside him was a sign in gold lettering, "Carvel and Company, Wholesale Dry Goods." And lastly, looking down upon him with a quizzical expression, was a gentleman. There was no mistaking the gentleman. He was cool, which Eliphalet was not. And the fact is the more remarkable because the

gentleman was attired according to the fashion of the day for men of his age, in a black coat with a teal of ruffled shirt showing, and a heavy black stock around his collar. He had a white mustache, and a goatee, and white hair under his black felt hat. His face was long, his nose straight, and the sweetness of its smile had a strange effect upon Eliphalet, who stood on one foot.

“Well, sonny, scared of mules, are you?” The speech is a stately drawl very different from the nasal twang of Eliphalet's bringing up. “Reckon you don't come from anywhere round here?”

“No, sir,” said Eliphalet. “From Willesden, Massachusetts.”

“Come in on the 'Louisiana'?”

“Yes, sir.” But why this politeness?

The elderly gentleman lighted a cigar. The noise of the rushing mules had now become a distant roar, like a whirlwind which has swept by. But Eliphalet did not stir.

“Friends in town?” inquired the gentleman at length.

“No, sir,” sighed Mr. Hopper.

At this point of the conversation a crisp step sounded from behind and wonderful smile came again on the surface.

“Mornin', Colonel,” said a voice which made Eliphalet jump. And he swung around to perceive the young captain of the Louisiana.

“Why, Captain Lige,” cried the Colonel, without ceremony, “and how do you find yourself to-day, suh? A good trip from Orleans? We did not look for you so soon.”

“Tolluble, Colonel, tolluble,” said the young man, grasping the Colonel's hand. “Well, Colonel, I just called to say that I got the seventy bales of goods you wanted.”

“Ephum” cried the Colonel, diving toward a counter where glasses were set out,—a custom new to Eliphalet,—“Ephum, some of that very particular Colonel Crittenden sent me over from Kentucky last week.”

An old darkey, with hair as white as the Colonel's, appeared from behind the partition.

“I 'lowed you'd want it, Marse Comyn, when I seed de Cap'n comin',” said he, with the privilege of an old servant. Indeed, the bottle was beneath his arm.

The Colonel smiled.

“Hope you'se well, Cap'n,” said Ephum, as he drew the cork.

“Tolluble, Ephum,” replied the Captain. “But, Ephum—say, Ephum!”

“Yes, sah.”

“How's my little sweetheart, Ephum?”

“Bress your soul, sah,” said Ephum, his face falling perceptibly, “bress your soul, sah, Miss Jinny's done gone to Halcyondale, in Kaintuck, to see her grandma. Ole Ephum ain't de same nigger when she's away.”

The young Captain's face showed as much disappointment as the darkey's.

“Cuss it!” said he, strongly, “if that ain't too bad! I brought her a Creole doll from New Orleans, which Madame Claire said was dressed finer than any one she'd ever seen. All lace and French gewgaws, Colonel. But you'll send it to her?”

"That I will, Lige," said the Colonel, heartily. "And she shall write you the prettiest note of thanks you ever got."

"Bless her pretty face," cried the Captain. "Her health, Colonel! Here's a long life to Miss Virginia Carvel, and may she rule forever! How old did you say this was?" he asked, looking into the glass.

"Over half a century," said Colonel Carvel.

"If it came from the ruins of Pompeii," cried Captain Brent, "it might be worthy of her!"

"What an idiot you are about that child, Lige," said the Colonel, who was not hiding his pleasure. The Colonel could hide nothing. "You ruin her!"

The bluff young Captain put down his glass to laugh.

"Ruin her!" he exclaimed. "Her pa don't ruin her I eh, Ephum? Her pa don't ruin her!"

"Lawsy, Marse Lige, I reckon he's wuss'n any."

"Ephum," said the Colonel, pulling his goatee thoughtfully, "you're a damned impertinent nigger. I vow I'll sell you South one of these days. Have you taken that letter to Mr. Renault?" He winked at his friend as the old darkey faded into the darkness of the store, and continued: "Did I ever tell you about Wilson Peale's portrait of my grandmother, Dorothy Carvel, that I saw this summer at my brother Daniel's, in Pennsylvania? Jinny's going to look something like her, sir. Um! She was a fine woman. Black hair, though. Jinny's is brown, like her Ma's." The Colonel handed a cigar to Captain Brent, and lit one himself. "Daniel has a book my grandfather wrote, mostly about her. Lord, I remember her! She was the queen-bee of the family while she lived. I wish some of us had her spirit."

“Colonel,” remarked Captain Lige, “what's this I heard on the levee just now about your shootin' at a man named Babcock on the steps here?”

The Colonel became very grave. His face seemed to grow longer as he pulled his goatee.

“He was standing right where you are, sir,” he replied (Captain Lige moved), “and he proposed that I should buy his influence.”

“What did you do?”

Colonel Carvel laughed quietly at the recollection

“Shucks,” said he, “I just pushed him into the streets gave him a little start, and put a bullet past his ear, just to let the trash know the sound of it. Then Russell went down and bailed me out.”

The Captain shook with laughter. But Mr. Eliphalet Hopper's eyes were glued to the mild-mannered man who told the story, and his hair rose under his hat.

“By the way, Lige, how's that boy, Tato? Somehow after I let you have him on the 'Louisiana', I thought I'd made a mistake to let him run the river. Easter's afraid he'll lose the little religion she taught him.”

It was the Captain's turn to be grave.

“I tell you what, Colonel,” said he; “we have to have hands, of course. But somehow I wish this business of slavery had never been started!”

“Sir,” said the Colonel, with some force, “God made the sons of Ham the servants of Japheth's sons forever and forever.”

“Well, well, we won't quarrel about that, sir,” said Brent, quickly. “If they all treated slaves as you do, there wouldn't

be any cry from Boston-way. And as for me, I need hands. I shall see you again, Colonel."

"Take supper with me to-night, Lige," said Mr. Carvel. "I reckon you'll find it rather lonesome without Jinny."

"Awful lonesome," said the Captain. "But you'll show me her letters, won't you?"

He started out, and ran against Eliphalet.

"Hello!" he cried. "Who's this?"

"A young Yankee you landed here this morning, Lige," said the Colonel. "What do you think of him?"

"Humph!" exclaimed the Captain.

"He has no friends in town, and he is looking for employment. Isn't that so, sonny?" asked the Colonels kindly.

"Yes."

"Come, Lige, would you take him?" said Mr. Carvel.

The young Captain looked into Eliphalet's face. The dart that shot from his eyes was of an aggressive honesty; and Mr. Hopper's, after an attempt at defiance, were dropped.

"No," said the Captain.

"Why not, Lige?"

"Well, for one thing, he's been listening," said Captain Lige, as he departed.

Colonel Carvel began to hum softly to himself:—

"One said it was an owl, and the other he said  
nay,

One said it was a church with the steeple torn  
away,

Look a' there now!"

"I reckon you're a rank abolitionist," said he to Eliphalet, abruptly.

"I don't see any particular harm in keepin' slaves," Mr. Hopper replied, shifting to the other foot.

Whereupon the Colonel stretched his legs apart, seized his goatee, pulled his head down, and gazed at him for some time from under his eyebrows, so searchingly that the blood flew to Mr. Hopper's fleshy face. He mopped it with a dark-red handkerchief, stared at everything in the place save the gentleman in front of him, and wondered whether he had ever in his life been so uncomfortable. Then he smiled sheepishly, hated himself, and began to hate the Colonel.

"Ever hear of the Liberator?"

"No, sir," said Mr. Hopper.

"Where do you come from?" This was downright directness, from which there was no escape.

"Willesden, Massachusetts."

"Umph! And never heard of Mr. Garrison?"

"I've had to work all my life."

"What can you do, sonny?"

"I cal'late to sweep out a store. I have kept books," Mr. Hopper vouchsafed.

"Would you like work here?" asked the Colonel, kindly. The green eyes looked up swiftly, and down again.

"What'll you give me?"

The good man was surprised. "Well," said he, "seven dollars a week."

Many a time in after life had the Colonel reason to think over this scene. He was a man the singleness of whose



motives could not be questioned. The one and sufficient reason for giving work to a homeless boy, from the hated state of the Liberator, was charity. The Colonel had his moods, like many another worthy man.

The small specks on the horizon sometimes grow into the hugest of thunder clouds. And an act of charity, out of the wisdom of God, may produce on this earth either good or evil.

Eliphalet closed with the bargain. Ephum was called and told to lead the recruit to the presence of Mr. Hood, the manager. And he spent the remainder of a hot day checking invoices in the shipping entrance on Second Street.

It is not our place here to chronicle Eliphalet's faults. Whatever he may have been, he was not lazy. But he was an anomaly to the rest of the young men in the store, for those were days when political sentiments decided fervent loves or hatreds. In two days was Eliphalet's reputation for wisdom made. During that period he opened his mouth to speak but twice. The first was in answer to a pointless question of Mr. Barbo's (aetat 25), to the effect that he, Eliphalet Hopper, was a Pierce Democrat, who looked with complacency on the extension of slavery. This was wholly satisfactory, and saved the owner of these sentiments a broken head. The other time Eliphalet spoke was to ask Mr. Barbo to direct him to a boardinghouse.

"I reckon," Mr. Barbo reflected, "that you'll want one of them Congregational boarding-houses. We've got a heap of Yankees in the town, and they all flock together and pray together. I reckon you'd ruther go to Miss Crane's nor anywhere."

Forthwith to Miss Crane's Eliphalet went. And that lady, being a Greek herself, knew a Greek when she saw one. The kind-hearted Barbo lingered in the gathering darkness to witness the game which ensued, a game dear to all New Englanders, comical to Barbo. The two contestants calculated. Barbo reckoned, and put his money on his new-found fellow-clerk. Eliphalet, indeed, never showed to better advantage. The shyness he had used with the Colonel, and the taciturnity practised on his fellow-clerks, he slipped off like coat and waistcoat for the battle. The scene was in the front yard of the third house in Dorcas Row. Everybody knows where Dorcas Row was. Miss Crane, tall, with all the severity of side curls and bombazine, stood like a stone lioness at the gate. In the background, by the steps, the boarders sat, an interested group. Eliphalet girded up his loins, and sharpened his nasal twang to cope with hers. The preliminary sparring was an exchange of compliments, and deceived neither party. It seemed rather to heighten mutual respect.

"You be from Willesden, eh?" said Crane. "I calculate you know the Salters."

If the truth were known, this evidence of an apparent omniscience rather staggered Eliphalet. But training stood by him, and he showed no dismay. Yes, he knew the Salters, and had drawn many a load out of Hiram Salters' wood-lot to help pay for his schooling.

"Let me see," said Miss Crane, innocently; "who was it one of them Salters girls married, and lived across the way from the meetin'-house?"

"Spauldin'," was the prompt reply.

“Wal, I want t' know!” cried the spinster: “not Ezra Spauldin’?”

Eliphalet nodded. That nod was one of infinite shrewdness which commended itself to Miss Crane. These courtesies, far from making awkward the material discussion which followed; did not affect it in the least.

“So you want me to board you?” said she, as if in consternation.

Eliphalet calculated, if they could come to terms. And Mr. Barbo keyed himself to enjoyment.

“Single gentlemen,” said she, “pay as high as twelve dollars.” And she added that they had no cause to complain of her table.

Eliphalet said he guessed he'd have to go somewhere else. Upon this the lady vouchsafed the explanation that those gentlemen had high positions and rented her large rooms. Since Mr. Hopper was from Willesden and knew the Salters, she would be willing to take him for less. Eliphalet said bluntly he would give three and a half. Barbo gasped. This particular kind of courage was wholly beyond him.

Half an hour later Eliphalet carried his carpet-bag up three flights and put it down in a tiny bedroom under the eaves, still pulsing with heat waves. Here he was to live, and eat at Miss Crane's table for the consideration of four dollars a week.

Such is the story of the humble beginning of one substantial prop of the American Nation. And what a hackneyed story it is! How many other young men from the East have travelled across the mountains and floated down

the rivers to enter those strange cities of the West, the growth of which was like Jonah's gourd.

Two centuries before, when Charles Stuart walked out of a window in Whitehall Palace to die; when the great English race was in the throes of a Civil War; when the Stern and the Gay slew each other at Naseby and Marston Moor, two currents flowed across the Atlantic to the New World. Then the Stern men found the stern climate, and the Gay found the smiling climate.

After many years the streams began to move again, westward, ever westward. Over the ever blue mountains from the wonderland of Virginia into the greater wonderland of Kentucky. And through the marvels of the Inland Seas, and by white conestogas threading flat forests and floating over wide prairies, until the two tides met in a maelstrom as fierce as any in the great tawny torrent of the strange Father of Waters. A city founded by Pierre Laclede, a certain adventurous subject of Louis who dealt in furs, and who knew not Marly or Versailles, was to be the place of the mingling of the tides. After cycles of separation, Puritan and Cavalier united on this clay-bank in the Louisiana Purchase, and swept westward together—like the struggle of two great rivers when they meet the waters for a while were dangerous.

So Eliphalet was established, among the Puritans, at Miss Crane's. The dishes were to his taste. Brown bread and beans and pies were plentiful, for it was a land of plenty. All kinds of Puritans were there, and they attended Mr. Davitt's Congregational Church. And may it be added in justice to

Mr. Hopper, that he became not the least devout of the  
boarders.

## CHAPTER. II. THE MOLE

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For some years, while Stephen A. Douglas and Franklin Pierce and other gentlemen of prominence were playing at bowls on the United States of America; while Kansas was furnishing excitement free of charge to any citizen who loved sport, Mr. Eliphalet Hopper was at work like the industrious mole, underground. It is safe to affirm that Colonel Carvel forgot his new hand as soon as he had turned him over to Mr. Hood, the manager. As for Mr. Hopper, he was content. We can ill afford to dissect motives. Genius is willing to lay the foundations of her structure unobserved.

At first it was Mr. Barbo alone who perceived Eliphalet's greatness,—Mr. Barbo, whose opinions were so easily had that they counted for nothing. The other clerks, to say the least, found the newcomer uncompanionable. He had no time for skylarking, the heat of the day meant nothing to him, and he was never sleepy. He learned the stock as if by intuition, and such was his strict attention to business that Mr. Hood was heard to say, privately, he did not like the looks of it. A young man should have other interests. And then, although he would not hold it against him, he had heard that Mr. Hopper was a teacher in Mr. Davitt's Sunday School.

Because he did not discuss his ambitions at dinner with the other clerks in the side entry, it must not be thought that Eliphalet was without other interests. He was likewise too shrewd to be dragged into political discussions at the

boarding-house table. He listened imperturbably to the outbursts against the Border Ruffian, and smiled when Mr. Abner Reed, in an angry passion, asked him to declare whether or not he was a friend of the Divine Institution. After a while they forgot about him (all save Miss Crane), which was what Mr. Hopper of all things desired.

One other friend besides Miss Crane did Eliphalet take unto himself, wherein he showed much discrimination. This friend was none other than Mr. Davitt, minister for many years of the Congregational Church. For Mr. Davitt was a good man, zealous in his work, unpretentious, and kindly. More than once Eliphalet went to his home to tea, and was pressed to talk about himself and his home life. The minister and his wife were invariably astonished, after their guest was gone, at the meagre result of their inquiries.

If Love had ever entered such a discreet soul as that into which we are prying, he used a back entrance. Even Mr. Barbo's inquiries failed in the discovery of any young person with whom Eliphalet "kept company." Whatever the notions abroad concerning him, he was admittedly a model. There are many kinds of models. With some young ladies at the Sunday School, indeed, he had a distant bowing acquaintance. They spoke of him as the young man who knew the Bible as thoroughly as Mr. Davitt himself. The only time that Mr. Hopper was discovered showing embarrassment was when Mr. Davitt held his hand before them longer than necessary on the church steps. Mr. Hopper was not sentimental.

However fascinating the subject, I do not propose to make a whole book about Eliphalet. Yet sidelights on the life

of every great man are interesting. And there are a few incidents in his early career which have not gotten into the subscription biographical Encyclopaedias. In several of these volumes, to be sure, we may see steel engravings of him, true likenesses all. His was the type of face which is the glory of the steel engraving,—square and solid, as a cornerstone should be. The very clothes he wore were made for the steel engraving, stiff and wiry in texture, with sharp angles at the shoulders, and sombre in hue, as befit such grave creations.

Let us go back to a certain fine morning in the September of the year 1857, when Mr. Hopper had arrived, all unnoticed, at the age of two and thirty. Industry had told. He was now the manager's assistant; and, be it said in passing, knew more about the stock than Mr. Hood himself. On this particular morning, about nine o'clock, he was stacking bolts of woollen goods near that delectable counter where the Colonel was wont to regale his principal customers, when a vision appeared in the door. Visions were rare at Carvel & Company's. This one was followed by an old negress with leathery wrinkles, whose smile was joy incarnate. They entered the store, paused at the entrance to the Colonel's private office, and surveyed it with dismay.

“Clar t' goodness, Miss Jinny, yo' pa ain't heah! An' whah's Ephum, dat black good-fo'-nuthin'!”

Miracle number one,—Mr. Hopper stopped work and stared. The vision was searching the store with her eyes, and pouting.

“How mean of Pa!” she exclaimed, “when I took all this trouble to surprise him, not to be here! Where are they all?”



Where's Ephum? Where's Mr. Hood?"

The eyes lighted on Eliphalet. His blood was sluggish, but it could be made to beat faster. The ladies he had met at Miss Crane's were not of this description. As he came forward, embarrassment made him shamble, and for the first time in his life he was angrily conscious of a poor figure. Her first question dashed out the spark of his zeal.

"Oh," said she, "are you employed here?"

Thoughtless Virginia! You little know the man you have insulted by your haughty drawl.

"Yes."

"Then find Mr. Carvel, won't you, please? And tell him that his daughter has come from Kentucky, and is waiting for him."

"I callate Mr. Carvel won't be here this morning," said Eliphalet. He went back to the pile of dry goods, and began to work. But he was unable to meet the displeasure in her face.

"What is your name?" Miss Carvel demanded.

"Hopper."

"Then, Mr. Hopper, please find Ephum, or Mr. Hood."

Two more bolts were taken off the truck. Out of the corner of his eye he watched her, and she seemed very tall, like her father. She was taller than he, in fact.

"I ain't a servant, Miss Carvel," he said, with a meaning glance at the negress.

"Laws, Miss Jinny," cried she, "I may's 'ell find Ephum. I knows he's loafin' somewhar hereabouts. An' I ain't seed him dese five month." And she started for the back of the store.

“Mammy!”

The old woman stopped short. Eliphalet, electrified, looked up and instantly down again.

“You say you are employed by Mr. Carvel, and refuse to do what I ask?”

“I ain't a servant,” Mr. Hopper repeated doggedly. He felt that he was in the right,—and perhaps he was.

It was at this critical juncture in the proceedings that a young man stepped lightly into the store behind Miss Jinny. Mr. Hopper's eye was on him, and had taken in the details of his costume before realizing the import of his presence. He was perhaps twenty, and wore a coat that sprung in at the waist, and trousers of a light buff-color that gathered at the ankle and were very copious above. His features were of the straight type which has been called from time immemorial patrician. He had dark hair which escaped in waves from under his hat, and black eyes that snapped when they perceived Miss Virginia Carvel. At sight of her, indeed, the gold-headed cane stopped in its gyrations in midair.

“Why, Jinny!” he cried—“Jinny!”

Mr. Hopper would have sold his soul to have been in the young man's polished boots, to have worn his clothes, and to have been able to cry out to the young lady, “Why, Jinny!”

To Mr. Hopper's surprise, the young lady did not turn around. She stood perfectly still. But a red flush stole upon her cheek, and laughter was dancing in her eyes yet she did not move. The young man took a step forward, and then stood staring at her with such a comical expression of injury on his face as was too much for Miss Jinny's serenity. She

laughed. That laugh also struck minor chords upon Mr. Hopper's heart-strings.

But the young gentleman very properly grew angry.

"You've no right to treat me the way you do, Virginia," he cried. "Why didn't you let me know that you were coming home?" His tone was one of authority. "You didn't come from Kentucky alone!"

"I had plenty of attendance, I assure you," said Miss Carvel. "A governor, and a senator, and two charming young gentlemen from New Orleans as far as Cairo, where I found Captain Lige's boat. And Mr. Brinsmade brought me here to the store. I wanted to surprise Pa," she continued rapidly, to head off the young gentleman's expostulations. "How mean of him not to be here!"

"Allow me to escort you home," said he, with ceremony:

"Allow me to decline the honah, Mr. Colfax," she cried, imitating him. "I intend to wait here until Pa comes in."

Then Eliphalet knew that the young gentleman was Miss Virginia's first cousin. And it seemed to him that he had heard a rumor, amongst the clerks in the store; that she was to marry him one day.

"Where is Uncle Comyn?" demanded Mr. Colfax, swinging his cane with impatience.

Virginia looked hard at Mr. Hopper.

"I don't know," she said.

"Ephum!" shouted Mr. Colfax. "Ephum! Easters where the deuce is that good-for-nothing husband of yours?"

"I dunno, Marse Clarence. 'Spec he whah he oughtn't ter be."

Mr. Colfax spied the stooping figure of Eliphalet.

"Do you work here?" he demanded.

"I callate."

"What?"

"I callate to," responded Mr. Hopper again, without rising.

"Please find Mr. Hood," directed Mr. Colfax, with a wave of his cane, "and say that Miss Carvel is here—"

Whereupon Miss Carvel seated herself upon the edge of a bale and giggled, which did not have a soothing effect upon either of the young men. How abominably you were wont to behave in those days, Virginia.

"Just say that Mr. Colfax sent you," Clarence continued, with a note of irritation. "There's a good fellow."

Virginia laughed outright. Her cousin did not deign to look at her. His temper was slipping its leash.

"I wonder whether you hear me," he remarked.

No answer.

"Colonel Carvel hires you, doesn't he? He pays you wages, and the first time his daughter comes in here you refuse to do her a favor. By thunder, I'll see that you are dismissed."

Still Eliphalet gave him no manner of attention, but began marking the tags at the bottom of the pile.

It was at this unpropitious moment that Colonel Carvel walked into the store, and his daughter flew into his arms.

"Well, well," he said, kissing her, "thought you'd surprise me, eh, Jinny?"

"Oh, Pa," she cried, looking reproachfully up at his Face. "You knew—how mean of you!"

"I've been down on the Louisiana, where some inconsiderate man told me, or I should not have seen you

today. I was off to Alton. But what are these goings-on?" said the Colonel, staring at young Mr. Colfax, rigid as one of his own gamecocks. He was standing defiantly over the stooping figure of the assistant manager.

"Oh," said Virginia, indifferently, "it's only Clarence. He's so tiresome. He's always wanting to fight with somebody."

"What's the matter, Clarence?" asked the Colonel, with the mild unconcern which deceived so many of the undiscerning.

"This person, sir, refused to do a favor for your daughter. She told him, and I told him, to notify Mr. Hood that Miss Carvel was here, and he refused."

Mr. Hopper continued his occupation, which was absorbing. But he was listening.

Colonel Carvel pulled his goatee, and smiled.

"Clarence," said he, "I reckon I can run this establishment without any help from you and Jinny. I've been at it now for a good many years."

If Mr. Barbo had not been constitutionally unlucky, he might have perceived Mr. Hopper, before dark that evening, in conversation with Mr. Hood about a certain customer who lived up town, and presently leave the store by the side entrance. He walked as rapidly as his legs would carry him, for they were a trifle short for his body; and in due time, as the lamps were flickering, he arrived near Colonel Carvel's large double residence, on Tenth and Locust streets. Then he walked slowly along Tenth, his eyes lifted to the tall, curtained windows. Now and anon they scanned passers-by for a chance acquaintance.

Mr. Hopper walked around the block, arriving again opposite the Carvel house, and beside Mr. Renault's, which was across from it. Eliphalet had inherited the principle of mathematical chances. It is a fact that the discreet sometimes take chances. Towards the back of Mr. Renault's residence, a wide area was sunk to the depth of a tall man, which was apparently used for the purpose of getting coal and wood into the cellar. Mr. Hopper swept the neighborhood with a glance. The coast was clear, and he dropped into the area.

Although the evening was chill, at first Mr. Hopper perspired very freely. He crouched in the area while the steps of pedestrians beat above his head, and took no thought but of escape. At last, however, he grew cooler, removed his hat, and peeped over the stone coping. Colonel Carvel's house—her house—was now ablaze with lights, and the shades not yet drawn. There was the dining room, where the negro butler was moving about the table; and the pantry, where the butler went occasionally; and the kitchen, with black figures moving about. But upstairs on the two streets was the sitting room. The straight figure of the Colonel passed across the light. He held a newspaper in his hand. Suddenly, full in the window, he stopped and flung away the paper. A graceful shadow slipped across the wall. Virginia laid her hands on his shoulders, and he stooped to kiss her. Now they sat between the curtains, she on the arm of his chair and leaning on him, together looking out of the window.

How long this lasted Mr. Hopper could not say. Even the wise forget themselves. But all at once a wagon backed and