

# The Bohemian

By Fitz-James O'Brien

I was launched into the world when I reached twenty-one, at which epoch I found myself in possession of health, strength, physical beauty, and boundless ambition. I was poor. My father had been an unsuccessful operator in Wall Street. Had passed through the various vicissitudes of fortune common to his profession, and ended by being left a widower, with barely enough to live upon and give me a collegiate education. As I was aware what strenuous exertions he had made to accomplish this last; how he had pinched himself in a thousand ways to endow me with intellectual capital, I immediately felt, on leaving college, the necessity of burdening him no longer. The desire for riches entirely possessed me. I had no dream but wealth. Like those poor wretches so lately starving on the Darien Isthmus, who used to beguile their hunger with imaginary banquets, I consoled my pangs of present poverty with visions of boundless treasure. A friend of mine, who was paying teller in one of our New York banks, once took me into the vaults when he was engaged in depositing his specie, and as I beheld the golden coins falling in yellow streams from his hands, a strange madness seemed to possess me. I became from that moment a prey to a morbid disorder, which, if we had a psychological pathology, might be classed as the *mania aurabilis*. I literally saw gold. Nothing but gold. Walking out in the country my eyes involuntarily sought the ground, as if hoping to pierce the sod and discover some hidden treasure. Coming home late at nights, through the silent New York streets, every stray piece of mud, or loose fragment of paper that lay upon the side-walk, was carefully scanned, for, in spite of my better reason, I cherished the vague hope that some time or other I should light upon a splendid treasure, which, for want of a better claimant, would remain mine. It seemed, in shod, as if one of those gold gnomes of the Hartz Mountains had taken possession of me, and ruled me like a master. I dreamed such dreams as would cast Sinbad's valley of diamonds into the shade. The very sunlight itself never shone upon me but the wish crossed my brain that I could solidify its splendid beams and coin them into "eagles."

I was by profession a lawyer. Like the rest of my fraternity I had my little office, a small room on the fourth story in Nassau Street, with magnificent painted tin labels announcing my rank and title all the way up the stairs. Despite the fact that I had nine of these labels fixed to the walls, and in every available corner, my legal threshold was virgin. No client gladdened my sight. Many and many a time my heart beat as I heard heavy footsteps ascending the stairs, but the half-dawning hope of employment was speedily crushed. They always stopped on the floor below, where a disgusting conveyancer, with a large practice, had put up his shingle. So I passed day after day alone with my "Code" and "Blackstone," and my "Chitty," writing articles for the magazines on legal-looking paper—so that in case a client entered he might imagine I was engaged at my profession—by which I earned a scanty and precarious subsistence.

I was, of course, at this period in love. That a young man should be very ambitious, very poor, and very unhappy, and not in love, would be too glaring a contradiction of the usual course of worldly destinies. I was, therefore, entirely and hopelessly in love. My life was divided between two passions. The desire of becoming wealthy, and my love for Annie Deane.

Annie was an author's daughter. Need I add, after this statement, that she was as poor as myself? This was the only point in my theory of the conquest of wealth on which I contradicted myself. To be consistent I should have devoted myself to some of those young ladies, about

whom it is whispered before you are introduced, that “she will have a hundred and fifty thousand dollars.” But though I had made up my mind to devote my life to the acquisition of wealth, and though I verily believe I might have parted with my soul for the same end, I had yet too much of the natural man in my composition to sacrifice my heart.

Annie Deane was, however, such a girl as to make this infraction of my theory of life less remarkable. She was, indeed, marvelously beautiful. Not of that insipid style of beauty which one sees in Greek statues and London annuals. Her nose did *not* form a grand line with her forehead. Her mouth would scarcely have been claimed by Cupid as his bow; but then, her upper lip was so short, and the teeth within so pearly. The brow was so white and full, and the throat so round, slender, and pliant; and when, above all this, a pair of wondrous dark-gray eyes reigned in supreme and tender beauty, I felt that a portion of the wealth of my life had already been accomplished when I gained the love of Annie Deane.

Our love affair ran as smoothly as if the old adage never existed. Probably for the reason that there was no goal in sight, we were altogether too poor to dream of marriage as yet, and there did not seem very much probability of my achieving the success necessary to the fulfillment of our schemes. Annie’s constitutional delicacy, however, was a source of some uneasiness to me. She evidently possessed a very highly-strung nervous organization, and was, to the extremest degree, what might be termed *impressionable*. The slightest change in the weather affected her strangely. Certain atmospheres appeared to possess an influence over her for the better or the worse; but it was in connection with social instincts, so to speak, that the peculiarities of her organism were so strikingly developed. These instincts, for I can not call them any thing else, guided her altogether in her choice of acquaintances. She was accustomed to declare that by merely touching a person’s hand, she could tell whether she would like or dislike them. Upon the entrance of certain persons into a room where she was, even if she had never seen them before, her frame would sink and shiver like a dying flower, and she would not recover until they had left the apartment. For these strange affections she could not herself account, and they on more than one occasion were the source of very bitter annoyances to herself and her parents.

Well, things were in this state when one day, in the early part of June, I was sitting alone in my little office. The beginning of a story which I was writing for Harper’s lay upon the table. The title was elaborately written out at the top of the page, but it seemed as if I had stuck in the middle of the second paragraph. In the first—for it was an historical tale after the most approved model—I had described the month, the time of day, and the setting sun. In the second I introduced my three horsemen, who were riding slowly down a hill. The nose of the first and elder horseman, however, upset me. I could not for the life of me determine whether it was to be aquiline or Roman.

While I was debating this important point, and swaying between a multitude of suggestions, there came a sharp, decisive knock at my door. I think if the knock had come upon the nose about which I was thinking, or on my own, I could scarcely be more surprised. “A client!” I cried to myself. “Huzza! the gods have at last laid on a pipe from Pactolus for my especial benefit.” In reality, between ourselves, I did not say any thing half so good, but the exclamation as I have written it will convey some idea at the vague exultation that filled my soul when I heard that knock.

“Come in!” I cried, when I had reached down a Chitty, and concealed my story under a second-hand brief which I had borrowed from a friend in the profession. “Come in!” and I arranged myself in a studious and absorbed attitude.

The door opened and my visitor entered. I had a sort of instinct that he was no client from the first moment. Rich men—and who but a rich man goes to law—may sometimes be seedy in their attire, but it is always a peculiar and respectable seediness. The air of wealth is visible, I know not by what magic, beneath the most threadbare coat. You see at a glance that the man who wears it might, if he chose, be clad in fine linen. The seediness of the poor man is, on the other hand, equally unmistakable. You seem to discern at a glance that his coat is poor from necessity. My visitor it was easy to perceive was of this latter class. My hopes of profit sank at the sight of his pale, unshorn face—his old shapeless boots—his shabby Kossuth hat—his over-coat shining with long wear, which, though buttoned, I could see no longer merited its name, for it was plain that no other coat lurked beneath it. Withal this man had an air of conscious power as he entered. You could see that he had nothing in his pockets, but then he looked as if he had a great deal in his brain.

He saluted me with a sort of careless respect as he entered. I bowed in return, and offered him the other chair. I had but two.

“Can I do any thing for you, Sir?” I inquired blandly, still clinging to the hope of clientage.

“Yes,” said he, shortly; “I never make purposeless visits.”

“Hem! If you will be so kind as to state your case”—for his rudeness rather shook my faith in his poverty—“I will give it my best attention.”

“I’ve no doubt of that, Mr. Cranstoun,” he replied; “for you are as much interested in it as I am.”

“Indeed!” I exclaimed, not without some surprise and much interest at this sudden disclosure. “To whom have I the honor of speaking, then?”

“My name is Philip Brann.”

“Brann?—Brann? A resident of this city?”

“No. I am by birth an Englishman, but I never reside any where.”

“Oh! you are a commercial agent, then, perhaps?”

“I am a Bohemian!”

“A what?”

“A Bohemian,” he repeated, coolly removing the papers with which I had concealed my magazine story, and glancing over the commencement; you see, my habits are easy.

“I see it perfectly, Sir,” I answered, indignantly.

“When I say that I am a Bohemian, I do not wish you to understand that I am a Zingaro. I don’t steal chickens, tell fortunes, or live in a camp. I am a social Bohemian, and fly at higher game.”

“But what has all this got to do with me?” I asked, sharply; for I was not a little provoked at the disappointment I experienced in the fellow’s not having turned out to be a client.

“Much. It is necessary that you should know something about me before you do that which you will do.”

“Oh, I am to do something, then!”

“Certainly. Have you read Henri Murger’s ‘*Scènes de la Vie de Bohême*?’”

“Yes.”

“Well, then, you can comprehend my life. I am clever, learned, witty, and tolerably good looking. I can write brilliant magazine articles”—here his eye rested contemptuously on my historical tale—“I can paint pictures, and, what is more, sell the pictures I paint. I can compose songs, make comedies, and captivate women.

“On my word, Sir, you have a choice of professions,” I said, sarcastically; for the scorn with which the Bohemian had eyed my story humiliated me.

“That’s it,” he answered; “I don’t want a profession. I could make plenty of money if I chose to work, but I don’t choose to work. I will never work. I have a contempt for labor.”

“Probably you despise money equally,” I replied, with a sneer.

“No, I don’t. To acquire money without trouble is the great object of my life, as to acquire it in any way, or by any means, is the great object of yours.

“And pray, Sir, how do you know that I have any such object?” I asked, in a haughty tone.

“Oh, I know it. You dream only of wealth. You intend to try and obtain it by industry. You will never succeed.”

“Your prophecies, Sir, are more dogmatical than pleasant.”

“Don’t be angry,” he replied, smiling at my frowns. “You shall be wealthy. I can show you the road to wealth. We will follow it together!”

The sublime assurance of this man astounded me. His glance, penetrating and vivid, seemed to pierce into my very heart. A strange and uncontrollable interest in him and his plans filled my breast. I burned to know more.

“What is your proposal?” I asked, severely; for a thought at the moment flashed across me that some unlawful scheme might be the aim of this singular being.

“You need not be alarmed,” he answered, as if reading my thoughts. “The road I wish to lead you is an honest one. I am too wise a man ever to become a criminal.”

“Then, Mr. Philip Brann, if you will explain your plans, I shall feel more assured on that point.”

“Well, in the first place,” he began, crossing his legs and taking a cigar out of a bundle that lay in one of the pigeon-holes of my desk, “in the first place, you must introduce me to the young lady to whom you are engaged, Miss Annie Deane.”

“Sir!” I exclaimed, starting to my feet, and quivering with indignation at such a proposal; “what do you mean? Do you think it likely that I would introduce to a young lady in whom I am interested a man whom I never saw before to-day, and who has voluntarily confessed to being a vagabond? Sir, in spite of your universal acquirements, I think Providence forgot to endow you with sense.”

“I’ll trouble you for one of those matches. Thank you. So you refuse to introduce me! I knew you would. But I also know that ten minutes from this time you will be very glad to do it. Look at my eyes!”

The oddity of this request, and the calm assurance with which it was made, were too much for me. In spite of my anger, I burst into a fit of loud laughter. He waited patiently until my mirth had subsided.

“You need not laugh,” he resumed; “I am perfectly serious. Look at my eyes attentively, and tell me if you see any thing strange in them.”

At such a proposition from any other man, I should have taken for granted that he was mocking me, and kicked him down stairs. This Bohemian, however, had an earnestness of manner that staggered me. I became serious, and I did look at his eyes.

They were certainly very singular eyes. The most singular eyes that I had ever beheld. They were long, gray, and of a very deep hue. Their steadiness was wonderful. They never moved. One might fancy that they were gazing into the depths of one of those Italian lakes on an evening when the waters are so calm as to seem solid. But it was the interior of these organs—if I may so speak—that was so marvelous. As I gazed, I seemed to behold strange things passing in the deep gray distance which seemed to stretch infinitely away. I could have sworn that I saw figures moving, and landscapes wonderfully real. My gaze seemed to be fastened to his by some

inscrutable power; and the outer world gradually passing off like a cloud, left me literally living in that phantom region which I beheld in those mysterious eyes.

I was aroused from this curious lethargy by the Bohemian's voice. It seemed to me at first as if muffled by distance, and sounded drowsily on my ear. I made a powerful effort and recalled my senses, which seemed to be wandering in some far-off places.

"You are more easily affected than I imagined," remarked Brann, as I stared heavily at him with a half-stupefied air.

"What have you done? What is this lethargy that I feel upon me?" I stammered out.

"Ah! you believe now," replied Brann, coldly; "I thought you would. Did you observe nothing strange in my eyes?"

"Yes. I saw landscapes, and figures, and many strange things. I almost thought I could distinguish Miss—Miss—Deane!"

"Well, it is not improbable. People can behold whatever they wish in my eyes.

"But will you not explain? I no longer doubt the fact that you are possessed of extraordinary powers, but I must know more of you. Why do you wish to be introduced to Miss Deane?"

"Listen to me, Cranstoun," answered the Bohemian, placing his hand on my shoulder; "I do not wish you to enter into any blindfold compact. I will explain all my views to you; for though I have learned to trust no man, I know you can not avail yourself of any information I may give you without my assistance."

"So much the better," said I; "for then you will not suspect me."

"As you have seen," continued the Bohemian, "I possess some remarkable powers—the origin, the causes of these endowments, I do not care to investigate. The scientific men of France and Germany have wearied themselves in reducing the psychological phenomena of which I am a practical illustration to a system. They have failed. An arbitrary nomenclature, and a few interesting and suggestive experiments made by Reichenbach, are all the results of years of the intellectual toil of our greatest minds. As you will have guessed by this time, I am what is vulgarly called 'a Mesmerist.' I can throw people into trances, deaden the nervous susceptibilities, and do a thousand things by which, if I chose to turn exhibitor, I could realize a fortune. But while possessing those qualities which exhibit merely a commonplace superiority of psychical force, and which are generally to be found in men of a highly sympathetic organization, I yet can boast of unique powers such as I have never known to be granted to another being besides myself. What these powers are I have now no need to inform you. You will very soon behold them practically illustrated.

"Now, to come to my objects. Like you, I am ambitious, but I have, unlike you, a constitutional objection to labor. It is sacrilege to expect men with minds like yours and mine to work. Why should we—who are expressly and evidently created by Nature to enjoy—why should we, with our delicate tastes, our refined susceptibilities, our highly-wrought organizations, spend our lives in ministering to the enjoyment of others? In short, my friend, I do not wish to row the boat in the great voyage in life. I prefer sitting at the stern, with purple awnings and ivory couches around me, and my hand upon the golden helm. I wish to achieve fortune at a single stroke. With your assistance I can do it. You will join me!"

"Under certain conditions."

I was not yet entirely carried away by the earnest eloquence of this strange being.

"I will grant what conditions you like," he continued, fervently. "Above all, I will set your mind at rest by swearing to you, whatever may be my power, never in any way to interfere between you and the young girl whom you love. I will respect her as I would a sister."

This last promise cleared away many of my doubts. The history which this man gave of himself, and the calm manner with which he asserted his wondrous power over women, I confess rendered me somewhat cautious about introducing him to Annie. His air was, however, now so frank and manly; he seemed to be so entirely absorbed by his one idea of wealth, that I had no hesitation in declaring to him that I accepted his strange proposals.

“Good!” he exclaimed. “You are, I see, a man of resolution. We will succeed. I will now let you into my plans. Your *fiancée*, Miss Annie Deane, is a *clairvoyante* of the first water. I saw her the other day at the Academy of Design. I stood near her as she examined a picture, and my physiognomical and psychological knowledge enabled me to ascertain beyond a doubt that her organization was the most nervous and sympathetic I had ever met. It is to her pure and piercing instincts that we will owe our success.”

Without regarding my gestures of astonishment and alarm, he continued:

“You must know that this so-called science of Mesmerism is in its infancy. Its professors are, for the most part, incapables, its pupils credulous fools. As a proof of this, endeavor to recall, if you can, any authentic instance in which this science has been put to any practical use. Have these mesmeric professors and their instruments, ever been able to predict or foresee the rise of stocks, the course of political events, the approaches of disaster. Never, my friend, save in the novels of Alexandre Dumas and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. The reason of this is very simple. The professors were limited in their power, and the *somnambules* limited in their susceptibilities. When two such people as Miss Deane and myself labor together, every thing is possible!”

“Oh! I see. You propose to operate in the stocks. My dear Sir, you are mad. Where is the money?”

“Bah! who said any thing about operating in stocks? That involves labor and an office. I can afford neither. No, Cranstoun, we will take a shorter road to wealth than that. A few hours’ exertion are all we need to make us *millionaires*.”

“For Heaven’s sake explain! I am wearied with curiosity deferred.”

“It is thus: This island and its vicinity abounds in concealed treasure. Much has been deposited by the early Dutch settlers during their wars with the Indians. Captain Kyd and other buccaneers have made numberless *cachés* containing their splendid spoils, which a violent death prevented their ever reclaiming. Poor Poe, you know, who was a Bohemian, like myself, made a story on the tradition, but, poor fellow! *he* only dug up his treasure on paper. There was also a considerable quantity of plate, jewels, and coin concealed by the inhabitants of New York and the neighborhood during the war with England. You may wonder at my asserting this so confidently. Let it suffice for you that I know it to be so. It is my intention to discover some of this treasure.”

Having calmly made this announcement, he folded his arms and gazed at me with the air of a god prepared to receive the ovations of his worshipers.

“How is this to be accomplished?” I inquired earnestly, for I had begun to put implicit faith in this man, who seemed equally gifted and audacious.

“There are two ways by which we can arrive at our desires. The first is by the command of that power common to *somnambules*, who, having their faculties concentrated on a certain object during the magnetic trance, become possessed of the power of inwardly beholding and verbally describing it, as well as the locality where it is situated. The other is peculiar to myself, and as you have seen, consists in rendering my eyes a species of *camera obscura* to the *clairvoyante*, in which she vividly perceives all that we would desire. This mode I have greater faith in than in any other, and I believe that our success will be found there.”

“How is it,” I inquired, “that you have not before put this wondrous power to a like use? Why did you not enrich yourself long since through this means?”

“Because I have never been able to find a *somnambule* sufficiently impressionable to be reliable in her evidence. I have tried many, but they have all deceived me. You confess to having beheld certain shadowy forms in my eyes, but you could not define them distinctly. The reason is simply that your magnetic organization was not perfect. This faculty of mine, which has so much astonished you, is nothing new. It is practiced by the Egyptians, who use a small glass mirror where I use my eyes. The testimony of M. Leon Laborde, who practiced the art himself, Lord Prudhoe, and a host of other witnesses have recorded their experience of the truth of the science which I preach. However, I need discourse no further on it. I will prove to you its verity. Now that you have questioned me sufficiently, will you introduce me to your lady-love, Mr. Henry Cranstoun?”

“And will you promise me, Mr. Philip Brann, on your honor as a man, that you will respect my relations with that lady?”

“I promise, upon my honor!”

“Then, I yield. When shall it be?”

“To-night. I hate delays.”

“This evening, then, I will meet you at the Astor House, and we will go together to Mr. Deane’s house.”

That night, accompanied by my new friend, the Bohemian, I knocked at the door of Mr. Deane’s house in Amity Place. A modest neighborhood fit for a man who earned his living by writing novels for cheap publishers, and correspondence for Sunday newspapers. Annie was, as usual, in the sitting-room on the first floor, and the lamps had not yet been lighted, so that the apartment seemed filled with a dull gloom as we entered.

“Annie dear,” said I, as she ran to meet me, “let me present to you my particular friend, Mr. Philip Brann, whom I have brought with me for a special purpose, which I will presently explain.”

She did not reply.

Piqued by this strange silence, and feeling distressed about the Bohemian, who stood calmly upright with a faint smile on his lips, I repeated my introduction rather sharply.

“Annie,” I reiterated, “you could not have heard me. I am anxious to introduce to you my friend, Mr. Brann.”

“I heard you,” she answered, in a low voice, catching at my coat as if to support herself, “but I feel very ill.”

“Good Heavens! what’s the matter, darling? Let me get you a glass of wine, or water.”

“Do not be alarmed,” said the Bohemian, arresting my meditated rush to the door, “I understand Miss Deane’s indisposition thoroughly. If she will permit me, I will relieve her at once.”

A low murmur of assent seemed to break involuntarily from Annie’s lips. The Bohemian led her calmly to an arm-chair near the window, held her hands in his for a few moments, and spoke a few words to her in a low tone. In less than a minute she declared herself quite recovered.

“It was you who caused my illness,” she said to him, in a tone whose vivacity contrasted strangely with her previous languor. “I felt your presence in the room like a terrible electrical shock.”

“And I have cured what I caused,” answered the Bohemian; “you are very sensitive to magnetic impressions. So much the better.”

“Why so much the better?” she asked anxiously.

“Mr. Cranstoun will explain,” replied Brann carelessly; and, with a slight bow, he moved to another part of the dusky room, leaving Annie and myself together.

“Who is this Mr. Brann, Henry?” asked Annie, as soon as the Bohemian was out of earshot. “His presence affects me strangely.”

“He is a strange person, who possesses wonderful powers,” I answered; “he is going to be of great service to us, Annie!”

“Indeed! how so?”

I then related to her what had passed between the Bohemian and myself at my office, and explained his object in coming hither on this evening. I painted in glowing colors the magnificent future that opened for her and myself, if his scheme should prove successful, and ended by entreating her, for my sake, to afford the Bohemian every facility for arriving at the goal of his desires.

As I finished, I discovered that Annie was trembling violently. I caught her hand in mine. It was icy cold, and quivered with a sort of agitated and intermittent tremor.

“Oh, Henry!” she exclaimed, “I feel a singular presentiment that seems to warn me against this thing. Let us rest content in our poverty. Have a true heart, and learn to labor and to wait. You will be rich in time; and then we will live happily together, secure in the consciousness that our means have been acquired by honest industry. I fear those secret treasure-seekings.”

“What nonsense!” I cried; “these are a timid girl’s fears. It would be folly to pine patiently for years in poverty when we can achieve wealth at a stroke. The sooner we are rich the sooner we will be united, and to postpone that moment would be to make me almost doubt your love. Let us try this man’s power. There will be nothing lost if he fails.”

“Do with me as you will, Henry,” she answered, “I will obey you in all things; only I can not help feeling a vague terror that seems to forbode misfortune.”

I laughed and bade her be of good cheer, and rang for lights in order that the experiment might be commenced at once. We three were alone. Mrs. Deane was on a visit at Philadelphia; Mr. Deane was occupied with his literary labors in another room, so that we had every thing necessary to insure the quiet which the Bohemian insisted should reign during his experiments.

The Bohemian did not magnetize in the common way with passes and manipulations. He sat a little in the shade, with his back to the strong glare of the chandeliers, while Annie sat opposite to him, looking full in his face. I sat at a little distance at a small table, with a pencil and note-book, with which I was preparing to register such revelations as our *clairvoyante* should make.

The Bohemian commenced operations by engaging Miss Deane in a light and desultory conversation. He seemed conversant with all the topics of the town, and talked of the opera, and the annual exhibition at the Academy of Design, as glibly as if he had never done any thing but cultivate small talk. Imperceptibly but rapidly, however, he gradually led the conversation to money matters. From these he glided into a dissertation on the advantages of wealth, touched on the topic of celebrated misers, thence slid smoothly into a discourse on concealed treasures, about which he spoke in so eloquent and impressive a manner as to completely fascinate both his hearers.

Then it was that I observed a singular change take place in Annie Deane’s countenance. Hitherto pale and somewhat listless, as if suffering from mental depression, she suddenly became illumined as if by an inward fire. A rosy flush mounted to her white cheeks; her lips, eagerly parted as if drinking in some intoxicating atmosphere, were ruddy with a supernatural health, and

her eyes dilated as they gazed upon the Bohemian with a piercing intensity. The latter ceased to speak, and after a moment's silence, he said gently,

"Miss Deane, do you see?"

"I see!" she murmured, without altering the fixity of her gaze for an instant.

"Mark what you observe well," continued the Bohemian; "describe it with all possible accuracy;" then turning to me, he said rapidly, "Take care and note every thing."

"I see," pursued Annie, speaking in a measured monotone, and gazing into the Bohemian's eyes, while she waved her hand gently as if keeping time to the rhythm of her words, "I see a sad and mournful island on which the ocean beats forever. The sandy ridges are crowned with manes of bitter grass that wave and wave sorrowfully in the wind. No trees or shrubs are rooted in that salt and sterile soil. The burning breath of the Atlantic has seared the surface and made it always barren. The surf that whitens on the shore drifts like a shower of snow across its bleak and storm-blown plains. It is the home of the sea-gull and the crane."

"It is called Coney Island?" the Bohemian half inquired, half asserted.

"It is the name," pursued the Seeress, but in so even a tone that one would scarce imagine she had heard the question. She then continued to speak as before, still keeping up that gentle oscillation of her hand, which, in spite of my reason, seemed to me to have something terrible in its monotony.

"I see the spot," she continued, "where that you love lies buried. My gaze pierces through the shifting soil until it finds the gold that burns in the gloom. And there are jewels, too, of regal size and priceless value hidden so deeply in the barren sand! No sunlight has reached them for many years, but they burn for me as if they were set in the glory of an eternal day!"

"Describe the spot accurately!" cried the Bohemian in a commanding tone, making for the first time a supremely imperative gesture.

"There is a spot upon that lonely island," the Seeress continued, in that unimpassioned monotone that seemed more awful than the thunder of an army, "where three huge sandy ridges meet. At the junction of these three ridges a stake of locust-wood is driven deeply down. When by the sun it is six o'clock a shadow falls westward on the sand. Where this shadow ends the treasure lies."

"Can you draw?" asked the Bohemian.

"She can not," I answered hastily. The Bohemian raised his hand to enjoin silence.

"I can draw *now*," the Seeress replied firmly, never for an instant removing her eyes from the Bohemian's.

"Will you draw the locality you describe, if I give you the materials?" pursued the magnetizer.

"I will."

Brann drew a sheet of Bristol board and a pencil from his pocket, and presented them to her in silence. She took them, and still keeping her eyes immovably fixed on those of the magnetizer, she commenced sketching rapidly. I was thunderstruck. Annie, I knew, possessed no accomplishments, and had never made even the rudest sketch before.

"It is done!" she said, after a few minutes silence, handing the Bristol board back to the Bohemian. Moved by an inexpressible curiosity I rose and looked over his shoulder. It was wonderful! There was a masterly sketch of such a locality as she described executed on the paper. But its vividness, its desolation, its evident truth were so singularly given that I could scarcely believe my senses. I could almost hear the storms of the Atlantic howling over the barren sands.

“There is something wanting yet,” said the Bohemian, handing the sketch back to her, and smiling at my amazement.

“I know it,” she remarked, calmly. Then giving a few rapid strokes with her pencil, she handed it to him once more.

*The points of the compass had been added in the upper right hand corner of the drawing.* Nothing more was needed to establish the perfect accuracy of the sketch.

“This is truly wonderful!” I could not help exclaiming.

“It is finished!” cried the Bohemian, exultingly, and dashing his handkerchief two or three times across Annie’s face. Under this new influence her countenance underwent a rapid change. Her eyes, a moment before dilated to their utmost capabilities, now suddenly became dull, and the eyelids drooped heavily over them. Her form, that during the previous scene had been rigidly erect, and strung to its highest point of tension, seemed to collapse like one of those strips of gold-leaf that electricians experiment with, when the subtle fluid has ceased to course through its pores. Without uttering a word, and before the Bohemian or myself could stir, she sank like a corpse on the floor.

“Wretch!” I cried, rushing forward, “what have you done?”

“Secured the object of our joint ambition,” replied the fellow with that imperturbable calmness that so distinguished him. “Do not be alarmed at this fainting fit, my friend. Exhaustion is always the consequence of such violent psychological phenomena. Miss Deane will be perfectly recovered by to-morrow evening, and by that time we will have returned *millionaires*.”

“I will not leave her until she is recovered,” I answered sullenly, while I tried to restore the dear girl to consciousness.

“Yes, but you will,” asserted Brann, lighting his cigar as coolly as if nothing very particular had happened. “By dawn, to-morrow, you and I will have embarked for Coney Island.”

“You cold-blooded savage!” I cried passionately, “will you assist me to restore your victim to consciousness? If you do not, by Heaven, I will blow your brain out!”

“What with? The fire-shovel?” he answered with a laugh. Then carelessly approaching he took Annie’s hand in his, and blew with his mouth gently upon her forehead. The effect was almost instantaneous. Her eyes gradually unclosed, and she made a feeble effort to sustain herself.

“Call the housekeeper,” said the Bohemian, “have Miss Deane conducted to bed, and by to-morrow evening all will be tranquil.”

I obeyed his directions almost mechanically, little dreaming how bitterly his words would be realized. Yes! truly. All *would* be tranquil by tomorrow evening!

I sat up all night with Brann. I did not leave Mr. Deane’s until a late hour, when I saw Annie apparently wrapped in a peaceful slumber, and betook myself to a low tavern that remained open all night, where the Bohemian awaited me. There we arranged our plan. We were to take a boat at the Battery at the earliest glimpse of dawn, then, provided with a spade and shovel, a pocket compass, and a small valise in which to transport our treasure, we were to row down to our destination. I was feverish and troubled. The strange scene I had witnessed, and the singular adventure that awaited, seemed in combination to have set my brain on fire. My temples throbbed; the cold perspiration stood upon my forehead, and it was in vain that I allowed myself to join the Bohemian in the huge draughts of brandy which he continually gulped down, and which seemed to produce little or no effect on his iron frame. How madly, how terribly I longed for the dawn!

At last the hour came. We took our implements in a carriage down to the Battery, hired a boat, and in a short time were out in the stream pulling lustily down the foggy harbor. The exercise of

rowing seemed to afford me some relief. I pulled madly at my oar, until the sweat rolled in huge drops from my brow, and hung in trembling beads on the curls of my hair. After a long and wearisome pull we landed on the island at the most secluded spot we could find, taking particular care that it was completely sheltered from the view of the solitary hotel, where doubtless many inquisitive idlers would be found. After beaching our boat carefully, we struck toward the centre of the island, Brann seeming to possess some wonderful instinct for the discovery of localities, for almost without any trouble he walked nearly straight to the spot we were in search of.

“This is the place,” said he, dropping the valise which he carried. “Here are the three ridges, and the locust stake, lying exactly due north. Let us see what the true time is.”

So saying he unlocked the valise and drew forth a small sextant, with which he proceeded to take an observation. I could not help admiring the genius of this man, who seemed to think of and foresee every thing. After a few moments engaged in making calculations on the back of a letter, he informed me that exactly twenty-one minutes would elapse before the shadow of the locust-stake would fall on the precise spot indicated by the Seeress. “Just time enough,” said he, “to enjoy a cigar.”

Never did twenty-one minutes appear so long to a human being as these did to me. There was nothing in the landscape to arrest my attention. All was a wild waste of sand, on which a few patches of salt grass waved mournfully. My heart beat until I could hear its pulsations. A thousand times I thought that my strength must give way beneath the weight of my emotions, and that death would overtake me ere I had realized my dreams. I was obliged at length to dip my handkerchief in a marshy pool that was near me, and bind it about my burning temples.

At length the shadow from the locust log fell upon the enchanted spot. Brann and myself seized the spades wildly, and dug with the fury of ghouls who were rooting up their loathsome repast. The light sand flew in heaps on all sides. The sweat rolled from our bodies. The hole grew deeper and deeper!

At last—oh Heavens!—a metallic sound! my spade struck some hollow sonorous substance. My limbs fairly shook as I flung myself into the pit, and scraped the sand away with my nails. I laughed like a madman and burrowed like a mole. The Bohemian, always calm, with a few strokes of his shovel laid bare an old iron pot with a loose lid. In an instant this was dashed with a frantic blow of my fist, and my hands were buried in a heap of shining gold! Red glittering coins; bracelets that seemed to glow like the stars in heaven; goblets, rings, jewels in countless profusion flashed before my eyes for an instant like the sparkles of an Aurora—then came a sudden darkness—and I remember no more!

How long I lay in this unconscious state I know not. It seemed to me that I was aroused by a sensation similar to that of having water poured upon me, and I was some moments before I could summon up sufficient strength to raise myself on one elbow. I looked bewilderedly around. I was alone! I then strove to remember something that I seemed to have forgotten, when my eye fell on the hole in the sand, on the edge of which I found I was lying. A dull-red gleam as of gold seemed to glimmer from out the bottom. This talismanic sight restored to me every thing—my memory and my strength. I sprang to my feet. I gazed around. The Bohemian was nowhere visible. Had he fled with the treasure? My heart failed me for a moment at the thought; but no! there lay the treasure gleaming still in the depths of the hole, with a dull-red light, like the distant glare of hell. I looked at the sun; he had sank low in the horizon, and the dews already falling, had, with the damp sea-air, chilled me to the bone. While I was brushing the moisture from my coat, wondering at this strange conduct of the Bohemian, my eye caught sight of a slip of paper pinned upon my sleeve. I tore it off eagerly. It contained these words:

I leave you. I am honest though I am selfish, and have divided with you the treasure which you have helped me to gain. You are now rich, but it may be that you will not be happy. Return to the city, but return in doubt.

The Bohemian

What terrible enigma was this that the last sentence of this note en-shrouded? what veiled mystery was it that rose before my inward vision in shapeless horror? I knew not. I could not guess, but a foreboding of some unknown and overwhelming disaster rushed instantly upon me, and seemed to crush my very soul. Was it Annie, or was it my father? One thing was certain, there was no time to be lost in penetrating the riddle. I seized the valise, which the Bohemian had charitably left me—how he bore away his own share of the treasure I know not—and poured the gold and jewels into it with trembling hands. Then scarce able to travel with the weight of the treasure, I staggered toward the beach, where we had left the boat. She was gone. Without wasting an instant I made my way as rapidly as I could to the distant pier, where a thin stream of white smoke informed me that the steamer for New York was waiting for the bathers. I reached her just as she was about to start, and staggering to an obscure corner sat down upon my treasure sorrowfully.

With what different feelings to those which I anticipated was I returning to the city. My dream of wealth had been realized beyond my wildest hopes. All that I had thought necessary to yield me the purest happiness was mine, and yet there was not a more miserable wretch in existence. Those fatal words—“Return to the city, but return in doubt!” were ever before me. Oh! how I counted every stroke of the engine that impelled me to the city.

There was a poor blind humpbacked fiddler on board, who played all along the way. He played execrably, and his music made my flesh creep. As we neared the city he came round with his hat soliciting alms. In my recklessness, I tumbled all the money I had in my pockets into his hands. I never shall forget the look of joy that flashed over his poor old seared and sightless face at the touch of these few dollars. “Good Heavens!” I groaned, “here am I, sitting on the wealth of a kingdom, which is all mine, and dying of despair; while this old wretch has extracted from five dollars enough of happiness to make a saint envious!” Then my thoughts wandered back to Annie and the Bohemian, and there always floated before me in the air the agonizing words—“Return to the city, but return in doubt!”

The instant I reached the pier, I dashed through the crowd with my valise, and jumping into the first carriage I met, promised a liberal bounty to the driver if he would drive me to Amity Place in the shortest possible space of time. Stimulated by this, we flew through the streets, and in a few moments I was standing at Mr. Deane’s door. Even then it seemed to me as if a dark cloud seemed to hang over that house above all others in the city. I rang; but my hand had scarcely left the bell-handle when the door opened, and Doctor Lott, the family physician, appeared on the threshold. He looked grave and sad.

“We were expecting you, Mr. Cranstoun,” he said, very mournfully.

“Has—has any thing—happened?” I stammered, catching at the railings for support.

“Hush! come in.” And the kind Doctor took me by the arm and led me like a child into the parlor.

“Doctor, for Heaven’s sake, tell me what is the matter? I know something has happened. Is Annie dead? Oh! my brain will burst unless you end this suspense!”

“No—not dead. But tell me, Mr. Cranstoun, did Miss Deane experience any uncommon excitement lately?”

“Yes—yes—last night,” I groaned wildly, “she was mesmerized by a wretch. Oh! fool that I was to suffer it!”

“Ah! that explains all,” answered the Doctor. Then he took my hand gently in his—“Prepare yourself, Mr. Cranstoun,” he continued, with deep pity in his voice, “prepare yourself for a terrible shock.”

“She *is* dead, then!” I murmured. “Is she not?”

“She is. She died this morning of the effects of over-excitement, the cause of which I was ignorant of until now. Calm yourself, my dear Sir. She expired blessing you.

I tore myself from his grasp, and rushed up stairs. The door of her room was open, and, in spite of myself, my agitated tramp softened to a stealthy footfall as I entered. There were two figures in the room. One was an old man, who knelt by the bedside of my lost love, sobbing bitterly. It was her father. The other lay upon the bed, with marble face, crossed hands, and sealed eyelids. All was tranquil and serene in the chamber of death. Even the sobbings of the father, though bitter, were muffled and subdued. And she lay on the couch, with closed eyes, the calmest of all! Oh! the Seeress now saw more than earthly science could show her.

I felt, as I knelt by her father and kissed her cold hand in the agony of my heart, that I was justly rewarded.

Below stairs, in the valise, lay the treasure I had gained. Here, in her grave-clothes, lay the treasure I had lost!