directly afterward the whole form of old Smith, the only constable of the place, was brought to view, and in another moment he had arrested the violent gestures of the speaker, by pinioning his arms behind him.

"Is this him?" he asked of a gentleman who had entered the room immediately after him.

"The very one!" replied the other, smiling in spite of his efforts to the contrary, at the ludicrous scene of which he had only been witness of the conclusion.

"You see," in a bluff, good-natured way, replied old Smith to the rapid questions of the impromptu audience, "you see, this 'ere young chap is a son of Mr. Townsend, here, from M—, who took it inter his head to run away from the home of his benevolent father; and so we've come after him—that's all. Oh! you want to know what he's doing with the big knife, and what makes him talk so funny? Well, I'll tell you; he's a 'nambulist. Now you don't know what that is—of course not; it couldn't be expected for you to know, but it's a fact; the fellow walks, and talks, and cuts up all sorts of shames when he's dead asleep. That's true!"

And the worthy constable smacked his lips with evident satisfaction at the superior knowledge he had acquired over his fellow-townsmen.

"O Mr. Smith, what a mercy it is you have come! Indeed, sir, we were all of us about to be pillaged and murdered, and there's no telling where he'd a-stopped. But my poor Andrew—oh, my poor Andrew!" sobbed the landlady, making her appearance at the door of the room.

"Why, my dear woman, what on earth is the matter with your Andrew?" queried Mr. Smith.

"Murdered!" with renewed sobs replied the landlady; "yes, foully, brutally murdered by that there ———" and she pointed to the crestfallen criminal, whose head hung down upon his bosom, as if seeking to find a retreat from the vulgar gaze that was fastened upon him.

"What! 'Pon my honor, Mr. Townsend, this case begins to assume a more desp'rite light."

"I hope not," replied the gentleman; and turning to the landlady, he asked, "Are you sure, madam, that your son is murdered?"

"Sure? Oh, yes; too, too sure! I haven't seen the corpse, but I heard him accuse Andrew of having robbed him, and such-like slanders, and then I heard him plunge the knife into the poor boy. Oh, it is too horrible!"

"Andrew! You say your son's name is Andrew? Yes, yes, I see—I see it all. Ha! ha! ha! Capital joke, upon my word!" and uttering these hasty sentences, to the surprise of all but the dejected culprit, Mr. Townsend burst into a hearty fit of laughter.

"Really, my dear madam, this is,—pray, excuse me, but you see —ha! ha! ha!" This last clause of the gentleman's laugh was prolonged to such an extent that no one noticed the entrance of a young man, who, if possible, was more surprised at the scene that met his eyes, than any of the others.

"Let me see. Oh, yes—your son isn't dead, madam; I dare say Andrew is as stout and hale as he ever was in his life."

"To be sure I am," said the last-comer; and the words were scarcely out of his lips before he was clasped in his mother's arms.

After a suitable hug had been given and returned, the landlady asked Mr. Townsend, with a great deal of perplexity in her looks and words, to explain to his bewildered audience, if possible, which he did in the following words:—

"My son here, Ernest, is not only a good dramatic player, but is also something of an author. He has lately composed a tragedy in three acts, in which the principal character is a tyrant named Andrea; while opposed to him is a young and fanatic rebel, who, at the end of the second act, slays the tyrant with a dagger, all the time reproaching him with the crimes of which he has been guilty. Now, Ernest is also a somnambulist, and generally when excited in his sleep, his thoughts revert to whatever is uppermost in his mind; so it is very natural that to-night he should have thought of his play, especially as he ran away from me with the avowed intention of joining some theatrical