





J. P. Kennedy
THE

EDINBURGH TALES.

CONDUCTED BY

MRS. JOHNSTONE.

VOLUME II.

WILLIAM TAIT, EDINBURGH.
CHAPMAN AND HALL, LONDON.
JOHN CUMMING, DUBLIN,

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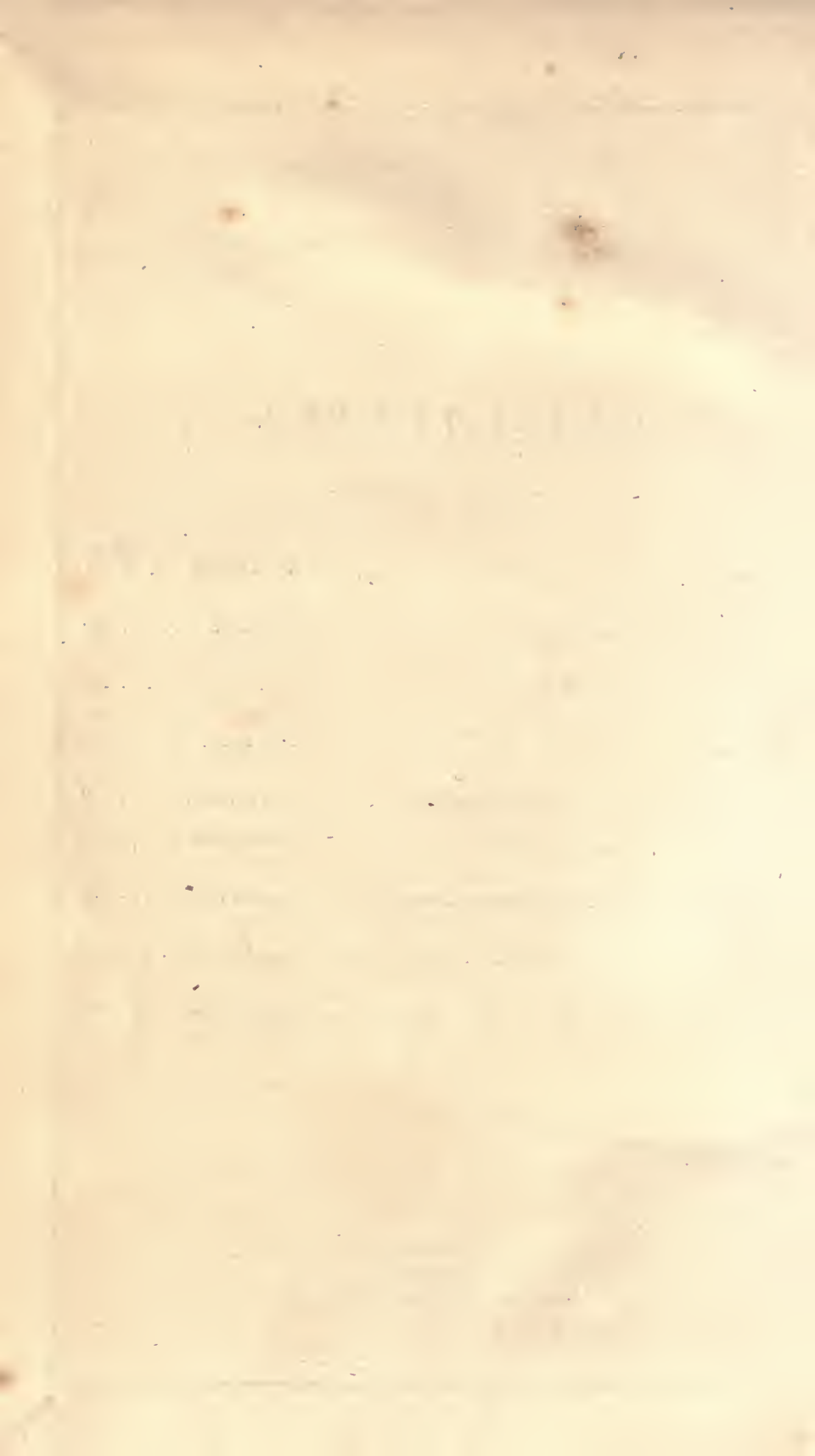
Printed by WILLIAM TAIT, 107, Prince's Street.

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THE
EDINBURGH TALES.

THE AUTHOR'S DAUGHTER.

BY MARY HOWITT.

CHAPTER I.

MR. FRANK LAWFORD offended his family by three things. He turned author; he adopted liberal opinions in politics; and he married a poor and nameless wife. Any one of these would have been bad enough, according to the hereditary notions of the Lawford family; but all these combined in one person, was an unimaginable delinquency which the Lawfords could not forgive. But in order that our readers may have a more definite idea of this family, which had considered itself *par excellence sans reproche*, we must go back to the time of Peter Lawford, the old squire.

Peter Lawford, and his ancestors before him, had been members of the squirearchy of Leicestershire for some hundreds of years. The chancel vault was full of the bones of the Lawfords, male and female; and the church walls were covered with monumental tablets, in marble and brass, commemorating their virtues and their greatness. The Lawfords of the fifteenth century endowed the grammar school; the Lawfords built the alms-houses; the Lawfords had given, and still gave, doles of beef and fuel to the poor at Christmas; they had always sate on the magisterial bench; they were in all trusts of bridges and turnpike roads for their part of the county. Lawfords also had sate in Parliament; they had served their king and country in the army and on sea; and according to their belief they served God also, by

providing out of their own family a Lawford to occupy the living of Lawford, which, of course, was in their gift—a comfortable way it was of serving God, for the living had always been a good one, and, at the time of our story, amounted to £800 a-year.

But whatever the Lawfords of former times had been as to wealth, Peter Lawford, when he came into possession of the estate, found that its revenues were somewhat encumbered. Peter was the second son, and had been brought up to the law, for which he always entertained the highest regard; holding it as his firm opinion, that, had fate left him to pursue his own course, he should have risen to the highest eminence. But fate made a country gentleman of him; and as it is a much easier and safer thing to regret the loss of greatness than to try to achieve it, Peter sate down contentedly on the broad lands of Lawford, to try to rid himself of the encumbrances which he had never expected to find there. The older Lawford had been a speculator before the true time for profitable speculation began, and therefore won for himself the character of insanity, because he laid down in his park an infant rail-road, on which he laboured hard to perfect self-propelling carriages. He built velocipedes and constructed balloons, but, poor man, succeeded in nothing. He was one of those men with glimmerings of truth before the age is prepared to receive it; precursors of discoveries on the very verge of their birth. Had Mr. Lawford lived fifty years later he

would have made his fortune and benefited society; as it was, he impoverished the family estate, and gained the reputation to himself of being brimful of crotchets, if not actually insane; and, what was still more disastrous, lost his life by the falling of a heavy beam, which had been inadequately fastened for the support of some ponderous machinery.

The world said, that Mr. Peter Lawford, now the head of the family, was a strong-minded man; he believed so himself, nay, as we have hinted before, he had the highest possible idea of his own abilities, and in settling down on the estate resolved to clear off all encumbrances, and never to marry but with a woman of substance. It is wonderful what credit Peter's mode of action gained for him in the world; he was the very model of prudence and practical wisdom; he was an oracle at quarter sessions, where his law-knowledge really stood him in stead. He was counsellor both to old and young, and soon found that not only did he stand high among fathers and uncles, and brothers and nephews, but among all ladies whether married or single. Having enjoyed all this triumph for ten long years, he all at once took it into his head to think about being married. Perhaps he might be a little stimulated to this, by hearing one certain May morning that no less than six ladies of his acquaintance were to be married that summer. Ah poor Peter, and one of the six that very Miss Rutherford, the belle of the county, about whom he had been thinking for these last four years. Without exactly knowing what was his precise train of thought, we can only say that upon that very morning Peter rode over to the Rutherfords to ascertain his fate.

He found the brother of the young lady at home, and asked immediately from him if the report of his sister's approaching marriage were really true. Mr. Rutherford replied that he believed so, that he hoped so, but that the marriage settlements were not yet drawn.

Lawford walked up and down the room, as men do whose minds are agitated, made one or two ineffectual attempts to speak, and then resolutely mastering his feelings, begged that Mr. Rutherford would never betray the emotion which he had witnessed; that from the bottom of his soul he wished nothing but the happiness of his amiable sister; that he had wished to clear his estate of the encumbrances with which his unfortunate brother had burdened it—he had hoped in a year or two—that it was a very painful thing to him

—that his friend would understand him—and now the report of Miss Rutherford's approaching marriage had reached him. He had ridden over to ascertain the truth—and now of course he had nothing more to say. He offered his friend his hand, and apparently much affected, was about to leave the room.

"My good fellow," said Rutherford, "this is unfortunate—but you must not go thus. Sit down, I will say a word to you in confidence. Of this Colonel Wynn I know little, of his family still less: he is an acquaintance which my wife and Alice made last winter at Bath. You, on the contrary, are an old friend—our families have been connected by marriage, and I will candidly tell you, that I would rather that Alice had married you, than any other man I know."

Lawford's countenance brightened: "Might he understand," he asked, "that the young lady herself entertained any sentiment of regard towards him?"

Mr. Rutherford refused to give a definite answer to that question, but added, that if his friend were inclined to try his luck, he could honestly tell him that with all his heart he wished him success.

On that very day, as a matter of course, Mr. Lawford offered hand and heart to the fair Alice Rutherford. The lady blushed, wept, looked lovelier than ever; spoke of the awkward position of her affairs; of Colonel Wynn, whom she esteemed as a friend, of his violent temper, of her dread of fearful consequences; wept again almost hysterically, and confessed with maiden shame that Mr. Lawford was by far the dearer of her two lovers.

As she had anticipated, not many days elapsed before the tempestuous Colonel Wynn made his appearance in Leicestershire, the end of which was, that two challenges were sent by him in one day; the one to her brother, the other to her new lover. The duels were fought, from which Mr. Rutherford and the Colonel came off scathless, while Mr. Lawford received an injury in the left elbow, which, after confining him for a few weeks, left him with a stiff joint for the rest of his days. But this affair brought to him no other unpleasant consequences; on the contrary, he never apparently stood so high in the opinion of his county neighbours, as when he first made his appearance again amongst them, with his arm in a sling and as the affianced bridegroom of the beautiful Alice Rutherford.

CHAPTER II.

Years went on, and prosperity seemed to belong to the Lawfords. All went on smoothly and brightly as on a summer's day, when, all at once, somebody put it into Mr. Lawford's head to offer himself as Tory candidate for the county. Elections were long and fierce in those days, and the stories which old people tell of the bribery and corruption which took place, make those of the present time the merest child's play. And of all elections, that which Mr. Lawford carried has been always considered one of the most memorable. Little did Lawford think, when the idea first crossed his brain of offering himself, of the sum that it would cost him; but such things have been before and since. The successful candidate finds, as the young Franklin did, that he has paid too dearly for his whistle.

Peter Lawford took his seat in parliament, and that part of the world which knew him expected great things from him. Mrs. Lawford, like her husband, prided herself on her good sense and good management, and in order, as she said, that the expense of two establishments might be saved, a house was taken in London, the estate put into the hands of a trusty bailiff, the house shut up and left in charge of a couple of servants on board-wages; and Lawford determined now, in his parliamentary career, to turn his law-education to account, and win to himself he knew not how much honour and advantage. For ten long years did he occupy his place in parliament, never absenting himself from a single sitting, and distinguishing himself by his hot and unflinching adherence to every principle of Tory policy, either at home or abroad. His speeches were remarkable for two things, their soporific quality and their great length,—some witty members having been known to put their night-caps on when he rose to his feet. But this moved not Mr. Lawford a jot, nor did he despond after ten years of unrewarded service. If the ministry had remained in office only six months longer, he believed that he should have risen to the peerage. But the Whigs came into office, and, after an unsuccessful attempt to be returned in the new parliament, he came to Lawford and a country life, very much the worse for his ten years of public labour.

Mrs. Lawford was by no means a lady of an economical turn, although she had talked of leaving Lawford and removing to London, to save the expense of two houses and two

establishments. But the establishment in London cost far more than that in the country could have done; and then there was the winter at Bath or Cheltenham for the benefit of the lady's health, and the cottage in the Isle of Wight or at Worthing, for the children and their attendants. All this dipped deeply into the annual rents of Lawford, which were yet not clear from the late Mr. Lawford's debts, and consumed, as if they had fallen into a vortex, all the emoluments, and fees, and bribes, which dropped one way and another into the pockets of the parliamentary man of business.

Mr. Lawford came back to the home of his fathers a much poorer, and a much more anxious man than he had left it. Besides which, he had been compelled, in order to pay off the most pressing of his election debts, to sell the next presentation of the living of Lawford, which was then held by his uncle, at that time eighty years of age, and a free liver into the bargain. It was a ready means of raising money, and fifteen thousand pounds was thus obtained. He had three sons of his own, the second of whom was, as a matter of course, destined to the church, and for this living in particular; nor had he any doubt but by the time this young man was ready for his clerical duties, that fate or favourable circumstances would have cleared the way for him. But fate was hard, and favourable circumstance was none; for at the very time when the second son, Adolphus, the destined incumbent of Lawford, was in his twenty-first year, the old incumbent, or encumbrance rather, was in his ninety-fourth, a hale old man, who prided himself on reading without spectacles. It was a serious thing to the Lawfords, but a much more serious thing to the Rev. Mr. Colville, who, ten years before, had sunk all his worldly wealth, even more than he then possessed, to purchase this next presentation, which every one reckoned as good as his own on the day of purchase.

It is a proverb, that if you give any old woman an annuity, she will live for ever; so said the Rev. Mr. Colville a thousand times, only varying the proverb to suit his own case. The Lawfords were making a good figure in London, while the poor Colvilles, who had beggared themselves for the sake of their purchase, were struggling on a small curacy, with a large family and the most oppressive worldly anxieties. Old Humphrey Lawford would not die! It was in vain that Mr. and Mrs. Colville looked over the list of deaths in the daily papers; die he would not,

and Mr. Colville had no influential connexions to assist him. His very heart was sick of hope deferred; and so the bloom wore off his life and his hair grew gray, and his wife lost her cheerful looks and her placid temper, and it almost seemed to them that they would die themselves before this old incumbent who was now ninety-two.

One, two, three years yet went on, and the school that the poor curate had now kept for some years, ebbed and flowed with a very uncertain current, till, in the very half-year when Peter Lawford's parliamentary life came to a close without any golden sunset, a little scholar brought into the school the scarlet-fever, and one scholar, the son of his best supporter, died together with the youngest of his own children, the pet and darling of his cheerless heart. The cup of their misfortune and their misery seemed full. The last drop was in, and it already flowed over.

The evening, however, on which the children were buried, a post letter brought the long expected news—old Humphrey Lawford was dead.

"Blessed be the Lord, inasmuch as his hand is yet stretched out to save us!" ejaculated the heart-stricken clergyman, as he laid down the letter, feeling nevertheless, in the sorrowful depths of his heart, as if the time of rejoicing was gone for ever from him.

"Oh that poor Jeanie had but lived!" groaned the mother, as she read the letter which her husband had laid down. Her eye caught her husband's; heart understood heart, and, clasping each other in a long embrace, they wept together.

CHAPTER III.

The very day on which the Colvilles, in their deep mourning, and with their grief-subdued countenances, took possession of their long-expected home, the Lawford family came back to the old Hall. It was a sore thought to Mr. Lawford and his wife, that here was a man hardly arrived at middle life at that very moment come into possession of that heritage which, from his childhood upward, they had regarded as the patrimony of their second son; and what if he lived to the age of old Humphrey? and he might do so, sailing thus, like a ship after a stormy voyage, into a haven of blessed repose. What prospect was there, then, for poor Adolphus? "Poor Adolphus!" sighed they, whenever they thought of the Rectory: "Poor Adolphus!" whenever they thought

on the young man himself; for even they, with all the partiality of parents, were forced to confess, that Adolphus was the least gifted of all their offspring, and who, on the fat living of Lawford, might have kept a curate, and, with the patronage and forbearance of his own family, might have gone respectably through life, but who otherwise could not look even to be another man's curate. Another vexatious thing there was, and it was a very vexatious thing, old Humphrey Lawford, who had been a bachelor all his days, and never had spent the half of his income, and who had indulged in but one luxury, that of buying books, had left behind him a most unsatisfactory will. He had left his library to his own college; his money in the funds, to four public societies; and all his furniture, and all his personal property, to his forty-years' housekeeper. Not one penny came to his nephew or his family! Mr. Lawford literally begrudged the cost of family mourning.

The Lawford family were four. George, the eldest, a young man, whose gay college life had caused his father great displeasure, and was now placed rather on the shady side of his affections. The second was the only daughter Camilla, somewhat turned twenty, a very well-bred and highly accomplished young lady, as every one said, and her father's favourite. Camilla was much more remarkable for her wit and her talents than for her beauty, being the plainest of the family,—the only one, indeed, who had not inherited the fine Rutherford eyes and cast of countenance. Her complexion was dark; her eyes gray, with a keen intelligence in them, perfectly in accordance with her well-cut and firmly-closing mouth.

"It is a pity that Camilla is not a boy!" said her mother, when she saw how, by an absolute love of rule, and a natural force of character, she, as a little girl, had governed her brothers and those about her. As Camilla grew up, very little was said of her amiability. She was too cold, too selfish, too fond of power, ever to be much loved; but love was not the thing that she very much cared about. If she had power, that would give her an influence and a consideration which suited her much better. One characteristic, however, there was in her, which was praiseworthy; and that was the kindness and attention she always bestowed upon her smally gifted brother Adolphus. Adolphus seemed ever more dependent upon her than upon his parents: he looked up to

her as to a superior being, and she took his part, with all her natural strength of will, in all his follies and his weaknesses. Of course, Camilla could not be expected to look upon the newly-arrived family at the Rectory with any forbearance; she was more vehement against them than her parents, and declared that she would never sit under the preaching of a man whom she and all her family had such good reason to dislike.

Five years younger than Adolphus was Frank, the last of the family, and the most highly gifted. As a little child, he had been the privileged disturber of his father's study, even in the most occupied days of his parliamentary life. He was his mother's darling, and was taken out with her shopping and making morning calls, when the prudent matrons of her acquaintance thought that he would have been much better occupied over his lessons. But Frank learned, Heaven knows how, although the good clergyman, with whom he was said to be a weekly boarder, complained quite as much of non-attendance as he would have done of non-payment.

"Frank has a splendid head, if there be any truth in phrenology," said his father, many a time putting aside the bright curls from his beautiful forehead; "and it will be his own fault if he do not make a figure in the world."

"Frank has the noblest of hearts," said his mother, with a tearful eye, to her friends; "he is the flower of our flock, and will out-shine his elder brothers in intellect; but that is of less consequence, because they may be reckoned as provided for, and therefore it is but just that my boy has the Benjamin's-portion of natural gifts."

Mr. Lawford, remembering with pleasure his own life as a law-student, and cherishing the idea that he himself was a Lord-Chancellor lost, destined Frank for the Bar.

"He will make a figure there," said his mother, "for he has natural eloquence; quite a style of his own, and the keenest insight into every thing. He was born for a lawyer."

People said, and wise people too, that the foolish admiration of his parents would be the ruin of young Lawford. But there are some natures that take a deal of spoiling, and Frank was one of them. He was not spoiled at seventeen, even though he knew well enough that he was considered much cleverer than his elder brothers, and that it was the general opinion too that he had a much finer disposition, and was handsome as

a youth, and promised to be very handsome as a man. Spoiled he was not; but then neither was he improved by it. Vanity, that ill-weed and that offspring of weakness, was fostered in his nature, and thus more mortification, and a severer self-discipline, were stored up for him in after life.

Had his sister Camilla been of a nature less dominant, she perhaps might best have managed a disposition like her young brother's. Camilla, with her keen insight into character, was early aware of the fine talents and nature of the boy; and, as was natural, took upon herself to school and train him, never concealing, however, that it was rather to gratify her own love of power than anything else. Hence, between these two, there existed a continual species of warfare, a strife for mastery, which was conducive neither to their own nor the family happiness. Their mother, desirous above all things for peace, coaxed the one and scolded the other, and always without success.

"Now, Frank, my angel," his mother would say, stroking the blooming cheeks of the handsome youth, "what is the sense of opposing your sister in this way? Sing this duet with her; it is but a small thing, and if you love me you will do it!"

"If it were for love of you, I would do it, and ten times more," Frank would reply; "and, as you say, it is not much, but then Camilla has said that I *shall* do it. *Shall* is a law with Camilla, and if I submit once, I must submit a hundred times,—it is not 'as you will,' but 'as I will,' with Camilla!"

And "How can you be so tyrannical with poor Frank," her mother would say to her, in an angry tone, "as to have him up, morning, noon, and night, at that everlasting duet? You have not a spark of reason or consideration in you. Let *my* will be done, is your motto, without any regard to another's feelings!"

"Frank is a spoiled child," Camilla would reply, resolutely: "and will do nothing that does not offer incense to his vanity. The discipline I would now subject him to would spare him trouble in after life; it would be his greatest happiness to submit to me. He would have to thank me for it. He has great talents, but they will all run to waste from want of steady purposes. To what does he apply himself steadily—to nothing! And I know that I am right in requiring him to sing this duet with me, even if it were ten times more disagreeable!"

Mrs. Lawford had always the worst of an argument with her daughter, and from such

controversy as this, she mostly retired to persuade Frank to compliance, or to be witness to an unhappy strife between her two strong-willed children.

It was in the maturity of spring, towards the latter end of the merry month of May, that the Lawfords returned, and the Rector's family took possession of their new home. Happily for Frank, his own family, and Camilla in particular, were so much occupied in attending to their own concerns, as not to have much time to think about him. He therefore was for a time left to his own free-will, to range about the wide manor of Lawford; to find the primroses growing fresh on the mossy banks of woody dingles, and the yellow cowslips and purple orchises in the grassy fields; and take his rod and line, and first essay the gentle craft of angling in the little babbling streams, which, whilst they had all the charm of being full of the early and else forgotten memories of childhood, had at the same time all the fascination and charm of novelty. What a blessed thing it seemed to him to throw himself down here under the branches of a tree, covered with the young tender leaves of the season, and reading some glorious books of poetry or poetical literature, feel himself as it were a free man, caring nothing for the domination of Camilla. The soul of a poet in those joyous days first awoke within him; and, without being able, had he tried to define or describe his feelings, he found that a well-spring of happiness and tender and lofty emotion lay within him, which the rejoicing carol of the skylark, or the gushing sunlight through the delicate leaves, could call forth. At such times, his whole soul was a fountain of deep love; and even the stern proud Camilla appeared before him softened and glorified.

Weeks went on; and, during this time, Frank had advanced in knowledge of many things. Between his family and the Rectory, as we said before, there existed a coldness, an unfriendly feeling: rather, however, it must be confessed, on the side of Mr. Lawford than the clergyman's. Camilla, who, among her other characteristics, was very polemically inclined, soon discovered that Mr. Colville was not an evangelical preacher, and therefore gave herself the trouble of going five miles every Sunday, to attend the ministry of a neighbouring clergyman, with whom and his family she formed a close intimacy. This new acquaintance, to the comfort of poor Frank, occupied her mind, and removed

her from home a good deal; so that he was left, in his turn, to make acquaintance, which he very soon found to be as much to his taste as his sister's was to hers.

Within the park of Lawford, or rather at its edge, stood the church, about a quarter of a mile from the Hall. The church was remarkably picturesque, with its tall gray tower of good proportions, and fine style of architecture, and surrounded by its little quiet field of graves. Frank found much to interest and please him in this sacred little spot; and yet, when there, was never so much occupied by his poetic musings, as not to have an eye to spare for the Rectory grounds, which bounded one side of it, and which, from one particular part of the church-yard, lay open to view. The first time Frank was here, he saw the Rector's daughter, a fair, slight girl, walking in the garden, surrounded by a tribe of young brothers and sisters. His first thought was, what a large family the Rector had; his second, how interesting was that fair sister, who, all unconscious of a stranger's observations, seemed like the spirit of affection and tenderness. Day after day, Frank visited that particular corner of the church-yard, sometimes seeing different members of the family, sometimes not. He was remarkably regular in his attendance at church, though his family was not so; nor did he allow himself to be the least in the world prejudiced against their new neighbours, even though "poor Adolphus," through them, would stand in want of a home.

The Rector's young people, however, like Frank, soon discovered that there were very charming dingles, where primroses grew in various parts of the park and hills in the neighbourhood, where fine views might be obtained over the country; and it was not very long before some or other of them met with him, or he with them. From these meetings an intimacy grew up. Frank undertook to be their guide here and there; and they, in their turn, made him soon feel, that without him, a rural excursion could afford them very little pleasure.

The Rector and his lady, who, after so many years of waiting, anxiety, and sorrow, had now anchored, as it were, in this sunny bay of life, could afford to be in good humour with all the world. Right excellent people were they, said every one, rich and poor alike; and, though it was some little cause of regret to them, that the squire and his lady were among the most negligent of his parishioners in their attendance at church, and their

daughter had, in the most pointed manner, withdrawn herself from under his pastoral care, yet that was no reason why the Rector, in his office of pastor of his flock, should send out, as it were, the sheep-dog of his anger, barking after his lukewarm or even stray sheep. No, his plan was to keep his eye on them in kindness and good-will, and not to obtrude himself on their notice, other than by good offices. A desire, therefore, to influence the parents through the son, perhaps made him receive Frank with the greatest kindness, and endeavour that all his visits to the Rectory should be as agreeable as possible. To his mother, Frank spoke of his intimacy at the Rectory, and of his pleasant visits there, but to no one else; and his mother, well pleased that he should meet with agreeable associates, was entirely satisfied, and began even to meditate upon placing her son under the Rector's care, instead of sending him at present to any public school.

In this way Frank knew the Colville family old and young, and used to amuse and interest his mother by his anecdotes of the interior of the Rectory. He was a great favourite with the Rector's lady, because he amused the little children. He cut mice out of apple-pippins, and swans out of apples themselves; made skipping rats with his rolled-up pocket-handkerchief, and rabbits on the wall with his hands. He was a most amusing companion to them, and nothing delighted them more than to see him between the garden trees by the fish-pond. The one, however, who evinced most pleasure in his society, though that not with the vociferation of the younger children, was that fair, slender girl who had first made the Rectory-lawn so interesting to him. With Emma he sate for hours, reading to her as she sate at work, or in quiet and very lover-like conversation. Frank was seventeen, a tall stripling, Emma was a year his senior; on his part, at least, it was a very tender and a very warm flame. From Emma he soon heard, as well as from the younger children and their parents, of John, the eldest of the family. John was turned three-and-twenty, and was at College—at the very college where his own brothers were. It seemed to him a remarkable coincidence. The whole family, old and young, were enthusiastic in his praise. "Brother John," said the children, "gave them this book; taught them that accomplishment; devised for them that pleasure: oh, there was no one in this world like brother John!" Emma joined in the same pœan to his praise.

John had been the associate of all her pleasures, the consoler in all her troubles. He was so clever, so gay! They should have such delightful times when John came home!

To hear Emma and the younger ones talk of this wonderful brother, Frank fancied a light-hearted, merry youth, full of fun and frolic, beside whom he should be a very monk for sedateness. To hear the parents, however, speak of him, a very different idea was suggested. John had been his father's pupil, grave, and steady, and precocious. Latin and Greek had been to him mere child's play. He had been usher in his father's school when only fifteen. He had lived with his parents not as their child, but as their friend and adviser. But, great as had been John's virtues at home, his college-life had even exhibited his character to greater advantage. He had struggled through poverty and hardship; had been untempted by pleasure; and now, by great ability and most unheard of industry, had carried all honours before him; had won the regard of the heads of the college, and the esteem of his fellow collegians. He had now taken his degree, and had won also for himself a fast friend and sure patron in the son of Earl —, a young man of great promise and virtue. Frank thought of his own brothers, whose college-lives had caused his parents such uneasiness and trouble—of the gay, thoughtless George, whose debts had for the present turned his father's heart from him, and of poor Adolphus, who had not sense enough to keep out of scrapes. The next college vacation John Colville would be at home—at that new home, the prosperity of which was the more welcome on his account.

Frank thought of John Colville night and day, and set him up as a sort of ideal model to himself. He, too, he resolved, would distinguish himself; he, too, would endeavour to be the pride and blessing of his family.

At length the time came which was to bring the young collegians home,—the young spendthrifts to the Hall, and the hard-working and honour-crowned John to the Rectory. Very little was said at the Hall about the expected arrivals there; the father was out of humour; the mother uneasy; and Camilla, who, when her elder brothers were concerned, admitted a rival idea with her new evangelical notions, alert and determined, yet silent.

Frank went to the Rectory the evening before the day on which John was expected.

He felt more impatient to see him than his brothers. John Colville was to him the name of a dear friend ; he felt already to love him ; he thought how he would freely open his heart to him, and ask counsel from him of many things which as yet lay in dim prospective before him. His idea of John Colville was that of intellectual force and spiritual beauty. He thought of Milton, and Philip Melancthon, and Fenelon, and Luther, and those fine spirits who were the idols of his heart's worship, whenever he thought of him.

He went, not expecting to find him arrived, but merely because his heart impelled him to tell his friends that he would think of them on the morrow. Scarcely, however, was he within the garden-gate, when Emma Colville came bounding towards him, exclaiming that John was come ; and then out came rushing the younger children to tell him the same thing ; and when he said how glad he was, how delighted they must be, all their faces grew serious, and they said, "Oh, but John was going away on the morrow, was going out of England for they knew not how long !"

By this time, Frank, with a beating heart and a crimsoning brow and cheek, had entered the dining-room by the open French window to which Mr. Colville had beckoned him, and the next moment he stood before John Colville. And this then was he ! A short, stiff, solidly-built young man, with a compactly put-together head, thickly covered with short crisped black hair ; a forehead of great strength rather than beauty, which rose above a pair of deep-set, small, dark eyes, of a grave, intelligent, yet rather cold expression ; a remarkably well-formed nose and mouth that looked as if chiselled out of granite. There was an iron-gray tinge about the lower part of the face which indicated a strong, black beard, but all this, even to the whiskers, was closely shaved, revealing the clear, strong curve of the jaw which added an expression of force to this remarkable, but not altogether pleasing countenance. The dress exactly suited the character of the face, there was no foppery or nonsense of any kind about it. All was plain and in excellent keeping. He was evidently, as Frank saw at a glance, one of the *rare aves* — an old head on young shoulders ; such a son could be no other than his father's friend and confidant ; but he felt that years would never make him as intimate with the son, as months only had with the father. Mr. Colville and his son

were in deep conversation together, as the mother, taking Frank by the hand, led him up to them. "This is our young friend, Frank Lawford, John," said she.

"Ah Frank, my boy," said the Rector, "we've got John among us at last, you see !"

John gave his hand ; spoke a few civil words ; eyed Frank for a moment with his searching glance from head to foot ; and then, as if he had quite satisfied himself, turned again to his father and pursued the conversation which had been interrupted. Poor Frank's enthusiasm felt as if blown upon by an icy wind ; he withdrew a few paces. Mrs. Colville was listening to her son and so were the girls ; even Emma did not seem to have a thought to spare for him ; he felt that he was not wanted, and, making his adieux, very unobtrusively withdrew. He felt that he had no right to be disappointed in John Colville ; he was exactly the sort of person he might have expected, a strong-minded, clear-headed, independent sort of man. Frank, however, fancied that he looked cold-blooded and calculating, and wanting in that generous enthusiasm which was his own characteristic. He recalled to his memory all that had been told of his high virtue, his self-denial, his industry, his devotion to his family, his honourable life at college, the distinction and the friendship he had won. Yes, all this was very noble, Frank could not but acknowledge ; and yet some way he felt that after all his golden idol was but a mixture of clay.

In a day or two, his brother Adolphus returned : George preferred absenting himself ; and with Adolphus came much news and talk of John Colville. According to him, John Colville was the most time-serving sycophant in all Oxford ; he had been the merest lick-spittle to the Earl of —'s son, with whom he was about to set out as travelling companion. Adolphus might himself have won honours, had it not been for this young man, this son of the very person who was keeping him out of his heritage ! Camilla took the part of her brother ; her inveteracy against the Rector's family was hotter than ever ; and then it came out that she had not been in ignorance, but had only connived at Frank's intimacy there. Camilla had her way. Frank's little friendship on his own account was thwarted ; but, as was natural, his little love affair grew only the more interesting. Emma and he exchanged locks of hair ; he wrote to her the most touching little poems ; and after Christmas he was

sent to a great public school, preparatory to his college life.

Twelve months after this time, when Frank came home for his vacation, he found very extraordinary things going forward. But these require a word of explanation. After Frank left, as was only natural, the coldness continued between the families at the Hall and the Rectory. In a while news came that the Earl's son, with whom John Colville had been travelling, and whose health had for many years been delicate, had died in Italy, leaving to his friend and his companion a legacy of five thousand pounds; and that the Earl, his father, had given him the next presentation to a good living, which was expected to fall vacant almost daily. "That young man is born to be fortunate," said all the world.

His return to his family made quite a sensation through the neighbourhood, and even among Camilla's evangelical friends. Camilla herself, it must be presumed, became interested by all she heard; but, for the sake of consistency, she was very bitter in her remarks upon him. Camilla was a clever diplomatist; and John Colville had not been long at the Rectory with his grave, self-possessed manners, his independent bearing, and his deep mourning, before she found herself animated by the most lively zeal to have all the poor children in the parish educated. This could not be done without the sanction and assistance of the clergyman; and to him she went, begging his advice and co-operation. Nothing could have pleased the Rector more: he and Camilla worked hard at the school; and from this day no one was more intimate at the Rectory than herself. She became quite eloquent against herself, and the mischief which prejudice of any kind does in society: it was her bounden duty to acknowledge it; and nothing that she could do was too much for her new, dear friends. She talked to them of "poor Adolphus," and they admired her sisterly affection, her spirit, her candour, her good sense, her decision of character. They saw nothing but virtues in her; and more than this, it was not long before John Colville was seen coming and going between the Rectory and the Hall, before he and Camilla were seen walking together arm in arm in deep confidential discourse. The world jumped to no false conclusion when it said, that the Rector's son and the Squire's daughter would one day be married.

This was the news that met Frank on his

return home. Why was he someway vexed about it? He could not satisfactorily answer that question to himself. At the Rectory he was received with the greatest kindness; but someway he felt in the depths of his soul a melancholy presentiment that where Camilla was the caressed and flattered, and favourite daughter-in-law elect, the chosen of the idol John, he could never occupy the place he had done. Even Emma seemed changed, and charged him before the assembled family with undervaluing Camilla. The whole family were clamorous in lauding Camilla's generosity, warm-heartedness, and unselfishness, those very qualities which he had thought her deficient in, and were ready to quarrel with him because of them. Emma was to be Camilla's bridesmaid,—and they, too, were inseparable,—besides which, she seemed to have imbibed a cordial interest for "poor Adolphus;" and whether it was wounded vanity or becoming self-respect, Frank quietly withdrew himself, recalling to his mind the repulsive sentiment he at first had felt towards the pattern John Colville, and thinking that he must be contented to give up his friends and to endure the blighting of his first love,—and that was all.

To no soul but to his mother did he open his heart, and that only so far as regarded his future brother-in-law.

"John Colville is a clever man of the world," said she. "Camilla and he are admirably suited for each other. If John should ever be a bishop—and he is likely enough—Camilla will put the mitre on his brows; and, thank God, between them they will take care of 'poor Adolphus!'"

The day of Camilla's marriage arrived. The children of the newly-established school scattered flowers in her path; and the bride and bridegroom returned to the Hall to partake a wedding-breakfast with the united families. Nothing could be gayier than all around them: bells ringing, sun shining, and the various members of the two families exchanging congratulations. At the "head of the table" sate Mrs. Lawford, smiling and gay; she had excited and exerted herself much on this occasion. All at once she was seen to make an attempt to rise, and then she sunk back into her chair, and, laying her hand on her side, exclaimed, "Oh, God! my heart, my heart!"

A flush for one moment covered her countenance, and then a change passed over it, and a pallor as of death. She was a large, heavy woman, and was with difficulty

removed to the sofa. A physician was instantly fetched: he attempted to bleed her; but human aid was vain. She died of an affection of the heart, under which she had long laboured, in the fifty-seventh year of her age. No conception can be formed of the effects of this shock in the midst of bridal festivity and joy.

"Oh, my mother!" exclaimed Frank, falling on his knees before her, and clasping her hand, with a convulsive burst of sorrow, to his lips,—“no one loved you as I did: no one will mourn for you as I shall!”

Frank said rightly—no one mourned her so deeply as he did. Years did not remove the effect from his spirit; nay, his whole life bore traces of it; and those traces, like the seed sown in good ground, produced a harvest for the garner of heaven.

At the moment of Mrs. Lawford's death, the bride and bridegroom were about to set out on a marriage tour of some months, at the end of which time they hoped the living destined for them would be ready. Camilla, however, promptly, and at that moment properly, decided that the tour should be given up, for that she could not leave her family in this sudden distress. At first her father, thankful for the assistance of his strong-minded daughter, resigned every thing to her management; but when, as his mind recovered its usual tone, he saw how completely Mr. and Mrs. John Colville were the masters there, he roused himself, and quietly intimated, that this was not their permanent home. Camilla's permanent home was not, however, ready for her; and making yet an effort to retain her power, her father wrote to his son George, who now had been living so long under his displeasure, inviting him to return and assist him henceforth in the management of his affairs. George, who by this time had sown all his wild oats, accepted his father's invitation with unbounded joy, and within a few days presented himself at Lawford, to the surprise of his sister, who knew nothing of what her father had done. The father and son met with the utmost affection and confidence; and from this Camilla understood her father's real intentions. Not a hint, however, did she give of this; but speaking only of the pleasure she and her husband would now have in being released to attend to their own duties, made her retreat with all the dignity of entire conquest.

CHAPTER IV.

Years went on. George married much to his father's wishes, and grandchildren sate on the old man's knees. As was expected, Camilla and her husband, now Dr. Colville, provided for Adolphus; and this made her family regard her with unbounded gratitude. "She is a wonderful woman," said her brother George. "She has the credit of the family so at heart," said her father,—“has never let the world know of poor Adolphus's deficiencies; and even when he married a farmer's daughter, took the young woman under her care, and made a complete gentlewoman of her!” “A really noble character is Aunt Colville,” said young Mrs. Lawford to her children; thinking that, as Aunt Colville had none of her own, her sons and daughters could not do better than be such to her. “Never fail in deference to your aunt, and only try to be as clever a woman as she is!”

Dr. Colville was now an archdeacon. All the world bore testimony to his talents and his ambition. Churchmen said, that he was fit to be an archbishop: that his controversial writings placed him at the head of all polemical writers whatever: that he was one of the stanchest pillars of church and state; that he was proud and ambitious, to be sure, but then he had the zeal of an apostle. Dissenters and radicals, and such like people, said that Dr. Colville was the most bigotted zealot of the present day; a proud, hot-headed churchman; an upholder of every corruption of Church and State; a man no more fitted to preach and teach the doctrines and practices of the humble, self-denying son of the poor carpenter, than Judas Iscariot himself, who sold him for money, as Dr. Colville and such men did!

Frank, ever since his law studies had begun, had lived in London apart from his family. They pursued their course, and he his, every passing year making the distance between them in many respects greater and greater. He was called to the bar; and his family began to listen out, somewhat impatiently, for the reports of his law-reputation. “What is Frank doing?” asked old Mr. Lawford of his eldest son; and his eldest son answered him by merely repeating the question; and somehow or other, they obtained from somewhere, a very unsatisfactory answer. Frank had left the bar and turned—what had he turned? A shopkeeper? No! A Methodist-preacher? No; worse even than

that—he had turned an author! An author! repeated some individual of the family: well well; after all, that might not be so very bad. He had perhaps been writing on the practice or usage of law; whole libraries of books must have been written about law, and all books have authors.

No, no! Frank had not written on law: Frank had written a poem—and a novel! these anonymously. No wonder he got no briefs! and now he had come out in his own name, as the author of some strange book which nobody could rightly understand, and yet which every body was reading.

The good people at Lawford regarded an author as some sort of a disreputable character; a combination of extravagance and poverty. Authors were people who never had a shilling to bless themselves with; who sate shivering in garrets, with blankets pinned round them, writing for their daily bread, which they were never able to win. Old Mr. Lawford, in his reading days, had read Johnson's "Lives of the Poets." The life of Savage was the only one he distinctly remembered; but that, and the print of Hogarth's poor author, which, with the rest of the set, hung in the dining-room at the Hall, furnished him with his idea of authors. Duns and printers' devils besieged their doors; they were people who always were in debt for their lodgings and their green-groceries. Professional men, and county families, could not associate with authors, penny-a-liners, and poor devils! George, who never had been a reader, adopted his father's notions, and thought, of a truth, that Frank was disgracing the family. The only periodicals that came to Lawford, were the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review*: the *Gentleman's* never condescended to speak of Frank's publications; but the *Quarterly* contained a regular slashing and cutting-up article on his last work. It was full of bitter personal sarcasm; taunted, and jeered, and ridiculed; and then, instead of proof from the volume, gave mutilated passages, in Italics and Roman capitals, so that the very author might blush at his words. The Lawfords felt as if the whole family was cut up, root and branch, by this article.

"I shall never show my face again in public!" said old Mr. Lawford.

"Frank has disgraced us all!" exclaimed George, in a towering passion.

By the next post letters from Lawford reached the author, expressing the family displeasure at this his unimaginable folly.

In return, Frank sent them reviews on the other side; but these they never read. He knew whom he had to thank for the invective in the *Quarterly*,—it was Archdeacon Colville; but he made no remonstrance to him, for he had long known that he and his brother-in-law could not be expected to think alike. Camilla wrote to him a dictatorial and yet a half-flattering letter, acknowledging his talents, and upbraiding him for the abuse of them. His reply to her was in the words of Scripture: "Let not him who hath put his hand to the plough turn back to the house to fetch his clothes." Camilla said, it was a misapplication of Scripture; it was an abuse of holy things; it was almost blasphemy; and, while her brother remained in that temper, he must take his own course and the consequences of it.

Frank was not much surprised by the letters from his family: he knew that this, his new course of life, involved their displeasure, perhaps entire alienation from him. This, however painful, he must bear. Frank saw many things very differently from what they did. At the same time that he did not, by any means, undervalue wealth, or rank, or worldly distinction, there were other things which he valued more highly,—truth, justice, and the peace of his own mind; and these seemed to have called him into the ranks of literature, despised though this vocation might be by his family. Nevertheless, like every young author, he doubted not but that his course would be a brilliant one; and that he should achieve fortune at the same time that he achieved fame and honour. Ah, poor Lawford! he was young in those days; and, though his glowing, youthful enthusiasm prophesied truly of the glory and usefulness of the future, it told him nothing of sleepless nights, and weary days of labour and disappointment, and weariness of brain, and anxiety that would not be allayed. Of these it told him nothing; his sister Camilla was the raven that croaked of all these things; and his father, to whom she sent copies of all her letters, repeated the doleful note. But Frank Lawford was incorrigible; and, after some time, the family made up their minds to bear, as philosophically as they could, the disgrace of being connected with a poor, thriftless author; giving him, as their parting words, the intelligence, that having wilfully turned his back on the path of honourable independence, if not of distinction, which they had chosen for him, he must never look to them for countenance or assistance.

Time went on ; and then it came suddenly into the heads of sundry people, that George Lawford, Esquire, of Lawford, would most ably represent their interests in parliament ; and accordingly he was warmly solicited to allow himself to be nominated. His father thought of his own parliamentary life, now lying behind him at the distance of many years, and to him it seemed encircled with a golden halo. Yes, his son, his favourite son, as he now called him, must certainly serve his country, as his father had done before him. George was not unwilling : Dr. and Mrs. Colville warmly seconded it ; but then came a difficulty — George was no public speaker ; the election would be contested violently ; there was a deal of popular talent on the other side ; pamphlets and broadsides were already in circulation ; George must have some one beside him who could write and even speak for him. “ If I had only Frank’s powers ! ” said George. Mrs. Colville had thought the same thing, and so had her husband ; and then, as by a simultaneous impulse of mind, the whole family conclave spoke out. Would it not be as well to make use of Frank ? there had been displeasure enough shown by them. To be sure, Frank might have served them just as well, had he been a barrister ; but then, as he chose to be an author, why not make use of him ? Poor Frank ! no doubt he would embrace, with joy, such an opportunity of reconciliation with his family ; and then, when his brother was in parliament, he might be able to do something for him ; and, as this unfortunate *cacoethes scribendi* seemed natural to him, they must have a little charity towards him, just as they would, if he had a crooked spine. “ To be sure we must,” said Mrs. Colville, who had come to the Hall for the occasion, “ we must all remember, that Frank is our own flesh and blood ! ”

His father wrote to him immediately a letter at Camilla’s dictation. A good deal was said of his delinquency ; of his having run counter to the wishes of his father, of the grief which his pertinacity had occasioned, and of the willingness there was, notwithstanding, in the parental heart, to pity and to forgive. Now, he was told, an opportunity offered to serve his brother George in his own peculiar way ; and, by serving George, to oblige his family. His family were willing, the letter said, to make this occasion the means of family union ; the past should be forgotten, and good understanding henceforward exist among them.

The whole affair was then explained to him ; and he was desired immediately to come down, so that, on the spot, he might employ all his powers for the service of his brother.

Instead of going down however as requested, Frank replied by letter to the family proposal of peace ; and this letter fell like a thunderbolt among them. It was a long and eloquent letter ; a letter full of affection, and which had not been written without emotion. The purport of it was, that much as Frank desired a reunion with his family, willing as he would be, at any personal risk to himself, to serve any one of them ; yet, he grieved to say, that in this one particular alone, he could do nothing. The most honest and single-minded inquiry after truth, had led him to adopt political opinions opposite to those of his family. It was a matter of principle and duty with him, not of pleasure or will ; and that, however painful it was to differ or separate himself in any way, from those with whom natural affection allied him, he had no alternative, if they regarded his conduct as offensive, because every principle of religion and duty would force him to adhere to what he considered as truth.

No words can describe the wrath, and indignation, and scorn, which this letter produced. He was a traitor to God, and to his family. This was what his abandonment of a gentlemanly profession had led him to ! They knew that it would lead to no good ; Dr. Colville had said, from the first, that there was nothing but rank radicalism in his books, however disguised ; he was a disgrace to the family ! and it was a thousand pities that ever they had asked his assistance.

The most angry letters were sent him in reply. His father disowned him as his son ; Mrs. Colville as her brother ; George foretold the loss of his own election through him ; and even poor Adolphus put forth a feeble philippic.

As George had foretold, he lost his election ; and lost with it a deal of money, which made it harder still to bear : all of which, as a matter of course, was ascribed to Frank.

CHAPTER V.

Frank Lawford had yet a third sin to commit, and that was his marriage ; but a peculiar event led to that, which we must relate. He was walking one day along Harley Street, when a horse in a private little carriage, in which an elderly lady was seated, took fright, and almost immediately dashed

it to pieces against some impediment in the road. The lady was in the utmost alarm and danger; when Frank, without a moment's consideration for himself, rushed forward, and bore her in his arms to a place of safety. Every one admired his promptitude and presence of mind. The old lady was most grateful; and, giving her address, begged him to call upon her. This led to an intimate acquaintance. She unfolded to him her particular circumstances: told him that she had no immediate connexions in the world, excepting an old Scotch cousin, with whom, as a child, she had been brought up. To him she had left the bulk of her property, and to his children, one of whom was a missionary in the East Indies; another, a clergyman in Scotland; and the third, a daughter, who gained her living as a daily governess. The father and daughter lived in London; but a misunderstanding of some years' existence kept herself and them apart. The old gentleman was, in case she died without a will, her heir-at-law; but it was her intention, she said, to surprise him by her liberality. She knew him very well, and his proud spirit: he would not come near her, lest he should seem to be courting her favour; but she would be his and his children's benefactor after all. But there was more to leave, the old lady went on to say, than what she meant for the Macintyres: she should have a residuary legatee, and perhaps—and with this she nodded and said, that Mr. Frank would never have reason to regret having risked himself to save her. There was something very cordial and maternal about this old Mrs. Vaughan; and, in reply to all her inquiries respecting his family and his prospects, he frankly told all—that he was disowned by his family, and why. Mrs. Vaughan was herself a radical in politics—Heaven help her! She went a long way beyond Frank; advocated universal suffrage, and universal equality in every way, for rich and poor, black and white, man and woman, alike. All which was good and right as a principle; but then, Mrs. Vaughan was very extreme in her opinions for all that; thought that women should choose their own husbands very much more independently than they now did; and that they should sit in parliament as well as men. It was on these subjects, she said, that she and her cousin Macintyre had quarrelled. Frank was the least in the world startled when he saw, in this lady, the exaggerated reflex of his own opinions; but he nevertheless made her a present of a

handsomely bound set of his own works, which she very carefully read, and criticised very freely. At Mrs. Vaughan's, Frank met a certain Mr. Morgan, an author likewise by profession, a round-faced, sallow-complexioned young man, of very obsequious and deferential manners; but whose political and general opinions much more accorded with the old lady's, than his own. Frank felt a sort of instinctive dislike to Morgan; Morgan's ultra notions seemed to create a reaction in his mind; and long, and often very warm, were the arguments between them in Mrs. Vaughan's presence, where alone he met Morgan, and to please and flatter whom Frank suspected these opinions to be held.

Like old Mr. Macintyre, Frank felt frequently a sort of delicacy in going uninvited to Mrs. Vaughan's, lest it should seem to be for selfish ends; besides which, the society of Morgan, whom he was always sure to meet there, was extremely distasteful to him.

One day when Frank had been absent a whole month, he received a note from the house-keeper, informing him that Mrs. Vaughan was very ill and wished to see him. He found her evidently sinking fast: she was still sensible, pressed his hand, reproached him for his long absence, and spoke with tears of her gratitude. Morgan was not there; and with a feeling of self-reproach for having really neglected her—she who had been as a mother to him when his own father and family had cast him off—he resolved, during the rest of her life, to devote himself to her. He stayed with her the whole day; read prayers to her, to which she was too weak to respond; and only left her at night on the assurance of the physician that he saw no immediate danger, promising to return early the next morning. The next morning when he returned she was no more.

Her death affected him greatly, much more than he could have imagined. He was invited by her executors to attend her funeral and be present at the reading of her will. There were present, beside himself, the executors, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Macintyre and his daughter. Mr. Macintyre was an old man; he probably, however, looked older than he really was, from his snow-white hair and a degree of paralytic weakness, which had given a bending feebleness to his whole person. He entered the room, leaning on the arm of his daughter, a young lady of perhaps three-and-twenty, whose countenance was less remarkable for beauty than a pensive, earnest expression, which told that sorrow had made

early demands upon a mind naturally reflective.

Miss Macintyre moved slightly but courteously to the assembled company, and then occupied herself by seating her father in the large cushioned chair which had been provided for him. After he was seated, the old gentleman looked round with the air of one who felt himself the principal person there. He had already acted as chief mourner; and having now arranged his whole person to his mind, he remarked that nothing, he believed, prevented their proceeding to business.

There seemed some little hesitation and uncertainty among the executors, every one of whom saw a some one else there in that character whom he did not expect. At length, however, at a nod from Mr. Morgan, which Mr. Macintyre internally called impertinent, the seals were broken and the reading of the will commenced. Frank glanced round the assembly: every countenance appeared calm excepting Morgan's, which was deeply flushed, and the quick, restless movement of whose eye betokened something extraordinary. He divined how it was. The will bore date but a few months previously. Three thousand pounds was left to Mr. Macintyre; considerable sums to various charities; her large edition of the works of Thomas Paine, and her Bayle's Dictionary, bound in calf, to Frank Lawford, Esquire, and the whole remainder of her property, real and personal, to Joseph Morgan, Esquire, subject only to the payment of a few stipulated annuities.

The will was listened to with apparent patience in the hope of some codicil or other. But no! codicil there was none. Joseph Morgan was residuary legatee, and Frank Lawford had a few books.

"*This is not the will!*" exclaimed Mr. Macintyre.

"*This was not the will of five years ago, in which I was an executor!*" exclaimed one or two, whose names as executors were now omitted.

"*This is her last will and testament!*" said Mr. Morgan, with an ill-suppressed exultation.

Frank Lawford felt now, for the first time, that really, after all, the old lady's will had been a matter of importance to him. He was excited and displeased; he felt that he had been deceived, if not ill-used.

"Let us go!" said Catherine Macintyre to her father, on whom she feared the effects of this unlooked-for testamentary document.

"Three thousand pounds only!" said he, without noticing his daughter; "and what do you suppose the residuary legatee's share may be — this Morgan, whom nobody knows any thing about — what will he get?" asked the old gentleman from one of the executors under the former will, and who, not being named in the new one, had thus lost the two hundred pounds which were left to each executor for his trouble, and thus felt himself also an aggrieved party.

"Not much under twenty thousand pounds," replied he, "when all the annuities are reckoned out."

Poor Macintyre swore that he would have the will set aside; called Morgan a knave and an artful interloper, and a scene of angry contention began.

"Let us go, dearest father," again besought Catherine, casting at the same moment a glance towards Frank Lawford, as if asking for his assistance.

"Who are you?" asked Mr. Macintyre, almost fiercely, as Frank came forward and politely offered to assist the old gentleman out.

"This is Mr. Frank Lawford," said one of the disappointed executors. "Till within these six months he too stood very well in Mrs. Vaughan's will; and now the very mention of him is like an insult."

"Do me the favour, Mr. Frank Lawford," said Mr. Macintyre, "to see my daughter to the coach, which is at the door. I must know more about this iniquitous will; but this is no place for her."

Catherine prayed him to return with her; but he was already in fierce contention with Morgan.

"I will remain with your father," said Frank, handing her into the coach. "I will not leave him; and with your permission I will accompany him home."

From this day the fates of Catherine and Lawford were bound together.

As Catherine had feared, Mrs. Vaughan's unsatisfactory will greatly affected her father. From that time he never was well; and before he came into possession of the bequest which she had made him, he was beyond the power of enjoying it, had it been ten times the amount. — He was gone where the want of money can never give pain, nor the possession of it pleasure.

In process of time news went to the Lawfords of Lawford, that Frank was married to a poor Scotch girl, without even family or wealthy connexions to recommend her. But

by this time Frank's actions had ceased to surprise his family; "and yet," said Mrs. Colville, "this last act has put the finishing stroke to his former extraordinary conduct. Had Frank," argued she, "distinguished himself by marriage, other things, in course of time, might have been passed over; but a false step in marriage leaves nothing to be repaired!"

The father revised his will, leaving merely a small annuity to Frank, much less than to poor Adolphus, who had now sunk into a state of imbecility; and then, in the full belief that all his earthly duties had been thoroughly performed, at the age of eighty-six, went down to the grave of his fathers. Frank was out of England at the time of his father's death, and thus had no opportunity of craving his father's blessing, even if the old man would have given it. He, however, had so long been used to disappointment and trial, that let it come how and when it would he was found, like the true soldier on watch, ready to meet the enemy. A happy man nevertheless, whether fortune smiled or frowned, was Frank Lawford; for his sound mind, and his sound heart, and the love that surrounded him, as with an atmosphere of heaven, made his life a perpetual rejoicing. His literary career had also been a bright one. He had taken a high and sure place among the noblest minds of his country. Those great truths, of which at first he had been, as it were, the solitary apostle, advanced, and, advocated by his eloquent pen, had now rooted themselves into the great national heart, as a part of its own vitality. For all this, his had been an arduous and anxious life; and at fifty-seven all the provision that he had been able to make for his family, was the sum of two thousand pounds, for which his own life was insured. In a worldly point of view, rich stock-brokers, and bankers, and holders of railway shares, would have said, that he had provided wretchedly for his family. Sad thoughts of the same kind often clouded his own mind; but then, in those dark moments, neither he nor those fat money-bags took into account, that Frank Lawford would leave to his children what money alone would never purchase,—fine education, the noblest principles, and his own unblemished name.

CHAPTER V.

BUT let us now take a peep into that happy home at Kensington, which for so many years he had called his own.

It was Christmas day. Thousands of homes were prepared in London for that day's festivity. The rich feasted the rich, the great feasted the great, and the noble the noble. There was a dinner-party also that day at Frank Lawford's, and the whole house had a look of festivity. Agnes, and her young brothers, had decorated the walls with evergreens; sprigs of holly, with their clustering berries, peeped out from above the heavy frame of their father's portrait, that beautiful portrait painted by Phillips in his best manner; a wreath of bay encircled the noble brow of his marble bust, which Chantrey, out of love to the author, had presented to his wife, and which stood among his books,—those household gods of his, in his library. But it was in the dining-room that there was most show of festivity; a garland of evergreen wreathed the chandelier, and at four o'clock the window curtains were drawn, and the lamps lighted, and the side-board shone out with its glass, and plate, and verdant evergreens. The table was spread for twelve; five individuals composed the family; the father and mother, Agnes the only daughter, and the two boys, Arthur a tall manly fellow, who looked fit to combat with the whole world, and little Harry as he was called, more as a term of endearment, than because of his size. Harry was turned eleven, slender in form, and timid in temper, gentle as a girl, and with a soft and delicate complexion, and beautiful wavy hair of a golden brown, which gave an expression of tender beauty to his whole person. He might have been justly painted as a St. John in childhood, and his character corresponded with that of the beloved Apostle.

These were the family; the expected guests were seven. An excellent smell of capitally cooked viands came up from the kitchen; the wine was decanted; Mr. Frank Lawford had done it with his own hands, and very good wine it was; excellent port and sherry—none other; and such as he would have given to the best lord in the land. The family awaited their guests in the dining-room, and punctually as the clock struck four the dinner was served, and at that moment the *back-gate* bell rang, not the *front* bell, and little Harry exclaimed joyfully that they were come! In they came, the welcome guests! and were received at the dining-room door as they came in, and then conducted to their seats.

"Ay, bless you, madam, how good it is of you to do so much for a poor body like me,"

said the clean, white-haired old man, with the spare form, and the friendly eye, whom Mrs. Lawford placed at her right hand.

"God bless you, sir; and a merry Christmas, and a happy new year," said the half-blind, elderly needlewoman, whom Mr. Lawford placed in the similar seat by him.

"Take the seat near the fire, Mrs. Collins," said Mrs. Lawford, to an emaciated and half-famished-looking young woman, in poor but decent mourning, with an anxious countenance, who led by the hand a pale but intelligent-looking boy, "you will find that seat warm, and Johnny will sit beside you."

With a blush that crimsoned her melancholy face, and a tear in her eye, she took the offered seat, appreciating the thoughtful kindness of giving her and the boy those seats, for they two were the worst clad in the whole company, and were thus chilled to the bone.

"Here is a seat for you," said Agnes, leading up an old man, a sort of Trotty Veck, in his Sunday clothes, and with a little cheerful face, all smiles and courtesy, like a sunshiny winter's day,—“here's a seat for you on my side the table,” said she, placing him opposite the dejected young widow.

Five guests were seated when the two last entered, and were cordially welcomed by all present. The dress and appearance of these last comers indicated much more of comfort in home and circumstances than was apparent in that of the others. The one was a man about fifty, of rather a severe countenance, but with, as phrenologists would say, striking intellectual developments. His strong iron-gray hair was cut in a precise fashion, and turned back from his forehead; his deep-set gray eye, which seemed to penetrate with a stoical coldness whatever met its glance, looked out from under a pair of thick shaggy eyebrows: there was, however, an expression of earnestness and heart about the lower part of the face, which somewhat neutralized the stern severity of its upper features. The whole head and face indicated a character in which two opposite natures prevailed, and left the beholder in doubt as to which would be the dominant one. His dress was that of a well-to-do artisan. A well-worn, yet not by any means a thread-bare suit, showed that he was one that required its duty from every thing that belonged to him. He looked like a man who had money for a new suit when it was needed, but who would not buy one until then. With him

there entered the room—not leaning on his arm, although she looked as if she knew that to be the mode in genteel society—a young girl of perhaps twenty, his daughter, and the apple of his eye, whose trim and elegant figure gave to her otherwise plain attire a rather modish and—if one may be allowed the word with reference to a poor girl—a *distingué* air. Her countenance was soft and remarkably pleasing; her fine black hair as smooth and glossy as silk; and the distinct pencilling of her exquisite eyebrows, which in colour exactly resembled her hair, accorded beautifully with a rich and peach-like complexion. The eyes, of a deep violet colour, had a laughing and rather coquettish expression, to which a little rosy mouth, with its curved and pouting lips, had been made to match. At the back of her head, as if with the design of concealing as little of her fine hair as possible, was set a jaunty little cap, modestly, but tastily trimmed with pink ribbons. Her dress was black French merino, made tight to the bust, and up to the throat, where it was relieved by a very small, white, fine linen collar. She looked, but for a certain bashfulness, or rather the air of one not quite at her ease, like a young gentlewoman in her morning-dress. These two were William Jeffkins and his daughter Fanny. Fanny had now been in service in the country for six months, and this was her first visit to her father.

Jeffkins and his daughter were evidently, in a worldly point of view at least, the most respectable of all the guests, and accordingly were received by them all with bows and politeness. Every one would have given up their seats to them, more especially the merry old man who sat by Agnes and the half-blind old needlewoman. But the Jeffkins' places had been appointed beforehand, and so the dinner commenced.

Such was a specimen of a Christmas dinner party at Frank Lawford's; and never could there be more joyous or more delighted guests, or more gratified hosts. It would have been a very convincing argument against any despiser or condemner of the poor to have witnessed the politeness of these poor people one towards another. The old man, to whom a good dinner made an era in his life, and who at eighty could count up every good dinner he had ever eaten, begged that "this lady" or "that gentleman" might be served before him—he was in no hurry; and the merry old man, with his white hair and his stiff joints, apologised to his neighbour

right and left for beginning to eat before the whole company was served. It would have done any body's heart good to have seen that humble company, in their poor but decent apparel, sitting at that good man's table as equals with him and his family, for that one day at least.

It was Frank Lawford's opinion, that if we would really raise and improve the moral condition of the poor, nay, even the apparently depraved, those in the classes above them, those better instructed than they, must treat them as brethren and sisters. Only let the poor feel, that we consider them as children of the same great Father in Heaven, not in *word*, but in *deed*, and we shall obtain unbounded influence over them. People argued with him, that this was true only as regarded particular individuals; but that the lower classes, generally, were too depraved and rude for any friendly or intimate intercourse to exist between them and the refined and pure: that law, and the terrors of law alone, must keep the poor in order. His own experience proved, that this was not so true as is generally believed; he knew that the kindness and the friendly countenance of a respectable man may reform even those whom law and its penalties would drag down to perdition. These his poor guests, his humble friends, some of them of many years standing, had been raised, by his Christian love and goodness, from misery and depravity, either in themselves or those with whom they were connected. They remembered him in their prayers; he was their friend and counsellor in all their troubles, and the poor have many. He had assisted them, not so much by money, as by instilling hope into hopeless breasts; by creating a motive for amended lives; by inducing them to save something, if it were but a shilling—for a man is twice a man when he can call something his own, if it be no more than a three-legged stool. Other friends of this class he had also besides these seven guests, in the same class of society, but they were not here; some, through his means, had emigrated to America, and cheered his heart with pleasant news of their growing prosperity; some were in Africa; and one,—let not the rigidly righteous exclaim in horror,—among the convicts of South Australia. Yes, and for that man, his heart had bled as for a brother. The man was of a weak yielding nature, and had been beguiled into crime; and the remembrance of Frank Lawford's pity and forgiveness, would work a surer reform in him than

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his seven years' exile. Such were the every day acts of this good man's Christian benevolence; they were seen and blessed by the angels of God, rather than trumpeted among men.

Of all his humble friends, Frank Lawford was most attached to Jeffkins; their acquaintance commenced fifteen years before, and not under the most promising circumstances. Mr. Lawford was passing, one summer Saturday afternoon, down a wretched street in the neighbourhood of Spital's-fields, where he saw a crowd gathered round a drunken woman, whose clothes were almost torn from her back, and whose face was bleeding from a deep gash, which had been caused by her falling on some iron railing. She was still young; and a little girl of about five or six years old, forlorn and ragged as her mother, stood crying beside her. It was a melancholy spectacle. The crowd around was filled with a mingled sentiment of pity and disgust. Mr. Lawford inquired who she was; and at length ascertained that her home was in the neighbourhood. The police came in and assisted her away; and Mr. Lawford followed, impelled by the deepest pity. Nothing could be more miserable than the home to which she was taken; her husband, who appeared like herself intoxicated, though not to the same extent, received her with the most bitter curses.

From this unpromising beginning the most fortunate results for the husband and child followed. Lawford soon discovered him to be one of those whom an unhappy marriage had dragged down into the cruelest misery. The wife soon died, but not without a little gleam of better feeling brightening, like the ray of a winter's sunset, the heart of herself and her husband. The wintry day was over; and the morning dawned which ushered in, as it were, a more vernal season, of which it might truly be said, that Mr. Lawford was the sun. A sunbeam of hope had burst into his formerly joyless heart and home; life seemed worth enjoying, but that quite in another way than he had hitherto called pleasure. He was a man of a naturally good understanding; he became a reader, and a thinker also; and being permitted to consider Mr. Lawford, not only his adviser but his friend, he felt himself raised in the social scale; he had become emphatically *A MAN*. From that time he was sober and industrious; and, being a clever workman, was able to save money. One master-fault, however, he had, which Mr. Lawford in vain combated;

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this was that natural severity of character of which we before spoke, and which, whilst it made him severe in his judgment on himself, left him wanting in charity and forbearance towards others. In particular was he severe in his judgment of women; the errors of his wife stood blackly before him, and only forgiven to her through her death. The beauty of his daughter, and her natural gaiety of character, excited in him nothing but fear and foreboding. He believed that he had done well in sending her into service into the country; and, when she was away from him, he thought of her with nothing but pride and affection. Poor Jeffkins! and she was now come back to him for a few days of Christmas holiday; and again he trembled, and was uneasy for her. "She's the lamb of my bosom—she's the joy of my life; and if evil happen to her, it will be the death of me," said he, in his heart, many a time, as he saw her light figure crossing the house-floor, or heard her singing over some little fire-side duty.

Such were Jeffkins and his daughter. But the dinner is now over; and the poor guests blessed God, and their good hosts, for a dinner which had "strengthened, as it were, the very marrow of their bones;" pity only, thought good Mrs. Lawford with a sigh, that we can afford you such a dinner but once a-year. And now, while they are left to a little comfortable gossip among themselves, over the dining-room fire, and Mr. and Mrs. Lawford are together in the library, before tea again assembled them, we will hear what information Agnes has gained from her humble friend, Fanny Jeffkins, of her new life in service.

"Yes, Miss Agnes," said she, in the tone of one not intending to take advice, "it is all very true what you say about stopping in one place, and living with such a quiet, respectable family as the Dean's; but I have made up my mind to leave, and then, as I said before, old Mrs. Colville, the late Archdeacon's lady, your own aunt, Miss Agnes, who now lives at Lawford with your uncle, let me know through her woman that she would get me a place; she took a deal of notice of me when she was staying at the Deanery."

"I have heard a deal about my aunt Colville from papa," said Agnes.

"Yes, Miss, I dare say," continued Fanny, "she is a very nice lady; and her woman Mrs. Sykes told me, that if ever I left my present place, I might have a situation as upper nurse maid at her lady's niece's at Law-

ford Rectory, and that is all among your own relations, Miss Agnes, and is just what I should like. I should live with the Rector's lady, and have better wages than at the Deanery."

"The Rector's lady?" questioned Agnes; "how can that be?"

"Oh, yes, Miss Agnes," continued Fanny, who seemed perfectly informed on the subject, "Miss Lawford, the squire's oldest daughter, old Mrs. Colville's niece, married the present Rector—the son of the late Rector, and brother, only a great many years younger, to Archdeacon Colville."

"Yes, yes," said Agnes, "you are right; I recollect we heard of the marriage; she is niece, and, at the same time, sister-in-law to my aunt Colville. But Fanny," continued she, "I must candidly tell you, that I think my aunt did not act right in inducing you to leave your present situation."

"She did not induce me," said Fanny, crimsoning very deeply, "but it is very dull at the Deanery; the servants are all old, and there's very little company kept—only just once or twice a-year a great party; and I had made up my mind to leave; and so I told Mrs. Sykes, Mrs. Colville's maid, and what she did is no more than one friend might do for another."

"But my Aunt Colville is a very severe and exact woman," said Agnes; "you would be kept in strict order if you lived with her."

"But," said Fanny, "I am to live with Mrs. Sam Colville at the Rectory. I saw her at the Dean's party, and Miss Ada, her unmarried sister, the most beautiful young lady in the world!"

"Is, then, my cousin Ada so beautiful?" asked Agnes with cordial interest, and eager to hear something of those relations of whom she knew nothing.

"She is the handsomest young lady I ever saw," returned Fanny with enthusiasm; "I helped her to dress, because she did not bring her maid, and she stayed all night. She was dressed in pale pink brocaded silk, and wore a tiara of pearls. Every body said how beautiful she was; and there was her brother Mr. Edward, too, in his uniform; he was just then going out to the East Indies, and——" Fanny paused, a peculiar expression passed over her face, and then she continued, "They are a very nice family, Miss Agnes, and I am sure that at Mrs. Sam Colville's I shall find myself very happy."

"If you must leave the Deanery," suggested Agnes.

"I have made up my mind to leave," said Fanny, decidedly, "and so I let Mrs. Sam know; and to tell you the real truth, Miss Agnes, I am not going back to the Deanery but to Lawford at once, and that next week."

"I see, you had made up your mind long ago," said Agnes, smiling.

"Why, Miss Agnes, you see," returned Fanny, anxious to win her auditor to her plans, "it will seem like living at home, to live among your relations; and Mrs. Sam is an excellent lady, and I know that I shall be very comfortable at the Rectory. I shall have better wages than at the Deanery, and my meals with the children; and I am told that they are such sweet children, and I always was so fond of children, and there is a maid to wait on the nursery. It's quite an upper sort of place, Miss Agnes; and then old Mrs. Colville seems such a very clever, nice lady——" Fanny paused, and again Agnes smiled, remembering the picture her father had so often drawn of his sister Camilla.

Poor Fanny Jeffkins! She deceived Agnes, she deceived her father, perhaps, also, she deceived herself as to the true motives for leaving the quiet old Deanery to go and live at Lawford, to take care of Mrs. Sam's children. And why, in speaking of her new situation, and describing the various members who composed the family at the Rectory and the Hall, did she not mention, either to her father or to Agnes, Tom Lawford, the Squire's eldest son, the brother of the beautiful Ada, and of that Mrs. Sam Colville, for whose children she seemed to have conceived so much affection? Poor Fanny! She thought of her own beauty, she thought how she had been kindly noticed, and in part educated by Mr. Frank Lawford and his family. Poor girl! Vanity, and ambition, and the weakness of a tender and trusting heart, had made her listen to false and cruel flatteries, and to foster fond and false hopes. If he were to marry me, thought she a thousand times, his family might forgive him. Old Mrs. Colville took a fancy to me directly. Mr. Frank Lawford and his family have always been my friends. Such things have been before now; and, oh Heavens! if I should ever be Tom Lawford's wife!

The Christmas-day was at an end. The humble guests returned to their own homes, blessing God that there were those who were not ashamed of the poor. The dejected hearts of poor Mrs. Collins and her little son imbibed from that evening a ray of con-

solation that gladdened and comforted their after lives. Jeffkins and his daughter went home also; but Fanny kept from her father, even more guardedly than she had done from Agnes, any knowledge of the true state of her feelings.

CHAPTER VI.

THE next Christmas-day's dinner at Frank Lawford's was not as cheerful as the last. Neither Jeffkins nor his daughter were there, and the cause of their absence saddened the whole party. Yet their names were not mentioned until the guests after dinner were left, as was customary, to have a little gossip among themselves before tea.

"Ay, Lord help us, what a thing this is about Jeffkins and his daughter," said the white-haired old man, with the friendly smile, "what did you hear, Mrs. Bennet?"

Mrs. Bennet, the half-blind old needlewoman, said that she had heard nothing but what Mrs. Collins had told her.

All looked to Mrs. Collins, who immediately drawing her chair more closely into the circle, began for general edification.

"Why, you see," said she, "as Mr. Jeffkins has taken Johnny's prentice, I go there now and then; and he, poor man, felt it now and then a sort of relief to open his heart to me; and yet he is naturally a very close man, and most of what I do know I know only through putting one thing to another. Poor Jeffkins! he thought that Fanny was out of all danger, living at a clergyman's, and in the country: and oh! he was so fond of her, and so proud of her, though he is a man that does not show his feelings. Well, all at once the news came that Fanny had left her service, and nobody could tell where she was. He set off in a hurry to Lawford Rectory, but got no satisfaction. She had given a regular month's warning, at the end of a quarter, when her wages were paid, and they were sorry to part with her; but go she would, and she did not even wait to the end of her month. I never saw a poor man so cut up in my life as was Jeffkins; for he is a proud man, and he knew that this setting off in that way could lead to no good. He advertised her, but he got no answer; and all this time he was as still about it, and said nothing to any body. But my Johnny, whose bed stood in a sort of closet within his chamber, said what nights he used to pass! how he lay tossing and groaning for hours, and then would get up and pray till the very

sweat dropped from off him ; and sometimes he'd curse just as violently, and threaten what he would do—for he's a stern, savage-tempered man when he's angry, is Jeffkins ! He got no answer, however, to his advertisements, and Mr. Frank Lawford, I believe, wrote to his relations at Lawford, but nothing came out. At last, one day a letter came without a name to say, that if he would forgive her, she would come back. He promised he would ; and come back she did one evening at dusk hour. I knew nothing of this at the time, or it should have turned out differently to what it did ; for I would have taken her home to me and have befriended her. What Jeffkins really expected I know not—he had no right to have expected any thing but what he found. But when he saw her condition he would not forgive her ; and God knows what might have happened if it had not been for our Johnny. And hard-hearted, unnatural father that he was, he turned her out of doors again, and bade her go to the workhouse, and give birth to her child there. It's my opinion, however, that he never really meant so bad by her. But she took him at his word, and went, not to any workhouse—God knows where she went—and that's two months since. Jeffkins soon repented of what he had done, and now he would give his life to gain tidings of her or the child. He's a complete wreck ; neither eats nor sleeps, but goes moping about like a melancholy man. He's punished for his hard-heartedness, and God knows what has become of her !”

“God help her !” sighed the half-blind needlewoman.

“God help us all, for poor weak creturs,” said the white-haired old man, with tears running down his cheeks.

“Her body will be turning up, some of these days,” said Mrs. Collins ; “for it's my opinion that she has made away with herself.”

“God help her !” again sighed the needlewoman.

On his fifty-seventh birthday, Frank Lawford gave the finishing stroke to a work which had occupied him for two or three years. It was a work into which he had put his whole soul, and which he believed would be his best gift to posterity.

“Now, Agnes, my child,” said he to his daughter, after dinner, “I must read you the last chapter of my book.” He said this with a remarkably affectionate tenderness of voice,

and, as his daughter looked into his face, she saw that his eyes were filled with tears. She remembered that this was his birthday, his fifty-seventh, and that his mother, whom he had loved so dearly, died at that same age. Agnes was the idol of her father, and his dearest companion ; and, young as she was, at least comparatively speaking, he was satisfied with nothing until it had received her approval.

Without noticing her father's emotion—how often she thought of it afterwards !—she linked her arm into his, and accompanied him into the library, that beloved room which seemed a part of her father, and where she, too, the privileged companion of even his hours of study, sate and wrote, too, without interrupting him ; nay, the father said that it did him good to cast up his eyes from his book, and see her form near him. They sate down at his table, he with his lamp before him and his manuscript, and she on a low seat opposite to him, and just at his knees.

“I must read you the whole of my last chapter,” said he, laying his hand on her beautiful head.

It was a long chapter, and on a serious subject ; it contained a summary of his views of man's duty to man—a subject admirably suited to his pen. It was written from his heart, and was the concentration of the whole spirit of his works and of his life. Agnes' heart glowed as he went on ; she responded to every noble sentiment, and their eyes often met, with an expression of unspeakable affection and union of soul. It was the young disciple sitting at the feet of the master, and hearing for the last time the words of love and wisdom from his lips—oh what lessons were they to be henceforward !

“When man has faithfully fulfilled his duty to his fellow man, then, and not till then, has he a right to call God his Father !”

These were the concluding words of his argument ; and his daughter, with tears of deep emotion in her eyes, gazed lovingly into his face. At that moment a change came over his countenance, and leaning back his head in the large chair in which he sate, he laid his hand upon his heart, whilst a short convulsion shook his frame. Agnes started up. Her scream brought in her mother.—Let us be spared the scene which followed : we cannot describe it if we would—the husband, the father, the noble author at the moment of his work's completion, was dead !

He of all men was entitled to call God his Father; and to his Father he had departed!

A night of sorrow, almost of despair, settled down on that lately so happy household. Poor Jeffkins that night came to the house to crave a word of consolation from his strong-minded friend. The servants told him that Mr. Lawford was dead. Without a word he turned away from the house; and somebody saw him after midnight, sitting on the stone-step at the gate, weeping like a child.

The newspapers, of all creeds and parties, announced within a few days, and with honourable mention of his moral and intellectual worth, the death of Mr. Frank Lawford.

"Poor Frank is dead!" exclaimed his brother George, now the fat and for many years gout-afflicted Squire, to his family at luncheon. "Poor Frank!" and the tear twinkled in his eye as he laid down the paper.

"Poor Frank," said his sister Colville, who sat at the head of the table, "I wonder how he has left his family!"

At that moment letters came in, and among them one from poor Agnes herself to her uncle, to whom she had never before written, announcing the sudden death of her father. Her mother, she said, was ill, but nothing could exceed the kindness of their friends; even the very poor, whom her father had befriended, wished, if possible, to do something to assuage their grief. A few words she said on the very best of fathers, on the noblest of human beings—but as she wrote, her tears blinded her eyes and blotted the paper.

The Squire wept as the letter was read,—
"We ought to have done something for poor Frank," said he. "I have often, and of late in particular, been sorry for the coolness between us: we should have remembered that he was our brother." The Squire wept bitterly,—he had hardly wept more when his wife died.

"We *will* do something," said Aunt Colville, soothingly. "This poor Agnes, now,—what a nice, well-written letter she has sent," said she, also wiping her eyes; "we must see what we can do for her."

The old gentleman wrote a very kind letter back, offered his house to any of them, requested to know of their circumstances, and regretted that his own indisposition prevented his being able to attend the funeral. His son, however, would go as his representative. In a postscript he added, that if his brother

had left them in any pecuniary embarrassment, he begged that he might be applied to; and furthermore, he desired to know what family his brother had left, and what prospects they had in the world.

Mr. Tom Lawford attended his uncle's funeral, and carried back the news that men of rank and distinction attended it likewise. Of about a dozen poor mourners who followed the procession, he said nothing, for he knew not of them: they, however, next to his own family, most bitterly bewailed his loss.

"Make way, will you?" said one of the sexton's assistants to a poor man who stood by the grave after the company had moved away,—
"let's get this earth shovelled in." The person addressed was standing with his arms folded, his hat pulled over his eyes, and was looking into the grave where the coffin lay barely covered with a few shovel-fulls of soil. "By your leave!" said the man, again putting forth his spade. The person addressed heaved a deep groan, and then moved slowly away. "God help him!" said the man, looking after him, and touched by his manner; "I do believe that there lies somebody in this coffin that he loved!"

Tom Lawford returned home, and told of the esteem in which his uncle lived; of his really respectable home; of his valuable library; of his fine portrait and bust; of Agnes, the only daughter, whose grief for her father seemed so excessive; of her mother, who certainly was a gentlewoman; and of the two fine and interesting boys. Of their circumstances generally, he could say nothing; they were much obliged by the kind offers of his father, but whether they were not too proud to accept of them it was difficult to say.

The head of the family gone, and only two thousand pounds left,—what was to be done for the family? Agnes and her mother, with heavy, but yet with trustful hearts, consulted together. In a few days, a letter from the Rev. Mr. Macintyre, Mrs. Lawford's brother in Scotland, arrived to determine their plans. He advised, that what little income there was should be devoted principally to the education of the boys at the school where it was their father's wish that they should be placed. He advised that Agnes should, for the present, accept of the invitation from her father's family,—to visit them, or to make herself useful among them, as it might turn out; and that, for the present at least, his sister should come to him. The letter breathed the warmest affection.

Mr. Macintyre had been the dear friend of her husband ;—she fancied now that, could he have spoken, he would have advised the same.

And now the time came when the happy family of the Lawfords was to be broken up for ever. The books, the portrait, and the bust were gone, — nothing now remained in the house but that which was to be dispersed among strangers by public auction. Mrs. Lawford was gone with the boys back to school. Agnes had suffered much in parting with them. On the morrow she was to part with her mother : this was her last evening in the home of so much happiness, of so much sorrow. She was seated in the chair in which her father had died, sunk in deep thought, and with her eyes swimming with tears, when the door opened, and the figure of a woman in a large cloak, and with her bonnet drawn over her face, entered. Agnes started.

The woman advanced a step or two, and then stood with downcast eyes, like a criminal before his judge.

“Fanny Jeffkins!” exclaimed Agnes, in a tone in which surprise and pity were mingled.

“I am ashamed, Miss Lawford, to come here. I am ashamed to look you in the face after what has happened ; but I heard by chance that you were leaving London for ever, and I felt as if I must see you again.”

“Have you seen your father?” inquired Agnes.

The girl burst into tears, and supported herself against the table.

“Sit down, Fanny,” said Agnes, drawing a chair towards the fire, and near her own. “I am glad that you are come,—what, now, can I do for you?”

“I cannot sit in your presence,” said the girl, after the violence of her emotion was over. “I am very unhappy,” she said. “I am a poor, fallen creature, I know ; and it has cost me a great deal to make up my mind to come—I did not know how you would receive me.”

“I have always wished you well,” said Agnes, who had risen, that at least they might thus seem equal ; “but oh, Fanny, you must answer me one question—why do you not return to your father?”

Again the girl burst into tears, and remained silent.

“Am I to understand,” continued Agnes, “that you do not intend returning to him. If so, why, then, are you here? Am I to ask forgiveness for you? If it be that, how

gladly will I do it!” She made no answer, and Agnes continued. “I do not know how far your life of crime and wretchedness may have hardened your heart, but I cannot believe that you are fallen past recall. Oh, then, Fanny, I beseech of you, by all that is sacred and dear to you, to return to your father,—let me intercede between you! I know what he has suffered on your account,—we, even in the midst of our sorrow, have had tears to spare for him, and he has wept with us : he is a good man, although he may be stern. But only think, Fanny, what you were to him—his all in life—and so as you deceived him!”

The poor girl groaned, clasped her hands, but made no answer.

“Do not close your heart against him,” continued Agnes, “when, like the father of the poor prodigal in the gospel, he holds out his arms to embrace you ; for if you do, you will have no right to blame any one but yourself for your future fate, however dark or unhappy it may be ; nor otherwise, if your life be such as some say, have you a right to intrude yourself into this house.”

The girl sighed deeply, still without replying, and cast a quick and searching glance at Agnes.

“If I seem to speak severely,” continued Agnes, “it is from my earnest desire for your welfare and happiness. You are come here for some purpose—what is it? I am sure it must be good. Speak, then, freely. For my father’s sake I know that your’s will listen to me, if you wish me to be your intercessor. Tell me, then, what I can do for you. We will not cast you off, although you may have sinned ; we are all sinners one way or another before God,—He knows what our temptations have been, and what strength we have had to resist them. God often is more merciful than man ; but then, having once sinned, we must sin no more, and having to suffer in consequence of sin, we must bear it patiently. Tell me, then, for what purpose you are come, and what you require from me.”

Again poor Fanny sighed deeply, and then, as if awaking from a deep trance, fixed her eye on Agnes’ face, “I knew how good you were, Miss Agnes,” said she in a tremulous voice, “and I knew also—sorrowfully and surely did I know it—how unworthy I am to speak with you. You cannot despise me more than I despise myself ; my father cannot love me more than I love him! He thinks I have forgotten him—oh no : I

would lay down my life for him. How have I wished that I could see him in danger of his life, that I might rush in, and, at the sacrifice of my own, save him—that I could hear of his having the plague which would drive every one from him, so that I might go and nurse him night and day and die in thus showing my love! Does this look as if I had no love for him?" asked she.

"Fanny," said Agnes, "you wish to show your affection and devotion to him in some wild improbable way, and such occasions never will occur—but in the simple, easy, common-place way of going to him, and proving to him your repentance, you will not show it. This is no true affection! What days and nights of unspeakable anguish, worse than any suffering of body, you might spare him, and yet you will not! No, Fanny, deceive not yourself with the idea that yours is true affection—it is selfishness—it is pride—God forbid that it should be even worse?"

"It is an easy thing to judge," said Fanny in a voice of deep anguish—"it is a bitter thing to suffer! and I have suffered!"

"Then your child also," continued Agnes, "where is it? These are the thoughts which wring your poor father's heart—what is become of your child?—Ah, you have done very wrong, Fanny, you have sadly deceived us all!"

"Miss Agnes," said Fanny, "you and your family have been very good to me, and how much I have loved you, I have no right to say, seeing how fallen and sinful I have been, and how miserable I am! But however," continued she as if impatient to proceed, "I came here, as you say, for a purpose, and that I must accomplish or die. I have heard that you are going to live altogether at Lawford—that was a fatal place to me!—and there are those yet at Lawford whom I would die to save. You will see *him*, Miss Agnes," continued she in a hurried, agitated voice; "*he* will love you—he cannot help it—and you will love him, there is no helping it; and oh, when you are his wife," said she clasping her hands, "see that right is done to my poor child. It is there! I was not the unnatural mother my poor father imagined me—how could I? I loved the child too well to have done it any wrong—it was dear to me as an angel of heaven, for its father's sake, unkind as he was to me! At first the thought was bitter to me, of you being his wife—but I am now satisfied: I know how good you are, and for mercy's

sake—perhaps even for mine, you will befriend my poor child. Promise me that you will do this!" cried she coming forward almost wildly.

"You startle me," said Agnes; "and I do not understand you—at least can only dimly conjecture your strange meaning."

Fanny looked at her with a hurried but searching glance, and then said, "You know who I mean; he came to your father's funeral—your cousin, Tom Lawford—you cannot help loving him, but then your love will be fortunate."

"Fanny," said Agnes, "far wiser would it have been to have confided your child to your own father's care, rather than to the man who had wronged you so cruelly. You have done wrong: you have made your child an outcast. How could you expect that the family would own your child? Your own father would!"

"My father turned me out of doors on a winter's night—turned me out in my misery, and my shame," said Fanny bitterly. "Oh, Miss Agnes, he is a hard, unforgiving, unpitying man: he had no mercy, and no compassion! What was I to do? without a home, in the streets of London, humbled and ashamed, and my child about to be born! Were I to tell you all I suffered, you would never forget it the longest day you lived. The world goes on smoothly, Miss Agnes, smoothly to the rich and the untempted, and it thinks not on the bleeding and trampled hearts, which misery and an unkind fortune have thrust out under foot! It is easy to talk of sin and of sinners; but God only knows the true burden of their offences. God only knows what I have gone through; and yet, at times, misery and misfortune have made me almost doubt if there were a God!"

"Do not speak so, do not think so!" exclaimed Agnes, "you only aggravate your sin and your misery by such thoughts. God sees you, and even now, in the person of your sorrowing father, calls you back to him!"

"After my child was born," continued Fanny, "as soon as I was able to travel, I sold some of my things to raise a little money, and set off to Lawford. My child was beautiful, I thought no one could have the heart to cast him off—"

"And yet you could," interrupted Agnes.

"That was not my intention," returned Fanny, "I told his father, in the bitterness of my desertion, that, if need were, I would send it to him; and, for my part, I meant to work hard for it. I hoped to get a wet-

nurse's place in London when I returned ; but I took cold, was laid up with a dreadful fever, was insensible for some weeks ; and, when I recovered, it was to find that I had fallen amid worse than thieves. I was in bondage to the vilest and the most remorseless. I was with those who have no mercy, and whom law could not reach. I was sold, body and soul. I had no hope, and no power to rescue myself. Against my will I was now a sinner. Remorse and despair took hold on me ; I felt that now I was a loathsome sinner, and the punishment of sin was on me. I seemed to myself not worth saving—my pride was gone, and my self-respect ; and all that I longed for was revenge on my oppressors, and death for myself. I saw my poor father's advertisements ; but he had thrust me out when I was comparatively spotless—now I was not worth saving—it was too late ! Nothing but death, and the pity and mercy of God could redeem me—and I only said, let me die !”

Agnes wept.

“Oh, Miss Agnes !” continued Fanny, in a broken voice, “it is a lamentable thing to think of a human being made thus hopelessly forlorn—made thus despicable, thus worthless, through the villany of others. What is law for, if these things are to be ? The Queen is a woman like us, and yet there is no pity for us ! Great and good ladies, clergymen's wives and daughters, are women like us, and yet on us they have no pity ! We are down at the lowest turn of fortune's wheel ; and yet, such as I, the betrayed and the unfortunate, are properly objects of pity, and not of anger and scorn.”

“I pity you, Fanny !” said Agnes.

“Yes,” continued she, “you and other good people pity us, as they do thieves and murderers, because they think us wilfully wicked, and therefore the most unfortunate of human beings ; but I have *not* been wilfully wicked. I loved one too high for me : I was beguiled and deceived ; and the loss of my good name, and my father's favour, and the having ruined his peace, was my fitting punishment. My after intention was, to be honest and blameless. I meant to work hard for my child, and to sin no more. But a power, irresistible as death, took hold on me, under the guise of friendship ; and, weak in body and mind, I was dragged down the abyss of infamy and sorrow. God help me ! I only wonder that I committed no murder. But my course will not be a long one ; the sooner I am gone the better,” said she, bursting into tears.

Agnes wept also. “Ah, my poor Fanny,”

said she, “my heart aches for you ; but you must be rescued. Let me send for your father—let me see you ask his forgiveness—let me see you reconciled.”

“We shall, we shall be reconciled !” returned Fanny, impatiently. “I will go to my father myself. I know the parable of the Prodigal Son. I have often thought of it—of going too to *my* father. I have thought also of putting an end to my own life. I must be grown very wicked,” said she, in a tone of the utmost anguish—“very wicked indeed you will think me ! but oh, Miss Agnes, this is the last time we shall ever meet, the last time you will ever hear my voice. I shall never again see my child : hear then my prayer,” said she, sinking on her knees ; “when you are his wife, have pity on my child. Do not be ashamed of the child of an unfortunate mother ! You are good : he will refuse you nothing ; and so, may God Almighty always hear your prayer ; and may no child of yours ever want a friend !”

“Rise, Fanny ! rise,” said Agnes, “you alarm and distress me !”

“Do not refuse me,” pleaded the poor young woman, with eyes full of tears : “or I shall indeed doubt if there be a God in Heaven !”

“All that I can do I will do,” said Agnes tenderly—“but for your child—”

“Plead for it with its unkind father,” said Fanny, “plead for it with him as *you* only can ; and keep my secret from all the world !”

“Promise me, in return, then,” said Agnes, “that you will go to your father !”

“I will ! I will !” said Fanny, rising from her knees. “It will soon be all one to me, whether he is angry or not.”

“This night you will go to him !” repeated Agnes.

“I will ! I will !” returned Fanny hastily, and rushed from the room.

Poor Fanny ! It was a wild dark night ; and, gathering her cloak about her, she ran through the streets, and onward through lane and alley, in the direction of her father's house, which was several miles off : through that vast ocean of life she went, of which she was but one drop of misery and wo. On she went, now feeling as if the pardoning arms of her father's love were enfolding and sustaining her ; now, as if that fearful and heart-rending scene of repulsion and sorrow, which had thrown her, a wreck, upon the sea of infamy and sorrow, was again to be acted. But a strong resolve drove her on. Now she thought of the woman whose victim

she was—the cruel, the unsparing! now of the man whom she had been tempted to murder; and, like a haunting demon, these thoughts drove her onward. “I will go to my father, and will say, I have sinned before Heaven and in thy sight, make me as one of thy hired servants!”

At that very time, poor Jeffkins sat in his solitary home, and thought upon his daughter and wept. His anger had not left him, and yet he wept tears of love and pity. “Better to have been childless,” groaned he, “than to have been thus deserted! So as I loved her! so proud as I was of her—thus to have been deserted!”

He thought on the years of peace and prosperity which had been; on his little property; on his good name; on his powers of mind; on the little set of whom he had been the head; of the days when he had gone preaching into the country, and his little Fanny had gone with him: he thought of Mr. Lawford, his patron and his friend, of the yearly dinner, and the kind intercourse which that good man had allowed to exist between them. He looked at his little shelf of books, at his writing desk, at the little chair in which Fanny had sat as a child; and, all at once, a gush of tenderness overflowed his heart, and bending his face to his knees, he sat and wept like a child.

But poor Fanny came not. She neared her father's door, and then turned aside. She went afar off. It was deep night; no one saw her, or heard her, excepting Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps. A few days afterwards, and the body of a woman, was floating along the icy waters of the river Lea. No one saw it; a jutting bank arrested its course; it floated into a little cove, among the withered sedges of the last year. They too had had their time of bloom and beauty, and so had she; they were bleached by the weather, and blown by the fierce winds of the unkind wintry season; so had she, by the tempests of misery and misfortune. Now like a melancholy funeral pall the gray sedges bent over her, and the strong ice enclosed her in a cold embrace.

CHAPTER VII.

HER painful interview with Fanny Jeffkins, and the sad and strange history which that poor and unhappy girl had told her, hung like a dark cloud over the mind of Agnes Lawford, as the next morning she journeyed towards her new home. The pain of parting

from her mother, and leaving her own home for ever, was mingled with sympathy for her poor humble—*friend*, we were going to say, and friend it shall be, for Agnes was never more her friend than at this moment. The belief that Fanny had really, like the repentant prodigal, gone to her father, was the one cheering ray that brightened the otherwise dark subject. That voice of agony pleading with her, “Be a friend to my child, and keep my secret from all the world!” rung in her ears and in her heart: and determining with herself to wait patiently, and see what circumstances might bring forward, she prayed earnestly, though wordlessly, for help from God, and ability to do that which was best, whatever the duty might be. In this spirit she journeyed on to Leicester, where her uncle's carriage met her, together with that very Mrs. Sykes, of whom poor Fanny Jeffkins had told her. Mrs. Sykes informed her, that her lady was gone out that morning, to make calls with Miss Ada, who was going from home in a day or two on a long visit, and therefore she was sent to meet her. It did not seem a very cordial welcoming of her among them, Agnes thought, and the thought depressed her.

And now, while with a dejected and anxious heart, poor Agnes is making the last ten miles of her journey, let us say a few words to the reader on the exact state of the family, which, at this moment, we understand better than he does.

The father had been now for some years a gouty invalid, who rarely left the house. His sister Colville, fancied that she saw in him traces of an impaired intellect; but in that she was mistaken. It is true, however, that the more active management of his affairs had now been, for some time, in the hands of his eldest son, that Tom Lawford, of whom we have heard something already: still that argued nothing against the sound state of his mind, however infirm his health might be. His sister Colville, who, since the death of her husband, the learned Archdeacon, and of his wife, had resided with him, had taken upon herself the whole internal domestic management, as was sure to be the case wherever she came. Many infirmities, however, he had notwithstanding, which made him willing to yield up the reins of government to any one capable of managing them. Poor man, he required now also much and constant personal attention, and that of a kind which his valet could not give. As he had grown older, he had become much fonder, not of

reading, but of listening to books; he extremely disliked being left alone; he wished always to have some one with him, his daughter Ada, or Mrs. Colville; but they had no time to spare: and so he fretted and grew peevish, and was a trouble to himself and those about him. And thus his family, who had their own pleasures, and their own occupations, were too busy to have any time for him, and were willing enough to escape from his irritability, and frequent ill-humour.

Mr. Lawford now, as in his younger years he had always done, considered his sister Colville the cleverest of women. Right glad was he therefore, after the death of his wife, that she should take up her abode with him, and thus be the most desirable chaperon in the world for his, at that time, two unmarried daughters. All that "sister Camilla" had done in former years for "poor Adolphus," who now was dead and gone, without the world knowing much of his deficiencies, remained in his mind as a debt which the whole family owed to her. She had been a mother to Adolphus; and now, it was with no little gratification that he heard her speak of herself as the mother of his children. As a mother, she had already been looking out in the world for suitable settlements and alliances for them.

The Lawfords, however, were not alone the objects of the diplomatic lady's ambition; the Colvilles were so likewise: for if she was a Lawford by birth, she had become a Colville by marriage; and though she had no children of her own, the large family of younger brothers and sisters of her husband had, ever since her marriage, been objects of her care. All had, one after another, been well settled and well disposed of long ago,—all, excepting the youngest of the family, Sam, who had been brought up to the church, and had now been his father's curate for some years. The Squire, too, had a son, his second son, Edward, who was destined to the church from his infancy, the appointed future Rector of Lawford, when he should have taken orders, and death should have removed the present Rector, now well advanced in years. Nobody but the really clever widow of Archdeacon Colville would have known how to manage all points so as to make every one a gainer in this family game at chess.

Nothing, however, was more easy to her than this. Her own brother-in-law, Sam, the present curate of Lawford, should marry her eldest niece Mildred, and thus, receiving

the living as a part of his wife's fortune, two persons were at once provided for. Mildred and Sam Colville had been brought up, as it were, together; the only wonder was that any body should think of any thing else but their marriage. Mrs. Colville had always prided herself on the success of all her schemes; therefore nothing in this world seemed to her more natural than that her dear old father-in-law should quietly drop off, just at the right moment for the young people to have a home ready to receive them. Mildred became Mrs. Sam Colville, and a little marriage tour of two months, sufficed to put the Rectory-house in good order for them.

"What is to become of Edward?" asked his father, when Aunt Colville first proposed to him the marriage between Mildred and her brother-in-law: "don't let us have another 'poor Adolphus' in the family!"

But the warning was hardly needful. Aunt Colville had managed all that. Years before, while Edward was but a boy, she knew that his inclinations turned rather to the army than the church; and when Edward, with the quick eyes of youth, saw a lover-like intimacy springing up between the Hall and the Rectory, as it had done in the days of the last generation, he opened his heart fully and freely to his aunt, and besought her influence with his father that his destination in life might be changed.

The omnipotent Aunt Colville managed all according to his wishes, and the young soldier embarked with his captain's commission for the East Indies, feeling unbounded gratitude to his aunt, and evincing its continuance by sending to her Delhi scarfs and Indian toys. His career so far had been a brilliant one; and his aunt's favourite phrase was, that "he had engrafted the laurels of military glory upon the old family tree."

Edward, from his boyhood, had been much attached to his young sister Ada, to whom he now wrote of his splendid life in the East, and never ended without saying, that should her course of true love not run smooth, or should she find no one to her mind, she must come out to him. It was a favourite joke of Ada's, that she would go to India to her brother; but it was only a joke: neither she nor her aunt Colville had any ideas of any thing but an English husband in an English home. Ada was the pride of her aunt's heart; and, from the first moment of her becoming the head of her brother's household, she resolved that Ada should marry well. She looked round among the county

gentry for a suitable husband for her, and none seemed so desirable or so suitable as the one whom destiny, it was believed, had appointed for her. This was their neighbour, Mr. Latimer, of the Hays, a gentleman of large independent fortune, who, having now, for several years, been his own master, had established for himself one of the finest and most unexceptionable of characters. Mr. Latimer was one who, both for his worth and his wealth, was universally courted. Any one would have been proud of his alliance; many had striven for it, but he seemed hard to please: he required much, very much in a wife; and, quite aware of his own desirableness to some half-dozen at least unmarried young ladies, still preserved his own unspoiled sincerity of character, and would neither be wooed, nor flattered, nor coquetted into compliance. The world said that he required so much in a wife that he never would be suited, nay, he began almost to think so himself. Aunt Colville, however, was not going to be foiled. She had made up her mind that her niece should, in the end, accomplish that which no one else could. She began even to feel sure of success. People began to congratulate her on the conquest which her niece had made; and she began, even spite of her usual tact and prudence, to speak as if it were as good as settled, when, all at once, to the surprise of the world, and the unspeakable chagrin of Aunt Colville, Mr. Latimer announced his intention of spending two years on his West Indian property. It was very strange, she thought! Two years was so long a period of a lover's life. In two years Ada might be married and gone for ever!—Could it be possible, after all, that he had no serious thoughts of her—or was this a *ruse* on his part to bring the young beauty to terms. She had coquetted with others—she had shown considerable frivolity of character—her anxious aunt had often been displeased and annoyed at her waywardness and petulance in his presence. Had, then, the two years' absence any thing to do with this? was it intended to bring her to her senses, or to wean him of a passion which, perhaps, he thought hopeless? Mrs. Colville tried the question in all ways; she redoubled her own attention to him; talked seriously to Ada; besought of her not to let such a lover escape; spoke of the scandal in the neighbourhood, of the triumph of this and that lady; and remembered, with secret vexation, how, in the secure pride of her heart, she had been so unwise as to speak of the connexion as

certain. What if he had heard of this, and was now deserting the field to prove himself free, and leave the lady a free course with her other lovers? Never had Aunt Colville been in such a dilemma before. That no enemy, however, might triumph, she maintained, as much as possible, the old appearance of things,—spoke of “dear Mr. Latimer's departure” as a public calamity; begged him to spend all the time he could possibly spare with them, and took care that he should not lack the opportunity of declaring himself to Ada if such were his wish. It looked exceedingly well that Mr. Latimer spent his last evening at Lawford. Ada was perfectly charming, mild, and gentle, and the very ideal of what Latimer's wife ought to be; but for all that, what did he say at parting? that he had no expectation of finding her *Miss Lawford* on his return. And thus he left the house, and the next day left England, without declaring his passion, or endeavouring to secure her affections to himself in any way.

Mrs. Colville was exceedingly angry, but she said not a single word either of her anger or her chagrin to Ada; that she kept for her own breast and for Mrs. Sam Colville, who, since her marriage, had risen very high in her aunt's opinion. Ada was too proud, whatever her feelings might be, to express them to any living soul. To the world, her aunt spoke of Mr. Latimer as of the dear friend of the family, as of one who had quite a fraternal regard for all the young people; but for Ada she now began to look out for a new connexion in the gay world of London, to which now, for the first time, they went during the season. But a great change seemed to have come over the young beauty. It was the working of a deep, earnest love, her aunt imagined; and therefore, after having again unsuccessfully schemed and planned, she thought it wisest to leave things to themselves, and, in so doing, she returned to her former wishes regarding Latimer. She was convinced that he would not marry whilst abroad; and, in the meantime, she bent which Ada's mind seemed to have taken would only prepare her more completely to fascinate him on his return. All would be well, she doubted not, in the end; but as diplomacy was her passion, she could not help taking some steps to facilitate that end, and those steps were remarkably easy ones. Mr. Latimer's only sister, to whom he was greatly attached, and some few years older than himself, had been married now seven

ral years to a Mr. Acton, a nephew of the good old Dean, where poor Fanny Jeffkins had first lived in service. Mr. Latimer had spoken much and warmly of his sister to Ada; they met for the first time, since Ada was a mere child, at that large party at the Deanery, for which poor Fanny Jeffkins had dressed Ada in her pink dress and tiara of pearls. Both ladies were much pleased with each other. Fortune favoured Aunt Colville's schemes in so far, that Mr. Acton purchased a small estate in an adjoining county, where he built a cottage ornée, and the family came to reside within the last six months. Like Mrs. Colville, Mrs. Acton perhaps thought that Ada would be a suitable wife for her brother; she in the first place had appeared charmed by her beauty, and nearer acquaintance seemed not to have lessened the effect. Mrs. Colville considered the circumstance of her inviting Ada to her house for a long and intimate visit, to be a sure proof that she was tacitly forwarding the same object.

By the time, therefore, when Agnes came to reside at her uncle's, Aunt Colville had returned to her old opinions, and regarded Ada unquestionably as the future Mrs. Latimer. She began to take the most lively interest again in the Hays, and only regretted that she had not obtained a commission from its master of general oversight during his absence. The only confidant in all her schemes and plans—not even excepting Ada herself, for to her she hinted nothing—was Mrs. Sam. Mrs. Sam and she spoke between themselves of Ada's marriage, as of a settled thing, and never did they pass the gates of the Hays, or come even within sight of its chimneys, without feeling as if Ada were already mistress there.

Perhaps, however, the only person, in the whole circle of her acquaintance, of whom Mrs. Colville stood at all in awe, was this same Mr. Latimer. She had never ventured to scheme and speculate so boldly and so confidently when he was amongst them. There was a decision about him, a coolness, a mastery of himself, over which, when present, she felt that she had no power. And thus, now that he was away, even spite of his self-possession at parting, she felt more hopeful and certain, but at the same time more prudent than ever. Ada, during his absence, had refused several offers—of this her aunt had informed Mrs. Acton; a great change, too, had come over her; she was no longer a coquet; she was quieter, graver, sadder, perhaps, but certainly not less lovely

than when he left. It was evident, Mrs. Colville thought, that Ada was reserving herself for his return, and she was satisfied.

In this state of affairs came the news of Mr. Frank Lawford's death in London. Little as had been the intercourse between these two branches of the family, there had been growing secretly, in the depths of the elder Mr. Lawford's heart, a yearning sentiment of good will and pity towards his younger, outcast brother. In the solitude of his sleepless nights he had thought upon him with tenderness; a sentiment that came, he knew not how, of charity and forbearance, prepared him for deeds of kindness. When, therefore, the news came of his brother's sudden death, he stood as it were self-arraigned and condemned for severity and neglect. And oh! how bitter is the sense that the time for kindness is gone by for ever; that the heart is for ever cold which one would now so fain have warmed and cheered with the kindly flame of our affection. Bitter were the tears which Mr. Lawford shed, and it was with the utmost sincerity that he besought the bereaved members of his brother's family to accept of his aid and his good will.

Tom went to the funeral, and brought back such tidings of their hitherto overlooked relatives as only the more strengthened his father's inclinations. It was a very touching, though a very simple letter, which Agnes in the dark hour of bereavement had written to her uncle; but it had spoken eloquently to his heart.

"We will see what we can do for them," Aunt Colville had said; "we will see if we cannot do something for this poor girl, who really has written such a very proper and affecting letter."

She said this, at first, as the thought of the moment, rather to pacify her brother than any thing else; but on after consideration, and especially after Tom had returned home, and brought word that this cousin Agnes, whose grief for her father's death seemed so deep, was a quiet sensible girl, but not at all handsome, the disposition to serve her seemed to grow amazingly.

"She can read to my brother, and amuse him; she must have been used to a life of hardship, and living here will be quite an advantageous change to her," thought she to herself.

Mr. Lawford, who, like his sister, calculated certainly upon Ada's marriage, conceived, as she had already done, the idea of his niece supplying to him the place of a daughter,

"and then," thought he, "there is this advantage in her over my daughter, she will not be leaving me to get married. Ada has so many acquaintances, and is always going out. I am never sure of her for a day; nay, not even for an hour. Poor Frank's daughter will be very different; she will have no acquaintance but us, and we will make her happy amongst us."

"We will find her a home amongst us," said also Mrs. Sam Colville; "if she do not suit one she may suit another. She can have had no brighter prospects in life than we can offer her: it was such a thing of my uncle leaving no better provision for his children!"

"Poor man!" said Aunt Colville, with a sigh, "he was always improvident; ran counter to all our wishes; and this is no more than any of us expected. However, as my dear Archdeacon used to say, 'we must all have charity one with another;' and now poor Frank is dead and gone, let his weaknesses and his errors die with him."

"Amen!" said Mrs. Sam.

"And," continued Aunt Colville, "I see no objection at all to having this Agnes with us: my brother is always fretful when Ada goes out; he likes to have young people about him; and I have often thought him a little unreasonable towards Ada, for a girl like her is naturally fond of society; and that was one reason why I was so willing for her to go to Mrs. Acton's: and therefore, if my brother takes to Frank's daughter, and she turn out tractable and useful, nothing can be better; and she's not likely to marry; and as she is not handsome, and has no fortune, there will be no flirting and nonsense of that kind."

"There is no danger of Tom," said Mrs. Sam, with a very self-satisfying confidence.

"And then, if she be well educated, as I dare say she is," continued Aunt Colville, "in course of time, if any thing should happen to my poor brother, she can take the management of your little ones. Emily will want a governess in a few years—or Mrs. Acton might take her; for when Ada is married," said she, with a peculiar look, "one may reckon the Actons as a part of our own family."

Such were the designs of these two ladies, and such were their sentiments towards our poor Agnes: her uncle's, if not unmingled with selfishness, were certainly much kinder. His heart yearned towards her; and he meant, in showing good-will towards her, to satisfy his soul, if possible, as regarded her father. The two in the family who seemed most indifferent with regard to her coming, who

neither said nor acted any thing, were Ada and her brother Tom. Ada, it might be supposed, was so much occupied with the now approaching return of Mr. Latimer, and with the visit she was about to pay to his sister, as to have no thoughts to spare for any less interesting subject. Besides, she was by no means what might be called a transparent character—Ada kept many of her thoughts and feelings to herself. Aunt Colville said, "that she had enough, poor girl, to think of; and she did not at all wonder at her wish, to set off directly to Mrs. Acton's." As for Tom, nobody troubled themselves about him: he went and came, and thought his own thoughts, and acted just as he pleased, without any body wondering at any thing he did.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I AM now at Lawford," wrote Agnes to her mother, within a week of her arrival there; "at the home of my father's youth. Ah! so often as I have heard him describe this place! To me it was as familiar as if I had had here a pre-existence—the trees, the brook, the very outline of the distant landscape. How differently do the good people here regard these things to what I do! To me they are sanctified by the holy spirit of love and death. My dear, dear father! and this was the place where he was born; where he passed the bright days of his childhood, and that happy youth, of which he retained such delightful remembrance. Thank God that his youth was happy!"

"On Sunday, we were at church. I fancied to myself the corner of the pew where my father sate, when he alone of all the family went there; and when he sate and watched the Rector's eldest daughter, sitting among her young brothers and sisters, and casting now and then, from above her prayer-book, sly glances at her young lover! And just above the pew is the marble tablet to the memory of his mother. You know not with what a thrill I read of her sudden death, on her fifty-seventh birthday; it seemed to me as if those two awful days were blended in one: I lived over again their whole agony, and wept bitterly. A beautiful white marble urn, exquisitely designed and executed, stands in the churchyard, between two dark well-grown cypresses, in memory of her. The effect is extremely good. Were I rich, I would place here a monument to my father;—but he needs none! Love has enshrined him in our hearts; and good works, and noble

sentiments, in the hearts of thousands besides!

“The weather, since I came, has been fine for the season; and, under a mild but leaden December sky, I walked out one morning to explore the park and the immediate neighbourhood. The fallen but undecayed leaves, and sombre but mild colouring of the landscape, accorded well with my feelings. I was quite alone, and enjoyed my ramble greatly. I found the brook, the Merley brook, where my father used to fish; it runs along the bottom of the park, through a succession of wild little dingles, which must be beautiful in spring and summer. It must have been here that my father lay and read in that old copy of Homer, in which, even to the last, he looked with such delight. I tried to find that bend of the brook where the old willow-tree grew, of which he spoke so often; but the brook seemed to have so many bends, and all the willows were so old and picturesque, that I could not tell which might have been pre-eminently his favourite. Here, too, must be that copse, all covered with moss, and bordered with primroses and violets, which he has described in his “Poet,” as being the favourite resort of Vernon in spring-time; for here is the rookery, and Vernon lay among the primroses watching the rooks, as you remember, with his Greek Homer in his hand.

“I cannot tell you the effect which these old haunts produce on my mind: the spirit of these quiet, sylvan scenes, breathes in so much that my father has written, and it makes me indescribably sad; sad, when I think how he, who, of all men, loved nature so truly, and was so attached to this place, was an outcast from it. I think of the refreshment it would have been, to have come here and gathered again ‘these primroses by the river’s brim;’ and those to whom they belong, have let them bloom and die year after year, and never have drawn from them a holy, or a refreshing sentiment. Poor Jeffkins, too! he, who used to bring my father the first spring-flowers; who would walk so many miles to gather him the early violets; how sad and desolating a place has Lawford been to him! God only knows why such things are allowed to be! Poor Fanny, too! The strange and melancholy spirit of our interview saddened my parting with you. My journey here was a gloomy one. My thoughts were entirely my own; for a very taciturn and bulky country couple, who were my fellow travellers, interrupted them by

not a single remark. My parting from you, the sense that I had no longer a home, and poor Fanny’s unhappy fate, lay like dark and brooding clouds upon my heart; the only little cheering beam was, that the poor forlorn, and yet, I trust, not God-abandoned prodigal, would that night be restored to her father. Had you not left London so soon after me, you probably would have seen him.”

The next day. — “Your letter, which this moment has arrived, distresses and alarms me. Jeffkins, you say, has not seen his daughter! Oh, God forbid that she has deceived us; or that she has again fallen into evil hands! Poor Jeffkins! his attention to you has indeed affected me. How good, how thoughtful, how really delicate is his conduct. Let no one talk of the bad hearts of the poor! Ah, dearest mother, is it not true, that the gratitude of these poor people has often left us mourning? A dark and sad mystery involves Fanny’s conduct; and my heart bleeds for the anguish, and agonizing uncertainty, which her father must experience. Here, as yet, her name has never been mentioned. You did well not to speak of the strange secret confided to me. It is safe, too, in my keeping; and God, if he design me for an agent of good toward that unhappy deserted child, will make all known to me at the right time. As yet, however, one part of poor Fanny’s prophecy seems far from being fulfilled. There is a sort of coldness and distance between my cousin Tom and me. I know why, on my part. I cannot disconnect him, in my mind, from that poor unhappy girl; and feel, as it were, unpleasantly conscious, in his presence, of the sad secret of which I am the depository. You ask about my cousin Ada. She left home, on a visit of some weeks, the third day after my arrival, and that without our having advanced towards any intimacy. Ada seems to me to be rather a paradox, a mixture of openness, or perhaps impulse, and decided reserve. She says occasionally abruptly kind things, for which one is not prepared, which give the idea that the impulses of her nature are good and kind; but pride, or reserve, or perhaps timidity, make her general conduct cold, and to me repulsive. Our bedrooms adjoin, divided only by a dressing-room which opens to both, but which she keeps locked. She allowed her maid to pay me all little civilities. I am not an exacting person; I would have been thankful, at that time, for but one kind word, or act. As it was, I sat in my solitary bed-room, and

wept. Do not think me petulant, or unreasonable; but my heart, for that first night, was desolate, and felt how great had been its bereavement.

"The family consider Ada very clever. My aunt Colville says that she is a true genius, and has great intellectual powers. I doubt it—at least as far as original talent goes. Handsome, however, she is unquestionably—nay, beautiful. She has a fine, oval, Rutherford face, with those peculiar large dove-like eyes, which my father called the family-eyes, and which I now see are those of dear little Harry—and here I must put in a parenthesis. I have had a letter from those dear boys—a kind beautiful letter. Arthur says that poor Harry is getting up his spirits famously, and has even had a little fight on his own account. Poor Harry! I cannot tell you how I was haunted by the sad expression of that dear child's face as he sat keeping back his tears, while they waited for the coach. Arthur is so handsome and manly, and so capable of defending himself—but God, and a good brother help poor Harry with his loving, gentle spirit, that never was meant for a tough warfare with hardship and unkindness! So much for a little thought, by way of parenthesis.—I now return to my fair cousin Ada. Ada is the darling of the family, in part from being the youngest, in part also from her being so handsome, and from their having the idea of her great abilities. My Aunt Colville says very much to me about Ada's powers of mind, and fine character; so also does Mrs. Sam; but as Ada herself, during the short time we were together, rather shunned than courted intimacy with me, and did not betray any great originality of mind in any way, I cannot speak from my own knowledge.

"I hear a great deal said of a Mr. Latimer of the Hays, who is expected in the spring from the West Indies. I suspect him to be the *fiancé* of Ada; it is with his sister that she is now visiting. According to report Mr. Latimer is the very summit of perfection; but when I consider their notions of perfection, which appear to be personified in Archdeacon Colville, I expect—pardon my heresy—nothing more remarkable than good looks—wealth, which I know he has—and self-possession—perhaps self-esteem.

"You ask of my uncle, and of my aunt Colville. Nothing could be kinder than my uncle's reception of me. I was taken into his room—a sort of inner library, where he spends most of his time. He said very little

—but words were not needed: he kissed me,—looked into my face, and wept. I wept too—and that abundantly, for my heart indeed was full; and I saw so plainly in my uncle a strong resemblance to my father—that peculiar cut of countenance, which made the last generation of the Lawfords so handsome. It was my father's face, only much older and without that expression of superior intellect which gave such a marked character to the face. My uncle wept as he spoke of my father's death, and lamented that 'politics and other things,' had separated them. His heart I am sure is kindly interested in me; and with him, in his little library, I feel at home. He is a great invalid, and suffers much from the gout and other maladies. In his intervals of ease, I read to him. His own children, he told me, do not like reading aloud, nor will they read what he wants. I read to him the newspaper daily. It comes in at breakfast, which is very late; and as we are then altogether, and mostly alone, I read it aloud, and my aunt Colville generally stays also to hear it. If my uncle were too ill to breakfast with the family, I would take it into the chamber, when his chocolate went in, and read it there: but as yet they say he is in unusual health. We read novels, of which he is very fond, and works of divinity; and he pays me the compliment of liking my reading—so did my dear father. Oh, my uncle knows not how often I have tried to cheat my poor heart into the belief, that I was again in papa's library reading to him! They have none of papa's works here, nor do I believe that they have, any of them, read a single page of his writing. They all hold extreme opinions in religion and politics; and no wonder, when Archdeacon Colville is their apostle. His works are here: thirteen volumes, bound in purple morocco, richly gilt. I was reading one of them one day, when my aunt Colville came in; she seemed greatly pleased, the only time I have ever seen her appear cordially satisfied with me. Her veneration for the Archdeacon is extreme; and there are, after all, points of view from which her character is far from unamiable. To me, however, generally speaking, she is cold and harsh: she wishes me to devote myself to my uncle; but I fear that decided kindness towards me on his part will displease her. So also at the Rectory—she wishes me to amuse the children, and to gain their affection; but were I, in mistake, to gain that of their mother, she would hardly forgive me. I must be subservient,

humble, and useful to every one—I must give love and devotion, but I must look for none in return. Aunt Colville has a great deal of family pride; but *the family* consist only of herself, and her elder brother, and his descendants: we, if we would please her, must minister to these, we must have no little aspirings on our own account; what little light we have, we must contribute to the family glory; we must sink ourselves to exalt them—and if we will do this, my aunt Colville will be as surely our friends and patrons, as ever she was to poor Adolphus. But I must now conclude: I have yet to write to the dear boys. I treasure up every droll anecdote, every conundrum, every amusing trait of character for them, that my letter may amuse them.

“Thank God, that you are so cheerful, and that you are surrounded by so much love, and so much repose! Ah, I once thought that you and I should never smile again: but the year goes on; and the summer, which, in the dark wintry days, seemed so far off, will come with its birds, its flowers, and its sunshine; and thus it is with our hearts! May it only please God, that we, whose hearts are one, may yet form one household; you and I, and those dear boys! I dare not think of it, but try to say, in all submission, Thy will, not mine, be done!

“Adieu, write often to your own

“AGNES.”

The winter was severe. Christmas came with its carol singers, in the snowy and frosty evenings; the church-bells chimed forth their sweet psalm-tunes: holly and ivy decorated the Hall, and the Rectory; the doles of fuel and beef were given to the poor; and the county newspaper, as it always did, made a paragraph about the well-known, seasonable munificence of the Lawfords of Lawford. There was a poetical sort of feudal sentiment about this Christmas at Lawford, which had its charm to Agnes; but still she felt, that here the poor and the rich were separated, spite of seasonable gifts, by a wide gulf, which no sincere kindly sympathy bridged over.—Very different was all this from those little festivals of human love and human brotherhood which each successive Christmas had seen under her father's roof.

“I will take you with me this morning,” said aunt Colville to Agnes, on the day when the doles were distributed; thinking to impress her with the munificence of the great branch of the family.

Aunt Colville, enveloped in velvet and

fur, sate in the great carriage, and Agnes took her seat beside her. She was in a very gracious mood, and as they drove along, pointed out the Grammar School, and the Alms-houses which had been endowed by the family.

“It is a proud thing,” said Aunt Colville, “to be the main branch of an old line of ancestors—the direct family line, I believe, has no stain upon it—all its men were men of honour, who served their God and their King zealously, and unflinchingly; and their women were noted for beauty, and purity. I am proud of being a Lawford,” said she with dignity; “and though, in the last generation, we had cause to deplore some things connected with the family, yet the main branch has ever retained its uprightness.”

Agnes felt that a sting was contained in her aunt's words, and perhaps she might have replied, had they not now reached the village green, where the church-wardens and other officials were distributing the Squire's bounty; and as the great family coach slowly drove among them, hats were taken off, and a huzza welcomed them. Women, with children by the hand, or at the breast, were carrying away the cuts of beef; and men and big boys were wheeling away coals in barrows or hand-carts. Every body looked eager, but by no means was there an expression of universal satisfaction on every face. Many were discontented; they believed that their neighbours were better supplied than themselves; they looked angry and envious.

“Yes,” said Aunt Colville, as she sate in the great family coach, glancing through its plate-glass windows at the discontented faces around her, “it is a privilege to belong to the better classes of society, for there is a natural depravity and hardness about the poor.”

“Pardon me, aunt,” said Agnes, eager to vindicate the poor as a class, “but society has always dealt so hardly by the poor, it has made poverty and crime synonymous. The rich and the poor are not bound together by deeds of kindness and a spirit of brotherly consideration and forbearance; they are separated by severe laws and enactments, which the rich have made to keep the poor in awe. Oh, aunt, is it not enough to harden and sour the very heart of poverty, when it craves from its fellow man the leave to toil, and that is denied it? Instead of accusing the poor of natural depravity, I only wonder at their forbearance and patience. What

can the poor do in such cases but sink into despair, and out of despair plunge into crime; and then, when we have made them criminals, we drive them farther from us by severe penalties. We make ourselves their oppressors—what wonder then if they hate us?”

“These are dangerous opinions,” said Aunt Colville, impatiently, “the opinions of levellers and democrats. I know what the poor are, and how impossible it is to reform them. I know a great deal more about them than you do. It is hardly worth while arguing the subject, but still I must say a word or two; for instance, you say that the rich do not bind the poor to them by deeds of kindness: what is this very scene which you are witnessing? what was it that I did upwards of thirty years ago? I established Sunday and daily schools in this parish. I took care, at least my excellent father-in-law took care, that every child should be able to read, and should know its catechism thoroughly. He disseminated tracts; put down public-houses, and bowling-greens, and such places, which are frequented by the lowest and idlest class of characters; he expelled Methodists out of the parish, and established among the farmers and the more respectable inhabitants, an association for employing none but such as attended church regularly, and sent their children to school. But all these efforts were vain. Vice and immorality only the more increased: the use that was made of education was to read infidel books, and the whole neighbourhood was full of poachers and every species of disreputable characters. It is perfectly absurd to hear you talking in that romantic sentimental way, and it only shows your total ignorance of the subject. I know the poor well, and can safely testify, that there is something emphatically correct in styling the wealthy the *better classes* of society.”

“It seems to me,” returned Agnes, in a tone whose gentleness was meant to neutralize the boldness of a dissenting opinion, “that the late Rector’s well-intentioned but somewhat extreme efforts at reforming the parish were very much calculated to produce the effects they did.”

Aunt Colville literally turned round, and looked Agnes in the face: but spite of this, she continued:—

“Men inclined to Methodism—and such may be very good men, and very useful members of society—and men of physical activity, to whom the bowling-green would have furnished an escape-valve for their

energies, would, under the changes which the Rector introduced, be very likely to become poachers; more especially if they could not obtain employment without professing religious opinions, which perhaps they neither understood nor held.”

“These are the kind of notions which I suppose my poor brother instilled into your mind,” interrupted Aunt Colville, with a reprimanding countenance.

“My father was the friend of the poor,” said Agnes, in reply; “and this I consider as one of his greatest honours. Like Jesus Christ, who was his example, he went among them, and talked with them, and by the force alone of love, and the persuasion of kindness, healed, if not their physical, yet their moral infirmities, which are even worse. The poor, like the beloved apostle, might almost literally be said to rest upon his bosom.”

“I do not admire this way of talking,” said her aunt; “and such opinions as you seem to hold are not seemly in a young lady. You must remember that you are the niece now of Mr. Lawford of Lawford; and I am sure it would grieve him, and all your friends here, to hear you expressing any Owenite or Benthamite notions. What would Mrs. Sam think, and the Actons, if they heard you talking thus? Your poor father, Agnes, did himself a deal of mischief by them; and, though I would not willingly speak ill of the dead, yet there are occasions when silence is criminal, and this I consider to be one of them.”

“For Heaven’s sake,” interrupted Agnes, with impetuous emotion, “do not say one word against my father. You none of you knew him, none of you can conceive his goodness and his real greatness; and let me beseech of you,” said she, turning to her aunt with imploring eyes, “that whatever fault you may have to find with me, whatever displeasure my poor opinions may cause you, that you will breathe no reproaches against my father!”

There was something very mild and touching in the tone in which Agnes spoke; and in a softened voice, and laying her hand upon that of Agnes, Mrs. Colville replied: “I wish not wantonly to hurt your feelings, Agnes; but you ought to know, that your poor father separated himself from his family, and cut off his own means of usefulness, and his own advancement in life, by abandoning the old hereditary opinions of his family, and by adopting others which gentlemen

ordinarily do not hold; therefore you must consider how painful, how unpleasant, how revolting it must be to us to have such opinions broached in our presence; and especially by one whom we have placed amongst us, and towards whom we wish to entertain favourable sentiments. I hope, therefore, that you will never let Mrs. Sam hear any thing of the kind from your lips!"

Agnes made no reply; she bitterly felt her own dependence. A thousand contradictory emotions agitated her soul; but her heart was too full for words, and a quiet tear fell from her cheek to her knee.

Aunt Colville saw the tear, and was touched by it.

"We will drop this subject now," she said; "but when I have leisure and opportunity, I will relate such instances of depravity which have come under my own eye, as are really shocking to think of—things which have occurred in Lawford—and Lawford is not nearly so bad as many other places: but even in Lawford, I say, there have occurred cases of women abandoning their own children! At Lawford Hall, not so very long since, some wicked, unnatural mother left her child but a few weeks old! Such things as these are awful, and enough to bring down the judgments of Heaven!"

"How, when, dear aunt, was a child left at Lawford?" asked Agnes, suddenly roused from the thoughts immediately connected with herself to the remembrance of poor Fanny Jeffkins' confession.

"It is a most unpleasant subject," said her aunt, "I cannot enter upon it now. Not another word about it now; for I see Mrs. Sam and the children, and we will take them up; but remember, not a syllable about these things before Mrs. Sam!"

The carriage took up Mrs. Sam and the children; and Agnes was so absorbed by her aunt's words, and the thoughts which they gave rise to, that she displeased both ladies by taking no notice of "the darling Emily," who was destined for her future pupil.

Although Aunt Colville had desired that Mrs. Sam might never hear such heterodox opinions fall from Agnes's lips, it was not long before that lady herself informed her of them.

It was no more, they said, than they might have expected: but what would the Barhams, and the Bridports, and the Actons, and the Dean and his lady say, if they heard such sentiments? They had the most benevolent desires for her improvement; and as

her position in the family, for the present at least, seemed to be that of companion and reader to her uncle, they would get him to make her read all the Archdeacon's works, and such others also as would give her proper views of life and society. There was a deal of good in her, no doubt, they said, and they would do their duty by her; but it was a great deal better, however, that she should not go much into society with them, and there was a good excuse for her staying at home, and that was attending to her uncle.

"It is a good thing that my father is so fond of her," said Mrs. Sam, "for, poor thing, spite of all her accomplishments, and her talents, and her easy graceful manners—and one cannot deny her all these—while she holds such opinions, even if she wanted a situation to-morrow, I could not give her one. Sam is so fond of catechising, that he would draw out all her opinions, and quarrel with her the first day."

Agnes was set to read the first volume of Archdeacon Colville's "Essays on Religious Opinion." It was a very heavy book; but the old gentleman felt it his duty, as his sister Colville recommended it, that not only it, but the whole thirteen volumes of sermons, essays, and treatises must be gone through from the first page to the last. So she read, and he listened or dozed; and when he was tired—and he was very often as tired of listening as she of reading—the book was laid down, and they began to talk, which he very soon had found to be a pleasant way of spending time. He encouraged her to talk of her parents, of her brothers, of her former home, and of the people she knew in London. Her uncle took a great delight in her society, and missed her when she was absent; he called her pet names, repaid her attentions by a kiss, and said that she was his youngest daughter, and that her very presence near him soothed his pain and his irritation. Poor Agnes, she did not easily tire of talking to her uncle of her home and her family, although she was often inclined to weep when she did so; but then the old man grew irritable if she wept, and therefore she soon learned to touch lightly on painful subjects, for both their sakes; and, after the warning which her aunt had given her, carefully avoided touching on politics or the virtues of the poor.

Breakfast, which, as we have said, was not early at Lawford, was taken mostly in the little library where the old gentleman sat, that he might enjoy it with his family; and on these occasions it was, as the reader

knows, the duty of Agnes to read from the morning paper the lighter news, and police reports, deaths, and casualties, of which he was very fond.

One morning, while thus reading, she came upon a paragraph which related that "considerable excitement was occasioned the day before, on the breaking up of the ice in the river Lea, by the discovery of the body of a young woman, which appeared to have lain there some weeks. The body was first discovered by some boys, and a remarkable circumstance had led to its immediate recognition. The father of the young woman, who was by trade a silk-weaver—" Agnes paused for half a moment, and then went on. "The father was walking on the banks of the river at the time, and joining in the crowd, recognised the body to be that of his daughter. The father's distress was inconceivable. The girl, it appeared, was of abandoned character, and had left the house of her father many months before. No injury, which could excite suspicion of murder, was found on the body, and it was suspected that she had committed suicide, as so many unfortunate females did. A small sum of money was found in her pocket, together with a letter, which, although almost illegible, appeared to be addressed to her father. She wore a small locket round her neck, in which was a lock of dark hair, and a gold ring set with a small emerald. The name of the girl was Fanny Jeffkins—" Agnes said no more, but dropping the paper on her knee, clasped her hands, and burst into tears.

"Jeffkins!" exclaimed Aunt Colville; "can it be that Fanny who lived with Mrs. Sam? But, bless me, Agnes," said she, looking sternly at her niece, "what is amiss with you?"

"I was much attached to that poor, unfortunate girl!" said Agnes.

"My dear!" exclaimed her uncle.

"Not at all to your credit," said Aunt Colville.

"I cannot explain to you," said Agnes, "the peculiar circumstances which make her death affecting to me. You could not understand it; but, wretched as she was, and abandoned as the world believed her, I was much attached to her; and her father, a man of many virtues and many sorrows, was a friend of my father's."

Aunt Colville looked petrified with horror. "Thank Heaven," she said, "that there is no one present!" for though Tom was there, she considered him like no one.

Tom sat with his forehead on his hand, his cup of coffee untouched before him, and seemed to be reading from a book which lay open on the table. Outwardly he seemed an indifferent auditor of what passed, but in reality he felt as much agitated as Agnes herself.

"Not exactly a *friend* of your father's, my dear," said her uncle, willing, if possible, to shield her from her aunt's displeasure.

"Yes," returned Agnes, firmly, "he was so, and one whom my father respected, and perhaps even loved. His attachment to my father was extreme."

"And this wretched, abandoned creature," interrupted Aunt Colville, with indignation, "who was hurried to the face of her Maker with all her unrepented sins on her head, was perhaps a friend of yours!"

"In the truest sense of the word," replied Agnes, calmly, and in a voice of deep sorrow, "perhaps she was. I, at least, may say truly, that I was *her friend*; and strange as these words may seem to you, they are capable of such explanation as I believe would satisfy even you."

"I want no explanation," returned Aunt Colville. "I have said all along that this radicalism, this sympathy and friendship with the depraved lower classes, could not possibly lead to good."

"I do not at all understand what you can mean by attachment and friendship for abandoned characters, Agnes," said her uncle, "and we must have some explanation."

Agnes, without so much as glancing at Tom, who still maintained his look of cool indifference, began, in a voice low with emotion, to give a slight sketch of her father's acquaintance with Jeffkins.

"I must say," interrupted Aunt Colville, before she had half finished, "that it was not a reputable thing to be, as one may say, hand and glove with a drunken silk-weaver. The distinctions of society must be kept up: rich and poor are ordained by Heaven, and are as much apart as light and darkness! No one has a higher sense of our Christian duties than I have, and I consider it as a something quite revolting, this intimacy and attachment that you talk of."

"And was this young woman, this Fanny who lived with Mrs. Sam, this—this—this very disreputable young woman, really brought up with you?" asked her uncle, rousing himself into a little anger.

"Not brought up with me," said Agnes; "but I frequently saw her as a child. My

parents never objected to my seeing her because she was poor; and when she grew up, and was so very lovely, and, as we believed, so good, we all of us felt great interest in her——” Agnes paused. Tom hastily swallowed his coffee, and casting a hasty and anxious glance at his cousin, which she did not see, rose from the breakfast table, fearful lest his countenance might betray him, and stood by the fire with his back to the table.

“I remember,” said Aunt Colville, “that your father wrote about her after she left Mrs. Sam. She was a good-for-nothing huzzy, and I beg I may never hear you speak of her as your friend again. There must be distinctions in society,—there is right and wrong; crime and depravity are not imaginary things; and those who try to palliate them, make themselves in some degree parties to them.”

Poor old Mr. Lawford perceived, by the tone of his sister’s voice, how angry she was getting; and, wishing to spare his niece, put a random question to her, the most trying he could have put.

“And when did you see this unfortunate girl last?” asked he. Tom started as he heard it, and almost turned round.

“It is a painful subject, uncle,” said Agnes. “You cannot conceive how painful! Ask me no more about it! But oh, for God’s sake,” said she, clasping her hands, and looking imploringly into his face, “do not impute evil to me! It is true that I knew this poor girl to have been a sinner, but I knew also the intense misery which she endured. God is merciful,—let man be so too! And for my part, I again beseech of you not to ascribe or impute evil to me. I believe it impossible for you or my aunt to understand perfectly my family’s connexion with poor Jeffkins and his unhappy daughter; but indeed there was no pollution in it. Christ himself had familiar intercourse with publicans and sinners, and permitted his feet to be bathed by the tears of Mary Magdalene!”

“Nay, nay, Agnes,” interrupted her aunt, with increased displeasure, “let us have no more of this! If you compare yourself and your family to our blessed Lord, it is high time to put a stop to it. It is not the first time you have done so, and I can tell you that it is nothing short of blasphemy! Sit down, and let us have breakfast at once,” said she, as if determined to put an end to the subject.

“I have breakfasted,” said Tom, hastily, and went out.

“Allow me to leave the table,” said Agnes, rising, and with tears in her eyes.

“Yes, yes, child, go!” said her uncle, in a hurried but gentle voice.

In the lobby she met Tom. He looked pale and agitated, but passed her without speaking; the next moment he returned, and, offering her his hand, said in a peculiar voice, “Do not, Agnes, let any thing which my Aunt Colville said distress you. We all know how good you are. My aunt is a bad-tempered, formal, old woman.”

Agnes thought of Tom’s words through the day. His words, it is true, were commonplace enough, but yet the tone in which they were spoken affected her. The remembrance of his poor victim never left her mind, and she sighed as she thought that it was with tones as winning and as kind as these that he had betrayed her to her ruin.

And what really was Tom’s state of mind as he went out on that fresh, clear morning into the park, where the first appearances of spring were visible after the dead sleep of winter? What, indeed! It was that of one whose impulses to good are naturally strong, and who now is writhing under the vulture-beak of self-accusation, of remorse and sorrow. His feelings were agony, bitter agony. He walked rapidly, as if to escape from himself; and then, finding it impossible to do so, sauntered along, as if in the vain hope that the living anguish that tortured him might leave him behind.

Never as yet had Tom Lawford communicated any secret thought to a human being; now for the first time he yearned for a friend whose milder judgment might reconcile him to himself. He thought of Agnes, with her deep, womanly love, her tenderness, her forbearance towards the sinner, her pity, and her gentleness; and then the sense of the wrong and the injustice which he had done to that hapless human being, whose life was now his sacrifice, humbled him to the dust, and for the first time he felt how grievously he had offended both God and humanity.

CHAPTER IX.

WEEKS went on; and Aunt Colville and Mrs. Sam found more and more cause of displeasure and dissatisfaction in poor Agnes.

They talked to her uncle about the distress of mind which she still manifested regarding the unhappy end of that wretched Fanny

Jeffkins; but the good old gentleman astonished them by taking her part.

It showed, he said, her goodness of heart, her humanity, her Christian charity; and besides this, the conversations he had had with her convinced him that a better girl or a more thorough gentlewoman did not exist. She was reading, he said, Archdeacon Colville's works,—he had no doubt but that in time she would adopt opinions as rational as their own.

Aunt Colville was not at all either satisfied or convinced; and anxious for the sake of Mrs. Sam's little daughter, she resolved to become a third occasionally at the reading of her late husband's works, that thus she might duly enforce the orthodoxy which they contained, and also that she might ascertain whether Agnes listened to them in a teachable and becoming spirit. This, however, was not altogether satisfactory to the old gentleman, nor yet to his niece; for, with all due reverence to the memory of his learned brother-in-law, he had always considered his works amazingly heavy reading; and now, in presence of his very observant relict, he had no chance of taking a quiet doze, or of listening to Agnes's arguments on the other side the question, and of conceding, in a tone which might pass either for conviction or indolence, "Well, well, child, we will argue it no farther,—perhaps the Archdeacon may be wrong after all!"

Nothing could be more notoriously quiet than Agnes's life at the Hall at this time. But her duties were few and not unpleasant, and the affection which her uncle evinced towards her was a cheering and heart-gladdening circumstance. At the bottom of her heart, however, lay a sad and depressing consciousness which weighed all the more heavily because of the impossibility of making any one her confidant in it. In vain she questioned, directly and indirectly, her aunt regarding the founding child of which she had spoken; but the old lady, offended at what she called "her lax opinions," would not be communicative. Her uncle could tell her no more than that the child had been sent to the parish, and that a woman of indifferent character, at that time in the house, who no doubt knew of its parentage, had taken it out with her, and that was all that was known. Mrs. Sykes, Mrs. Colville's woman, confirmed the same; and Agnes began to fear, that if this were the child of poor Fanny, no occasion would ever offer for her befriending it. Tom had

relapsed again into his natural reserve and imperturbability, with this exception, that he too not unfrequently came also to hear the reading of the late Archdeacon's sermons, which he never failed to abuse whenever private opportunity occurred. Now and then, however, Tom would talk of his sister Ada, whose return home was deferred from week to week. Tom was fond of his sister, and seemed to have great pleasure in relating to Agnes anecdotes respecting her.

At length spring came, in the full mature bursting forth of its flowers and its birds' songs, and with it came Ada, and a new life at once began at Lawford. Aunt Colville gave up the readings in the library; receiving callers, or making calls, occupied the mornings, and the evenings were devoted to parties. A round of gaieties began, from which the old gentleman, with the nervous irritability of an invalid, withdrew himself, requiring all the more the attention of his niece. The idea never seemed to occur to him, or to any body else, that he was unreasonable in requiring all her time and attention. "Are you happy?" asked her mother in many a letter, waiting with an anxious heart for the reply. "I am happy," said Agnes, "in the affection of my uncle. I am sure that he loves me; he encourages me to talk of my father, and now that my Aunt Colville is too much occupied to join our reading parties, I am in hopes that in time I may gain permission to read to him my father's works. My lovely cousin, Ada, is as cold and indifferent in her behaviour to me as ever; and yet now and then she has surprised me by some act or word of abrupt kindness and good feeling towards me; and then, when my heart has warmed towards her, she has again repelled me by her haughty coldness. Nothing can begayer than the Hall at this time; every day my Aunt Colville, Ada, and Mrs. Sam go out; the younger ladies often on horseback, attended by their servants, or joining other equestrian ladies and gentlemen of their acquaintance. In a few weeks Mr. Latimer returns home. A great deal is said on this subject. The Actons are now at the Hays to prepare for his reception; and to-morrow a Miss Bolton, a half-sister of Mr. Acton, and a young lady as I am told of great fortune and beauty, comes here on a visit of a few days. Report says that my Aunt Colville, in her matrimonial speculations, has destined her for the wife of my cousin Tom. Poor Tom! He has come out of that icy shell of coldness and reserve, which are his characteristics, and which, I

am beginning to think, hide many good qualities. Tom, under an outward show of great respect, has no love for my Aunt Colville; he delights in quietly thwarting her; thence, perhaps, the true secret of his little attentions to me."

As Agnes said, all was gaiety at the Hall. It was a late spring, but one of the most beautiful in nature; and the rooks in the old elm trees were not busier building their nests, and rejoicing in the sunlit atmosphere which bathed their tree-tops, than were the inhabitants of the Hall themselves; there were parties on horseback in the mornings, and dinner-parties and dances in the evenings: this was on the outward surface, but there was an under-current of excitement and expectation in the hearts of Aunt Colville and Ada, which, though unconfessed by either lady to the other, was the main-spring of every action and sentiment; and this was the approaching return of Mr. Latimer. Wonderful was the kindness and attention shown to the Actons and to Miss Bolton; nothing was too much to do for them; and many were the drives which Aunt Colville took to the Hays, ostensibly to call on her friend, but to indulge, in reality, a sort of pride, by anticipation of the time when Ada might be its mistress.

Agnes did not join the gay equestrian parties, nor did any one ask her to do so. She was like a cipher in the house; and the old gentleman, who fancied himself so much more of an invalid since the commencement of the fine weather, shut himself up entirely in the little library. It did not occur to him that Agnes might like to join in some of the gaiety that was going on, or that it was selfish to require through these fine, balmy days her incessant attention.

"She really is a good creature," said Mrs. Sam, one day after a long drive, who, having seen her head bending over a book in the little library as they went out, saw it in precisely the same position on her return.

"It is her duty," said Aunt Colville, coldly, "and her uncle is very fond of her. She has always been used to books and study, and she does not feel the fatigue of it as any of us should; she is naturally pale."

"Do you not think her pretty, and very intellectual looking?" asked Miss Bolton.

"She is a noble creature!" exclaimed Ada, startling every one by her energy, "and some day or other I shall tell her so!"

Agnes was sitting at the library window one splendid morning, waiting for the ringing

of her uncle's bell, which was to summon her to the inner-room, when Tom entered, as if by accident.

"You here!" he exclaimed, "I thought you were out with the rest of them."

"No," said Agnes, wondering how he could have thought so; "I am waiting to read to my uncle."

"You'll ruin your health," said Tom, "with all this reading: I thought I saw you with the rest of them."

"No!" said Agnes, smiling at what she knew must be a false assertion.

"But you went out with them yesterday?" said he.

"No!" said she, and again laughed, for Tom himself was of the yesterday's riding-party.

"Do you pretend, then, to say that you never go out?" asked Tom, as if in perfect ignorance of all that went on.

At that moment the bell rang, and Agnes turned to go, taking up the seventh volume of Archdeacon Colville's works from the library table.

"You shall not sit reading all day long," said Tom decidedly, "it is downright tyranny and selfishness of any one to require it: you look very pale and ill. You shall go and take a walk round the park. I am quite vexed that they are gone without you; I wish I had only known it before!"

Again the bell rang.

"Thank you, cousin Tom," said Agnes, surprised and somewhat affected by his kindness, "but indeed I cannot go this morning; my uncle expects me."

"It is enough to kill you," said Tom, looking very earnest, "and you shall not read this morning. I am not very fond of reading aloud, especially such chopped straw as this," said he, taking the book forcibly from her, "but for once I'll do it."

"I shall read to you this morning," said he, entering his father's room; "Agnes must go out now and then; she looks quite ill; I wonder that Mrs. Sam or Ada never think about her. I told my Aunt Colville a month ago; and Agnes says that she has never been out—"

The old man looked astonished, and asked her if she were ill, and told her rather sharply, that if she were so, she ought to have told him, "for," said he, "I do not think you have ever found me unreasonable."

"I am not ill, uncle," returned Agnes.

"Then why did you complain, child?" asked he pettishly.

"Nor did I complain," said she smiling; "but my cousin Tom was so kind."

"It's only right that she should go out into the fresh air sometimes—every day she ought to—" said Tom, interrupting her.

"Yes, yes, to be sure it is," said the old man; "but then, who is to read to me?"

"I shall read to you," exclaimed Tom.

"I am not fond of Tom's reading," said the old man; "but you should have some fresh air. I wonder Mrs. Colville or somebody does not think of it."

Nothing touches the heart more than kindness and consideration where it was not expected; and, as Agnes that morning took the walk which Tom had desired her to take, the thought of poor Fanny Jeffkins and her strange prophecy, "He cannot help loving you, and you cannot help loving him," came vividly to her mind. She recalled his whole behaviour during the time she had been at Lawford, his outward reserve and pride, and his many little acts of kindness. Nobody evidently thought as much about, or cared as much for her as he did. Her uncle might love her, but there was a selfish exaction in his love. Her Aunt Colville treated her with harshness as an inferior; Mrs. Sam narrowly watched all her words and actions to detect something improper in them. Ada was absorbed by pleasure and her own occupation; she was cold and haughty, and repelled every little attempt of kindness on the part of Agnes. The friends of the house came and went, and no one introduced her to them. Poor Agnes! she wept as she walked on through that primrose-covered copse, of which her father in boyhood had been so fond, and which she had regarded as a place of precious memories; but, strange to say, on that morning her thoughts were not of her father. An indescribable sadness lay on her soul, which the gushing golden sunshine and the sweet-jargoning of the birds among the budding trees, seemed only to mock. A deep and living sense came over her, of her really friendless and forlorn condition, of her state of dependance and isolation, even among her own kindred; she thought of her willingness to love those who would not accept her love; and then came a dread and apprehension lest she should give her love where her sense of honour had hitherto so strongly forbidden it. On the one hand, the dead body of poor Fanny Jeffkins seemed to warn her back with all her wrongs, and her hapless fall and fate: on the other, stood Fanny's betrayer,

the one true heart among so many cold ones, with his quiet deeds of kindness, his thoughtfulness, his voice which had such a touching tenderness in it—and her heart seemed pleading for him.

"Oh, gracious Father in Heaven," sighed she, "strengthen me to resist the tempter; give me strength to distinguish right from wrong, for I am weak and ready to fall!"

Strengthened and calmed by her mental prayer, Agnes walked on. In the farthest copse she heard the sound of children's voices, and soon saw a little group, as she imagined, from the neighbouring hamlet, gathering flowers and making chains of dandelion stems, with which they were ornamenting a bright-eyed, auburn-locked cherub of a child, which was seated in the lap of the eldest girl. The baby, which might be about a-year and half old, was laughing and screaming with delight, and throwing about his beautiful rounded limbs in an ecstasy of childish glee. It was a lovely picturesque group, and instantly arrested both Agnes's thoughts and steps.

"What a beautiful child!" said she, putting back the rich curls from his sunny forehead; "is he your brother?" asked she, addressing the girl who held him.

"Yes," said the girl, but with a peculiar hesitation in her manner, which made Agnes again question her.

"Oh yes, Miss, all the same as brother," returned the girl colouring; "mother always reckons him one of the family," said she, and hugged him to her bosom.

Agnes seated herself upon a fallen tree beside them, and the two other children, a boy in a somewhat ragged suit, and another wild urchin in petticoats, betook themselves to a little distance, wondering what the lady had got to say.

"Is this beautiful little creature an orphan then?" asked Agnes, interested both in the baby and the girl who held him so lovingly in her arms.

"I don't know," returned she; "but the Squire sent him to the House when we were there; and as our little baby died, mother took him, and so he has lived with us, and we love him as if he were our own."

"And where is your mother?" inquired Agnes.

"Oh Miss," said the girl, tears at once filling her eyes, "mother is very ill, and I must now go to her."

"I too will go with you," said Agnes, and accompanied the girl with the child in her arms, half a mile farther on, down into a

deep, secluded, woodland lane, where, at some distance, stood a green caravan, from the red chimney of which ascended a thin blue smoke. The ragged lad and the urchin in petticoats were not far off.

"Is that your home?" asked Agnes, comprehending at once that these were some of those wandering potters or tinkers which were not unfrequent in the neighbourhood, and against whom, as she had heard, her uncle, in the days of his magisterial activity, had waged war so desperately.

The girl told her, that her father sold brushes and wooden-ware, and went up and down the country, and that her elder brother went with him. Their mother, however, who had been ill some time, and was now a deal worse, was in the caravan which they saw, and that she would now run and apprise her of the visitor who was coming. Agnes offered to hold the beautiful child, but he clung to his young nurse, and in their absence she tried to make friends with the other two children, who were hiding under the caravan; but at her first word they started up and ran away, and then, half in bashfulness, and half in petulance, threw pebbles and little pellets of earth at her.

Presently, however, she was invited by the elder girl up the steps of the caravan, and entering, she found an anxious, sorrowful-looking woman, with many a sign of poverty about her, and who, apparently far gone in consumption, was almost too weak to rise to receive her visitor. Agnes was touched by the first glance at the sick woman and her abode, and seating herself beside her, invited her kindly to speak freely of her present and past condition.

"We belong to the parish of Lawford," said the woman; "both my husband and me, and now I am come back to die here."

"Perhaps not," said Agnes, kindly and hopefully; "we have the summer before us."

"Very true, miss," said she, "but I shall not see through the summer; and then God knows what is to become of the children, and little Johnny!—that's what preys on my mind!" and with this she wept bitterly.

"But little Johnny is not your son?" inquired Agnes.

"In one sense, no," said the woman, "and that is all the more distressing to me. You see, miss, my own baby died—we were in the Poor-house, for ours has been a hard life—and as this had no one to own it, neither father nor mother, I took it for my own.

My husband was as good and well-meaning a man as ever trod in shoe-leather when we married; but he offended the Squire and the Rector with joining a political club in Leicester. He was a reading man, and was much sought after at clubs and ale-houses, because he could speak very well. He was then a sort of under bailiff on the Squire's farm. But envious folks told lies of him to his employer and the Rector; and he was young and thoughtless in those days, and would not be warned to avoid even the appearance of evil; so he lost first one place, and then another. And the Squire's hardness and severity, and the Rector's together, awoke in him a spirit of hatred and ill-will. We had children, and we fell into poverty: one article of furniture after another was pawned and sold to get us bread. Nobody would give my husband a character; and our very neighbours, who had known us in our better days, looked shy on us. Oh, miss, kindness and confidence keep up a man's self-respect more than any thing else! We came soon to feel as if our being poor had degraded and debased us! My husband went to Leicester to get employment, but none was to be had. He came back, after an absence of some weeks, famished. It was winter-time; we had four children then living—when my husband had left home there were five; but one had died while he was away, and the parish had buried it. I expected that my husband would have grieved sorely, but he did not; he shed not a tear: he only said that he wished the other four were under the sod with little Bessy. I was expecting to become a mother again almost daily; we had no food; house-rent was going on; we were in despair; and oh, God help the poor who are driven to despair! It was winter-time,—a black bitter, frost,—and we were dying of cold and hunger. My husband had become reckless, and almost ferocious. He called the rich tyrants; and ground and gnashed his teeth when he heard the children cry. My time approached, and I sent to old Mrs. Colville to beg help: but she sent me word that she could relieve none but persons of good character. At that moment the children, who had gone out to beg, came home crying for cold and hunger. My husband was roused to fury,—he went out swearing a fearful oath. The next day we had plenty to eat; we feasted—us and the children: God knows how we had needed food before. The third day after that my husband was taken up for a poacher, and

sentenced to six months' imprisonment and hard labour, and we were taken into the House. In the midst of disgrace and poverty, and distress of mind, my child was born. The night that it was born I heard the women talking of a young child which had been found at the Hall gates——"

Agnes started at these words, and breathlessly awaited for the continuation of the woman's story.

"It made a great talk in the House," she continued; "some said one thing, and some another; but the Squire sent the child to the House, and old Mrs. Colville came herself. She was very angry, and said that it was a proof of the wickedness and hard-heartedness of the poor, because this child was abandoned by its mother. Some of the poor folks in the House sided with her, and others took against her. I, for my part, who had gone through so much, thought that despair, such as we had felt, had perhaps closed the heart of this child's mother against it, and I had pity on both it and her. There was nobody in the House to nurse it but me. They gave me good food, and plenty of it, and my bodily strength soon returned, but my own baby was sickly, and died. My heart clung to the nursling that had no mother to cherish it, so I gave to it my baby's name, and said that it should be mine in the place of the one I had lost. Nobody made any objection, — Mrs. Colville even approved, and sent to me then a bundle of baby-clothes.

"At length the time came when my husband's imprisonment was at an end. He returned home,—if home that might be called, which was no more than a roof to cover us. The six months of his imprisonment had changed his very nature. He had associated with men ten times worse than himself; he knew that he was now a branded man, and he was in reality depraved. The severest misery that I endured, was in perceiving the change that was come over him. When he heard that my baby was dead, and that in its stead I had adopted another, he was very angry. He refused to let me have it,—he threatened to tear it from my breast. It was not ours, he said, and we would not burden ourselves with it. The child was dear to me as my own flesh and blood——" The poor woman paused; she wiped the drops of sweat which stood upon her brow, and seemed overcome and oppressed by the remembrance.

Agnes listened in breathless interest, and without saying a word, wiped away her own tears.

"It would have broken my heart," continued the woman after a few moments, "to have parted with the child; but fortunately a letter came from some unknown hand, offering to my husband the sum of twenty pounds on condition of his adopting the child, and removing from the parish. Twenty pounds to a man in my husband's circumstances, was a sufficient inducement to do even more than this. He laid in a little stock of such articles as are used in country-places; and we began our life of wandering. Success attended us—but my husband was no longer the open-hearted man he had been. A hard, cold, griping spirit had taken possession of him; he hated the rich, and had neither compassion for, nor faith in the poor. We now travel about from place to place. The life suits him, and the boys. I took cold the first winter we were out; for it is perishingly cold o' nights in the caravan. He has bad associates, and is brutal and surly. He never has liked the child, God knows why, though it was the means of his having a livelihood in his hands.—When I am gone it will have a hard life among them."

"But," said Agnes, "you have a daughter, a kind-hearted girl, who loves the child."

"Ah, miss," said the mother with a deep sigh, "my husband will bring a step-mother to the caravan—I know it all! I have seen her, a stout, strapping quean, the head taller than me. She was in jail when my husband was there, and Heaven knows how she has gained so much influence over him. She has offered to come here to nurse me, and take care of the children; but no!" said she raising herself, and with an almost fierce expression in her hollow eyes, "let her come into the caravan if she dare, while the breath is in my body!"

There was something desperate and almost savage in the woman's tone and manner; and the little child that was playing on the floor of the caravan, looked up in her face, and terrified, began to cry. Agnes took him on her knee, and soothed him; she stroked his hair, and caressed him tenderly. This then was the child which had been committed to her care and love, by his unhappy mother. His father, as the letter from the unknown hand, and the twenty pounds proved, had acknowledged his claim. She fancied that in his clear eyes, and his peach-like complexion, she could trace a resemblance to his wretched mother. A deep sympathy, an inexpressible tenderness towards him filled her heart, and while her tears fell upon

his curling hair, she clasped him in her arms, and he, no longer afraid, looked up into her face with the beautiful confidence of childhood, and smiled.

"God knows," said the poor woman, as if suddenly awoke to a new idea, "if I have done well in talking thus freely to you of our affairs; I know not how I came to do it—but surely, miss, you will not in any way betray me!"

"Indeed I will not," said Agnes, in a tone of warm sincerity, "and I will come again to see you, nor will the child be uncared for; God will send him friends!"

With these, and other such words, she took her leave; and the woman, assured and some way comforted by her presence, watched her through the open door of the caravan till the windings of the lane concealed her from sight.

This strange and unexpected discovery agitated Agnes greatly, and as she hastily pursued her way back to the Hall, she endeavoured to ascertain what was for her the best mode of action; but she could not decide, and with her mind still in a perfect tumult of feeling, she reached the Hall amazed and half alarmed to find how long she had been absent. Her cousin Tom's groom waited at the door with his horse, and the ladies were returned. As she passed the drawing-room door, she heard an eager discussion among them, and presently Ada's voice, which said, "There is Agnes, ask her."

She was called in, and found the table and sofa covered with materials for splendid evening and ball dresses. Old Mrs. Colville and the young ladies were making purchases for a grand party, which was to take place in the neighbourhood in about a fortnight, and by which time it was expected that Mr. Latimer would be returned. Tom was with the ladies, and there was now a difference of opinion with regard to Ada's dress, whether it was to be a silver gauze over pink satin, or a gold-sprigged muslin over white. Ada, secretly remembering the night at the Deanery, when she wore the pink brocade, and made so much impression on Mr. Latimer, inclined to a dress of the same colour; her brother, Mrs. Sam, and Miss Bolton, advocated the white.

"Here is Agnes, let us hear her opinion," said Tom, who from the window had seen her approach.

"There is no need to ask her!" said Aunt Colville.

"There is Agnes, ask her!" said Ada,

without noticing her aunt's words, as she heard her step on the stairs.

Agnes was called in, and the important question proposed to her, and the respective elegancies of each dress dwelt upon at some length.

Poor Agnes! she was in no state of mind, just then, to enter fully into the merits of a ball dress; besides which, she was alarmed to think of having apparently neglected her uncle so long.

"They are both beautiful," said Agnes: "I do not know indeed to which to give the preference."

"But which do you think will suit Ada the best?" asked Miss Bolton.

Agnes considered for a moment, glancing first at her beautiful cousin, and then at the two dresses as they hung side by side; "I think the pink would suit her best," said Agnes, "but now indeed I must go!"

"Stop!" cried Tom; but Agnes went, and then turning to his sister he inquired if Agnes would not be of the party.

"How can she?" said his aunt, impatiently. "She must stop at home with her uncle; you know how difficult he has been to manage this morning; it is thoughtless of her to go out in this way!"

Tom began eagerly to say, that his father had not been impatient; and that his having gone out in his bath-chair was a very good thing; and then, again turning to his sister, he inquired whether Agnes was not to be of the party.

Ada said she did not know; she had not been invited; but there was no objection to her going with them.

"My dear," interrupted Mrs. Colville, "how can she go in her mourning, which is very shabby? Poor thing! she would be very uncomfortable in such a party."

"Ladies can dress themselves with a deal of taste and elegance even in mourning," said Tom, pertinaciously.

"Certainly," said Ada; "and if Agnes really were going, there are some beautiful things even here which would be very becoming to her. Suppose, aunt, we were to buy her one."

"My dear," returned Mrs. Colville, "what is the use of taking people out of their sphere. Agnes cannot go out every where with us. Besides there would not be room in the carriage. In a little while we shall be having little rural parties and quiet dinners," said she, recollecting that these things were to Mr. Latimer's taste, "and then we can

take her with us. At present, let her attend to her duties; besides, her position in life does not fit her for general society."

"But Miss Agnes Lawford, in point of position, is equal to any of us," said Miss Bolton; "and I am sure that Mrs. Acton would include her in every invitation she gave."

Tom looked approvingly on the young lady; and Mrs. Colville, who seemed not to hear what was said, turned to her favourite niece, and asked whether she had decided on the pink or the white dress.

"I have decided on the pink dress," said Ada.

Tom had that morning induced his father to go out in his bath-chair; the exercise and the fresh air had done him good; he was unusually cheerful; declared that he would have no more of Archdeacon Colville that day, and that Agnes must sit down and amuse him. Poor Agnes was not at all in a humour for amusing any body; her uncle said that she was very dull and stupid, and he could not think what was amiss with her, and really, if walking did her no more good she had better stay at home. From that day, however, the old gentleman went out daily himself; and Agnes had thus a few hours for leisure if not for enjoyment. The thought of the poor inmates of the caravan was for ever present to her mind, and it was not many days before she again betook herself to the woodland lane, to inquire after the sick woman, and to see the child which had so painful and so peculiar an interest for her. But the lane was solitary from one end to the other—the caravan and its people were gone. A fear took possession of her mind lest they were gone for ever, and she reproached herself for having done so little, where so much was required from her.

Agnes could not but think of her cousin Tom—many things obtruded him upon her mind, and nothing more than his kindness and sympathy towards her, so different from the cold, proud Ada. And why is Ada so cold and proud, and why is my Aunt Colville so austere and unkind? questioned she painfully, many a time. Ah, she felt so bitterly that this was not home; and yet all the more did home-affections and home-pleasures cling about her heart! She really had no home—she was dependant, and was made to feel her dependance. No one seemed to have sympathy with her or kindness for her—no one but her old infirm uncle and her cousin Tom; her uncle she really loved, and

was ready to serve with all her might—but Tom! Ah, poor Agnes! how she feared any insidious, sliding sentiment of love entering her heart for him! The little child, and poor Jeffkins and his daughter, warred in her soul against him. He is selfish and cold-hearted, said she, and nothing but my miserable, friendless condition makes my heart weakly incline to him! Thus she reasoned and pondered; and all this reasoning and pondering on his character and conduct might have been perilous to her peace, had she not endeavoured to act in an open, straightforward course, and as far as she could see it in the entire fulfilment of her duty. She had come to Lawford with no definite idea of the place she was to occupy in the family, whether she was to be guest, adopted daughter, or humble domestic friend. All was in darkness around her; but she soon found out one little straight-forward path of duty, and that was devotion to her uncle; and now, more than ever, she resolved to keep herself to that, and leave the rest to God. For this reason, she was careful in no way to obtrude herself on any of the family or their guests; and such hours as were not spent in attendance on her uncle, she spent either in walking or in her own chamber, where she could at least command solitude and the indulgence of her own thoughts.

A day or two after that on which the dresses for the grand party were purchased, Tom Lawford surprised his sister Ada, by asking her to come into his room where he had something of importance to consult her upon. Her heart beat violently, and she thought that it must be connected with Latimer.

"I want to take you into my council, Ada," said he, speaking as if with difficulty, which really was the case, for he had done violence to his natural reserve on this occasion.

Ada stood looking at him in silence awaiting his words.

"My aunt and Mrs. Sam," said he, "spoke the other day of Agnes's dress not being fit to appear in society in; now, Ada, will you give her a dress? will you get a dress made for her?"

Ada smiled, and Tom felt ready to repent of what he had done.

"It would not be agreeable to her," said he, assuming at once an air of boldness and decision, "nor should I like her to know that I make her a present."

Ada smiled, thinking to herself that her brother was captivated by this quiet and gentle cousin.

"I admire it in you, Tom," said she, speaking in her occasionally energetic manner, "and I will assist you in any way that I can. Agnes is a very good girl, and my heart often reproaches me regarding her; and her life is dull enough here. But let me see what you have purchased."

Tom never felt so awkward in his life before, as when he drew forth a considerable packet, and displayed to his sister the costly dress he had purchased.

Ada looked at it with surprise, and said not a word.

"You do not approve of what I have done?" said Tom.

"Yes, I do, with all my heart," said Ada, "but what will my aunt say?"

"Oh!" said Tom, at once struck by a new and bright idea, "the present is not mine, it is my father's, only I was commissioned by him to purchase it."

"Very peculiar of my father," said Ada, smiling, "to commission you to purchase a lady's dress; but, never mind! I admire your thoughtfulness and your kindness," said she, hastily putting the things together.

"Never let any one know," said Tom, "that this gift is from me. Above all things, never let *her* know it, else I should hate to see her wearing it!"

"It is my father's gift," said Ada, smiling again.

"And must be kept a profound secret till the night of the party," said Tom; "and then she is to go with us."

"She shall," said Ada.

CHAPTER X.

THE days went on, and the time of Mr. Latimer's return was at hand. Agnes had heard so much of him, and saw so plainly the excitement which his expected presence occasioned, that she, too, could not help having a great curiosity about him. Her uncle had described him over and over again—had described him as handsome, good, and clever, unlike every one else of their acquaintance; the only drawback being that he was a little, the least in the world, inclined to Whiggism; but of that, as he grew older, he would mend, said the old gentleman, consolingly. He was so good a landlord, so wise a magistrate, so fine a scholar, said he; he was quite sure that Agnes had never seen

his equal among all the great and learned people that she had seen in London! Agnes listened; and, spite of her curiosity, a sort of reaction was occasioned in her mind. "My uncle's ideas of excellence," thought she, "are so different from mine, that I am sure to be disappointed. I have seen more men of intellect than any of the good people here, and finer scholars, and more perfect gentlemen; and I know that he will fall far short of my standard of perfection!"

This scepticism was, however, a little staggered one morning, when Mrs. Acton, not finding either Mrs. Colville or Ada at home, introduced herself into the library, where Agnes sat with her uncle. This, then, was Mr. Latimer's sister, with that bright, intelligent, kind countenance! It was possible that her brother might be like her, and if so, he must be all that his friends described him. Never had any one yet at Lawford shown to Agnes the same consideration and attention as this lady; and yet she knew that Agnes was poor, was a dependant in the family. Had she been a countess in her own right, she could not have received more marked attention. "As Mr. Frank Lawford's daughter," said she, to the old gentleman, when Agnes was absent from the room for a moment, "she is to me extremely interesting—and what a beautiful countenance she has!"

"Dear me! we never reckoned her handsome; hardly good-looking," said the old gentleman, quite astonished and yet pleased, for Agnes was very dear to him.

With, as it were, an instinctive sense, Agnes felt that Mrs. Acton was a kindred spirit, that she belonged to the class of mind to which she was allied, and with whom she had hitherto lived. A sentiment of inexpressible sadness oppressed her heart, she knew not why,—an anxiety, a tenderness that made her long to weep upon the bosom of such a friend. It was as if, for the first time since her father's death, she breathed the spirit of her own home. Not a word, however, of this was expressed; but Mrs. Acton might have divined it; for, at parting, she pressed a warm kiss on Agnes's lips, and expressed a desire that they might often meet, that they might be friends.

Mrs. Acton, during her call, mentioned the great party which was at hand, and said, she hoped that they might meet there. She also congratulated Agnes on the friendship that must subsist between her cousin Ada and herself. She spoke of Ada with

warmth and kindness; called her a noble, and a generous-hearted girl, and said, that she considered her as beautiful in mind as in person. Agnes was grieved that she could not respond as warmly as she saw was expected to the praises of her cousin, and felt, as she had often done before, how differently things and characters present themselves to the rich and the poor, to the powerful and the dependent.

It was now the last week in May, and the whole country was one gush of mature vernal beauty. "Glorious weather," all the world said, "for the grand party at Merley Park!" Nothing had been talked of but this party for weeks; and since the time when Mrs. Acton had expressed a wish and an expectation of meeting Agnes there, the desire to go had taken possession of her mind.

"Is Agnes going to Merley Park on Wednesday?" asked old Mr. Lawford, one day, of his sister Colville.

Agnes's heart beat, and she glanced to her aunt for an answer.

"She has not been asked," said Aunt Colville; "but that is not of so much consequence: the question is, can you spare her, and whether she wishes to go?" said she, looking at Agnes, with an expression that said as plainly as words, "Of course you do not!"

"I should very much like to go," replied Agnes, decidedly but timidly.

"You should?" said Aunt Colville, in a tone of bitter surprise; "but there are many things to be considered. I don't very well see how we can make room in the carriage. I dislike crowding on such occasions: there will be Mr. and Mrs. Sam, Ada, and myself."

"Sam can go with me," said Tom, who was present; "or, Mr. and Mrs. Sam can drive together."

"And then your dress," continued Aunt Colville, "it would not do to go badly dressed."

"I will give her a dress," said her uncle: "see that she has a handsome one; I know that Mrs. Acton will expect to see her there."

"We must see if you are well enough, brother," continued the pertinacious old lady; "but you know that you are often very poorly of an evening. You have often kept Ada and me at home; and I know that Agnes would not wish to go, unless it were quite convenient. This is a large party, and I don't know whether we ought to take an additional one with us; and there will be

plenty of opportunities besides this, of her going out with us."

Agnes felt wounded; to her it seemed as if no one wished her to go; and with an agitation of voice, which she in vain tried to repress, she replied, that she would stay at home.

"Well, I see no great hardship in it," said Mrs. Colville; "and I think it better that you should."

No more was said; visitors were announced, and the subject, as Agnes believed, passed from every mind but her own.

The day of the party was at hand, and news came to the Hall that Mr. Latimer had arrived at home. They expected to meet him for the first time at Merley Park. A stillness and repose seemed, for some days past, to have fallen upon the household at Lawford, as of intense and almost breathless expectation. Ada was unusually calm and pale, and her beautiful countenance had a pensive, nay, almost anxious expression, which Agnes interpreted as the expression of intense love. Mrs. Sam had long interviews with Mrs. Colville, but about what nobody knew.

The beautiful dresses for the party came home on the day it was to take place, and with them the one for Agnes. Mrs. Colville was amazed. She had no idea, she said, that her brother had really given an order for one. No less surprised was Agnes: a very natural reaction took place in her own mind; she had been unjust to them; they were kinder to her than she had imagined. She was filled with gratitude and love; her countenance beamed with happiness. The surprise of such unlooked-for kindness, and the anticipation of now really meeting Mrs. Acton that very night, and seeing Mr. Latimer, filled her with a quiet animation which gave altogether a new expression to her whole person. With affectionate gratitude she hastened to her uncle, to thank him for his munificent present. "I know that I owe all this to you, dear uncle," she said; "but much as I should like to go, if I thought you would miss me, or that you were not so well, I would gladly stop at home."

What a blessed feeling, capable of every sacrifice, is that of love and gratitude!

The old gentleman was as much pleased as she was. He ordered her to put on her new dress, and come down to be looked at. He smiled and kissed her, and said that she really was a very lovely girl, and that he had no idea that she could look so handsome. He insisted on Ada and Aunt Colville coming

down to see her. But Aunt Colville was at that moment busy; she was in Ada's dressing-room, passing judgment on that young lady's dress; for her toilette on this evening was of particular importance, and nothing could exceed its elegance.

"Have you seen my little Agnes?" asked Mr. Lawford, as half an hour afterwards Aunt Colville entered. "She is really quite charming!"

"I have," said Mrs. Colville; "but I must tell you, brother, that I had a great deal rather she did not go. It never was my wish that she should; we have no room for her in the carriage, and she is not expected. She knows nobody who will be there; she will have to sit all the evening without dancing! You do not consider these things!"

"She'll get partners," said her uncle, "never fear. If I were young, I should fall in love with her."

"Well, Mr. Lawford," said Mrs. Colville, raising herself with dignity, "I can tell you, once for all, that I am not going to take her. I had left the thing quite satisfactorily arranged; she had no expectation, till you put it into her head; and I must tell you that it is no kindness to take her out to such parties. What is she, in fact?—but a sort of domestic!"

"She is my niece!" said Mr. Lawford, in a towering passion; "and I insist upon it that she goes!"

"I shall not take her!" said the lady, with decision.

The two might have proceeded to even fiercer contention, had they not, at this moment, been interrupted by Agnes herself, who, still in her new dress, and with eager and delighted astonishment in her countenance, entered with a set of splendid jet ornaments in her hand. The fact was, that when she returned to her chamber, and was about to take off her dress, her eye was caught by a carefully-wrapped-up packet on her toilette table, addressed to herself. She opened it, and found it to contain these ornaments.

Who had given them to her? was her first question. How kind and generous every one was to her! thought she; and, believing the donor to be her cousin Ada, she entered her dressing-room with a freedom which she had never used before.

"I know, dearest Ada," said she, "that you have given me these. How beautiful they are,—exactly the ornaments I want. How you all make me love you!"

"I have not given them to you," replied Ada, as much astonished as her cousin. "I never saw them before!"

"Then, to whom am I obliged?" asked Agnes.

"Perhaps to papa," returned Ada, thinking that very likely this conjecture was not true, however.

With this, Agnes hastened to her uncle, and entered, as we have seen, in the midst of contention regarding herself. In a moment, she saw the excited and angry countenances of both her relatives; and holding the ornaments displayed in her hand, she stood for a second, and then, apologizing for her intrusion, was about to withdraw, but her aunt called her back.

"Agnes," said she, "I give you credit for a great deal of good sense, and perhaps for some knowledge of the world,—Do you wish in reality to go with us this evening?"

"And why not, aunt?" said she.

"Why not?" repeated her aunt, with difficulty suppressing her passion. "Because, unless you had been especially invited, I consider your duty to be in attendance on your uncle."

"I do not want her attendance," said the old gentleman, angrily; "and I say she shall go! Am I to be thwarted in this way? No; I tell you plainly that Agnes shall go, or else Ada shall stay too!"

Agnes's heart beat tumultuously, and she seemed hurled at once into the dust from the pinnacle of delight to which she had been unexpectedly raised.

"Agnes," said her aunt, almost fiercely, "are you going to be a firebrand amongst us?"

"Indeed I am not," returned Agnes, meekly, "at least not willingly; and to end the contest, of my own free will I prefer to remain at home. You and I, dearest uncle," said she, laying her hand on the back of his chair, "will have a quiet evening together." More she could not say, for her heart was very full.

"I know, Mrs. Colville," said the old gentleman, "that you think me a childish, fanciful old man, who must have somebody to look after him and amuse him: now, I am not this; and I tell you plainly that Agnes shall not be kept at home for my sake. I do not want her; I do not wish her to stay; I can take care of myself, and amuse myself. I dislike being treated like a child, Mrs. Colville."

Mrs. Colville, who had full reliance on

Agnes's own pride and good sense, replied in a much more moderate and amiable tone than she had hitherto spoken in. "At our time of life, brother," she said, "it is not seemly for us to be disputing about trifles. I think I must have given evidence enough how much your dear children's interest is at my heart. If, however, you cannot trust our sweet Ada to me, you must find another chaperon for her. But that shall make no difference in my feelings towards her; and as to Agnes, I will leave it to herself. She shall go to-night, if she likes, and I will be a good chaperon to her, and I will do all I can to get her introduced to partners and people; but if she knows any thing of parties of this kind, she knows very well, that unless a girl have acquaintance in the room, or have great beauty or fortune to bring her into notice, she may sit the whole evening like a cipher in the room; and I know nothing more painful to witness than that, say nothing of what the feeling of it must be."

Agnes thought to herself, that the fact of her being the daughter of Mr. Frank Lawford would, in such society as she had any knowledge of, give her distinction enough; but, thus appealed to by her aunt, she replied, that she should greatly prefer staying at home. Poor girl! she never had really felt till then how the spirit of pride and arrogance can set its foot upon a human heart, and crush it to the dust. She felt utterly humiliated; she longed to weep freely: to pour forth her outraged feelings into some tender, sympathizing bosom; but none was near her.

Mrs. Colville had gained her point. When did she fail of doing so?—and this being the case, she could even flatter.

"I must say, Agnes," she said, "that your dress is handsome and very becoming. I am sure you are greatly obliged to your uncle; and these," she said, taking up the jet rosary which hung in Agnes's hand,— "these, too, are your uncle's present, I suppose?"

"I came to thank you for them, dear uncle," said Agnes, turning to him.

"I know nothing about them," returned he, petulantly. "They are not of my giving, and I wish I might not be bothered."

"Whose giving are they, then?" said Aunt Colville; "but we must see about that;" and, as if with the intention of doing so, she left the room.

"Go, Agnes," said her uncle, "I can do very well without you."

"Are you angry with me, then?" asked she, no longer able to suppress her emotions.

"No, I am not angry with *you*," said he, in a husky voice; "but I can do without you: not that I am angry with you, my poor girl," added he, seeing her weeping figure before him attired in that splendid dress, which so little accorded with her state of mind; "but I do not wish them to think that I am quite an idiot. Now, go!"

"Not until you have kissed me!" returned Agnes, feeling that she needed this token of reconciliation and kindness to keep her heart from breaking.

"Well, well," said her uncle, kissing her with real affection,— "there is no need for us to quarrel. There, now, don't spoil your good looks with crying. I wanted every body to see to-night how lovely you were. I know they think you a plain girl; but you are not so!"

Agnes smiled at her uncle's compliment, and withdrew. She returned to her chamber, and took off the beautiful dress which, but a short time before, had filled her with such joy and gratitude. How differently it looked to her now! The charm and beauty was gone from it; and she felt acutely that, let even this dark time pass away, the sting of it would long remain. Anguish of heart and mortification seemed stitched into every fold, and it seemed to her as if she never could put it on again. Those ornaments, too— which the donor no doubt intended should give her pleasure—were the subject of unpleasant questioning and surmise. She enclosed them again in their case; and, throwing herself on her bed, wept bitterly.

CHAPTER XI.

AN hour or two afterwards, Agnes put on her bonnet and shawl, resolving, amid the quiet and healing spirit of vernal nature, to enter into calm communion with her own heart, and to take, if it were possible, more cheering and Christian views of the life around her. When she reached the dingle, where she had first seen poor Fanny Jeffkins' child, her thoughts fixed themselves upon that subject; and seating herself upon the fallen tree, as she had done on that former occasion, she began to ponder upon the strange destiny which had linked her to this little friendless human being, and to discover, if she could, a gleam of light, which, amid the utter darkness which at present enveloped her, should point out the true path of her duty regarding it.

As she thus sat, her cousin Tom rode slowly up the little bridle-path through the dingle. He looked unusually handsome and gay, and was lashing his riding-whip in the exuberance of animal spirits. He did not see Agnes; he had not the least expectation of meeting her there, and the leafy bushes concealed her as he passed; and, occupied by his own thoughts, which, whatever they might be, seemed happy ones, he never looked behind, and Agnes, with a flushing cheek and a suddenly-beating heart, watched him till he was out of sight.

It was a small incident; but at that moment it caused a great agitation in her feelings. "Almighty Father!" prayed she, inwardly, "preserve my heart from sliding into any unworthy passion. Give me grace to know what is thy will, and ability to do it! Be thou my friend and comforter; for beside thee I have none!"

She rose up, and walked on in the direction opposite to that which her cousin had taken. She took the path which led to the sequestered woodland lane, and presently came to a little sylvan nook, where bubbled up a remarkably fine spring, which was said to possess medicinal virtues, and to which the country people came for water from a great distance. A little girl was filling a bottle as Agnes came up; she was stooping, and it was not until she rose that Agnes recognised her to be the girl from the caravan.

"Oh, miss," said the girl, her countenance suddenly lighting up, "I am so glad to see you. Mother is so badly, she cannot get up now, and I've come to this spring to fetch her some water; they say it is good for sick folks!"

"I have been to seek for you before," said Agnes; "but you were not in the lane."

"We've been out for a week," said the girl; "but mother's so bad again, and she would come back, for she says she shall die——" The girl said no more for weeping, but trudged on with her bottle, wiping her eyes, as she went, with the corner of her ragged shawl.

"And how is the baby?" asked Agnes, cheerfully, walking quickly to keep up with the girl.

"Oh, miss!" replied she, and cried more than ever.

"Is the baby ill or dead?" asked Agnes, alarmed.

"No, no," said the girl; "but when mother's dead what's to become of us?"

Father does not love the baby: it makes him cross only to hear him laughing!"

"God will provide for him!" said Agnes, trustfully; and, without another word, they walked onwards.

A strong-built man, with a surly, sun-freckled countenance, in a faded velveteen jacket, and leather leggings, was locking together the feet of a bony, ill-conditioned horse, which he seemed to have released from a smaller caravan as Agnes approached. A stiff and choleric-looking bull-terrier sprang, barking fiercely, to meet her as far as his chain would permit. At this the man turned round.

"The lady's come to see mother," said the girl timidly. The man touched his hat and muttered something, but whether in good or ill will it was impossible to say. Agnes followed the girl up the steps of the caravan, hoping that her villanous-looking father would not join them. The dread of him, however, left her when she saw the pallid, and, as it appeared to her, death-stricken countenance of the poor woman.

"The young lady's come to see you, mother," said the girl, bending down to the miserable bed on which she lay.

The woman opened her eyes and welcomed her visitor with a faint smile; at the same moment a lusty little form raised itself from under the quilt, and the baby, roused out of a rosy slumber, looked around him with gravely wondering eyes. The man, in the meantime, had seated himself on the steps of the caravan, and began smoking from a short and very much discoloured pipe.

"Shut the door, Mary," said the woman, "for the smoke is enough to poison one."

The girl shut the door, and, taking up the child, sate down with him on a three-legged stool. Her mother, however, bade her take him out, and Agnes and she were then alone together. She then raised herself in the bed, and fanning her now flushed face with an old handkerchief, thanked Agnes for thus visiting her. "I have thought a deal about you," said she, "and I don't know what it was that made me at once open my heart to you as I did."

"I wish to be your friend," said Agnes.

"God bless you!" returned the woman. "I am not long for this life; but there are some things which are very hard with me. I have made my husband promise that when I die, he will bury me in Lawford church-yard by my own father and mother. They were decent folks and have a gravestone of

their own. It may not matter to me after I am gone, but it would make my end easier to know that I should lie near them,—for that reason we came here. My husband hates Lawford, and all the folks in it, and we've suffered sorely, sure enough, among them ; but, for all that, I must be buried in Lawford churchyard. Another thing, however, is hard ; he won't let me send for the clergyman, for it's old Colville's son, who helped the Squire to put him in jail, and brought all our troubles on us ! But God help me ! am I to die without the sacrament, or so much as a prayer read beside me ! Oh, miss, I never thought to have died like a beggar in a ditch ! And then there's the baby," continued she, as if her pent-up heart must vent all its troubles. "As I told you, it's rightly none of mine—God knows whose it is ! But my husband conceits that it belongs to the Hall ; and though, as it were, we were paid to take it, he hates it because he hates all the Lawfords ; and she that is to be my children's step-mother when I'm gone, will be the death of the child !"

Agnes thought of the surly-countenanced man, and his hatred to all the Lawfords, and a shudder ran through her ; but of this she said nothing. "God will find friends for the child," she replied : "fear not, but put your trust in God, and he will provide friends for you both !"

There was an earnestness and an assurance in her voice which fixed the woman's attention, and, looking at her, she waited as if for farther comfort.

"I can see," continued Agnes, "the hand of God at work for you ; only put your trust in him ; repine not, but believe him to be your God and your Saviour. You have put confidence in me ; put confidence then in Him, who may make me the humble instrument of his mercy to you !"

"I said that you were an angel of God," returned the woman, "and I could not help opening my heart to you. Send me only some good man to pray by me—some good clergyman to administer the sacrament. But let it not be a Colville !"

Agnes thought, as she had done from the first, of poor Jeffkins. "I know a good man," said she, "but he is no clergyman, although, as a Methodist, he has preached up and down among the poor in country-places. He has suffered much, and can sympathize with sorrow and misery."

"And where is he ?" asked the woman eagerly.

Agnes said that he was in London.

"God help me !" returned the poor woman, in a tone of disappointment, "is there no good man nearer than London ?"

"This is the man whom you must see ; this is the man who will be both father and mother to the child when you are gone," said Agnes : "only, for the present, put confidence in God, and in me !"

"And who are you ?" asked the woman, "and why do you thus care for me ?"

"My name is of no consequence," returned Agnes, remembering the hatred which the woman's husband cherished to all who bore the name of Lawford ; "believe only this, that God will send you comfort through me !"

With this, Agnes, after promising to come again, if possible, took her leave ; the man was gone from the steps of the caravan, but the ugly dog growled at her as if in the spirit of his master.

It was with quite different feelings that Agnes, on her return, thought of the great party at Merley Park, and of the mortification which she had endured only a few hours since regarding it. That part of her duty which had hitherto seemed to her dim and inexplicable, now began to reveal itself clearly ; she blessed God that his hand seemed thus unexpectedly leading her to Christian acts of love and service. All craving for her own personal indulgence was appeased ; a light and cheerful spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to others infused new vigour into her mind, and made it easy to say, "Thy will be done !"

The dinner, however, at the Hall was silent and constrained. The only one who seemed quite at his ease was Tom, who laughed and talked with more than his usual gaiety : Ada, who expected within so few hours to meet Mr. Latimer, was silent and thoughtful ; so also was her father, who, though he had overcome his excitement of temper, and who knew, on reflection, that it was no use opposing his sister, yet thought it only right for the sake of his own dignity to keep up some show of resentment ; whilst Mrs. Colville, as was always the case on such occasions, attended to the proprieties of the table with the gravest of demeanours.

The ball-going part of the company went to dress.

"Where is Agnes ?" asked Tom, as Ada, beautiful as human skill could make her, came into the drawing-room ready dressed.

Agnes at that moment entered, anxious to

show her fair cousin that she could feel sympathy and interest in a pleasure which she was not allowed to partake.

"Why are you not dressed, Agnes?" asked Tom.

"She stays with my father," said Ada. "It is most noble and unselfish of her," continued she; "and I wish, Tom, you could have seen how charming she looked in her new dress. I wish you were going, Agnes; I wish, indeed, from my soul that you were," said she, addressing her with such cordial enthusiasm of voice as she had never shown towards her before.

Agnes was taken by surprise, and the tears sprang to her eyes: "I cannot wish it now," said she; "indeed, dearest Ada, I cannot! These words of yours, this kindness of yours, which my disappointment has won me, are worth twenty balls!"

"It is very strange," said Tom, in a dissatisfied voice, "that my father cannot spare you for one evening only!"

At this moment Mrs. Colville entered dressed and perfumed like a bed of gilliflowers; and as she came in, she said that the carriage was waiting. All three went down stairs. Agnes stood at the window, and saw them, in the clear moonlight of the summer evening, drive away. She watched the carriage till it was out of sight, and felt in the bottom of her heart a blank when she saw it no longer.

Her uncle had said in the morning, that he did not want her that evening. When, however, he sat alone in his little library, he felt as if he could not do without her. "Shall I send for her," thought he to himself, and as he thus was thinking, Agnes entered. He was evidently so glad to see her; laughed so merrily, and seemed so inclined to joke even about nothing at all, that spite of the morning, spite of the afternoon, spite of the little yielding of heart which had come over her but a few minutes before, she could not help being infected by the old man's spirit. They were sitting opposite to each other, with the little tea-equipage between them, the uncle laughing till tears ran down his cheeks, at one of those amusing anecdotes which Agnes used to tell now and then for his entertainment, when the door was flung wide open, and, with an air of the utmost importance, the footman announced "Mr. Latimer!"

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the old gentleman, rising from his chair, and seizing in both his the hand of this unexpected

visitor, "who thought of seeing you, Mr. Latimer! Only think! all my family are just gone to Merley Park in expectation of meeting you! God bless me!" again exclaimed he, laughing, "this is a pretty joke!"

"I did not care about going to Merley Park," returned Mr. Latimer; "I preferred spending a quiet evening with you."

"Bravo!" shouted the old gentleman, flinging himself back into his chair — "But I forgot, Mr. Latimer," said he, again raising himself; "this is my niece, Miss Agnes Lawford. Poor Frank's daughter — you have heard of his death perhaps."

Latimer offered his hand to Agnes, and said that Mrs. Acton had mentioned her being there.

"Yes," said the old gentleman, "poor Frank has been dead these six or seven months — perhaps more."

Agnes glanced beseechingly at her uncle, for her father's death was a subject which it was painful for her to hear spoken of. She felt Latimer's eyes upon her, and blushed deeply, she knew not why.

Never was old Mr. Lawford so merry in all his life before. It amused him beyond measure, to think of Mrs. Colville, and his son and daughter, being gone to Merley Park to meet Mr. Latimer, and here he was all the time! "Only think," said he, "they would not let poor Agnes go, although she had got new things, lest she should see you, most likely — and now here you are!"

Agnes was miserable, to hear her uncle talk thus. Mr. Latimer tried to turn the subject, but he would revert to it continually, "We shall have the laugh against them famously, Agnes," said he. "We'll tell them how well Mr. Latimer is looking, and all the rest. My word! but my old lady sister will be ready to swear from vexation, although she is Archdeacon Colville's widow!"

Mr. Latimer at length sobered down the old gentleman, and made him listen to some grave details, relating to public affairs. Whilst this is the case, we will briefly describe to our readers the exterior of the person, of whom so much has been said. In age Mr. Latimer might be five or six-and-thirty, and was about the middle height, well-made and proportioned. The countenance, however, was a very striking one; as full of firmness and decision, as even John Colville's, but the effect on the beholder was very different. In Colville, the first thing which was seen was that strong, determined

character, which conveyed with it the feeling of cool calculation, and an iron, but selfish, will; yet whilst you wondered at the intellectual magnitude of the man, you were not attracted by him. In Latimer, on the contrary, that extraordinary power and strength of character which the countenance indicated, was so mellowed; so softened, nay, so almost glorified by a beaming expression of goodness and truth, that you were immediately attracted. You felt that the character of which that countenance was the index was one on which you might rely in life and death. You felt at once that a perfect gentleman, in the noblest meaning of the word, was before you; and yet there was, at the same time, such a social, companionable charm and fascination in his manner, all was so perfectly natural and true, that occasionally you forgot even how very superior he was; you were drawn into his sphere, where truth and goodness were the native element, and then, it was only by the jarring effect of other persons' manners and sentiments that you found with how superior a nature you had been in communion.

Agnes, perhaps, of all human beings, was the one most capable of feeling and appreciating the value and beauty of such a character; her own idolized father had been such a one. She sat, as in a dream, and listened to his finely modulated voice; occasionally her eye met his, and there was a kindred expression in it, which touched her almost to tears. She wondered to herself, whether he had ever read her father's works; she passed them in review through her mind, and dwelt mentally upon the particular passages and trains of thought, which she would have liked to read to him, or to hear him read. She thought of Ada, and of the idea which had always suggested itself to her mind, that this was the husband her family desired for her. She thought of Ada's cold, reserved, and haughty character, which, until this very evening, had evinced towards her so little kindness and sympathy. Ada's conduct to her was inexplicable; but then, Mrs. Acton, that worthy sister of such a brother, had spoken of her with the warmest affection. Yes, there was no doubt of it, Ada would be his wife, his beautiful wife; and spite of her coldness and haughtiness, there was true womanly, noble feeling in her soul; and being there, would not a life-long companion like Latimer, foster it and call it forth into the most beautiful bloom, as the sun calls forth the flowers of summer?

Such were the thoughts which passed through the mind of Agnes, whilst Mr. Latimer was explaining, at some length, a subject on which her uncle had asked for information. Agnes was roused from her reverie, and the thread of Mr. Latimer's explanation was broken suddenly by the very audible breathing of the old gentleman, who, buried in a corner of his easy chair, was fast asleep. Agnes and Latimer looked at each other and smiled.

"My uncle often sleeps in an evening," said she.

"He used to do so two years ago," returned Latimer, drawing his chair sufficiently near for them to talk without disturbing him. How it was, Agnes really could not tell, but, some way or other, she found herself, with tears on her cheeks, speaking of her father. They had been talking together for an hour. Latimer did not seem to have said very much; he had not even told her, whether he had read her father's works, but she felt that he knew his character well, and that he appreciated and loved him. It was the first time that she had ever talked thus freely of her father and her family, since her home had been among strangers. He had asked her particularly of her brothers; and she had told him of Arthur, with his manly beauty, and his bold spirit, and of little Harry, who was timid and lovely as a girl. She had told him of her mother, so good and gentle, and of her excellent uncle in Scotland—all this she told to a stranger, within the first few hours of meeting him; and she might have gone on even farther, had not her uncle awoke, and, apologizing for his little doze, again demanded Mr. Latimer's attention. Agnes, now however thrown back on silence and herself, felt ashamed and troubled by what she had done: she thought of the impropriety of having talked so much; it all seemed folly and impertinence to her; she feared appearing ridiculous in his eyes, and that deep feeling which had made her touchingly eloquent at the time, seemed now to her like sentimental garrulity. What will he think of me? How foolish I must appear to him! thought she, and hardly ventured to raise her eyes. He too seemed silent and thoughtful.

Her uncle insisted on her telling Mr. Latimer that funny anecdote; at which he was laughing when he was first announced. Agnes prayed to be excused; she felt as if she could not tell it for the world: but her uncle declared that he would not excuse

her; and then, how like an angel Latimer seemed! he declared that he would have the privilege of telling droll anecdotes that night, and nobody should interfere with him. He told many most amusing stories, some of them about the negroes on his own plantation, and Mr. Lawford declared that he was much improved in story-telling, and that Agnes was not to be named with him.

After this, Latimer rose to take his leave, nor could the old gentleman persuade him to stay until the ladies returned, although he promised that if he would, they would all go into the drawing-room, which was quite warm, and where was the piano, and Agnes should give him some of the finest music and songs that he had ever heard. But though Latimer declared that of all things he should like to hear Miss Agnes Lawford sing, yet he would not stay.

"He is a wayward, perverse fellow!" said the old gentleman, when he was gone: "but, bless my soul! what a laugh we shall have against Mrs. Colville and the others."

CHAPTER XII.

MR. LAWFORD had his laugh against his sister Colville the next day; but however annoyed that lady might in reality be, she had tact enough to let nothing of it be seen; and the old gentleman was not sure whether, after all, he had had a triumph or not, more particularly as Mr. Latimer himself made an especial call that morning on the ladies of the family, which appeared greatly to satisfy them, and which occurring whilst he was out in his bath chair, and Agnes was in her own chamber, neither one nor the other had any part in. Agnes was writing to Jeffkins; it was a difficult task to her, and while thus doing, very soon after Latimer had taken his departure, the door of the dressing-room which divided her chamber from her cousin's, was suddenly opened, and Ada looking in, said in her occasionally abrupt manner, but with an expression of affectionate tenderness in her countenance, "May I come in? or rather," added she, again withdrawing, "will you come in here?"

Agnes, very much astonished, hastily put aside her writing, and entered the room, which was rather a boudoir than dressing-room. Ada seated herself on a sofa, before which stood a writing-table, and motioned to Agnes to do the same.

"No doubt, Agnes," she said, "my conduct at this moment appears very extraor-

dinary; but I think I can make it intelligible to you. I know, at all events, that my coldness and reserve—the little sympathy and interest I for a long time felt towards you, must have wounded you, and must have given you a very unfavourable idea of my character: but I can explain the cause of this—I had strong prejudice against you."

"Against me!" interrupted Agnes.

"Yes; I believed myself to have been unkindly treated by you. Do not interrupt me," said she hastily. "I shall in the end explain it all to you, and having resolved to do us both justice by this explanation, let me go on uninterruptedly."

"You shall!" said Agnes.

"I met you," continued Ada, "with a strong prepossession in your disfavour,—a strong resentment against you; and it is not now any merit in me to wish to reconcile us to each other, for I have been fairly conquered and won by your own goodness. I will not deny to you that I have striven not to like you; to see even sinister motives for your noblest conduct, but it availed not. There is an omnipotence in virtue which must conquer even the prejudice of wounded vanity and ambition. It has been your uniform unselfishness and gentleness, whilst you have been here; your willingness to bury, as it were, all your fine accomplishments and gifts in my poor father's dreary room, that have made me willing to do you justice: but nothing, after all, touched me like your conduct yesterday; before that every little lingering pride and unkindness in my heart gave way." Agnes took her hand without speaking, and with her heart upon her lips, kissed it tenderly.

"And now," continued Ada, "for my confession." A mantling blush covered her beautiful face, and she paused for a moment, as if hardly knowing how to begin.

"And into your confession, dearest cousin," said Agnes, "of course Mr. Latimer comes."

"Yes," said Ada, as if determined no longer to hesitate; "and as you have seen Latimer, you cannot wonder at it. Mr. Latimer has remotely, and directly, been the mainspring of my actions from the day when I first saw him. I was then a girl of twelve, and he a young man of five-and-twenty; he was the admiration of my girlish heart. I went to school, and even there cherished a romantic passion for him; had my bosom-friend, and to her confided the knowledge of a little amulet, which I wore next my heart—two lines of his handwriting! Oh, how ridiculous it

now seems," said she smiling; "two lines of tender poetry which by chance had come into my possession. My amulet, or my own glowing fancy, created a very sentimental and romantic passion, which was only increased by my own family and by circumstances, when at seventeen I returned home, and began my career as a young lady, of some little pretensions in the world. Mr. Latimer was the friend of the family; the most welcome guest at the house, and more welcome to me than to any one else. Do not, however, Agnes, run away with the idea that the regard was all on my side; at this time, and even for two years, I believe he had a very sincere regard for me. To the astonishment, however, of all my family, Mr. Latimer never made any open declaration of love. Had he been other than himself, my family would long before have brought the affair to a conclusion one way or another; but he was not a man to be trifled with, nor one to be suspected of dishonourable trifling. I however knew, what my family did not, the true motives of his reluctance to avow himself. Great as was his regard, perhaps even his love for me, there were many faults in my character; much trifling; much female weakness; much wilfulness and vanity, which offended his high and pure notions of womanly worth, and which he could not tolerate in the woman whom he would make his wife. Ah, what grave lectures did he give me, when my family hoped that love was the theme of our discourse! and I, rebellious and unworthy creature that I was, profited nothing by them! I was piqued that he could not find charms enough in what the world called my beauty, to conceal all my follies and my shortcomings. I ran into excesses of vanity and coquetry, which gave me but little pleasure, on purpose to annoy him. Oh, Agnes," said she, with tears in her eyes, "what self-condemnation and sorrow did not this afterwards cause me!

"Mr. Latimer, unlike all my family, was well acquainted with your father's writings. Politics and such subjects were rarely introduced in discussion between my family and him, because it was amicably understood that on these they tacitly differed; and my Aunt Colville wished for the match too devoutly to have the good understanding among them endangered by any controversy on politics or such subjects. To me, however, Mr. Latimer often spoke upon them; your father was his apostle; he quoted him, he read to me passages from his works, and kindled in

my mind the utmost enthusiasm for him, although, with a foolish perversity of heart, I never would confess the smallest admiration or even approval of his opinions. Of course he advocated the more solid education of women; he cared little, or seemed to care little for my accomplishments, which every one beside praised so much, and yet I knew that he had taste for these things. His wife, he used to say, must be his friend and his companion, not his mere plaything. Such sentiments as these from the lips of the man I loved, awoke in me new views and a new ambition, although a sort of wayward pride prevented me from confessing as much. Just at that time I had a new lover, a fashionable man of the world, who offered to all my outward attractions that incense of which Mr. Latimer was so sparing. I had not the slightest regard for him; but, in the vain wish of piquing Mr. Latimer, I coquetted with him tremendously. My Aunt Colville never was so angry with me in all her life before. It is now two years since; and, in the midst of this flirtation, Mr. Latimer announced his intention of leaving England for two years. It was to me like the shock of an earthquake, and sobered me directly. We met but twice afterwards; once at a large dinner-party, when it seemed to me that he shunned me; and yet never shall I forget his quiet and almost dejected expression of countenance—it spoke volumes to my heart; and the other, the evening before he sailed, at our own house; and, when at parting, he expressed his expectation of finding me married on his return. But for his sake, Agnes, I have kept single—for his sake, also, my family have not urged my marriage with any of my numerous lovers.

"When Mr. Latimer was gone," continued Ada, "I had time to ponder upon all his teachings; and the better part of my nature, which he had aroused, and had done all in his power to foster, made its voice be heard. I resolved, during his absence, to make myself worthy of him; to surprise him on his return by my improved character and my matured mind. I had only to wish, and my partial friends gratified all my desires; besides which they had some little compassion for me, I believe, thinking that I must suffer from Mr. Latimer's coldness or desertion. Pleasure tours were therefore made, and all possible things were done to divert my mind. To their surprise, however, they found that I neither pined nor was sad; the truth was, that I was well pleased with his absence, because in it there was a stimulus to im-

provement. I had now an object to attain, and for that I strove ardently. I had this little room fitted up as my boudoir, with a good lock on the door to secure me from intrusion; and here—it is almost laughable to think of it—I sat down to study deep things; to mature my understanding; to gain knowledge, that I might be worthy of him, might prove to him on his return how sincere were all my endeavours, even if I did not greatly succeed.

“Mr. Latimer had a high opinion of my powers of mind; at least, so he always said; and he was so entirely authority with me that I was convinced that my efforts at self-improvement would succeed. And now, dear Agnes,” said she, “what do you suppose were the first books which I read? They were the works of my uncle! yes, those works which my family dreaded, and which Mr. Latimer admired so much! You would smile were I to tell you the little artifice I had recourse to, to get possession of them, but I succeeded; and here they are,” said she, opening a deep drawer in her table, “and their worn state will convince you of the use I made of them. No one knows to this day that I am possessed of them. I established the system of locking my room; it was my humour, and no one objected. From the time of my acquaintance with these glorious works a new life dawned upon me. I began to see things, as it were, from a truer point of view, and they assumed new positions and a new relative value. Never shall I forget that time—that breaking in of a new light—the light of truth! My veneration for my uncle was unbounded, but I kept it all to myself; a new bond seemed mysteriously to be woven between Mr. Latimer and myself. I was supremely happy. Every one complimented me on my improved looks—it was the intelligence of mind in my countenance that improved it. I was no longer impatient now for Mr. Latimer’s return; I seemed to have yet so much to do before he came!

“My Aunt Colville has told you,” continued she, after a short pause, “that I also am a genius—an authoress!—God help me! so I wished to be. I had a little talent in poetry. As a child, and at school even, I had written; my family thought highly of my productions, and even Mr. Latimer, to whom they had been shown, had not disdained to praise them. Poetry was my delight; poetry of a high order,—Shelley, and Byron, and Coleridge, and Wordsworth, and Campbell, and Milton, and Shakspeare:—

they were my text-books. There they are,” said she, turning her beaming countenance towards her handsome book-case, where the most expensive editions of these poets shone in rich bindings and gold. “There they are, the immortal seven, whom I, poor aspiring worm, tried to emulate! I wrote—and a daring, and yet, perhaps, after all, a wise idea took possession of my mind. I copied out most carefully and most elaborately, on hot-pressed paper, and in a handsome book, such poems as I considered my master-pieces—and the book was full!”

With these words, she paused, and opening her desk took out a handsome, album-like volume, which instantly seemed strangely familiar to Agnes’s eyes.

“Of all men in England,” continued Ada, “I longed for the approbation and encouragement of your father. I wrote therefore to him a letter, which I meant to be modest and humble, and which, I intended, should recommend myself to him. I think it possible, however, that it was full of self-love and presumption. I concealed my name, avowed my aspirations after distinction, and besought his advice and encouragement, requesting him to read my volume, and give me his opinion thereon. With the most unspeakable impatience, I longed for his reply. I counted the days till it should come. I had no doubt but that he would praise my efforts and request my name. I thought with pride of making myself known to him. I arranged the letter I would write. I would confess to him my ardent wish for improvement,—I would make of him my moral and intellectual father—I would sit at his feet and learn! Never, Agnes, had I been so proud of my beauty, even when I wished most to captivate the proud heart of Mr. Latimer, as when I thought of sending to your father my miniature—that he might see and love his spiritual daughter. I thought of the purses I would net for him—of the slippers I would work for him, of the birth-day and Christmas presents I would send him!—Ah, Agnes, I know how it was; I wanted incense to be offered to my vanity, and how little was I prepared for the answer that was returned!”

Agnes sat with her head bowed down, and her heart transpierced with the keenest sympathy: her feelings were intense agony—but she said nothing, and Ada continued.

“My hot-pressed and handsomely bound volume, and my delicately copied verses, came back, and with them these cold words, in

answer to my long and warm epistle."—She took a note from between the leaves of the book, and read :

"Much as my time is necessarily occupied, I have gone through your verses. You ask my advice: it is, in a few words, this,—Read more, and write less; or rather, write not at all.

"I employ an amanuensis to write, but remain, dear madam,

"Yours faithfully.

"FRANK LAWFORD."

"I remember it! ah, I remember it!" exclaimed Agnes, in deepest pity for the poor girl. "Alas! that ever seemingly unkind words were written to you. But, dearest Ada, my father had so delicate a sense of excellence as made him seem severe, perhaps; but he was not less severe to himself."

With an air of painful abstraction, Ada glanced again at the note, and then, folding it together, kept it in her hand, and continued, "The words of this note entered my heart like an icy dagger. I had fancied such a different answer; my enthusiastic admiration of all that was good and great deserved it. I longed for love and encouragement; I met with coldness and repulsion!"

"For one moment consider, dearest Ada," said Agnes, anxious above all things to justify her father's conduct, which she knew had been wise, "that he was continually applied to by young, unknown aspirants, who wished to be encouraged in a path where he knew that failure and mortification only awaited them. My father knew what the world needs from its authors, and he knew also that to the young writer, the first mortification, the first disappointment, even though the unpleasant task was imposed upon him, who was in truth nothing but kindness and love, might save the author from far worse, far more bitter disappointment afterwards."

"It may be so; no doubt it is," returned Ada, again speaking in her cold and haughty tone; "but the letter which I so ardently had wished for, made me doubt if my golden idol were not clay—made me doubt in the truth of noble sentiments, and that divine enthusiasm for virtue which had been kindled in my soul by your father's pen. No, Agnes, say what you will, it was a cold, unfeeling letter—Just, it might be; I am come now to believe that it was so; but the effect on my mind at the time, was painful and injurious. Could we only have more faith in the good that is in every one, how much

more kindly should we act,—how much suffering should we spare each other! How much unkindness and wrong is often thus done to young, generous, and aspiring hearts!"

"Oh, how true is every word you say!" returned Agnes, feeling her heart wrung with the deepest sorrow for the pain which had thus been inflicted, and yet knowing so truly what were the motives of her father's conduct in such cases: "And how much my father would have loved you had he known you! had those writings you sent only faithfully portrayed your mind! had he only seen some revelation of the nobler qualities within you; for of all men he had the truest and quickest appreciation of nobility of character."

"So I believed," said Ada; "and for that reason, when I first became aware that there was within my soul a well-spring of better and higher action, did I so much covet his counsel and his support. But, Agnes," said she, speaking now in a kinder voice, and relaxing from her cold attitude, "I must confess to you that this letter produced on my mind the worst possible effect. If it mortified my vanity, it dethroned also my ideal divinity. Those sentiments in his pages, which I before had read with a kindling soul, and which had served as an inspiration to every nobler wish, now seemed to me like tinsel or mere sound. My heart no longer glowed towards the writer. I felt that I had been unkindly treated by him; my enthusiastic love had been repelled,—or, more truly, I suppose," said she, smiling, and with tears in her eyes, "he would have said that my vanity was wounded."

Agnes thought, as she had often done amid her experience of literary life, how painful it was, and how pitiable, when a young, glowing, enthusiastic mind, without, however, adequate powers, is possessed with a rage for composition, and when the love for poetry is mistaken for its inspiration. She knew many a humiliating history of this kind; and now her heart bled for the suffering which she saw that it had again caused. But she made no remark of this nature. That, indeed, was not the time for it. She was silent; but her eyes spoke the tenderest affection.

After a pause, Ada continued,—"Soon after this, the news came of the sudden death of your father. To me it was a far greater shock than to the rest of the family. And then your letter came;—my father wept as he read it. The letter had to me, however,

an interest and an intelligence which nobody else could feel: it was written by the daughter of him who had been so much to me. The letter was praised for its fine style, and natural and simple expression. I studied it line by line. I thought what would have been the letter I should have written on the death of such a father. I believed that it might have been like yours, for I saw plainly that your father was all to you which he had once been ideally to me. I, too, wept as I read it. But the letter was important to me in another way. I saw by it that you it was who had been your father's amanuensis. You had written the letter which had wounded me so bitterly. Although it bore your father's signature, for aught I knew the severe judgment might be your own. My brother went to the funeral, and I was impatient to hear his report of you. But Tom is reserved, and has no talent for description; so all I heard was, that your grief for your father was excessive, and that you were not handsome. I tell you his very words, Agnes," said she, smiling, "and your womanly vanity may perhaps be wounded; but, as a palliative, however, I will tell you that most of us disagree with Tom, and I am not sure whether by this time he, too, has not altered his opinion. But, to return to the time when we did not know you. Tom's report only confirmed the desire of my family to offer you a home with us. Of course, I was not consulted about your coming here; and if I had, I perhaps should not have opposed it under existing circumstances; and yet I must confess to you that my feelings towards you were any thing but friendly. You had written that painful letter to me,—you therefore knew that a young and an aspiring heart—a heart filled with almost bigoted devotion to your father—had been repulsed and wounded: for aught I knew, you might have added poignancy to the sting. You, it is true, did not know that *I* was the poor poetess who had presumed to lay the little offering, my only one, at his feet; but *I* knew it, and I knew that it was *your* hand that had flung it back! God forgive me, but my resentment was strong! and this must account to you for, and, if it can, excuse my coldness and my distance towards you for so long."

"Forgive me! oh, forgive me!" exclaimed Agnes, with deep emotion. "I acknowledge how little you deserved any severity from us; I acknowledge how noble is this candour on your part."

"It was not, however," continued Ada, "I who first did you justice,—it was my brother. It was he who first acknowledged your devotion to my father; your gentleness, and your unselfishness; your willingness to bury, as it were, all your fine powers of mind and beautiful gifts in the cheerless room of a testy invalid, to whom you owed no duty. It was Tom who first became conscious of this; and then I began really to see how excellent you were, how truly you carried out into daily practice all that refined and elevated philosophy which your father taught in his pages. I saw in you an emanation of his spirit. I saw in you a realization of that after which I had striven, and I began to think humbly of myself,—I began to covet your esteem, and next to determine to win it. This, then, is the truth,—are we not henceforth friends?"

Agnes fell on the neck of her cousin, and wept. "Oh, Ada!" said she, "this generous candour on your part is far nobler than the power to write smooth verses—is far nobler than merely the highest intellect!"

"That may be," returned Ada, "but I had literary ambition,—that, however, has been humbled: I will now try to do well, and to deserve that affection without which my life would be a blank!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THIS revelation of ingenuous and beautiful character, captivating even in its weaknesses, diffused a sunshine over the soul of Agnes. A new life seemed to have begun for her at Lawford; and, thankful to God for having permitted hearts which had hitherto seemed closed against her, to unfold themselves in affection and beauty, and thankful, too, in any way to be an agent of God's providence, she wrote to poor Jeffkins. She communicated to him the melancholy interview with his daughter, and the charge which that unhappy girl had laid upon her. The child, she told him, was found. She described to him briefly the character of the people in whose hands it was, the illness of the woman who had hitherto been a mother to it, and her desire for a spiritual comforter. She now conjured him, by the regard which he had felt towards her father, by his love to his fellow sufferers, and by the kindness which this woman had shown to a friendless child, to come and bless her dying spirit; and, as death was about to take from the child the protector which God had hitherto

provided, she appealed to every tender sentiment in his soul, and prayed him, for the sake of the bitter and soul-purifying anguish which his unhappy daughter had passed through, not to close his heart against her innocent, living representative. The letter was like the voice of a pitying angel pleading for fallen humanity; and the letter, had it even been written by a pen less eloquent and less heart-inspired than that of Frank Lawford's daughter, would not have failed of its effect. The pride of unforgiving and un-pitying manhood had passed away from the soul of poor Jeffkins. The dead form of his unfortunate daughter had obtained full pardon for all her living sins, and this, at the same time, had also produced a great change outwardly upon him. His iron-gray hair was become thin and silvery; his strong frame was bowed, as if with the weight of many years; and if somewhat of his natural harshness of countenance remained, it was so impressed by the baptism of sorrow which had passed over him, as to touch every beholder with pity and sympathy. His mode of life also had undergone a great change. He had withdrawn from all his former associates; he made speeches no longer at political clubs and debating societies; he passed no hard judgments on men or on women: a quiet, subdued, introverted spirit marked his whole demeanour. No one had seen him smile from the day on which his daughter's body was found. The widowed mother of his young apprentice, Johnny, was the only person who entered his house; she acted as his housekeeper, but was not his inmate. For weeks sometimes he never had exchanged a word with her, and yet he was not sullen. He would sit for hours looking at the little chair which had been Fanny's when a child, and which stood opposite to his own; and some few things of hers, mere trifles which she had left behind her—a little silk handkerchief for the neck, a silver tumbler, and a red-morocco pocket book—were to him like sainted relics. Many people remarked, that he never used now his handsome pocket Bible, with gilt edges and silver clasps, but instead of it carried with him a little shabby one, which had one side of its binding sewed on with black thread; but they who wondered knew not that this had been Fanny's Bible, and had been used by her at school and at church in her brightest and happiest days, before she went to Lawford.

Jeffkins bathed the letter which Agnes wrote to him with tears, and long before he had read

it through, he had resolved upon the journey. He set his house in order with what speed he might, placed his young apprentice in the hands of a respectable and trust-worthy man of his own trade, and requesting his mother to have a general oversight of his small possessions, left the door-key with her, and taking a change of raiment with him, set out for Leicester.

Not many evenings after Agnes had written her letter to Jeffkins, the Reverend Sam Colville came in. Every one saw in a moment that some important business had brought him there, and he lost but little time in announcing it. Some of his parishioners had brought him word that a poor woman, the wife of a travelling pedlar, or something of that kind, lay ill in the caravan in Woodbury Lane, and wished him to go and visit her. Nobody, he said, told him who it was, and so when he was at leisure he went. He said that Flora, his favourite pointer, was with him, and that when he got within reach of the caravan, a great ugly bull-terrier rushed upon her, and would have worried her to death. He would have killed any man, he said, who had attacked his dog, and therefore he fell on the terrier with all his might. At that moment the door of the caravan opened, and out came a fellow with a villanous countenance, who in a moment he saw to be the master of the dog. "What do you keep such brutes as this loose for!" exclaimed he; "call off your dog, or I'll beat his brains out."

"Keep your stick off my dog!" said the man, insolently, descending to where Colville stood.

"And who do you think the fellow was?" asked he, from Mr. Lawford and his family. "It was that poaching fellow, Marchmont!" "Oh, the wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Colville.

"He's a villanous-looking fellow," continued Mr. Sam Colville, "and he doubled up his fists, although he did not raise them, and swore a tremendous oath, that he would see me at the devil before I should hurt his dog!"

"Is this the language you use to a clergyman?" said I. "I tell you what, fellow," said I, "I'll have you put on the tread-mill for twelve months!" and with that he began abusing me—said he hated clergymen worse than the devil; that we were all hypocrites together, and that he would not give a fig's end for a whole bushel of my prayers!"

"Dreadful!" said Mrs. Colville.

"It is insufferable," said Mr. Lawford.

"These are your radicals, your democrats!" said Mrs. Colville glancing at Agnes, who took the greatest possible interest in the whole history; "and if such wretches as these are to be at large," continued she, "we shall be no better off than they are in Ireland!"

"That fellow would commit murder as soon as look at you," continued Mr. Sam; "and he as good as threatened it. I told him I would have him summoned, and his license taken from him, and give him that which he should remember the longest day he lived: and with that he bade me do my worst; called me tyrant, and bloodsucker, and said that all these seed, breed, and generations of Lawfords and Colvilles were alike; and actually bade me to go about my business, for that if I stayed much longer, he would not be answerable for the consequences. 'I am but flesh and blood,' said he, 'and there's a long unsettled account between us yet!' said he; and with that, trembling literally with rage from head to foot, and as white as a corpse, he whistled off his ugly dog, and turned into his caravan, and shut the door in my face."

"It is a thousand pities but the fellow had been transported at once," said old Mr. Lawford; "but I think it's a pity, Sam, that you got into any brawl with him."

"I'll have a summons for him," said Sam. "I consider my life in danger from him," said he; "and if you object to drawing me out a summons, I'll go at once to Mr. Latimer."

"I would rather not prosecute the fellow any more," said Mr. Lawford, "and that I candidly tell you."

"Let it drop, Sam," said Tom Lawford, now speaking for the first time; "we all know how warm you are. The fellow is a hardened brute, we all know, and yet he has been living decently and quietly of late,—and you have no witnesses."

"Bless me," said Sam, warmly, "my character against a fellow like that, is as good as ten witnesses, before any bench."

"You'll do no good," continued Tom, "you'll only make the fellow ten times your enemy. You recollect how it was with that Timothy Randal: and really, Sam, it is not creditable to a clergyman to be always prosecuting his parishioners: now take my advice, and let the matter die away quietly."

All the family felt that this was good advice, even Mrs. Colville; and yet the natural prejudice which she had against the poor, suggested to her a new idea with regard to Marchmont. "I wonder," said she, "where

that money came from that seemed to give him a start in the world as it were; perhaps he murdered somebody for the money! It always was a very mysterious thing to me."

"That has nothing to do with the present question," said Tom.

"I think it has," interrupted his father. "He comes out of jail; his wife and family out of the workhouse; and then, in a month or so, he is seen up and down in the country with a pedlar's caravan. These things do not come out of nothing; and, as Sam says, he is a brutal fellow, likely enough to commit murder."

"I declare to you," remarked Mr. Sam, "that though I am neither physically nor morally wanting in courage, yet that is a fellow who would make me fear for my life, and I'll have him looked after pretty handily!"

"Don't tell me, Sam," said Tom, with a persuasive smile on his lips, "that you really were afraid of him! You are not the man to let a fellow like that frighten you! and, as to what he said about not valuing your prayers, perhaps, if your own parishioners spoke out, you would find the opinion not such a very rare one!"

"Tom," exclaimed his aunt, horrified at such free-speaking, "are you really taking the part of such vagabonds against a gentleman, and a clergyman?" The discussion after this grew still warmer, and then Ada came forward as the advocate of peace, of forbearance on the plea of his poor wife's former good character, and that proof of her benevolence and strong affection in adopting the poor founding child. The end of it all was, that Mr. Sam was to take counsel with Mr. Latimer, whose character as a just and wise magistrate had always stood so high.

The next day Mr. Latimer dined with the Lawfords,—quite a family dinner,—for Mrs. Colville was determined, as soon as possible, to make this gentleman feel at home among them. It was a very pleasant dinner, and the subject which soon engrossed the whole party was the affair of Marchmont and Mr. Sam Colville. Mr. Latimer had dissuaded him from taking any violent measures against the man; and he now told them, that probably, in consequence of the threats of Mr. Sam, Marchmont had removed his caravan out of Woodbury Lane. This lane was a short cut to Lawford from the turnpike road, leading to the Hays, and Mr. Latimer had ridden up it in coming there that day. It was his idea, however, that he was not gone

far off, for he had that very morning seen a green caravan on the little common at the back of his own park. It was the first time that he had seen a caravan there, and he had no doubt but that it was Marchmont's.

Mrs. Colville hoped that Mr. Latimer's poultry-yard would not suffer.

Tom again said something in palliation of the man's conduct; and Ada related to Mr. Latimer the history of the child which the poor wife had adopted.

Mr. Latimer's noble countenance beamed with delight as he listened to this relation, which Ada made with enthusiasm, because she saw that he approved both it and her.

"I know," said Agnes, venturing a remark for the first time on the subject, "that instances of noble, disinterested benevolence, of self-sacrifice and devotion, are not so very rare among the poor. The charity and kindness of this class one to another are enough to make the rich and the so-called charitable blush. I believe, if I may so express it, that were it not for the poor, in many cases the poor must perish."

"I do not approve of any sanctioning of crime," said Aunt Colville.

Ada, and Tom, and Mr. Latimer, all seemed eager to testify that Agnes did not sanction any crime, but merely asserted the existence of benevolence and virtue among the poor.

"I firmly believe in its existence myself," said Mr. Latimer, "even among the criminal poor."

This conversation gradually died away, and a gayer succeeded. The dessert was on the table: all were gay and unanimous. The setting sun shone into the side windows of the room, and drew attention to its beautiful colouring; and from the laurels of the shrubbery the mellow tones of rival throats came audibly.

"How charming a walk would be!" exclaimed Ada.

Agnes looked to her uncle as if for consent.

"Why do you always look at me, child?" asked he, laughing, and then turning to the others, he said, "Agnes would make you believe me to be a great tyrant! Yes, yes, go out with them by all means," said he, seeing that his son, and daughter, and Mr. Latimer waited for her to accompany them.

The young people passed the window, and Agnes nodded to him as she passed, "She is a sweet creature," said her uncle, as if thinking to himself, "I wonder what I should do without her now?"

They walked on, all four together, towards the setting sun, and in the direction of the dingles at the bottom of the park. At length Mr. Latimer gave his arm to Ada, and Tom of course offered his to Agnes. It was the first time in her whole life that she had thus walked with him. A consciousness which was almost painful to her, made this little circumstance more noticeable. The thought of Fanny Jeffkins and her child, accompanied her as they went on through that very dingle where she first had seen it, and, following in the wake of the other couple, they sauntered slowly up Woodbury Lane. The lane was empty; scattered straw and rags, and the trampled grass, showed where the caravan had stood. Had Agnes not been so much interested in its inmates, or had not known that her companion was so also, she would naturally enough have spoken on the subject; but she did not. The place, however, seemed to suggest the thought to her cousin, for he said,—“You have seen perhaps the influence you have had upon me, Agnes. I have adopted your benevolent opinions and views. They wanted to put that poor Marchmont again in jail: but as you once said “the best way of reforming the world is to make it love goodness.’ You have reformed me in this way.”

“Nay,” said Agnes, anxious to disclaim any power, even for good, over her cousin, and suspecting also that the true motives for his forbearance towards the man proceeded from the obligation he was under to him regarding the child, “there are good and benevolent feelings in your own heart, naturally.”

“I am glad you think so,” returned he, “cherish that idea, Agnes; cherish every idea which makes you think better of me; and in the meantime, I will earnestly endeavour really to deserve your esteem.”

Tom spoke in that soft persuasive voice which once before had stolen into Agnes's heart. “It is the voice of the tempter,” thought she, and trembled.

They were now at a turn of the lane where the Merley brook crossed it. Tall, leafy willows sprang up beside it, and cast a shade over the road and the little bridge with its low-parapeted wall, on which, in the soft twilight, they found the other young couple seated.

“How sweet it is!” said Ada, motioning to her cousin to seat herself by them.

She and her companion sate down. They began to talk about beautiful evenings, and of fine descriptions of them, and the soft

lilac-hued summer twilight, as given by poets and romance writers.

"The most beautiful one I know," said Mr. Latimer addressing Agnes, "and one which I never fail to think of, when I witness the paled sunset about Lawford, is one which, I am sure, is familiar to you also;" and he quoted a short and most eloquent passage, descriptive of the scene and hour, from Mr. Frank Lawford's work entitled "The Poet."

Agnes's heart thrilled to hear her father's beautiful words spoken with so much feeling, and her countenance expressed her emotions.

"That work," she said, "is full of the spirit of the landscape round Lawford. I never thoroughly felt its exquisite and truthful descriptions until I knew this neighbourhood."

Ada was almost as well acquainted with this book as Latimer himself, but she said nothing. Latimer imagined Agnes to be the only one who could sympathise with him in his admiration of his favourite author. Agnes saw from this little circumstance, that he was ignorant of Ada's noble labours during his absence. Entire, open-hearted confidence did not yet exist between them. She wished that she could be the means of bringing it about: but she had given her promise to Ada to reveal nothing. She feared too that her cousin might be wounded by the enthusiasm of his manner to her; and this idea was painfully confirmed by Ada rising, and coldly proposing that they should return.

They walked again, as they had done at first, all four together, and then having re-passed the place where the caravan had stood, and after Latimer had approved of Tom's resolution of not harshly attempting Marchmont's reformation by again sending him to jail, even to please the Rector, they separated, and Tom and Agnes found themselves considerably in the rear of the others.

It seemed to be Tom's wish to delay their return as long as possible, and yet he was by no means in a talkative mood; and while he persisted in quietly sauntering along on the plea of looking for glow-worms, Agnes fell into a train of thought, very natural indeed. She had not yet heard any thing from Jeffkins. She had directed him to the woman in the caravan, in this very lane, and now the caravan was gone. To inquire after it in the neighbourhood seemed to her a very natural thing; would it not be equally so to him? Still she was quite anxious on the sub-

ject; and how, at several miles distance, was she herself to see the woman? Whilst she was thus pondering, a dark figure was seen advancing up the lane in the now deepening twilight, which was rendered still more obscure from the thickly overhanging trees.

The figure advanced slowly, and then revealed itself to be that of an elderly man with a child in his arms. Some villager, thought Agnes, who, after his day's work was done, had gone forth into the summer evening with his favourite child, or grand-child.

"Pray, sir, am I in the right road for Merley Common?" asked the man suddenly stopping them.

Agnes's heart seemed to stand still, and then throbbed violently as she at once recognised the voice of her humble friend about whom she had, even at that moment, been anxious. At once two questions were settled; he had found the woman, and he had taken the child to his bosom! Thank God! Thank God! ejaculated Agnes in spirit, feeling that the first fruits of her labours of love were before her.

"Who are you?" asked Tom abruptly in reply to the man's question, wondering who should be there, and yet know so little about the neighbourhood.

"I am a stranger in these parts, sir," said the man, "and will thank you to put me in the right way if I am wrong."

Tom Lawford, little imagining his own connexion with the two beings before him, gave the information which was demanded.

"I wonder what he is doing here, and where he comes from," remarked Tom looking after him with that inquisitive feeling which dwellers in country-places, even wealthy ones, have towards strangers.

Agnes walked on with a rejoicing spirit, clearly comprehending the cause of Jeffkins being in this place. No doubt he had learned, from the little girl, of her frequent visits to the dingle where they had first met, and where he now most likely had been, in the hope of seeing her. And how were they to meet? how could she get a note, or message conveyed to him? The wild thought of inlisting Mr. Latimer in her cause crossed her mind, but only came to show its own wildness and impossibility.

Spite of all these little difficulties, however, Agnes felt very happy. Thank God! was the inward voice of her heart. Her cousin was charmed with her cheerfulness; she was

now quite disposed to hunt for glow-worms with him.

"It has been a charming walk!" said Tom as they approached the Hall.

"It has indeed!" returned Agnes.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE next day there was to be a large party at the Rectory. It was a party invited to meet Mr. Latimer, and consisted of all their friends, and immediate neighbours. The whole family at the Hall, including Agnes, were invited; and all were to go, with the exception of the old gentleman, who for some years had very rarely dined from home.

Agnes thought that even after all the vexation and mortification of that former occasion, she was in spirits to put on her beautiful new dress. Ada, into whose heart the desire had been sliding for some time, that Agnes should be the wife of her brother, besought her to put on also the elegant jet ornaments.

"If I only knew from whom they came!" said Agnes.

"Do not be prudish," returned Ada laughing, "they were sent perhaps by some of your London friends, or by your uncle in Scotland."

Agnes shook her head.

Ada made the wearing of these ornaments a matter of much consequence. "She would regard it," she said, "as a personal favour to herself, and she would take it unkind if Agnes refused it to her." The truth was, that Ada was acting by the wishes of her brother. He had made a little secret compact with himself, that her wearing or not wearing these ornaments at Mrs. Sam's party, should be an omen of the success of his love for her.

"Do not make such a trifle as this, any evidence of my affection for you," prayed Agnes, who, believing that the ornaments were Tom's gift, felt a scruple in accepting them, still more in wearing them; "I will show my affection for you in much more important things."

"Ah!" said Ada, with a deep sigh, "our happiness is more influenced by trifles than many people think; there are many trifles which wring our very hearts!"

There was a deep earnestness in her words, and an evidence of emotion in her voice, which surprised Agnes; and with these words she left the room. The truth was,

that several little circumstances—*mere trifles*—had troubled her during the foregoing evening. She could not disguise from herself that there was no longer the same devotion of feeling in Mr. Latimer's heart toward her, that there had been formerly. He treated her with friendly courtesy but nothing more; nor had she found, eagerly as she longed for it, an opportunity of telling him of that which had occupied her during his absence. There was wanting between them that mutual power of attraction which, with an influence mysterious and irresistible as life itself, draws together kindred hearts. Ada felt that they were separated; she tried to believe that the difference was in herself; but a mere trifle, a word, a manner which could not be described, but *must* be felt, told her that her influence over him was weakened: still, the frequency of his visits to Lawford, the reluctance he seemed to have in leaving them, looked like the devotion of a lover—these were the counterbalancing trifles. And Ada, as our every-day life convinces us, was not wrong when she said that our happiness was influenced by trifles. The merest feather shows us which way the wind blows.

After breakfast two events occurred which had reference to Agnes. In the first place, a note was brought for her to the back-gate. A little girl brought it, and had given it to a groom, with the request that it might be delivered immediately. This note was fortunately conveyed at once to Agnes in her own chamber. She recognised the handwriting instantly to be that of Jeffkins; the note consisted of but a few words, and was an urgent request that she would see him in the dingle at the bottom of the Park, at four o'clock that afternoon. There was no means of sending him any answer back, nor did one seem to be expected; but here presented itself a difficulty; how was it possible that she could be with him at the dingle, nearly a mile from the Hall, at four o'clock, for perhaps a long, and at all events a painful interview, and yet be back again in time to dress and go to the Rectory for dinner at six? It was impossible! She turned it over all ways in her mind, and nothing but perplexity came out of it. In the midst of this she was summoned down stairs to see Mrs. Sam, who wished to speak with her. But, in the first place, we must say that this lady and Mrs. Colville also, like Ada, were not quite satisfied with Mr. Latimer; they thought, and yet they were very reluctant to acknowledge it, that his eye dwelt rather more upon Agnes

than upon her cousin ; and for this, (people are so very unreasonable sometimes!) they blamed Agnes. She tried to attract his attention, they said, and for that reason she must not go to dinner to Mrs. Sam's:

But we will now see what that lady has to say for herself ; she and her Aunt Colville were together in the little library where Agnes was desired to come. Agnes dreaded that some awful business was in hand ; she thought that it must have reference to Jeffkins, and her acquaintance with the people of the caravan ; and she went down, not knowing how she could clear herself where so much had to be concealed. But they were not frowning faces that met her ; and, on the contrary, they looked quite smiling and deprecating. Mrs. Sam began by an apology ; she really did not know, she said, how to make her peace with Agnes, but she had some way miscalculated her guests ; her table would only accommodate a certain number, and she had one lady too many.

"I will stay at home," said Agnes, with such a cheerful and relieved countenance as instantly made both ladies surmise that she had never wished to go ; and that was strange and ungrateful in her, they thought.

Mrs. Sam said more than was necessary about her regret at this untoward circumstance, and her hope that Agnes would come in after dinner for tea.

"Agnes and I will have tea together!" said her good old uncle, remembering how amusing Agnes could be when they two were alone together of an evening.

"Yes," said Agnes, "we will have a pleasant evening together."

Mrs. Sam urged that Agnes should come in, if it were only towards ten o'clock.

"Perhaps I can go to bed a little earlier," said the old gentleman, "and set her at liberty for the evening. Your guests will not leave so very early ; Sampson can walk over with her, and perhaps you may have a little dance ; I dare say Agnes likes dancing."

"Yes," said Mrs. Sam, "and perhaps you would not object, Agnes, to play a quadrille or two if it should be so?"

"Certainly not," remarked Aunt Colville. "I am sure that she would be quite glad to gratify you."

"Perhaps," said Agnes, thinking that probably after her interview with Jeffkins she might be in no humour either for playing or dancing, "you may not need me—perhaps you would excuse me altogether."

"I think it will amuse you," returned Mrs. Sam.

"I think you will not refuse Mrs. Sam so small a request," said Mrs. Colville:

"She shall do just as she likes," interrupted the old gentleman ; "if at the time she incline to go, she shall go ; if not, she shall stay away, and nobody shall be offended !"

The servant came in with letters—important letters—letters from Edward in India. The wife and family of his friend Colonel Murray were come over. He begged his family to show them every attention: He had sent valuable presents to every member of his family ; and a letter also from Mrs. Murray informed them that, having through powerful influence been able, without loss of time, to clear their things through the Customs, the packages intended for them were now sent off, and she hoped that they would arrive, perhaps even before the letters. Nothing could be more charming than Mrs. Murray's letter, excepting those which Edward himself sent. His life in India was a golden one. He had now his Colonelcy ; he had gained great reputation, and wealth also, in a late warlike expedition ; and again he repeated his wish—that wish which he seemed to cherish so fondly—that his beloved sister would come out to him.

"How foolish it is of Edward talking in this way!" said Mrs. Colville ; "but then, poor fellow, of course he knows nothing of Ada's prospects at home."

Edward's letter to his sister breathed the same wish. Mrs. Murray, he said, would return in six months, and she had promised to take charge of Ada if she would come out. Ada read the letter, and smiled and sighed at the same time. Her heart glowed warmly with affection for this best beloved brother. She knew how he loved her. She folded the letter, and claspng it tightly in her folded hands, pondered upon resolves which lay deep within her own soul.

"Where is Agnes?" asked Mrs. Colville, in an impatient voice, as late in the afternoon she wanted her to assist in putting aside the splendid Eastern gifts, with which, on the opening of Edward's packages, the drawing-room was strewn.

"Where is Agnes?" inquired Ada also, as laden with India muslins and scarfs, some resembling in texture and refulgence of silvery net-work, the opal-coloured dragon-fly's wing.

But Agnes was not at home. Some one

had seen her nearly an hour before walking through the shrubbery towards the Park. There was no doubt, therefore, but that she had taken her daily walk; and with a little impatience of temper Ada carried the things into her boudoir.

Agnes was punctual to Jeffkins' appointment. The fallen tree lay a little aside from the road, closely concealed from view by the leafy trees and underwood, and to it Agnes conducted her humble friend whom she found awaiting her. She saw at a glance the havoc which misery and sorrow had made in him. His thinned and whitened hair; his wrinkled, and care-worn, and haggard countenance; his stooping, enfeebled figure; how different to the bold-fronted, and strong-limbed Jeffkins of former years! But she was not surprised at all this; she had seen the beginning of this pulling down of his human strength and pride before she left London; and the sad terminating scene of the tragedy must necessarily have ploughed too deeply into heart and frame not to have left ineffaceable traces. A faint expression of pleasure, a smile it could not be called, beamed over his countenance, like the pale sunshine of a winter's day; and that expression was infinitely touching. It came for a moment, and then was gone again; and Agnes saw how unused that face was to any shadow of gladness. He did not offer his hand at first, nor did he trust his voice to utter a word. Agnes, however, offered hers with a gentle kindness that called tears to his eyes. He grasped her hand and turned aside his face to weep.

"You have found them!" said Agnes, thinking it best at once to face the subject for which they met. "Thank Heaven! you have found them—poor Mrs. Marchmont and the child!"

"May the Lord reward you!" said he. "But, I have suffered a deal! The child is like her. God in Heaven! I thought it would have killed me when I saw it first; the same complexion; the same eyes; the same expression! But——" and here he clasped his hands tightly together, as if keeping back some strong feeling while he groaned as if from the depths of his soul—"I have heard much from Mrs. Marchmont, the truth of which I must know. I have heard surmises as to the father of the child. A desire has taken possession of me to see him, to speak to him—to him! the betrayer of my unhappy daughter! Oh there was no dewy flower more pure than she, until she left me

—until she met with him! There is a heavy debt between us, God knows only how it must be paid!"

He pressed his hand upon his brow, walked backwards and forwards a few paces, and then continued.

"You saw my unhappy daughter, Miss Lawford, the night before you left London. God knows but most likely you were the last human being in whom she put any confidence, perhaps the last to whom she addressed a word. She loved you, she trusted you when she dared not to trust me. Ah, I was harsh and unsympathizing to her; and bitterly have I been punished! She left to your care the child whom she had abandoned. Tell me then," said he, fixing his eye sternly and searchingly upon Agnes, "did she name to you the father of her child? Answer me as you would answer God at the last judgment! did she, or did she not? I conjure you, by your blessed father's memory, not to sport with my feelings, but tell me, yes, or no!"

"She did!" replied Agnes.

"Name him then!" said Jeffkins, in a low but terrible voice.

Agnes hesitated.

"I will know the man," resumed Jeffkins, "who dragged that innocent girl to perdition; who blasted her young life with sin and sorrow! I will know the man who has made me childless—who has blasted my life—who has filled my soul with the passions of a demon. Tell me, what is his name, that I may hate him; that I may pray God to curse——"

"Silence! for Heaven's sake!" interrupted Agnes with a commanding voice. "Is it for this that you have sent for me? In the open sunshine and the free air of heaven to curse a sinful fellow-creature!"

"Forgive me!" said Jeffkins, with a pale and agonized countenance; "but you know not the hell of hatred and vengeance that is within me. God forgive me!" continued he, "for I, too, am a sinner; but I have suffered worse than martyrdom in the ruin and perdition of my girl! Oh Miss Agnes," said he, without a tear in his eye, but with an anguish of heart which made large drops of sweat stand like beads upon his forehead, "all that you were to your father, she was to me! For what was I a proud man? for her! For what did I toil and hoard up my hard-earned gains? for her! She it was who gladdened my nights and my mornings! For her I thought: for her I prayed: for her I would have died! If I were harsh to her; if I denied her even a ribbon, I made myself suffer some priva-

tion too! She knew not—no one knew how I loved her! And she was worthy of my love; she was pure and loving till that scoundrel met with her, and ruined her! What wonder then is it, that I should curse him! My very nature is changed when I think of him! I believed myself to have been resigned. I thought that I had said in the midst of my affliction and suffering, with my entire heart, Thy will be done! But it was not so! I thirst now for vengeance. God only keep my hands from shedding blood; but let me have vengeance!" said he, and ground his teeth together with an expression of ineffable hatred.

"Alas!" said Agnes, mildly but sorrowfully, "how little did I expect this. I thought that the affliction with which you had been visited, had purified, at the same time that it had stricken you! Christ, who endured so much for our sakes, prayed for his murderers!"

"I too," returned Jeffkins, "could have prayed for mine. But there are sufferings far worse than even the most painful and ignominious death, and these I have borne! Do you deem it a light thing to have seen my daughter dead by her own hands—a thing of infamy and despite: to know that she had gone from sin to judgment; that, humbled, outraged, and in despair, she had fled from life which was a burden to her, to death, her only refuge! Is this a light thing to bear?"

"No, it is not light," returned Agnes: "but God lays no burdens upon us, and permits none to be laid, which we have not strength to bear! You have been stricken to the dust, but He has not forgotten you. He has placed in your hands the child of that unfortunate mother. Her end was bitter: but God is merciful, and in its very bitterness I can see her cure. He who suffered Mary Magdalene to wash his feet with her tears, is not less merciful, is not less full of pity and forgiveness now than then! Poor Fanny's life was latterly one of sin: but God knows, if the soul consented. Do not distrust God, dear friend," said she, laying her hand softly on his arm. "I believe that there are greater sinners, against whom the world brings no accusation, than your poor daughter—even as, among her accusers, there was not found one guiltless enough to cast a stone at the woman taken in adultery."

These gentle words, like the rod of Moses on the rock in Horeb, called forth tears. One after another, they chased each other down his hollow cheeks, and Agnes continued,—"God, as I said, has not forgotten you:

he has work for you yet to do. He has called you out of your cheerless affliction to a high and a holy duty,—to preach to the poor, to touch the heart of the sinner by words of love; to pray by the dying; to be a father to a child more forlorn than an orphan! Is it then for you to cherish hatred and thoughts of vengeance in your soul? to meditate upon that which may lead to deeds of blood? to take upon yourself the authority of God, who says that vengeance is mine! Oh no! yours is a work of love: you are to be a disciple of Christ, and to labour in his spirit. And depend upon it that the betrayer of your daughter will be visited by a pang more severe than even that of a dagger. Remorse and repentance will visit him. But leave all punishment to God. He has called you to a brighter and a better mission; that of love and forgiveness."

Jeffkins seated himself on the tree, and bowing his face to his knees wept bitterly.

"You have saved my soul!" at length he said, raising his head whilst a mild expression beamed upon his countenance. "I will do thy will, oh Lord!"

"You will pray," said Agnes, "that your sins be forgiven to you, even as you forgive those who sin against you."

"So help me God, I will!" returned Jeffkins.

"You will forgive him who has been worse even than a murderer to you!" said Agnes.

"So help me God!" said he, raising his eyes and his hands to Heaven; "and more, even, if that may be!"

"Behold him, then!" said she, sinking down upon the tree beside him, and laying her hand on his arm.

Tom Lawford on horseback, as on the former occasion, rode up the dingle, humming a low air to himself, and beating time to it with his riding whip.

Jeffkins seemed at once as if deprived of volition. A pallor stole over his countenance; his eyes seemed starting from their sockets; and like a statue, his convulsive breathing alone telling that life was within him, he sat looking at the young man between the tree-branches as he passed.

When he was out of sight, a sort of shudder passed over his frame; and, clasping his hands before his face, he sat for some moments in silent, but agonizing communion with his own soul and God.

"May the Almighty Father bless you, and strengthen you for His good work and to your own peace!" said Agnes, with

deep emotion, and clasped hands, as she stood before him.

Jeffkins looked her in the face with an expression of pity,—“It is then a Lawford, as I was told,—one who could have had no thought or will to make her his wife: and at your prayer, and for your sake, I have forgiven him!”

“Not for my sake,” replied Agnes; “but for the sake of God, who is the father of us all, and of Jesus Christ, who is our saviour, our friend, and our teacher in all things!”

“I have forgiven him,” again said Jeffkins. “Hand of mine shall never be raised to injure him, nor shall my tongue curse him. But,” said he, solemnly addressing Agnes, “for the sake of virtue, for the sake of what womanhood suffered in the person of my poor girl—her downfall and her death—listen not to him! Let him not win your heart as he has won others! May blessed angels watch over you! and, if the prayers of a poor sinner like me may prevent a mischief or a sorrow, they shall be yours night and morning!”

He turned him about to go; his countenance was mild, but sorrowful; he stood more erect, and he trod with a firmer step. He had listened to the voice of God, who had given him a holy vocation, and his whole being was strengthened and ennobled by it.

Again he turned back, and blessed Agnes: she gave him her blessing in return. They parted, and each slowly took their different ways.

CHAPTER XV.

THE dinner-bell had rung both at the Hall and the Rectory, where all the guests were assembled, before Agnes reached home. There was no one to dine there that day, but Agnes and her uncle; and the old gentleman was very angry that she had not returned in time to sit down with him. He had taken his soup, and was busy over his boiled capon when she entered. She never had seen him so angry with her before; and, what was worse, she could not give any satisfactory account of that which had detained her so long. She had been no farther than the dingle at the bottom of the park, and yet she had been away quite three hours. It was a very thoughtless thing of her, he said, to go sauntering about by herself in lonesome places in that way,—how could she tell but that she might meet with that fellow

Marchmont, and even worse than he? It was very improper of her! He used to think, he said, that Mrs. Colville complained of her *outré* notions without cause: but he should not think so any longer now!

Through more than half the dinner he scolded her, and through the remainder of it he said nothing at all; and Agnes, who was more occupied in mind and more agitated in feeling by her interview with Jeffkins than even by her uncle's displeasure, allowed him to maintain his silence unbroken.

After his customary after-dinner nap, Agnes went in as usual, just before his hour for tea. She was resolved that the good old man should now have, as far as she was concerned, one of those quietly amusing evenings of which he was so fond. He was fortunately one of those persons who can bear to hear the same story ten times over; so, resolving to struggle against her own abstraction of mind, and determining not to go to Mrs. Sam's that night, she thought over her best stories and her drollest anecdotes, intending to introduce them very cunningly, and to while away his ill-humour by compelling him to laugh. With the tea, however, there was brought in a note from Mrs. Sam, which was to beg that Agnes would come, without fail, and to desire her to bring such and such quadrilles with her, as they all knew she excelled in playing. “My dear,” and “my dearest Agnes,” occurred again and again in the note; but for all that she did not feel flattered into any spirit of compliance.

“What is it?” asked the old gentleman, pettishly. “Is it from Mrs. Sam?”

“Mrs. Colville left word,” said the footman, addressing his master, “when she went, that Miss Agnes must go as soon as possible, and Sampson is now waiting to go back with her.”

Sampson was Mrs. Colville's own servant, and had accompanied his mistress to the Rectory; he had now brought the note, and waited to attend the young lady back.

“I have no wish to go,” said she, addressing her uncle,—“I very much prefer staying with you.”

“It's no use stopping with me,” returned the old gentleman; “and I insist upon your going!”

Agnes begged at all events to stay with him till after tea; but he was out of humour, and resolute. He insisted upon her going, even though it were only to play for other people's dancing; he could see nothing un-

reasonable in it, he said; and, to humour even his ill-humour, and quite against her own inclination, Agnes went out to prepare her toilette.

Sampson respectfully hinted to her, in passing him in the hall, that he was ordered to return instantly, and not to forget the music.

It was only to play for other people's dancing that she was sent for, and therefore it seemed to her needless to array herself in her new attire; so, making her ordinarily best dress look its best, and with no other ornament than a bouquet of geranium in her bosom, she set off to the Rectory.

It was a lovely night; here and there a bird twittered in the trees, as they passed; the grasshoppers chirped; and the deer, which lay for the night under a broad oak near the road, started up as they passed, and trotted away a few paces. The very soul of repose lay over every thing; but Agnes's mind was not in a state to receive its influence. She could not cease thinking of Jeffkins and his passion of hatred and revenge, and then, like Balaam, blessing the man whom he came to curse.

Light streamed from the Rectory windows; and the gay, laughing voices of young people, who had walked out of the heated rooms into the lovely flower-scented garden that surrounded the house, came like sounds from a totally different world to that in which Agnes's mind was thrown. She was now in the garden itself. Lightly-attired forms, each paired with a dark attendant, walked slowly along, laughing aloud, or listening to the low discourse of the apparently enamoured attendant. Agnes heard that Mrs. Acton was at this party, and Mr. Latimer also, as the lion of the night. Him she fancied that she saw in the distance, with Ada leaning on his arm. Happy Ada! sighed she, as she often had done before.

But Ada was not in the garden, whatever Latimer might be. Ada came up stairs the moment she heard that Agnes was arrived, impatient to see her, and, as she said, to arrange her toilette before she went down stairs.

"But I am not dressed," said Agnes.

Ada seemed annoyed,—“At all events you have your new ornaments on,” remarked she.

“No, I have not,” returned Agnes. “I have only come as a piece of mechanism, to play while you dance. I am not at all in a company mood to-night, dear Ada,” said she,

trying to keep back some tears, which, she could hardly tell why, seemed as if they would come into her eyes.

“Neither am I,” said Ada, revealing all at once, spite of her beauty, that some sad and troubling thought was in her heart, “and I shall be thankful when this night is over! But, however,” said she, assuming a sudden gaiety, “neither you nor I must go into the room looking doleful. And I wish you had put on your ornaments! I am quite angry that you have not done so!”

They entered the drawing-room, where there were evidently signs of something beyond an impromptu dance. The moment her Aunt Colville saw her, she came to her also across the room, her countenance giving evidence of rigorous displeasure, “What in the world has possessed you to come dressed in this manner? It is quite a disrespect to us all! And what could make you stop out so long this afternoon?—you ought to have been back long before it was time for us to go. It was very thoughtless of you; and now to come dressed that figure!”

“Never mind my dress, dear aunt,” said Agnes, assuming a cheerful air: “I am only going to play.”

Her cousin also whispered to her, with dissatisfaction in his countenance, “That she should have put on her new dress. And Ada says,” said he, as if he knew nothing of the matter, “that you have some handsome new ornaments,—why did you not wear them? We all wanted you to look your very best to-night!”

Agnes made no reply; she thought of the last time she had seen him, not many hours before, when she had turned almost the hand of a murderer aside from him. How little can one human being understand the heart of another! Tom thought that Agnes was out of humour; and, really out of humour himself, he turned hastily from her to flirt with the silliest girl in the room.

“That is Mr. Frank Lawford's daughter, who has sate down to the piano,” said George Bridport to the gentleman who stood next to him.

The gentleman looked at her through his eye-glass,—“She is a devilish pretty figure,” said he, “and has beautiful eyes! 'Pon my word, I think she is a pretty girl!”

“But devilish ill-dressed for a party like this,” said George Bridport, loud enough for her to hear him.

At this moment, Mrs. Acton, who was

only just then aware of her being in the room, seated herself by her, and talked to her kindly and cheerfully.

Mrs. Sam, in the mean time, had duly informed the company that Miss Agnes Lawford was so good as to offer to play a few quadrilles. The young people were delighted,—they came flocking in from the garden, bringing a cool, fresh air with them. All was bustle and animation, bows and smiles, of beseeching and assenting partners; and now the quadrille was formed, and Agnes began to play. She played beautifully, people said, remarking that it was delightful to dance to music like this; they thought she must be a great musical genius. Mr. Latimer danced with Ada. They, too, had only come in as the quadrille was formed, and Agnes had not exchanged a word with him.

When the first set was ended, he came to her, and asked her to dance the second with him. Mrs. Acton, at that very moment, was insisting upon taking Agnes's place at the piano. "The young men would be in despair, if you were to sit all the evening," said she, laughing. "My brother, I am sure, would scold me, if I were to allow you to play the next quadrille." These words were on her lips, as he in person made his request.

Many people thronged about her to thank her for her playing. They had never danced to better music before. She must be very fond of music, &c. &c.

"But my dress," said Agnes, appealing to Mrs. Acton. "I only came to play, really."

"Your dress is charming—most becoming to you," whispered she to Agnes; and then, turning to the admirers of Agnes's music, she said, that they must be contented with something less perfect this time, for Miss Agnes was going to dance.

Agnes thought of her aunt, and of Mrs. Sam, and begged again to decline; and Latimer stood and looked at her with a calm and yet admiring countenance, which more than any thing else disconcerted her.

"I cannot think of *your* sitting down to the piano, Mrs. Acton," said Mrs. Sam coming up. "Indeed I cannot! Agnes was so good as to offer; it is very good-natured of her: yes, she does play beautifully," said she to some admirer of Agnes's musical power. "I am not sure, though, that Agnes dances, Mr. Latimer. I believe you do not, Agnes." Of course Agnes ought to have said *no*; but

she did not, and to prevent any other answer Mrs. Sam went on: "I wish now, as the young people seem to enjoy dancing so much, that I had had a musician for the night; but I was uncertain whether a dance would be liked—Our rooms are not large," said she, glancing from one end of her handsome drawing-room to the other.

"I pray you to intercede for me," said Mr. Latimer, taking hold of Agnes's hand, and addressing Mrs. Sam; "she declines dancing. If she will not be my partner I shall sit down myself," said he laughing.

"We must not let *you* sit," said Mrs. Sam, assuming at once a gay humour: "you do Agnes great honour; and of course she will not decline; but I had no idea that she danced," said she, looking very significantly at her.

Mr. Latimer smiled and bowed, and leading Agnes away triumphantly, placed her so that young Bridport, who was about to dance with Ada, was her *vis-a-vis*. Agnes's heart beat, and she looked with an expression of ineffable love on her cousin, resolving, even though he were her partner, to absorb as little of his attention as she could—but there was something sad and inexplicable in Ada's eyes. The next moment, a proud and cold expression came over her features. She is offended with me, thought Agnes; I am wounding her by dancing with Mr. Latimer. I am perhaps exciting that most painful of all passions, jealousy! Agnes thought how already she had been the means, all innocently as it was, of wounding her cousin's pride and ambition: the album-like volume, and the note came to her mind; and then her noble and ingenuous confession; the unveiling of her love and her hopes. How inexpressibly dear was Ada to her, as she thought rapidly on these things! She saw her beautiful figure in its elegant dress floating along; she took, in passing, the lovely hand, and endeavoured by a gentle pressure to convey a feeling of the love and tenderness that was in her heart. But Ada was now laughing gaily with her partner, and looking again the happiest, as well as the loveliest in the room.

"It is all my own fancy!" thought Agnes. "Mr. Latimer's dancing with me, affects not Ada; she knows that he does so, as no doubt is the fact, because I am the poorest and the worst-dressed girl in the room!"

She resolved to be as gay as the rest. Young Bridport thought that the eyes of his *vis-a-vis* were even more beautiful than he had at first imagined, and that really she

looked such a thorough-bred gentlewoman, that he could no longer think her ill-dressed.

Nothing but the most general conversation passed between Mr Latimer and herself; but when that quadrille was ended she determined to dance no more that night.

Many young men, when it was finished, offered themselves as her partners, but she resolutely sate down to the instrument to play. From a cause which was, many people believed, easy of explanation, the next quadrille was not nearly so well played as the former one. Mr. Latimer took his place beside her, and Ada, who had declined dancing, sate on the other side of the room. Ada seemed neither chagrined nor neglected: many admirers, the least enamoured of whom by no means was the handsome George Bridport, were around her; but for all that, Agnes never lost the thought of her.

"I wish I could transport you to the vacant chair beside Ada!" thought Agnes, as Mr. Latimer's hand turned over each succeeding page of her music-book.

Mrs. Colville was winning one rubber after another at whist, so that she saw not what was going forward; but Mrs. Sam was busily looking after the dancing, and she noticed this malapropos adjustment of persons with great dissatisfaction.

"You have not played this last quadrille well," said Mrs. Sam, who had determined some time before that there should be no more dancing; "but I dare say, dear, you are anxious to get back to papa. She is so attentive to papa," said she, turning to Mr. Latimer, "and he is so poorly to-day, it was almost cruel to bring her out."

"I will now go quietly home," said Agnes, aside to Mrs. Sam. "I will make no adieus."

"But I do not know how we can spare any one to go home with you," said Mrs. Sam, who knew that supper would soon be announced.

"My servant shall walk with her," said Mr. Latimer, who, unexpectedly to both parties, had heard what passed.

Whether Mr. Latimer, however, could not find his servant, or whether he wished for the fresh air, and the cool quiet evening walk, or whatever might be his motive, he surprised Agnes, by joining her outside the door, and accosting her with,—“Permit me to be your attendant, Miss Agnes, instead of my servant.”

"I cannot indeed, Mr. Latimer," said Agnes stopping, "the distance is so short, and I quite prefer going alone; the air is fresh

and pleasant after the hot drawing-room, and there is no danger for me!"

He took her hand, and drew it within his arm with the air of one who will have his own way; and yet there was a something in his manner, tender at once and deferential, that troubled her. She recalled the conclusion of her former arguments, that he noticed her, and paid attentions to her, because his benevolence made her very deficiencies interesting to him; but on this occasion there surely was something more. Ah, poor Agnes, with a sentiment which she would not have dared to confess to herself, she felt her hand within his and resting upon his arm, and then she was walking step for step by his side. They walked both slowly and silently. A tumult of strange emotion was in her heart; a short spiritual combat ensued, and she won or seemed to win, a victory over herself.

"My cousin Ada is beautiful!" said she, speaking in the strength of her self-vanquishment.

"Very beautiful," said Mr. Latimer emphatically.

"She is a noble creature!" returned Agnes. "I think very few persons do her justice; I question if you do, for she is not a merely beautiful girl, but she has high and estimable qualities. I think her one of the most interesting characters I know. I cannot see any fault in her, and I am convinced that she must be greatly improved since you left." Agnes longed to tell the substance of the confession she had made, but Ada's strict prohibition forbade it.

"I think very highly of her powers," said Mr. Latimer, in a voice which to Agnes seemed cool and measured, "and I know no one more capable of developing herself nobly than Ada. There was a time," continued he, after a pause, "when I tried to use my influence with her; but Ada is one of those who must find the right way herself, and, sooner or later, she will find it, no doubt."

"She has found it already," said Agnes, warmly: "she is as noble as she is beautiful. I wish I could make you think as highly of her as I do myself," added she, feeling almost desperate in her cousin's cause.

"We are nearly at the end of our walk," said Mr. Latimer, abruptly, "and I must not forget my sister's commission to me. She came out to bid you good-bye, but I promised to do it for her, and to beg you to make one of a pic-nic party to Bradgate Park—merely her own family, your uncle's,

Mr. and Mrs. Sam, and myself, on Tuesday week."

"I should like it extremely," said Agnes, "if I can go—if my uncle can spare me."

"You must go, and he must spare you," returned Mr. Latimer; "for, to tell you the truth," said he, laughing, "the party is made for you and me. You, as the entire stranger; I, as the last arrival; and the party without either of us, would be like Hamlet with the part of Hamlet left out."

Agnes hoped to herself that neither he nor his sister would say this to any of her uncle's family, and this brought them to the Hall.

"I wish Mr. Latimer would be more attentive to Ada," thought she, as she entered her chamber for the night; "however, the very next time I go out, I will dress myself in my very best, and make the very most of myself, and owe nothing to compassion!"

Yes, so she said; but through the sleepless night that followed, she took a strict and close survey of the true connexion which existed relatively between Mr. Latimer, her cousin, and herself; and there was something very much more momentous than this or that dress, or this or that casualty, which was the mainspring of Mr. Latimer's behaviour. Then, as regarded herself, how different was her feeling now towards him to what it had been on that first evening of their meeting when she so unwittingly revealed to him all her domestic affections and sorrows! Yes, between then and now a very different feeling had sprung up; and very different too was it now, to what it was only comparatively a few hours ago! It was love which she was admitting into her heart! And this love, which was so flattering, so seductive, was treachery to her cousin—to her who had confided so much to her keeping—who had suffered already so much from her. It appeared to her at that moment almost criminal; and, if she stole away Latimer's heart, however rich the prize, it could only be at the purchase of Ada's happiness. Better ten times that I should suffer than do this! said she. The true path for her to take, however, seemed hidden from her. She prayed for aid, and all seemed darkness and uncertainty around her. She knew not that which was right for her to do. For one moment it appeared better that she should leave Lawford. In a great measure, if not altogether, her mission as regarded poor Fanny Jeffkins' child was fulfilled, if not to the letter, yet fully as to the spirit; and now she had duties to perform to

others, to herself, to her cousin, to her uncle, who had been as a father to her! Her duty to these was alike—to promote the well-being and happiness of each: but then, would her leaving Lawford do this? She knew not. However, she had a true friend and counsellor in her mother, and to her she determined to write. She had related to her all that had hitherto occurred, and now again she would be faithfully candid, and her mother's advice should be her guide. In the meantime, she resolved that nothing should induce her to neglect the most rigid fulfilment of her duty, nor would she give any ground for reproach. Her place was with her uncle, and him alone. She determined to avoid Mr. Latimer's society, and even his sister's, and not to give them any reason to suspect the treacherous inclinations of her own heart.

Such were the resolves which, in the stillness of the night, Agnes made: she prayed earnestly for the assistance of Heaven to strengthen her in this and all other trials; and, with a stronger and a more cheerful mind, she arose the next morning.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SLEEPLESS night was passed also by Ada. She had felt that Mr. Latimer's behaviour to her through the evening, although courteous and very friendly, was not that of the devoted lover. She had worn outwardly a gay untroubled countenance; she had laughed and sung, and accepted the attentions of people she cared nothing about; but now, that she was alone, she gave way to her real feelings. She wept bitterly; she reproached Latimer in her mind with the proverbial inconstancy of his sex; she resolved to call up all her womanly pride, and be equally indifferent. But that, on the other hand, seemed easier said than done; a miserable feeling, as if every thing was a blank, lay upon her soul, spite even of pride and "womanly spirit." And then there slid in a soft persuading sentiment, that she might yet win him—beautiful she was, and worthy of him; she would be humble, and gentle, and solicit his teaching; she would let him see how faithful her heart had been. As to his attentions to Agnes, he was interested probably with her, from several causes. She had known him often, in former years, leave her, the worshipped queen of the room, to dance with, or pay attention to some deformed, or neglected girl. She did not in reality attach so very much importance to

that; he was interested in Agnes, for her father's sake: she had expected that he would be so; and if she herself would only condescend to let him know that his favourite author was hers also—that they had tastes, and feelings, and pursuits, in common, she might win him, spite of his indifference. Ah! these were only dreams of the night! In the morning, she woke with the feeling, that it is vain to strive against the natural character. Reserved and proud she naturally was; reserved and proud she must remain to be. She could not, in the state of feeling in which he now was, hint to him, even of what she had done for his sake; not even, if by not so doing she must die! If, on the contrary, he had returned as he went, then how easily would all have been told; then heart would have responded to heart. Now when Ada thought upon the confession which she had made to Agnes, it burned within her soul like fire. She felt humiliated, and a feeling of resentment rankled in her heart.

Their next meeting was an unpleasant one for all parties, and yet outwardly very little was indicated. Nay, even Mrs. Colville herself, seemed more than usually gracious. She however was full of bitter displeasure. Hence it was that during the day she took an opportunity of having a private interview with Tom. Private interviews with him, were not very general things, because Mrs. Colville was never quite sure how far her nephew acted with her; but Mrs. Sam, with whom Mrs. Colville had already canvassed the subject under discussion, advised that Tom should be counselled with.

"I am not satisfied with Mr. Latimer's conduct," said she, after she had introduced the subject, as she thought, in a manner flattering to his brotherly pride.

"Nor am I," said Tom abruptly.

"Then you observed how indifferent he seemed about her?" asked she: "I hope nobody else did!"

"Very likely not," returned Tom; "but we were very naturally alive to the subject. 'Pon my word, I thought he seemed much more of a lover to Agnes than to Ada!"

"It is very wrong of Agnes to encourage him. I can see plain enough how much delighted she is with his attention—it is very wrong of her! I never expected we should have been having any love-affairs with her, and especially with Mr. Latimer! I told Mrs. Acton that she had no fortune, that she was quite dependant upon her uncle—and then to think of coming in that dress! I

declare I am quite provoked when I think of it!"

"It is possible," said Tom, speaking the idea which had occurred to himself, "that Mr. Latimer paid all that attention to her, because she was not remarkably well dressed—and yet, after all, she really did not look amiss!"

"For our sweet Ada's sake," said Mrs. Colville, "we cannot have this going on. It is wrong of Mr. Latimer, and it is still worse of Agnes, who owes so much to her uncle: it is perfect ingratitude, I can call it nothing else; and she shall leave us, as sure as she is alive, if she set herself up as a rival to Ada. And, by the bye, who was it that walked home with her last night? I had a mind to ask her point-blank this morning at breakfast: but I thought the very suspicion of its being Mr. Latimer, would be so unpleasant to poor Ada."

"I don't know," said Tom. "I did not know that she was gone, until supper was half over. I know, however, that Latimer was not in when supper began. George Bridport took in Agnes. I almost expected that I must do it myself. But I cannot believe that Latimer walked home with her."

"I asked Sykes this morning," said Mrs. Colville, "but she could not tell me. Nobody was with her at the door. However, I'll find it out! And then there is another thing," began Mrs. Colville, evidently on a new idea, "who was it that sent her those jet ornaments? surely that was not his doing?"

Tom laughed aloud. "No," said he, "nothing of the kind! Her uncle in Scotland, or her brothers, or some of her London friends. Latimer! God bless me, how could you think of such a thing!"

"Well, I have spoken my mind to you," said the old lady, "and we must consider what is to be done. We must not have Ada's prospects in life ruined, and the whole country laughing at us, for a little insignificant girl like that, without a penny to her fortune!"

Tom looked as if he were about to say something in opposition to his aunt: but he merely ended by repeating her words, that they must certainly consider what was to be done.

Tom, however, needed very little time for consideration; he had already, and before his aunt spoke, made up his mind as to what he was to do.

In the afternoon, as usual, when her uncle, who had fully and freely forgiven all

her short-comings of the day before, and had even, dear old man, asked her to pardon his petulance, was gone out in his bath chair, Agnes went out too, hoping, as she always did, amid the quiet of nature, to allay the troubles, and agitations, and uncertainties of her own heart. She avoided the dingle to-day, unwilling to recall more vividly than it yet lived in her mind, the strange interview with Jeffkins; and taking a shorter cut went direct to Woodbury Lane, as being the most retired place in the neighbourhood. She walked as far as the little bridge over the Merley brook, and then she sat down. What was her surprise, and no less her chagrin, when her cousin Tom, who, as on former afternoons, but now on foot, must have taken the bride road down the dingle, was now seen coming down the lane, in that direction towards her. It was no use trying to escape him: they saw each other at the first moment, and the next he was at her side.

There was a very friendly expression in his eyes, and a peculiar meaning in his voice as he said, "I knew you were here, Agnes, and therefore I came. I hope it is not unpleasant to you."

"I came for a solitary walk," returned Agnes. "I have just now many things to think of."

"And so have I," said he; "and yet, more correctly speaking, I have but one; and I may as well be candid with you at once; it is yourself. It is no use trying to conceal it any longer; and you must long have been aware of it,—I love you, Agnes, most desperately—most sincerely!"

"For Heaven's sake, do not say so," returned Agnes, with a pale cheek, and an earnest voice. "It will bring much unhappiness to us both, and much confusion in your family, and much trouble."

"Impossible," said Tom, speaking in a bold and cheerful voice, taking at the same time his cousin's hand, which she did not withdraw; "who is there to say that I do wrong in marrying you? I am my own master. My father loves you as a daughter already; Ada loves you like a sister; my Aunt Colville is not of the consequence she fancies herself; we will have you, as my own dear little wife, mistress at Lawford, and then the old lady may look out a home for herself."

Tom spoke like a lover who has no fear of being refused; in fact he never dreamed of it.

"It cannot be!" returned Agnes, in a voice deeply agitated.

"And why not?" asked he; "what can possibly prevent it? My whole life shall make you happy; and more than that, Agnes," said he, looking tenderly into her face, "shall make me deserve the happiness of being your husband. You know not," continued he in his peculiarly persuasive voice, "the immense influence which you have over me. I am already far different from what I was. I believe that I am a better man: it is you who have made me so. You can make me what you like!"

"I believe of a truth," said Agnes, "that a very noble nature lies within you. I believe you to be capable of every good sentiment. I bless God, indeed, if I have been the means of awakening one better thought in your soul—but your wife I never can be."

"And why not?" demanded he; "there are no difficulties that cannot be overcome. As to fortune," said he, thinking that perhaps that was in her mind, "I want not a farthing with you. I want you and nothing more: you are far dearer to me than a million of money; and as to any differences of opinion—there are none. I think as you do; you have never uttered one sentiment, however my Aunt Colville may have made an outcry about it, that has not had a response in my own heart. You have been like the light of truth to me: you have dispersed many errors. As my wife, it will be my pride to make you happy. Where, then, is the impossibility?"

"Dear cousin," said Agnes, looking at him with the most friendly candour, "you will give me credit for truthfulness of character—you can believe that what I say, I mean, and that I would not willingly say any thing which should deeply wound you, without having grave and convincing proof to myself of its truth and its necessity. Believe me then when I say, it is impossible for me to become your wife. I love you as a dear friend and brother; you are more interesting to me than I can tell, or you can well conceive. God knows how willingly I would serve you; but in this one particular I cannot! That you love me I sincerely believe! but that you do so, I consider one of the saddest events of my life, because I must give you pain!"

"This is the merest mockery, Agnes," said he, impatiently; "what is love either as a friend or a sister when the heart makes a

much warmer demand! True love is a thing not to be trifled with—not to be given by weight and measure. If a true heart, Agnes, an amended life, a devotion which death only can end, can win from you no better return than this, then there is only one conclusion to be drawn—and the conjectures of my Aunt Colville,” said he, in a tone of bitterness, “may not, after all, be so very much wrong—it may be true that you are placing yourself as a rival to Ada!”

“Does Mrs. Colville, then, say so?” asked Agnes, suddenly startled by the words. “Ah, no! God forbid that I should do such a thing! I will now be candid with you, because I am sure that you deserve that I should be so. The slight attentions which Mr. Latimer paid me last night troubled me greatly; how thankfully would I have placed him by Ada’s side! and these things, slight as they may be, have determined me to leave Lawford. My solitary walk this morning was to think over my plans. I have already written to my mother to announce my intentions. This, I think, will prove to you that I wish not to be Ada’s rival.”

“There is no need for you to leave us,” said he; “and the best way, and the surest, and the wisest way of proving that your heart has no interest in Mr. Latimer, is to accept of my hand and heart. Say yes, dearest Agnes,” pleaded he. “If you could only know the sincerity of my love, could only give me credit for the good that I know myself to be capable of, and which you have, unconsciously to yourself, awakened into vigorous growth within me, you would not drive me to despair by rejecting my suit! Does there yet remain an impossibility?” asked he impatiently, as he saw her yet pale and distressed countenance.

“Relying,” she said, “on the good that is within you, I will say a few words—strange words, of a truth, for me to say—but they will explain all to you.” She paused, for she had given herself a difficult task, and it was not without an effort that she thus continued,—“Before I came to Lawford a sad secret was committed to me by one whose life was your sacrifice.”

Tom dropped the hand which he had held, and turned pale.

“On the last evening of her unhappy life,” continued Agnes, “an evening which terminated a short career of sin and misery, she intrusted to me, upon her bended knees, the child which, with mistaken views,—which brought on her an awful punishment,—she

had abandoned. To the last moment I am convinced that you were dearer to her than life.”

Tom pressed his hand upon his brow, but made no reply.

“By the merest chance in the world, yet I believe through the hand of God, I found the child in the caravan of those poor Marchmonts who were in this very lane. But you know the history of the poor child,” said she, “as well as I do.”

“And what is this that you have been plotting and caballing with those wretched people?” asked he, evidently assuming anger to conceal deeper feelings.

“Nothing,” returned she, mildly. “The secret which that unhappy girl confided to me, has never passed my own breast. The woman, however, was at the point of death; the child about to be abandoned a second time; the husband, a brutal and dissolute man, would not permit the clergyman to visit his wife, because, as you know, he had inveterate hatred against Mr. Colville. I therefore sent for the father of the child’s mother; he is a good man, and one whom my father knew well—the child is now in his hands—it will want no more.”

“And for what is this wretched history now brought up against me?” demanded he: “these are some of the *outré* notions of which my Aunt Colville complains; and it is a peculiar subject, too, for a young lady to introduce to a gentleman!” and with these words there was an attempted jeer in his countenance.

“You pressed me very closely,” returned Agnes, “or I would not have spoken of it. You may treat it with levity: but I cannot do so. You may still consider it, as no doubt you do, a light thing, to win the love of a poor girl, to whom you could make no restitution, only for her ruin; but, believe me, in the eyes of God, of truth and justice, it is not so. This it is, I candidly confess to you, *outré* as my notions may appear, which kept my heart safe while it acknowledged your native goodness, and whilst it blessed you for being kind to me—very kind, when others were not so—this it was which kept my heart free from any warmer sentiment than friendship and gratitude. These I have always felt for you, and these I shall always feel; and I conjure you, by all that is sacred and dear to you, to listen to the better voice within your own soul, which even now reproaches you for having treated that as a trifle which was a great and an awful sin!”

He knew that every word which she said was true; but pride and an evil spirit warred yet against the good that was in him.

"If women," continued Agnes, "would but be faithful to virtue, not only in their own persons, but for virtue's own sake, and would feel, as truly is the case, that the whole sex is injured if but one woman fall, then how differently would men treat women!"

The evil spirit within his heart suggested to him to turn her words to ridicule; to question even whether the faultless Latimer were really without sin: but his newly awakened and better nature silenced the spirit; his answer therefore was of another kind.

"Agnes," said he, in a voice which wrung her heart but to hear, "is my crime, then, like Cain's, to make me an outcast for ever? Does my error, which may have its palliation, excludeme for ever from hope? Cannot sincere repentance, cannot an after life of purity and truth atone to your sense of virtue for one transgression? I acknowledge that I have sinned. I will make all the reparation in my power—all that even you can require from me. I will acknowledge the child of that unhappy girl. I will do all you ask, all you demand—only refuse me not your love!"

Agnes felt that the time of trial was now at hand. She was silent, and the eloquent tears rolled down her cheeks. She counselled deeply with her own heart; many feelings—and a woman is often never nearer to accepting a man than when she refuses him, strange as the paradox may appear—pleaded in his favour. Feelings of deep compassion for him; entire trust in her power over him for good; gratitude for much kindness, all pleaded for him; but still there was another voice, strong in its sense of truth and right, which said *no*—and to that she listened, although it compelled her to a hard task.

"Speak, Agnes," pleaded the young man, earnestly: "say that you will not cast me off, and my life and all that I have is yours!"

"May God in heaven strengthen us both!" said Agnes, in a broken voice: "but we must part!"

"We part then!" returned he, in a voice which went to her heart, "and may God bless you! but you have made a miserable man of me, when you might have made me so happy!" And without another word or look, like one who was prepared to meet his fate, he turned and slowly walked away.

Whether she had done right or wrong, for

the first sad moments after his departure, she knew not. She felt like one who has been stunned, and all was dark within her mind. She sate for some time after he was out of sight, and then she, too, arose and walked slowly homeward. This declaration had taken her by surprise; she could hardly believe but that it was a strange and troubled dream.

Tom came not back to dinner; but he was often so very eccentric in his movements that but little notice was taken of the circumstance. Mrs. Colville and Ada sate in the little library in the evening, and Agnes read aloud a new novel of Mrs. Gore's. It was a quiet evening, and over the minds of the household, whatever might be their true inward feelings, there was a great outward serenity. Agnes, however, grew silently uneasy as bed-time approached, and Tom had not yet returned.

"I wonder what is become of him!" said Ada, after her father had retired for the night.

Agnes would have told them that she had seen him that afternoon in Woodbury Lane: but she did not dare to trust her voice in speaking of him.

At length, when it was concluded that the servants must sit up for him, a note was brought in. It had been sent from a roadside inn, where the coach stopped, a few miles off, and was to say, that important business had unexpectedly taken him from home; that his portmanteau, with such things as he enumerated, should be sent to him at Leicester the next day, and that the time of his return was uncertain.

Young Mr. Lawford had his own business, his railway shares to look after, and Heaven knows what: so his absence caused no astonishment.

CHAPTER XVII.

THREE, four, five days went on quietly, and then a letter came for Agnes from her mother. It was such a letter as she expected. And now her kind, considerate Scottish uncle prayed her to come to him; she should be to him, he said, as a daughter. He remitted to her money for her journey, and arranged how and when she was to come. "I wish, however," said her mother, towards the end of the letter, "that you could see those dear boys before you leave England; but it is impossible. Their letters are cheerful; they are in good health, and are

doing well; but poor Harry feels it very hard to spend his holidays at school. The Carters, to whom they were to go, are called to Boulogne by the dangerous illness of poor Ellen; and the Riddleys have the scarletina, so that there is nothing for them but to submit, and be as contented as they can."

The expectation of being so soon reunited again to her beloved mother, diffused, for the first time for many days, a cheerfulness over the mind of Agnes. Her mother also entirely approved of her conduct in every way; and how strengthening, in difficult circumstances, is the approval of those whose judgment we esteem! It was now time to announce her intentions to her relatives; and, after all, as she expected it would be, it was a very difficult and painful duty. But, however, it must be done.

Ada was alone in her dressing-room, and to her Agnes went first.

"I am come to announce to you, dear Ada," she said, "that I am shortly about to leave you. My mother and my uncle wish me to go to them,—but I shall never forget your kindness——" more she could not say.

"I know how it is," said Ada; "I suspected as much when Tom went away so suddenly—you have refused him!"

Agnes was taken by surprise; she coloured deeply, and then turned pale.

"He loved you very dearly," continued Ada, "and, spite of some few drawbacks, he is a very noble fellow. I think that you have acted very unkindly by him, for you can have no idea of his deep love for you."

"Circumstances," returned Agnes, "have made me seem—oh, so unwillingly on my part!—to do unkind things to you both. Professions, when the actions do not seem to bear them out, are quite insults. I, therefore, will make no professions; but He who reads the heart, and knows every secret action and motive, knows that I have not been actuated by unkindness or mere waywardness, and that I feel nothing but the most disinterested regard and affection for you."

The sincerity with which these words were spoken, carried conviction with them. "I will believe you," said Ada, "I will give you credit for acting truthfully, and perhaps, though I cannot see it, wisely, in refusing my brother. It was, however, a fond wish of my heart that you might have been his wife; and I fear now that you have almost driven him to despair; and yet," continued she, wishing to pique Agnes, and speaking in her cold tone of voice, "that would be very

foolish in him. Henrietta Bolton would make him a charming wife; and she, I am sure, would not refuse him."

"I should love Henrietta Bolton," replied Agnes, warmly, "if she would make your brother happy. I am deeply interested in him, much more than you can imagine, or than any one can."

"What foolish scruples, then, have prevented you from accepting him? If it be fear of my Aunt Colville, that is the idlest thing in the world."

"I have made my decision, dear Ada," said Agnes, "and that not rashly. I may stand accused of folly, and even coldness of heart: but indeed I have not deserved it."

"That we shall see," said Ada, with a voice and manner which showed her to be both wounded and displeased.

Mrs. Colville and Mrs. Sam had come to the firm determination that Agnes must go; it was a thing which admitted of no *pro* and *con*. Go she must. They wished that something would occur to call her away. They did not know on what plea to get rid of her themselves; and then there was another question,—would her uncle let her go? That was a doubtful question. But for all that, go she must. Had they not better, they thought, open to him all their plans. He was desirous, of course, that Ada should marry Mr. Latimer; but then the old gentleman was crotchety; if he got the slightest idea in his head that Mr. Latimer preferred Agnes to his daughter, he would be very likely to say, "Well, then, let him have her, with all my heart!"

"Poor, dear man!" said Mrs. Colville, "there is no dependance on his mind now: he is sadly shaken!"

However, uncertain as was the step of consulting the old gentleman upon it, one thing was certain, and that was, that Agnes must go!

When, however, Agnes announced to these two ladies her mother's wish, and her own intention of leaving Lawford, a very mixed feeling—such is the inconsistency of human nature—came over their minds, of there being a something, after all, at the bottom of this, much deeper than they themselves yet saw. Like Pharaoh with the Israelites, their hearts were hardened, and they were not inclined to let her go. The one looked at the other; the same sentiment was in each breast, and Mrs. Sam spoke for her aunt as well as herself, when she said—"I think it very strange conduct, Agnes. We

considered you as engaged here in attending upon your uncle. I am sure that every reasonable attention has been paid to you; you have been treated by us as one of the family; but if you think that you can mend yourself, of course we can have nothing to say, except regretting it on your own account."

"But I think," said the elder lady, without giving Agnes time to reply, "that your uncle will be very much hurt by your conduct. He is very much attached to you, and has been quite a father to you, and you should consider this."

"I do consider it," replied Agnes. "I shall always retain the most grateful sense of my uncle's kindness to me; but circumstances, which I cannot control, make it very desirable for me to leave. My mother wishes it also. My uncle offers me a home with him, not so splendid as this, certainly, but one which promises me much happiness."

As Agnes said these words, the door opened, and Mr. Latimer was announced. Nothing could be gayer or brighter than his countenance. It was a wonderful contrast to the three which had been in conclave the minute before. His arrival, however, made an instantaneous change in these. The first dinner-bell had just rung, and he immediately declared his intention in coming to be, dining with them. The two Mrs. Colvilles welcomed him most joyfully,—it was so friendly of him, so neighbourly! Agnes withdrew; and, hastening to Ada, informed her of the unexpected dinner guest, and begged also that she might be excused from appearing at table.

"I am not well, dear Ada," she said, and her countenance testified to the truth of her words; "but do not you be angry with me, I feel as if that were more than I could bear. The anger of those I love makes my heart ache."

"I cannot be angry with you," said Ada, on whose mind Mr. Latimer's arrival had shed a broad sunbeam of delight; "you disarm my anger by your gentleness—and yet," added she, "I cannot forgive your refusing to become my sister."

It was agreed between the elder and younger Mrs. Colville, that considering Mr. Latimer was come, not a word should be said about Agnes leaving them. The old gentleman, as yet, knew nothing of it, and they would not spoil the harmony of the party by introducing the subject. He troubled himself very much about Agnes's

indisposition, and insisted after dinner that she should have some strong coffee sent up to her, and a smelling-bottle, and begged her to bathe her temples with *eau de Cologne*. He said that he could not do without her.

"It is strange what an effect that girl has upon me, Mr. Latimer," said he, addressing that gentleman: "there is a wonderful something about her that quite takes hold of one. If I had been a young fellow now, I should certainly have been over head and ears in love with her, that I should!" and the old gentleman's eyes twinkled as if tears were in them.

Mr. Latimer laughed merrily, and said that he should not wonder at all; that really there was a deal of truth in what Mr. Lawford said.

"You may laugh," said old Mr. Lawford, "but I'll repeat it: there are not many girls like her."

Mr. Latimer did not incline to controvert that opinion, therefore the old gentleman said no more on the subject.

"I am going to have my nap," said he, when he had finished his half pint of port; "Agnes must come down to me in about an hour—you'll see to it, Ada; and if I am pretty well, you shall all come and have tea with me."

He looked wonderfully good-tempered; and, declining the offered arm of Mr. Latimer, he shuffled away to his own room.

Agnes went to him as he desired, resolving not to say a word to him on a subject which would be so painful to him that evening. Instead of so doing, she combed his hair, of which he was so fond, she rubbed his bald head with her soft hand; sang to him and told him little stories. He was as happy as a king; he kissed her tenderly, and called her his pet-child; and then bade her ring for tea.

"You must bring in tea for all," said he to the servant, "and tell the ladies and Mr. Latimer, with my compliments, that I will expect the pleasure of their company to tea."

Agnes could not object, and with the urn came in the household guests. Ada was leaning on Mr. Latimer's arm; the best understanding in the world seemed to exist between them; he placed a chair for her, and seated himself by her side. The two Mrs. Colvilles looked quite triumphant.

Flowers stood on the tea-table, and a soft lamp-light lit the room, which lying away from the west was early dark even in summer. All seemed inviting to the most agreeable social intercourse.

"You have not heard the news," said Mrs. Colville to her brother the moment she was seated. "It has taken us greatly by surprise, but it has delighted us also equally."

"What can it be?" asked Mr. Lawford impatiently.

Mr. Latimer laughed, and so did Ada.

"You have not heard of Tom lately?" said Mr. Latimer.

"No, upon my word, we have not," returned the old gentleman.

"I have, however," said Mr. Latimer. "He made his appearance at my sister's yesterday, on very important business; that of paying his court to Henrietta Bolton—and of course, with remarkable success. My brother and sister are delighted with it, and so am I."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed the old gentleman; "that was his sudden business, was it?"

Agnes was making tea; the urn concealed her face from every one. The news indeed surprised her; but in what way it exactly affected her, in the first instance, it would be difficult to say. In some little degree it lessened her regard for him, and yet what a burden it at once lifted from her breast! Pique, no doubt, was at the bottom of it; but still the match was so wise and suitable a one, that she could do no other than rejoice in it.

"Well," said the old gentleman, after a pause, in which he seemed to have been cogitating on the subject; "Miss Henrietta Bolton is a great favourite of mine, and she has done my son great honour in accepting him; but I had laid out my little Agnes there, for his wife!"

The eyes of all turned upon her, even Mr. Latimer's, and all with very different feelings.

"But man proposes, and God disposes," said he, "and we'll hope that Agnes will get a good husband somewhere else; but then it will be taking her away from me, and that I should not like; but I am an old man, and I may not live to see that day!"

He was quite affected by his own suggestions, and so also was Agnes.

It was a termination to the merry news of Tom's wooing, which nobody had expected. But the party was not going to be mournful for all that. A few moments restored both Agnes and her uncle to their usual cheerfulness, although the old gentleman gave evidence of weighing the consequences of Tom's marriage through the whole evening. But it had taken a load from the heart of Agnes,

which made her feel like a new being. An intelligent look passed between herself and Ada, which said, on the one side, "You see that I have not made Tom irreparably miserable after all!" and on the other, "You see that a very sweet girl would have him although you would not!" and then the eyes of both expressed the same sentiment,—"We are very good friends again with each other, and very well satisfied with the state of affairs!"

When this subject had subsided, Mr. Latimer said, that he had also another little piece of news to tell them, which had given him great pleasure, "and which," said he, addressing Agnes, "will I am sure please you also."

As the last news had been about wooing, a curious sensation went to the heart of every one present, as if this too must be of a similar nature—but then what had Agnes to do with it? Every body looked curious and amazed.

"You recollect the other day," said he, turning to Mr. Lawford, "the little affair about that poor fellow Marchmont with the caravan in Woodbury Lane?"

"What, he has been taken up, has he?" asked Mrs. Colville triumphantly.

"No, nor I hope is likely to be," replied Mr. Latimer.

Mrs. Colville was not going to oppose any hopes of Mr. Latimer's, however extraordinary they might be: so she left him to continue his narrative.

"Marchmont removed his caravan," continued he, "to Merley Common just by me. When I had left you the other morning I rode up to the little encampment, and found the poor woman extremely ill. I sent off for the doctor from Merley, and ordered my housekeeper to look after her a little. I heard nothing more about them, until last evening, when, as I was walking in my grounds, I heard a sound, which was not to be mistaken, although it is a very uncommon one in our neighbourhood,—the singing of a hymn, as if preparatory to a field-preaching."

"Bless me! are the Methodists again in the parish?" exclaimed Mrs. Colville.

"It seemed very much like it," replied Mr. Latimer; "and as I do not happen to have any very violent prejudice against the Methodists"—(here again was an opinion which, from Mr. Latimer's lips, poor Mrs. Colville was obliged to tolerate)—"I too betook myself to the place whence the sound proceeded, and which was that little Merley Common on which Marchmont's caravan stood."

"The devil turned preacher!" said Mr. Lawford laughing, and anticipating what he expected to be the drift of the story.

"No, it was not Marchmont, nor the black adversary in hisshape," returned Mr. Latimer, smiling, "although the preacher had made a pulpit of the steps of his caravan. The preacher was a stranger to me, a man perhaps of sixty; a man of the working class, however, with a haggard and care-worn countenance, and thin silvery hair, which was combed back from a forehead which indicated great powers of mind. He had probably been preaching through the week in the neighbouring villages, and this now was his Sunday congregation. There were probably two or three hundred people assembled, all neat and decent, people of all ages, in their Sabbath apparel. It was a sight which pleased me greatly. Within the door of the caravan also, there was a singular and interesting group; the sick woman, who now seemed better both in mind and body, sate on her bed or in a chair propped up with pillows, and at her side a girl held on her knee one of the most beautiful children I ever saw in my life, a living cherub of Murillo. The hymn was just finished, and the preacher gave out his text, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.'

"I have heard many preachers, both at home and in America," continued Mr. Latimer; "I have heard the highest dignitaries in the church, and the most celebrated preachers of the day, both learned and unlearned: but I never heard so effective a sermon as this. There was no ranting, no striving after effect in it; there was no flowery eloquence, nor any appeal to the passions; but it was, from beginning to end, the strong eloquence of truth kindled into a living flame by the broadest spirit of Christian love. It was a sermon on the mission and power of Christianity, as it comes home to every man's heart and hearth, and every day's experience. The people all round me were weeping; but the most remarkable and interesting feature in the whole scene, was poor Marchmont himself. He stood apart from every one, on the outside of the assembly, as if he had not made up his mind whether to go or stay. There was an uneasiness and an uncertainty

in his countenance for some time. At length he was fairly won; his hard features relaxed, and then kindled up into a responsive sentiment, and not long afterwards I saw him seated on the ground weeping like a child. It was an extraordinary and really an affecting thing, to see that man, whom the law had pronounced to be a hardened and hopeless criminal, brought into the state of a humble, repentant child, by the simple teachings of the doctrines of love—by the pure gospel!"

"But *was* it the gospel which really was preached?" asked Mrs. Colville.

"Unquestionably, the repentance-working, purifying, and life-ennobling gospel," returned Mr. Latimer; "and it seems to me that the apostles of our Lord, poor fishers and handicraftsmen, whom he sent abroad to preach and teach, must have been such as this poor, hard-handed mechanic."

Old Mr. Lawford wiped his eyes,—"If the Methodists," said he, "can reform such fellows as Marchmont, it is a pity, I think, that they have been sent out of our parish."

"I think so, too," said Mr. Latimer, warmly; "and if their preachers were always like this man, they should have a chapel in my grounds, if there were no other place for them."

Agnes looked at him with an expression of unspeakable admiration and gratitude.

"You approve of this heresy, Miss Agnes," said he, "I see it in your countenance."

Ada would have said that she did so also, spite of her Aunt Colville and spite of Mrs. Sam; but a something in the expression of his eye, as he looked at Agnes, a something in the tone of his voice, kept her silent.

What could have made Agnes happier than these tidings! This, then, was poor Jeffkins, going forth upon that mission to which she herself had been instrumental in calling him. Perhaps this was the happiest moment of her whole life; her own little private troubles and uncertainties sank into nothing as she thought of Jeffkins, an agent in God's hand, and the sinner Marchmont the first-fruits of his faithfulness. God had blessed him and his labours. The sick woman and the child too, would both be saved spiritually and temporally. She could no longer be depressed. Whatever the evening might be to the others, to her it was a happy one: she was raised out of herself; and when Mr. Latimer made the most kind inquiries after her mother and her brothers, as if they had been his own friends, she had forgotten that it was for *her* sake that

this was done, and, in the open-hearted simplicity of a broad Christian love, she told of the poor boys who were forced, so sorely against their will, to spend their holidays at school,—“Poor lads,” she said, “I wish they were at Lawford!” Mr. Latimer made many inquiries about them still, and at what school they were. It seemed to please him, just as much as it pleased her, that he knew something about the gentleman with whom they were; they had been members of the same college for some months,—Mr. Latimer’s college life having begun just before the other gentleman’s terminated.

All this was very pleasant; and then arrangements had to be made relative to the Bradgate Park pic-nic of the morrow. All regarding this day’s pleasure had been thrown into confusion and uncertainty by Tom’s absence; and Agnes also had felt great difficulty, under existing circumstances, in becoming one of the party. All was right now, however; Tom was to accompany his betrothed and the Actons; and Mr. Latimer had now to propose that the party from the Rectory and the Hall, of course including Agnes, should take luncheon at the Hays, which was in their direct way to Bradgate, and then that they should all proceed together to the point of rendezvous in this beautiful old park, where the Actons would meet them punctually at three o’clock; Mr. Latimer stipulating for the pleasure of driving Ada and her cousin in his barouche. Mrs. Acton, whose party this was to be considered, claimed the privilege of providing viands for a cold collation, which was to be spread in some beautifully secluded part of the park. Fire was to be lighted in gipsy fashion, and coffee, which Henrietta Bolton prided herself in making with great skill in the true continental manner, was to be enjoyed, as rich coffee can only be thoroughly enjoyed, in the open air. The ladies were to sing; the gentlemen were to be as amiable as possible, and all was to be perfect.

Mrs. Colville, and Ada, and Mrs. Sam, approved greatly of the whole arrangements, and agreed to every thing.

“I think,” said Agnes, who, after all, dreaded this immediate meeting with her cousin, and believing that it would also be unpleasant to him, “that I had much better stay at home with my uncle.”

Every one turned to him, even Mr. Latimer.—“I think,” said he, addressing the old gentleman, “that you will spare Miss Agnes to be of our party; my sister wishes it very

much, and she is the only one amongst us who has not seen the park.”

“To be sure, she must go!” said he; “she must go, and bring me word about Tom and his lady-love! God bless me! to think of his setting off in that sly way!”

It was quite decided that Agnes must go; and she, however reluctant she might be to meet Tom, even as the *fiancé* of another, and however strong was her conviction that it was not for the peace of her mind, though it might matter nothing to Mr. Latimer, to be much in his society, did not see how she could make any opposition.

“Man proposes, and God disposes!” said Mr. Lawford, the next morning, when, after a night of violent thunder, the family, late in the forenoon, still sate over the breakfast table, looking out into drenching rain, which looked as if it never would cease. The thunder-storm seemed to be one of that kind, which, after a long period of dry weather, at once breaks it up, and is the precursor of a long wet and cold time.

“There will be no Bradgate Park to-day,” said Ada, mournfully, who, feeling confident that Agnes would attach herself to Mrs. Acton through the day, as she had said she would do, in order to enjoy as much of her pleasant society as was possible, had anticipated, poor girl, the necessity of Mr. Latimer and herself having long *tête-à-têtes* in that quiet, old, sylvan region, where the poetry of nature and the poetry of a beautiful life were so harmoniously united, and which might lead—oh, so naturally!—to a union of spirit between themselves. Lady Jane Grey’s study of Plato in those old woods, might so easily lead to a confession of the study she had devoted herself to, of works as noble as those of Plato!

“There is a little break in the clouds! I think it looks a little brighter!” said she: “what do you think, Agnes?”

Agnes thought so too; nay, there was even the faintest ray of sunshine! but then Mrs. Colville came in with her very natural recollection, that, let the sun shine as it would, the mossy turf of the old park would be a very unfit carpet for the feet of any lady that day, to say nothing of sitting and singing on the grass.

“Just as well be one of Alderman Scales’s cherubs,” said her father, “and sit singing on a damp cloud!”

“Then I suppose it must be given up!” said Ada. “It is so very awkward,” she continued: “one cannot tell whether one is

expected or not. Perhaps Mr. Latimer may expect us to luncheon, and it is better to have half a pleasure than none."

"My dear!" returned her aunt, "it is impossible! It would look like perfect insanity in us—See, it rains now faster than ever; and now," said she, looking at her watch, "it is half past twelve."

It rained all day: there was a damp, chill, comfortless feeling in the house, which made people think of the delights of a fire as the day wore on. In the afternoon a servant came over from the Hays with a note from Mr. Latimer to Mrs. Colville, full of regrets for the untoward opposition of the elements, together with two remarkably fine pine-apples. The pinery at the Hays was noted for the fine quality of its fruit. Mrs. Colville read from the note that Mr. Latimer hoped that Ada would accept them. Heaven knows if the words were really in the note, for the old lady put it in her pocket as soon as she had finished it. Poor Ada! she almost forgave the rain.

"It's very pretty of Mr. Latimer to send Ada the handsome pines," said Mrs. Colville to her brother, as they all sate at tea together before a fire which was lighted in the little library. Ada divided one of the pines that evening among them. She was unusually lively and amiable.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE next morning Tom Lawford made his appearance at home, and Mrs. Colville had a private conversation with her brother; but one subject is quite enough at a time, and we will take them in the order in which they occurred.

Tom received the congratulations of his family with a very well-satisfied mien; one little remark, however, of his father's disconcerted him.

"I consider," said he, "Miss Bolton a very charming girl, and perhaps a little too good for you; she has a handsome fortune and good connexions; I have nothing to say against the match. It is time you got married, and you have my entire consent; but I had hoped, Tom, that we might have done your poor uncle some little justice by providing for his daughter amongst us. Rich women are not uncommon, nor handsome ones either, but such girls as Agnes are uncommon. But fathers must not choose for their sons: and so, God bless you, Tom, and give my love to Henrietta Bolton."

His voice was broken, and the tears rolled down his cheeks. His son seized his hand and grasped it, and left the room without speaking.

After he was gone, Mrs. Colville came in; and Tom, expecting to find his sister alone in the dining-room, went there; but Agnes was with her. He started: but, mastering the emotion, whatever it might be, which he felt, he said in a tolerably firm voice,— "I am obliged to leave home again for a week; my business in London is unfinished; you can tell my aunt and my father. — Good-bye!"

He had hardly glanced at Agnes: he did not speak to her. His conduct was natural, perhaps, but it troubled and distressed her.

"I must leave this place," again said she to herself, "this is his home, and I drive him from it!" She dreaded announcing her departure to her uncle; and indeed, to her, the parting from him was very grievous. But, however, this little incident with Tom decided her to a prompt and firm fulfilment of her duty. "When I go to him, after luncheon," she said, "I will tell him, when he and I are quite alone together."

In the meantime, as we said, Mrs. Colville is having an interview with him.

"Brother," she began, seating herself beside him almost before his nap was ended, "I have some little matters to talk over with you."

The old gentleman was a little out of humour, and a little out of spirits, and was not at all in a mood for an unpleasant communication; but, however, he was destined to have one made to him that day either by one party or by another, and there is no opposing one's destiny.

"I suppose that Agnes has not told you," she continued, "that she wants to leave us."

"No!" said he; "nor do I think that she does—why should she?"

"Yes, indeed," repeated she, "why should she? but however she does. Her mother, she tells me, and her uncle in Scotland, wish it; but that may be an excuse, as very likely it is, if they are rational people: for where among them can she have a home like this? the same advantages, and the same class of society? However, she tells me that she wishes to go, and that immediately!"

"It is very odd, and very unkind not to have mentioned it to me!" said her uncle. "I thought that she was fond of me; and I take it as very unkind—very unkind, indeed! What am I to do without her?"

"Very true," said Mrs. Colville; "and so I told her. I told her that she was behaving very ill. We offered her a comfortable home here; she has been treated just like one of the family, and you have been like a father to her—I told her all this. I am not at all pleased with her, for I consider that she had no more right to go away in this abrupt manner than a hired servant had!"

"Do not talk of it in that way," replied Mr. Lawford, sharply; "Agnes was not any thing like a servant here! She is her own mistress, and if she can be happier away from us, we have no right to prevent her going—but, however, that is not what I expected from her—and I'll tell you what, Mrs. Colville, there's a something at the bottom of all this; there's a reason for it," said he, raising himself in his chair, and speaking with that energy which indicated a coming storm; "there's a something, Mrs. Colville, which I do not yet penetrate—somebody has been behaving ill to her! You behaved very ill, yourself, to her about that ball at Merley Park; and, if her leaving us is caused by any one behaving ill to her, I shall not readily forgive him, let it be who it may, Mrs. Colville!"

"Do not put yourself into a passion," said she, "I can explain it all to you."

"I will not see a fatherless girl wronged," continued he, without regarding her words, "much less my brother's daughter, and that I can tell you. There's a reason, I say, for her going, Mrs. Colville; and I'll know the bottom of it—I'll have her in here to your face, and know the bottom of it!"

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. Colville, with a suddenly flushed countenance, "am I to be spoken to in this way? What's Agnes to me? Do you imagine that I plot, and cabal, and get up intrigues against her? Is this the return that I am to have for all my anxiety, and care, and thought, night and day, for your family? It is not kind of you, brother," said Mrs. Colville, assuming the voice and manner of an injured person.

Poor Mr. Lawford looked quite bewildered and dumbfounded; he knew not precisely what to say, and therefore was silent; and Mrs. Colville, making use of the advantage she had gained, continued,—“You are right in imagining that there is some motive for her conduct, and a powerful one, too; and I'll tell you what it is. I was convinced that there was a something myself, and I have watched her narrowly. Poor thing! she has lost her heart to her cousin! I saw how

her countenance changed when Mr. Latimer mentioned Tom's engagement to Miss Bolton; and when you said that you wished he had chosen her, she looked ready to faint!"

"Poor, dear girl!" sighed her kind-hearted uncle.

"It is very unfortunate for her," continued Mrs. Colville, "for I am convinced that she is greatly attached to him; and I do not blame her so much for that, for Tom has fine qualities—and however much I blamed her at first for leaving us, I can now see reason for it, and I think we must not oppose it.—Tom, as I said, has fine qualities; I have thought him much improved of late, and I fancy that he is much steadier; but when he was about being married that was natural."

"Poor thing!" sighed Mr. Lawford; "but I tell you what, Mrs. Colville," said he, again seeming to be on the verge of a passion, "if I can find out that my son has been trifling with her affections, he need not look for my forgiveness!"

"There is no danger of that," interposed she; "Tom knows what he is about; he has been thinking of no one but Henrietta Bolton, I will answer for it; and it is a pity that Agnes thought any thing about him!"

Mrs. Colville made it all appear very intelligible to her brother, and very easy to be accounted for; but how much she herself was convinced of the truth of it, we know not.

The rain continued: and, later in the afternoon, as Mr. Lawford could not go out, Agnes sat with him, intending to take an opportunity of breaking the painful subject to him. How kind he seemed to her, poor old gentleman! His heart was filled with such intense compassion for her. He had said many a time, that if he were a young man he should fall in love with her—he now wished that he had another son to give her. The truest proof, however, of the reality of his affection for her, was his willingness to part with her, seeing that the happiness of her life or the peace of her mind made the leaving Lawford needful for her: but she must not leave me altogether, thought he, pondering on the subject even in her presence—she must come back again to me—we will hope it is not so serious but that she may come back again! He looked at her tenderly without speaking, and the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"What is amiss, dear uncle?" asked she; "what distresses you?"

"I've heard it," replied he; "your Aunt Colville has told me, and it has cut me up sadly; but we must not be unreasonable with you; we must consider your own feelings."

Agnes was taken by surprise; but still it was a relief to find that she was spared making the painful disclosure. Her uncle had resolved, with feelings of true delicacy, not to let her know that of which her aunt had informed him regarding the state of her affections; but his heart was so full that it was next to impossible to conceal it.

"I hoped," said he, looking tenderly in her face, "that we had made you happy amongst us."

"You have, dear uncle," said she, rising to his side, and laying her arm on his shoulder as he liked her to do, "and I shall never forget your affection for me. You have been like a second father, and parting from you is like a repetition of my first sorrow"—she could not restrain her feelings and wept bitterly—she seated herself on the low seat beside him, on which she sate to read to him. He wept with her; he laid his hand upon her head as her own father used to do, and drew it tenderly to his knee; and thus they both sate for a long time in silence.

"You have been a daughter to me, Agnes," at length he said, "a very dear daughter. I owe you many pleasant hours. Old man as I am, I have been benefited by your conversation, by your example! I have sometimes thought that, like Abraham, unawares I have entertained an angel. May God Almighty bless you, my child, and reward you better than I can! may he bless with fulfilment every desire of your heart! Tell me, my child, is there any thing I can do for you?"

Agnes said nothing; she clasped her uncle's hand in hers, and pressed it tenderly to her lips; but she could at that moment make no reply.

At length the old man raised himself in his chair, wiped his eyes, gave a husky cough, and showed that he was about to shake off the grief that oppressed him.

"Now, my love," said he, "let us talk rationally together. Is there any thing which your old uncle can do for you?"

She replied that there was nothing.

"Then you must do something for me," said he; "you must not leave me immediately; Ada always is engaged; I shall miss you greatly. I cannot part with you all at once; can you not wait yet a month?"

Agnes replied that it was her wish to go sooner.

"Well, a week," said he, remembering that his son remained from home so long. "I cannot part with you under a week! and promise me, moreover, that you will come again to me. I will not fix when: it shall be at your own time; when your own heart can bear it—or when you are disposed," added he, wishing to amend the expression; "but for me you cannot come too soon!"

The allusion which her uncle had twice made to the state of her own heart troubled her; she feared that the true state of her feelings regarding Mr. Latimer was discovered—she blushed, and her uncle was all the more confirmed in his own belief.

"And even if you should never come back," said he, "write to me sometimes, and tell me about your brothers; the little fellow that has the Rutherford face, and Arthur. I wish we could have had them here! And then, when you marry let me know; and don't be in a hurry, Agnes, for there are few men who are worthy of you: but I should like to know, for I consider you as one of my own children; and if I can make you no better return, I can give you a dowry."

Again Agnes wept; she was questioning with herself whether after all she were justified in leaving him. "I will stay with you a week," said she, "and, please God, when Ada is married to Mr. Latimer, and my cousin is married, then if he and his wife will have me for an inmate, I will come and be with you; for as to marrying myself, dearest uncle, I am not likely to do that!"

"You shall come and live with me," said he, kissing her tenderly, and looking very much pleased. "I shall keep you to your word, spite of a whole clan of raw-boned Scotsmen."

The rain, which had now continued for three or four days without much intermission, gave signs of clearing off, and the news that Miss Agnes Lawford was about to leave her uncle's, circulated about till it reached the Hays.

The very morning after it reached Mr. Latimer, he rode over to Lawford. He had several reasons for going there just then: one of these we will state. His brother-in-law, Mr. Acton, was a great promoter of floriculture, especially among the people. The cottagers all round him were florists. One of the first things which he did three years before, when he purchased his little estate and began to lay out his grounds, before his house was built, was to establish in the neighbour-

hood a floricultural society, from which prizes were to be given to the poor for their best flowers. Since he had resided in the neighbourhood, his example had made the thing popular and fashionable also. The flower-shows were pleasant occasions of meeting, and the whole country round talked of them with interest and delight. It was now the time of auriculas and ranunculuses; and the little society was to hold its first meeting this season, in the lovely grounds belonging to Mr. Acton. The gentlemen of the neighbourhood were to send green-house plants; a tent was to be erected in the grounds, as a sort of temple of Flora; and cards of invitation had been issued for above a fortnight. There was quite an excitement in that little country-world about this occasion, which it was rumoured was to be unusually splendid and interesting; and then came the rain and dashed every body's hopes; the poor man's flowers, the rich people's show, and the whole country's pleasure! But in all cases there is a little cranny for hope to creep in at, and so it was now; people hoped that the weather would change with the change of the moon. The moon changed, and at that very time the most glorious weather began.

The Lawfords had all been invited to dine at the Actons', after the prizes were distributed; and now the ostensible motive of Mr. Latimer's visit had reference to this. The flower-show was in two days; he prophesied, of a certainty, fine weather, and he wished to engage the whole Lawford family to take luncheon at the Hays, as had been arranged on the unfortunate day of the proposed picnic. It was but a very little way out of their direct road, and his manner very clearly showed that he intended to have no refusal. Agnes had not seen him now for several days, the circumstance of the pine-apples being sent to Ada, trivial as it was, had satisfied her that her own imagination had given much greater importance to his attentions on the night of the Rectory party, than there was any occasion for. She was going, she thought, so soon, that even the prospect of meeting Tom at the Actons',—for Mr. Latimer brought word that he was coming from London to be there,—did not deter her from the wish to be this once of the party; yes, even if her own heart carried away with it a deeper anguish.

Mr. Latimer was in high spirits—very high. He spoke of Agnes's departure with surprise, but not at all with the air of one who was much interested in it. Ada thanked him for the pine-apples, and he was delighted

that she was pleased with them. Agnes inquired after the poor invalid in the caravan; he said that she was better, and would certainly recover; that that extraordinary preacher whom he had described the other evening, was preaching in the neighbouring villages with very remarkable effect; that he seemed wonderfully attached to the beautiful child at the caravan, and that he himself had met him out on his little preaching excursions, with the child in his arms. Marchmont, he said, extraordinary as it might seem, appeared really quite a reformed man. He had been told, he said, by his gardener, how much astonishment this change in him had occasioned in the neighbourhood, and that he had been to Leicester and taken the Temperance Pledge. He intended, he said, himself to have some talk with the preacher when he next came to Merley, or wherever he might meet with him. He said that he should like Agnes to see that beautiful child; in fact, he should like them all to see it.

"It must be that little foundling child of ours!" exclaimed Ada, suddenly struck with the idea: "that poor foundling which Mrs. Marchmont adopted. I told you of it the other evening," said Ada: "we must see it—poor little thing!"

The day of the flower-show came; the loveliest day of the whole year. It was all the more beautiful for the rain, said every one; and yet the day before had been so warm and bright, that all moisture seemed gone from the surface of the earth, so that even the most delicate lady need not fear to soil her satin slipper.

After breakfast, when every one was alive with the thoughts of the day's pleasure, old Mr. Lawford surprised them all by saying, that he had half a mind to go with them, at least as far as the Hays. Dear old man! he wanted to have as much as he could of Agnes's company during the short remainder of her stay; but he did not say so; he only said, that as the day was so fine, and the carriage so easy, and his gout so much better, and as he could have his air-cushions and gout-stool, he did not see that the fatigue would be much more than that of his bath-chair; certainly it would not!

Every body was delighted: it would please Mr. Latimer so very much; and if he were tired he might stop at the Hays, and they would call for him in the evening. So they might, said he; but he thought that he very likely should go on as far as Mr. Acton's: he had never seen his cottage since it was

finished. He said nothing about shaking hands with his new daughter-in-law-elect, although he thought of it; nor did Mrs. Colville,—for even she, on this morning so auspicious to every one, seemed quite disposed to avoid giving pain—“And if,” added the old gentleman, suddenly thinking that perhaps seeing his son under such circumstances would be painful to her, “I should take it into my head to stop at the Hays till you return, Agnes, if she like, can stop with me. The Hays is a fine place, and we can get into the garden, or sit in the library; it's a fine room, and Mr. Latimer has the largest collection of books, and best selection too in the neighbourhood!”

A messenger rode over from the Hays with Mr. Latimer's compliments, and begged, as the morning was so fine, they would be with him as early as possible.

“Bless me! what can be the meaning of this?” exclaimed Mrs. Colville, startled out of her usual quiet decorum.

The young ladies went up to dress; the carriage was ordered out; and dear old Mr. Lawford, quite talkative with this impromptu pleasure trip, took his seat, with his gout-stool and his air-cushions, by the side of Mrs. Colville, who looked quite gracious. The space which Mr. Lawford required with his lame foot, caused there to be no room for Agnes. She therefore was obliged to go down to the Rectory, that she might accompany Mr. and Mrs. Sam in their phaeton. Fortunately the Rector and his lady were going to drive to Merley Park, to call on the Bridports, before they went to the Hays, and therefore the carriage was at the door, and they just setting out.

“I wonder what Latimer means by sending for you so much earlier,” said Mr. Sam. “But it's lucky you came when you did, or in five minutes you would have been too late.”

Mrs. Sam proposed that they should join her father's carriage, and drive at once to the Hays, that they might understand this mysterious hastening of the party; and thus it was decided.

Agnes had never been to the Hays; she had only seen its trees and its chimneys from a distance, and it was not without a certain thrilling at her heart that she saw them drive in through the old gray lodge gates into the park-like grounds that surrounded the house. Agnes's state of mind on this day was something like that of the drunkard, who, seeing a carouse has begun, determines, reckless of

consequences, to make a night of it. This was the last time she should see Mr. Latimer, this was the first time she had been at his home. There was a little romance for her heart in it; and, if she indulged it, let no moralist blame her too severely.

And now they got glimpses of the old, red brick house, with its gray stone quoigns and window-heads, and its stacks of handsome cross-banded chimneys, that gave character and dignity to the whole edifice. All was quiet and substantial, with an air of old, solid, family-pride about it, that accorded with the long stretches of lawn scattered over with well-grown and almost venerable trees. And now the first carriage drew up at the door, and out came a grave servant to receive them. The sight of Mr. Lawford, however, brought out Mr. Latimer himself, who, delighted and astonished to see the old gentleman, gave him such a cordial welcome as did his heart good. And what a warm welcome they all had!

Every body wondered why they were come a full hour earlier than had at first been named; and they were destined to wonder even more, for, scarcely were they seated in the handsome morning room, when Mr. Latimer, taking Agnes's hand, with a most peculiar expression of countenance, said, “Permit me!” and then led her out of the room.

“What is the meaning of this?” said every one who remained.

“Permit me!” again said Mr. Latimer to Agnes, who, astonished and almost terrified, looked at him with wondering eyes. But nothing more was needed,—the library door burst open, and two boys at once caught Agnes in their arms.

“Here we are!” exclaimed they; “aren't you surprised? You never thought to find us here!”

Poor Agnes! nor did she indeed; and with these exclamations they drew their astonished sister with them into the library, and shut the door.

Mr. Latimer explained to his guests his extraordinary conduct; he wished, he said, to give Miss Agnes Lawford a pleasure. He had perceived her great affection for her brothers; the poor boys had no where to go in the holidays; he knew the gentleman with whom they were; and, not fearing to obtain consent from every one, he ventured, as the time was short, to write at once for them,—and their being here he hoped would prevent Miss Agnes leaving Lawford so soon.

"Poor old Mr. Lawford was quite affected: he wiped his eyes, and, offering his hand to Mr. Latimer, shook his cordially,— "This was worth coming out to hear! and you have done me a great pleasure!" said he.

Mr. Latimer smiled on the kind-hearted old gentleman, and told him farther, that his son, Mr. Tom Lawford, who was returning from London for this flower-show, had promised to take charge of them; in fact, he said, Tom had had the boys with him two or three days in London, and they had almost turned one another's heads.

"How charming," said Ada, "and how much it will please Agnes, and how very thoughtful it was of you!"

Again old Mr. Lawford was seen to wipe his eyes. "Thank you, Mr. Latimer," again said he; and, taking up the former idea, added, "and I don't think that now she will leave us so soon. It is a pity that she is going at all, is it not?"

But he received no answer, for Mrs. Colville inquired, at the same moment, whether they seemed nice boys, these brothers of Agnes.

"How poorly you are looking, Agnes, dear!" said Harry, with his arm on her shoulder, as they all three sate together on a sofa in the library; "I thought that you would be looking quite rosy with living in the country," said he, as if a little disappointed with her appearance.

"There, now, tears are in her eyes again!" exclaimed Arthur; "I never saw such a girl in all my life: when I'm glad I never cry!"

"I know you don't," said Agnes, again smiling, and clasping them both to her heart; "but this is so unlooked for, so very kind, I really know not what to say,—to me it seems more like a dream!" Again she embraced them. She made them stand up before her, and go to a distance; she looked at them behind and before; she laid her hand on their heads to see if they were grown; she saw how well they looked, how happy; she saw the resemblance in them to her father and her mother; and she thanked God, with a full heart, that they were her brothers, and that thus they met!

"Do you know," said Harry, with glowing cheeks, "that Mr. Latimer has all papa's works,—the very best edition, all beautifully bound? Come, I'll show you them."

"Never mind books now!" said Arthur. "Let's have your bonnet off! There's a sweet sister! Now you look better," said

he. "Oh, Harry, she's a very pretty girl for all you said just now!"

Harry wanted to justify himself, but Arthur was impatient to hear about the people at Lawford,— "And don't you think Mr. Tom Lawford is a nice fellow, and Mr. Latimer?"

"Do you know," interrupted Harry, "Mr. Latimer reminds me of poor dear papa? I don't know how or why, but still he does."

"And who do you think we saw last night?" exclaimed Arthur, leaving his sister no chance of talking herself. "Why, we saw Mr. Jeffkins—positively and truly Mr. Jeffkins, and nobody else!"

"He was so astonished to see us," said Harry, taking advantage of a little pause which his brother had made. "There's a little sort of common just by, and a sort of ladder-stile, which leads over the Park fence to it; we just mounted up to look over, and what should we see but poor Mr. Jeffkins, sitting among the heath, reading his Bible. He was so astonished to see us, he looked as if he could hardly believe his eyes. He asked a deal about you, and we told him you were coming here in the morning, and you did not know that we were here, and you were going to be so surprised!"

"And did you tell him," asked Agnes, anxiously, "that you had been in town with Mr. Tom Lawford?"

"Yes, we did," returned Harry; "we told him all about it, and every thing."

"And what did he say?" inquired she.

"Oh, I don't know,—nothing particular."

"Now, don't let us sit here all day," said Arthur: "this middle window opens—I know all over the garden."

"And it is such a lovely garden," said Harry, "and there are such flowers!"

"First of all," said Agnes, "I must take you to my uncle and my cousin Ada;" and with a brother on each arm, and a countenance beaming with love and happiness, she presented them to her relations.

Every one sympathised with her. Ada was charmed with the boys, and so was her father; and Mrs. Colville remarked that Arthur was certainly both handsome and gentlemanly, and that Harry was a complete Rutherford.

Mr. Latimer's eyes followed Agnes wherever she went; and a much less interested observer than either Ada or her aunt, would have seen at a glance that he was a deeply enamoured lover. Some little consciousness of his marked attention very soon forced itself

upon her; and then Ada's quiet manner and thoughtful countenance fixed it deeper on her mind.

"I am doomed unwittingly and unwillingly to be a trouble to them all," thought she, "and what atonement am I ever to make to Ada, if this really be so? She determined through the rest of the day to avoid him; to remain with her brothers, to occupy herself with them, and to make of them her shield and defence. She was now angry with herself, for having permitted her heart to indulge in one truant fancy. "Every weakness, every error," said she to herself, "brings its own reward of sorrow, and of repentance!"

In the meantime, Mr. Latimer was neither negligent, nor indifferent towards Ada, nothing could be more courteous or even friendly, than his behaviour to her; but she saw plainly, as she had seen before, that she had no longer empire in his heart. The very circumstance for which the whole party was brought there an hour earlier was to give Agnes pleasure. It was to Ada the complete bursting of the golden bubble; the *fata morgana* of love had all vanished, and the cold and hard reality of life, lay like a barren desert before her!

The kindness which Tom Lawford had shown to her brothers, made it now no longer difficult for Agnes to meet him. What a wonderful virtue there is in kindness! She did not even express a wish to stay at the Hays, although her uncle preferred doing so. He was afraid, he said, of the ten miles farther; so he was carefully cushioned in an easy chair, in the library, and left to take his nap, and amuse himself till dinner, when Mr. Latimer promised him, that his old acquaintance, the Vicar of Merley, should come and dine with him; promising that on their way to the Actons', he would call at the vicarage, to make this arrangement for him. Agnes and her brothers, who were not to be divided, were to be driven in Mr. Latimer's carriage, and Mr. Latimer himself was to accompany Ada and her Aunt. The arrangement outwardly seemed good and satisfactory.

A great deal of company had already arrived at the cottage; nothing could look gayer, or more beautiful, than the grounds; and the cavalry band, which was a very good one, played at intervals. It was quite a fairy-land scene. The grounds at the cottage were extensive, and laid out in the finest taste; there was wood and water within their boundary, and ample space for rambling and

solitude here and there, fit for any love-scene whatever.

With her brothers at her side, Agnes felt not the slightest embarrassment in meeting her cousin; the most friendly understanding seemed to exist between them. She thanked him for all the kindness he had shown to her brothers; he praised her brothers as the most interesting and intelligent lads he had ever seen. In the course of the afternoon, however, Tom took an opportunity of sending the boys to row a little boat across the lake, and then asked Agnes to walk with him, to see them. It was the quietest and most secluded walk in the whole demesne which Tom took her, and she leaned on his arm quite familiarly. At length Agnes ventured to express to him the pleasure his proposed alliance with Miss Bolton gave her—the subject was a delicate one, but still she ventured to touch it.

"I dare say," said he, "it seems to you a strangely hurried affair; and so it is—but it is all right. The only fault is, that Henrietta is too good for me; and so were you, dear Agnes," said he; "God knows how I want still to have a deal of talk with you. They tell me that you are going—I am sorry for it; if, however, it is on my account, I promise you in no way to displease, or annoy you. You are very dear to me, Agnes—and your visit in our family has had a strange influence on me; but I think I told you that before. But however, Agnes, go where you may, I shall always be your friend; and if I am ever worthy of Henrietta it is owing to you—I have told her so already—and my prayer is, that you may meet with a husband more worthy of you than I am, and who may love you as well as I should have done!"

"Do not let us talk so, dear cousin," said Agnes, "but we will always be friends."

"That we will!" said Tom emphatically. "And there is a foolish little thing, which I must mention to you," said he, "I gave you those jet ornaments—I had been foolish enough to make your wearing them or not, an omen for my heart, on that evening of my sister's party. I was very disagreeable that night to you. I was disappointed, and annoyed; but however that is past. And now will you accept those ornaments from me, as an atonement? I wish that they were worthier."

"If it were only a rosebud," said Agnes, quite touched by his conduct, "I would treasure it for your sake!"

"Here then," said Tom, "the subject ends for ever between us."

"It does," returned Agnes: "but we are friends for ever."

Ada and Mr. Latimer walked arm in arm, up and down the long shadowy pleached walk, that ran the whole length of the garden. People saw them and avoided the walk, for all the world believed them to be lovers. But their conversation, whatever it might be, only left Ada graver, and more thoughtful; the true feelings of her heart, however, were concealed under her coldest and proudest demeanour. She received every where the homage of her beauty, and George Bridport, who would only have been too happy to have carried her lap-dog, was ten times over her slave. The world said, however, that Ada Lawford was not in her most amiable humour that day. If it had said, that a blight had fallen on her youth and her life that day, it would have been much truer.

"What two handsome boys these are!" exclaimed many a one as they saw Arthur and Harry, with their bright and joyous countenances, which bore, in their characteristic difference of expression, a resemblance to morning and evening.

"These are Mr. Frank Lawford's sons," said one to another, among the company, "and that young lady in mourning, is his daughter!"

"How interesting looking they are!" was the reply; and for the sake of Mr. Frank Lawford, with his world-widening reputation, people wished to notice them; and many a poor man, too poor to buy his works, but who had known them well by newspaper extracts, or by some stray well-worn volume, which had fallen into their hands, and thenceforth became a text-book to their little circle, looked after them with a sentiment, more akin to reverence, than if they had been the Queen's own offspring.

In the evening, when the company was all gone, and dinner was over, and coffee had been sipped, and people had chatted, and talked over all the affairs of the day, Mrs. Colville who, she hardly knew why, was not quite satisfied with several things, began to be impatient to return. The boys, however, were out; and Tom, who was to return with them to the Hall, was not to be found; and then, when they were found, it was discovered that Agnes and Mr. Latimer were missing.

It was just like collecting a stray flock of sheep

"You see how reluctant our friends are to leave us," said Mrs. Acton, smiling. "I wish you would follow their example."

But Mrs. Colville could neither smile nor follow their example; besides which, and that was very unpleasant to her, Mrs. Acton seemed so provokingly indifferent about having her brother and Agnes sought after. They could not be far off, she said; they would soon be making their appearance, and it really was very early.

At length Harry, to whom Mrs. Colville appealed, said that he had seen them down by the water-side, just when he and his brother were bringing up the boat to the shore—that was half a mile off, he said, and he should not wonder if they were there still.

It was proposed to send Harry to seek them; and then, just at that very moment, in walked Agnes, and Mr. Latimer following her. Every body's eyes were upon them. It looked very suspicious, but no one said any thing; the carriages were waiting.

Tom rode on horseback; and the party returned to the Hays according to the arrangement of the morning. Before they drove off from the cottage, Ada heard Mrs. Acton beg of Agnes to come and spend some time with her before she left the country; she would have, she said, her brothers there, and she was sure that they could make the time pass very pleasantly. Whatever Agnes's answer might be, Ada did not hear it. Mr. Latimer with great courtesy begged to hand her to the carriage, and Agnes was left to Mr. and Mrs. Acton, who seemed overflowing with kindness to her. It seemed almost as if Agnes had supplanted her with these old friends.

The boys talked all the way they went; nothing could equal the flow of their spirits. It was well for Agnes that they were all-sufficient for themselves, for she had more to think of that evening than she had ever had to think of before.

Mr. Latimer had asked her to go and see an evening primrose of remarkable beauty; and then perhaps forgetting the flower altogether, he had led her on and on into the far shrubbery, where without preamble of any kind he had made such a straight-forward, candid, and manly declaration of love as left the question for whom were his attentions, no longer in doubt.

Oh, if Agnes could only have acted from the impulses of her own heart, how easy would have been the answer—but a sense of honour and of delicacy towards her cousin,

made the answer which her heart dictated impossible.

She hesitated ; she would not speak a falsehood ; she dared not speak the truth. She felt, exactly as Mrs. Colville had always done, that Mr. Latimer was not a man to be trifled with : but how was she to explain even her hesitation without betraying her cousin.

"I was told," at length she said, "even before I came to Lawford, that you were engaged to my cousin Ada ; and to speak the truth, I have always regarded you as destined for her."

"There was a time," replied Mr. Latimer, "I will not deny it, when my heart pleaded very warmly for Ada ; but in her I found not all that I required in a wife. Two years absence from England confirmed still more my earlier opinions regarding women. I returned cured of my passion, which, for some time before I left, I had sufficient reason to consider hopeless. I returned sobered in many respects, and two years older in feeling. The very day after my return I met you ; you were the realization of all my hopes and requirements ; since that moment my mind has never wavered, nor doubted the wisdom of its choice. I know my own character, Agnes, and I believe also that I know something of yours—enough at least to convince me, that we are in all respects suited to each other ; we have tastes and feelings in common ; the same views in life. Where then is the cause for demur or doubt ?"

"It is," said Agnes, "like pleading against my own happiness ; almost like ingratitude to Heaven to oppose what you say. But do not require from me at this moment a definite answer ; I was not prepared for this. I feel that much is to be considered—weighed. There are many consequences, which I can foresee and which I dread—I feel as if this were a happiness not meant for me, and which I have no right to."

"Enough, enough !" said Latimer, well pleased by what she had said ; "for I know after this, and of a certainty, that you will be my own dear Agnes : permit me only to speak to your uncle."

In the hands of Mr. Latimer it seemed to Agnes, as if it would be hurried on too fast.

"No, no," said she peremptorily, "my answer is not an assent. You know not what you are about—much, very much is yet to be thought of. I cannot tell what my uncle would say—I know not even what he ought to do regarding it : none of our family, not even myself, have been prepared for this !"

Such an interview as this, might well make both Agnes and Mr. Latimer silent in their respective carriages on their drive back to the Hays.

"How remarkably silent—almost stupid Mr. Latimer is to-night," whispered Mrs. Colville to Ada as they sate in the carriage at the door of the Hays, waiting for Mr. Lawford, who was now to join them. Mr. Latimer brought out the old gentleman, who seemed amazingly merry ; the old Vicar was with him, and they seemed quite reluctant to part. He was assisted into the carriage ; his gout-stool and his air-cushions were settled to his mind.

Mr. and Mrs. Sam Colville had driven home immediately after dinner, and now Agnes had to return home in the rumble behind the carriage. The boys found it very amusing to help her up to her seat ; Mr. Latimer offered her his hand at parting, the very touch thrilled her to the heart.

"Good-night ! good-night !" rang from the lips of the merry-hearted boys. "We shall come up to Lawford to-morrow !"

"Do ; there are good fellows !" returned Mr. Lawford, and the carriage drove away.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE day was ended ; an important day to three of our party. Every one, even Mr. Lawford, seemed tired, and all immediately retired for the night.

Ada exchanged not a word with her cousin ; but, as Agnes sate in her chamber a full hour after midnight yet dressed, pondering with an anxious and deeply foreboding mind on the decided turn which events had taken, again the door opened which divided her bed-room from her cousin's, and Ada, pale as marble, and looking almost as rigid, stood in the doorway, and said in a sad and solemn voice, "Come into this room ; I have something to say to you !"

With somewhat the feeling of a criminal, and yet with a heart ready almost to give up life for her sake, Agnes obeyed ; and, as she had done on a former occasion, seated herself on the sofa beside her.

"I have much to say to you," said Ada ; "much which concerns your peace and mine, and the sooner it is said the better. You have proved yourself worthy of my confidence ; you never betrayed my former confession even to Mr. Latimer. I thank you ! you have not caused me to lose my

own self-respect. A weak character, with your generous feelings, thinking to have served me with Mr. Latimer, would have betrayed me to him. How much I thank you for not having done so! Had Mr. Latimer's heart inclined to me, even in the smallest degree, no confession of any kind would have been needed; as it did not, such a confession must only have been humiliating to me. The time when he could become attached to me, has long been passed; I cherished false hopes, and like every other false thing, they punished their possessor. I must bear the punishment, because I doubt not my former folly deserved it. For you a better lot is in store, because you have deserved it. Do not interrupt me, Agnes," said she, seeing her cousin about to speak. "I am in no humour, I assure you, for bandying about compliments; and I say nothing but the barest truth to-night. Let me speak, and do not interrupt me, for I have as much upon my heart as it will bear!

"I have for some time suspected," continued she, "that I had no longer any hold upon Mr. Latimer's heart; but that which we hold dear as life, we part with reluctantly. To-day has set the question at rest. Mr. Latimer has declared his love to you; do not deny it!"

"I do not deny it!" said Agnes.

"And you love him; neither can you deny that!"

Both remained silent; anguish oppressed the hearts of both: but for the one there was hope, for the other none; and yet, at that moment, it would have been hard to say which suffered the most.

"I could almost wish," said Agnes, at length, "that I had never come to Lawford; I have been like a dark cloud between you and your happiness. I feel as if it were almost an insult to say even that I love you, and yet I would give up all for you!"

"You must love me still," said Ada; "deprived of your affection I should be very forlorn. You must love me still! you must not desert me, for my heart has suffered shipwreck! But I am not going to make a spectacle of myself," said she, speaking in her natural tone; "I want no one's pity. You have proved to me how well you deserve my confidence, and therefore I place still more, still greater confidence in you. Do not regret that you came amongst us. I have found in you the realization of that high principle, and that single-hearted goodness which your father's works teach, and I

have learned more from you even than from them."

These words seemed to humble Agnes; she felt as if she must sink down at Ada's feet; but, feeling that words and actions at that time expressed so little, she answered her only by silence, which is often so expressive.

"I have gone through a great deal," continued Ada, "as you may believe; a great deal in a very short time. This day—what has it not revealed to me, what has it not taught me! And Agnes, in the same way as my heart feels warmly, my mind decides rapidly. My plans are all formed; the line of conduct which I must pursue is already marked out, and I have already entered upon it. Late as it was, I had just returned from an interview with my father when I came to you."

"With your father," repeated Agnes, both amazed and alarmed.

"I told him," continued Ada, "what I had discovered of Mr. Latimer's sentiments towards you; and I have won from him his entire approbation."

The generosity of this conduct, knowing what self-sacrifice it involved, overpowered Agnes. She covered her face with her hands, and wept; inwardly beseeching God to bless, and strengthen, and comfort one who had acted so unselfishly, so nobly.

"Ah, Ada!" said Agnes, "how much more noble, how much more admirable are you than I! and yet, I will not deny it," said she, "I, too, was capable of making a sacrifice for you. Let me confess also, I wished to leave Lawford that I might not interfere with your happiness! I now feel poor, in that I can do nothing for you."

"You can do much for me!" returned Ada. "A time will come when I, perhaps, may not be so strong as I now am; a time when I may say, even as Christ did, Let this cup pass from me! then, be you the angel that will stand by me and strengthen me!"

Agnes folded her cousin in her arms, and wept on her bosom.

"I have formed plans, as I told you," continued Ada, "which will require strength to carry out. I shall go to India to my brother; he loves me tenderly; we shall be dear to each other as husband and wife. The preparations for this long journey, a journey which has many attractions for me, and which, under happier circumstances, would be very seductive to my imagination, will be very useful to me—will take me out of

myself—will, in fact, be my salvation. I shall now, from this time, look to India as to my home, and centre the true love of my heart upon my brother. I will have no one's pity, Agnes—the world is to know nothing but that it is my pleasure or my whim to go abroad. I will see you married before I leave, and I myself will be your bridesmaid. And now, one thing more, and I have done—Keep in the innermost recesses of your heart the knowledge of that which I did for Mr. Latimer's sake. It is enough that the benefit of that discipline of mind, the blessing of your father's teaching, through his works, will be my reward, and will support me, by the blessing of God, through every trial and every sorrow! And now, good-night!"

"I shall not leave you," said Agnes, "until I have seen your head upon your pillow."

Ada consented. Agnes smoothed for her the pillow, and laid her throbbing temples upon it; and then, drawing the curtains, sate down beside her till she slept.

It was a feverish and disturbed sleep, and was the precursor of a long and sad sickness. We, however, will not dwell upon it. The most untiring love and devotion watched by her and tended her; and youth, and youth's strength, bore her through it.

Three months afterwards, in the month of September, she sate, for the first time, once more in the little library at tea with her father. Poor old gentleman! how glad he was to see her again beside him! Neither he nor the world knew exactly what was the cause of her great illness. Many people supposed that she had taken cold at the flower-show. Mrs. Colville strenuously supported this idea: Ada, she said, was delicate, the ground was damp after the great rains that there had been, and that dear Ada's illness was no more than she expected. Some people have such certain foreknowledge of every thing!

It was not known, beyond the immediate members of the Lawford and Latimer families, for some months, that Mr. Latimer was the betrothed lover of the niece instead of the daughter of the old Squire. People were very much astonished when this knowledge first began to circulate among them; but it was singular how very soon every body was satisfied that it was quite in the proper order of things; and this was only the more strengthened, because the whole family, and even Ada herself, seemed well pleased. But greater still was their astonishment, when

the news went abroad that Ada was going out to India, although not until after the two marriages, that of her brother Tom and of her cousin Agnes, were celebrated.

And what said Mrs. Colville and her co-adjutor, Mrs. Sam, all this time? They said enough for every body else, had they all been silent; but then they had sense enough to express very little dissatisfaction to the world, seeing that they whom it most concerned had settled all so resolutely before they were consulted.

"When my sweet Ada is gone," Mrs. Colville, however, said to her acquaintance, "and my nephew has brought home his new wife, I shall leave the Hall. I do not know what will become of my poor brother when I am gone," said she; "but, new men, new measures; and my brother is not what he used to be. Poor man! he has taken strange crotchets into his head. He talks of sending for that preaching fellow, Jeffkins, to the Hall—I hope, by the by, that he is no relation to that creature who lived with Mrs. Sam!—and he has actually had that child there that Mrs. Marchmont took out of the workhouse, and has been sending Mrs. Marchmont jellies and such things! Poor man! his mind is certainly sadly impaired; it is my opinion that he hardly knows what he does; however, I leave all that,—for there will be a change, I know, when the new mistress comes!

"And then, at the Hays, what a change, to be sure! and, between you and me, I do not think Mr. Latimer at all improved by his two years' absence from England: he has been in the West Indies among the slaves, and in America among the democrats, and he has brought home some extraordinary notions; and he is, with all his great abilities, a dogged, determined man, whom there is no turning. I have very much altered my opinion about Mr. Latimer! However, that is neither here nor there; and I am told that new furniture is ordered for the drawing-room. He has had a London upholsterer and decorator down, and is laying out a deal of money; and yet he gets not a penny with his wife! Poor Ada's picture, that she leaves Agnes as her parting present, is to hang there: they have all been and chosen the place. It seemed to me—God knows why!—as if they were going to choose the

place where she was to be buried! A beautiful picture she makes! We have had Pickersgill down for a whole month: he paints one for her father, too, and I must have a handsome miniature. A beautiful creature she is—only a little paler than she was; and so cheerful—it's quite wonderful!

But she's a real angel; and it is a pity that she must leave old England!

"And then I hear, too, that Mr. Frank Lawford's widow is to come out of Scotland to see her daughter married. Bless me! who would have thought of Frank's daughter being Mrs. Latimer of the Hays!"

THE BALSAM-SELLER OF THUROTZER.

BY MRS. GORE.

CHAPTER I.

Would you know what his fault was?—Tom Tackle
was poor!
Diddin.

THERE was a sound and an air of gladness prevalent throughout the little town of Nagy-Börö;—the sun was shining brightly upon the dome of its principal church,—upon the white towers of its numerous monasteries, and the hanging gardens which fringed its mouldering ramparts;—the bells spoke out merrily through the springy air; and crowds of peasants, in their red cloaks and blue worsted hose, picked their way daintily through the white plashy pools of a chalky road, which the April shower, still sparkling on the bushes, had converted into a non-navigable canal.

But notwithstanding the sunny smile which irradiated earth and her children,—Nagy-Börö and its inhabitants,—there existed a nook within its limits, whence, as from the halls of the Inferno, hope and sunshine were excluded; a nook as cheerless as despotism's gloomiest dungeon;—the chamber, in short, of the Fiscal of the district, or, as it was commonly termed, the justice-court of the town. In this awful tribunal, a dead and dread silence prevailed; although, being a holiday of the Patriarchal Church, it was amply filled with the idlers of the town;—Hungarians, in their richly-braided pelisses,—Illyrians, wearing a less gorgeous but far more fanciful costume,—and Croats, with their dare-all boldness of brow, and flowing amplitude of attire.

All, however, were silent; and, as it would appear, through the influence of a merciful sympathy; for an Hungarian court of criminal judicature, however ill calculated to waken or foster impulses of Christian virtue, presents at times objects of wretch-

edness, which might draw tears from Master Launce's "pebblestone of a cur;" and the prisoner at present under interrogation was so sordidly miserable in his appearance, and hopeless in his air, that no human heart could have exulted in the degradation of so fallen a man.

All were silent. The Fiscal had opened the session of the day, by commanding the Haiduck in attendance to bring forth the body of Niklas Barótza,—accused of being accessory to a high-way robbery and assault committed three weeks before, in the neighbouring forest of Horösvar, upon the persons of a nobleman and his suite; a crime still fatally prevalent among the Southern provinces, notwithstanding the perpetual warning afforded by the permanent gallows erected in solid masonry at the gates of every free or borough town, which impresses but a gloomy augury upon the minds of travellers. The prisoner, as he was half led, half shoved, towards the table whereon the documents and writing implements of office were deposited in ominous array, cast a sort of despairing heart-broken gaze around the gaudy assemblage met to luxuriate in his misery; which moved some of the foremost among the gaping crowd to withdraw their contemptuous scrutiny from his tattered dress, and wasted visage. He scarcely seemed to have attained to middle age;—

But careful hours

Had written strange defeatures on his brow;

and the sheep-skin cloak, drawn closely round his meagre body, appeared rather designed to conceal the wretched plight of the garments beneath, than to improve the temperature of an atmosphere which a truth-telling thermometer would have fixed at "stifling heat."

"Stand up, fellow!" said the Fiscal,

authoritatively, to a wretch deemed unworthy of being classed among the people.* Stand up, and give an audible reply to my interrogation. Who were your accomplices in your outrage upon the person of the gracious Count Keglovics, on the eighteenth day of the past month, in the forest of Horösvar, in the Veröczer comitatus?"

But to "stand up" was a difficult effort, and to "speak audibly" an impossible one to a man who, for three foregoing weeks, had been deprived of air and wholesome food; and who had been withdrawn from his fetid dungeon on one occasion, only to be submitted to examination by the worshipful Fiscal; and to be condemned thereafter to forty strokes of the stick, publicly inflicted upon the official iron table in front of the justice-hall, in order to amend the contumacy which induced him to persist in declarations of innocence of the crime laid to his charge.

Barótza replied to the Fiscal's interrogation, only by drawing his breath with the deep respiration of one upon whose lungs the upper air produces the effect of a new element; and by bending his haggard looks in supplicatory earnestness upon his judge.

"Prick him with your sabre, Horszt," said the Fiscal to the grim Haiduck who supported the prisoner;—"he is dreaming, methinks."

The miserable man was too far gone in the despair of humiliation; to resent or appear conscious of the hardships practised towards him. If indeed he felt the smart inflicted upon his wasted frame, by the minion of the law's minion, the sensation was only expressed by raising his bony hand to part the long, matted, gray hair upon a brow whereon the beaded dews of debility betrayed the oppression under which he laboured.

"Niklas Barótza," exclaimed the Fiscal, enraged by the prisoner's insulting delay,—delay, that fellest fiend which blows the embers of official impatience,—"I warn you that I speak for the last time. Who were your companions in your assault upon Count Keglovics?"

Niklas moved the parched lips that were scarcely visible amid his untrimmed and grizzled beard, and clasped his gaunt hands together; but the effort, although it brought a faint stream of colour into his wan cheek, produced only the imperfect renewal of his former words, "Alas! I am wholly innocent!"

"This is too much," said the rubicund, well-fed, well-trimmed man in office, twirling his bushy black mustachios, and folding the rich drapery of his silken symar with an air of dignity. "Officer! convey the prisoner for the second time to the court-yard; where you will inflict upon him forty stripes; nor remit a single stroke, unless he claims the exemption by making an unreserved confession."

There rose a murmur among the crowd. Was it in applause of a cruel and oppressive act? or in compassion towards a defenceless man, who had been arrested on bare suspicion of a crime for which no temptation could be adduced, since his poverty made it evident that none of the booty had fallen to his share; and who had been already visited by that scorpion scourge of judicial tyranny,—probationary torture.

Horszt the Haiduck, to whom the tasks of inflicting cruelty and upholding despotism were the purchase of his daily bread, prepared himself with contented assiduity to execute the duty of the day. He stretched his sinewy arm, as an archer bends his bow, to see that it be tough and in trim for action; and seizing the wo-worn Barótza with one hand, regardless of the big tears that were slowly rolling down his lank cheeks, he prepared with the other to make way for their passage through the crowd. But this was no easy task; for the mass of human life with which he had to contend was, at that moment, agitated by an impulse of excitement wholly unconnected with the prisoner or his destinies.

"Rumalie! — Rumalie!" — murmured twenty voices at once;—"Rumalie," said the clerk, who was adding a nib to his long swan-quill pen; "Rumalie," exclaimed the Fiscal himself in a tone of satisfaction,— "Rumalie!" growled the very Haiduck, groping at his button-hole for his empty tobacco pouch, while a Turk,—a well-dressed, middle-aged, animated, and very handsome Turk,—made his way towards the seat of justice and of the Fiscal; and lightly touching his silken robe with an outstretched hand, kissed, as in respectful obeisance, the finger-tips which had been honoured by such contact.

"*Salve Domine!*" said the Turk, respectfully addressing himself to the dignified official. "*Et vos, mei fratres et patroni, saluto; commoditatem, prosperitatemque vite habebatis.*"

"And how long are you from the frontier,

* The word *populus*, in the terms of the Hungarian constitution, applies exclusively to the ennobled.

Rumalie?" demanded the Fiscal, in a sort of interjectional whisper. "What news from Belgrade?"

"The respected Abdul Manhad greets you well, gracious sir," replied Rumalie, in a still lower voice; and taking from the bosom of his vest a small packet, fastened round with a slight cord of crimson silk, he placed it with a significant glance in the hands of the Fiscal.

"So—so," muttered the *employé* to himself. "You are a trusty courier, Rumalie. Come at eventide to my dwelling; and we will confer together, touching the health and the will and the tidings of my respected friend Abdul Manhad."

"Too much honour!" observed Rumalie, renewing with reverence his obeisance. "My sojourn in Nagy-Börö will not endure till the shadows begin to lengthen; nor journeyed I hitherward save on thine errand. Business recalls me to Fünfkirchen."

"Ay—ay;—the fair,—Rumalie keeps stand at the fair!" was the universal comment of the assembly, with whom the intruder appeared to be an object of common interest and regard.

Rumalie,—the Turk, Illyrian, Greek, Egyptian, Armenian, or Italian,—Rumalie the Moslem, Jew, Christian, or Idolater,—for each he had been considered and called by turns, and with what justice who could decide?—Rumalie, the itinerant merchant,—who, in honour of his garb and dialect, was usually termed the Turkish pedlar, was indeed a personage held in the highest respect and request throughout the country. If he were a Jew, his honesty and open dealing merited that he should be a Christian; but his faith, his race, his name, were matters of no moment. His frank demeanour, unblemished rectitude, and lofty manliness of mind, were decided and recognised qualifications; and the merits of his wares, the fairness of his bargains, and the interest attached to his pilgrimages, which extended his traffic into countries deemed all but apocryphal in Hungary, rendered his rare visits a general holiday; and the simple country people hailed his arrival, like that of other birds of passage, as a good omen.

Even in despite of the awful presence of the Fiscal, they now pressed more closely towards his tray of merchandise than mere curiosity could excuse; and its outward and visible treasures,—flaskets of *rosenöhl* or atar of roses,—amulets of the seraglio,—chaplets of coral and amber,—*mandel seife* in

wrappers of gilt paper,—offered but a very humble sample of the real character of his commercial speculations. The initiated among his customers, those gifted with florins or ducats sufficient to unlock the mysteries of his confidence, were however aware that the folds of Rumalie's tunic concealed gems of price, which it had been hazardous to exhibit more publicly, as under his simple guardianship;—rubies from Balsora,—opals as bright and rainbow-hued as ever issued from the ancient mines of Czerwernitzta,—pearls even and pure as the fishers of Ormus can supply,—and, precious above all in the eyes of the devout,—relics of matchless sanctity,—and many a *rosenkrantz* or rosary, deriving virtues beyond price from having been consecrated in the precincts of the holy Sepulchre itself.

Twice had Rumalie bent his pilgrimage to Jerusalem,—twice had he shaken the dust from his feet by the waters of Jordan. To him the passes of the mighty Caucasus, and the cedar forests of Carmel and Ararat, were equally familiar with those of the Carpathians; he had visited Fez and Cairo, Medina and Damascus; he had been,—where had he not been!—and he had fragments of speech, and song, and legend,—and withal a glibness of tongue, and bright intelligence of eye, which added a wild animation to his narratives, and a new grace to the manliness of his athletic frame and jet-black beard.

"Your honourable lordship will scarcely be pleased to enter just now into communion with Rumalie," said he to the Fiscal, who was fretfully balancing himself in his chair of judgment. "Yonder prisoner seems under examination?"

"Ay—Heaven's curse and mine be upon him," replied the other. "'Tis the villain who shot at Graf Keglovics in the forest."

"That may hardly be, noble sir!" observed Rumalie, "since the Count declared his opponent to have been a *gulya* or cattle driver,—bold of limb, and strong, and daring; and yonder outcast,—a trembler and a coward as all present may judge,—was at the time of the robbery sojourning in Belgrade. Myself beheld him there; and even then as now, withered by disease and heart-struck by poverty."

"And who constituted you or judge or witness in the case?" interrupted the Fiscal. "'Tis the first time, Rumalie, I ever heard of one of your tribe being admitted evidence in a Christian court of justice."

"A court of *Christian justice*," repeated Rumalie, with a salutation whose profound

reverence bordered upon irony, "is open to the lowliest of earth's creatures."

"An oath consecrated by the holy Gospels is nevertheless a requisite credential."

"Rumalie may therefore claim a sufficient passport," observed the Turk, no whit discomfited by the innuendo, "as a brother, through baptism, of the Church of Rome."

To find his curiosity upon this long-disputed point thus gratuitously satisfied, was almost a sufficient recompense to the Fiscal, for Rumalie's intrusive pertinacity. "Indeed!" retorted he;—"and am I then to understand you as willing to swear that—"

"Niklas Barótza was a dweller in Bosnia, when the Magnat Keglovics was assailed by robbers; nor, until three days thereafter, departed the said Niklas from the city of Belgrade."

"This deposition," said the clerk, turning over his notes, "tallies exactly with the former declarations of the prisoner."

"In truth," observed one of the crowd, "the poor wretch appears in too feeble a condition of body, to have provoked the vengeance of a numerous and well-armed caravan."

"So said he in his defence," resumed the clerk.

"Your excellency will then be pleased to make out his order of release?" demanded Rumalie pleadingly.

"Release! Szent Lorenz forbid! What! shall the noble Count Keglovics, the patron and lord of half our comitatus, be braved and spoiled here on the very verge of his domain, and the court of Nagy-Börö take no single step to avenge the injury?"

"The Count is better aware than court or judge, how far he provoked the evil that fell upon him,—as your Excellency may chance to know," observed Rumalie, in a low voice.

"And has your worship no reply for Abdul and his questioning?" continued he in a still more significant whisper. "The tobacco is packed and afloat—and if—"

"Hein! hein! my good friend Rumalie! a hall of justice is no seat for the money changers. Terms of traffic and barter befit not the passing hour."

But Rumalie, who was willing to pursue the advantage afforded him by his insight into the Fiscal's contraband negotiations with the frontier, was deaf to this remonstrance.

"If," he continued, "the Commissary of the Danube can be prevailed on to accept the

false invoice in lieu of the fair bill of lading, Abdul Manhad agrees to—"

"Rumalie!" again interrupted the Fiscal, his eyes rolling in their caved sockets with consternation, "as you interest yourself touching the release of the miscreant Niklas Barótza, and have advanced a sufficient plea in his favour, I will presently decree his enlargement,—if you will undertake to indemnify the town by removing him instantly beyond its jurisdiction."

"Verily I am moved in his favour but as Christianly mercy suggests," replied the Turk. "Nevertheless, as I am about to depart on my way, and as Lanslo's wagon beareth bales of price for me towards the fair of Fünfkirchen, I will adventure to give the ragged slave a cast upon his road to Pesth."

"Release him, Horszt," said the Fiscal with an imperial nod to the Haiduck. "Go, wretch!—and see thou be not found again within the liberties of our jurisdiction."

"Pitch him into Lanslo's cart, friend Horszt," said Rumalie, with a nod less official, but equally effective. And while the Haiduck, in deference to the excellent quality of the pedlar's *Turkische tabak*, diligently executed his command by expediting the astonished and grateful Barótza upon his journey, Rumalie very leisurely replaced the straps of his tray upon his broad shoulders; and kissing the hem of the Fiscal's garment, who bade "God speed him," so fervently as to betray some interest in his speedy departure, the comely pedlar withdrew from the baffled tribunal of Nagy-Börö.

It was late upon the following day that Barótza, who, in pursuance of his new patron's instructions, had been comfortably housed, and fed and laid to rest in the inn of the *Rehfuss* at Fünfkirchen, wherein the merchandise of Rumalie was deposited during the period of the fair, awoke from the first easy slumber he had enjoyed for many weeks, to the full enjoyment of that delicious itching, which a philosopher has described as following the removal of fetters. Niklas, who had been heavily manacled, and chained to the damp mildewed wall of a dungeon of which the oppressive atmosphere had hung like a weight upon his soul, could scarcely believe in the reality of his good fortune when he beheld the sun, the actual sun of Heaven, shining upon him through the casement of a well-ordered chamber; and when an aromatic steam of purest Mocha breathed—without metaphor—all the perfumes of Arabia upon his intoxicated senses. But neither the

cheering sunshine, nor the morning meal spread upon a table at his couch-foot, had power to arrest his attention.

Rumalie sat there,—Rumalie his deliverer, his benefactor, his friend!—and crawling from his pillow, he fell humbly at the feet of the Turk, and mingled his blessings and thanksgivings with an agony of tears.

“Back to thy rest!—back, friend, back,” said the pedlar, attempting to repress his own emotion, and to replace his guest upon the couch he had quitted. “Thou art all too feeble to bear about thy limbs in safety.”

And the condition of the debilitated Barótza bore evidence to the accuracy of his observation; for, as he strove to resist, he reeled with the dizziness of weakness and disease, and fell back exhausted upon the bed; while the benevolent Rumalie ministered to his sufferings with the zeal of a kindly host, and the skill of an experienced leech.

“I could have affirmed,” faltered the afflicted Niklas, as he drained the cordial held to his parched lips by the Turk, “I could have affirmed that thy draught had been concocted in mine own Thurotzer. Such balsamic medicaments are the boast of my native province; but thou, an alien from our land, canst scarcely be learned in their mysteries.”

“It were a vain thing and a strange,” observed Rumalie, whose swarthy brow had reddened at the degrading supposition, “if one to whom the leechcraft of Judea is familiar,—who hath culled his simples on the plains of Mamra, and disputed with sages in the schools of Mecca,—should borrow instruction from the savage Carpathian wilds! Howbeit, as thy palate is something dis-tempered by fever, I can pardon thy lack of discrimination.”

Niklas humbly craved forgiveness for his involuntary disparagement of the skill of his kind attendant. “Thou hast it, friend,” replied the other cordially. “Be well,—be comforted,—be of good cheer,—and I ask no more at thy hands.”

“Little else than gratitude, alas! couldst thou require of me without certainty of disappointment,” observed Barótza. “It is fitting thou shouldst know, generous and gracious as thou art, that the wretch on whom thy bounties are bestowed is destitute, friendless, and smitten with the blight of misery and evil fortune,—even unto the marrow of his bones.”

“Friend Niklas!” interrupted Rumalie, whose brow was again suffused with an

angry stain, “little will drugs avail, and food still less, to perfect thy recovery, while thy mind remains harassed and ill at ease. Know therefore, and be henceforth at peace in thy troubled spirit, that I am well acquainted with all thy recent calamities. I beheld thine arrival at Belgrade with thy cargo of cotton-seed: I witnessed the conflagration of thy luckless vessel, and grieved over the blackened hulk as it lay cumbering the Danube’s surface. At Nagy-Börö, I saw thee falsely imprisoned,—inhumanly scourged. I know thy heavy responsibility to thine employers in Pesth,—thy fears, thy present wretchedness; and I say unto thee, be comforted Niklas Barótza; for as my soul liveth, no evil shall be wrought upon thee.”

The sufferer waved his head despairingly, but without impatience.

“The course of my traffic,” resumed Rumalie, “will detain me ten days here in Fünfkirchen. At the expiration of that time, or my skill is of poor account, thou wilt be restored to health and strength, and mayest accompany me on my road to Pesth; where I will bear witness in the ears of thy employers, my trusty friends the merchants Karlitz, of the blamelessness of thy calamitous ministry in their service. Nay—hear me on, Barótza,—and even from Pesth unto Gran, we may still journey in company; since thy destiny, if rightly interpreted by the Fiscal, leads thee back unto Thurotzer, and mine must shape my course into Austria. Tarry with me therefore during my sojourn in this city, and we will become fellow travellers for a season.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed Barótza, sorrowfully; “I cannot thus endure to be thy charge and hinderance. I have seen better days; and the lingering pride which they engendered, forbids me to eat my bitter bread unearned.”

“If that be thy sole embarrassment,” continued the Turk gaily, “win thy bread an thou list, and feed thy hungry pride withal; I will give thee labour no less abundantly than food.”

“Look on this wasted body,” said poor Niklas; “on these trembling hands;—how may they toil in thy service?”

“Tut, tut! I tell thee thou shalt be speedily healed in body and spirit,—strong, Niklas; strong in sinew as in courage; and by the time thou hast done some justice to the good cheer of the *Rehfuss*, thou shalt become my able assistant and my packsmen. How! hast thou numbered years some forty

and five, and yet believest that my tender mercies towards thee have been unmotivated by views to my own future advantage?—Thou shalt serve me, Niklas.”

“Heaven knows how willingly!” replied Barótza; “but I fear——”

“Fear nothing; thy load will be no weighty charge;—a *kübel* of the spongy soap of Debreczin, for which I find a ready market in the Empire. Therefore, Niklas, I admonish thee to banish all gloomy considerations; so shalt thou best pleasure me, and advantage thyself.”

The predictions of the sanguine Rumalie were fully and rapidly verified. Barótza freed from care, became free from disease;—contentment and strength came hand in hand; and the consciousness that his services were of serious benefit to the worthy Rumalie, in the registry of his extensive negotiations, and the clerky adjustment of his concerns, added new vigour to his frame. It would seem, indeed, as if a blessing had followed the pedlar’s charitable exertions in his favour; for never had the booth of Rumalie, with its studded amber tubes,—its mouth-pieces of embossed and enamelled gold,—its flasks of Egyptian ether, censers of sandal-wood, and pipe bowls of keff-kil*—attracted such numerous and liberal customers, as at the fair of Fünfkirchen. Sometimes the merchants of Debreczin and Lemberg, with whom he was engaged in still more extensive financial negotiations, would adjourn to his own domicile in order to remonstrate with him upon the grasping tenacity of his bargains,—and Rumalie was, in truth, by no means soft-handed in his mode of traffic; but he replied to their murmurs with a hearty laugh.

“Let a handsome cloak and doublet for the *Herr Secretarius* yonder, who hath registered thy business, prove a make-weight on thy side, and I am content to accept thy first offer,” he would say to his discontented customers. Or, “Dry the ink which our scrivener Niklas has expended on our agreement with a little gold-dust, cross his palm with a broad piece or two, and I concede the point.” And thus, instead of humiliating his poor dependent by a gift of money, he contrived to make him earn the means of

subsistence and of more seemly array. Barótza was not blinded however by his considerate delicacy; he freely accepted the gifts of his bestowing, as the best evidence he could offer of grateful regard; and when they quitted Fünfkirchen at the appointed time, each bearing a sufficient load, but that of Niklas by far the lighter of the two, terms of perfect confidence and amity were established between them.

A day’s march brought them in safety to the banks of the Danube, where it had been agreed that they should lighten their journey by taking passage in a return Semlin baggage-boat,—one of the shapeless Noah’s arks which so disfigure the navigation of that mighty river. By this tedious process they arrived at Pesth in the full freshness of strength; and Barótza, whose apprehensions from the owners of his luckless cargo had kept him in a state of perpetual agitation, was equally astonished and overjoyed to find the merchants Karlitz easily accessible to the assurances and arguments of Rumalie; and content to acquit him of all share in their disaster; even without reference to the official documents which had been granted to him, in exoneration, by the Turkish authorities. One only regret remained to sadden his mind when, after the audit of his accounts with his employers, he quitted the capital;—at Gran he must necessarily part from his benefactor; at Gran he must bid adieu to the sole living being who, for many years past, had vouchsafed to exhibit an interest in his misfortunes; and he expressed the sincerity of his sorrow with such persuasive simplicity, that Rumalie appeared deeply touched, and almost as mournful as himself, when they reached the destined spot, and destined day of separation.

“Nay! friend Niklas,” said he, marking the sadness of his companion, as they sat together waiting the return of the flying bridge; “it were inhumanity on my part to grieve thy spirit thus deeply, for the matter of a fifty league journey. I am half inclined to try my fortune at Sz. Marton;—and even an thy Thurotzians be not tempted by my wares, I can perchance become their customer myself. The Carpathian crystals and amethysts are of high account;—and who knows,” continued the Turk, smiling significantly, “who knows but I may initiate myself into the mysteries of the balsam trade?”

Poor Niklas, gratified beyond his hopes by the change which deference to his feelings

* *Keff-kil*, or *pataal-tash*, known in Europe as *meerschauum*, or sea foam, is a mineral found in Anatolia. In its natural state it resembles a soft clay, and forms an object of commerce between Turkey and Pesth or Debreczin; where it is converted into pipe bowls by means of the lathe; and thence circulated throughout Europe.

had wrought in Rumalie's intentions, could only repeat his thanks; nor was it until they had fairly crossed the river, and set forth upon their journey towards his native province, that the remembrance of how poor a welcome he should be enabled to bestow upon his generous friend, occurred to sadden the exultation of his soul. As they trudged onwards, side by side, along a road presenting many other charms beside that of ancient and hallowed association with home, which it possessed in the eyes of Barótza, he could not shake off the consciousness which oppressed his mind; a consciousness overcoming the influence of lovely weather and still lovelier scenery.

It was the spring-tide of the year;—just at that moment of brief enchantment when summer expands her luxuriant buds of beauty, until their velvet leaves unfold a voluptuous treasury of fragrance amid the light green foliage which has quivered into life beneath the touch of spring;—that moment when every earthly object appears renewed and embellished by the vivifying influence of the balmy breath of Heaven;—when animate and inanimate nature seem to brighten into youth and happiness;—and hope—we know not why—returns to cheat us with her smiles, and is welcomed with a wilful confidence, which even the gloomy experience of years fails to destroy. The common cares of life,—its ordinary occupations,—seem unworthy to engross the mind in such a season of visionary enjoyment!

“Let us not set up our evening rest in the gwothy cheerless inn of yonder village,” said Rumalie to his weary companion, on the afternoon of their first day of travel. “The moon will rise early to-night to light us on our road; meanwhile, let us recruit ourselves on yonder bank, of which the short and tender herbage looks so inviting.” They made their way accordingly to a shady slope which, fronting the setting sun, was overhung by the downy and rustling foliage of a group of tall arbeal trees, that attempred the evening beams into a shadowy coolness; and depositing his burden by his side, the Turk proceeded to draw from his stores some light materials of refreshment, while they reposed themselves in delicious languor upon the elastic turf. Clusters of wild cyclamen enamelled its level surface with their pencilled silver leaves, and lilac blossoms; the pale flowers of the wood-sorrel trembled amid their tufts of tenderest green; and the fragrant breezes “wagging their sweet head,”

betrayed the untrodden beds of violets which lay in secure concealment amid the neighbouring thickets.

“It appears to me,” observed Rumalie, after enduring with patience for a weary space the taciturnity of his fellow traveller, “that this homeward path of thine is haunted by some of memory's spectres; else couldst thou not remain so meditative under the influence of this brightest, fairest, sweetest scene and hour.”

“I was considering,” replied Niklas, “and Heaven pardon me the sin!—not without grievous bitterness of heart, the varying fortunes which mark thy destiny and mine. Wherever thou goest, prosperity and abundance seem to resort, and the sun of life still shineth. The frowns of the Fiscal,—that petty tyrant of the land,—the grasping exactness of the Pesth merchants, whose avarice hath passed into a proverb, subsided and vanished at the mere sound of thy voice,—at thy persuasion, their wrath was turned into courtesy. But upon *me*,—wretch that I am!—frowns and reviling are showered without remission; and were it not to indulge an unseemly superstition, I should say that I am followed by the influence of an evil eye.”

“Nor wouldst thou say amiss,—for poverty is a witch of direst incantations. The beasts of the forest, nay, even the more domestic brutes, will fix their fangs into any creature of their kind, upon which another hath fallen despitefully to worry and destroy. And thus is it also with mankind;—the destitute wretch is made a butt for the shafts of oppression and cruelty;—the miserable appear to invite further humiliation;—and we might sum up the evil qualities we hear ascribed to many an unhappy being, in one expressive word,—he is *poor!*”

“Thou readest the human heart with a discerning eye; nor does prosperity appear to obscure its vision,” replied Niklas, with a mournful smile. “Still, methinks, some talisman more potent than mere wealth appears to add weight to thy word, and to support thy career.”

“Nay, I will borrow no undue importance in thine eyes,” answered the Turk, laughing heartily at the air of mystery assumed by Barótza. “The obduracy of the Fiscal gave way, it is true, before my persuasions,—and wherefore?—solely because I am master of his secret,—of his mal-administration of the county revenues,—of his smuggling intercourse with the merchants of Belgrade!

The bankers Karlitz sacrificed their love of extortion to their desire of retaining the good will of Rumalie,—and wherefore?—solely because the rich fruits of his industry are guarded in their coffers; and afford them better aid in their extended commerce, than could the paltry price of a bargeful of cottonseed, even if menaces or imprisonment might have gathered it from amid the wreck of the fortunes of their supercargo.”

“Thou hast deigned to give account of thy potent influence,” resumed Nicklas; “but how wilt thou explain the prevalence of my own evil chance, of *my* luckless destiny?”

The white teeth of the Turk glittered amid his raven beard. “Heardest thou not my confession of faith? Despite the garb I wear,” said he, looking scornfully upon the brocaded sleeve of his tunic, “I am no follower of Mahound; and predestination squares not with the doctrines of my church. But pardon me, Barótza; let me not decide unheard upon the nature of thine opinions. The sun hath many hours to waste upon us; and if Rumalie hath something won upon thy confidence, tell him as much of thy history as may excuse thy despondency, and last out his *schibouque*.”

As he spoke, the Turk took forth his pipe of jessamine-wood from its velvet casket; and, kindling it with a fragment of dried *boletus* tinder, he shortly became enveloped in fragrant clouds; while Niklas, after some little hesitation, thus unfolded his narrative of afflictions:—

CHAPTER II.

And what should I do in Illyria?
My brother,—he is in Elysium!

Twelfth Night.

“Thy sentence was a mild one, which comprised the sins and errors of Niklas Barótza in his poverty. Evil, in good sooth, are the fortunes I have to relate; but they form the fitting retribution of evil feelings,—of still more wicked actions! I owe thee, generous Rumalie! a full confession of my faults; and when thou hast heard how bitterly they have been repented, how heavily atoned, thou wilt perchance endow me anew with confidence and compassion.

“My father, who was of gentle race, and possessed of a moderate estate in the Thurrotzer county, had no child but myself, when, four years after my birth, he took a second wife to his bosom, to replace the mother who had died in bringing me into this weary

world. I was of a wilful and selfish disposition, even at that early period of my existence; and although I dared not openly rebel against the stepdame he had set over me, and whose discipline was the first to thwart the obstinacy of my character, I looked upon her with secret feelings of detestation. It is a dangerous symptom of mind when a child nourishes a *secret* feeling of any description;—the candour of unsuspecting and unsuspected childhood should be incapable of repressing its emotions. But I *did* conceal my abhorrence of Aloiska;—I even succeeded in disguising the dismay and disgust with which the intrusion of her first-born overcame my heart.

“It was of my own sex,—a boy,—a rival; and well do I remember that the tears which ran down my father’s cheeks, when holding the infant in his arms he pronounced a blessing upon its head, penetrated my bosom like the wound of a sharp instrument;—they were the first I had seen him shed since my mother’s death; and already they appeared to rob me of my birthright.

“Little Gyorgy, despite my hatred, despite the pernicious adoration of both his parents, grew in strength and beauty; and soon became the darling of every heart which I had previously taught myself to believe by exclusive right—my own. He was a dark-eyed, spirited creature,—bounding like a roe through his paternal fields; and his voice had a ringing jousousness in its tones which spoke stirringly to the heart, like the clarion of a trumpet:—while I, who inherited my mother’s debility of constitution, grew still more frail through the fretful captiousness of a disposition which rendered my food tasteless, and my pillow devoid of sleep; and which gathered fresh bitterness from the contrast between my own sickly feebleness, and my brother’s vigorous and animated bearing. I saw the perception of this contrast marked in the compassionate air with which strangers would inquire my age, after they had withdrawn their admiring gaze from Gyorgy’s brilliant boyhood;—I saw it in the mild, tender forbearance which still prompted my father to overlook the failings of his elder and motherless son; I saw it, above all, in the frank and unenvious impartiality with which my step mother brought forward, upon all occasions, my claims in union with those of the darling of her heart.

“But the more she protected me—the more my father appeared to strive against his predilection for his youngest born, the deeper,

the more intense became my loathing towards my gifted rival; and sometimes when Gyorgy, innocently unconscious of my concealed abhorrence, would force his caresses upon me, and indulge his warm affections by a fraternal kiss, I have secretly turned aside, and spat upon the earth, as though a reptile had polluted my lips by its slimy scales. Sometimes too,—for the God of mercy sends his penetrating touch into the darkness of the hardest hearts,—sometimes the confidence and tenderness bestowed by my brother upon his covert enemy, oppressed my heart with such emotions of shame and terror, that I have seized his hand with a burst of sudden fondness, which I could not explain without self-accusal, and public dishonour. But in the midst of my penitence, Aloïška would quench my wakening warmth in tears of bitterness, by exhibiting in the full glory of her maternal pride, some merit, or feat, or grace that appeared to distinguish her favourite from his less fortunate brother; or my father would summon him to his knee, and having bestowed upon him the spontaneous endearments of paternal love, would straightway turn his attention towards myself;—as if in atonement for his partiality,—as if urged by a sense of duty. How could I love Gyorgy? He had done more than deprive me of my heritage,—he had robbed me of the affections of my only parent!

“This feeling of mean envy, of bitter jealousy, increased with my increasing years; it was a scorpion which grew with the heart in which it was engendered; and when we became schoolmates, I, who as the elder brother should have been his protector and champion, although I dared not openly desert his cause, yet with the refined malice of a demon, I betrayed his thoughtless footsteps into many an evil path; secure through the craftiness of my own cunning, myself to escape without detection. But while I remained in possession of the good-will and applause of my superiors, Gyorgy by his frank address and generous spirit became equally advanced in the regard and admiration of his young companions, to whom my feeble health, and careful, discontented brow rendered me an object of distrust;—at home,—abroad,—he was equally sure of preference; and already the seers of Thurotzer predicted the elevation and aggrandizement of our family, through the energetic and aspiring boldness of Gyorgy Barótza.

“We were advancing towards manhood,

when a relation of my father's, who held an appointment in the Royal Mining College of Schemnitz, generously offered to receive one of us into his family, in order to become a pupil in the *Bergwerks Academie*.

“The prospects opened by this eligible mode of education, either as a civil engineer, as an overseer of the royal forests, or as an aspirant for employment in the mines or mint of Kremnitz, were sufficiently brilliant to ensure my father's warm gratitude towards his kinsman, and Aloïška's instant determination to devote her son to so promising a career. As the elder, and natural inheritor of my father's lands, she appeared to consider me excluded from all participation in the friendly offer; even my father seemed to apply it solely to his favourite son. Yet something whispered to me,—some evil inspiration,—that I was better—far better calculated to profit by the advantages of public instruction than my happier brother. I had already distinguished myself in our provincial classes by my proficiency in mathematical studies, and scientific acquirements. Strong powers of verbal memory and a prevailing taste for experimental philosophy, replaced in my mind the brilliant imagination which characterized the wild and speculative Gyorgy; and so deep was my consciousness of mental superiority, and so earnest my desire to supersede him in his destined appointment, that I totally overlooked the strength of limb and constitution requisite for success in an active vocation. My reflections and opinions on the subject were however of small account; they were undeveloped by any appeal on the part of my parents;—Gyorgy, in whose sight ink and paper were abominations, departed, nobly equipped, for Schemnitz; and I remained behind, to brood over the conviction that the post from which I was thus excluded, afforded my only future prospect of success and happiness, and to sigh for the golden epaulets and college uniform which had so embellished my brother's graceful person.

“Short, however, was my indulgence in these dreams of wayward discontent; scarcely was Gyorgy removed from the home in which he was thus dearly cherished, when domestic sorrow filled his place. Aloïška, smitten by a sudden fever, drooped, sickened, and died, before her son could be summoned back to receive her parting blessing; and even my hardened heart was profoundly touched by beholding my stepmother stretched on an

untimely bed of death, and removed from the diligent execution of her matron duties, and the intense enjoyment of her happy prospects, into the darkness of a noisome grave. I grieved too to note the yearning of her heart after her absent son; and had she then appealed to my feelings in his behalf, and bespoken my brotherly tenderness for his inexperience, I should have promised all she required, and honourably kept my word. But so absorbing was her conviction of Gyorgy's supremacy, that her dying benediction actually enforced the assurance of her son's *protection*! 'Weep not, dear Niklas,' said she; 'while Gyorgy lives thou wilt never want a friend; the goodness of his heart is my surety for thy future happiness.' Revolted by her blind partiality, my spirit festered anew, — I followed her to the grave without a tear.

"My father's grief was deep, reverent, and intense: but attempered, by increase of years, into that holy confidence of speedy re-union with those who are gone before, which forbids all vehement indulgence of distress. Circumstances of the strongest national interest tended also to mitigate his sorrows. I have said but little touching his character, for it is of myself I have undertaken to speak; and I am conscious that his opinions have very insufficiently influenced my own. Thus much however I must premise, in elucidation of my history, that the prevailing passion of my good old father was an intensity of national devotion,—of patriotism, which animated his every pulse, his every thought, his every action; and that among the numberless Hungarian bosoms which the edicts and oppressions of the Emperor Joseph filled with indignation and dismay, at the epoch to which I allude, none beat with a sense of prouder resentment than his own.

"With myself, — I own it to my shame! — the love of my country hath ever been a secondary impulse. Patriotism is a virtue inherent in the ardent and the prosperous; and as my selfish mind could picture skies more bright than those of Hungary, fields more fertile, and a home where truer happiness might await me, her destinies roused no tumult of excitation in my breast; — the paternal mantle appeared to have descended unrent and undiminished upon my brother. He had a heart for the country of his fathers, a voice to uplift in her cause, an arm to raise in her defence. It was to him my father loved to breathe his lamentations; it

was Gyorgy who re-echoed all the curses which every fresh importation of German laws, and German legislators, wrung from the depths of his father's heart, and from the lips of an outraged nation. Nothing, indeed, but the iron arm of military despotism could have repressed the revolutionary spirit which agitated, at that critical period, the mass of the Hungarian people, against measures equally unconstitutional, and new to their endurance; measures betraying in the character of Joseph, that love of arbitrary power which, as it equally distinguished the numerous children of Maria Theresa who were destined to fill European thrones,—was probably subdued in her wiser self by early reverses, and by long experience in the art of government.

"The national language had been ejected from the tribunals and institutions of the land; its costume had been denounced as an ensign of rebellion; its independent counties had been converted into circles of the empire; its religious communities dissolved, dispersed, and their revenues appropriated by the Emperor; the Regalia of the kingdom had been torn from its ancient sanctuary, to be polluted by the common touch of Vienna; a capitation tax was in peremptory process; and a bastille already reared its menacing and grated brow on the shores of the Danube! Judge what were the emotions of my father and brother! judge whether the swords of the magnats were restless in their scabbards! Rumours of insubordination, mingled with appeals to the memory of Ragótski, reached even unto that Imperial bed of sickness, on which the misjudging originator of the evil lay within the clutch of a tyrant mightier than himself. The milder policy of his ministers prevailed; and as a first concession to the remonstrances of the Hungarian nobility, the consecrated crown of St. Stephen was rendered into the hands of the Commissioners, delegated by the Diet to deposit it once more within the towers of Buda.

"Ill canst thou imagine the fervour, the tumultuous stir of exultation, with which the nation celebrated its triumph! A solemn ovation did honour to the sacred relic on its passage from the frontier unto Ofen; and every living soul rushed forth from palace and cabin, to offer a reverential homage by the way. Among the enthusiasts of the hour, my brother, whom five years of application had placed in the highest class of the *Kaiserliche Königliche Academie*, without diminishing his political ardour, — my brother

was rash enough to absent himself from Schemnitz, in company with a chosen band of the students who shared his opinions, in order to join the procession which welcomed the commissioners of the crown to the gates of Raab; where the Cathedral had been brilliantly prepared for the reception of the Regalia during the night.

“His return to the college was not so long delayed but that the consequences of his imprudence might have been averted, or terminated by a short arrest, had not my letters incited him to a public declaration of the motives of his absence; and to a bold profession and defence of his political opinions, and detestation of German oppression;—which, as might naturally be expected, were instantly followed by a sentence of expulsion! He arrived at home discomfited, but not subdued in spirit;—my father was unfortunately absent, and once more my evil counsels prevailed upon Gyorgy to avoid the first ebullition of his anger, by temporary sojourn with an acquaintance at Tynau. I supplied him,—malicious liberality!—with the entire fruits of my boyish parsimony; and having oppressed his mind by anticipations of my father’s fury on this premature blighting of his temporal prospects,—I hastened him over the threshold. My brother! my ill-starred, my noble brother! I never looked upon his face again!”

“But thy father,” interrupted Rumalie, now for the first time seeming to interest himself in the narration. “What said thy father to his absence?”

“The tidings of his favourite’s disgrace were received with equal astonishment and regret; for the motive of his expulsion was cunningly omitted in the official German circular forwarded by the college.”

“But *thou* didst suggest the cause?” demanded the Turk, “thou didst excuse his offence as consequent upon the influence of his sire’s transmitted principles?”

“And thus bestow upon my brother the honours of martyrdom in my father’s eyes,—of martyrdom in his favourite cause,—the cause of national freedom? No! thou must imagine that a heart such as mine,—that the state of mental delusion under which I laboured,—could scarcely prompt me to such an act of magnanimity! Yet how shall I dare,—even unto thee, a stranger,—reveal the horrible cause I assigned as that of Gyorgy’s disgrace? I told him,—I told my wretched father,—ay, and even by a forged letter confirmed the accusation, that

his son,—the darling of his age,—had been detected in peculation of the Imperial ores, which, as deputy-warden of the assay laboratory, had been consigned to his charge; and that the respectability of his connexions, and his previous good character, had alone redeemed him from being publicly branded as a felon, and a thief! But what ails thee?” exclaimed Niklas, interrupting himself, as Rumalie, uttering a sharp cry, pressed his hand upon his heart.

“A reptile,—some crawler of the dust, hath stung me through my vest,” faltered the Turk. “But say on;—the interest of thy tale will overcome my passing anguish. Thy father—did he—*could* he give credit to so vile an accusation?”

“Rather inquire whether he could suspect brother of fabricating such a charge against brother. He *did* believe me,—and in the heat of his rage, he addressed a letter to his unfortunate son, which, although it contained little more than his malediction, and a command to depart instantly from out the land, fully answered my worst of purposes!”

“Yet believe me,—if still thou canst give faith to the words of a being so depraved,—believe me, that scarcely was this letter despatched upon its cruel mission, scarcely had I learned from Gyorgy’s reply that he had already departed on some distant and nameless pilgrimage, when a profound repentance took possession of my mind. Despair had rendered it wicked and inhuman; the success of my projects brought back its better, its softer impulses! But all was now too late! What would it have availed to undeceive my father, and to convince him of his injustice towards an innocent son, whom I could no longer bring back into his bosom;—whom my machinations had rendered a friendless, homeless wanderer over the wide earth? To have confessed my sin would have been but a renewal of cruelty towards my father.

“And, oh! how bitter was the endurance of my secret sorrow,—how overwhelming my silent sense of crime,—my penitential atonement! Wherever I turned my eyes, they were greeted by the image of my brother; and the confiding tenderness of his farewell words lingered in my ears like a death-knell! At table, his chair seemed always full;—in the very temple of God, his phantasm appeared to kneel by my side;—in the open field it pursued me like a shadow;—nor for worlds would I have trod beside his mother’s grave. And in the

watches of the night, — those nights which the wintry tempests made horrible with their uproar, a still small voice perpetually rose above the yelling of the hurricane, — a still small echo of the Hebrew's sentence of judgment. 'Where is thy brother?' said the deep voice of ages.

"Am I my brother's keeper?" was the reply of the first murderer! but I, who had been nurtured in a better creed, sank rebuked and afraid at the imaginary sound. Even in my solitude, I shrouded my face, and trembled as I listened; — I had been my brother's keeper, and I had betrayed my trust!

"For many years previous to his recent domestic calamity, my father's sight had been failing; but its latest exercise was in writing that fearful letter to his darling child. His eyes grew dim from that very day, — he never saw clearly again! I did not observe him indeed indulge in tears; but the winter nights were long, his chamber solitary; and who can tell how far secret weeping may have tended to obscure his vision? This gradual decay soon ended in total eclipse, in utter blindness; and from that period he resigned the entire management of himself and of his estates into my hands. This new responsibility, instead of gratifying my feelings, by the independence and supremacy for which I had sighed so long, served but to oppress me with new anxieties; and it was chiefly in the hope of interesting my troubled mind by the formation of new ties and the indulgence of new affections, that I resolved to unite myself in marriage with the sweetest and loveliest of my young companions at Szent Marton.

"Urszlá deserved a better fate than to be selected for such a purpose; for good and fair as she was, her original charm in my eyes had been her repeated rejection of my brother's boyish suit. Perhaps he pressed his ardent love too vehemently upon her timid acceptance; for he was surely better gifted to secure her happiness than the miserable wretch in whose bosom she pledged her faith! We married: I became a father. Urszlá, who was the gentlest, the most assiduous of wives, was the sweetest mother too, on whose devoted tenderness my eyes had ever rested. But even the observation and possession of her faultless beauty, could not animate the heart upon which conscience, like a clinging incubus, hung heavy and terrific. And other evils soon began to assail me.

"I have already alluded to my disinclina-

tion and inaptitude for a life of agricultural activity; and the deteriorated condition of my father's estates soon bore evidence to my mal-administration. The most valuable produce afforded by our land, from time immemorial, had been the poppies and saffron required in the balsam trade of the country; and it chanced that my unfortunate brother, in the early ardour of his chemical studies, had suggested a method of turning them to better account; which, without a sufficient insight into his views, or a sufficient capital to support preliminary failures, I attempted to put in practice, — and totally without success. The product of the year, our sole resource, was lost to us at once! Our independence and hereditary nobility proved a grievous burden on this occasion; for the vassals of a noble house have recourse to their *suzerain* for assistance under such contingencies; receiving an advance of corn upon the promise of the ensuing harvest, or a trifling loan which they repay with *robot*, or personal service.

"But the Barótzas are unhappily of gentle blood; and our common necessities obliged me therefore to become a debtor, — again and again, and soon without hope of repayment; for what accession of revenue was to relieve from embarrassment an income merely sufficient for our maintenance? And every thing seemed leagued against a possibility of relief. Storm and alternate drought laid waste the province, — pestilence deprived me of my peasants, — disease swept away my herds, — and ruin and devastation prowled amid my solitary fields. The poverty consequent upon such visitations, I could have borne in patience; for my children might have been nurtured in the humble lowliness befitting their altered degree; — but it was for my father alone, my poor, blind, bereaved, decrepid father, that I dreaded the horrors of privation. Two of his grandchildren, indeed, served and tended him with a patient gentleness which they inherited from their mother; they had been named at his desire after the two beings he had most loved, — Gyorgy and Aloíska; and the old man appeared to hold them the dearer for that sad association.

"My elder son, Johan, — I have delayed too long to speak of him, but the wounds of a father's heart are sorely painful in exposure, — my first-born son appeared to unite the beauty and boldness, and ardour of his lost uncle, with the craftiness and cruelty of his far more wretched parent. From his boyhood he was dauntless and shameless, — a, braggart

and a spendthrift; from his boyhood he appeared destined to heap upon my head, those burning embers which I had wickedly kindled for another: yes! it was the thanklessness of my child which avenged most deeply, most bitterly, the injuries of my slandered brother!

"Dream not, however, that in my earlier hours of wedded happiness, or in the transient snatches of prosperity which delayed my ruin, I had forgotten for a single hour, his absence or its cause. Never did any glad tears of welcome fall upon the cheek of my new-born children, that the memory of his infancy came not to sadden my rejoicing; never did I note exultingly the dawning of their better qualities and manly spirit, that Gyorgy's fair presence and noble mind came not painfully mingled with the recollection; never did their embraces thrill through my frame with that touch of ecstasy known only to a parent's heart, that the image of my brother,—of him whom I had deprived of the precious ties of home and kindred,—rose not like a spectre before my eyes. Why—why could I not call it into life!

"I have told thee that we were poor—oppressed by difficulties and misfortunes," continued Niklas, fetching a heavy breath; "judge, then, whether the lavish profligacy of my son tended to redeem my embarrassments! Yet,—extreme in love as in hate,—my doating tenderness for the unhappy boy, prevented me from admonishing his early follies, from repressing, by paternal authority, his maturer vices. Poor as I was, I supplied him again and again from my limited means, when dissipation and ill fortune reduced him to distress: he had persuaded me to place him in the Imperial army; and our little stock was frequently exhausted, and our hunger left uncared for, in order to improve his appearance in the world. But this could not last;—a necessity for disposing of our family estate became apparent."

"And thine old father, Niklas! How couldst thou obtain his consent to so humiliating a measure?"

"The tears of my wife and children found their way to his withered heart. He conditioned but for the retainment of the dwelling wherein he had first and last beheld the light of heaven; and the sacrifice was achieved."

"And thou wert once more free?"

"Condemned by the law of the realm to place my lands at the disposal of the nearest magnat, I scarcely obtained a third of their value; and even that sum speedily melted

away under the selfish demands of my son Johan. One relief was however vouchsafed to us by Heaven; my aged father died about this period. I say *vouchsafed*,—for how could I endure to see him stripped of all his comforts by the profligate extravagance of my son; he who had been despoiled of the best joy of his existence by my own still more wanton cruelty? Yes! he died; and the first unembittered tears which had blest my eyes since Gyorgy's departure, were those I shed upon his coffin!

"And that beloved name was the last word that trembled on his wasted lips—'Blessings be upon the castaway!' said he, in his dying prayers; 'the blessings of his father and of his God?' And the smile with which he spoke went with him into the depths of the grave.

"But I speak in vain," said Niklas, interrupting himself on perceiving that the Turk lay extended on the earth, with his face buried in the grass. "He sleeps! my benefactor is wrapt in slumber; peace be with him! It was presumptuous to imagine that my tale could interest his feelings."

CHAPTER III.

Juste ciel! il y en a deux.

The French Ghostseer.

DURING the whole of the following day, the intercourse of the travellers was disturbed and thwarted by the unsettled humour of the sky. The weather, like a spoiled beauty, was one moment radiant with gracious smiles,—and the next, overclouded by sullen shadows; and at the very moment that the rainbow—that peacemaker of Heaven—began to spread its conciliatory arch over the laughing, conscious skies, the playful snatches of balmy air which agitated the branches as if in gratulation, would become irritated by sudden caprice into angry gusts; and sweep with threatening vehemence among the blossoms that had already opened anew their fragrant censers of sacrifice.

It was a sabbath morning, too; and the peasant girls, who were clad in holiday array, were seen scudding in groups along their road from church; shrouding their laughing faces from the momentary showers, under the cover of their scarlet skirts; or sheltering themselves here and there among the rifts of sand, beneath some straggling juniper bush, or stunted pine tree, from the pelting rain that pattered over their tangled green awning. Even the hardy Rumalie and his

companion were forced to be on the alert against the sudden violence of the passing storms; and to own that the season was not propitious for gossiping.

But on the third day, when the petulant winds had fretted themselves to rest, a mild and holy calm overspread the freshened face of nature; and the wanderers rested themselves at mid-day in a thick grove of pinasters, which overhung the ravine they were traversing; reposing in voluptuous indulgence upon a rich carpet of the greenest moss, which the brooms of the neighbouring peasants, seeking fuel in the woods, had disencumbered of its fir cones and decaying fibres. No sound broke in upon their lonely *siesta* but the distant murmur of the wood-pigeons, or the carol of a passing thrush; till Rumalie, suddenly rousing himself from a fit of abstraction, exclaimed, "And thy wife, Barótza,—thy daughter,—thy two sons,—tarry they still at Szent Marton?—and what strange chance impelled thee unto Belgrade?"

"The departure of my boys from Thurotzer," replied Niklas, gratified to observe that his apprehensions of having excited the hatred and disgust of his benefactor, were unfounded, "preceded my own. It is now two years since my unfortunate Johan accompanied his regiment to Naples;—and shortly afterwards Gyorgy, who, so long as my father could be comforted by his presence, was content to be detained at our fireside, implored my permission to try his fortunes in the world. He had witnessed too much domestic humiliation to be ambitious; and, having from his earliest years devoted his leisure to the cultivation of our provincial art, and with considerable success, my boy, poor and friendless, and with pitiful resources, but ardent, and courageous, and hardy in temperament, set forth upon his weary wanderings as a *balsam-seller*. His mother and sister saw their last comfort vanish with the trace of his footsteps in the snow; and, on the succeeding spring, our desponding hearts were confirmed in their gloomy forebodings, by tidings of the violent death of my elder son. For some weeks we endured the suspense of an unconfirmed rumour; but at length I ceded to the prayers of his sorrowing mother, and, taking my staff in my hand, I departed for Pesth, to seek an interview with his agents, of the house of Karlitz. The tale that had reached us was, alas! but too fatally true! my misgoverned Johan had fallen in a duel with a Neapolitan officer—he was already dead, buried, forgotten!—

and I had only to return to my desolate hearth to add another page to my record of misery, and to witness the heart-broken smiles of my patient, my forbearing Urszlá.

"No! I could not endure to think of my return,—I could not! But by letter I told her all, and acknowledged that the Karlitz family had taken pity upon my wretchedness, and granted me temporary employment. As thou already knowest, they had commissioned me to visit Turkey, and negotiate a speculation in cotton-seed for the stalled cattle upon their arid lands at Ketschkémet. How ill my journey sped is also unhappily known to thee; and even my earnest trust and chief inducement,—that of crossing the path of my surviving son, among the southern provinces, was totally disappointed. While, as if in wanton aggravation of my affliction, I was seized in traversing Veröczter, on suspicion of highway robbery,—imprisoned, beaten, persecuted, and on no better grounds than that I was poor and friendless, and could bring no witnesses of the truth of my defence. Yet as I stood, a condemned man and an humbled, before the tribunal, how could I resent injustice,—how resist severity?—I, upon whose withered mind the consciousness of crime was indelibly impressed!"

"And thy wife and daughter, Niklas,—know they of thy recent mischances?"

"They await our coming with impatience. From Fünfkirchen, I wrote to prepare them for the reception of my best of friends."

"That was ill done! I had hoped to surprise their welcome and good-will."

"Their welcome, my gracious benefactor, must be limited by poverty and affliction."

"That of a kindly heart might befit a king."

"Nevertheless, so sorely do I dread thine impatience of our poor accommodations, that I would willingly lengthen our road through Kremnitz, and the wide district of our mines, in order that gratified curiosity might blind thine eyes, by a vision of the glory of Hungary, unto the wretchedness of Barótza's home."

"The glory of Hungary!" interrupted Rumalie. "My good friend, Niklas, look around thee! Look on the wooded ravine at thy feet,—at yonder crags, which lift their noble fronts unto heaven, above thy head! Look at these budding vineyards, spreading from slope to slope,—and tell me not of the beauties of mines or caverns! Besides, what have these golden pits of thine to boast, which can match with those of

Transylvania?—Bořtza have I visited, and Nagygag;—have seen the tellurium glitter in the yawning entrails of the earth, and——”

“Nay, gracious Rumalie,” exclaimed Niklas, “an thou hast visited the golden treasures of Bořtza, I speak no more of Schemnitz; I have no further delay to urge. Yonder in the horizon I discern the looming of a city,—of mine own Sz. Marton; and two leagues beyond, in a valley sheltered by yon glimmering hills, stands the habitation of my fathers.”

Barótza uncovered his head in salutation to a spot so consecrated in his estimation; and Rumalie, either in listlessness, or to rid his companion of the restraint of his observation, beguiled their onward way by lifting up his voice in wild fragments of many a Turkish ballad, or Moorish ditty, one of which bore the following interpretation:—

BALLAD.

I.

Across the trackless desert, ride
A Moslem and a Frank,
To spread their evening tents beside
The well-spring's shaded tank;
Brief rest, though sweet!—long ere the sun
Glares fiercely forth, again
Their twilight course perforce they run
Athwart the sultry plain.

II.

Lo! as they pass, the rustling reeds
Quiver, where—gliding soft—
A snake uncoils its spotted weeds,
And rears its crest aloft!
Bismillah! with an arm of strength
The Frank hath aimed his blow,—
Flings high in air its mangled length,
Then dashes it below!

III.

“What hast thou done?” the Moslem cries,
“Thy ruthless hand hath slain
A thing great Allah from the skies
Breathed on without disdain;
It had not harmed thee,—could not harm
Thy courser in his speed!
Away!—thine act—thy heart—thine arm
Have shamed thy Christian creed!

IV.

“Through the wide world, the reptile race,
Like man, have harbour given;
But who shall dare assign the space,
Their heritage from Heaven?
Will not that God thy deed condemn,
Whose power,—intent to bless,—
Fashioned the wilderness for them,—
Them for the wilderness?”

V.

“Go! in the meanest thing that lives,
Revere its Maker's hand;
And reverence the will which gives
To all—a promised land!—

To all, his sheltering care!—and know
That, through a just decree,
The mercy which thou lov'st to show,
Will be vouchsafed to thee!”*

It was evening, when the weary travellers reached the valley in which Vehlhá, the village formerly belonging to the Barótza family, was dotted, white and tranquil, like a scattered flock amid the green pastures. A few of its lowly habitations appeared to have wandered still higher up the hill-side, where its house of prayer, like the shepherd of the fold, stood high above the rest overlooking its charge; and on the same level, the Barótza dwelling-house, half farm, half mansion, extended its white front amid a plantation of larches. The purple shadows of the deepening twilight which now obscured the face of things, prevented its dilapidated condition, and the furrows that time had ploughed upon its aspect as roughly as upon that of its master, from becoming degradingly apparent; and as the wanderers approached its northern entrance, between tufts of larch and lilac trees, which rendered the air oppressively sweet by their fulness of bloom, there burst from the bushes such a thrilling concert of nightingales, as, united with the stillness of the clear, calm sky, and its one intense evening star, forbade all observation of meaner objects.

The pilgrims crept towards the windows; and through the mouldering *jalousies* which hung loosely on their broken hinges, they plainly discerned, by the light within, the gentle Urszlá patiently seated beside it, in her mourning weeds: and Alořska leaning her still fairer cheek upon her mother's shoulder, whispering sanguine predictions of her father's early return. The interposing figures of the travellers obscured the lingering evening light, and the disturbed inmates instantly rushed forth in anxious inquiry—and were not disappointed;—in another moment they were alternately clasped to the bosom of the agitated Barótza.

Rumalie, in deference to their emotion, tarried afar off; but when Niklas, recovering his self-possession, named him as his benefactor and best friend, the eager Alořska flew towards him, and would have pressed his hand to her lips, had he not prevented her with words so kind, and breathed in broken tones so touching, that Urszlá started from her husband's arm, as though they were

* Founded on the Turkish Ambassador's reproof to Dr. Clarke as they journeyed together from Constantinople.

familiar to her ear. It was but a gloomy welcome home. So many grievous remembrances, — so deep a sense of actual misery tended to sadden the meeting,—that not one of the little group could even affect a tone of rejoicing ; it seemed a general relief when the Turk, pleading fatigue, begged permission to retire to repose.

Niklas Barótza, lamp in hand, and guided by Aloiska's whispered directions, conducted his guest into a roomy but almost dismantled chamber ; and as they crossed the threshold, he once more, and very humbly, welcomed him to the shelter of his desolate abode.

"I feel," said he, "that this scanty furniture is insufficient to offer for a stranger's accommodation ; yet, poor as it is, not only is it our best, but very sacred in our eyes. My old father drew his last breath in yonder bed : this cumbrous arm chair is that before which my brother and myself were wont to kneel in our childhood, for his nightly blessing ! Beside it, sir, lieth the ebony spindle of my step-mother ; and Gyorgy's broken cross-bow hangs yonder, beneath the calvary." Niklas drew his hand across his eyes ; then hastily saluted his guest. "Sleep well, gracious sir ; be your rest untroubled as theirs, — your waking more joyous than mine !" And so saying, he withdrew mournfully from the chamber.

Rumalie listened until the echo of his footsteps ceased in the lonely gallery : then drew bolt and bar ; and throwing himself on his knees before the bed, he lifted up his voice and wept !

"My father !" faltered he at length, amid his broken sobs, "my mother ! do these perishable records alone survive ye ? do these frail tokens of my childhood exist, and are you shrouded in the earth ? My father ! thou who in thy dying hour didst pardon my imputed crime,—thou—oh ! my mother,—who didst love me all too tenderly for my happiness—look down on my return ! Accept the reverence, the deep, fond reverence of your alien child ; forgive the unmeant offences of my boyhood ; forgive, for my sorrow's sake, my brother's cruelty ! Hear me ! father, — mother, — from the grave which I have come so far to visit and to honour, oh ! hear me, and bless my desolate return !"

Even Niklas and his family, who outwatched the stars that night in their mutual communications of suffering and sorrow, slept more, and more peacefully, than their guest. As soon as the watchmaster of the village had droned the last Psalm at sunrise, under

his window, Rumalie went forth in secret into the valley, and ere other eyes were waking to pry into his movements, he had breathed his morning prayer upon an obscure grave within the cemetery of Vehlhá. In his wanderings through the village, he outstaid the morning meal of his hosts ; but he was more than privileged in their eyes ; and when he did indeed return, Urszlá herself went forth to meet him by the way ; and to renew his welcome of the preceding evening with an increased cordiality that brought tears into his eyes. That voice of hers, with how many touching associations did it thrill upon his heart !

In the course of the day, Rumalie's feelings were again and again excited by the grateful regard and emotion evinced, throughout the valley, unto the family which had been compelled by ruined fortunes to resign its lordship into the hands of strangers. The villagers observing that a guest had been welcomed in the dreary hall of Vehlhá, and eager to assist the scanty stores of their former master, hastened to bring homely tokens of their respect to mend his frugal fare. Game—vessels of ewe-milk *schmalz*—baskets of crimson salad, the earliest of the year,—wood strawberries, by their German name of earth-pease,—flasks of Sirmian wine, or a few ancient bottles of Tokäyer, of the Gyrok vintage,—were forced upon his acceptance ; while the most stirring damsels of the valley vied with each other in tenders of aid and good offices to the adroit and active Aloiska, the flower of the district. And thus furthered in their desire to render the welcome of Rumalie as warm as Hungarian hospitality could suggest, the family of Barótza received his offer of a prolonged visit with the frankest cordiality.

Niklas alone, — although he had been the first to bespeak the services of his wife and daughter for his generous friend, would have been contented to moderate their growing friendship. From the second day of the Turk's domestication under his roof, he had been startled by a suspicion of having detected looks of intelligence between his daughter and his guest ; nay ! even Urszlá herself seemed moved to regard the stranger with an air of interest more tender than was altogether satisfactory to her husband. His mind was not yet wholly untainted by the leaven of his early infirmity ; and a degree of unquiet jealousy sometimes prompted him to break in unexpectedly upon the little group, as they sat together under the broad shadows

of the plane-trees. Yes! their animated discourse was suspended instantly upon his appearance,—an air of confusion and consciousness prevailed among them when he fixed his eye upon each several countenance;—the fact was indisputable! But was it possible that his gentle Urszlá, that his proud and hitherto disinterested girl, could be so very quickly and powerfully influenced by the casket of balass' rubies, and the bags of sequins which Rumalie had given unto their safe keeping? Could Aloiska have so soon forgotten her engagement, her very betrothment, with the son of the Lutheran pastor of Vehlhá,—young Vinzenz, who only waited an increased stipend in his diplomatic appointment at Vienna, to claim her as his bride? Niklas cursed in his secret soul the frailty of woman, as he bewildered himself by these perplexing considerations; and once, when he had surprised the dark eyes of the Turk fixed in mournful intensity upon his still beautiful wife, he even wished himself back in the dungeons of Nagy-Börö,—so Rumalie were still hawking his wares in Transylvania, or beyond the Bosphorus!

He even detected the scornful appellation of "Turkish pedlar" lurking, upon several occasions, between his own compressed lips; and although he drove back from his heart the bitter thought that urged it, and banished the ungrateful word, as unbecoming and offensive, yet was he never better pleased than when his guest proposed that they should profit by the loveliness of the season and depart from Vehlhá, upon a tour among the Carpathian mountains; where Rumalie trusted to turn his experience in the gem and crystal trade, to good account. Barótza earnestly acceded to the request; and in a few days the dangerous Turk had bid adieu to his rival sultanas,—and had left Szent Marton far in the distance.

The first station of interest to which their journey was directed, was the obscure village of Czerwenitza; where alone, of all Europe, the native opal is found in its full pride of radiance, imbedded in a stratum of decomposed porphyry. The archives of this precious mine are said to be of five hundred years standing; and are in themselves worthy of attention. But Rumalie, prompt in all his dealings, was soon ready to proceed on their enterprise; and before they had passed many days in the solitary wilds they were compelled to traverse in order to reach Galicia, terms of the happiest understanding were once more renewed between them, and

Barótza appeared to have forgotten all his ungenerous suspicions and discontents. Few things, indeed, tend more to strengthen the bonds of intimacy than a perilous and laborious journey. Peevishness and *ennui* confine themselves to turnpike roads, smoothed by Macadam; but crags to be surmounted,—forests to be traversed—dark, pathless pine-forests, sacred to the wolf and the bear—fagots of *krumholz* or knee wood, to be gathered for a watchfire,—provisions to be husbanded, and scantily shared,—fatigues and privations, and dangers, to be endured in common, form a tie of mutual interest, very favourable to the growth of friendship. And thus it was with our Carpathian wanderers, during their pilgrimage among the mountain ravines, and their sojourn in the elevated but lovely region of the Green Lake; and there, in their prolonged interchange of thought and feeling, Barótza became deeply and unaccountably sensible to the peculiar charm he had found in the air, and voice, and sentiments of the Turk, during their earlier acquaintance;—one of those prepossessions which sometimes beset our hearts with an overcoming influence, —

Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound.

Niklas, however, was incapable of sustaining the fatigues which his more ardent companion was eager to encounter; and soon, in the languor of indisposition, he began to sigh after those beloved inmates of Vehlhá, who were so much better skilled to minister to his sufferings than the rude bear-hunters of Kásmark. The object of their mountain tour had been happily accomplished in an abundant acquirement of the double sexagonal crystals, which are to be found amid those inaccessible wilds; and yet Rumalie appeared intent upon devising new excursions, and seeking fresh objects, like one who is bent upon loitering out an appointed season; nor was it till after repeated hints, and at length earnest entreaties, that he would consent to their immediate return into Thurotzer.

And now, once more they were upon their route towards home; they were again approaching Vehlhá, and this time with feelings of common interest. Rumalie, indeed, began to count the hills and valleys no less anxiously than his companion, as they were left behind them in the homeward track which still divided them from hearts beloved and loving. At length the misty summit of Fatra appeared in the distance; and the Vehlhá

valley, in all the sweetness of its sheltered seclusion, lay extended at their feet.

The path of their descent led through a cove of weeping birch skirting the little cemetery; which, according to the continental custom, uplifted its lonely walls at some distance above the village. Barótza, as was his wont, paused beside the grated gates in pious reverence; but as he concluded his brief prayer, he started on perceiving that during his absence, a handsome sepulchral monument, a colossal cross of granite, had been erected upon the lowly grave of his parents. Slowly he approached the spot, — perused those sacred names which became thrice hallowed in their union with death and its desolate home; then kneeling beside the cross, he blessed the affectionate wife who had thus liberally appropriated a portion of her scanty means to the honour and memory of those he loved. So deeply, indeed, was his heart affected by this unforeseen incident, that he neither addressed his companion, nor lifted his eyes from the path until he reached the precincts of home.

Home! could it be indeed home, — his own inhabited home, — which struck his astonished gaze as he stood transfixed in the courtyard? Had a fairy hand been there, — had Rübzahl himself wandered from his mountain realm, to effect the transformation?

The breaches of time and ruin had been repaired, — each mouldering wall had been raised anew; and enlarged casements, stone parapets, and a wide *piátza*, imparted an air of dignity to his ancient habitation. The devastated court was handsomely paved with granite, — a grove of young chestnuts concealed the offices, — and a long range of farm buildings extended their thatched roofs into the very depths of the shrubbery.

Niklas grew pale as death, — for a painful apprehension occurred to his mind. During his absence, the old dwelling had probably been sold, and might owe these embellishments to its new proprietor! But no! — it was his own faithful Bartz who came bounding and yelling to his feet; — it was his own aged horse which neighed from the adjoining close at the well-known sound of his voice; — it was his own beloved wife and precious child, who extended their arms in welcome beneath the portal!

Lost in the confusion of amazement, forgetful in the joy of their embraces, of his guest, of himself, of the whole world, he suffered them to conduct his passive footsteps

into a new and handsome apartment, enriched with the most commodious furniture. He gazed around him with wondering admiration, but suddenly started back with horror and dismay. — Merciful Providence! on what an object are his eyes riveted, — what miracle hath brought it there?

A dark-eyed, handsome youth, attired in the uniform of Schemnitz college, — Gyorgy, in short, such as he was when a brother's malice banished him from Vehlhá, stood before him!

"Come hither, my son," said Urszlá in a gentle whisper, "and kneel for thy father's blessing."

Gyorgy, now advancing, bent low at his father's feet, — but Niklas recoiled on his approach.

"Forgive me, oh! my brother," faltered he, "forgive and pity my repentance."

"I do! I do!" — exclaimed a broken voice beside him.

"Gyorgy — my brother!" murmured the heart-broken Barótza —

"Is here at thy bidding," said Rumalie, flinging aside his turban, and rushing into his arms. "All is forgotten — forgiven."

But Niklas heard not, saw not, felt not; excess of agony had driven the blood from his heart. And when, having been carried into the air, he awoke to the full consciousness of happiness, he found that Urszlá and Aloíska were weeping by his side; and that his son had united his hand with that of one whom he named as his uncle, his friend, and benefactor. Yes! it was no dream, — he was once more clasped to the bosom of his long-lost brother.

CHAPTER IV.

I've wander'd where the scorching sun
 Blights the fair flower it smiles upon;
 I've wander'd where its warmest beam
 Chills, like the moonlight's ghastly gleam;
 I've wander'd where, like winged flowers,
 Gay star-bright birds flit through the bowers,
 Yet ne'er awake those blossom'd trees
 With bursts of thrilling melodies.
 Where the bright buds of velvet bloom
 Tissued in Nature's various loom,
 Ne'er with one fragrant kiss, caress'd
 The breeze that haunts their loveless breast.
 I've wander'd where no breathing thing
 'Mid the cleft granite sheltering
 Gave sound or sight of life; — where e'en
 One leaf, one flower, had blest a scene
 Thus to creation's purpose lost, —
 The giant realm of endless frost!

I've seen the hunted elephant
 Deep in the trampled jungle pant;
 I've seen the lonely vulture fly
 With blood-stain'd beak, yet hungry eye;

I've seen the desert-serpent coil,—
The lion's track imprint the soil ;
The fierce volcano fling on high
Its glaring torrents through the sky ;
The boiling breakers foam and roar
O'er ambush'd rocks that guard the shore ;
Antres, within whose gulfs profound
Grim darkness spreads its terrors round ;
And hurricanes, where bolts of death
Shed, blazing round, their sulphurous breath.

I've dwelt in vales with banks o'erhung
By purple vines,—enlaced among
The orange-branches, orb'd with gold ;—
I've seen the olive groves unfold
Their downy shade — reflected deep
In the calm river-waves, that sleep
So dreamingly, — so murmuring sky,—
Beneath that cloudless summer sky.

I've seen the lingering daylight set
O'er mosque and arrowy minaret ;—
I've marked its brighter dawning deck
Some column'd temple's marble wreck ;
I've felt its noontide radiance shine
Through the pagoda's sandal shrine ;
Or, glimmering o'er earth's holiest dome,
Illume the fanes of sovran Rome !

But these — but all — still vainly strove
To wean me from the land I love. —
It may not brightest be, nor best,—
To me, it spreads a mother's breast ;—
Its springs, — well from mine inmost heart ;
Its skies, — my heavenliest dreams impart ;
Its earth, — enshrines my parents' tomb ;
Its air, — amid life's darkest doom,
Breathes hope into my withered soul ! —
Swiftly, ye loitering billows, roll !
Swiftly, ye lagging couriers, fly !
Once more beneath my longing eye
In thy familiar charms expand —
Mine own, — my blessed fatherland !

Vane.

“AND must I, in sooth, recount my whole long, tedious history ?” said Rumalie, some few weeks afterwards, as the happy family of Barótza, with young Vinzenz as a solitary addition, were seated round a glowing stove.

“Must I indeed forfeit all my mysterious dignity in your eyes, by revealing the ordinary and common-place character of my adventures ? Nay, then, lend me your patient hearing. So happy, so contented an auditory cannot prove very severe in its judgment ; and there are some among us, unto whom the tale of my destinies may offer a valuable admonition : one true picture of actual human existence and its vicissitudes, affords a more profitable lesson than a thousand homilies !

“My fate, such as it hath been, owes its prevailing colour to the master-impulse of my mind, — to Hope ! warm, sanguine, buoyant Hope ! The teachers of our faith aver that the Almighty Creator hath been pleased to withhold, since the revelation of the Christian faith, that manifestation of himself which he vouchsafed unto his people

in earlier ages. The light of the divine countenance is indeed denied us ; but say, ye blind guides ! what else but a Heavenly presence irradiates our hearts, when hope springs like a sunbeam through the darkness of our sorrow ? — what else but the Divinity stirs within us when, with renewed strength, we cast off our heavy burden of despair, — apply our hands, as was the purport of their creation, unto the uses of the world, — and, wiping the tears from our eyes, direct our eager gaze anew over the vast wilderness of life ?

“I feel, humbly and gratefully, that my own heart hath been fashioned unto good, and my own evil fortunes redeemed, embellished, and prospered, through the inspirations of a cheerful sanguine temperament, which despair hath never yet subdued. It may have sunk for a season under the pressure of distress, but only to rebound into a brighter atmosphere ; and amid the obscurity of affliction's most devoted day, I have never forgotten that its morrow must be improved by my own exertions. The surface of the heart, like the face of nature, hath many shadows ; but through the darkest by which both are obscured, the brightness of the colouring beneath is still discernible. They form no blot, no blemish : their darkness is as of the night, — it passeth away, and all is smiling as before.

“Mark how I already abuse my privilege of bestowing my tediousness in your ears ! But fear not : I have moralized my limit ; and will condense my narrative, as in gratitude for your forbearance bound. I will not dwell upon the days succeeding the receipt of my father's maledictory letter ; and yet, however terrible to endure, they were perhaps less cruelly painful than your own minds may now suggest ; for I was in truth supported in my affliction by a sense of injury, a consciousness of unmerited chastisement ; I felt that to have merely put in injudicious practice my father's oft repeated lessons, deserved not such heavy retribution. The whole affair, too, wore at first the unsubstantial inconsistency of a dream ; nor in its worst reality was I wholly abandoned to my misery. My father had indeed renounced me ; my brother had, as I believed, weakly resigned my cause ; but I had a friend.

“Fortunately this friend was a fellow-sufferer with myself from the severity of our college discipline : he shared my public sentence, though not its private aggravation.

Already he had been received with the warmest welcome by his family and father, who was Director on the lands of Prince Czakló, in Szolnok; and at Valerian's pressing invitation, I undertook a long and solitary journey, in the hope of finding employment under the same liberal patronage. The way was weary,—my means narrow; but I reached in safety the humble and hospitable home of my friend, and was appointed, shortly after my arrival, Registrar of the Prince's splendid stud. You start!—the post was an ignoble one for a gentleman and a scholar! True; but remember that I was a penniless scholar, a disinherited gentleman, and that I had been early taught to dread the baneful rust of idleness, which is said to eat like a canker into the strongest mind. I accepted, therefore, with gratitude a situation which thus opportunely relieved the family of Valerian from my maintenance, and settled me within reach of my friend's society; for already he shared the appointment of his father, in which view he had prosecuted his studies at Schemnitz in the forest art.*

"I believe I might have vegetated in Transylvania, even unto this day, recording the birth of Jelica's bay foal, and the apportionment of forage distributed to Section C. of the Puszta, had not an incident, a very fortunate chance, introduced me to the personal notice of their master. I had been sent in control of the two chief stud-grooms to dispose of fifty of the less valuable colts, at the fair of Beszterce. This herd of horses, to which bit, bridle, and halter were unknown,—as wild, in short, as any that gallop the Ukraine,—was driven by my attendants, like a flock of sheep, within the magic circle of a strong rope, and arrived without accident at the fair; where, being of a celebrated race, the whole were advantageously disposed of. On the following day we returned, charged with three bags of ducats instead of our troublesome companions. It chanced that at nightfall we were obliged to traverse a forest of considerable extent, the property of the Count; and the two grooms, who were lords of our treasury, and bearers of the ducats, began to express their apprehensions of a hostile encounter, natural or supernatural, by audibly reciting the seven penitential psalms; while I, whose heart was as light as my pockets, had leisure

to fix my attention upon the surrounding objects.

"During the deepening obscurity of the twilight, I had perceived, in various parts of the forest, a hovering light that appeared to issue from the earth, although no fissures were perceptible; but in the darkness of the night, these illuminated spots gave out a vivid lambent flame. I directed the attention of my companions to this species of *ignis fatuus*; but scarcely had the words passed my lips, when they put spurs to their horses, and fled, exclaiming, '*Heilige sacrament! die poltergeistor!* the earth-imps with their mining lamps in their hands!' and as their horses' hoofs rung in the distance, I found myself alone in the dreariness of the night. The exclamation of the grooms powerfully impressed my mind, not with any apprehension of *poltergeistor*, but with this popular corroboration of a fact which I had frequently heard announced in the lectures of Professor Mödling, that every considerable body of mineral substance gives out a gaseous emanation,† in many instances lambent or inflammable. Heaven knows how little my mineralogical studies had profited my mind; but so simple and curious a circumstance had found a place in my memory; and upon my return to Czakló, unmolested by earth or other imps, I ceased not to consider the subject; till at length, fully persuaded that mines of some extent and value still lay undetected in the recesses of the forest, I made personal application to the Prince for permission to sink a shaft in one of the illuminated spots. For many weeks, pick-axe and lever were exerted in vain;—in vain I watched the windlass, and myself unloaded the succeeding buckets: the products of my speculation continued most unpromising.

"An innovation is always unpopular; and both the Director and the miners employed by his Highness on the occasion, were loud in their predictions of failure, and sneers at my presumption. Judge, therefore, of my triumph—judge of the Prince's delight, when at length a rich auriferous ore made its appearance, and when, in the course of a few hours, a considerable heap of *tellurets* of gold was laid at our feet. Other shafts soon

† The difficulty of breathing experienced in certain spots, both by mules and travellers, in crossing the Cordilleras, is ascribed by the guides to the same cause; (*Vide* Lieutenant Brand's Narrative.) And one of the most celebrated gold mines in Hungary, that of Nagyag, was discovered in the manner described by Rumalie.

* *Forstwissenschaft*, a principal branch of study at the Royal College.

enabled us to explore the various spots marked out by the hydrogenous exhalations; and in every instance the vein soon presented itself. For many weeks nothing but rejoicing and amazement prevailed throughout the estate.

“Your gratulatory looks inform me that you consider my fortune already assured; and if the sincerity of his Highness’s gratitude could have enriched me, your judgment had not been premature. But just at the height of my popularity and good report, my evil genius willed that the old Director of the Czakló mines should fall a victim to a six months’ ague; or, according to a more prevailing opinion, to vexation at his own obstinacy, and impatience of my success. The Prince hastened to offer me his appointment, which was one of two thousand annual florins, to be doubled while filled by myself. He was equally eager to testify his sense of my zeal in his service, and to adopt a convenient mode of repayment; for like most of our magnats, his riches consisted in woods and waters, mines and herding plains,—he had not ten ducats at command! But notwithstanding my desire to accept a requital which might at once advantage my patron and extend my sphere of activity in his service, I felt that to obey his commands was in this instance wholly out of my power.

“For many years, the post in question had formed an object of hope and just expectation to Valerian’s father, an old and faithful servant to his Highness, far better skilled to protect his interests than myself, whose success was solely attributable to an act of memory. What was to be done? I dared not incense my noble patron by refusal; I could not bring myself to deprive the family of my friend,—the family which had sheltered me in my destitution,—of the just reward of patient industry! I passed a restless night, and had taken, ere morning, a desperate resolve. I mounted a noble steed, which had been my first token of the Prince’s munificence,—left a letter of explanation to all parties,—and departed to push my fortunes elsewhere.

“Gyorgy! Aloiska! your admiration is misplaced. Kiss not my hands so fervently; for selfish and human motives mingled their influence in my decision. My mining vocation had been, even at Schemnitz, a compulsory one; I abhor the gloomy caverns of the earth, while the free air can be breathed above them. Besides, my spirit is of the most restless cast; and at that season of my

life, a permanent situation in an obscure Transylvanian forest had been insupportable. I longed to satiate my ardent curiosity by wilder wanderings; and crossing into the Bukowine, I assumed the garb of an unpretending adventurer: I became a balsam-seller!

“It was now for the first time that I felt the loneliness of my position in the world; for suspicions that I had been unfairly dealt with, began to imbitter even my recollections of home. The observations of Valerian and of his family had first suggested to my mind the possibility of—a brother’s treachery! Dark thought! dread thought!—I cast it from my bosom like an enemy, and tried to banish its corroding influence; but in vain! I could still be cheerful and unsuspecting amid the green pastures, or during my daylight labours; but at night, when I became helpless and feeble through mental exertion and bodily fatigue, then, like a vampire bat, the horrible idea of my brother’s hatred crept in to fasten itself upon its feeble victim; renewing, with bloody talons, the agony of my heart. Think not, however, that I yielded myself an easy prey to gloomy retrospections, or still darker forebodings; I summoned all the energies of my mind; I resolved to labour,—to conquer fate; and I have done so!

“‘But a balsam-seller,’ you will say, ‘a clerk to grooms! are these your illustrious paths to fortune?’ Already Aloiska gives up her hope of the Emir’s daughter, whom her active imagination had conjured up to redeem me from slavery, and endow me with a world of riches! Already Gyorgy despairs of finding me the leader of a Tatar troop, with all its privilege of plunder! Dear children! be patient, and wonders will come!

“Very early in my practice, I acquired considerable reputation in my new trade; in truth my chemical studies had considerably enlarged my provincial experience, and raised my skill far above that of our ordinary Thurotzian balsam-venders. During a summer’s ramble through Moldavia, even unto Odessa, my stock of worldly wealth was more than doubled; and in a commercial city, and in one so rich in oriental produce, I was not only enabled to swell my stores of medicinable gums, but to disperse them among numerous customers. But I did more; I formed an agreeable and profitable acquaintance.

“Hänsel was a young man nearly of my own age, and still more nearly of my own

adventurous character. By birth a Wirtemberger, his family had formed part of that singular band of emigrants which affected to believe its colonization in Georgia foretold in the book of Revelation.

“A better explanation of their renouncement of their native land,” said Hänsel, when he related their history, “may be read in its wretchedness, its exhaustion by a rapacious government, and in the facility afforded by that noble pathway of waters,—the Danube,—to those who would traverse Europe, and seek the luxuries of an Eastern climate. Could you but see our filthy villages,—dark with physical and moral obscurity,—could you witness our thriftless labour, our miserable destitution, you would know why we seek the musky vineyards of Georgia, where our corn and wine and oil have increased.” Hänsel had been despatched by the little colony as an envoy to their native country; and had been charged to establish a line of communication through Odessa. He was now on the point of crossing the Bosphorus on his return, and asked me to accompany him to his Asiatic home.—What had such a vagrant to object? In eight days we landed at Tchumat, and were on our road toward Tiflis.

“To pass from one great kingdom to another forms an epoch in most men’s lives. A new language, climate, government, are for a time objects of wonderment and interest; but the change between two of the earth’s mighty quarters, is indeed an exciting transition. I shall never forget the thrill of my whole frame, when I set foot in Asia; a region, how glorious in its interests! how lovely in its inheritance from Heaven! The land of the date, the fig, and the green olive; the land of miracles; the land where God spake audibly unto his people; where the Lamb of promise was sacrificed for mankind, and whence the glory of his name hath departed, or shrunk into a vain echo! all lay open to my wanderings.

“My first experience of an oriental city was in Tiflis; and none, perhaps, could be better calculated to dispel the illusions my visionary mind had gathered from poetical descriptions of Bagdad, or historical records of Babylon. I beheld a collection of narrow lanes formed of mud hovels, to which the sallow inhabitants waded through a sea of less consistent mud. The rank odours issuing from these cabins, the howl of the jackals at sunset among the cemeteries of the city, the scorpions basking on the filthy walls,

all struck me with disgust; and I was right glad to escape from a spot so uninviting, and to accompany my friend Hänsel into the beautiful province of Ratcheticon, where the little German settlement restored me to the cleanliness and homeliness of Europe. Imagine to yourself the simple dwellings of Wirtemberg, with their wooden balconies and overhanging roofs, their labouring inhabitants in three-cornered hats, and their female peasantry costumed in the Swiss fashion; imagine them sheltered by the lofty palm, dreading the incursions of tigers, and the swarming of the tarantulas!

“Delighted to welcome a European to their remote habitation, Hänsel’s worthy relations received me with *sans und braus*; mingled *sauerkraut* with their *pillau*, to do me honour; and in the course of a few days I found myself sharing the labours of the farm. The lands chiefly allotted to their use by the Russian government, which warmly protects the little colony, consist in vineyards fallen to decay, that have been redeemed by their industry. Now an Hungarian claims to have been born a vintager; for although our vines are said to have been transplanted from Syria by the Emperor Probus, still it is the Magyarian mode of cultivation which produces the most precious of wines from our presses. Hänsel was eager to gather from my instructions the art of separating the *trockenbeeren*, or dried grapes, which form the celebrated *ausbruch* essence of Tokäy; and my abode in Georgia was sufficiently long to witness the profit arising from my lessons.

“But dearly as I love the solitary haunts of the hills, the lonely surface of the lake, or the seclusion of the enshelved valley, I confess that I cannot long endure to inhabit a village; where the evil passions of the city are equally to be found, and aggravated by meanness and mediocrity of mind. I was weary of my Wirtembergers and their petty jealousies; and having procured strong letters of recommendation from the pastor of the settlement to the superior of an Armenian convent at Erivan, I took an affectionate leave of my kind hosts, and departed to shape my wandering course through Persia, as one of a numerous caravan.

“It was formed of a curious patchwork of the rags and tatters of human life, mixed with a few fragments of brocade. Dives rode beside Lazarus in the train; several substantial Armenian merchants, a thriving Jew from Erivan, and a son of the Khan of

Udgany rode in our company. I had purchased a camel at Tiflis, and assumed something of an oriental costume, in order to disguise from others, if not from myself, my strangeness in the land; and as our road lay through scenery of the most majestic character, dark with rocks, and animated by brawling rivers, while the mighty Caucasus uplifted its snowy summits in the distance, I was less sensible to the labours of the journey than my companions; to all of whom its interesting features were familiar. An incident, however, soon occurred which put every dream of the sublime and beautiful to flight.

"I was usually one of the loiterers of the train; and as I entered the dreary pass leading from Bekamti to Gumri, the ominous discharge of a *tophaïke* struck me with consternation. I hastily looked to the priming of my pistols, and had scarcely replaced them in my belt, when, from the turn of a projecting rock, I perceived the caravan halting in disorder, and surrounded by a troop of Lesghees, some of whom were in active affray with its insufficient escort. Fortunately the report of our moderate attractions had rescued us from becoming a prey to one of the superior mountain troops; we had been resigned to the sparrow-hawks of the profession.

"I did not, however, at the moment of attack, so proudly disdain their condition. I had nothing to defend but a wallet of simples, a few caskets of precious drugs, and some score of gold pieces; but being well armed, I made as valiant an outbreak, as if the field of Mohacs were again to be won or lost. Probably the insignificance of my profession formed as good a buckler as my strength of arm. "'Tis but a poor balsam-seller," said a robber who had attacked me. "Live! wretch, live! to be a slayer of men with weapons less noble than ours."

"This taunt upon my calling redoubled my ire against the base maligner of art; and as he galloped off in search of higher prey, I flew to the assistance of the Jew whom I beheld on the opposite bank, suffering under the persecutions of three of the Lesghees. They had tied his gaberdine above his head, and were slashing his under garments in all directions in search of his hidden treasures. I could observe that the hollow groans of the poor old man were redoubled, as each succeeding purse chinked upon the ground in its fall. But my inclination to smile at this wringing forth of his earthly substance, and at his bewailment, ceased when I obtained a

full view of his person; every slash had drawn blood through his light clothing, and bodily torment had its full share in his agonized clamour.

"I rushed forwards to his aid,—shot the foremost of his riflers dead on the spot,—and with my second pistol disabled another; but in engaging with the third, although finally victorious, I received a severe cut in the arm. Our party, as I trust your presentiments assure you, remained masters of the field; for my first persuasion that our Cossack escort was in league with the heroes of the *chappow* or foray, was proved unfounded by their efficient assistance in time of need. Their counsels, as well as my own apprehensions, now prompted us to overlook our wounds and fatigues, and to push onwards to the frontier, where we should be secure from the further molestation of the Kurds; for the iron rule of Hossein, the Serdar of Erivan, secures the province from all rapine but his own. My camel, which had been hamstrung, I was therefore forced to abandon; but Meshech, the grateful Jew, the pain of whose wounds I had hastily allayed by a healing balsam, insisted on placing me upon his own; while he contented himself with his baggage mule, whose load had been somewhat eased by the spoilers. We left the human carrion of several of these lawless wretches unto the eagles of the Caucasus; and like the wicked, *fled*, though no man pursued.

"It was evening before I was enabled to wash the blood from my stiffened wound, and to administer that simple chirogeonship to myself, which Meshech had so gladly received at my hands; for believing that the avengers of blood were behind us, we tarried not till we had gained the Persian territory. A few more tedious days, and the cleft summit of Ararat rose above our heads, with its eternal snow shining beneath the smile of Heaven. We passed the celebrated monastery of Eitch-mai-Adzen,* and entered the city of Erivan. In the course of those days the venerable Meshech had bestowed more sympathy upon the wound I had received in his defence, and had displayed a warmer interest in my favour than I had believed could be elicited from one of his tribe by any thing less than the fraction of a piastre;

* Founded by St. Gregory in honour of a divine vision A. D. 304. The monastery, which is of an immense extent, is the residence of the Armenian patriarch.

he even pressed me to become his guest in the city during my stay.

“Tarry with me, my son!” said the old man, ‘and lo! thou shalt behold the fatness of our land. Meshech hath the authority of much age among his people; and shall not thy traffic with the sons of men prosper under his fosterage? Therefore tarry with me, and thy soul shall be glad.’

“But the very sight of his squalid abode, with the storks’ nests clustering round its shapeless roof, determined me to seek my intended quarters in an Armenian convent of the city. While I stood muttering my excuses in the porch of the Jew’s mean habitation, a veiled figure eagerly advancing, knelt low at the feet of Meshech, and pressed his garment to her lips. ‘Miriam! my child,’ said he, ‘be the blessing of the Eternal on thy head, and about thy path! Arise, oh! my daughter,—behold this youth, and do him honour; for verily thy father’s days had been cut off in untimeousness by the men of Belial, who gird on their swords for evil, had not his better arm prevailed in the day of bloodshed.’

“The kneeling maiden started and trembled at the thought of her father’s danger; but drawing aside the drapery from her face, she disclosed a countenance rich in the lofty beauties of her tribe—the high forehead, expressive eyebrow, and raven hair. Her large dark eyes were dim with tears, as she raised them to look upon one who had preserved a parent to her affection; she pressed her quivering lips to my tunic, and would have brought water to bathe my feet, believing that I was about to sojourn as a guest in her father’s dwelling. She murmured not when I persisted in immediate departure, but me thought she looked after me with regret.

“For my own part, I must confess that in the dreary halls of the Armenian convent, where, in honour of my recommendations and thriving trade, I was warmly welcomed, the image of the Jewish maiden haunted my dreams more frequently than beseeemed so holy a roof. During our journey, Meshech, with doating loquacity, had delighted to dwell upon instances of her tender mercy, her forgetfulness of self, her filial devotion. He had never spoken of her loveliness, but that mine own eyes had recognised; and the impression of her graceful gentleness was sweetened by those more precious memories of her excellence. Meanwhile, my calling throve with me. Meshech’s good word established my credit at the Bazaar; and partly

through the superior drugs attainable in the city, partly through the superstitious credulity of its inhabitants, my riches and reputation soon waxed great in Erivan.

“In the pauses of my industry, I was frequently feasted in the grateful Jew’s unpromising habitation; and great, indeed, was my surprise on observing how little its interior arrangements, and the character of the entertainment, accorded with the affected poverty of my host. Our repast was usually spread in a chamber, of which the spacious window was formed of small panes of gorgeously stained glass, and overlooked a garden bright with still more gorgeous flowers, which sloped towards the river Zengui. The carpets which covered the marble floor were of the most costly tissue; and between small niches, freshly filled with aromatic plants, a single painting, of no mean excellence, ornamented the wall: it represented the patriarch Lot, entertaining the Angel. Sometimes a gray-bearded Rabbi or two, —solemn and stiff-necked, and controversial as a Pharisee of the olden time,—sat beside a board on which vessels of gold, and vessels of silver, and drinking cups of agate and onyx, displayed their splendours. And Meshech would say unto his daughter, ‘Even this day shalt thou partake of our feast; for, lo! the elders of thy people, and the youth who fought a good fight for thy father, may look without reproach upon thine uncovered face.’ And as we sat at meat, I have glanced from the table unto the picture, and from the picture unto our table; grieving the while that the painter’s eyes had never rested on the brighter angel by our side.

“How lovely she was!—lovely as her life of charity and tenderness! How fair she looked with her nimble fingers sewing a fretwork of pearl upon a brocaded cushion for her father’s prayers; her dark hair falling importunately over her work, which, at times she would throw back with her hand, and uplift her radiant face to listen unto the lessons of wisdom, unfolded in discourse by the sages of her tribe! How fondly, too, did Meshech doat upon this tender child of his old age. To adorn her beauty,—to gratify her liberal benevolence,—he forgot his habitual parsimony. He gave her wealth,—and through wealth, influence among the daughters of her people: but he gave her *more*,—even the fulness of every thought and every feeling which he spared from Heaven. Yes! of all the passions of our nature, that which hal- lows the tie between a father and his child

hath alone withstood the corruptions of the world! Although it sprang up within the human heart amid the paths of earth, and in the earliest days of mortal sin, yet doth it remain as it hath ever been, a bond of holiest love,—exquisite to enjoy, and sacred to behold!

“I know not how long I had been, or might have been detained in Erivan, when one morning, in the midst of a rebuke with which I was favoured by the Superior of the convent, touching my repeated visits to the defiled dwelling of a filthy Jew, I felt a consciousness of sudden sickness oppress my respiration. I looked towards the sky,—it seemed blotted with darkened spots; towards the earth,—it appeared to reel beneath my feet. Smitten with apprehension, I crawled unto the cell of one of the brethren, renowned for his leechcraft; but no sooner had he gazed upon my ghastly face, and listened to my tale of tumid joints, than he flung his robe over his head, and fled away. ‘*He is plague-stricken!*’ reached my ear, as the monk attained his trembling companions.

“Convinced of the truth of his assertion, I lay me down upon the pavement of the cell, with the horrid thought of death heavy upon my soul; for my art instructed me that no remedy might avail against the destroying angel of the East. ‘I will lie down, and die!’ I murmured through my clenched teeth; ‘an alien,—an outcast,—without a country, without a home, where can I better resign my vexed spirit than in this holy abode? Heaven in its mercy provides me a refuge in the grave,—a Christian grave, in a land of idolaters!’

“I had not remained long in this tranquil frame of mind, when the door of the cell grated upon its hinges, and a young Armenian orphan, a novice of the convent, stood before me, bearing a brazier of aloes interposed between his lips and my polluted person. He was a messenger from the Superior.

“‘Arise, and depart hence,’ said the mandate of which he was the bearer; ‘nor defile with pestilence the temple of thy God; for, lo! its holy sanctuary must not be barred of access unto those Christian feet which seek therein the bread of life! Go! stranger, in peace and quietness; and the Heaven in which we put our trust, will provide shelter for the infected wanderer of its flock.’

“My first impulse was to resist this seemingly inhospitable decree; but on striving to collect my infirm senses, I could not but acknowledge its justice. ‘The words of the

Padre are words of truth!’ was my amended reply. ‘It were an evil thing to infect the congregation of my Christian brethren.’

“I had still strength sufficient to wrestle with the disease: I rose tottering upon my feet, and groping my way from the convent, resolved to seek the Lazaret erected upon the opposite bank of the Zengui; directing my course so as to traverse the by-ways of the crowded city, and to take a last view of the sole dwelling in which my death would excite even a passing sensation. It might be that a consciousness like this heightened the raging of my distemper; or, perhaps, it was simply the fierceness of the noonday sun by which I was overcome;—I fell, motionless and half senseless, by the way. I was able, however, to perceive the horror excited by my appearance: all men fled when they had looked upon my livid face; and as I lay there in my loneliness, to await the chilling approach of death, I fixed my dim eyes upon those twin summits of Ararat which had formed the first harbour of a storm-driven vessel,—upon that sky above them, whereon the first covenant of mercy between God and his creatures, was sealed by a visible and immortal token;—I looked, and was comforted.

“At times I was distracted from such contemplations by grievous bodily torments; at others, a sort of visionary ecstasy took possession of my bewildered senses: already my spirit seemed disembodied, and flitting through a dark abyss; and as it appeared to fall lower and lower into a fathomless gulf, methought the Cross, like a mighty anchor, was proffered for my support,—and lo! as I grasped it to my bosom, my wandering soul regained its firmness!

“At length, other and mere mortal images were mingled with those of my delirium. Earthly figures passed before my eyes,—a stifled shriek I heard,—a woman’s lamentation,—a confusion seemed to arise, a despatch of messengers; and shortly afterwards I plainly distinguished the voice of Meshech. ‘What dost thou here, Miriam?’ said the old man, reproachfully. ‘Art thou not the sole child of thy father’s house, and shall thy days be perilled for a stranger?’

“‘My father!’ replied the subdued voice of the Jewish maiden, ‘when this Christian youth redeemed thy life with a strong arm of defence, didst thou not swear by the God of Israel that so thou wouldst do unto him, and more also? Oh! my father! turn not thy face from him in the path;—for so shall

the vengeance of the Lord fall upon thy broken vow !”

“A few minutes afterwards, I was lifted upon a mule ; and in the intervals of my delirium, I was conscious of being stretched upon a couch in Meshech’s habitation. Day and night had become alike to me ; — it was all a horrible confusion of pain and fear. Yet even amid the torments I endured, a mysterious soothing would suspend their terrors ; a heavenly influence would prevail over the demon of the plague. It was the voice of Miriam ! — her touch — her tending — her sisterly expostulations ! As she bent over my bed of agony, warm tears would mingle with the death-dews upon my brow. ‘Be not afraid,’ she whispered with dove-like softness. ‘My father’s prayers, — whose life was a gift of thine, — and the prayers of our people, intercede in thy behalf, that the God whom thou servest may walk by thy side in the dark valley. Beyond, — no fear, — no pain abideth ; — therefore be of good cheer, oh ! my brother !’

“The valley of my wandering was indeed dark ; for of the further progress of my disorder I know nothing. All was veiled in the blackness of night ! At length, after a vague interval, I awoke to a renewed sense of existence ; — or was I dreaming still ? for an unearthly wailing, as of many voices, was borne fitfully unto mine ears. I longed to inquire its origin ; but the icy hand was not yet withdrawn, nor my tongue unloosed ; again I relapsed into insensibility.

“But when next my eyes re-opened to the light, I was enabled to gaze around me through the shadows of my chamber ; and I beheld Meshech, with sackcloth upon his shoulders, sitting in lowliness upon the ground. Ashes were scattered upon his gray hairs, and despair had set its seal upon his altered face. A thrill of horror passed through my enfeebled frame.

“‘Father !’ I faltered. — But starting at the name, he pressed his hands unto his ears, as if to shut out a sound that wounded them.

“‘Speak — speak,’ said I again, ‘my friend, — my preserver, — speak ! Where — where is Miriam ?’

“‘At rest !’ replied the old man in a hollow voice ; — and he hid his face in his garment, and wept.

CHAPTER V.

I swept that flower from Judah’s stem.

Byron.

“Yes ! Miriam was dead, — had died for my sake !” resumed Rumalie, after a pause of deep emotion. “Cheered by the knowledge that her father in his youthful days had passed in safety through the disorder, she had persisted in her attendance upon my deserted couch, — had sickened and perished ere the knowledge of her illness had spread alarm among the hearts that loved her. The poor had lost their friend, — the sad and the sick their comforter ; — Meshech, the prop of his old age, — and myself, — but I will not speak of the sorrows of her destroyer during his long and tedious return to the common paths of existence, — to an existence eternally imbittered by her loss ! — I joined my tears unto those of the bereaved father ; who, far from harbouring resentment against me as the unintentional author of his calamity, derived his only consolation from this participation of affliction.

“‘Oh ! do not leave me, my son !’ said he at length, when returning strength released me from my couch, ‘do not leave me to my desolation ; while thou namest me thy father, I am not wholly childless ! Do not abandon my old age !’

“Could I refuse him, — could I, thus urged, desert his gloomy dwelling ? No ! I resolved to remain the guest of Meshech till his mind had grown inured to its wretchedness, — the wretchedness I had brought upon his prosperity. I spoke no more of departure ; and soon, very soon after I had formed my determination, symptoms of mental and physical decay became painfully evident in the poor old man. He wasted away, gradually but rapidly ; — became feeble, helpless, decrepid ; — the mainspring of his existence was snapt in twain. I hastened to gather about him the elders of his people, that they might minister to the sufferings of an afflicted brother ; and they did so. I own I was even deeply touched by the reverent sympathy testified towards him ; but they had all known Miriam, — could they do less than mourn with those who mourned her ? Nay, so true, so tender was the esteem in which this pearl of all her tribe had been held in Erivan, that her influence had overcome its customs and its laws. The bodies of those who die of the plague, however high their rank, or mighty their possessions, are

dragged with tongs through the city unto the common grave, by condemned criminals clad in a vesture of oil-skin. But Miriam's bier had been surrounded by many mourners, nor surrendered unhonoured unto the tomb. As many flowers had been strown upon her virgin corse, as though contagion lurked not there; and she was borne in triumph to her grave, by a multitude whose tears were the best records of her brief existence!

"How often have I sat beneath the awning of Meshech's habitation, listening to his recital of her dying hours,—and to the words of consolation breathed into his ears by the priests of his faith? But when I could no longer disguise from myself how greatly his strength failed him between morrow and morrow, I could not endure to see him thus leaning upon a broken reed,—dying in the profession of a reprobated creed, under the horrible curse invited by his forefathers;—and I attempted to introduce into our discourse the doctrines, if not the divine mission of the Redeemer.

"My son!" replied the enfeebled Meshech, no whit irritated by my attempt, "thou meanest me well,—kindly; but tempt me no more from the ancient faith of my fathers,—from the faith of my innocent child; for what promise can that Heaven unfold to mine eyes, which rejects my Miriam from its eternal precincts?—Nor speak to me of doctrines, nor of vain forms. Death hath been busy of late within mine household; and I have looked upon his fearful aspect face to face. I saw my Miriam die!—I saw the last breath quiver upon her young lips;—and what, thinkest thou, oh, Ruma-lie! upheld my soul in the trial? Not the remembrance of burnt-offering, nor oblation,—not the fasts,—not the festivals my child had kept holy! Oh! no—no—no! It was the tears she had wiped from the faces of the poor,—it was the humility of her devotion towards her old father,—it was the saintly purity of her spirit which taught me to lay her head with calmness in the grave!"

"Nevertheless," said I, when the images he had conjured up, vanished back into the memory of my soul, "nevertheless, it is written that through faith alone we shall see God."

"Said I not that the creed of my fathers was immutable in my eyes?" resumed the old man. "I know that I am a worm in the sight of the Most High;—but if it be his will to call me unto himself, the unbelief

in which I was born and bred, will not be my condemnation."

"I was struck by the old man's Christian-like humility of mind. I felt myself too little capable of giving an account of the faith that was in me, to blame the submission with which he had received, unexamined, the doctrines professed by his parents. 'Forgive me,' said I, 'even this one more question. Hast thou lived according to the strict interpretation of the law of Moses? Hast thou followed, in all things, the commandments of the God of Israel?'

"In the sight of Jehovah," replied Meshech, devoutly, "the self-vaunting of a sinful mortal is as the vain crackling of thorns; yet according unto the light vouchsafed me, I have not erred wilfully from the path."

"I have since blamed myself that I called not for the aid of the Armenian teachers, in my desire of Meshech's conversion. Perhaps it was my youth and incapacity which determined me to relinquish my attempt; for I never again sought to disturb the mental resignation of the poor old Jew. He was to me but as Miriam's father; and I held it sacrilege to sever their immortal interests. I sometimes fear that it was this forbearance on my part which begat the reciprocal forbearance of his tribe. In his last hours he summoned the elders to his side, and having made a deed of gift unto their institutions of one half of his great wealth, he solemnly bequeathed the remainder unto myself. If they were displeased by this prodigal act, they murmured not, or then, or since. They looked upon me as Meshech's adopted son, and sought not to disturb mine inheritance.

"When he was dying he demanded, as an act of great indulgence at their hands, that the dirge which had graced the obsequies of his child might be repeated in his parting hour. And lo! the white-robed children of the synagogue stood by his bedside; and once more I listened to that solemn strain which had been as Miriam's passing-bell in my ears!"

HEBREW DIRGE.

I.

Our brightest star is set!
Clouds overcame its shining,
Yet breathe we no repining,
'T will rise and sparkle yet!

II.

Our gentlest dove hath fled!
Whose murmuring music stealing
Soothed every angry feeling
Our vain hearts nourished.

III.

Our fairest pearl is lost !
 Our pearl, whose spotless whiteness
 Dazzled those eyes with brightness
 Which loved its beauty most.

IV.

Our sweetest rose is gone !
 Our thornless rose, whose blooming
 Withered beneath the dooming
 Of the Eternal One !

V.

Our blessed child is dead !—
 Fading as summer foliage
 When Autumn's storm prevaileth
 O'er some lone lily's bed !

VI.

She's gone unto her rest !
 Oh ! tranquil are the slumbers
 A soul so gentle numbers
 Ere joined unto the blest !

VII.

And lo ! we do not weep,—
 Her mortal cares are over,
 No griefs, no terrors move her
 In that soft summer sleep !

VIII.

We do not dare to mourn !
 Thy mercy, Lord ! confessing,
 We render back a blessing
 Thou claimest in thy turn !

IX.

Accept the sacrifice
 Oh ! mighty God ! To soften
 Thy wrath enkindled often,
 Let this one lamb suffice !

“And Meshech was gathered unto his fathers,—and I, a Christian and a stranger, was the sole lingerer over the grave which united him to her whom we had lost. But it was even myself who had laid them there ; like a minister of divine vengeance, I had smitten them unto the dust !

“The city of Erivan had become as the valley of death unto my heart ; and as I was retarded by no hinderance in the distribution of Meshech's heritage, I quickly prepared for my departure, leaving my horribly acquired wealth in the hands of several commercial brethren of the tribe. From that period, my relations with the scattered remnant of Israel have never ceased ; and let me hasten to do them that justice which the world denies. In all our numerous negotiations in the East, and in my native land, I have never met with evil dealing at their hands : watchful to a proverb over their own interests, I have never found their rapaciousness betray them into fraud or unfairness of any kind. More than once I have incurred the rebukes of my spiritual pastors,

by my communion with their tribe. But was it for me, who have proved so largely their generous mercy, to cast a stone at them ?—was it for me, a stranger youth and an ignorant, to attempt the overthrow of an ancient faith, which the Omniscient hath permitted to outlast the wreck of empires ?

“I had intended,” observed Rumalie, “to lay before your eyes the uninterrupted path of my wanderings ;* but the painful feelings which have arisen in my heart from this recurrence to my youthful sorrows, and the tears which I have already seen you yield to their memory, forewarn me not to trouble the joy of the passing time by such bitter reminiscences. Trust me that the afflictions I have described are trifling and poor in comparison with the calamity which, in after life, blighted my bosom ; and which, ten years after my adventures in Erivan, drove me back to Europe, a heart-stricken and miserable man. Bereft of every thing, save the useless wealth which nothing that I loved survived to share, I resolved to revisit Hungary, in order to learn whether the old man my father were yet alive.

“Once more I traversed the Bosphorus, and, wearing the Turkish costume in furtherance of the character which best suited my wanderings, I reached Semlin ; where, partly from habit, and partly to divert my thoughts from past misfortunes, I continued the traffic in which you have seen me engaged with some of the leading mercantile houses of Hungary. It was in the course of one of these negotiations, that I became interested in the destinies of a young spendthrift, an officer of one of the Milanese regiments quartered in the garrison. Long before he had announced himself to me as Johan Barótza, his singular resemblance to our family had convinced me that kindred blood flowed in our veins.

“My first object was to satisfy his pecuniary wants,—my second to acquaint myself with the changes which twenty years had wrought in Thurotzer ; and you may imagine with what a throbbing heart I prepared myself to listen to his replies. His first announcement—that of my father's recent death—I had naturally been prepared to expect ; but to find that my young kinsman was indebted for his existence to the union of my brother with—*with Ursula*, was a great and very unlooked-for blow. All that

* Rumalie's Arabian adventures are suppressed, as engrossing too much space in a tale that professes to be descriptive of Hungary.

followed, indeed, was painful to my feelings. The defects of my nephew's character are unfortunately too familiar to my hearers to require any disguise on my part; I do not hesitate, therefore, to record the falsehoods and calumnies which I heard and credited from his lips, and which were but intended to swell his own consequence in the eyes of a stranger. His father he described as one of the richest and most prosperous nobles of his native country; proud, unfeeling, covetous, and stinting the common wants of his children in order to swell the pomp of his own magnificence! Thus satisfied with the temporal well-doing of my brother, I proceeded with great caution to inquire after a kinsman; one whom I affected to have known at Schemnitz in my early youth.

"Hush! hush! my worthy friend Rumalie!" replied the insolent boy. "An thou lovest me, not a word of my felon-uncle, who, I doubt not, has by this time found his way to the galleys."

"Was this then the view which my brother had given of my character? Were these the feelings he had instilled into his children on my behalf? Was this my encouragement to visit Thurotzer, where my presence would be loathsome, and my wealth superfluous? I took a hasty leave of Semlin and of the braggart representative of my family honours, and once more commenced my wanderings. I visited, I verily believe, every nook and corner of my native country, save that to which I was indebted for my birth. The early prejudices of my childhood began to revive, and Hungary resumed in my estimation that pinnacle of superiority which I had formerly conceded to its claims. Since the extinction of my lingering hope to find a father or a brother among my countrymen, I began to look upon every Hungarian as claiming some share in my regard; and thus my good will and good offices procured me theirs in return; and Rumalie the Turkish pedlar became the favoured guest of many a fireside, and the darling of many a heart, where Gyorgy Barótza would have knocked in vain. A vague hope of attaching myself to my native country by the renewal of some earlier tie, tended also to render still palatable the vagrant existence to which I had condemned myself. Altogether, the contrast between the slavish and indolent habits, the filth and superstition of the oriental countries wherein I had abided so long, and the frank independence and daring courage of the Magyari, struck me with delight and

pride. We have been called a nation of warriors,—of horsemen;—such at least were our progenitors; and even the heavy yoke of Austria has not entirely subdued the spirit which forms our best—our sole inheritance.

"You look impatient,—you would learn where, and in what manner, my encounter with yonder dear boy restored my affections to yourselves?—Fear not; my story is drawing towards its happy conclusion.

"It was at the close of the last autumn, that a negotiation I had undertaken between my correspondents at Debreczin and a Walachian house, induced me to visit Bükorest to inspect a consignment of *ruja* root, with which the Hungarian tanners intended to supersede the use of sumach. Having satisfactorily concluded my business, and on my return traversed the vast plains which separate Walachia from the Transylvanian frontier, I resolved to bend my homeward course through Szolnok, in order to inquire after the fortunes, or perhaps the *survivors* of my boyish friend Valerian; and as I once more turned my back upon the Crescent and the Horse-tail, my heart sunk within me on setting foot upon my native earth, and feeling how poor were my claims, how insignificant my ties to the country of my fathers.

I had passed the boundary of the Ottoman empire, and had already entered that magnificent defile,—the pass of the red Tower,—when, giving up my horse to my Walachian guide, that he might pull its ears and rub its eyes according to their national mode of refreshment, I resolved to ascend the mountain on foot. Wearied by the sameness of the level plains I had recently traversed, I gazed with renewed delight upon the stupendous crags by which I was surrounded, from whose summits the frail flowers of the white saxifrage were profusely suspended by aerial tendrils. The road, which follows the ledges of the rocks, is in many places supported by wooden bridges uniting the awful fissures of the granite, and appearing to tremble in the air.

"I looked around me on the barren loneliness of the spot, and shuddered! 'And this,' said I, 'is the image of my gloomy destiny! Solitude and darkness are its prevailing characters; the screaming vulture haunts its recesses, and the milder woodland birds fly from its desolation. And if a few transitory flowers deign to embellish its gloomy surface, they waver tremblingly, and hesitate to fix themselves irrevocably in a soil so arid.'

Suddenly a moving object in the path suspended my contemplations. A boy, a joyous animated youth, was bounding along the ledges of the pass, and singing forth the loud carol of a happy heart; it was a song of my native province. He approached; and I was able to distinguish his costume and his countenance; his dress was that of a balsam-seller of Thurotzer: his features were—*my own!* He was a living restoration of my boyhood!

"I was paralyzed; nay, let me confess all my weakness, I even fancied myself under the delusions of the renowned geni of the region, when, in answer to my greeting and repeated inquiries, the figure replied, 'My name? Gyorgy Barótza, at your service.'

"Your father—your mother—"

"My poor father's name is Niklas; and Urszlá is my mother; though I can scarcely reconcile it to myself to shame them as being the parents of a miserable balsam-seller.'

"You may imagine the affecting recognition that ensued; you may easily conjecture the joy, not unmixed with bitterness, by which my heart was oppressed. I took my nephew to my bosom; and from that day I have considered him as the son of my adoption. Together we journeyed unto Czáklo, where I was welcomed with the warmest regard. After a lapse of twenty years, the Prince rejoiced to prove the continuance of his gratitude for my former services, by placing Gyorgy, at my request, in the College of Schemnitz, of which his Highness is president. The only circumstance that occurred to damp my satisfaction was the reply I now received from the authorities of Szent Marton, unto whom I had applied for assistance in the redemption, according to the law of the realm, of our family estates. 'Johan Barótza,' they wrote, 'had died at Naples; and my brother had expatriated himself.'

"I succeeded, however, my dear Niklas, in tracing you to Pesth,—to Belgrade,—and followed you, as in the course of my ordinary traffic; but I resolved to acquaint myself with the nature of your sentiments towards a long-lost, and long-injured brother, before I declared myself. I had nearly, however, broken through my determination, when I witnessed, at Belgrade, your agony of despair

the night of the conflagration; and I was waiting an occasion to present myself to your assistance, when your departure under the shadow of night, baffled my researches, and betrayed you into the tyrannical thralldom of the Fiscal of Nagy-Börö. Accident, indeed, alone discovered to me the snares into which you had innocently fallen!

"And now, all is told! We have cast our sorrows behind us; and our future is bright with hope and happiness. May the blessing of Heaven render them permanent."

Thus ended the narrative of Rumalie; every word of which rendered him still more dear, still more interesting to the hearts of his auditors. The little family continued to dwell together in happy household union, until Aloiska, following the fortunes of a husband she adored, departed for Vienna.

"My uncle!" whispered she to Rumalie, at parting. "An unhappy presentiment assures me that I shall not find you here on my return. Your restless foot, your truant heart, are wearying of the monotony of home; and when the green spring freshens the paths of the earth, you will away to the hill-sides, like a roebuck bursting from the hunters' toils."

Rumalie smiled. "Aloiska, love!" he replied, "mayst thou never know how weary a thing it is to dwell in the contemplation of happiness which it is denied thee to share! Thy mother's sweet face hath brought back the dreams of my youth; thine and thy brother's tenderness recall to my heart the children that were torn from me by a cruel death. Thou sayest truly, my child! I am not happy here, in Vehlhá; and the void in my heart,—that void by which I measure the immensity of the affections once treasured therein,—requires the excitation of travel and constant occupation, to render it endurable. I have redeemed thy father's lands; Gyorgy, too, is rich, and Aloiska happy. Nevertheless Rumalie the pedlar will one day renew his toil and traffic, and dedicate their first fruits as a dowery for thy children."

And when the mild spring air breathed freshly on the plains, and clothed the banks of the Vehlhá orchards with a sheet of blossom, Rumalie was indeed missed one morning from his accustomed haunts. He hath never since returned into Thurotzer.

THE GOLDEN POT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF HOFFMANN.

FIRST VIGIL.

The Mishaps of the Student Anselmus — Conrector Paulmann's Tobacco-box, and the Gold-green Snakes.

ON Ascension-day, about three o'clock in the afternoon, there came a young man running through the Schwarzthor, or Black Gate, out of Dresden, and right into a basket of apples and cakes, which an old and very ugly woman was there exposing to sale. The crash was prodigious; all that escaped being squelched to pieces, was scattered away, and the street-urchins joyfully divided the booty which this quick gentleman had thrown them. At the murder-shriek which the crone set up, her gossips, leaving their cake and brandy tables, encircled the young man, and with plebeian violence stormfully scolded him: so that, for shame and vexation, he uttered no word, but merely held out his small, and by no means particularly well-filled purse, which the crone eagerly clutched, and stuck into her pocket. The firm ring now opened; but as the young man started off, the crone called after him: "Ay, run, run thy ways, thou Devil's bird! To the Crystal, run! to the Crystal!" The squealing, creaking voice of the woman had something unearthly in it: so that the promenaders paused in amazement, and the laugh, which at first had been universal, instantly died away. The Student Anselmus, for the young man was no other, felt himself, though he did not in the least understand these singular phrases, nevertheless seized with a certain involuntary horror; and he quickened his steps still more, to escape the curious looks of the multitude, which were all turned towards him. As he worked his way through the crowd of well-dressed people, he heard them murmuring on all sides: "Poor young fellow! Ha! what a cursed beldam it is!" The mysterious words of the crone had oddly enough given this ludicrous adventure a sort of tragic turn; and the youth, before unobserved, was now looked after with a certain sympathy. The ladies, for his fine shape and handsome face, which the glow of inward anger was rendering still more expressive, forgave him this awkward step, as well as the dress he wore, though it was utterly at variance with all mode. His pike-gray frock was shaped as if

the tailor had known the modern form only by hearsay; and his well-kept black satin lower habiliments gave the whole a certain pedagogic air, to which the gait and gesture of the wearer did not at all correspond.

The Student had almost reached the end of the alley which leads out to the Linke Bath; but his breath could stand such a rate no longer. From running, he took to walking: but scarcely did he yet dare to lift an eye from the ground; for he still saw apples and cakes dancing round him; and every kind look from this or that fair damsel was to him but the reflex of the mocking laughter at the Schwarzthor. In this mood, he had got to the entrance of the Bath: one group of holiday people after the other were moving in. Music of wind instruments resounded from the place, and the din of merry guests was growing louder and louder. The poor Student Anselmus was almost on the point of weeping; for he too had expected, Ascension-day having always been a family-festival with him, to participate in the felicities of the Linkean paradise; nay, he had purposed even to go the length of a half *portion* of coffee with rum, and a whole bottle of double beer; and that he might carouse at his ease, had put more money in his purse than was entirely convenient or advisable. And now, by this fatal step into the apple-basket, all that he had about him had been swept away. Of coffee, of double or single beer, of music, of looking at the bright damsels; in a word, of all his fancied enjoyments, there was now nothing more to be said. He glided slowly past; and at last turned down the Elbe road, which at that time happened to be quite solitary.

Beneath an elder-tree, which had grown out through the wall, he found a kind green resting-place: here he sat down, and filled a pipe from the Sanitätsknaster, or Health-tobacco-box, of which his friend the Conrector Paulmann had lately made him a present. Close before him, rolled and chafed the gold-dyed waves of the fair Elbe stream: behind this rose lordly Dresden, stretching, bold and proud, its light towers into the airy sky, which again, farther off, bent itself down towards flowery meads and fresh springing

woods ; and in the dim distance, a range of azure peaks gave notice of remote Bohemia. But, heedless of this, the Student Anselmus, looking gloomily before him, blew forth his smoky clouds into the air. His chagrin at length became audible, and he said : " Of a truth, I am born to losses and crosses for my life long ! That in boyhood, at Odds or Evens, I could never once guess the right way ; that my bread and butter always fell on the buttered side ; of all these sorrows I will not speak : but is it not a frightful destiny, that now, when, in spite of Satan, I have become a student, I must still be a jolt-head as before ? Do I ever put a new coat on, without the first day smearing it with tallow, or on some ill-fastened nail or other, tearing a cursed hole in it ? Do I ever bow to any Councillor or any lady, without pitching the hat out of my hands, or even sliding away on the smooth pavement, and shamefully oversetting ? Had I not, every market-day, while in Halle, a regular sum of from three to four groschen to pay for broken pottery, the Devil putting it into my head to walk straight forward, like a leming-rat ? Have I ever once got to my college, or any place I was appointed to, at the right time ? What availed it that I set out half an hour before, and planted myself at the door, with the knocker in my hand ? Just as the clock is going to strike, souse ! some Devil pours a wash-basin down on me, or I bolt against some fellow coming out, and get myself engaged in endless quarrels till the time is clean gone.

" Ah ! well-a-day ! whither are ye fled, ye blissful dreams of coming fortune, when I proudly thought that here I might even reach the height of Privy Secretary ? And has not my evil star estranged from me my best patrons ? I learn, for instance, that the Councillor, to whom I have a letter, cannot suffer cropt hair ; with immensity of trouble the barber fastens me a little cue to my hindhead ; but at the first bow, his unblest knot gives way, and a little shock, running snuffing about me, frisks off to the Privy Councillor with the cue in its mouth. I spring after it in terror ; and stumble against the table, where he has been working while at breakfast ; and cups, plates, ink-glass, sand-box, rush jingling to the floor, and a flood of chocolate and ink overflows the Relation he has just been writing. ' Is the Devil in the man ? ' bellows the furious Privy Councillor, and shoves me out of the room.

" What avails it that Conrector Paulmann gave me hopes of a writership : will my malignant fate allow it, which every where pursues me ? To-day even ! do but think of it ! I was purposing to hold my good old Ascension-day with right cheerfulness of soul : I would stretch a point for once ; I might have gone as well as any other guest, into Linke's Bath, and called out proudly : ' Mar-queur ! a bottle of double-beer ; best sort, if you please ! ' I might have sat till far in the evening : and, moreover, close by this or that fine party of well-dressed ladies. I know it, I feel it ! heart would have come into me, I should have been quite another man ; nay, I might have carried it so far, that when one or other of them asked : ' What o'clock may it be ? ' or ' What is it they are playing ? ' I should have started up with light grace, and without overturning my glass, or stumbling over the bench, but in a curved posture, moving one step and a half forward, I should have answered : ' Give me leave, mademoiselle ! it is the overture of the *Donanweibchen* ; ' or, ' It is just going to strike six. ' Could any mortal in the world have taken it ill of me ? No ! I say ; the girls would have looked over, smiling so roguishly ; as they always do when I pluck up heart to show them that I too understand the light tone of society, and know how ladies should be spoken to. And now the Devil himself leads me into that cursed apple-basket, and now must I sit moping in solitude, with nothing but a poor pipe of — " Here the Student Anselmus was interrupted in his soliloquy by a strange rustling and whisking, which rose close by him in the grass, but soon glided up into the twigs and leaves of the elder tree that stretched out over his head. It was as if the evening wind were shaking the leaves ; as if little birds were twittering among the branches, moving their little wings in capricious flutter to and fro. Then he heard a whispering and lisping ; and it seemed as if the blossoms were sounding like little crystal bells. Anselmus listened and listened. Ere long, the whispering, and lisping, and tinkling, he himself knew not how, grew to faint and half-scattered words :

" ' Twixt this way, 'twixt that ; 'twixt branches, 'twixt blossoms, come shoot, come twist and twirl we ! Sisterkin, sisterkin ! up to the shine ; up, down, through and through, quick ! Sun-rays yellow ; evening wind whispering ; dew-drops pattering ; blossoms all singing ; sing we with branches and blossoms ! Stars soon glitter ; must

down: 'twixt this way, 'twixt that, come shoot, come twist, come twirl we, sisterkin!"

And so it went along, in confused and confusing speech. The student Anselmus thought: "Well, it is but the evening-wind, which to-night truly is whispering distinctly enough." But at that moment there sounded over his head, as it were, a triple harmony of clear crystal bells: he looked up, and perceived three little Snakes, glittering with green and gold, twisted round the branches, and stretching out their heads to the evening sun. Then, again, began a whispering and twittering in the same words as before, and the little Snakes went gliding and caressing up and down through the twigs; and while they moved so rapidly, it was as if the elder-bush were scattering a thousand glittering emeralds through the dark leaves.

"It is the evening sun which sports so in the elder-bush," thought the Student Anselmus: but the bells sounded again; and Anselmus observed that one Snake held out its little head to him. Through all his limbs there went a shock like electricity; he quivered in his inmost heart: he kept gazing up, and a pair of glorious dark-blue eyes were looking at him with unspeakable longing; and an unknown feeling of highest blessedness and deepest sorrow was like to rend his heart asunder. And as he looked, and still looked, full of warm desire, into these kind eyes, the crystal bells sounded louder in harmonious accord, and the glittering emeralds fell down and encircled him, flickering round him in thousand sparkles, and sporting in resplendent threads of gold. The Elder-bush moved and spoke: "Thou layest in my shadow; my perfume flowed round thee, but thou understoodst it not. The perfume is my speech, when Love kindles it." The Evening-wind came gliding past, and said: "I played round thy temples, but thou understoodst me not. That breath is my speech, when Love kindles it." The Sun-beam broke through the clouds, and the sheen of it burnt, as in words: "I overflowed thee with glowing gold, but thou understoodst me not: That glow is my speech, when Love kindles it."

And, still deeper and deeper sunk in the view of these glorious eyes, his longing grew keener, his desire more warm. And all rose and moved around him, as if awakening to glad life. Flowers and blossoms shed their odours round him; and their odour was like the lordly singing of a thousand softest voices; and what they sung was borne, like an echo,

on the golden evening clouds, as they flitted away, into far-off lands. But as the last sun-beam abruptly sank behind the hills, and the twilight threw its veil over the scene, there came a hoarse deep voice, as from a great distance.

"Hey! hey! what chattering and jingling is that up there? Hey! hey! who catches me the ray behind the hills? Sunned enough, sung enough. Hey! hey! through bush and grass, through grass and stream. Hey! hey! Come dow-w-n, dow-w-w-n!"

So faded the voice away, as in murmurs of a distant thunder; but the crystal bells broke off in sharp discords. All became mute; and the Student Anselmus observed how the three Snakes, glittering and sparkling, glided through the grass towards the river; rustling and hustling, they rushed into the Elbe; and over the waves where they vanished, there crackled up a green flame, which, gleaming forward obliquely, vanished in the direction of the city.

SECOND VIGIL.

How the Student Anselmus was looked upon as drunk and mad—The crossing of the Elbe—Bandmaster Graun's Bravura—Conradi's Stomachic Liqueur, and the bronzed Apple-woman.

"THE gentleman is ailing some way!" said a decent burgher's wife, who, returning from a walk with her family, had paused here, and, with crossed arms, was looking at the mad pranks of the Student Anselmus. Anselmus had clasped the trunk of the elder-tree, and was calling incessantly up to the branches and leaves: "O glitter and shine once more, ye dear gold Snakes; let me hear your little bell-voices once more! Look on me once more, ye kind eyes; O once, or I must die in pain and warm longing!" And with this, he was sighing and sobbing from the bottom of his heart most pitifully; and in his eagerness and impatience, shaking the elder-tree to and fro; which, however, instead of any reply, rustled quite stupidly and unintelligibly with its leaves; and so rather seemed, as it were, to make sport of the Student Anselmus and his sorrows.

"The gentleman is ailing some way!" said the burgher's wife; and Anselmus felt as if you had shaken him out of a deep dream, or poured ice-cold water on him, that he might awaken without loss of time. He now first saw clearly where he was; and recollected what a strange apparition had assailed him, nay, so beguiled his senses, as to make him break forth into loud talk with

himself. In astonishment, he gazed at the woman; and at last, snatching up his hat, which had fallen to the ground in his transport, was for making off in all speed. The burgher himself had come forward in the meanwhile; and, setting down the child from his arm on the grass, had been leaning on his staff, and with amazement listening and looking at the Student. He now picked up the pipe and tobacco-box which the Student had let fall, and, holding them out to him, said: "Don't take on so dreadfully, my worthy sir, or alarm people in the dark, when nothing is the matter, after all, but a drop or two of Christian liquor: go home, like a pretty man, and take a nap of sleep on it."

The Student Anselmus felt exceedingly ashamed; he uttered nothing but a most lamentable Ah!

"Pooh! pooh!" said the burgher, "never mind it a jot; such a thing will happen to the best; on good old Ascension-day a man may readily enough forget himself in his joy, and gulp down a thought too much. A clergyman himself is no worse for it; I presume, my worthy sir, you are a *Candidatus*.—But with your leave, sir, I shall fill my pipe with your tobacco; mine went done a little while ago."

This last sentence the burgher uttered while the Student Anselmus was about putting up his pipe and box; and now the burgher slowly and deliberately cleaned his pipe, and began as slowly to fill it. Several burgher girls had come up: these were speaking secretly with the woman and each other, and tittering as they looked at Anselmus. The Student felt as if he were standing on prickly thorns and burning needles. No sooner had he got back his pipe and tobacco-box, than he darted off at the height of his speed.

All the strange things he had seen were clean gone from his memory; he simply recollected having babbled all manner of foolish stuff beneath the elder-tree. This was the more frightful to him, as he entertained from of old an inward horror against all soliloquists. It is Satan that chatters out of them, said his Rector; and Anselmus had honestly believed him. But to be regarded as a *Candidatus Theologie*, overtaken with drink on Ascension-day! The thought was intolerable.

Running on with these mad vexations, he was just about turning up the Poplar Alley, by the Kosel garden, when a voice behind

him called out: "Herr Anselmus! Herr Anselmus! for the love of Heaven, whither are you running in such haste?" The Student paused, as if rooted to the ground; for he was convinced that now some new mischance would befall him. The voice rose again: "Herr Anselmus, come back, then; we are waiting for you here at the water!" And now the Student perceived that it was his friend Conrector Paulmann's voice: he went back to the Elbe; and found the Conrector, with his two daughters, as well as Registrator Heerbrand, all on the point of stepping into their gondola. Conrector Paulmann invited the Student to go with them across the Elbe, and then to pass the evening at his house in the Pirna suburb. The Student Anselmus very gladly accepted this proposal; thinking thereby to escape the malignant destiny which had ruled over him all day.

Now, as they were crossing the river, it chanced that, on the farther bank, in the Anton garden, a firework was just going off. Sputtering and hissing, the rockets went aloft, and their blazing stars flew to pieces in the air, scattering a thousand vague shoots and flashes round them. The Student Anselmus was sitting by the steersman, sunk in deep thought; but when he noticed in the water the reflection of these darting and wavering sparks and flames, he felt as if it was the little golden Snakes that were sporting in the flood. All the wonders that he had seen at the elder-tree again started forth into his heart and thoughts; and again that unspeakable longing, that glowing desire, laid hold of him here, which had before agitated his bosom in painful spasms of rapture.

"Ah! is it you again, my little golden Snakes? Sing now, O sing! In your song let the kind, dear, dark-blue eyes, again appear to me—Ah! are ye under the waves, then?"

So cried the Student Anselmus, and at the same time made a violent movement, as if he were for plunging from the gondola into the river.

"Is the Devil in you, sir?" exclaimed the steersman, and clutched him by the coat-brest. The girls, who were sitting by him, shrieked in terror, and fled to the other side of the gondola. Registrator Heerbrand whispered something in Conrector Paulmann's ear, to which the latter answered at considerable length, but in so low a tone, that Anselmus could distinguish nothing

but the words: "Such attacks more than once?—Never heard of it." Directly after this, Conrector Paulmann also rose; and then sat down, with a certain earnest, grave, official mien, beside the Student Anselmus, taking his hand, and saying: "How are you, Herr Anselmus?" The Student Anselmus was like to lose his wits, for in his mind there was a mad contradiction which he strove in vain to reconcile. He now saw plainly that what he had taken for the gleaming of the golden Snakes was nothing but the image of the fireworks in Anton's garden: but a feeling unexperienced till now, he himself knew not whether it was rapture or pain, cramped his breast together; and when the steersman struck through the water with his helm, so that the waves, curling as in anger, gurgled and chafed, he heard in their din a soft whispering: "Anselmus! Anselmus! seest thou not how we still skim along before thee? Sisterkin looks at thee again: believe, believe, believe in us!" And he thought he saw in the reflected light three green-glowing streaks: but then, when he gazed, full of fond sadness, into the water, to see whether these gentle eyes would not again look up to him, he perceived too well that the shine proceeded only from the windows in the neighbouring houses. He was sitting mute in his place, and inwardly battling with himself, when Conrector Paulmann repeated, with still greater emphasis, "How are you, Herr Anselmus?"

With the most rueful tone, Anselmus replied: "Ah! Herr Conrector, if you knew what strange things I have been dreaming, quite awake, with open eyes, just now, under an elder-tree at the wall of Linke's garden, you would not take it amiss of me that I am a little absent, or so."

"Ay, ay, Herr Anselmus!" interrupted Conrector Paulmann, "I have always taken you for a solid young man: but to dream, to dream with your eyes wide open, and then, all at once, to start up for leaping into the water! This, begging your pardon, is what only fools or madmen could do."

The Student Anselmus was deeply affected at his friend's hard saying; then Veronica, Paulmann's eldest daughter, a most pretty blooming girl of sixteen, addressed her father: "But, dear father, something singular must have befallen Herr Anselmus; and perhaps he only thinks he was awake, while he may have really been asleep, and so all manner of wild stuff has come into his head, and is still lying in his thoughts."

"And, dearest Modemoiselle! Worthy Conrector!" cried Registrar Heerbrand, "may one not, even when awake, sometimes sink into a sort of dreaming state? I myself have had such fits. One afternoon, for instance, during coffee, in a sort of brown study like this, in the special season of corporeal and spiritual digestion, the place where a lost *Act* was lying occurred to me, as if by inspiration; and last night, no farther gone, there came a glorious large Latin paper tripping out before my open eyes, in the very same way."

"Ah! most honoured Registrar," answered Conrector Paulmann; "you have always had a tendency to the *Poetica*; and thus one falls into fantasies and romantic humours."

The Student Anselmus, however, was particularly gratified that in this most troublous situation, while in danger of being considered drunk or crazy, any one should take his part; and though it was already pretty dark, he thought he noticed, for the first time, that Veronica had really very fine dark blue eyes, and this too without remembering the strange pair which he had looked at in the elder-bush. On the whole, the adventure under the elder-bush had once more entirely vanished from the thoughts of the Student Anselmus; he felt himself at ease and light of heart; nay, in the capriciousness of joy, he carried it so far, that he offered a helping hand to his fair advocate, Veronica, as she was stepping from the gondola; and without more ado, as she put her arm in his, escorted her home with so much dexterity and good luck, that he only missed his footing once, and this being the only wet spot in the whole road, only spattered Veronica's white gown a very little by the incident.

Conrector Paulmann failed not to observe this happy change in the Student Anselmus; he resumed his liking for him, and begged forgiveness for the hard words which he had let fall before. "Yes," added he, "we have many examples to show that certain fantasms may rise before a man, and pester and plague him not a little; but this is bodily disease, and leeches are good for it, if applied to the right part, as a certain learned physician, now deceased, has directed." The Student Anselmus knew not whether he had been drunk, crazy, or sick; but at all events the leeches seemed entirely superfluous, as these supposed fantasms had utterly vanished, and the Student himself was growing happier

and happier, the more he prospered in serving the pretty Veronica with all sorts of dainty attentions.

As usual, after the frugal meal, came music; the Student Anselmus had to take his seat before the harpsichord, and Veronica accompanied his playing with her pure clear voice: "Dear Mademoiselle," said Registrar Heerbrand, "You have a voice like a crystal bell!"

"That she has not!" ejaculated the Student Anselmus, he scarcely knew how. "Crystal bells in elder-trees sound strangely! strangely!" continued the Student Anselmus, murmuring half aloud.

Veronica laid her hand on his shoulder, and asked: "What are you saying now, Herr Anselmus?"

Instantly Anselmus recovered his cheerfulness, and began playing. Conrector Paulmann gave a grim look at him; but Registrar Heerbrand laid a music-leaf on the frame, and sang with ravishing grace one of Bandmaster Graun's bravura airs. The Student Anselmus accompanied this, and much more; and a fantasy duet, which Veronica and he now fingered, and Conrector Paulmann had himself composed, again brought all into the gayest humour.

It was now pretty late, and Registrar Heerbrand was taking up his hat and stick, when Conrector Paulmann went up to him with a mysterious air, and said: "Hem! — Would not you, honoured Registrar, mention to the good Herr Anselmus himself — hem! what we were speaking of before?"

"With all the pleasure in nature," said Registrar Heerbrand, and having placed himself in the circle, began, without farther preamble, as follows: —

"In this city is a strange remarkable man, people say he follows all manner of secret sciences; but as there are no such sciences, I rather take him for an antiquary, and along with this, for an experimental chemist. I mean no other than our Privy Archivarius Lindhorst. He lives, as you know, by himself, in his old sequestered house; and when disengaged from his office, he is to be found in his library, or in his chemical laboratory, to which, however, he admits no stranger. Besides many curious books, he possesses a number of manuscripts, partly Arabic, Coptic, and some of them in strange characters, which belong not to any known tongue. These he wishes to have copied properly; and for this purpose he requires a man who can draw with the pen, and so

transfer these marks to parchment, in Indian ink, with the highest strictness and fidelity. The work is carried on in a separate chamber of his house, under his own oversight; and besides free board during the time of business, he pays his man a speziesthaler, or specie-dollar, daily, and promises a handsome present when the copying is rightly finished. The hours of work are from twelve to six. From three to four, you take rest and dinner.

"Herr Archivarius Lindhorst having in vain tried one or two young people for copying these manuscripts, has at last applied to me to find him an expert drawer; and so I have been thinking of you, dear Herr Anselmus, for I know that you both write very neatly, and likewise draw with the pen to great perfection. Now, if in these bad times, and till your future establishment, you could like to earn a speziesthaler in the day, and this present over and above, you can go tomorrow, precisely at noon, and call upon the Archivarius, whose house no doubt you know. But be on your guard against any blot! If such a thing falls on your copy, you must begin it again; if it falls on the original, the Archivarius will think nothing to throw you over the window, for he is a hot-tempered gentleman."

The Student Anselmus was filled with joy at Registrar Heerbrand's proposal; for not only could the student write well and draw well with the pen, but this copying with laborious caligraphic pains, was a thing he delighted in beyond aught else. So he thanked his patron in the most grateful terms, and promised not to fail at noon tomorrow.

All night the Student Anselmus saw nothing but clear speziesthalers, and heard nothing but their lovely clink. Who could blame the poor youth, cheated of so many hopes by capricious destiny, obliged to take counsel about every farthing, and to forego so many joys which a young heart requires! Early in the morning he brought out his black-lead pencils, his crow-quills, his Indian ink; for better materials, thought he, the Archivarius can find nowhere. Above all, he mustered and arranged his caligraphic masterpieces and his drawings, to show them to the Archivarius, in proof of his ability to do what he wished. All prospered with the Student; a peculiar happy star seemed to be presiding over him; his neckcloth sat right at the very first trial; no tack burst; no loop gave way in his black silk stockings; his hat did not once fall to the dust after he

had trimmed it. In a word, precisely at half-past eleven, the Student Anselmus, in his pike-gray frock, and black satin lower habiliments, with a roll of caligraphies and pen-drawings in his pocket, was standing in the Schlossgasse, or Castle-gate, in Conradi's shop, and drinking one—two glasses of the best stomachic liqueur; for here, thought he, slapping on the still empty pocket, for here speziesthalers will be chinking soon.

Notwithstanding the distance of the solitary street where the Archivarius Lindhorst's antique residence lay, the Student Anselmus was at the front-door before the stroke of twelve. He stood here, and was looking at the large fine bronze knocker; but now when, as the last stroke tingled through the air with loud clang from the steeple-clock of the Kreuzkirche, or Cross-church, he lifted his hand to grasp this same knocker, the metal visage twisted itself, with horrid rolling of its blue-gleaming eyes, into a grinning smile. Alas, it was the Applewoman of the Schwarzhthor! The pointed teeth gnashed together in the loose jaws, and in their chattering through the skinny lips, there was a growl as of: "Thou fool, fool, fool!—Wait, wait! Why did'st run!—Fool!" Horror-struck, the Student Anselmus flew back; he clutched at the door-post, but his hand caught the bell-rope, and pulled it, and in piercing discords it rung stronger and stronger, and through the whole empty house the echo repeated, as in mockery: "To the crystal, fall!" An unearthly terror seized the Student Anselmus, and quivered through all his limbs. The bell-rope lengthened downwards, and became a white transparent gigantic serpent, which encircled and crushed him, and girded him straiter and straiter in its coils, till his brittle paralysed limbs went crashing in pieces, and the blood spouted from his veins, penetrating into the transparent body of the serpent, and dyeing it red. "Kill me! kill me!" he would have cried, in his horrible agony; but the cry was only a stifled gurgle in his throat. The serpent lifted its head, and laid its long peaked tongue of glowing brass on the breast of Anselmus; then a fierce pang suddenly cut asunder the artery of life, and thought fled away from him. On returning to his senses, he was lying on his own poor truckle-bed; Conrector Paulmann was standing before him, and saying: "For Heaven's sake, what mad stuff is this, dear Herr Anselmus?"

THIRD VIGIL.

Notices of Archivarius Lindhorst's Family—Veronica's blue Eyes—Registrator Heerbrand.

"THE Spirit looked upon the water, and the water moved itself, and chafed in foaming billows, and plunged thundering down into the Abysses, which opened their black throats, and greedily swallowed it. Like triumphant conquerors, the granite Rocks lifted their cleft peaky crowns, protecting the Valley, till the Sun took it into his paternal bosom, and clasping it with his beams as with glowing arms, cherished it and warmed it. Then a thousand germs, which had been sleeping under the desert sand, awoke from their deep slumber, and stretched out their little leaves and stalks towards the Sun their father's face; and like smiling infants in green cradles, the flowrets rested in their buds and blossoms, till they too, awakened by their father, decked themselves in lights, which their father, to please them, tinted in a thousand varied hues.

"But in the midst of the Valley was a black Hill, which heaved up and down like the breast of man when warm longing swells it. From the Abysses mounted steaming vapours, and rolled themselves together into huge masses, striving malignantly to hide the father's face: but he called the Storm to him, which rushed thither, and scattered them away; and when the pure sunbeam rested again on the bleak Hill, there started from it, in the excess of its rapture, a glorious Fire-lily, opening its fair leaves like gentle lips to receive the kiss of its father.

"And now came a gleaming Splendour into the Valley; it was the youth Phosphorus; the Lily saw him, and begged, being seized with warm longing love, 'Be mine for ever, thou fair youth! For I love thee, and must die if thou forsake me!' Then spake the youth Phosphorus: 'I will be thine, thou fair flower; but then wilt thou, like a naughty child, leave father and mother; thou wilt know thy playmates no longer, wilt strive to be greater and stronger than all that now rejoices with thee as thy equal. The longing which now beneficently warns thy whole being, will be scattered into a thousand rays, and torture and vex thee; for sense will bring forth senses; and the highest rapture, which the Spark I cast into thee kindles, will be the hopeless pain wherein thou shalt perish, to spring up anew in foreign shape. This spark is Thought!'

“Ah!” mourned the Lily, ‘can I not be thine in this glow, as it now burns in me; not still be thine? Can I love thee more than now; could I look on thee as now, if thou wert to annihilate me?’ Then the youth Phosphorus kissed the Lily; and as if penetrated with light, it mounted up in flame, out of which issued a foreign Being, that hastily flying from the Valley, roved forth into endless Space, no longer heeding its old playmates, or the youth it had loved. This youth mourned for his lost beloved; for he too loved her, it was love to the fair Lily that had brought him to the lone Valley; and the granite Rocks bent down their heads in participation of his grief.

“But one of these opened its bosom, and there came a black-winged Dragon flying out of it, and said: ‘My brethren, the Metals are sleeping in there; but I am always brisk and waking, and will help thee.’ Dashing up and down on its black pinions, the Dragon at last caught the Being which had sprung from the Lily; bore it to the Hill, and encircled it with his wing; then was it the Lily again; but Thought, which continued with it, tore asunder its heart; and its love for the youth Phosphorus was a cutting pain, before which, as if breathed on by poisonous vapours, the flowrets, which had once rejoiced in the fair Lily’s presence, faded and died.

“The youth Phosphorus put on a glittering coat of mail, sporting with the light in a thousand hues, and did battle with the Dragon, who struck the cuirass with his black wing, till it rung and sounded; and at this loud clang the flowrets again came to life, and like variegated birds fluttered round the Dragon, whose force departed; and who, thus being vanquished, hid himself in the depths of the Earth. The Lily was freed; the youth Phosphorus clasped her, full of warm longing, of heavenly love; and in triumphant chorus, the flowers, the birds; nay even the high granite Rocks, did reverence to her as the Queen of the Valley.”

“By your leave, worthy Herr Archivarius, this is oriental bombast,” said Registrar Heerbrand; “and we beg very much you would rather, as you often do, give us something of your own most remarkable life, of your travelling adventures, for instance; above all, something true.”

“What the deuce, then?” answered Archivarius Lindhorst. “True? This very thing I have been telling, is the truest I could dish out for you, good people, and belongs to

my life too, in a certain sense. For I come from that very Valley; and the Fire-Lily, which at last ruled as queen there, was my great-great-great-great-grandmother; and so, properly speaking, I am a prince myself.” All burst into a peal of laughter. “Ay, laugh your fill,” continued Archivarius Lindhorst. “To you this matter, which I have related, certainly in the most brief and meagre way, may seem senseless and mad; yet, notwithstanding this, it is meant for any thing but incoherent, or even allegorical, and it is, in one word, literally true. Had I known, however, that the glorious love-story, to which I owe my existence, would have pleased you so ill, I might have given you a little of the news my brother brought me on his visit yesterday.”

“How, how is this?—have you a brother, then, Herr Archivarius? Where is he?—where lives he? In his Majesty’s service, too?—or perhaps a private scholar?” cried the company from all quarters.

“No!” replied the Archivarius, quite cool, and composedly taking a pinch of snuff, “he has joined the bad side; he has gone over to the Dragons.”

“What do you please to mean, dear Herr Archivarius?” cried Registrar Heerbrand. “Over to the Dragons?”—“Over to the Dragons?” resounded like an echo from all hands.

“Yes, over to the Dragons,” continued Archivarius Lindhorst; “it was sheer desperation, I believe. You know, gentlemen, my father died a short while ago; it is but three hundred and eighty-five years since, at most, and I am still in mournings for it. He had left me, his favourite son, a fine onyx; this onyx, right or wrong, my brother would have; we quarrelled about it, over my father’s corpse, in such unseemly wise, that the good man started up, out of all patience, and threw my wicked brother down stairs. This stuck in our brother’s stomach, and so without loss of time he went over to the Dragons. At present, he keeps in a cypress wood, not far from Tunis; he has got a famous mystic carbuncle to watch there, which a dog of a necromancer, who has set up a summer-house in Lapland, has an eye to; so my poor brother only gets away for a quarter of an hour or so, when the necromancer happens to be out looking after the salamander-bed in his garden, and then he tells me in all haste what good news there are about the Springs of the Nile.”

For the second time, the company burst

out into a peal of laughter; but the Student Anselmus began to feel quite dreary in heart, and he could scarcely look in Archivarius Lindhorst's parched countenance, and fixed earnest eyes, without shuddering internally in a way which he could not himself understand. Moreover, in the rude and strangely metallic sound of Archivarius Lindhorst's voice there was something mysteriously piercing for the Student Anselmus, and he felt his very bones and marrow tingling as the Archivarius spoke.

The special object, for which Registrar Heerbrand had taken him into the coffee-house, seemed at present not to be attainable. After that accident at Archivarius Lindhorst's door, the Student Anselmus had withstood all inducements to risk a second visit: for, according to his own heart-felt conviction, it was only chance that had saved him, if not from death, at least from the danger of insanity. Conrector Paulmann had happened to be passing through the street at the time when Anselmus was lying quite senseless at the door, and an old woman, who had laid her cake and apple-basket to a side, was busied about him. Conrector Paulmann had forthwith called a chair, and so got him carried home. "Think of me what you will," said the Student Anselmus, "consider me a fool or not: I say, the cursed visage of that witch at the Schwarzthor grinned on me from the door-knocker. What happened after I would rather not speak of: but had I recovered from my swoon and seen that infernal Apple-wife beside me (for the old woman whom you talk of was no other,) I should that instant have been struck by apoplexy, or have run stark mad." All persuasions, all sensible arguments on the part of Conrector Paulmann and Registrar Heerbrand, profited nothing; and even the blue-eyed Veronica herself could not raise him from a certain moody humour, in which he had ever since been sunk. In fact, these friends regarded him as troubled in mind, and meditated expedients for diverting his thoughts; to which end, Registrar Heerbrand thought, there could nothing be so serviceable as this employment of copying Archivarius Lindhorst's manuscripts. The business, therefore, was to introduce the Student in some proper way to Archivarius Lindhorst; and so Registrar Heerbrand, knowing that the Archivarius used to visit a certain coffee-house almost nightly, had invited the Student Anselmus to come every evening to that same coffee-house, and drink

a glass of beer and smoke a pipe, at his the Registrar's charges, till such time as Archivarius Lindhorst should in one way or another see him, and the bargain for this copying work be settled; which offer the Student Anselmus had most gratefully accepted. "God will reward you, worthy Registrar, if you bring the young man to reason!" said Conrector Paulmann. "God will reward you!" repeated Veronica, piously raising her eyes to heaven, and vividly thinking that the Student Anselmus was already a most pretty young man, even without any reason.

Now accordingly, as Archivarius Lindhorst, with hat and staff, was making for the door, Registrar Heerbrand seized the Student Anselmus briskly by the hand, and with him stepping in the way, he said: "Most esteemed Herr Archivarius, here is the Student Anselmus, who has an uncommon talent in caligraphy and drawing, and will undertake the copying of your rare manuscripts."

"I am most particularly glad to hear it," answered Archivarius Lindhorst sharply; then threw his three-cocked military hat on his head; and shoving Registrar Heerbrand and the Student Anselmus to a side, rushed down stairs with great tumult, so that both of them were left standing much bamboozled, gaping at the room-door, which he had slammed in their faces, till the bolts and hinges of it rung again.

"It is a very strange old gentleman," said Registrar Heerbrand. "Strange old gentleman," stammered the Student Anselmus, with a feeling as if an ice-stream were creeping over all his veins, and he were stiffening into a statue. All the guests, however, laughed, and said; "Our Archivarius has got into his high key to-day: to-morrow, you shall see, he is mild as a lamb again, and speaks not a word, but looks into the smoke-vortexes of his pipe, or reads the newspapers: you must not mind these freaks."

"That is true too," thought the Student Anselmus: "who would mind such a thing, after all? Did not the Archivarius tell me he was most particularly glad to hear that I would undertake the copying of his manuscripts; and why did Registrar Heerbrand step directly in his way, when he was going home? No, no, he is a good man at bottom this Privy Archivarius Lindhorst, and surprisingly liberal. A little curious or so in his figures of speech; but what is that to me? To-morrow by the stroke of twelve I go to

him, though fifty bronzed Apple-wives should try to hinder me!"

FOURTH VIGIL

Melancholy of the Student Anselmus — The Emerald Mirror — How Archivarius Lindhorst flew off in the shape of a Kite, and the Student Anselmus met nobody.

To thee thyself, favourable reader, I may well venture the question, Whether thou in thy time hast not had hours, nay, days and weeks, in which all thy customary trading and transacting raised a most vexing dissatisfaction in thy soul; and all that thou wert wont to look upon as worthy and important, now seemed paltry and unprofitable? Thou knewest not, at this season, what to do, or whither to turn; a dim feeling that somewhere, and some time or other, there must be a higher wish fulfilled, a wish overstepping the circle of all earthly joys, and which the spirit, like a strictly-nurtured and timid child, durst not even utter, still swelled thy breast; and in this longing for the unknown Something, which, wherever thou wentest or stookest, hovered round thee like an airy dream, with thin translucent forms melting away in thy sharper glance, thou wert mute for all that environed thee here below. Thou glidedst to and fro with troubled look, like a hopeless lover; and all that thou sawest men attempting or attaining, in the noisy vortex of their many-coloured existence, awakened in thee no sorrow and no joy, as if thou hadst neither part nor lot in this sublunary world.

If such, favourable reader, has at any time been thy humour, then from thy own experience thou knowest the state into which the Student Anselmus had now fallen. On the whole, I could wish much, courteous reader, that it were in my power to bring the Student Anselmus with proper vividness before thy eyes. For in the night-watches, which I spend in recording his highly singular history, I have still so much of the marvellous, which like a spectral vision may remove into faint remoteness the week-day life of common mortals, to lay before thee, that I fear thou wilt come, in the end, to believe neither in the Student Anselmus, nor in Archivarius Lindhorst; nay, wilt even entertain some unfounded doubts as to Registrator Heerbrand and Conrector Paulmann, though the last two estimable persons, at least, are yet walking the pavement of Dresden. Make an effort, favourable reader

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— while in the Fairy region full of glorious Wonders, which with subduing thrills calls forth the highest rapture and the deepest horror; nay, where the Earnest Goddess herself will waft aside her veil, so that we seem to look upon her countenance (but a smile often glimmers through her earnest glance; and this is that jestful teasing, which sports with us in all manner of perplexing enchantments, as mothers in nursing and dandling their dearest children)—in this region, which the spirit so often, at least in dreams, lays open to us, do thou make an effort, favourable reader, again to recognise the well-known shapes which, even in common life, are daily, in fitful brightness, hovering round thee. Thou wilt then find that this glorious kingdom lies much closer at hand, than thou wert wont to suppose; which I now very heartily desire, and am striving to show thee in the singular story of the Student Anselmus.

So, as was hinted, the Student Anselmus, ever since that evening when he met with Archivarius Lindhorst, had been sunk in a dreamy musing, which rendered him insensible to every outward touch from common life. He felt how an unknown Something was awakening his inmost soul, and calling forth that rapturous pain, which is even the mood of Longing that announces a loftier existence to man. He delighted most when he could rove alone through meads and woods; and as if loosened from all that fettered him to his necessitous life, could, so to speak, again find himself in the manifold images which mounted from his soul.

It happened once, that in returning from a long ramble, he passed by that notable elder-tree, under which, as if taken with faery, he had formerly beheld so many marvels. He felt himself strangely attracted by the green kindly sward; but no sooner had he seated himself on it, than the whole vision which he had then seen as in a heavenly trance, and which had since as if by foreign influence been driven from his mind, again came floating before him in the liveliest colours, as if he had a second time been looking on it. Nay, it was clearer to him now than ever, that the gentle blue eyes belonged to the gold-green Snake, which had wound itself through the middle of the elder-tree; and that from the turnings of its taper body all those glorious crystal tones, which had filled him with rapture, must needs have broken forth. As on Ascension-day, he now again clasped the elder-tree to his bosom,

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and cried into the twigs and leaves: "Ah, once more shoot forth, and turn and wind thyself among the twigs, thou little fair green Snake, that I may see thee! Once more look at me with thy gentle eyes! Ah, I love thee, and must die in pain and grief, if thou return not!" All, however, remained quite dumb and still; and as before, the elder-tree rustled quite unintelligibly with its twigs and leaves. But the Student Anselmus now felt as if he knew what it was that so moved and worked within him, nay, that so tore his bosom in the pain of an infinite longing. "What else is it," said he, "but that I love thee with my whole heart and soul, and even to the death, thou glorious golden little Snake; nay, that without thee I cannot live, and must perish in hopeless woe, unless I find thee again, unless I have thee as the beloved of my heart. But I know it, thou shalt be mine; and then all that glorious dreams have promised me of another higher world shall be fulfilled."

Henceforth the Student Anselmus, every evening, when the sun was scattering its bright gold over the peaks of the trees, was to be seen under the elder-bush, calling from the depths of his heart in most lamentable tones into the branches and leaves, for a sight of his beloved, of his little gold-green Snake. Once as, according to custom, he was going on with this, there stood before him suddenly a tall lean man, wrapped up in a wide light-gray sirtout, who, looking at him with his large fiery eyes, exclaimed: "Hey, hey, what whining and whimpering is this? Hey, hey, this is Herr Anselmus, that was to copy my manuscripts." The Student Anselmus felt not a little terrified at this strong voice, for it was the very same which on Ascension-day had called: "Hey, hey, what chattering and jingling is this," and so forth. For fright and astonishment, he could not utter a word. "What ails you, then, Herr Anselmus," continued Archivarius Lindhorst, for the stranger was no other; "what do you want with the elder-tree, and why did you not come to me, and set about your work?"

In fact, the Student Anselmus had never yet prevailed upon himself to visit Archivarius Lindhorst's house a second time, though, that evening, he had firmly resolved on doing it. But now at this moment, when he saw his fair dreams torn asunder, and that too by the same hostile voice which had once before snatched away his beloved, a sort of desperation came over him, and he broke out fiercely into these words: "You may

think me mad or not, Herr Archivarius; it is all one to me: but here in this bush, on Ascension-day, I saw the gold-green Snake — ah! the for-ever-beloved of my soul; and she spoke to me in glorious crystal tones; and you, you, Herr Archivarius, cried and shouted so horribly over the water."

"How is this, sweet sir?" interrupted Archivarius Lindhorst, smiling quite inexpressibly, and taking snuff.

The Student Anselmus felt his breast getting great ease, now that he had succeeded in beginning this strange story; and it seemed to him as if he were quite right in laying the whole blame upon the Archivarius, and that it was he, and no other, who had so thundered from the distance. He courageously proceeded: "Well, then, I will tell you the whole mystery that happened to me on Ascension-evening; and then you may say and do, and withal think of me whatever you please." He accordingly disclosed the whole miraculous adventure, from his luckless oversetting of the apple-basket, till the departure of the three gold-green Snakes over the river; and how the people after that had thought him drunk or crazy. "All this," so ended the Student Anselmus, "I actually saw with my eyes; and deep in my bosom are those dear voices, which spoke to me, still sounding in clear echo: it was no-wise a dream; and if I am not to die of longing and desire, I must believe in these gold-green Snakes; though I see by your smile, Herr Archivarius, that you hold these same Snakes as nothing more than creatures of my heated and overstrained imagination."

"Not at all," replied the Archivarius, in the greatest peace and composure; "the gold-green Snakes which you saw in the elder-bush, Herr Anselmus, were simply my three daughters; and that you have fallen over head and ears in love with the blue eyes of *Serpentina* the youngest, is now clear enough. Indeed, I knew it on Ascension-day myself: and as I on that occasion, sitting busied with my writing at home, began to get annoyed with so much chattering and jingling, I called to the idle minxes that it was time to get home, for the sun was setting, and they had sung and basked enough."

The Student Anselmus felt as if he now merely heard in plain words something he had long dreamed of; and though he fancied he observed that elder-bush, wall and sward, and all objects about him were beginning

slowly to whirl round, he took heart, and was ready to speak; but the Archivarius prevented him; for, sharply pulling the glove from his left hand, and holding the stone of a ring, glittering in strange sparkles and flames before the Student's eyes, he said: "Look here, Herr Anselmus; what you see may do you good."

The Student Anselmus looked in, and O wonder! the stone threw a beam of rays round it, as from a burning focus; and the rays wove themselves together into a clear gleaming crystal mirror; in which, with many windings, now flying asunder, now twisted together, the three gold-green Snakes were dancing and bounding. And when their taper forms, glittering with a thousand sparkles, touched each other, there issued from them glorious tones, as of crystal bells; and the midst of the three stretched forth her little head from the mirror, as if full of longing and desire, and her dark-blue eyes said: "Knowest thou me, then; believest thou in me, Anselmus? In Belief alone is Love: canst thou Love?"

"O Serpentina! Serpentina!" cried the Student Anselmus, in mad rapture; but Archivarius Lindhorst suddenly breathed on the mirror, and with an electric spitter the rays sank back into their focus; and on his hand there was now nothing but a little emerald, over which the Archivarius drew his glove.

"Did you see the golden Snakes, Herr Anselmus?" said the Archivarius.

"Ah, good Heaven, yes!" replied the Student, "and the fair dear Serpentina."

"Hush!" continued Archivarius Lindhorst, "enough at one time: for the rest, if you resolve on working with me, you may see my daughter often enough; or rather I will grant you this real satisfaction, if you stick tightly and truly to your task, that is to say, copy every mark with the greatest clearness and correctness. But you do not come to me at all, Herr Anselmus, though Registrar Heerbrand promised I should see you forthwith, and I have waited several days in vain."

Not till the mention of Registrar Heerbrand's name, did the Student Anselmus again feel as if he were really standing with his two legs on the ground, and he were really the Student Anselmus, and the man talking to him really Archivarius Lindhorst. The tone of indifference with which the latter spoke, in such rude contrast with the strange sights which, like a genuine necromancer, he had called forth, awakened

a certain horror in the Student, which the piercing look of these fiery eyes, beaming from their bony sockets in the lean puckered visage, as from a leathern case, still farther aggravated; and the Student was again forcibly seized with the same unearthly feeling, which had before gained possession of him in the coffee-house, when Archivarius Lindhorst had talked so wildly. With a great effort he retained his self-command; and as Archivarius again asked: "Well, why have you not come to me?" the Student exerted his whole energies, and related to him all that had happened at the street door.

"Dear Herr Anselmus," said the Archivarius, when the narrative was finished; "dear Herr Anselmus, I know this Apple-wife of whom you speak: she is a fatal slut of a creature that plays all manner of freaks on me; but that she should have bronzed herself, and taken the shape of a door-knocker, to deter pleasant visitors from calling, is indeed very bad, and truly not to be endured. Would you please, however, worthy Herr Anselmus, if you come to-morrow at noon, and notice aught more of this grinning and growling, just to be so good as drop me a driblet or two of this liquor on her nose; it will put all to rights immediately. And now, adieu, dear Herr Anselmus! I go somewhat fast, therefore I would not advise you to think of returning with me. Adieu, till we meet!—To-morrow at noon!"

The Archivarius had given the Student Anselmus a little vial, with a gold-coloured fluid in it; and he walked rapidly off; so rapidly, that in the dusk, which had now come on, he seemed rather to be floating down to the valley than stepping down to it. Already he was near the Kosel garden; the wind got within his wide great-coat, and drove the breasts of it asunder; so that they fluttered in the air like a pair of large wings; and to the Student Anselmus, who was looking full of amazement at the course of the Archivarius, it seemed as if a large bird were spreading out its pinions for rapid flight. And now, while the Student kept gazing into the dusk, a white-gray kite, with creaking cry, soared up into the air; and he now saw clearly that the white flutter which he had looked upon, as the retiring Archivarius, must have been this very kite, though he still could not understand where the Archivarius had vanished so abruptly.

"Perhaps he may have flown away in person, this Herr Archivarius Lindhorst," said the Student Anselmus to himself; "for

I now see and feel clearly, that all these foreign shapes of a distant wondrous world, which formerly I never saw except in quite peculiarly remarkable dreams, have now come forth into my waking life, and are making their sport of me. But be this as it will! Thou livest and glowest in my breast, thou lovely, gentle *Serpentina*; thou alone canst still the infinite longing which now rends my soul in pieces. Ah, when shall I see thy kind eyes, dear, dear *Serpentina*!" So cried the Student *Anselmus*, quite aloud. "That is a vile unchristian name!" murmured a bass voice beside him, which belonged to some home-going promenader. The Student *Anselmus*, reminded in right season where he was, hastened off at a quick pace, thinking to himself, "Were it not a proper misfortune now if *Conrector Paulmann* or *Registrator Heerbrand* were to meet me?"—But neither of these gentlemen met him.

FIFTH VIGIL.

Die Frau *Hofrätthin Anselmus*. *Cicero de Officiis*.
Meer-cats, and other vermin. The Equinox.

"THERE is nothing in the world to be made of this *Anselmus*," said *Conrector Paulmann*; "all my good advices, all my admonitions, are fruitless; he will apply himself to nothing; though he is a fine classical scholar, too, and that is the foundation of all."

But *Registrator Heerbrand*, with a sly, mysterious smile, replied: "Let *Anselmus* have his time, dear *Conrector*! he is a strange subject this *Anselmus*, but there is much in him; and when I say much, I mean a *Privy Secretary*, or even a *Court-councillor*, a *Hofrath*."

"Hof——" began *Conrector Paulmann*, in the deepest amazement; the word stuck in his throat.

"Hush! hush!" continued *Registrator Heerbrand*, "I know what I know. These two days he has been with *Archivarius Lindhorst*, copying manuscripts; and last night the *Archivarius* meets me at the coffee-house, and says: 'You have sent me a proper man, good neighbour! There is stuff in him!' And now, think of *Archivarius Lindhorst's* influence.—Hush! hush! we will talk of it this time twelvemonth." And with these words the *Registrator*, his face still wrinkled into the same sly smile, went out of the room, leaving the *Conrector* speechless from astonishment and curiosity, and fixed, as if by enchantment, in his chair.

But on *Veronica* this dialogue had made a still deeper impression. "Did I not know all along," thought she, "that *Herr Anselmus* was a most clever and pretty young man, out of whom something great was to come? Were I but certain that he really liked me! But that night when we crossed the *Elbe*, did he not twice press my hand? Did he not look at me, in our duet, with such particular glances, that pierced into my very heart? Yes, yes! he really likes me; and I——" *Veronica* gave herself up, as young maidens are wont, to sweet dreams of a gay future. She was *Mrs. Hofrath*, *Frau Hofrätthin*; she occupied a fine house in the *Schlossgasse*, or in the *Neumarkt*, or in the *Moritzstrasse*; the fashionable hat, the new Turkish shawl, became her admirably; she was breakfasting in the balcony in an elegant negligee, giving orders to her cook for the day: "And see, if you please, not to spoil that dish; it is the *Hofrath's* favourite." Then passing beaux glanced up, and she heard distinctly: "Well, it is a heavenly woman, that *Hofrätthin*; how prettily the lace cap sets her!" *Mrs. Privy Councillor Ypsilon* sends her servant to ask if it would please the *Frau Hofrätthin* to drive as far as the *Linke Bath* to-day? "Many compliments; extremely sorry I am engaged to tea already with the *Presidentinn Tz.*" Then comes the *Hofrath Anselmus* back from his office; he is dressed in the top of the mode: "Ten, I declare," cries he, making his gold watch repeat, and giving his young lady a kiss. "How goes it, little wife? Guess what I have here for thee?" continues he, roguishly toying; and draws from his waistcoat-pocket a pair of beautiful earrings, fashioned in the newest style, and puts them on in place of the old ones. "Ah! the pretty, dainty earrings!" cried *Veronica*, aloud; and started up from her chair, throwing aside her work, to see these fair earrings with her own eyes in the glass.

"What is this, then?" said *Conrector Paulmann*, roused by the noise from his deep study of *Cicero de Officiis*, and almost dropping the book from his hand; "are we taking fits, like *Anselmus*?" But at this moment, the Student *Anselmus*, who, contrary to his custom, had not been seen for several days, entered the room, to *Veronica's* astonishment and terror; for, in truth, he seemed altered in his whole bearing. With a certain precision, which was far from usual in him, he spoke of new tendencies of life which had become clear to his mind, of glorious pro-

spects which were opening for him, but which many a one had not the skill to discern. Conrector Paulmann, remembering Registrar Heerbrand's mysterious speech, was still more struck, and could scarcely utter a syllable, till the Student Anselmus, after letting fall some hints of urgent business at Archivarius Lindhorst's, and with elegant adroitness kissing Veronica's hand, was already down stairs, off and away.

"This was the Hofrath already," murmured Veronica to herself; "and he kissed my hand, without sliding on the floor, or treading on my foot, as he used! He threw me the softest look, too; yes, he really likes me!"

Veronica again gave way to her dreaming; yet now, it was as if a hostile shape were still coming forward among these lovely visions of her future household life as Frau Hofrathinn, and the shape were laughing in spiteful mockery, and saying: "This is all very stupid and trashy stuff, and lies to boot; for Anselmus will never, never be Hofrath, and thy husband; he does not love thee in the least, though thou hast blue eyes, and a fine figure, and a pretty hand." Then an ice-stream poured over Veronica's soul; and a deep sorrow swept away the delight with which, a little while ago, she had seen herself in the lace cap and fashionable earrings. Tears almost rushed into her eyes, and she said aloud: "Ah! it is too true; he does not love me in the least; and I shall never, never be Frau Hofrathinn!"

"Romance crotchets! romance crotchets!" cried Conrector Paulmann; then snatched his hat and stick, and hastened indignantly from the house. "This was still wanting," sighed Veronica; and felt vexed at her little sister, a girl of twelve years, because she sat so unconcerned, and kept sewing at her frame, as if nothing had happened.

Meanwhile it was almost three o'clock; and now time to trim the apartment, and arrange the coffee-table; for the Mademoiselles Oster had announced that they were coming. But from behind every work-box which Veronica lifted aside, behind the note-books which she laid away from the harpsichord, behind every cup, behind the coffee-pot which she took from the cupboard, that shape peeped forth, like a little mandrake, and laughed in spiteful mockery, and snapped its little spider fingers, and cried: "He will not be thy husband! he will not be thy husband!" And then, when she threw all away, and fled to the middle of the room, it

peered out again, with long nose, in gigantic bulk, from behind the stove, and snarled and growled: "He will not be thy husband!"

"Dost thou hear nothing, sister? dost thou see nothing?" cried Veronica, shivering with affright, and not daring to touch aught in the room. Fränzchen rose, quite grave and quiet, from her broidering-frame, and said: "What ails thee to-day, sister? Thou art throwing all topsyturvy, and jingling and tingling. I must help thee, I see."

But here the lively visitors came tripping in with brisk laughter; and the same moment, Veronica perceived that it was the stove-handle which she had taken for a shape; and the creaking of the ill-shut stove-door for those spiteful words. Yet, thus violently seized with an inward horror, she could not so directly recover her composure, that the strange excitement, which even her paleness and agitated looks betrayed, was not noticed by the Mademoiselles Oster. As they at once cut short their merry narratives, and pressed her to tell them what, in Heaven's name, had happened, Veronica was obliged to admit that certain strange thoughts had come into her mind; and suddenly, in open day, a dread of spectres, which she did not use to feel, had got the better of her. She described in such lively colours how a little gray mannikin, peeping out of all the corners of the room, had mocked and plagued her, that the Mademoiselles Oster began to look round with timid glances, and start all manner of unearthly notions. But Fränzchen entered at this moment with the steaming coffee-pot; and the whole three, taking thought again, laughed outright at their folly.

Angelica, the elder of the Osters, was engaged to an officer; the young man had joined the army; but his friends had been so long without news of him, that there was too little doubt of his being dead, or at least grievously wounded. This had plunged Angelica into the deepest sorrow; but to-day she was merry, even to extravagance; a state of things which so much surprised Veronica, that she could not but speak of it, and inquire the reason. "Dear girl," said Angelica, "dost thou fancy that my Victor is not still in my heart and my thoughts? It is for him I am so gay—O Heaven! so happy, so blessed in my whole soul! For my Victor is well: in a little while he comes, advanced to be Rittmeister, and adorned with the honours which his boundless courage has won him. A deep,

but by no means dangerous wound, in the right arm, which he got, too, by a sword-cut from a French hussar, prevents him from writing; and the rapid change of quarters, for he will not consent to leave his regiment, still makes it impossible for him to send me tidings. But to-night he receives a fixed order to withdraw, till his wound be cured. To-morrow he sets out for home; and, just as he is stepping into the coach, he learns his promotion to be Rittmeister."

"But, dear Angelica," interrupted the other, "how knowest thou all this already?"

"Do not laugh at me, my friend," continued Angelica; "and surely thou wilt not laugh; for might not the little gray mannikin, to punish thee, peep forth from behind the mirror there? In a word, I cannot lay aside my belief in certain mysterious things, since often enough in life they have come before my eyes, I might say, into my very hands. For example, I cannot reckon it so strange and incredible as many others do, that there should be people gifted with a certain faculty of prophecy, which, by sure means known to themselves, they may put in action. In the city, here, is an old woman, who possesses this gift to a high degree. It is not, as with others of her tribe, by cards, or melted lead, or grounds of coffee, that she divines to you; but, after certain preparations, in which you yourself bear a part, she takes a polished metallic mirror, and there rises in it the strangest mixture of figures and forms, all intermingled; these she interprets, and so answers your question. I was with her last night, and got those tidings of my Victor, in which I have not doubted for a moment."

Angelica's narrative threw a spark into Veronica's soul, which instantly kindled with the thought of consulting this same old prophetess about Anselmus and her hopes. She learned that the crone was called Frau Rauerin, and lived in a remote street near the Seethor; that she was not to be seen except on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, from seven o'clock in the evening, but then, indeed, through the whole night till sunrise; and that she liked best if her customers came alone. It was Thursday even now, and Veronica determined, under pretext of accompanying the Osters home, to visit this old woman, and lay the case before her.

Accordingly, no sooner had her friends, who lived in the Neustadt, parted from her at the Elbe-bridge, than she hastened with winged steps towards the Seethor; and, ere

long, she had reached the remote narrow street described to her, and at the end of it perceived the little red house in which Frau Rauerin was said to live. She could not rid herself of a certain dread, nay of a certain horror, as she approached the door. At last she summoned resolution, in spite of inward terror, and made bold to pull the bell: the door opened, and she groped through the dark passage for the stair which led to the upper story, as Angelica had directed. "Does Frau Rauerin live here?" cried she, into the empty lobby, as no one appeared; and instead of answer, there rose a long clear "Mew!" and a large black cat, with its back curved up, and whisking its tail to and fro in wavy coils, stept on before her, with much gravity, to the door of the apartment, which, on a second mew, was opened.

"Ah, see! art thou here already, daughter? Come in, love; come in!" exclaimed the advancing figure, the aspect of which was rooting Veronica to the floor. A long lean woman, wrapped in black rags — while she spoke, her peaked projecting chin wagged this way and that; her toothless mouth, overshadowed by the bony hawk-nose, twisted itself into a ghastly smile, and gleaming cat's-eyes flickered in sparkles through the large spectacles. From a party-coloured clout wrapped round her head, black wiry hair was sticking out; but what deformed her haggard visage to absolute horror, was two large burn-marks which ran from the left cheek, over the nose. Veronica's breathing stopped; and the scream, which was about to lighten her choked breast, became a deep sigh, as the witch's skeleton hand took hold of her, and led her into the chamber. Here all was awake and astir; nothing but din and tumult, and squeaking, and mewing, and croaking, and piping all at once, on every hand. The crone struck the table with her fist, and screamed: "Peace, ye vermin!" And the meer-cats, whimpering, clambered to the top of the high bed; and the little meer-swine all run beneath the stove, and the raven fluttered up to the round mirror; and the black Cat, as if the rebuke did not apply to him, kept sitting at his ease on the cushion-chair, to which he had leapt directly after entering.

So soon as quiet was obtained, Veronica took heart; she felt less dreary and frightened than without in the lobby; nay, the crone herself seemed not so hideous. For the first time, she now looked round the room. All manner of odious stuffed beasts hung down

from the ceiling ; strange unknown household implements were lying in confusion on the floor ; and in the grate was a blue scanty fire, which only now and then sputtered up in yellow sparkles ; and at every sputter, there came a rustling from above, and monstrous bats, as if with human countenances, in distorted laughter, went flitting to and fro ; at times, too, the flame shot up, licking the sooty wall, and then there sounded cutting howling tones of wo, which shook Veronica with fear and horror. "With your leave, Mamsell !" said the crone, knitting her brows, and seizing a brush ; with which, having dipt it in a copper skillet, she then besprinkled the grate. The fire went out ; and as if filled with thick smoke, the room grew pitch-dark ; but the crone, who had gone aside into a closet, soon returned with a lighted lamp ; and now Veronica could see no beasts or implements in the apartment ; it was a common meanly furnished room. The crone came up to her, and said with a creaking voice : "I know what thou wantest here, little daughter : tush, thou wouldst have me tell thee whether thou shalt wed Anselmus, when he is Hofrath."

Veronica stiffened with amazement and terror ; but the crone continued : "Thou hast told me the whole of it at home, at thy papa's, when the coffee-pot was standing before thee : I was the coffee-pot ; didst thou not know me ? Daughterkin, hear me ! Give up, give up this Anselmus : 'tis a nasty creature ; he trod my little sons to pieces, my dear little sons, the Apples with the red cheeks, that glide away, when people have bought them, whisk ! out of their pockets again, and roll back into my basket. He trades with the Old One : 'twas but the day before yesterday, he poured that cursed Auripigment on my face, and I had nigh gone blind with it. Thou mayst see the burn-marks yet. Daughterkin, give him up, give him up ! He loves thee not, for he loves the gold-green Snake ; he will never be Hofrath, for he has joined the Salamanders, and he means to wed the green Snake : give him up, give him up !"

Veronica, who had a firm, steadfast spirit of her own, and could soon conquer girlish terror, now drew back a step, and said, with a serious resolute tone : "Old dame ! I heard of your gift of looking into futurity ; and wished, perhaps too curiously and thoughtlessly, to learn from you whether Anselmus, whom I love and value, could ever be mine. But if, instead of fulfilling my desire, you

keep vexing me with your foolish unreasonable babble, you are doing wrong ; for I have asked of you nothing but what, as I well know, you grant to others. Since, as it would seem, you are acquainted with my inmost thoughts, it might, perhaps, have been an easy matter for you to unfold to me much that now pains and grieves my mind ; but after your silly slander of the good Anselmus, I care not for talking farther with you. Good night !"

Veronica was hastening away ; but the crone, with tears and lamentation, fell upon her knees ; and, holding the young lady by the gown, exclaimed : "Veronica ! Veronica ! hast thou forgot old Liese, then ? Her who has so often carried thee in her arms, and nursed and dandled thee ?"

Veronica could scarcely believe her eyes ; for here, in truth, was her old nurse, defaced only by greater age, and chiefly by the two burns ; old Liese in person, who had vanished from Conrector Paulmann's house, some years ago, no one knew whither. The crone, too, had quite another look now : instead of the ugly many-pieced clout, she had on a decent cap ; instead of the black rags, a gay printed bedgown ; she was neatly dressed, as of old. She rose from the floor ; and, taking Veronica in her arms, proceeded : "What I have just told thee may seem very mad ; but, unluckily, it is too true. Anselmus has done me much mischief, though against his will : he has fallen into Archivarius Lindhorst's hands, and the Old One means to marry him with his daughter. Archivarius Lindhorst is my deadliest enemy. I could tell thee thousands of things about him, which, however, thou wouldst not understand, or, at best, be too much frightened at. He is the Wise Man, it seems ; but I am the Wise Woman : let this stand for that ! I see now, thou lovest this Anselmus heartily ; and I will help thee with all my strength, that so thou mayest be happy, and wed him like a pretty bride, as thou wishest."

"But tell me, for Heaven's sake, Liese——" interrupted Veronica.

"Hush ! child, hush !" cried the old woman, interrupting in her turn : "I know what thou wouldst say ; I have become what I am, because it was to be so ; I could do no other. Well, then ! I know the means which will cure Anselmus of his frantic love for the green Snake, and lead him, the prettiest Hofrath, into thy arms ; but thou thyself must help."

"Speak it out, Liese ; I will do aught and

all, for I love Anselmus much!" whispered Veronica, scarce audibly.

"I know thee," continued the crone, "for a courageous child: I could never frighten thee to sleep with the *Wauwau*; for that instant, thy eyes were open to what the *Wauwau* was like. Thou wouldst go without a light into the darkest room; and many a time, with papa's powder-mantle, hast thou terrified the neighbours' children. Well, then, if thou art in earnest about conquering Archivarius Lindhorst and the green Snake by my art; if thou art in earnest about calling Anselmus by the name of Hofrath and thy husband; then, at the next Equinox, about eleven at night, glide from thy father's house, and come hither: I will go with thee to the crossing of the roads, which cut the fields hard by here: we shall provide the needful; and whatever wonders thou mayest see, shall do thee no whit of harm. And now, love, good night: papa is waiting for thee to supper."

Veronica hastened away: she had the firmest purpose not to neglect the night of the Equinox; "for," thought she, "old Liese is right; Anselmus has got entangled in strange fetters; but I will free him from them, and call him mine for ever and aye; mine he is, and shall be, the Hofrath Anselmus."

SIXTH VIGIL.

Archivarius Lindhorst's Garden, with some Mock-birds—The Golden Pot—English current-hand. Pot-hooks—The Prince of the Spirits.

"It may be, after all," said the Student Anselmus to himself, "that the superfine strong stomachic liqueur, which I took somewhat freely in Monsieur Conradi's, might really be the cause of all these shocking fantasies, which so tortured me at Archivarius Lindhorst's door. Therefore, I will go quite sober to-day; and so bid defiance to whatever farther mischief may assail me." On this occasion, as before when equipping himself for his first call on Archivarius Lindhorst, the Student Anselmus put his pen-drawings, and calligraphic masterpieces, his bars of Indian ink, and his well-pointed crow-pens, into his pockets; and was just turning to go out, when his eye lighted on the vial with the yellow liquor, which he had received from Archivarius Lindhorst. All the strange adventures he had met with again rose on his mind in glowing colours; and a nameless emotion of rapture and pain thrilled through his breast. Involuntarily he exclaimed, with a most piteous voice: "Ah, am not I going

to the Archivarius solely for a sight of thee thou gentle lovely *Serpentina*!" At that moment, he felt as if *Serpentina's* love might be the prize of some laborious perilous task which he had to undertake: and as if this task were no other than the copying of the Lindhorst manuscripts. That at his very entrance into the house, or more properly, before his entrance, all manner of mysterious things might happen, as of late, was no more than he anticipated. He thought no more of Conradi's strong water; but hastily put the vial of liquor in his waistcoat-pocket, that he might act strictly by the Archivarius' directions, should the bronzed Apple-woman again take it upon her to make faces at him.

And did not the hawk-nose actually peak itself, did not the cat-eyes actually glare from the knocker, as he raised his hand to it, at the stroke of twelve? But now, without farther ceremony, he dribbled his liquor into the pestilent visage; and it folded and moulded itself, that instant, down to a glittering bowl-round knocker. The door went up: the bells sounded beautifully over all the house: "Klingling, youngling, in, in, spring, spring, klingling." In good heart he mounted the fine broad stair; and feasted on the odours of some strange perfumery, that was floating through the house. In doubt, he paused on the lobby; for he knew not at which of these many fine doors he was to knock. But Archivarius Lindhorst, in a white damask night-gown, stepped forth to him, and said: "Well, it is a real pleasure to me, Herr Anselmus, that you have kept your word at last. Come this way, if you please; I must take you straight into the Laboratory." And with this he stepped rapidly through the lobby, and opened a little side-door, which led into a long passage. Anselmus walked on in high spirits, behind the Archivarius; they passed from this corridor into a hall, or rather into a lordly green-house: for on both sides, up to the ceiling, stood all manner of rare wondrous flowers, nay, great trees with strangely formed leaves and blossoms. A magic dazzling light shone over the whole, though you could not discover whence it came, for no window whatever was to be seen. As the Student Anselmus looked in through the bushes and trees, long avenues appeared to open in remote distance. In the deep shade of thick cypress groves, lay glittering marble fountains, out of which rose wondrous figures, spouting crystal jets that fell with pattering spray into the gleaming lily-cups; strange voices cooed and rustled through

the wood of curious trees ; and sweetest perfumes streamed up and down.

The Archivarius had vanished : and Anselmus saw nothing but a huge bush of glowing fire-lilies before him. Intoxicated with the sight and the fine odours of this fairy garden, Anselmus stood fixed to the spot. Then began on all sides of him a giggling and laughing ; and light little voices railed and mocked him : "Herr Studiosus ! Herr Studiosus ! how came you hither ? Why have you dressed so bravely, Herr Anselmus ? Will you chat with us for a minute, how grandmammy sat squelching down upon the egg, and young master got a stain on his Sunday waistcoat ?—Can you play the new tune, now, which you learned from Daddy Cockadoodle, Herr Anselmus ?—You look very fine in your glass perriwig, and post-paper boots." So cried and chattered and sniggered the little voices, out of every corner, nay, close by the Student himself, who now observed that all sorts of party-coloured birds were fluttering above him, and jeering him in hearty laughter. At that moment, the bush of fire-lilies advanced towards him ; and he perceived that it was Archivarius Lindhorst, whose flowered night-gown, glittering in red and yellow, had so far deceived his eyes.

"I beg your pardon, worthy Herr Anselmus," said the Archivarius, "for leaving you alone : I wished, in passing, to take a peep at my fine cactus, which is to blossom to-night. But how like you my little house-garden ?"

"Ah, Heaven ! Immeasurably pretty it is, most valued Herr Archivarius," replied the Student ; "but these party-coloured birds have been bantering me a little."

"What chattering is this ?" cried the Archivarius angrily into the bushes. Then a huge gray Parrot came fluttering out, and perched itself beside the Archivarius on a myrtle-bough ; and looking at him with an uncommon earnestness and gravity through a pair of spectacles that stuck on its hooked bill, it squeaked out : "Don't take it amiss, Herr Archivarius ; my wild boys have been a little free or so ; but the Herr Studiosus has himself to blame in the matter, for—"

"Hush ! hush !" interrupted Archivarius Lindhorst ; "I know the varlets ; but thou must keep them in better discipline, my friend.—Now, come along, Herr Anselmus."

And the Archivarius again stepped forth, through many a strangely decorated chamber ; so that the Student Anselmus in following

him, could scarcely give a glance at all the glittering wondrous furniture, and other unknown things, with which the whole of them were filled. At last they entered a large apartment ; where the Archivarius, casting his eyes aloft, stood still ; and Anselmus got time to feast himself on the glorious sight, which the simple decoration of this hall afforded. Jutting from the azure-coloured walls, rose gold bronze trunks of high palm-trees, which wove their colossal leaves, glittering like bright emeralds, into a ceiling far up : in the middle of the chamber, and resting on three Egyptian lions, cast out of dark bronze, lay a porphyry plate ; and on this stood a simple Golden Pot, from which, so soon as he beheld it, Anselmus could not turn away an eye. It was as if, in a thousand gleaming reflexes, all sorts of shapes were sporting on the bright polished gold : often he perceived his own form, with arms stretched out in longing—ah ! beneath the elder-bush,—and *Serpentina* was winding and shooting up and down, and again looking at him with her kind eyes. Anselmus was beside himself with frantic rapture.

"*Serpentina ! Serpentina !*" cried he aloud ; and Archivarius Lindhorst whirled round abruptly, and said : "How now, worthy Herr Anselmus ! If I mistake not, you were pleased to call for my daughter ; she is quite in the other side of the house at present, and indeed just taking her lesson on the harpsichord. Let us go along."

Anselmus, scarcely knowing what he did, followed his conductor ; he saw or heard nothing more, till Archivarius Lindhorst suddenly grasped his hand, and said : "Here is the place !" Anselmus awoke as from a dream, and now perceived that he was in a high room, all lined on every side with bookshelves, and nowise differing from a common library and study. In the middle stood a large writing-table, with a stuffed arm-chair before it. "This," said Archivarius Lindhorst, "is your work-room for the present : whether you may work, some other time, in the blue library, where you so suddenly called out my daughter's name, I yet know not. But now I could wish to convince myself of your ability to execute this task appointed you in the way I wish it and need it." The Student here gathered full courage ; and not without internal self-complacence in the certainty of highly gratifying Archivarius Lindhorst, pulled out his drawings and specimens of penmanship from his pocket. But no sooner had the Archivarius cast his eye on

the first leaf, a piece of writing in the finest English style, than he smiled very oddly, and shook his head. These motions he repeated at every following leaf, so that the Student Anselmus felt the blood mounting to his face; and at last, when the smile became quite sarcastic and contemptuous, he broke out in downright vexation: "The Herr Archivarius does not seem contented with my poor talents."

"Dear Herr Anselmus," said Archivarius Lindhorst, "you have indeed fine capacities for the art of calligraphy; but, in the meanwhile, it is clear enough, I must reckon more on your diligence and good-will, than on your attainments in the business."

The Student Anselmus spoke largely of his often-acknowledged perfection in this art, of his fine Chinese ink, and most select crow-quills. But Archivarius Lindhorst handed him the English sheet, and said: "Be judge yourself!" Anselmus felt as if struck by a thunderbolt, to see his hand-writing look so: it was miserable, beyond measure. There was no rounding in the turns, no hair-stroke where it should be; no proportion between the capital and single letters; nay, villanous school-boy pot-hooks often spoiled the best lines. "And then," continued Archivarius Lindhorst, "your ink will not stand." He dipt his finger in a glass of water, and as he just skimmed it over the lines, they vanished without vestige. The Student Anselmus felt as if some monster were throttling him: he could not utter a word. There stood he, with the unlucky sheet in his hand; but Archivarius Lindhorst laughed aloud, and said: "Never mind it, dearest Herr Anselmus; what you could not perfect before, will perhaps do better here. At any rate, you shall have better materials than you have been accustomed to. Begin, in Heaven's name!"

From a locked press Archivarius Lindhorst now brought out a black fluid substance, which diffused a most peculiar odour; also pens, sharply pointed and of strange colour, together with a sheet of especial whiteness and smoothness; then at last an Arabic manuscript: and as Anselmus sat down to work, the Archivarius left the room. The Student Anselmus had often copied Arabic manuscripts already; the first problem, therefore, seemed to him not so very difficult to solve. "How these pot-hooks came into my fine English current-hand, Heaven, and Archivarius Lindhorst, know best," said he; "but that they are not from *my* hand, I will testify to the death!" At every new word

that stood fair and perfect on the parchment, his courage increased, and with it his adroitness. In truth, these pens wrote exquisitely well; and the mysterious ink flowed pliantly, and black as jet, on the bright white parchment. And as he worked along so diligently, and with such strained attention, he began to feel more and more at home in the solitary room; and already he had quite fitted himself into his task, which he now hoped to finish well, when at the stroke of three the Archivarius called him into the side-room to a savoury dinner. At table, Archivarius Lindhorst was in special gaiety of heart: he inquired about the Student Anselmus's friends, Conrector Paulmann, and Registrar Heerbrand; and of the latter especially he had store of merry anecdotes to tell. The good old Rhenish was particularly grateful to the Student Anselmus, and made him more talkative than he was wont to be. At the stroke of four he rose to resume his labour; and this punctuality appeared to please the Archivarius.

If the copying of these Arabic manuscripts had prospered in his hands before dinner, the task now went forward much better; nay, he could not himself comprehend the rapidity and ease with which he succeeded in transcribing the twisted strokes of this foreign character. But it was as if, in his inmost soul, a voice were whispering in audible words: "Ah! couldst thou accomplish it, wert thou not thinking of *her*, didst thou not believe in *her*, and in her love?" Then there floated whispers, as in low, low, waving crystal tones, through the room: "I am near, near, near! I help thee: be bold, be steadfast, dear Anselmus! I toil with thee, that thou mayest be mine!" And as, in the fulness of secret rapture, he caught these sounds, the unknown characters grew clearer and clearer to him; he scarcely required to look on the original at all; nay, it was as if the letters were already standing in pale ink on the parchment, and he had nothing more to do but mark them black. So did he labour on, encompassed with dear inspiring tones as with soft sweet breath, till the clock struck six, and Archivarius Lindhorst entered the apartment. He came forward to the table with a singular smile; Anselmus rose in silence: the Archivarius still looked at him, with that mocking smile: but no sooner had he glanced over the copy, than the smile passed into deep solemn earnestness, which every feature of his face adapted itself to express. He seemed no longer the same.

His eyes, which usually gleamed with sparkling fire, now looked with unutterable mildness at Anselmus; a soft red tinted the pale cheeks; and instead of the irony which at other times compressed the mouth, the softly-curved graceful lips now seemed to be opening for wise and soul-persuading speech. The whole form was higher, statelier; the wide night-gown spread itself like a royal mantle in broad folds over his breast and shoulders; and through the white locks, which lay on his high open brow, there winded a thin band of gold.

"Young man," began the Archivarius, in solemn tone, "before thou thoughtest of it, I knew thee, and all the secret relations which bind thee to the dearest and holiest of my interests! Serpentina loves thee; a singular destiny, whose fateful threads were spun by enemies, is fulfilled, should she be thine, and thou obtain, as an essential dowery, the Golden Pot, which of right belongs to her. But only from effort and contest can thy happiness in the higher life arise; hostile Principles assail thee; and only the interior force with which thou shalt withstand these contradictions, can save thee from disgrace and ruin. Whilst labouring here, thou art passing the season of instruction: belief and full knowledge will lead thee to the near goal, if thou but hold fast what thou hast well begun. Bear *her* always and truly in thy thoughts, her who loves thee; then shalt thou see the marvels of the Golden Pot, and be happy for evermore. Fare thee well! Archivarius Lindhorst expects thee to-morrow at noon in thy cabinet. Fare thee well!" With these words Archivarius Lindhorst softly pushed the Student Anselmus out of the door, which he then locked; and Anselmus found himself in the chamber where he had dined, the single door of which led out to the lobby.

Altogether stupefied with these strange phenomena, the Student Anselmus stood lingering at the street door; he heard a window open above him, and looked up: it was Archivarius Lindhorst, quite the old man again, in his light-gray gown, as he usually appeared. The Archivarius called to him: "Hey, worthy Herr Anselmus, what are you studying over there! Tush, the Arabic is still in your head. My compliments to Herr Conrector Paulmann, if you see him; and come to-morrow precisely at noon. The fee for this day is lying in your right waistcoat-pocket." The Student Anselmus actually found the clear speziesthaler in the pocket indicated; but he took no joy

in it. "What is to come of all this," said he to himself, "I know not: but if it be some mad delusion and conjuring work that has laid hold of me, the dear Serpentina still lives and moves in my inward heart; and before I leave her, I will die altogether, for I know that the thought in me is eternal, and no hostile Principle can take it from me: and what else is this thought but Serpentina's love?"

SEVENTH VIGIL.

How Conrector Paulmann knocked the Ashes out of his Pipe, and went to Bed. Rembrandt and Höllebrenghel. The Magic Mirror; and Dr. Eckstein's Prescription for an unknown Disease.

At last Conrector Paulmann knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and said: "Now, then, it is time to go to bed."

"Yes, indeed," replied Veronica, frightened at her father's sitting so late; for ten had struck long ago. No sooner, accordingly, had the Conrector withdrawn to his study and bed-room, and Fränzchen's heavy breathing signified that she was asleep, than Veronica, who, to save appearances, had also gone to bed, rose softly, softly, out of it again, put on her clothes, threw her mantle round her, and glided out of doors.

Ever since the moment when Veronica had left old Liese, Anselmus had continually stood before her eyes; and it seemed as if a foreign voice, unknown to herself, were ever and anon repeating in her soul that his reluctance sprang from a hostile person holding him in bonds, which, by secret means of magical art, Veronica might break. Her confidence in old Liese grew stronger every day; and even the impression of unearthliness and horror by degrees softened down, so that all the mystery and strangeness of her relation to the crone appeared before her only in the colour of something singular, romantic, and so not a little attractive. Accordingly, she had a firm purpose, even at the risk of being missed from home, and encountering a thousand inconveniences, to front the adventure of the Equinox. And now, at last, the fateful night, in which old Liese had promised to afford comfort and help, was come; and Veronica, long used to thoughts of nightly wandering, was full of heart and hope. With winged speed, she flew through the solitary streets, heedless of the storm which was howling in the air and dashing thick rain-drops in her face.

With stifled droning clang, the Kreuzthurm

clock struck eleven, as Veronica, quite wetted, reached old Liese's house. "Art come, dear! wait, love; wait, love——" cried a voice from above; and instantly the crone, laden with a basket, and attended by her Cat, was also standing at the door. "We will go, then, and do what is proper, and can prosper in the night which favours the work." So speaking, the crone with her cold hand seized the shivering Veronica, to whom she gave the heavy basket to carry, while she herself produced a little cauldron, a tret, and a spade. On their reaching the open fields, the rain had ceased, but the storm had become louder; howlings in a thousand tones were flitting through the air. A horrible heart-piercing lamentation sounded down from the black clouds, which rolled themselves together, in rapid flight, and veiled all things in thickest darkness. But the crone stept briskly forward, crying in a shrill harsh voice: "Light, light, my lad!" Then blue forky gleams went quivering and sputtering before them; and Veronica perceived that it was the Cat emitting sparks, and bounding forward to light the way; while his doleful ghastly screams were heard in the momentary pauses of the storm. Her heart was like to fail; it was as if ice-cold talons were clutching into her soul: but, with a strong effort, she collected herself, pressed closer to the crone, and said: "It must all be accomplished now, come of it what may!"

"Right, right, little daughter!" replied the crone; "be steady, like a good girl; thou shalt have something pretty, and Anselmus to boot."

At last the crone paused, and said: "Here is the place!" She dug a hole in the ground, then shook coals into it, put the tret over them, and placed the cauldron on the top of it. All this she accomplished with strange gestures, while the Cat kept circling round her. From his tail there sputtered sparkles, which united into a ring of fire. The coals began to burn; and at last blue flames rose up round the cauldron. Veronica was ordered to lay off her mantle and veil, and to cower down beside the crone, who seized her hands, and pressed them hard, glaring with her fiery eyes at the maiden. Ere long the strange materials, (whether flowers, metals, herbs, or beasts, you could not determine,) which the crone had taken from her basket, and thrown into the cauldron, began to seeth and foam. The crone quitted Veronica; then clutched an iron ladle, and plunged it into the glowing mass, which she began to

stir; while Veronica, as she directed, was to look steadfastly into the cauldron, and fix her thoughts on Anselmus. But now the crone threw fresh ingredients, glittering pieces of metal, a lock of hair which Veronica had cut from her head, and a little ring which she had long worn, into the pot; while she howled in dread yelling tones through the gloom, and the Cat in quick incessant motion whimpered and whined.

I could wish much that thou, favourable reader, hadst on this twenty-third of September been thyself travelling towards Dresden. In vain, when late night sank down, did the people try to retain thee at the last stage: the friendly host represented to thee that the storm and the rain were too bitter, and moreover, that it was not safe for unearthly reasons to rush away in the dark, in the night of the Equinox; but thou regardedst him not, thinking within thyself: "I will give the postilion a whole thaler of drink-money, and so, at latest, by one o'clock reach Dresden; where, in the *Golden Angel*, or in the *Helmet*, or in the *City of Naumburg*, a well-readied supper and a soft bed await me." And now, as thou art driving hither through the dark, thou suddenly observest in the distance a most strange flickering light. Coming nearer, thou perceivest a ring of fire; and in the midst of it, beside a pot, out of which thick vapour is mounting with quivering red flashes and sparkles, sit two most diverse forms. Right through the fire goes thy road: but the horses snort, and stamp, and rear; the postilion curses and prays, and scourges his cattle withal; they stir not from the spot. Involuntarily thou leapest out of thy carriage, and hurriest a few steps forward. And now thou clearly beholdest the dainty gentle maiden, who, in her white thin night-dress, is kneeling by the cauldron. The storm has loosened her braids, and the long chestnut-brown hair is floating free in the wind. Full in the dazzling fire of the flame flickering up under the tret, stands the angelic face; but in the horror which has overflowed it with an ice-stream, it is stiffened to the paleness of death; and by the updrawn eyebrows, by the mouth in vain opened for the shriek of anguish, which cannot find its way from the bosom compressed with nameless torture, thou perceivest her affright, her horror: her soft small hands she holds aloft spasmodically pressed together, as if she were calling with prayers her guardian angel, to deliver her from the monsters of the Pit, which in obe-

dience to this potent spell are forthwith to appear! There kneels she, motionless as a figure of marble. Over against her sits cowering on the ground, a long, shrivelled, copper-yellow crone, with peaked hawk-nose, and glistening cat-eyes; from the black cloak, which is huddled round her, stick forth her naked skinny arms; stirring the Hell-broth, she laughs and cries with creaking voice, through the raging bellowing storm. I can well believe that in thee too, favourable reader, though otherwise unacquainted with fear and dread, there might have arisen at the aspect of this Rembrandt or Höllenbreughel picture, here standing forth alive, some unearthly feelings; nay, that for very horror the hairs of thy head might have risen on end. But thy eye could not turn away from the gentle maiden, entangled in these infernal doings; and the electric stroke, that quivered through all thy nerves and fibres, kindled in thee with the speed of lightning the courageous thought of defying the mysterious powers of the fire-circle; and in this thought, thy horror disappeared; nay, the thought itself sprang up from that very horror as its product. Thy heart felt as if thou thyself wert one of those guardian angels, to whom the maiden, terrified to death, was praying; nay, as if thou must instantly lug forth thy pocket-pistol, and without more ceremony blow the hag's brains out. But while thou wert thinking all this most vividly, thou criest aloud, "Holla!" or "What's the matter here?" or "What's adoin'g there?" The postilion blew a clanging blast on his horn; the witch laddled about in her brewage, and in a trice the whole had vanished in thick smoke. Whether thou wouldst then have found the maiden, whom with most heartfelt longing thou wert groping for in the darkness, I cannot say: but the spell of the witch thou hadst of a surety destroyed, and undone the magic circle into which Veronica had thoughtlessly entered.

Alas! Neither thou, favourable reader, nor any other man, either drove or walked this way, on the twenty-third of September, in the tempestuous witch-favouring night; and Veronica must abide by the cauldron, in deadly terror, till the work was near its close. She heard, indeed, what howling and raging there was around her; how all sorts of hateful voices bellowed and bleated, and yelled and hummed; but she opened not her eyes, for she felt that the sight of the abominations and the horrors with which she

was encircled might drive her into incurable destroying madness. The hag had ceased to stir the pot: its smoke grew fainter and fainter; and at last, nothing but a light spirit-flame was burning in the bottom. Then the beldam cried: "Veronica, my child! my darling! look into the grounds there! What seest thou? What seest thou?"

Veronica could not answer, yet it seemed as if all manner of perplexed shapes were dancing and whirling in the cauldron; and on a sudden, with friendly looks and reaching her his hand, rose the Student Anselmus from the cavity of the vessel. She cried aloud: "It is Anselmus! It is Anselmus!"

Instantly the crone turned the cock fixed at the bottom of the cauldron, and glowing metal rushed forth, hissing and bubbling, into a little mould which she had placed beside it. The hag now sprang aloft; and shrieked, capering about with wild horrific gestures: "It is done! It is done! Thanks, my pretty lad; hast watched?—Pooh, pooh, he is coming! Bite him to death! Bite him to death!" But there sounded a strong rushing through the air: it was as if a huge eagle were pouncing down, striking round him with his pinions; and there shouted a tremendous voice: "Hey, hey, vermin!—It is over! It is over!—Home with ye!" The crone sank down with bitter howling; but Veronica's sense and recollection forsook her.

On her returning to herself, it was broad day, she was lying in her bed, and Fränzchen was standing before her with a cup of steaming tea, and saying to her: "But tell me then, sister, what in all the world ails thee? Here have I been standing this hour, and thou lying senseless, as if in the heat of a fever, and moaning and whimpering till we are frightened to death. Father has not gone to his class, this morning, because of thee; he will be here directly with the Doctor."

Veronica took the tea in silence: and while drinking it, the horrid images of the night rose vividly before her eyes. "So it was all nothing but a wild dream that tortured me? Yet, last night, I surely went to that old woman; it was the twenty-third of September, too! Well, I must have been very sick last night, and so fancied all this; and nothing has sickened me but my perpetual thinking of Anselmus and the strange old wife who gave herself out for Liese, but was no such thing, and only made a fool of me with that story."

Fränzchen, who had left the room, again came in with Veronica's mantle, all wet, in her hand. "Do but look, sister," said she, "what a sight thy mantle is! There has the storm over night blown up the window, and overset the chair where thy mantle was hanging; and so the rain has come in, and wetted it all for thee."

This speech sank heavy on Veronica's heart; for she now saw that it was no dream which had tormented her; but that she had really been with the witch. Anguish and horror took hold of her at the thought; and a fever-frost quivered through all her frame. In spasmodic shuddering, she drew the bed-clothes close over her; but with this, she felt something hard pressing on her breast, and on grasping it with her hand, it seemed like a medallion: she drew it out so soon as Fränzchen went away with the mantle; it was a little, round, bright-polished metallic mirror. "This is a present from the woman," cried she, eagerly; and it was as if fiery beams were shooting from the mirror, and penetrating into her inmost soul with benignant warmth. The fever-frost was gone; and there streamed through her whole being an unutterable feeling of contentment and cheerful delight. She could not but remember Anselmus; and as she turned her thoughts more and more intensely on him, behold he smiled on her with friendly looks out of the mirror, like a living miniature portrait. But ere long she felt as if it were no longer the image which she saw; no! but the Student Anselmus himself alive and in person. He was sitting in a stately chamber, with the strangest furniture, and diligently writing. Veronica was about to step forward, to pat his shoulder, and say to him: "Herr Anselmus, look round; it is I!" But she could not; for it was as if a fire-stream encircled him; and yet when she looked more narrowly, this fire-stream was nothing but large books with gilt leaves. At last Veronica so far succeeded that she caught Anselmus' eye: it seemed as if he needed, in gazing at her, to bethink himself who she was; but at last he smiled and said: "Ah! is it you, dear Mademoiselle Paulmann! But why do you please now and then to take the form of a little Snake?" At these strange words, Veronica could not help laughing aloud; and with this she awoke as from a deep dream; and hastily concealed the little mirror, for the door opened, and Conrector Paulmann with Doctor Eckstein entered the room. Doctor Eckstein stopt

forward to the bedside; felt Veronica's pulse with long profound study, and then said, "Ay! ay!" Thereupon he wrote out a prescription; again felt the pulse; a second time said, "Ay! ay!" and then left his patient. But from these disclosures of Doctor Eckstein's, Conrector Paulmann could not clearly make out what it was that particularly ailed Veronica.

EIGHTH VIGIL.

The Library of the Palm-trees. Fortunes of an unhappy Salamander. How the Black Quill caressed a Parsnip, and Registrar Heerbrand was much overtaken with Liquor.

The Student Anselmus had now worked several days with Archivarius Lindhorst; these working hours were for him the happiest of his life; still encircled with lovely tones, with Serpentina's encouraging voice, he was filled and overflowed with a pure delight, which often rose to highest rapture. Every strait, every little care of his needy existence, had vanished from his thoughts; and in the new life, which had risen on him as in serene sunny splendour, he comprehended all the wonders of a higher world, which before had filled him with astonishment, nay, with dread. His copying proceeded rapidly and lightly; for he felt more and more as if he were writing characters long known to him; and he scarcely needed to cast his eye upon the manuscript, while copying it all with the greatest exactness.

Except at the hour of dinner, Archivarius Lindhorst seldom made his appearance; and this always precisely at the moment when Anselmus had finished the last letter of some manuscript: then the Archivarius would hand him another, and directly after, leave him, without uttering a word; having first stirred the ink with a little black rod, and changed the old pens with new sharp-pointed ones. One day, when Anselmus, at the stroke of twelve, had as usual mounted the stair, he found the door through which he commonly entered, standing locked; and Archivarius Lindhorst came forward from the other side, dressed in his strange flower-figured night-gown. He called aloud: "To-day come this way, good Herr Anselmus; for we must to the chamber where Bhogovotgita's masters are waiting for us."

He stept along the corridor, and led Anselmus through the same chambers and halls, as at the first visit. The Student Anselmus again felt astonished at the marvellous beauty

of the garden: but he now perceived that many of the strange flowers, hanging on the dark bushes, were in truth insects glancing with lordly colours, hovering up and down with their little wings, as they danced and whirled in clusters, caressing one another with their antennæ. On the other hand again, the rose and azure coloured birds were odoriferous flowers; and the perfume which they scattered, mounted from their cups in low lovely tones, which, with the gurgling of distant fountains, and the sighing of the high groves and trees, mingled themselves into mysterious accords of a deep unutterable longing. The mock-birds, which had so jeered and flouted him before, were again fluttering to and fro over his head, and crying incessantly with their sharp small voices: "Herr Studiosus, Herr Studiosus, don't be in such a hurry! Don't peep into the clouds so! They may fall about your ears—He! he! Herr Studiosus, put your powder-mantle on; cousin Screech-Owl will fizzle your toupees." And so it went along, in all manner of stupid chatter, till Anselmus left the garden.

Archivarius Lindhorst at last stepped into the azure chamber: the porphyry, with the Golden Pot, was gone; instead of it, in the middle of the room, stood a table overhung with violet-coloured satin, upon which lay the writing-ware already known to Anselmus; and a stuffed arm-chair, covered with the same sort of cloth, was placed beside it.

"Dear Herr Anselmus," said Archivarius Lindhorst, "you have now copied me a number of manuscripts, rapidly and correctly, to my no small contentment: you have gained my confidence; but the hardest is yet behind; and that is the transcribing or rather painting of certain works, written in a peculiar character; I keep them in this room, and they can only be copied on the spot. You will, therefore, in future, work here; but I must recommend to you the greatest foresight and attention; a false stroke, or, which may Heaven forefend, a blot let fall on the original, will plunge you into misfortune."

Anselmus observed that from the golden trunks of the palm-trees, little emerald leaves projected; one of these leaves the Archivarius took hold of; and Anselmus could not but perceive that the leaf was in truth a roll of parchment, which the Archivarius unfolded, and spread out before the Student on the table. Anselmus wondered not a little at these strangely intertwined characters; and

as he looked over the many points, strokes, dashes, and twirls in the manuscript, he almost lost hope of ever copying it. He fell into deep thoughts on the subject.

"Be of courage, young man!" cried the Archivarius; "if thou hast continuing Belief and true Love, *Serpentina* will help thee."

His voice sounded like ringing metal; and as Anselmus looked up in utter terror, Archivarius Lindhorst was standing before him in the kingly form, which, during the first visit, he had assumed in the library. Anselmus felt as if in his deep reverence he could not but sink on his knee; but the Archivarius stepped up the trunk of a palm-tree, and vanished aloft among the emerald leaves. The Student Anselmus perceived that the Prince of the Spirits had been speaking with him, and was now gone up to his study; perhaps intending, by the beams which some of the Planets had despatched to him as envoys, to send back word what was to become of Anselmus and *Serpentina*.

"It may be, too," thought he farther, "that he is expecting news from the Springs of the Nile; or that some magician from Lapland is paying him a visit; me it behoves to set diligently about my task." And with this, he began studying the foreign characters in the roll of parchment.

The strange music of the garden sounded over to him, and encircled him with sweet lovely odours; the mock-birds, too, he still heard giggling and twittering, but could not distinguish their words, a thing which greatly pleased him. At times, also, it was as if the leaves of the palm-trees were rustling, and as if the clear crystal tones, which Anselmus on that fateful Ascension-day had heard under the elder-bush, were beaming and flitting through the room. Wonderfully strengthened by this shining and tinkling, the Student Anselmus directed his eyes and thoughts more and more intensely on the superscription of the parchment roll; and ere long he felt, as it were from his inmost soul, that the characters could denote nothing else than these words: *Of the marriage of the Salamander with the green Snake*. Then resounded a louder triphony of clear crystal bells: "Anselmus! dear Anselmus!" floated to him from the leaves; and, O wonder! on the trunk of the palm-tree the green Snake came winding down.

"*Serpentina! Serpentina!*" cried Anselmus, in the madness of highest rapture; for, as he gazed more earnestly, it was in truth a lovely glorious maiden that, looking at him

with those dark blue eyes, full of inexpressible longing, as they lived in his heart, was hovering down to meet him. The leaves seemed to jut out and expand; on every hand were prickles sprouting from the trunk; but *Serpentina* twisted and winded herself deftly through them; and so drew her fluttering robe, glancing as if in changeful colours, along with her, that, plying round the dainty form, it nowhere caught on the projecting points and prickles of the palm-tree. She sat down by *Anselmus* on the same chair, clasping him with her arm, and pressing him towards her, so that he felt the breath which came from her lips, and the electric warmth of her frame.

"Dear *Anselmus*!" began *Serpentina*, "thou shalt now soon be wholly mine; by thy Belief, by thy Love thou shalt obtain me, and I will bring thee the Golden Pot, which shall make us both happy for evermore."

"O thou kind lovely *Serpentina*!" said *Anselmus*, "if I have but thee, what care I for all else! If thou art but mine, I will joyfully give in to all the wondrous mysteries that have beset me ever since the moment when I first saw thee."

"I know," continued *Serpentina*, "that the strange and mysterious things, with which my father, often merely in the sport of his humour, has surrounded thee, have raised distrust and dread in thy mind; but now, I hope, it shall be so no more; for I come at this moment to tell thee, dear *Anselmus*, from the bottom of my heart and soul, all and sundry to a tittle that thou needest to know for understanding my father, and so for seeing clearly what thy relation to him and to me really is."

Anselmus felt as if he were so wholly clasped and encircled by the gentle lovely form, that only with her could he move and live, and as if it were but the beating of her pulse that throbbed through his nerves and fibres; he listened to each one of her words till it sounded in his inmost heart, and, like a burning ray, kindled in him the rapture of Heaven. He had put his arm round that daintier than dainty waist; but the changeful glistening cloth of her robe was so smooth and slippery, that it seemed to him as if she could at any moment wind herself from his arms, and glide away. He trembled at the thought.

"Ah, do not leave me, gentlest *Serpentina*!" cried he; "thou art my life."

"Not now," said *Serpentina*, "till I have

told thee all that in thy love of me thou canst comprehend. Know then, dearest, that my father is sprung from the wondrous race of the Salamanders; and that I owe my existence to his love for the green Snake. In primeval times, in the Fairyland Atlantis, the potent spirit-prince *Phosphorus* bore rule; and to him the Salamanders, and other Spirits of the Elements, were plighted. Once on a time, the Salamander, whom he loved before all others (it was my father,) chanced to be walking in the stately garden, which *Phosphorus*' mother had decked in the lordliest fashion with her best gifts; and the Salamander heard a tall Lily singing in low tones: 'Press down thy little eyelids, till my Lover, the Morning-wind, awake thee.' He stept towards it: touched by his glowing breath, the Lily opened her leaves; and he saw the Lily's daughter, the green Snake, lying asleep in the hollow of the flower. Then was the Salamander inflamed with warm love for the fair Snake; and he carried her away from the Lily, whose perfumes in nameless lamentation vainly called for her beloved daughter throughout all the garden. For the Salamander had borne her into the palace of *Phosphorus*, and was there beseeching him: 'Wed me with my beloved, and she shall be mine for evermore.'—'Madman, what askest thou!' said the Prince of the Spirits; 'Know that once the Lily was my mistress, and bore rule with me; but the Spark, which I cast into her, threatened to annihilate the fair Lily; and only my victory over the black Dragon, whom now the Spirits of the Earth hold in fetters, maintains her, that her leaves continue strong enough to enclose this Spark, and preserve it within them. But when thou claspest the green Snake, thy fire will consume her frame; and a new Being rapidly arising from her dust, will soar away and leave thee.'

"The Salamander heeded not the warning of the Spirit-prince: full of longing ardour he folded the green Snake in his arms; she crumbled into ashes; a winged Being, born from her dust, soared away through the sky. Then the madness of desperation caught the Salamander; and he ran through the garden, dashing forth fire and flames; and wasted it in his wild fury, till its fairest flowers and blossoms hung down, blackened and scathed; and their lamentation filled the air. The indignant Prince of the Spirits, in his wrath, laid hold of the Salamander, and said: 'Thy fire has burnt out, thy flames are extinguished, thy rays darkened: sink down to the Spirits

of the Earth ; let these mock and jeer thee, and keep thee captive, till the Fire-element shall again kindle, and beam up with thee as with a new being from the Earth.' The poor Salamander sank down extinguished : but now the testy old Earth-spirit, who was Phosphorus' gardener, came forth and said : ' Master ! who has greater cause to complain of the Salamander than I ? Had not all the fair flowers, which he has burnt, been decorated with my gayest metals ; had I not stoutly nursed and tended them, and spent many a fair hue on their leaves ? And yet I must pity the poor Salamander ; for it was but love, in which thou, O Master, hast full often been entangled, that drove him to despair, and made him desolate the garden. Remit him the too harsh punishment ! '— ' His fire is for the present extinguished,' said the Prince of the Spirits ; ' but in the hapless time, when the Speech of Nature shall no longer be intelligible to degenerate man ; when the Spirits of the Elements, banished into their own regions, shall speak to him only from afar, in faint, spent echoes ; when, displaced from the harmonious circle, an infinite longing alone shall give him tidings of the Land of Marvels, which he once might inhabit while Belief and Love still dwelt in his soul : in this hapless time, the fire of the Salamander shall again kindle ; but only to manhood shall he be permitted to rise, and entering wholly into man's necessitous existence, he shall learn to endure its wants and oppressions. Yet not only shall the remembrance of his first state continue with him, but he shall again rise into the sacred harmony of all Nature ; he shall understand its wonders, and the power of his fellow-spirits shall stand at his behest. Then, too, in a Lily-bush, shall he find the green Snake again : and the fruit of his marriage with her shall be three daughters, which, to men, shall appear in the form of their mother. In the spring season these shall disport them in the dark Elder-bush, and sound with their lovely crystal voices. And then if, in that needy and mean age of inward stuntedness, there shall be found a youth who understands their song ; nay, if one of the little Snakes look at him with her kind eyes ; if the look awaken in him forecastings of the distant wondrous Land, to which, having cast away the burden of the Common, he can courageously soar ; if, with love to the Snake, there rise in him belief in the Wonders of Nature, nay, in his own existence amid these Wonders, then the Snake shall be his.

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But not till three youths of this sort have been found and wedded to the three daughters, may the Salamander cast away his heavy burden, and return to his brothers.'—' Permit me, Master,' said the Earth-spirit, ' to make these three daughters a present, which may glorify their life with the husbands they shall find. Let each of them receive from me a Pot, of the fairest metal which I have ; I will polish it with beams borrowed from the diamond ; in its glitter shall our Kingdom of Wonders, as it now exists in the Harmony of universal Nature, be imaged back in glorious dazzling reflection ; and from its interior, on the day of marriage, shall spring forth a Fire-lily, whose eternal blossoms shall encircle the youth that is found worthy, with sweet wafting odours. Soon, too, shall he learn its speech, and understand the wonders of our kingdom, and dwell with his beloved in Atlantis itself.'

" Thou perceivest well, dear Anselmus, that the Salamander of whom I speak is no other than my father. Spite of his higher nature, he was forced to subject himself to the paltriest contradictions of common life ; and hence, indeed, often comes the wayward humour with which he vexes many. He has told me now and then, that for the inward make of mind, which the Spirit-prince Phosphorus required as a condition of marriage with me and my sisters, men have a name at present, which, in truth, they frequently enough misapply : they call it a childlike poetic character. This character, he says, is often found in youths, who, by reason of their high simplicity of manners, and their total want of what is called knowledge of the world, are mocked by the populace. Ah, dear Anselmus ! beneath the Elder-bush, thou understoodest my song, my look : thou lovest the green Snake, thou believest in me, and wilt be mine for evermore ! The fair Lily will bloom forth from the Golden Pot : and we shall dwell, happy, and united, and blessed, in Atlantis together !

" Yet I must not hide from thee that in its deadly battle with the Salamanders and Spirits of the Earth, the black Dragon burst from their grasp, and hurried off through the air. Phosphorus, indeed, again holds him in fetters ; but from the black Quills, which, in the struggle, rained down on the ground, there sprung up hostile Spirits, which on all hands set themselves against the Salamanders and Spirits of the Earth. That woman who so hates thee, dear Anselmus, and who, as my father knows full well, is striving for posses-

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sion of the Golden Pot ; that woman owes her existence to the love of such a Quill (plucked in battle from the Dragon's wing) for a certain Parsnip beside which it dropped. She knows her origin and her power ; for, in the moans and convulsions of the captive Dragon, the secrets of many a mysterious constellation are revealed to her ; and she uses every means and effort to work from the Outward into the Inward and unseen ; while my father, with the beams which shoot forth from the spirit of the Salamander, withstands and subdues her. All the baneful principles which lurk in deadly herbs and poisonous beasts, she collects ; and, mixing them under favourable constellations, raises therewith many a wicked spell, which overwhelms the soul of man with fear and trembling, and subjects him to the power of those Demons, produced from the Dragon when it yielded in battle. Beware of that old woman, dear Anselmus ! She hates thee, because thy childlike pious character has annihilated many of her wicked charms. Keep true, true to me ; soon art thou at the goal !”

“O my Serpentina ! my own Serpentina !” cried the Student Anselmus, “how could I leave thee, how should I not love thee for ever !” A kiss was burning on his lips ; he awoke as from a deep dream : Serpentina had vanished ; six o'clock was striking, and it fell heavy on his heart that to-day he had not copied a single stroke. Full of anxiety, and dreading reproaches from the Archivarius he looked into the sheet : and, O wonder ! the copy of the mysterious manuscript was fairly concluded ; and he thought, on viewing the characters more narrowly, that the writing was nothing else but Serpentina's story of her father, the favourite of the Spirit-prince Phosphorus, in Atlantis, the Land of Marvels. And now entered Archivarius Lindhorst, in his light-gray surtout, with hat and staff : he looked into the parchment on which Anselmus had been writing ; took a large pinch of snuff, and said with a smile : “Just as I thought !— Well, Herr Anselmus, here is your speziesthaler ; we will now to the Linke Bath : do but follow me !” The Archivarius stepped rapidly through the garden, in which there was such a din of singing, whistling, talking, that the Student Anselmus was quite deafened with it, and thanked Heaven when he found himself on the street.

Scarcely had they walked twenty paces, when they met Registrator Heerbrand, who companionably joined them. At the Gate, they

filled their pipes, which they had about them : Registrator Heerbrand complained that he had left his tinder-box behind, and could not strike fire. “Fire !” cried Archivarius Lindhorst, scornfully ; “here is fire enough, and to spare !” and with this he snapped his fingers, out of which came streams of sparks, and directly kindled the pipes. “Do but observe the chemical knack of some men !” said Registrator Heerbrand ; but the Student Anselmus thought, not without internal awe, of the Salamander and his history.

In the Linke Bath, Registrator Heerbrand drank so much strong double beer, that at last, though usually a good-natured quiet man, he began singing student songs in squeaking tenor ; he asked every one sharply, Whether he was his friend or not ? and at last had to be taken home by the Student Anselmus, long after Archivarius Lindhorst had gone his ways.

NINTH VIGIL.

How the Student Anselmus attained to some Sense. The Punch Party—How the Student Anselmus took Convector Paulmann for a Screech-Owl, and the latter felt much hurt at it—The Ink-blot, and its Consequences.

THE strange and mysterious things which day by day befell the Student Anselmus, had entirely withdrawn him from his customary life. He no longer visited any of his friends, and waited every morning with impatience, for the hour of noon, which was to unlock his paradise. And yet while his whole soul was turned to the gentle Serpentina, and the wonders of Archivarius Lindhorst's fairy kingdom, he could not help now and then thinking of Veronica ; nay, often it seemed as if she came before him and confessed with blushes how heartily she loved him ; how much she longed to rescue him from the phantoms, which were mocking and befooling him. At times he felt as if a foreign power, suddenly breaking in on his mind, were drawing him with resistless force to the forgotten Veronica ; as if he must needs follow her whither she pleased to lead him, nay, as if he were bound to her by ties that would not break. That very night after Serpentina had first appeared to him in the form of a lovely maiden ; after the wondrous secret of the Salamander's nuptials with the green Snake had been disclosed, Veronica came before him more vividly than ever. Nay, not till he awoke, was he clearly aware that he had but been dreaming : for he had felt

persuaded that Veronica was actually beside him, complaining with an expression of keen sorrow, which pierced through his inmost soul, that he should sacrifice her deep true love to fantastic visions, which only the distemper of his mind called into being, and which, moreover, would at last prove his ruin. Veronica was lovelier than he had ever seen her; he could not drive her from his thoughts; and in this perplexed and contradictory mood he hastened out, hoping to get rid of it by a morning walk.

A secret magic influence led him on to the Pirna gate: he was just turning into a cross street, when Conrector Paulmann, coming after him, cried out: "Ay, ay!—Dear Herr Anselmus!—*Amice! Amico!* Where, in Heaven's name, have you been buried so long? We never see you at all. Do you know, Veronica is longing very much to have another song with you. So come along; you were just on the road to me, at any rate."

The Student Anselmus, constrained by this friendly violence, went along with the Conrector. On entering the house, they were met by Veronica, attired with such neatness and attention, that Conrector Paulmann, full of amazement, asked her: "Why so decked, Mamsell? Were you expecting visitors? Well, heré I bring you Herr Anselmus."

The Student Anselmus, in daintily and elegantly kissing Veronica's hand, felt a small soft pressure from it, which shot like a stream of fire over all his frame. Veronica was cheerfulness, was grace itself; and when Paulmann left them for his study, she contrived, by all manner of rogueries and waggeries, so to uplift the Student Anselmus, that he at last quite forgot his bashfulness, and jigged round the room with the light-headed maiden. But here again the Demon of Awkwardness got hold of him: he jolted on a table, and Veronica's pretty little work-box fell to the floor. Anselmus lifted it; the lid had started up; and a little round metallic mirror was glittering on him, into which he looked with peculiar delight. Veronica glided softly up to him; laid her hand on his arm, and pressing close to him, looked over his shoulder into the mirror also. And now Anselmus felt as if a battle were beginning in his soul: thoughts, images flashed out—Archivarius Lindhorst,—Serpentina,—the green Snake: at last the tumult abated, and all this chaos arranged and shaped itself into distinct consciousness.

It was now clear to him that he had always thought of Veronica alone; nay, that the form which had yesterday appeared to him in the blue chamber, had been no other than Veronica; and that the wild legend of the Salamander's marriage with the green Snake, had merely been written down by him from the manuscript, but nowise related in his hearing. He wondered not a little at all these dreams; and ascribed them solely to the heated state of mind into which Veronica's love had brought him, as well as to his working with Archivarius Lindhorst, in whose room there were, besides, so many strangely intoxicating odours. He could not but laugh heartily at the mad whim of falling in love with a little green Snake; and taking a well-fed Privy Archivarius for a Salamander: "Yes, yes! It is Veronica!" cried he, aloud; but on turning round his head, he looked right into Veronica's blue eyes, from which warmest love was beaming. A faint soft Ah! escaped her lips, which at that moment were burning on his.

"O happy I!" sighed the enraptured Student: "What I yesternight but dreamed, is in very deed mine to-day."

"But wilt thou really wed me, then, when thou art Hofrath?" said Veronica.

"That I will," replied the Student Anselmus; and just then the door creaked, and Conrector Paulmann entered with the words:—

"Now, dear Herr Anselmus, I will not let you go to-day. You will put up with a bad dinner; then Veronica will make us delightful coffee, which we shall drink with Registrar Heerbrand, for he promised to come hither."

"Ah, best Herr Conrector!" answered the Student Anselmus, "are you not aware that I must go to Archivarius Lindhorst's and copy?"

"Look you, *Amice!*" said Conrector Paulmann, holding up his watch, which pointed to half past twelve.

The Student Anselmus saw clearly that he was much too late for Archivarius Lindhorst; and he complied with the Conrector's wishes the more readily, as he might now hope to look at Veronica the whole day long, to obtain many a stolen glance, and little squeeze of the hand, nay, even to succeed in conquering a kiss. So high had the Student Anselmus's desires now mounted; he felt more and more contented in soul, the more fully he convinced himself that he should soon be delivered from all the fantastic

imagination, which really might have made a sheer idiot of him.

Registrar Heerbrand came, as he had promised, after dinner; and coffee being over, and the dusk come on, the Registrar, puckering his face together, and gaily rubbing his hands, signified that he had something about him, which, if mingled and reduced to form, as it were, paged and titled, by Veronica's fair hands, might be pleasant to them all, on this October evening.

"Come out, then, with this mysterious substance which you carry with you, most valued Registrar," cried Conrector Paulmann. Then Registrar Heerbrand shoved his hand into his deep pocket, and at three journeys, brought out a bottle of arrack, two citrons, and a quantity of sugar. Before half an hour had passed, a savoury bowl of punch was smoking on Paulmann's table. Veronica drank their health in a sip of the liquor; and ere long there was plenty of gay, good-natured chat among the friends. But the Student Anselmus, as the spirit of the drink mounted into his head, felt all the images of those wondrous things, which for some time he had experienced, again coming through his mind. He saw the Archivarius in his damask night-gown, which glittered like phosphorus; he saw the azure room, the golden palm-trees; nay, it now seemed to him as if he must still believe in Serpentina: there was a fermentation, a conflicting tumult in his soul. Veronica handed him a glass of punch; and in taking it he gently touched her hand. "Serpentina! Veronica!" sighed he to himself. He sank into deep dreams; but Registrar Heerbrand cried quite aloud: "A strange old gentleman, whom nobody can fathom, he is and will be, this Archivarius Lindhorst. Well, long life to him! Your glass, Herr Anselmus!"

Then the Student Anselmus awoke from his dreams, and said, as he touched glasses with Registrar Heerbrand: "That proceeds, respected Herr Registrar, from the circumstance, that Archivarius Lindhorst is in reality a Salamander, who wasted in his fury the Spirit-prince Phosphorus's garden, because the green Snake had flown away from him."

"How? what?" inquired Conrector Paulmann.

"Yes," continued the Student Anselmus; "and for this reason he is now forced to be a Royal Archivarius; and to keep house here in Dresden with his three daughters, who, after all, are nothing more than little

gold-green Snakes, that bask in elder-bushes, and traitorously sing, and seduce away young people, like as many syrens."

"Herr Anselmus! Herr Anselmus!" cried Conrector Paulmann, "is there a crack in your brain? In Heaven's name, what monstrous stuff is this you are babbling?"

"He is right," interrupted Registrar Heerbrand: "that fellow, that Archivarius, is a cursed Salamander, and strikes you fiery snips from his fingers, which burn holes in your surtout like red-hot tinder. Ay, ay, thou art in the right, brotherkin Anselmus; and whoever says No, is saying No to me!" And at these words Registrar Heerbrand struck the table with his fist, till the glasses rung again.

"Registrar! are you frantic?" cried the wroth Conrector. "Herr Studiosus, Herr Studiosus! what is this you are about again?"

"Ah!" said the Student, "you too are nothing but a bird, a screech-owl, that frizzles toupees, Herr Conrector!"

"What?—I a bird?—a screech-owl, a frizzler?" cried the Conrector, full of indignation: "Sir, you are mad, horn mad!"

"But the crone will get a clutch of him," cried Registrar Heerbrand.

"Yes, the crone is potent," interrupted the Student Anselmus, "though she is but of mean descent, for her father was nothing but a ragged wing-feather, and her mother a dirty parsnip: but the most of her power she owes to all sorts of baneful creatures, poisonous vermin which she keeps about her."

"That is a horrid calumny," cried Veronica, with eyes all glowing in anger: "old Liese is a wise woman; and the Black Cat is no baneful creature, but a polished young gentleman of elegant manners, and her cousin german."

"Can *he* eat Salamanders without singing his whiskers, and dying like a candle-snuff?" cried Registrar Heerbrand.

"No, no!" shouted the Student Anselmus, "that he never can in this world; and the green Snake loves me, and I have looked into Serpentina's eyes."

"The Cat will scratch them out," cried Veronica.

"Salamander, Salamander beats them all, all," hollowed Conrector Paulmann, in the highest fury: "But am I in a mad-house? Am I mad myself? What unwise stuff am I chattering? Yes I am mad too! mad too!" And with this, Conrector Paulmann

started up, tore the peruke from his head, and dashed it against the ceiling of the room; till the battered locks whizzed, and, tangled into utter disorder, rained down the powder far and wide. Then the Student Anselmus and Registrar Heerbrand seized the punch-bowl and the glasses, and, hallooing and huzzaing, pitched them against the ceiling also, and the sherds fell jingling and tingling about their ears.

"*Vivat* the Salamander! — *Pereat, pereat* the crone! — Break the metal mirror! — Dig the cat's eyes out! — Bird, little Bird, from the air — *Eheu — Eheu — Evoe — Evoe*, Salamander!" So shrieked and shouted, and bellowed the three, like utter maniacs. With loud weeping, Fränzchen ran out; but Veronica lay whimpering for pain and sorrow on the sofa.

At this moment the door opened: all was instantly still; and a little man, in a small gray cloak, came stepping in. His countenance had a singular air of gravity; and especially the round hooked nose, on which was a huge pair of spectacles, distinguished itself from all the noses ever seen. He wore a strange peruke, too; more like a feather-cap than a wig.

"Ay, many good evenings!" grated and cackled the little comical mannikin. "Is the Student Herr Anselmus among you, gentlemen? — Best compliments from Archivarius Lindhorst; he has waited to-day in vain for Herr Anselmus; but to-morrow he begs, most respectfully, to request that Herr Anselmus would not miss the hour."

And with this he went out again; and all of them now saw clearly that the grave little mannikin was in fact a gray Parrot. Conrector Paulmann and Registrar Heerbrand raised a horse-laugh, which reverberated through the room; and in the intervals, Veronica was moaning and whimpering, as if torn by nameless sorrow; but, as to the Student Anselmus, the madness of inward horror was darting through him; and unconsciously he ran through the door, along the streets. Instinctively he reached his house, his garret. Ere long Veronica came in to him, with a peaceful and friendly look, and asked him why, in the festivity, he had so vexed her; and desired him to be upon his guard against imaginations, while working at Archivarius Lindhorst's. "Good night, good night, my beloved friend!" whispered Veronica, scarce audibly, and breathed a kiss on his lips. He stretched out his arms to clasp her, but the dreamy

shape had vanished, and he awoke cheerful and refreshed. He could not but laugh heartily at the effects of the punch; but in thinking of Veronica, he felt pervaded by a most delightful feeling. "To her alone," said he within himself, "do I owe this return from my insane whims. In good sooth, I was little better than the man who believed himself to be of glass; or he who durst not leave his room for fear the hens should eat him, as he was a barleycorn. But so soon as I am Hofrath, I marry Mademoiselle Paulmann, and be happy, and there's an end of it."

At noon, as he walked through Archivarius Lindhorst's garden, he could not help wondering how all this had once appeared so strange and marvellous. He now saw nothing past common; earthen flowerpots, quantities of geraniums, myrtles, and the like. Instead of the glittering party-coloured birds which used to flout him, there were nothing but a few sparrows, fluttering hither and thither, which raised an unpleasant unintelligible cry at sight of Anselmus. The azure room also had quite a different look; and he could not understand how that glaring blue, and those unnatural golden trunks of palm-trees, with their shapeless glistening leaves, should ever have pleased him for a moment. The Archivarius looked at him with a most peculiar ironical smile, and asked: "Well, how did you like the punch last night, good Anselmus?"

"Ah, doubtless you have heard from the gray Parrot how——" answered the Student Anselmus, quite ashamed; but he stopt short, bethinking him that this appearance of the Parrot was all a piece of jugglery.

"I was there myself," said Archivarius Lindhorst; "did you not see me? But, among the mad pranks you were playing, I had nigh got lamed: for I was sitting in the punch-bowl, at the very moment when Registrar Heerbrand laid hands on it, to dash it against the ceiling; and I had to make a quick retreat into the Conrector's pipe-head. Now, adieu, Herr Anselmus! Be diligent at your task; for the lost day also you shall have a speziesthaler, because you worked so well before."

"How can the Archivarius babble such mad stuff?" thought the Student Anselmus, sitting down at the table to begin the copying of the manuscript, which Archivarius Lindhorst had as usual spread out before him. But on the parchment roll, he perceived so many strange crabbed strokes and twirls all

twisted together in inexplicable confusion, offering no resting point for the eye, that it seemed to him well-nigh impossible to copy all this exactly. Nay, in glancing over the whole, you might have thought the parchment was nothing but a piece of thickly veined marble, or a stone sprinkled over with lichens. Nevertheless he determined to do his utmost, and boldly dipt in his pen; but the ink would not run, do what he liked; impatiently he spirted the point of his pen against his nail, and—Heaven and Earth!—a huge blot fell on the outspread original! Hissing and foaming, rose a blue flash from the blot; and crackling and wavering, shot through the room to the ceiling. Then a thick vapour rolled from the walls; the leaves began to rustle, as if shaken by a tempest; and down out of them darted glaring basilisks in sparkling fire; these kindled the vapour, and the bickering masses of flame rolled round Anselmus. The golden trunks of the palm-trees became gigantic snakes, which knocked their frightful heads together with piercing metallic clang; and wound their scaly bodies round Anselmus.

“Madman! suffer now the punishment of what, in capricious irreverence, thou hast done!” So cried the frightful voice of the crowned Salamander, who appeared above the snakes like a glittering beam in the midst of the flame: and now the yawning jaws of the snakes poured forth cataracts of fire on Anselmus; and it was as if the fire-streams were congealing about his body, and changing into a firm ice-cold mass. But while Anselmus’ limbs, more and more pressed together, and contracted, stiffened into powerlessness, his sense passed away. On returning to himself, he could not stir a joint: he was as if surrounded with a glistening brightness, on which he struck if he but tried to lift his hand.—Alas! He was sitting in a well-corked crystal bottle, on a shelf, in the library of Archivarius Lindhorst.

TENTH VIGIL.

Sorrows of the Student Anselmus in the Glass Bottle. Happy Life of the Cross Church Scholars and Law Clerks. The Battle in the Library of Archivarius Lindhorst. Victory of the Salamander, and Deliverance of the Student Anselmus.

JUSTLY may I doubt whether thou, favourable reader, wert ever sealed up in a glass bottle; or even that any vivid tormenting dream ever oppressed thee with such necromantic trouble. If so were the case, thou

wilt keenly enough figure out the poor Student Anselmus’ wo: but shouldst thou never have even dreamed such things, then will thy quick fancy, for Anselmus’ sake and mine, be obliging enough still to enclose itself for a few moments in the crystal. Thou art drowned in dazzling splendour; all objects about thee appear illuminated and begirt with beaming rainbow hues; all quivers and wavers, and clangs and drones, in the sheen; thou art swimming, motionless and powerless as in a firmly congealed ether, which so presses thee together that the spirit in vain gives orders to the dead and stiffened body. Weightier and weightier the mountain burden lies on thee; more and more does every breath exhaust the little handful of air, that still played up and down in the narrow space; thy pulse throbs madly; and cut through with horrid anguish, every nerve is quivering and bleeding in this deadly agony. Have pity, favourable reader, on the Student Anselmus! Him this inexpressible torture laid hold of in his glass prison: but he felt too well that death could not relieve him; for did he not awake from the deep swoon into which the excess of pain had cast him, and open his eyes to new wretchedness, when the morning sun shone clear into the room? He could move no limb; but his thoughts struck against the glass, stupifying him with discordant clang; and instead of the words, which the spirit used to speak from within him, he now heard only the stifled din of madness. Then he exclaimed in his despair: “O Serpentina! Serpentina! save me from this agony of Hell!” And it was as if faint sighs breathed around him, which spread like green transparent elder-leaves over the glass; the clanging ceased: the dazzling perplexing glitter was gone, and he breathed more freely.

“Have not I myself solely to blame for my misery? Ah! have not I sinned against thee, thou kind, beloved Serpentina? Have not I raised vile doubts of thee? Have not I lost my Belief; and with it, all, all that was to make me so blessed? Ah! thou wilt now never, never be mine; for me the Golden Pot is lost, and I shall not behold its wonders any more. Ah! but once could I see thee; but once hear thy kind sweet voice, thou lovely Serpentina!”

So wailed the Student Anselmus, caught with deep piercing sorrow: then spoke a voice close by him: “What the devil ails you, Herr Studiosus? What makes you lament so, out of all compass and measure?”

The Student Anselmus now perceived that on the same shelf with him were five other bottles, in which he perceived three Cross Church Scholars, and two Law Clerks.

"Ah, gentlemen, my fellows in misery," cried he, "how is it possible for you to be so calm, nay, so happy, as I read in your cheerful looks? You are sitting here corked up in glass bottles, as well as I, and cannot move a finger; nay, not think a reasonable thought, but there rises such a murder-tumult of clanging and droning, and in your head itself a tumbling and rumbling enough to drive one mad. But doubtless you do not believe in the Salamander, or the green Snake."

"You are pleased to jest, Mein Herr Studiosus," replied a Cross Church Scholar; "we have never been better off than at present: for the speziesthalers which the mad Archivarius gave us for all manner of pot-hook copies, are ehinking in our pockets; we have now no Italian choruses to learn by heart; we go every day to Joseph's or other houses of call, where the double-beer is sufficient, and we can look a pretty girl in the face; so we sing like real Students, *Gaudeamus igitur*, and are contented in spirit!"

"They of the Cross are quite right," added a Law Clerk; "I too am well furnished with speziesthalers, like my dearest colleague beside me here; and we now diligently walk about on the Weinberg, instead of scurvy Act-writing within four walls."

"But, my best, worthiest masters!" said the Student Anselmus, "do you not observe, then, that you are all and sundry corked up in glass bottles, and cannot for your hearts walk a hairsbreadth?"

Here the Cross Church Scholars and the Law Clerks set up a loud laugh, and cried: "The Student is mad; he fancies himself to be sitting in a glass bottle, and is standing on the Elbe-bridge and looking right down into the water. Let us go along!"

"Ah!" sighed the Student, "they have never seen the kind *Serpentina*; they know not what Freedom, and life in Love, and Belief, signifies; and so by reason of their folly and low-mindedness, they feel not the oppression of the imprisonment into which the Salamander has cast them. But I, unhappy I, must perish in want and wo, if she, whom I so inexpressibly love, do not deliver me!"

Then waving in faint tinkles, *Serpentina's* voice flitted through the room: "Anselmus!

believe, love, hope!" And every tone beamed into Anselmus' prison; and the crystal yielded to his pressure, and expanded, till the breast of the captive could move and heave.

The torment of his situation became less and less, and he saw clearly that *Serpentina* still loved him; and that it was she alone who had rendered his confinement tolerable. He disturbed himself no more about his inane companions in misfortune; but directed all his thoughts and meditations on the gentle *Serpentina*. Suddenly, however, there arose on the other side a dull croaking repulsive murmur. Ere long he could observe that it proceeded from an old coffee-pot, with half-broken lid, standing over against him on a little shelf. As he looked at it more narrowly, the ugly features of a wrinkled old woman by degrees unfolded themselves; and in a few moments, the Apple-wife of the *Schwarzthor* stood before him. She grinned and laughed at him, and cried with screeching voice: "Ay, ay, my pretty boy, must thou lie in limbo now? To the crystal thou hast run: did not I tell thee long ago?"

"Mock and jeer me; do, thou cursed witch!" said the Student Anselmus, "thou art to blame for it all; but the Salamander will catch thee, thou vile Parsnip!"

"Ho, ho!" replied the crone, "not so proud, good ready-writer! Thou hast squelched my little sons to pieces, thou hast burnt my nose; but I must still like thee, thou knave, for once thou wert a pretty fellow; and my little daughter likes thee too. Out of the crystal thou wilt never come unless I help thee: up thither I cannot clamber; but my cousin gossip the Rat, that lives close behind thee, will eat the shelf in two; thou shalt jingle down, and I catch thee in my apron, that thy nose be not broken, or thy fine sleek face at all injured: then I carry thee to Mamsell *Veronica*; and thou shalt marry her, when thou art Hofrath."

"Avaunt, thou devil's brood!" cried the Student Anselmus full of fury; "it was thou alone, and thy hellish arts, that brought me to the sin which I must now expiate. But I bear it all patiently: for only here can I be, where the kind *Serpentina* encircles me with love and consolation. Hear it, thou beldam, and despair! I bid defiance to thy power: I love *Serpentina*, and none but her for ever; I will not be Hofrath, will not look at *Veronica*, who by thy means entices me to evil. Can the green Snake not be mine,

I will die in sorrow and longing. Take thyself away, thou filthy rook! Take thyself away!"

The crone laughed, till the chamber rung: "Sit and die, then," cried she; "but now it is time to set to work; for I have other trade to follow here." She threw off her black cloak, and so stood in hideous nakedness; then she ran round in circles, and large folios came tumbling down to her; out of these she tore parchment leaves, and rapidly patching them together in artful combination, and fixing them on her body, in a few instants she was dressed as if in strange party-coloured harness. Spitting fire, the black Cat darted out of the ink-glass, which was standing on the table, and ran mewling towards the crone, who shrieked in loud triumph, and along with him vanished through the door.

Anselmus observed that she went towards the azure chamber; and directly he heard a hissing and storming in the distance; the birds in the garden were crying; the Parrot creaked out: "Help! help! Thieves! thieves!" That moment the crone returned with a bound into the room, carrying the Golden Pot on her arm, and with hideous gestures, shrieking wildly through the air: "Joy! joy, little son!—Kill the green Snake! To her, son! to her!"

Anselmus thought he heard a deep moaning, heard Serpentina's voice. Then horror and despair took hold of him: he gathered all his force, he dashed violently, as if nerve and artery were bursting, against the crystal; a piercing clang went through the room, and the Archivarius in his bright damask nightgown was standing in the door.

"Hey, hey! vermin!—Mad spell!—Witchwork!—Hither, holla!" So shouted he: then the black hair of the crone started up in tufts; her red eyes glanced with infernal fire, and clenching together the peaked fangs of her abominable jaws, she hissed: "Hiss at him! hiss at him! hiss!" and laughed and neighed in scorn and mockery, and pressed the Golden Pot firmly towards her, and threw out of it handfuls of glittering earth on the Archivarius; but as it touched the nightgown, the earth changed into flowers, which rained down on the ground. Then the lilies of the nightgown flickered and flamed up; and the Archivarius caught these lilies blazing in sparky fire and dashed them on the witch: she howled for agony; but still as she leapt aloft and shook her harness of parchment, the lilies went out, and fell away into ashes.

"To her, my lad!" creaked the crone: then the black Cat darted through the air, and soused over the Archivarius' head towards the door; but the gray Parrot fluttered out against him; caught him with his crooked bill by the nape, till red fiery blood burst down over his neck; and Serpentina's voice cried: "Saved! saved!" Then the crone, foaming with rage and desperation, darted out upon the Archivarius: she threw the Golden Pot behind her, and holding up the long talons of her skinny fists, was for clutching the Archivarius by the throat: but he instantly doffed his nightgown, and hurled it against her. Then, hissing, and sputtering, and bursting, shot blue flames from the parchment leaves, and the crone rolled round in howling agony, and strove to get fresh earth from the Pot, fresh parchment leaves from the books, that she might stifle the blazing flames; and whenever any earth or leaves came down on her, the flames went out. But now, from the interior of the Archivarius issued fiery crackling beams, and darted on the crone.

"Hey, hey! To it again! Salamander! Victory!" clanged the Archivarius' voice through the chamber; and a hundred bolts whirled forth in fiery circles round the shrieking crone. Whizzing and buzzing flew Cat and Parrot in their furious battle; but at last the Parrot, with his strong wing, dashed the Cat to the ground; and with his talons transfixing and holding fast his adversary, which, in deadly agony, uttered horrid mews and howls, he, with his sharp bill, picked out his glowing eyes, and the burning froth spouted from them. Then thick vapour streamed up from the spot where the crone, hurled to the ground, was lying under the nightgown: her howling, her terrific, piercing cry of lamentation, died away in the remote distance. The smoke, which had spread abroad with irresistible smell, cleared off; the Archivarius picked up his nightgown; and under it lay an ugly Parsnip.

"Honoured Herr Archivarius, here let me offer you the vanquished foe," said the Parrot, holding out a black hair in his beak to Archivarius Lindhorst.

"Very right, my worthy friend," replied the Archivarius: "here lies my vanquished foe, too: be so good now as manage what remains. This very day, as a small douceur, you shall have six cocoa-nuts, and a new pair of spectacles also, for I see the Cat has villainously broken the glasses of these old ones."

"Yours for ever, most honoured friend and patron!" answered the Parrot, much delighted; then took the Parsnip in his bill, and fluttered out with it by the window, which Archivarius Lindhorst had opened for him.

The Archivarius now lifted the Golden Pot, and cried, with a strong voice, "Serpentina! Serpentina!" But as the Student Anselmus, joying in the destruction of the vile beldam who had hurried him into misfortune, cast his eyes on the Archivarius, behold, here stood once more the high majestic form of the Spirit-prince, looking up to him with indescribable dignity and grace. "Anselmus," said the Spirit-prince, "not thou, but a hostile Principle, which strove destructively to penetrate into thy nature, and divide thee against thyself, was to blame for thy unbelief. Thou hast kept thy faithfulness: be free and happy." A bright flash quivered through the spirit of Anselmus: the royal triphony of the crystal bells sounded stronger and louder than he had ever heard it: his nerves and fibres thrilled; but, swelling higher and higher, the melodious tones rang through the room; the glass which enclosed Anselmus broke; and he rushed into the arms of his dear and gentle Serpentina.

ELEVENTH YIGIL.

Conrector Paulmann's anger at the Madness which had broken out in his Family—How Registrar Heerbrand became Hofrath; and, in the keenest Frost, walked about in Shoes and silk Stockings—Veronica's Confessions—Betrothment over the steaming Soup-plate.

"But tell me, best Registrar! how the cursed punch last night could so mount into our heads, and drive us to all manner of *allotria*?" So said Conrector Paulmann, as he next morning entered his room, which still lay full of broken sherds, with his hapless peruke, dissolved into its original elements, floating in punch among the ruin. For after the Student Anselmus ran out of doors, Conrector Paulmann and Registrar Heerbrand had still kept trotting and hobbling up and down the room, shouting like maniacs, and butting their heads together; till Fränzchen, with much labour, carried her vertiginous papa to bed; and Registrar Heerbrand, in the deepest exhaustion, sunk on the sofa, which Veronica had left, taking refuge in her bed-room. Registrar Heerbrand had his blue handkerchief tied about his head; he looked quite pale and melancholic, and moaned out: "Ah, worthy Conrector, not the punch which Mamsell Ver-

onica most admirably brewed, no! but simply that cursed Student is to blame for all the mischief. Do you not observe that he has long been *mente captus*? And are you not aware that madness is infectious? One fool makes twenty; pardon me, it is an old proverb: especially when you have drunk a glass or two, you fall into madness quite readily, and then involuntarily you manœuvre, and go through your exercise, just as the crack-brained fogleman makes the motion. Would you believe it, Conrector? I am still giddy when I think of that gray Parrot!"

"Gray fiddlestick!" interrupted the Conrector: "it was nothing but Archivarius Lindhorst's little old *Famulus*, who had thrown a gray cloak over him, and was seeking the Student Anselmus."

"It may be," answered Registrar Heerbrand; "but, I must confess, I am quite downcast in spirit; the whole night through there was such a piping and organing."

"That was I," said the Conrector, "for I snore loud."

"Well, may be," answered the Registrar: "but, Conrector, Conrector! ah, not without cause did I wish to raise some cheerfulness among us last night.—And that Anselmus has spoiled all! You know not—O Conrector, Conrector!" And with this, Registrar Heerbrand started up; plucked the cloth from his head, embraced the Conrector, warmly pressed his hand, and again cried, in quite heart-breaking tone: "O Conrector, Conrector!" and snatching his hat and staff, rushed out of doors.

"This Anselmus comes not over my threshold again," said Conrector Paulmann; "for I see very well, that, with this moping madness of his, he robs the best gentlemen of their senses. The Registrar is now over with it too: I have hitherto kept safe; but the Devil, who knocked hard last night in our carousal, may get in at last, and play his tricks with me. So, *Apage, Satanas!* Off with thee, Anselmus!" Veronica had grown quite pensive; she spoke no word; only smiled now and then very oddly, and liked best to be alone. "She, too, has Anselmus in her head," said the Conrector, full of spleen: "but it is well that he does not show himself here; I know he fears me, this Anselmus, and so he never comes."

These concluding words Conrector Paulmann spoke aloud; then the tears rushed into Veronica's eyes, and she said, sobbing: "Ah! how can Anselmus come? He has long been corked up in the glass bottle."

“How? What?” cried Conrector Paulmann. “Ah, Heaven! ah, Heaven! she is doting too, like the Registrar: the loud fit will soon come! Ah, thou cursed, abominable, thrice-cursed Anselmus!” He ran forth directly to Doctor Eckstein; who smiled, and again said: “Ay! ay!” This time, however, he prescribed nothing; but added, to the little he had uttered, the following words, as he walked away: “Nerves! Come round of itself. Take the air; walks; amusements; theatre; playing *Soutagskind*, *Schwestern von Prag*. Come round of itself.”

“So eloquent I have seldom seen the Doctor,” thought Conrector Paulmann; “really talkative, I declare!”

Several days and weeks and months were gone; Anselmus had vanished; but Registrar Heerbrand also did not make his appearance: not till the fourth of February, when the Registrar, in a new fashionable coat of the finest cloth, in shoes and silk stockings, notwithstanding the keen frost, and with a large nosegay of fresh flowers in his hand, did enter precisely at noon into the parlour of Conrector Paulmann, who wondered not a little to see his friend so dizened. With a solemn air, Registrar Heerbrand stepped forward to Conrector Paulmann; embraced him with the finest elegance, and then said: “Now at last, on the Saint’s day of your beloved and most honoured Mamsell Veronica, I will tell you out, straight forward, what I have long had lying at my heart. That evening, that unfortunate evening, when I put the ingredients of our noxious punch in my pocket, I purposed imparting to you a piece of good news, and celebrating the happy day in convivial joys. Already I had learned that I was to be made Hofrath; for which promotion I have now the patent, *cum nomine et sigillo Principis*, in my pocket.”

“Ah! Herr Registr—Herr Hofrath Heerbrand, I meant to say,” stammered the Conrector.

“But it is you, most honoured Conrector,” continued the new Hofrath; “it is you alone that can complete my happiness. For a long time, I have in secret loved your daughter, Mamsell Veronica; and I can boast of many a kind look which she has given me, evidently showing that she would not cast me away. In one word, honoured Conrector! I, Hofrath Heerbrand, do now entreat of you the hand of your most amiable Mamsell Veronica, whom I, if you have nothing against it, purpose shortly to take home as my wife.”

Conrector Paulmann, full of astonishment,

clapped his hands repeatedly, and cried: “Ay, ay, ay! Herr Registr—Herr Hofrath, I meant to say—who would have thought it? Well, if Veronica does really love you, I for my share cannot object: nay, perhaps, her present melancholy is nothing but concealed love for you, most honoured Hofrath! You know what freaks they have!”

At this moment Veronica entered, pale and agitated, as she now commonly was. Then Hofrath Heerbrand stepped towards her, mentioned in a neat speech her Saint’s day, and handed her the odorous nosegay, along with a little packet; out of which, when she opened it, a pair of glittering earrings beamed up to her. A rapid flying blush tinted her cheeks; her eyes sparkled in joy, and she cried: “O Heaven! These are the very earrings which I wore some weeks ago, and thought so much of.”

“How can this be, dearest Mamsell,” interrupted Hofrath Heerbrand, somewhat alarmed and hurt, “when I bought these jewels not an hour ago, in the Schlossgasse, for current money?”

But Veronica heeded him not; she was standing before the mirror to witness the effect of the trinkets, which she had already suspended in her pretty little ears. Conrector Paulmann disclosed to her, with grave countenance and solemn tone, his friend Heerbrand’s preferment and present proposal. Veronica looked at the Hofrath with a searching look, and said: “I have long known that you wished to marry me. Well, be it so! I promise you my heart and hand; but I must now unfold to you, to both of you, I mean, my father and my bridegroom, much that is lying heavy on my heart; yes, even now, though the soup should get cold, which I see Fränzchen is just putting on the table.”

Without waiting for the Conrector’s or the Hofrath’s reply, though the words were visibly hovering on the lips of both, Veronica continued: “You may believe me, best father, I loved Anselmus from my heart, and when Registrar Heerbrand, who is now become Hofrath himself, assured us that Anselmus might probably enough get some such length, I resolved that he and no other should be my husband. But then it seemed as if alien hostile beings were for snatching him away from me: I had recourse to old Liese, who was once my nurse, but is now a wise woman, and a great enchantress. She promised to help me, and give Anselmus wholly into my hands. We went at midnight on the Equinox to the crossing of the

roads : she conjured certain hellish spirits, and, by aid of the black Cat, we manufactured a little metallic mirror, in which I, directing my thoughts on Anselmus, had but to look, in order to rule him wholly in heart and mind. But now I heartily repent having done all this; and here abjure all Satanic arts. The Salamander has conquered old Liese; I heard her shrieks; but there was no help to be given: so soon as the Parrot had eaten the Parsnip, my metallic mirror broke in two with a piercing clang." Veronica took out both the pieces of the mirror, and a lock of hair from her work-box, and handing them to Hofrath Heerbrand, she proceeded: "Here, take the fragments of the mirror, dear Hofrath; throw them down, to-night, at twelve o'clock, over the Elbe-bridge, from the place where the Cross stands; the stream is not frozen there: the lock, however, do you wear on your faithful breast. I here abjure all magic: and heartily wish Anselmus joy of his good fortune, seeing he is wedded with the green Snake, who is much prettier and richer than I. You, dear Hofrath, I will love and reverence as becomes a true honest wife."

"Alake! Alake!" cried Conrector Paulmann, full of sorrow; "she is cracked, she is cracked; she can never be Frau Hofrathinn; she is cracked!"

"Not in the smallest," interrupted Hofrath Heerbrand; "I know well that Mamsell Veronica has had some kindness for the loutish Anselmus; and it may be that, in some fit of passion, she has had recourse to the wise woman, who, as I perceive, can be no other than the card-caster and coffee-pourer of the Seethor; in a word, old Rauerin. Nor can it be denied that there are secret arts, which exert their influence on men but too balefully; we read of such in the Ancients, and doubtless there are still such; but as to what Mamsell Veronica is pleased to say about the victory of the Salamander, and the marriage of Anselmus with the green Snake, this, in reality, I take for nothing but a poetic allegory; a sort of song, wherein she sings her entire farewell to the Student."

"Take it for what you will, best Hofrath!" cried Veronica; "perhaps for a very stupid dream."

"That I nowise do," replied Hofrath Heerbrand; "for I know well that Anselmus himself is possessed by secret powers, which vex him and drive him on to all imaginable mad freaks."

Conrector Paulmann could stand it no

longer; he broke loose: "Hold! For the love of Heaven hold! Are we again overtaken with the cursed punch, or has Anselmus' madness come over us too? Herr Hofrath, what stuff is this you are talking? I will suppose, however, that it is love which haunts your brain: this soon comes to rights in marriage; otherwise I should be apprehensive that you too had fallen into some shade of madness, most honoured Herr Hofrath; then what would become of the future branches of the family, inheriting the *malum* of their parents? But now I give my paternal blessing to this happy union; and permit you as bride and bridegroom to take a kiss."

This happened forthwith; and thus before the presented soup had grown cold, was a formal betrothment concluded. In a few weeks, Frau Hofrathinn Heerbrand was actually, as she had been in vision, sitting in the balcony of a fine house in the Neumarkt, and looking down with a smile on the beaux, who passing by turned their glasses up to her, and said: "She is a heavenly woman, the Hofrathinn Heerbrand."

TWELFTH VIGIL.

Account of the Freehold Property to which Anselmus removed, as Son-in-law of Archivarius Lindhorst; and how he lives there with Serpentina. Conclusion.

How deeply did I feel, in the centre of my spirit, the blessedness of the Student Anselmus, who now, indissolubly united with his gentle Serpentina, has withdrawn to the mysterious Land of Wonders, recognised by him as the home towards which his bosom, filled with strange forecastings, had always longed. But in vain was all my striving to set before thee, favourable reader, those glories with which Anselmus is encompassed, or even in the faintest degree to shadow them forth to thee in words. Reluctantly I could not but acknowledge the febleness of my every expression. I felt myself enthralled amid the paltrinesses of every-day life; I sickened in tormenting dissatisfaction; I glided about like a dreamer; in brief, I fell into that condition of the Student Anselmus, which, in the Fourth Vigil, I have endeavoured to set before thee. It grieved me to the heart, when I glanced over the Eleven Vigils, now happily accomplished, and thought that to insert the Twelfth, the keystone of the whole, would never be vouchsafed me. For whensoever, in the night season, I set myself to complete the work, it was as if mischievous Spirits (they might be relations, perhaps

cousins-german, of the slain witch) held a polished glittering piece of metal before me, in which I beheld my own mean Self, pale, overwatched, and melancholic, like Registrar Heerbrand after his bout of punch. Then I threw down my pen, and hastened to bed, that I might behold the happy Anselmus and the fair Serpentina at least in my dreams. This had lasted for several days and nights, when at length quite unexpectedly I received a note from Archivarius Lindhorst, in which he addressed me as follows :

“ Respected Sir,—It is well known to me that you have written down, in Eleven Vigils, the singular fortunes of my good son-in-law Anselmus, whilom Student, now Poet ; and are at present cudgelling your brains very sore, that in the Twelfth and Last Vigil you may tell somewhat of his happy life in Atlantis, where he now lives with my daughter on the pleasant Freehold, which I possess in that country. Now, notwithstanding I much regret that hereby my own peculiar nature is unfolded to the reading world ; seeing it may, in my office as Privy Archivarius, expose me to a thousand inconveniences ; nay, in the Collegium even give rise to the question, How far a Salamander can justly, and with binding consequences, plight himself by oath, as a Servant of the State ? and how far, on the whole, important affairs may be intrusted to him, since, according to Gabalis and Swedenborg, the Spirits of the Elements are not to be trusted at all ?—notwithstanding, my best friends must now avoid my embrace ; fearing lest, in some sudden anger, I dart out a flash or two, and singe their hair-curls, and Sunday frocks ; notwithstanding all this, I say, it is still my purpose to assist you in the completion of the Work, since much good of me and of my dear married daughter (would the other two were off my hands also !) has therein been said. Would you write your Twelfth Vigil, therefore, then descend your cursed five pair of stairs, leave your garret, and come over to me. In the blue palmtree-room, which you already know, you will find fit writing materials ; and you can then, in few words, specify to your readers what you have seen ; a better plan for you than any long-winded

description of a life, which you know only by hearsay. With esteem,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ The SALAMANDER LINDHORST,
“ P. T. Royal Archivarius.”

This truly somewhat rough, yet on the whole friendly note from Archivarius Lindhorst, gave me high pleasure. Clear enough it seemed, indeed, that the singular manner in which the fortunes of his son-in-law had been revealed to me, and which I, bound to silence, must conceal even from thee, favourable reader, was well known to this peculiar old gentleman ; yet he had not taken it so ill as I might readily have apprehended. Nay, here was he offering me his helpful hand in the completion of my work ; and from this I might justly conclude, that at bottom he was not averse to have his marvellous existence in the world of spirits thus divulged through the press.

“ It may be,” thought I, “ that he himself expects from this measure, perhaps, to get his two other daughters the sooner married ; for who knows but a spark may fall in this or that young man’s breast, and kindle a longing for the green Snake ; whom, on Ascension-day, under the elder-bush, he will forthwith seek and find ? From the wo which befell Anselmus, when enclosed in the glass bottle, he will take warning to be doubly and trebly on his guard against all Doubt and Unbelief.

Precisely at eleven o’clock, I extinguished my study-lamp ; and glided forth to Archivarius Lindhorst, who was already waiting for me in the lobby.

“ Are you there, my worthy friend ? Well, this is what I like, that you have not mistaken my good intentions : do but follow me !”

And with this he led the way through the garden, now filled with dazzling brightness, into the azure chamber, where I observed the same violet table, at which Anselmus had been writing.

Archivarius Lindhorst disappeared : but soon came back, carrying in his hand a fair golden goblet, out of which a high blue flame was sparkling up. “ Here,” said he, “ I bring you the favourite drink of your friend the Bandmaster, Johannes Kreisler.* It is

* An imaginary musical enthusiast, of whom Hoffmann has written much ; under the fiery sensitive wayward character of this crazy Bandmaster, presenting, it would seem, a shadowy likeness of himself. The *Kreisleriana* occupy a large space among these *Fantasy-pieces* ; and Johannes Kreisler is the main figure in *Kater Murr*, Hoffmann’s favourite but unfinished work. In the third and last volume, Kreisler was to end, not in composure and illumination, as the critics would have required, but in utter madness : a sketch of a wild, flail-like scarecrow, dancing vehemently and blowing soap-bubbles, and which had been intended to front the last title-page, was found among Hoffmann’s papers, and engraved and published in his *Life and Remains*.—*Trans.*

burning arrack, into which I have thrown a little sugar. Sip a touch or two of it: I will doff my night-gown, and to amuse myself and enjoy your worthy company while you sit looking and writing, I shall just bob up and down a little in the goblet."

"As you please, honoured Herr Archivarius," answered I: "but if I am to ply the liquor, you will get none."

"Don't fear that, my good fellow," cried the Archivarius; then hastily threw off his night-gown, mounted, to my no small amazement, into the goblet, and vanished in the blaze. Without fear, softly blowing back the flame, I partook of the drink: it was truly precious!

Stir not the emerald leaves of the palm-trees in soft sighing and rustling, as if kissed by the breath of the morning wind? Awakened from their sleep, they move and mysteriously whisper of the wonders, which from the far distance approach like tones of melodious harps! The azure rolls from the walls, and floats like airy vapour to and fro; but dazzling beams shoot through it; and whirling and dancing, as in jubilee of childlike sport, it mounts and mounts to immeasurable height, and vaults itself over the palm-trees. But brighter and brighter shoots beam on beam, till in boundless expanse opens the grove where I behold Anselmus. Here glowing hyacinths, and tulips, and roses, lift their fair heads; and their perfumes in loveliest sound, call to the happy youth: "Wander wander among us, our beloved, for thou understandest us! Our perfume is the Longing of Love: we love thee, and are thine for evermore!" The golden rays burn in glowing tones: "We are Fire, kindled by Love. Perfume is Longing; but Fire is desire: and dwell we not in thy bosom? We are thy own!" The dark bushes, the high trees rustle and sound: "Come to us, thou loved, thou happy one! Fire is desire; but Hope is our cool Shadow. Lovingly we rustle round thy head: for thou understandest us, because Love dwells in thy breast!" The brooks and fountains murmur and patter: "Loved one, walk not so quickly by: look into our crystal! Thy image dwells in us, which we preserve with Love, for thou hast understood us." In the triumphal choir, bright birds are singing: "Hear us! hear us! we are Joy, we are Delight, the rapture of Love!" But anxiously Anselmus turns his eyes to the glorious Temple, which rises

behind him in the distance. The fair pillars seem trees; and the capitals and friezes acanthus leaves, which in wondrous wreaths and figures form splendid decorations. Anselmus walks to the Temple: he views with inward delight the variegated marble, the steps with their strange veins of moss. "Ah, no!" cries he, as if in the excess of rapture, "she is not far from me now; she is near!" Then advances Serpentina, in the fulness of beauty and grace, from the Temple; she bears the Golden Pot, from which a bright Lily has sprung. The nameless rapture of infinite longing glows in her meek eyes; she looks at Anselmus, and says: "Ah! dearest, the Lily has sent forth her bowl: what we longed for is fulfilled; is there a happiness to equal ours?" Anselmus clasps her with the tenderness of warmest ardour: the Lily burns in flaming beams over his head. And louder move the trees and bushes; clearer and gladder play the brooks; the birds, the shining insects dance in the waves of perfume: a gay, bright, rejoicing tumult, in the air, in the water, in the earth, is holding the festival of Love! Now rush sparkling streaks, gleaming over all the bushes; diamonds look from the ground like shining eyes: strange vapours are wafted hither on sounding wings: they are the Spirits of the Elements, who do homage to the Lily, and proclaim the happiness of Anselmus. Then Anselmus raises his head, as if encircled with a beamy glory. Is it looks? Is it words? Is it song? You hear the sound: "Serpentina! Belief in thee, Love of thee, has unfolded to my soul the inmost spirit of Nature! Thou hast brought me the Lily, which sprung from Gold, from the primeval Force of the world, before Phosphorus had kindled the spark of Thought; this Lily is Knowledge of the sacred Harmony of all Beings; and in this do I live in highest blessedness for evermore. Yes, I, thrice happy, have perceived what was highest: I must indeed love thee for ever, O Serpentina! Never shall the golden blossoms of the Lily grow pale; for, like Belief and Love, this Knowledge is eternal."

For the vision, in which I had now beheld Anselmus bodily, in his Freehold of Atlantis, I stand indebted to the arts of the Salamander; and most fortunate was it that, when all had melted into air, I found a paper lying on the violet-table, with the foregoing statement of the matter, written fairly and distinctly by

my own hand. But now I felt myself as if transpierced and torn in pieces by sharp sorrow. "Ah, happy Anselmus, who hast cast away the burden of week-day life, who in the love of thy kind Serpentina fliest with bold pinion, and now livest in rapture and joy on thy Freehold in Atlantis! while I—poor I!—must soon, nay, in few moments, leave even this fair hall, which itself is far from a Freehold in Atlantis; and again be transplanted to my garret, where, enthralled among the pettinesses of necessitous existence, my heart and my sight are so bedimmed with

thousand mischiefs, as with thick fog, that the fair Lily will never, never be beheld by me."

Then Archivarius Lindhorst patted me gently on the shoulder, and said: "Soft, soft, my honoured friend! Lament not so! Were you not even now in Atlantis; and have you not at least a pretty little copyhold Farm there, as the poetical possession of your inward sense? And is the blessedness of Anselmus aught else but a Living in Poesy? Can aught else but Poesy reveal itself as the sacred Harmony of all Beings, as the deepest secret of Nature?"

THE DAYS OF OLD.

BY JOHN MILLS. AUTHOR OF "THE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN," &c.

CHAPTER I.

"Yet hath my night of life some memory,
My wasting lamp some fading glimmer left."

THERE exists a peculiar satisfaction in our being carried by memory out of the present into the past, which is as difficult to define as it would be impossible not to feel. The solicitude, fears, anxieties, the puerilities of this little life, "rounded with a sleep," are all forgotten. It is as if the world waned, and we with it; and these reminiscences carry us back to the pleasant days of departed youth. However we may mask, hide, and endeavour to subdue it, there is a spring centred in all hearts, which bounds to every touch that restores to us the memory of what has been, but is not. It is our nature that stirs within us; for who would not, if they could, tread back the steps of time?

It was in the days of old, when the sportsman tally-ho'd the fox before the lark soared from her grassy bed to shake the dew-drops from her wings,—when he whipped the stream in powdered wig and velvet cap,—bagged partridges with setters and net, and brought his racer to the post to run four-mile heats for a whip of the value of forty shillings,—it was in these quaint old-fashioned times that Sir Godfrey Flamstead lived, as his forefathers had done before him for a succession of generations, at Wynford Grange, on the borders of one of the Western counties. What Wynford Grange might have been in its pristine condition, it is impossible to say; but at the period we are called upon to describe its condition, it was any thing but an attractive residence. The building was of

the Elizabethan order, and in a ruinous state, from a want of due regard to painting and repair. By far the greater number of the wide and diamond-paned casements, were rudely stopped with common boards nailed across them; and some of the wooden water-spouts, jutting from the angles in the roof, having crumbled and become rotten in the winters and storms of ages, the walls were covered, here and there, with a dark green slimy matter vegetating on the damp. The chimneys, surrounding the high and sloping roof, were so cramped, twisted, and crooked, that even the smoke must have struggled to have found vent through the intricacies. Now, however, with the exception of two or three, the jackdaws were permitted to build their nests in them; and it is a matter of uncertainty which would have been the most surprised at a volume of dense vapour rolling upwards and vomiting itself out of one of these disused chimneys—a family of fledglings reared and nurtured within them, or the gossips in the vicinity. Certain it is that one and all would have been set agape with wonderment. A large, rambling, neglected place was Wynford Grange. The land surrounding it, which was of immense extent, had the appearance of a desolate heath: for, far as the eye could reach, scarcely a twig intercepted the view; and, but for the soft velvet turf which grew so luxuriantly on the surface, thickly interspersed with the fragrant clover flower, there would have been little difference between the broad acres comprising the park belonging to the manorial domain, and some uncultivated sterile waste. To be sure, there were a few lopped and stunted

pollards growing at long distances apart, the only crippled remains of timber standing—all besides having long since fallen under the sharp stroke of the woodman's axe. Stripped, bare, and naked, looked all and every thing. Some tall and gaunt-looking fir trees reared themselves not far from the mansion, and marked the spot where the drive led from the entrance; but rank grass and weeds had been allowed to grow over the gravel road, so that not a vestige of it was now visible. There had been an extensive rookery within a stone's throw of the ruinous old house; but the felling of the trees had driven the colony from their homes, with the exception of a score or two of hoarse-throated, jet-plumed fellows, who resolved, come weal come wo, to stick to the home of their fathers. A few lean and antiquated fallow-deer still browsed disconsolately together, forming a meagre herd; and had it not been that they were wedded to the frequented spot by many, many long years of pleasant association, they would doubtless have wandered elsewhere; for the shattered fences, and broken-down rotten gates, formed no barriers to their inclination, had it been of a roving tendency.

In a large and lofty room, hung around with faded arras, the scenes but faintly legible in the once rich and curiously wrought tapestry, and as much hidden by dust and cobwebs as effaced by the mouldering hand of time, sat Sir Godfrey Flamstead, before a large polished oak table, on which was placed a very small and frugal breakfast, consisting of a single egg, a loaf of brown bread, and a plate containing a limited supply of butter. Tea, although not an unknown luxury at the time we are recalling, was not a decoction of which the Baronet was fond; and in lieu of this now common beverage for the matin meal, a stone jug of foaming beer stood at his elbow.

The Baronet appeared to be about sixty years of age, and his present good looks denoted that he must once have been an exceedingly handsome man, although a cloud now hung upon his brow, and his lips were knit together as if the reverie in which he was wrapped was any thing but of an agreeable nature, and proved highly detrimental to the expression of his features. His forehead was lofty and smooth; his countenance was scarcely marked with a wrinkle; and, but for the few scanty and bleached locks covering his head, none could have believed that so many winters had passed over it. His stature was of the middle height,

with a figure somewhat portly; and altogether there was an aristocratic bearing and air about Sir Godfrey, that gave sufficient warrant of his eury having been in the cedar top. His costume consisted of the old doublet and trunkhose, with a long-waisted coat devoid of collar, and profusely decorated with polished steel buttons. In his shoes were large buckles, and from heel to head the Baronet was quite "the gentleman of the old school."

"Humph," muttered Sir Godfrey, taking the solitary egg between his left forefinger and thumb, and giving it a gentle tap on the uppermost end with a spoon composed of horn. "Humph," repeated he, "I really don't know what to do. That rascal, Dickory Crump," he continued, extracting a letter from a deep pocket in his lateral attire, and glancing at its contents with a curl upon his lip, "says, that *he* can raise more money if *I* can produce a corresponding security. Now he knows," said the Baronet, hissing the words through his teeth, "that the estate is mortgaged to the last shilling that it will bear, that every stick of timber is cut, and that the family pictures and plate found their way into the hands of the Israelites some three years ago. I haven't even a silver egg spoon left," and as he spoke he pitched the horn one from his hand on to the table, rolled the egg after it, and, throwing himself back in his chair, buried his hands in the pockets of his doublet.

For a few seconds Sir Godfrey remained in mute reflection: but this was quickly dissipated by the door of the apartment being thrown open, and his son entering, with an infirm old servant tottering in his wake.

"Good morning, father," said the young man with a smile upon his handsome visage, and shaking the Baronet heartily by the hand. "I began to fear that I had been playing the laggard; but by your untasted breakfast, I see that I am closely on your heels."

"I've not been up long, my boy," replied Sir Godfrey; "but as for breakfast," continued he, addressing the servant, "I think, Jacob, you might have supplied us with a less sparing hand. A single small egg—Fough!"

"I did my best, Sir Godfrey, I do assure ye," rejoined Jacob, in a thin, piping tone, as he placed a corresponding object of the Baronet's contempt before his young master.

"Bad, truly then, is the best," returned the Baronet.

"I couldn't——"

"Silence!" interrupted Sir Godfrey, irritably. "I do not wish to hear of your inability, any more than to think of my own. Leave the room, Jacob."

The last sentence was spoken in a more subdued tone, and the faithful and obedient servant left with a slow and profound reverence.

During this brief colloquy the heir to Wynford Grange sat ostensibly engaged in chipping off the shell from the egg: but from the furtive glances that he gave his father, it was obvious that he was endeavouring to discover the cause of the anger which disturbed the Baronet's usual equanimity.

"Ned," said Sir Godfrey, upon the closing of the door, drawing his fingers over his brow as if about to make a reluctant disclosure; and then abruptly stopping and seizing the jug, he added, "your health."

"Thank you, father," responded the young man.

Sir Godfrey coughed slightly at the termination of his draught, and remarked that "the beer was very small and thin."

"The strong ale is all drunk, I believe," replied his son.

"Yes, it's *out*, Ned, so I am told," rejoined the Baronet, "as, indeed, is every thing else with me, until, at length, I'm out of humour."

"Is there any cause to distress or annoy you of which I am ignorant?" asked the young man in a kind and soothing tone and manner.

For a short time Sir Godfrey made no answer. At length he appeared to overcome the conflicting emotions with which he was struggling, and screwing his determination to the sticking point, thus began the recital of his woes:—"You know, my dear Ned, that our affairs for a considerable period have been in any thing but so flattering a condition as we could wish."

His listener could not prevent a smile at this specious opening of the family exigencies.

"It's of no use blaming myself; and as little my being blamed by any body else, Ned," resumed Sir Godfrey, "for the skeleton state in which we are. I confess that my want of economy, and gratifying the many expensive tastes in which I have indulged, may be traced as the origin and true source of the deplorable state of our exchequer. A man can but confess," continued the Baronet, elevating his eyebrows, and placing his two thumbs in the arm-holes of his doublet, "his

improvidence, misdeeds, and so forth; at the same time one cannot but regret that the confession, acting as a wholesome penance, does not generally produce more beneficial results. For example: There's not a man within the dominions over which King George reigns, more ready to admit his errors, both commissions and omissions, than myself; and yet, by the faith of a Christian, if I were to have my humility cried in every market town throughout the kingdom, it would not bate a jot—no, not so much as the value of a bushel of meal for my hounds, in the multitudinous items of my unpaid liabilities!"

Ned, as his father abbreviated his name, felt a strange inclination to laugh outright as Sir Godfrey proceeded, there was something so peculiarly exciting to the risible muscles in the tone and manner in which he gave a full, true, and particular account of his pressing troubles.

"Upon your leaving Eton," resumed the Baronet, "which was about a month previous to your arriving at your eighteenth birthday, and within three of the lamented and premature decease of your estimable mother—I am particular in these two events for a purpose that will presently appear—you were for the first time made acquainted that I had been, and then was, living far beyond the nett returns of my rent-roll. With that ready and affectionate regard to my wishes, whether expressed or implied, which you display on all occasions, Ned, you immediately gave your promise to cut off the entail of certain broad lands upon attaining your majority; which engagement was faithfully kept on the very day that you arrived at man's estate. This proved of immeasurable assistance to me at the time, and kept at bay a host of impatient and clamorous creditors. The settlement, too, made on your mother for her life at our marriage, fell in at the time I am referring to, which you cannot but perfectly well remember; and thus I was enabled to put the derangement and running accounts of many years' standing upon a very pleasant and easy footing. My damaged credit became good and sound again, and my friends took advantage of my position. Yes, Ned, my dear boy, our friends have proved to be our greatest enemies. The house was always as crowded with them, the four seasons round, as a hive is full of bees. They borrowed and won my money; eat, drank, and fleeced me from one year's end to the other; and

yet, in my foolish, nay culpable confidence, I regarded each and all as the very paragons of honour."

As Sir Godfrey proceeded he became more serious in his deportment, and his son lost every trace of levity.

"I need not say," resumed the Baronet, "that money, vast sums of money, melted away like the snow at noon. Mortgage after mortgage was raised, timber felled; and at length, much against my inclination, I was compelled to ask for a return of some of those loans I had assisted my countless friends with in the time of alleged need and difficulty. Then, and not till then, I saw the truth stripped of all guise and deception. It was known that nothing but *want* could have made Godfrey Flamstead ask for payment from any body, much less from a friend; and, as we are told, wandering sprites flee from mortal gaze at cock-crow, so my troops of fawning sycophants vanished and left me to profit by a lesson gained too late."

Sir Godfrey stopped in his address to refresh himself with a draught of the beer, and then proceeded.

"When the foundation sinks, the superstructure quickly follows. Claimants again poured in upon me as if a floodgate had been opened, when it became generally known that my resources were exhausted. Neither let, check, nor stop were given. Lawyers, duns, and bailiffs joined in full cry, to pull me down, and break me up; and it was not until every feather had been plucked that I was freed from the yelping pack of carrion curs. That fox-eyed, long-nosed rascal, Dickory Crump, turned every available article belonging to me into cash; and, after getting rid of all the suits against me and the debts, had the assurance to say, 'Now, Sir Godfrey, let me offer my congratulations to you; for your difficulties are completely removed, and your income, after payment of the interest of the mortgages, will be a clear hundred and fifty three pounds ten shillings and sixpence *per annum*.' Think of that, Ned," continued the Baronet. "The impudent rascal knew that it would scarcely supply me in claret, and yet with a serious face he wished me joy of the event! Well, I put up with the affront as well as I could; and determined that you, my dear boy, should not be inconvenienced by my follies, I kept on the hounds on a reduced scale, maintained two of our best horses, preserved the manorial rights of sporting, and effected the production of a bottle of good wine every day after dinner

for our joint and several benefits. I assure you, and I am certain, Ned, that you will give me full credit for the assertion, that for the pangs entertained by me occasioned by my reverses, there was no consolation so great as the reflection that *you* had not suffered any diminution of your personal comforts. You still could hunt, shoot, fish, drink, and dress as befitted your rank and birth. I have hidden as much as possible the numerous shifts that I was put to, in order to support the remains of our once princely establishment; but I at last find myself compelled to acknowledge that I am at my wit's end. Dickory Crump writes to me by the last mail, that he cannot borrow on bill, bond, or any kind of instrument, another guinea for me; and that, as I have anticipated two half-yearly payments, he will not make any farther advances. Now, Ned, without money, credit, friends, or the remotest chance of obtaining either one or the other, what is to be done?"

Sir Godfrey stopped at this query, and regarded his son with an earnest gaze.

"And do you think, father," said the heir to the wreck of Wynford Grange, as, rising hastily from his seat, and striding towards Sir Godfrey, he clutched his hand in both his palms and pressed it warmly as he spoke;—"and do you think, father," repeated he, "that I was not already aware of what you have now told me? I have listened patiently to every syllable of your communication; but there was not a word, throughout the whole of it, of intelligence to me. I knew the kindness of your intentions, and heaven forbid that I should have frustrated them by betraying a knowledge of your affairs previous to your expressed desire for my so doing. I know not whether I am right or whether I am wrong," continued the young man emphatically; "but I have ever deemed strict obedience to a parent's wishes, whether expressed or implied, the paramount duty of every child. I believe, father, that I can conscientiously say I have always acted up to this principle."

"You can, Ned, my dear boy," replied Sir Godfrey, making an effort to steady his nether lip, and brushing something away which suddenly affected the clearness of his vision: "You can, indeed."

"You've asked me what's to be done," rejoined his son cheerfully. "Do you remember your old motto '*Never give up?*'"

"That was old bluff Harry Flamstead's cry at the battle of Hastings," returned the Baronet.

"To be sure it was," added the young man. "And shall one of his descendants dishonour it? No, not if ruin and death stares him in the face,—a Flamstead *never gives up!*"

"Egad, Ned, but your words warm me, boy!" responded Sir Godfrey. "But remember these are not times wherein lance, mace, and broadsword can retrieve a lost fortune."

"Hear me," said his son. "You have asked me for my advice,—and I will give it. The hounds and horses must be sold; the remaining servants dismissed, except Jacob, whom to discharge from our service would be to destroy; the house must be shut up, and the park also turned to a better advantage than supporting a herd of thin, old, toothless deer. I must embrace a useful profession or occupation, and *you* must be satisfied with a pint of good port *per diem* instead of a quart of the best claret. Consent to this and your troubles end with the word."

"What, turn our backs on the old house, Ned?" said Sir Godfrey in a disconsolate tone and manner, which told how much the suggestion grieved him.

"Yes," replied his son, "until we can return again with mended fortune. For what can avail our remaining," continued he, "until it crumble down about our ears?"

"I must e'en confess that repairs are greatly wanted," rejoined the Baronet.

"A few more seasons," added his son, "and our quitting will be no matter of choice. The roof is now but little more water-tight than a sieve."

"It's sadly dilapidated certainly," returned Sir Godfrey, "and a considerable outlay is necessary to render the place longer tenable."

"But which we cannot supply."

"True, very true," responded Sir Godfrey; "and therefore we will make a virtue of necessity, and yield to the stern demand with all the grace within our power. To your able dictatorship," continued he, "I now submit myself, Ned."

CHAPTER II.

If I depart from thee, I cannot live:
And in thy sight to die, what were it else
But like a pleasant slumber in thy lap?"

It can scarcely have escaped the notice of the most casual observer, supposing him to be a little more of the peripatetic order than a bulbous root, that there are persons possessing the influence of wealth labouring under

the, oftentimes, imaginary disadvantage of birth and aristocratic connexions. What, however, will not gold effect? Look around, and we shall, among other of its marvellous effects, find it mingling the puddle blood of the plebeian with blood as pure as that of the Ptolemies.

Within a mile of Wynford Grange there was a newly built, prim-looking building called Franka Villa. It had been erected in accordance with the taste of its late proprietor, Mr. Francis James Jones, a successful speculator in indigo, and christened by the present occupier, Mrs. Francis James Jones, now a widow fair, stout, and, if truth must be told, a little over that standard age for widows, forty. The lucky dealer in the plant for dying blue, wanting an investment for his accumulated wealth, became the purchaser of a large portion of the estate sold at the time Edward Flamstead became of age; resolving to build a house upon his property, retire from business, and become a country gentleman. The first two divisions of his design he lived to accomplish; but just as he began to discover the difference between a hare and a rabbit, a hound and a poodle, mounting his horse on the near instead of the off side, and ramming his shot into the gun *after* the introduction of the powder, he died. Possessed of a handsome jointure, Mrs. Francis James Jones mourned for her husband in the most approved style. Her daughter, and only child, Emily Matilda, at this time a lispng Miss of sixteen, was taken from a fashionable boarding-school to become the companion of her mamma, and, as the relief of the speculator in indigo fondly hoped, at no distant day, the link by which the Joneses might be coupled with the oldest and best family in the county. For it should be here stated, that the sanguine and watchful Mrs. Jones had, from the day she first beheld the elegant and accomplished Edward Flamstead, determined, in secret communing with herself, that Emily Matilda should become the bride of the heir apparent to the Baronetcy. "Only think," would the ardent dame soliloquize, throwing out her farthingale and tossing back her head, frizzed and powdered as of yore, "only think what the *Brouns* will say when they hear of my daughter Lady Edward Flamstead!"

This brooding thought, perhaps dressed in other words, was often expressed; and, as may have happened with other architects so frequently met with in building magnificent edifices in the air, it is no wonder to people

of less valuable, because more common sense, that the superstructure should occasionally totter from a want of due attention to the solidity of the base. We have often thought that the phenomenon of a shower of pebbles occasionally falling from the clouds should be no longer deemed a wonder, or subject of speculation to the philosopher; for when half mankind are occupied in building castles in the air, where is the wonder that a few of the stones should fall?

It had been an absorbing desire for some time past with Mrs. Francis James Jones—her husband having been dead now for more than a year—to see the spark of acquaintanceship which existed between Edward and Emily Matilda fanned into a burning, glowing, crackling, hissing flame of love. For some cause, which the old lady could not fathom, little or no progress seemed to be made in the project. In vain did the careful mother study the latest fashions at court, and, with lavish expenditure, deck her personified hope in all the finery of the age, when Edward was to be present. In vain did she invite Sir Godfrey and his son to snug little dinner parties, displaying her massive plate and costly wines, and making quite a show of her possessions. Sir Godfrey drank the wine, and Edward made himself agreeable to Emily Matilda; but further there was nothing.

"'Tis very strange," said Mrs. Jones, after a run of defeats, "very strange, indeed. They must want money, that every body knows, and yet all I can do makes no impression."

That which excites the surprise of one may, like the discovered trick of the juggler, be no cause of wonderment to another. But to our purpose.

It was a bright morning in early spring. There was music on every bough and twig. Birds—happy, wild, roving birds,—were twittering and chirping in the spirit of their joy, as if their trilling throats would split with merriment. Bees and butterflies sipped and sucked the early fresh-born flowers. The thrifty ant quitted her earthy home, and again sought the replenishment of her store; and even that dull laggard the spotted toad, roused him from his long, long sleep, and croaked in doleful cadence his heart-felt satisfaction. Not a creature, not a thing—not even the meanest wild flower that grew unnoticed or uncared for—but looked the very type of unalloyed, unqualified happiness.

Glistening beads of dew filled the petals of the daisy and the buttercup, and the mist still hung in folds, veiling, but not hiding the brook, rippling and murmuring its way through the valley, when the slight forms of two young persons might have been seen, within a short distance of Wynford Grange, strolling side by side at this early hour of the morn when all nature was being kissed by her fresh maiden lip. One was Edward Flamstead; the other a young and lovely girl, in the ripening time between the budding girl and blooming woman.

"I tell ye, Kate," said her companion, "that our separation for the time I have named is indispensable. Exertion, and great exertion, on my part, is necessary to retrieve our shattered fortune. Instead of remaining here in our penniless, beggarly condition, I must prepare myself by reflection and study for an active life, although I cannot, as yet, determine on what particular course to take. Perhaps I may try to carve my way to distinction with the sword——"

"Nay, nay, I beseech you not to think of that," interrupted the fair girl entreatingly. "Let me never have to associate *you*, Edward, with cruelty and bloodshed, if——"and her voice trembled as she spoke, "if we are not to meet again on earth."

"Pooh!" exclaimed Edward gaily, as he passed his arm round her taper waist, and pressed her gently towards him. "Why, you speak like a child, Kate. Not meet again! If I thought that, we would never part. Surely," he continued in a bantering tone, "you are not fearful of——"

"Nothing but your safety," added his companion energetically, while unshed tears floated in her dark-blue eyes, curtained by long silken lashes, as jetty black as the plume of the raven's wing.

"Tremble not for that then, Kate," rejoined he laughing; "for the worthless seldom meet with harm."

"I pray that you do not jest," she returned. "I cannot bear light words at such a time as this."

This was spoken with such deep emotion that Edward Flamstead at once changed his tone and manner.

"I see, Kate," said he, tenderly taking a hand between his own, "that you *will* be serious in spite of my endeavours to prevent your being so. Well! e'en must when there's no choice, and so to yield without further struggle. Now listen to my designs. Upon the expiration of the time that I intend

to devote to the study of a profession, or the attainment of some profitable employment, which must depend on the result of applications which will be made to certain quarters upon my father and myself arriving in London, I shall, when successful, and successful I feel sure to be, proudly return and claim you, dear Kate, as the reward of my victory. Then we shall have no longer to fear the pains, and penalties, and contempt which track the heels of the poor gentleman; and instead of tears, and sighs, and evil forebodings, we shall have nothing but sunny smiles, joy, and pleasurable anticipations."

"You are very sanguine, Edward," observed his companion.

"But not more so than I feel that I have a right to be," returned he. "I am sanguine, because I know that I may depend upon my own exertions, which I will use to the best and utmost of my ability. Confidence is the choicest herald of success."

"As you think, so must I," added Kate; "although," she continued, "I never felt so great a reluctance to agree with you before."

The speaker was the daughter and only surviving child of Dr. Owen, the worthy and excellent vicar of Wynford, who, when a poor and friendless curate, had been presented with the living, by his patron Sir Godfrey Flamstead. It was any thing but a wealthy one; but it enabled the Doctor to live comfortably in the neat little house called the Rectory, within a short distance from the Grange, and to gratify his taste in purchasing old books and manuscripts. The Doctor, a thin, little man, with a high bald head, and mild, benevolent countenance, was deeply read in classic lore, and, being appointed tutor to Edward Flamstead when a stripling, it was one of the great objects of his life, to make his pupil as accomplished a scholar as himself. Much to the estimable Doctor's delight, he discovered that Edward was never so happy as when at the Rectory poring over his Ovid, Horace, or Cicero, or solving the problems and theorems of Euclid. It had escaped the short-sighted little Doctor that, while his pupil was apparently absorbed in the study of the eminent poets and philosophers of by-gone ages, he frequently peeped over the top of his book, and exchanged smiles with Kate Owen, who made all sorts of excuses to remain in the apartment, notwithstanding the remonstrances of her father.

"The weather is extremely fine, why not

take a ramble this morning?" the Doctor would say, wiping his barnacles.

"Don't you think it will rain?" Kate replied, taking her knitting needles, as if her purpose to remain was fixed.

"Rain, my dear!" exclaimed the Doctor looking over his glasses, and for the first time discovering the stolen glances between his pupil and his daughter. "The Bar—o—meter—" he could get no further. Like electricity the truth flashed through the nerves of the Doctor, and it quite took his breath away.

Pretty Kate crimsoned like a peony, while Edward became suddenly afflicted with an extremely dry, hacking cough.

This trifling and light occurrence had taken place years ago; but it made an indelible impression on the minds of all parties concerned. How Sir Godfrey was made acquainted with the affair, was never exactly known by the young couple; but soon after its occurrence the Baronet joked his son immensely about his *studies* at the Rectory, and seemed to enjoy Edward's confusion to an amazing extent. Far from objecting or throwing any obstacles in the way of his son's attachment, the good-natured Sir Godfrey considered it a great blessing to have the prospect of so charming a daughter-in-law in view. And if a thought of the dearth of means occasionally proved an alloy to the pleasurable reflection, he would breathe a prayer that he might sooner die than be in the way of preventing the consummation of Ned's wishes.

The worthy, inestimable, little, brisk Dr. Owen scarcely credited his senses, and he began to quote Tacitus, Valerius, Flaccus, Juvenal, Eusebius, and others, in order to test the soundness of his mind, when he learned that Sir Godfrey was not opposed to the match. "To be sure," said the Doctor in confidence to himself, "Kate is a comely lass, and few can translate Latin and Greek, make pies and puddings, sing and knit winter hose, as she can. But to become the wife of Sir Godfrey Flamstead's son!" and then the Doctor became lost in a labyrinth of amazement, and wandered, like his thoughts, a great way off, without rhyme or reason for his guide.

So matters stood on the eventful morning of Kate Owen's introduction to our readers.

Steeling himself to the purpose, Edward had arranged this early walk with his beloved, that he might make known to her the pressing difficulties which surrounded his father

and himself, and the necessity for immediate activity on his part to obtain a livelihood. The former part of the communication caused no regret for *herself*; she would, not having a dowery, rather wed Edward as a poor man than a rich one. But when she found that a separation was necessary, it struck like an icicle into as warm a little, foolish, palpitating heart as ever throbbed in woman's bosom.

"We will not speak any more about it now," said Edward, as they bent their footsteps towards the Rectory. "This world is made up of meetings and separations, and were it not for the latter we could not enjoy the pleasure of the former."

"But it seems so very sad that you should leave me," replied Kate. "I never thought we were to part for any length of time," added she tearfully.

"Cheer up, dearest," responded Edward, "and let not another word be spoken on the subject."

"My father will be sadly grieved to hear of this," returned Kate.

"Not so much as you anticipate," added he. "One of the last valuable aphorisms that he used his best endeavours to impress upon my mind was, 'Confide in the future rather than fear it. For the events to come are as strictly, although mysteriously, defined as those of the past; and if ye can conscientiously declare that for the past there is no cause to dread, put your faith and trust in the great Ruler that such may be the result of time hereafter.'"

CHAPTER III.

"We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction."

JACOB PRETTYMAN had been in Sir Godfrey's service in the capacity of huntsman for thirty-two years, and during that time neither master nor servant were heard to make a complaint of the conduct of each other in their relative positions. Jacob was a long-bodied, bandy-legged individual, without any remarkable personal distinction, save a more than ordinary expression of gravity in a set of very round, rubicund features, and an immoderate share of vanity in possessing a long, thick pigtail, which occupied the greater portion of its proprietor's leisure hours in maintaining it in perfection of order and condition. This now obsolete ornament to the human form was, with Jacob, the

focus of all the diffused rays of vanity darting from the sun of conceit centred in his bosom. Never, certainly, did a pigtail have more attention bestowed upon it in shape of combing, brushing, tying, powdering, greasing, and perfuming, than the luxuriant thatch of Jacob Prettyman's cerebellum, and its immediate vicinity.

As has been before stated, Jacob was a grave specimen of the *genus homo*. He detested to laugh with all his heart, on account of the risible muscles in motion destroying that dignity which he so highly prized as an attribute of his station. For it should be observed, that as huntsman to Sir Godfrey Flamstead, Jacob Prettyman deemed his position in society as something above the ordinary quality; and when in the zenith of his master's prosperity he had seventy-five couples of hounds in the kennel, and ten horses in the stable for his exclusive use, it would have taken the breath away of many a modest individual to have seen him arrive in all the pomp and circumstance of state by the cover side.

We are now writing of "the days of old;" and therefore, our stating that Jacob's hour for throwing the hounds into the brake was just as Reynard had licked his lips from his dainty nocturnal meal, need occasion no astonishment. Then it was, when the stars were just fading before the early beams of morning, that Jacob, dressed in his showy livery, with his pigtail unctuous with clammy grease, and floured as white as a snow-drift, with all the importance of a commander-in-chief about to fight and show his tactics with the enemy, cheered his gallant pack and woke the day with his ringing halloo. Then it was that, knowing the eyes of Sir Godfrey and the gentlemen of the hunt were upon him, he rose in his stirrups, and, as the first whimper gave intelligence of the "varmint" being afoot, he blew the great bugle slung across his shoulders, and made the hills and valleys echo and re-echo with music that sent a myriad of fairies to hide in the petals of the wild flowers growing in the dell.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that much of Jacob's supreme dignity became greatly tarnished as the hand of adversity stretched its skeleton fingers over Wynford Grange. The number of hounds, by degrees, dwindled down to ten couples, and the ten horses to one. Instead of two whippers-in, and three kennelsmen, who were placed under his immediate arbitrary control and government, these offices had long since been abolished, and the

whole now were condensed and united in the person of Jacob Prettyman. No banished lord, no prime minister ejected from the feast of the loaves and fishes of office, could feel more the loss of his power and tinsel of grandeur than did Jacob; but with the submission of the Arab to the decree of destiny, he bowed to fate, and, in his own graphic language, "made the best of a bad job."

Little did Jacob Prettyman think, when chewing the cud of the bitter downfall of his grandeur, that he should be called upon for a further pressure upon his stoicism. But we anticipate.

For once—we must repeat the last monosyllable in italics—for *once* the huntsman stood with the rein of his saddled horse in his hand before the entrance of the principal court in the kennel in a spiritless, and, if the expression may be used, hang-dog, wretched, blue-devilish mood. One hand was upon the latch of the gate, while the other held the bridle of his horse, which, perhaps, to keep his master in countenance, imitated his sorrowful expression by drooping his head between his knees, and standing so as to rest three of his legs out of the four.

Jacob Prettyman's neckerchief was tied with the same scrupulous care as ever, and his pigtail evinced in the arrangement of every hair that that devotion had been paid to it which its proprietor never failed to display. His boots bore the original polish, his spurs their first brightness, his double-thong its whiteness, and the entire appointments that extreme delicacy of touch which the surface of Jacob Prettyman, in his full uniform, always displayed. Still there was something within which subdued, and, as it were, extinguished the glitter which would have shone and sparkled on another occasion.

"And it's come to this, has it?" said Jacob, shaking his head and heaving a sigh from the deepest recesses of his heart. "And it's come to this, has it?" repeated he. "Here's the last time I shall ever unkennel Sir Godfrey's hounds, and, mayhap, any body's else. It seems a dream," continued Jacob, "but it's a fact, and all facts are stubborn things, more especially this."

The huntsman paused here, and after sundry wry faces, continued,—"After growing gray in the service of so good a master," said he, "to find myself forced to quit him! By Saint Paul!" exclaimed Jacob, "it's enough to make a man wish for

a shower of pitchforks. As far as the wages are concerned," continued he, "I'd have gone on, as I have done for the last three years, in a sort of running account without any end, until that day of reckoning comes when all debts are paid. But that wasn't to be, it appears. No."

The huntsman again came to a check, and then, catching the shadow of his forethought, hit off the conclusion of his soliloquy.

"This is the last day of the season," resumed Jacob, "and, as I was told yesterday, it's to be the last of all the seasons as far as Sir Godfrey's mastership is concerned. Well!" continued the huntsman, his eyes flashing as he spoke, and his blood running hotly and speedily through his veins, "the ashes from such an ember should burn brightly to the end. This day shall never be forgotten in these parts," and thus speaking, he threw open the gate, and out rushed the joyous expectant pack.

The number did not exceed five couples; but the admirer of the symmetrical, however fastidious a connoisseur he might be, would have been puzzled to have found a single fault in the shape, size, speed, and spirit of these remains of Sir Godfrey's former matchless hunting establishment, and it was proverbial throughout the country, that a fox *must*, when once their tongues were opened at him, run to earth or die.

Grouping round the huntsman, the hounds expressed their delight at the anticipated sport, by springing and leaping about him; but, instead of, as was his wont, acknowledging their gambols, calling their names, speaking to, and cheering them, Jacob took no notice of his favourites, but, in a gloomy silence, threw himself into the saddle and proceeded, in accordance with his orders, to the spot appointed for the meeting.

If the news had been spread by the fleet pinions of the wind, it could scarcely have been more generally or more speedily known that Sir Godfrey Flamstead was about to leave the home of his fathers for years, and it might be for ever. To say that universal regret was expressed for leagues around at this intelligence, is to give but a poor description of the feeling so generally entertained. In all grades of society, but more especially with the poor, the Baronet was deemed, and rightly so, the best among the good; and although for some years past he had not been able to keep open house to all, yet his profuseness and boundless generosity in former times had not been forgotten, and never could be.

And even now, although friends had turned their backs on his fallen fortune, and he felt the fangs of ingratitude, yet, as far as his means extended, he never permitted the needy and distressed to go from his door unrelieved or unsoled.

"God bless him!" was the fervent ejaculation whenever his name was mentioned; and then tale after tale would be told of his liberality, his dashing deeds by field and flood, his jokes and jests; for few, indeed, were they who, living within a score long miles of Wynford Grange, could not narrate many a story concerning Sir Godfrey Flamstead.

Far and wide it was known that the last opportunity of ever beholding the Baronet at the head of his hounds, or, probably to many, ever on earth again, was on this closing day of his mastership. Crowds, therefore, from every quarter of the compass congregated at the place where the meet was to be held. Old men, leaning heavily on their staffs with long white locks flowing to their shoulders, tottered forwards, saying, "It would go hard, indeed, not to see his honour once again; for they remembered him a boy fifty years ago and more." Their dames, too, with crutch-stick in hand, followed in their wake with palsied limbs, adding, "Ay, forsooth, those *were* times, those *were*!" Sturdy peasants, troops of urchins, and maidens dressed in holyday gear, assembled to pay their parting respect to Sir Godfrey. The ploughshare was abandoned, the flail no longer swung musically on the barn floor, and the hum and bur-r-r of the spinning-wheel was hushed in silence. Not a creature, not even the spectacle-nosed pedagogue presiding in austere and dreaded authority, was to be seen in the village school-room; and even the club-footed tailor deserted his board on which he sat and stitched away the greater portion of his life, crooning old ballads to himself. All had gone to take a respectful and reluctant farewell of the good Sir Godfrey Flamstead.

"Here they come!" hallooed a hundred tongues, "here come the hounds," as Jacob Prettyman made his appearance from the end of a long, winding lane leading on to a sterile waste called Gipsy Hollow.

"It was a different sight, I ween, some twenty years ago," whispered one to his companion, as the huntsman conducted his limited pack through the throng mounted on a horse showing the effects of time and hard work. "I remember," continued the speaker,

"when the meet was gayer than a fair day."

"So do I right well," replied the other. "But look, here's Sir Godfrey coming up, and the young Sir Edward that is to be, with him."

"And a noble young gentleman he is," returned the first speaker. "Nobody could mistake him of being a sprig from the old stock. He's a Flamstead from head to heel."

"And in heart and speech, too," was the rejoinder. "For he has not only a kind feeling towards every body, but a kind way of letting one know that he has."

The crowd, both mounted and on foot, gave way as the Baronet and his son arrived; and as they passed, audible whispers were heard showering down all sorts of blessings upon their heads. Sir Godfrey rode through the congregated mass of his humble but sincere well-wishers, exchanging salutations with all within hailing distance, and bowing to the yeomen with the same punctiliousness that he would have done to his sovereign.

To many he gave his hand, and long hearty gripes were given in silence, although, if eyes ever performed the office of the tongue, many spoke on this occasion.

Jacob Prettyman, with no assumed gravity, had withdrawn himself and his hounds to some little distance off, where, on a small hillock, he remained contemplating the scene before him with as dejected a countenance as a man, bereft of every earthly happiness can readily be conceived to wear, without any very great stretch upon the powers of the imagination.

Perceiving that his master was approaching, he settled himself in his saddle, raised his whip-hand to the peak of his black velvet cap, and spurred a few paces to meet him.

"Now, Jacob," said Sir Godfrey, "we are ready."

The huntsman slightly raised his cap, turned his bony horse round, and, giving him both the rowels deeply in his flanks, crashed through a tall bull-finch hedge into the furze brake called Gipsy's Hollow.

"Jacob, I see," remarked Edward, with a smile, "has determined to give us a touch of his best quality to-day."

"Poor fellow!" responded the Baronet, "it will be more from his courage and resolution to burn brightly to the last, than from any pleasure he can feel. Pish! I'm getting as sentimental as that pale, pasty-faced Emily Matilda Jones," continued Sir Godfrey, laughing.

"High, wind him!" cried Jacob. "Hoik, hoik! Drag on him! Have at him, hoik, hoik!"

With a dash and a spirit that showed the purity of blood and metal of their kith and kin, the little gallant band swept through briar and brake, and answered their huntsman's cheer by redoubling their efforts to discover the retreat of "cute Charley."

"Give it him! hoik——"

A whimper.

"Hark!"

By the gods, 'tis a find! The hound throws a deep-toned, bold challenge forth, drowning all doubt of its being a deceptive babble.

"Hark to Ringwood!" hallooed Jacob, with his heart in his voice. "Hark to Ringwood! hark, hark to him, my beauties!"

Like a flash of light the hounds flew to the leader's cry, and in an instant the air was loaded with the music of their tongue.

"Gently there, gently there, for'ard!" said Sir Godfrey, as a few of the ardent pushed to the end of the cover. "Keep still and quiet, as you value your day's sport," continued he.

"There he goes!" shouted one, pointing with a straightened finger and starting eyes as the fox gave himself to view.

"Here he is!" cried another.

"I must entreat of ye," said Sir Godfrey, "to be silent. There is nothing so likely to cause him to be chopped as ——"

"Tally-ho!" cried a voice, as a stout, shy, and gallant fox showed himself on the verge of the cover, and, in a moment, back into the brake he turned, lifting a tag at the tip of his brush as white as snow.

"Confusion!" exclaimed Sir Godfrey, with the blood mounting to his cheeks. "Confusion," repeated he, "they've headed him."

The offender saw his mistake when too late, and, seeing the Baronet approaching, endeavoured to avoid the rating he perceived to be in preparation. Sir Godfrey, however, rode up to his side, saying, "I must beg of you, sir, to be quiet. It is far from my wish to say any thing that might offend or wound the feelings of the humblest individual who joins my hounds, but I will not permit unsportsmanlike conduct to pass uncensured. A view-halloo," continued Sir Godfrey, "may be all very proper at certain times; but for a fox in cover it is not only unnecessary for assisting hounds, but nine

times out of ten proves highly detrimental, as in the present instance. Learn to be quiet, sir, learn to be quiet," repeated Sir Godfrey, in an admonitory tone and manner, "and you'll set the best example that heads the 'Rules for sportsmen to observe in the field.'"

In a few minutes the hounds again pressed the unwilling fox from the thicket, and the clear musical "Gone away" from Edward Flamstead, showed that matters were as they could be wished. "Gone away, gone away!" now rang from twenty tongues.

"For'ard, for'ard!" hallooed the huntsman.

"Hold hard, gentlemen!" cried Sir Godfrey. "Let them get well at him, and then ride over 'em if ye can."

Ringwood, with two couples of his companions, swept from the gorse before the fox had gained a hundred yards in advance, and, settling to him, away they went as if resolved to race him down at once without let, check, or stop.

Cap in hand, and his pigtail standing stiffly and fiercely out, Jacob spurred his way out of the cover, and, bringing the bunch of tail hounds with him, he lifted them hard to the front, and in a few seconds the whole were streaking along like a shadow from one body, and every tongue throwing melody to the breeze.

"'Tis a burning scent," remarked Edward Flamstead to his father, as they galloped over the flat at the commencement of the run.

"Ay, Ned," replied Sir Godfrey, "he who lives to the end of this must show his possession of the three essential qualifications in a sportsman — skill, courage, and judgment."

"Which doubtless we shall see displayed in yourself," rejoined his son, laughing.

"Ah!" returned Sir Godfrey, shaking his head, "I want the fire of youth; but I must try to be there or thereabouts to-day."

At the onset of the chase, the fox led across the open heath for about a mile, and, there being none of those impediments to cause the irresolute to crane and falter, the whole field scoured across it without any diminution of the numbers. With extraordinary determination to be in front where there were no difficulties to encounter, a few urged their horses with whip, spur, and voice, in the leading flight; but at the first barrier, which was a high bank with a strong growth of hawthorn on the top, these ardent and ambitious Nimrods drew their bridle-reins, and, standing in their stirrups, stretched their

necks over the stop to their course in hesitating fear.

"Clear the way!" halloosed Jacob Prettyman, coming up; and cramming his old, well-tutored hunter at the fence, he flew through and across it with the ease of thought.

"Hie—over!" cried Edward, throwing out his whip-hand, and charging it at the same moment with the huntsman.

"Now, gentlemen," said Sir Godfrey, in a rallying tone, "what *are* you looking at?" And while he spoke, his horse rose like a bird, and dipped across the rasper as lightly as if possessed of feathered pinions.

The way being led, many who feared to pioneer the course for themselves now followed in the rear, and vainly strove to recover the distance lost. For such was the pace that but a few yards forfeited to doubt were never to be regained.

Now, flying over elastic and velvet-bladed turf; then scouring through the deep and heavy fallows; at one moment skimming up the steep acclivity, and then over the top they dipped, and down the slope they rattled at breathless speed. On went the chase!

Gates, rails, walls, banks, brooks, and fences were taken in the course without a thought of their difficulty or danger. The arduous waxed warmer at every stride, and that which, at an earlier period of the run, would have made hearts and nerves flutter, was not even heeded with a thought. On went the chase!

Flocks of sheep, and herds of frightened cattle scampered to the corners of their boundaries, and stared at the fleet hounds and throng sweeping past in dumb but palpable amazement. Horses, ranging idly in rich pastures, roused by the inspiring and well-known sounds, stood statue-like at first, with pricked ears and distended nostrils, and then, as the gladdening cry of the pack gave notice of its approach, their eyes flashed fire, and, scorning all restraint, away they rushed over rail, hedge, and ditch, to join in the noble sport. On went the chase!

Mile after mile was scoured, and yet with unabated vigour the hunt continued. Occasionally a view halloo was heard at a short distance forwards, announcing that Reynard, with all his desperate struggle to get ahead, and make the space long between him and his enemies, had met with very indifferent success, considering the great exertions used. Fly he must, and fly he did; but there were those in his track that kept pace with him.

Abreast of Jacob Prettyman, rode Edward Flamstead; and it was a gallant sight, let who will gainsay it, to see both ride with such skill and noble spirit. There were no swerving—no faint hearts with them. Straight as feathered shafts they flew at the yawning impediments stretched before their horses' heads, and, neck-and-neck, held the enviable position of leaders of the van.

"Heads up, and sterns down!" cried the huntsman in an ecstasy of enthusiasm, pointing with his whip to the hounds not two hundred yards in advance; "that's the way, Master Edward, I love to see 'em go."

Jacob having addressed his young master by this juvenile title, when in long winter nights, he used to charm his ears by relating daring deeds by field and flood, as he sat astride upon his knee, a mischievous, fat, chubby boy, still observed his ancient custom by calling him "Master Edward."

"What a head they carry!" returned Edward admiringly.

"Yes, sir," added the huntsman; "and if I'm not out of my reckoning, and no accident happens in the shape of an open earth, they'll hold it for some time to come."

Sir Godfrey, as was his habit, held a conspicuous position; and if it was not so forward as his son's, still he well maintained his declared resolution "to be there or thereabouts."

Like leaves in autumn weather, the field now dropped off one by one; and, instead of the motley number thundering along helter-skelter, as at first, there were but a select few left in their glory alone. And even this choice number gradually became more choice, until some half dozen only had the power of living with the pack. On went the chase!

Through dark, deep woods, and across wide, open fields, and down green vales, and up steep, precipitous hills, and over heath, common, and waste, the hounds continued the rapid race between life and death—life in escape and death in defeat. There was no lack of ardour in either the pursuing or pursued. The latter evinced his love of existence by the terrific struggle made to preserve it, and the former the keen and whetted appetite for blood, in the desperate effort to pull their victim down, and let flow the crimson current from his arteries.

Hour after hour fled. Long shadows streaked themselves upon the earth, the sinking sun gilded the tree-top, and, at length, the thickening shades of evening fell in misty folds around; but still the chase went on.

Sir Godfrey's jaded horse had for some

time exhibited those symptoms of distress which told that nature was exhausted; and his rider, finding that he could go no further without the torture of force, pulled him to a stand-still, with the determination of not going a step further.

"By the Saints!" exclaimed the Baronet, dismounting, "this run will last till midnight."

There were now no followers left except Jacob Prettyman and Edward Flamstead. All the rest had been beaten off; but they still held their places. The flanks of their horses, however, told the severity used to keep them at the breathless speed, for the rowels of their spurs and their heels were speckled with gore,—and mire, foam, and sweat, covered their bodies from crupper to bit.

Night now began to drop darkly around. The moon struck her pale beams through thin fleecy clouds:—still the chase went on. Bright stars twinkled in the blue firmament, and were reflected in the mirror of waters:—still the chase went on. Rustics, who had finished their labours for the day, paused in their return home, or rushed to their cottage doors, to listen to the unusual sounds at so late an hour; and then, as silence became suddenly again restored, began to question the correctness of their senses.

"I can go no farther," shouted Edward, in a dry, husky voice.

"Hold on," returned Jacob in a similar hoarse tone, "hold on, sir," repeated he, "for a minute longer. He's not fifty yards afore 'em."

Thus cheered, Edward pricked his beaten horse forwards, but, staggering for a few yards with a last effort, his head dropped between his knees, and he fell dead on the greensward.

His rider was thrown lightly, and without a bruise, and disengaging himself from the stirrups he sprung to his feet, just as a loud, hearty, and ringing "Who-whoop!" burst from the lips of the huntsman.

"By Heaven, they've killed him!" exclaimed Edward, running forward to witness the victory of the gallant hounds.

He had not proceeded far when he saw the indistinct form of Jacob returning. The huntsman was leading his horse, and the hounds were following panting and exhausted at his heels.

"Well, Jacob!" ejaculated his young master, "the success has cost us dearly, for the Roan dropped dead from under me; but where's the brush?"

The huntsman replied in a thick, inarticulate, mysterious voice, that "he didn't know."

"*Not know!*" echoed Edward. "What do ye mean?"

"Exactly what I say, Master Edward," replied Jacob, in a slow, measured voice. "I saw the fox," continued he, "as plainly as I now see you; and I had done so for minutes before, when we were running him from scent to view. I say, sir, that I saw this with my own eyes, and I also saw the hounds run in to him, and pull him down in the middle of this very grass field that we are now standing in."

"Well!" said Edward, as the huntsman arrived at a pause in his narrative.

"With a who-whoop, which you might have heard, sir," resumed Jacob, "I jumped off to save the brush and pads, when there was nothing left to save or to see."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Edward. "What, they swallowed him, skin, marrow, bones, and all!"

"Swallowed him!" ejaculated the huntsman. "Could five couple of hounds, sir, break up and gorge a fox while a man was throwing his foot out of the stirrup? No, no, no," continued he; "I thought a miracle would be worked on the last day of Sir Godfrey Flamstead's hunt,—and I didn't live to be mistaken."

CHAPTER IV.

"Too old, by Heaven: let still the woman take
An elder than herself; so wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart."

MRS. FRANCIS JAMES JONES sat in the breakfast parlour of Franca Villa, in a gloomy disconsolate mood. Before her on the table were some writing materials, and the County Herald, containing in one column an advertisement for the disposal of Sir Godfrey's horses and hounds, and in another a paragraph announcing that the Baronet and his son were about to proceed immediately to the Continent, much to the regret of every body in the vicinity of Wynford Grange.

Seated at some little distance was Emily Matilda, busily engaged with pencils and colours, in the endeavour to draw the representation of some animal with legs and wings, but whether the design was intended for an eagle, cock-robotin, butterfly, or grasshopper, would have puzzled a naturalist of high pretensions. Emily Matilda was certainly that which Sir Godfrey designated her to be, "a pasty-faced girl." There was no appearance whatever of blood in her features, and her

lips had that ashy hue which might lead an observer to conclude she was in the constant habit of indulging in pickles. Her hair was approximating to red, if not positively of the shade called "carrot;" and her figure had that want of roundness in all points, that her chronicler would be unworthy of credit, and prove himself to be a gross flatterer, if he described it by any other term than the graphical one "scraggy."

"Matilda, my love," said Mrs. Jones.

"Yeth, ma?" returned the young lady.

"Leave the room, child," replied her mother. "I wish to be alone for an hour."

The request was readily obeyed, and Mrs. Jones left alone: that is, if the society of a small fat spaniel, snoring on a neighbouring footstool, is to be considered as nothing.

"So," said Mrs. Jones, glancing for the fiftieth time at the paragraph in the newspaper, "they are going to leave, and my hopes are doomed for ever to be blighted. 'Tis useless to deceive myself," continued the widow, rising hastily from her chair, and pacing the room hurriedly; "I never have, and I never will. Emily Matilda is plain, and far from being so accomplished as the money spent on her education would lead one to hope. But then her fortune I depended on as the attraction; and this, notwithstanding my frequent hints to the son, and plainer intimations to Sir Godfrey, has proved, from first to last, a complete failure."

Mrs. Francis James Jones said no more aloud; but her lips continued to mutter, and she walked the length of the apartment a hundred times, as her limbs sympathized with the rapidity of her thoughts.

At length she paused. Doubt was in her glance. Her brow knit deeply, and then her lips compressed, as if the purpose was resolved and fixed.

"I'll do it," said she, "let the result be what it may;" and, sitting down, Mrs. Jones seized a pen, wrote, and addressed a note to Sir Godfrey.

After despatching this, she summoned the tirewoman, and commenced her toilet with scrupulous care.

The rich brocaded silk dress, with sweeping train and farthingale beneath, was put on, with due attention for effect to every fold and crease. High-heeled and buckled slippers tightly and even pinchingly encased her feet. The most becoming wig, powdered and redolent with unctuous perfume, rose like a pyramid above her head, and surmounting this was one of the neatest, most coquettish,

useless, captivating, little coifs, that ever lured the admiration of man in maid, wife, or widow.

Black patches were then placed where formerly there were dimples; for their places had long since been usurped by other indentures called "wrinkles." A touch of rouge was then administered to the cheeks, and, after softening down the bridge of the nose, the centre of the forehead, and the chin, with a white powder, Mrs. Francis James Jones's mirror gave evidence that the labour of art was complete.

"Just in time," observed the widow, as a knock at the hall door of Franca Villa announced the arrival of the expected visitor.

In less than a minute more, Mrs. Jones, with a slight but palpable trepidation of feeling, entered the withdrawing room with all the grace and dignity of that formal era, giving the tips of her fingers to Sir Godfrey to conduct her, with a profusion of bows, to a seat.

At the conclusion of this ceremony, the usual questions and answers, commonplace then as they are now, concerning health and the weather, were interchanged, and then an opportunity was afforded to the widow to open her masked battery by the Baronet observing, that "he had had the honour of a note requesting his early attendance at Franca Villa, and it was a great pleasure to reply to it in person immediately upon receiving the intimation."

Mrs. Francis James Jones coughed, drew her laced handkerchief across her lips, and replied, that "Sir Godfrey would doubtlessly consider her a strange creature when he learned the cause of her desire to see and consult him. But the truth was, she had lately thought of a matter on which no one could give her so much valuable information as Sir Godfrey."

The Baronet was quite delighted at the preference shown him, and expressed his readiness to reveal all within his power and keeping.

"Without further mystery, then, Sir Godfrey," resumed the widow, bending her eyes on the points of her slippers, "I intend to purchase your fox-hounds."

"Fox-hounds!" exclaimed Sir Godfrey, astonished beyond the power of delineation, and as if his breath had been taken away, by the sudden plunge of Mrs. Jones thus diving at once to the pith of her subject.

"Yes," returned the widow. "I find that you are really going away from us, and it

would be too much to part with the comfort and life of the neighbourhood all at once; so I have resolved, in the absence of their master, to become the mistress of the dear dogs."

Mrs. Jones spoke feelingly and with greater effect than she could have even hoped, however sanguine she might have been.

"Are you serious, madam?" inquired Sir Godfrey.

"I was never more so, I assure ye," replied the widow. "Yes, Sir Godfrey," continued she, "I will not be denied. The hounds must be mine at whatever cost."

"You must excuse my astonishment, my dear madam," rejoined the Baronet, better pleased with Mrs. Francis James Jones than he had ever been in the whole course of their acquaintanceship; "but it is so very unusual a circumstance for a lady to become an M.F.H., in other words, a Master—or more properly speaking, a Mistress—of Fox-hounds, that a little surprise may not only be natural but pardonable."

"I'll have the greatest care taken of them for *your* sake, Sir Godfrey," added Mrs. Jones, emphatically. "I, by your leave, will take your old huntsman, too, with the charming pigtail, into my service, and the pets of horses must accompany him. I couldn't live," continued the widow, "without one and all of them."

If ever Sir Godfrey Flamstead of Wynford Grange felt at a loss for words to frame a polite reply, he did so on this occasion; for he sat tongue-tied, and yet wished to speak with conceived but inexpressible eloquence.

"Possessing these companions of your happiest hours," resumed Mrs. Francis James Jones, discovering, with a woman's quick perception, the rising bubbles in Sir Godfrey's sensibilities, "I shall have the pleasure—a melancholy one, it is true—to recal the pleasant associations with which the past is replete, and endeavour to retrace in memory that which never can be renewed."

Sir Godfrey was quite overcome. He rose from his seat at a bound, and, scarcely knowing what he did, he seized the widow's hand between his own, and pressed it warmly to his bosom, and from thence to his lips.

Mrs. Jones did not withdraw the hand. On the contrary, when the Baronet was disposed to separate the treasure from his lips, a slight movement on her part kept it there longer than was intended, and the position, from its length, became almost painful to Sir Godfrey.

"My dear Mrs. Jones," at length he found an opportunity of saying, "if I could only think that I was worthy of so much regard my happiness would be very great."

The widow's bosom heaved a deeply-drawn sigh.

Sir Godfrey felt a cold moisture ooze upon his forehead.

The critical moment was arriving; and Mrs. Francis James Jones knew it, and in order to quicken the proceeding, she burst into a flood of passionate tears.

Nothing is more soothing to grief than the word of comfort dropped in whispered accents. Perchance Sir Godfrey thought this as he gallantly bent his knee and poured forth a flow of words, such only as the inspired can command.

And here we will throw a curtain around and close the scene.

Much might now be said; but little is needed for the sequel of this slight history. Sir Godfrey, it is hardly necessary to tell, was an accepted suitor, and led to the altar the gratified and successful Mrs. Jones. Desirous of aggravating the envy of the Browns, the Lady Flamstead was lavish with her means and appliances of reinstating the grandeur of Wynford Grange, and phoenix-like the ancient house rose from its ashes and looked again as in days of old.

Shortly after his parent's union, Edward took his departure with the independent desire of acquiring his own fortune; but within a few weeks of taking his leave he was summoned to return in consequence of the unexpected and sudden decease of Emily Matilda. Poor girl! she caught cold from a short exposure to the damp, and, possessing no better constitution than a young tender linnnet, parted with her life with the ease of a candle snuffed out.

Edward had always been greatly admired for both his personal and mental qualities by his stepmother who, with all her vanity and powers of finesse, possessed a good, warm, and generous heart; and after the loss of her daughter she would not listen to his quitting his home again. Next to pleasing Sir Godfrey her study was to anticipate and gratify his son's inclination and wishes, and, learning how the tide of affection flowed in a certain quarter, it falls flat and superfluous to add, that Kate Owen soon pledged her troth to him to whom her willing heart had long been plighted.

COUNTRY-TOWN LIFE.

BY MISS MITFORD.

I.—A WIDOW GENTLEWOMAN.

I HAVE never had much acquaintance with a country-town life, an ignorance which I regret exceedingly, not merely because such a life comprises so much of the intelligence, cultivation, and moral excellence of that most intelligent, cultivated, and excellent body of persons, the middle classes, as they are called, of England, — but, because, so far as authorship is concerned, it is decidedly the sphere which presents most novelty, and would be most valuable as affording a series of unhackneyed studies to an observer and delineator of common nature. To the novelist, indeed, an English provincial town offers ground almost untrodden; and the bold man who shall first adventure from the tempting regions of high life, or low life, or Irish life, or life abroad, or life in the olden times, into that sphere where he has hitherto found so many readers and so few subjects, will, if he write with truth and vividness, find his reward in the strong and clinging interest which we never fail to feel when everyday objects are presented to us under a new and striking form — the deep and genuine gratification excited by an union of the original and the familiar. But when will such an adventurer arise? Who shall dare to delineate the humours of an apothecary? or the parties of his wife? or the loves of his daughter? Who will have courage to make a hero of an attorney? or to throw the halo of imagination around the head of a country brewer? Alas! alas! until a grand literary reform shall take place, boroughs and county towns must be content to remain in obscurity, represented in the house indeed, but absolute nullities in the library.

My acquaintance with the subject, slight as I have acknowledged it to be, has the further disadvantage of being almost wholly recollective, referring to persons who have long passed away, and to a state of things which I suspect has no present existence — for in country towns, as in other places, society has been progressing (if I may borrow that expressive Americanism) at a very rapid rate, for the last twenty years; and when I go into the goodly streets of B—— (where I still

possess some few younger friends) I cannot help looking around me, and wondering whether the very race of my old acquaintance be not extinct with the individuals, or whether there be still a class of respectable elderly gentlewomen, who, with no apparent object or interest in life, do yet contrive to live, and to live happily, by the help of a little innocent gossiping, and a great deal of visiting and cards.

One of the most notable specimens of this class that I recollect — and I remember her as long as I can remember any thing — was my mother's old friend, Mrs. Nicholson. She was the childless widow of a former vicar of St. John's parish in B——, and her husband's successor residing on another living, and the curate, a single man, preferring to board with a friend in the town, she still retained possession of the vicarage-house, in which she had presided for so many years, and which a limited but sufficient income enabled her to keep up on a small but comfortable scale. The house, indeed, was not of a sort to make any serious demands on her purse. It was a low, dark, dingy dwelling, situate in an angle between St. John's church and the lofty town-hall, the windows of which overtopped the very chimneys; enclosed within high walls, and looking out into a triangular court, where a few dusty poplars and yellow frost-bitten laurels combined to exclude the daylight from the little low rooms, whose small heavy sashes, of a glass older and thicker than common, afforded another protection against the beams of the blessed sun. The parlour in which she usually sat had also a triangular appearance, resulting from the chimney being placed in one corner — the little chimney faced with tiny Dutch tiles divided by a small low brass fender from a narrow hearth-rug of Mrs. Nicholson's own work, the lion rampant in the middle of which was particularly like a sandy cat, and fronted by a very dark, very bright, very old-fashioned mahogany table, hardly large enough to hold the frame on which she performed her worsted embroidery. The opposite corner displayed a beaufet,

adorned with ornamental glass and china in various states of preservation ; one side boasted an old settee, and another an indescribable piece of furniture called a commode, consisting of three drawers of dark mahogany, perched upon long legs, and surmounted by four shelves enclosed within glass doors, and containing a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends, one half-shelf being filled with books, Fordyce's Sermons, Young's Night Thoughts, Mrs. Glass's Cookery, and other works placed there for show and use, and the rest filled with a stuffed parrot, a shell-work grotto, some specimens of spars and ores, particularly dusty, and a curious collection of filigree.

The usual inhabitants of this apartment were Mrs. Nicholson, a huge overgrown dame, dressed in a style which twenty years ago had been twenty years out of fashion, with powdered hair and fly-caps and lappets, and a black lace tippet, looking exactly like a head-dress cut out of an old pocket-book, all bustle and speechifying, and fidget and fuss ; and a very sedate, demure, pale, sallow, little woman (every thing in the house was on a small scale except its mistress,) whom Mrs. Nicholson called Madge, but whose real name was Miss Day, who filled an equivocal post in the household, half handmaiden and half companion—or rather who performed the duties of both offices—dressing her lady, waiting upon her, combing her dog, and making up caps, lappets, and tippets, in the former capacity ; and writing her notes, reading her to sleep, sitting with her, and listening to her, (for with reply, or any thing that implied talking, Miss Day had little to do,) in the latter.

There they dwelt, Mrs. Nicholson and Miss Day, with the dog Viper, an astonishingly ugly terrier, most unnaturally fat, a little footboy in clerical livery, and an ancient maid of all work—there they lived, patients of decorum, (even the boy Tom, and Viper the terrier, were most staid and orderly specimens of their usually obstreperous class;)—there they lived, with a regularity so punctual, that they might have set the church clock, had that important functionary been out of order, and the sun unwilling to present himself. At half-past seven they rose, at eight they breakfasted, at three they dined, at six they drank tea, at half-past six they sat down to cards, at half-past nine the pool (for quadrille was the game) finished as by instinct, and at ten precisely they went to bed. As the watchman called half-past ten they lay down, and before he cried

eleven the whole household, from Mrs. Nicholson to Viper, might be fairly presumed to be at rest.

Sunday made little variation in this routine, except the episode of going to church, the change in the dinner hour from three to half-past one, and the substitution of Miss Day's reading the late doctor's manuscript sermons during the time which, on the other six days, was devoted to quadrille. The stock of sermons was not very large ; and three hours' reading, weekly, soon got through them ; but Mrs. Nicholson, to whom Miss Day once humbly and submissively suggested Blair, would by no manner of means consent to a change : and the good lady was right ; she had been used to go to sleep to these sermons in the time of her late husband, of happy memory, and knew their quality. Blair might have kept her awake.

For the rest, Mrs. Nicholson was a good woman and a kind, fond of Viper, civil to her acquaintance, and tolerably considerate towards Miss Day ; who, for as little as she looked like the heroine of a novel, had that prime requisite of one, which consists in being in love ; though whether that phrase may be applied to a twenty years' attachment—for such was the date of Miss Day's engagement to Mr. Thomas Cooke, writing-master in B., and parish-clerk of St. John's—may be doubtful. If fortune frowned, Mrs. Nicholson did not. She asked him how he did every Sunday, invited him to take a glass of wine every Christmas-day, and presented him with a kettle-holder of her own best worsted work, as a token of favour and remembrance.

In the duties of acquaintanceship Mrs. Nicholson was pre-eminent. Never was woman so regular in paying and returning visits, whether morning or evening—in sending to inquire after the sick, to condole on deaths, and congratulate on marriages. At the very moment prescribed by etiquette (the etiquette of a country town many years ago,) the rat-tat-tat of the little footboy was heard at the door, and the pit-a-pat of the clogs, or the heavy clump of the sedan-chair—a much more dignified conveyance for a dowager of weight in the world than any of the race of flies, whether horse-fly or man-fly—resounded in the passage. She was the very pattern of all acquaintances.

But visiting, although it was much to her, was not quite all ; she had something more of the salt of life to season her summer and winter worsted-work, in the shape of two

sentiments, both excellent as preservatives from *ennui*—a close and ancient friendship, and a gentle, harmless, innocent, gentlewomanly, Mrs. Grundy sort of hatred. Nobody that had the honour of belonging to Mrs. Nicholson's society, but must have heard of Mrs. Quelch, her aversion, and Lady Daly, her friend. Mrs. Quelch was not, as in the course of things it seemed right that she should have been, her next neighbour; on the contrary, she lived fifty miles off, so completely out of the way, that it really seemed surprising how Mrs. Nicholson could manage to pick up, as pick up she did, so many stories about her; of the number of new bonnets she bought in the year, and the number of servants she turned away—how she was cross to the governess, and spoiled the children—and how, above all, she prevented the doctor (for Mrs. Quelch was the wife of the then vicar of St. John's, and in some circumstance arising from that juxtaposition, had arisen Mrs. Nicholson's enmity) from increasing Thomas Cooke's salary, and giving a new gown to the sexton. Well! hatred and malice are, commonly speaking, very bad things, and far be it from me to enter into a general vindication of them. But in this particular instance I cannot help having a leaning towards the "simple sin;" for it was certainly a great comfort and amusement to Mrs. Nicholson, and could do Mrs. Quelch no harm, that lady being, as I have good cause to believe, happily ignorant that such a sentiment was entertained towards her by the ex-vicress of St. John's, and for the most part, I fear, entirely oblivious of the very existence of the personage in question. Why might not Mrs. Nicholson hate Mrs. Quelch? especially as her expression of the feeling, and sometimes its affected suppression, were by far the most amusing parts of her conversation.

Her friendship for Lady Daly, although more amiable in itself, was, as far as her acquaintance were concerned, a much greater evil. Lady Daly's name, and Lady Daly's

news, and Lady Daly's letters, were bores of the first magnitude. There was no escaping them either. It was impossible. As soon as you entered, she began with the name, and then she told you the news, and then (incredible barbarity!) after having told you every syllable of the contents, she inflicted on you the epistles in full—such epistles too! Lady Daly seems to have been that astounding person—a sensible woman, a good sort of sensible woman! and her letters were those tremendous compositions called sensible letters, well-written letters, excellent letters! words of praise which, being translated, are commonly found to signify the most elaborate specimens of dulness that are to be met with out of print. Her ladyship's epistles might pass for lessons on the art of amplification. It was wonderful how little meaning she could contrive to spread over four pages. They wanted even the seasoning of malice. Doubtless Mrs. Nicholson's answers were more amusing—she had Mrs. Quelch to hate. I know no harm of Lady Daly, poor woman, but I never saw one of her neat-looking packets, franked by her son Sir John (the son's M.P.-ship had probably tended to make his mamma epistolary,) emerge from her correspondent's huge pocket without wishing them both in the Red Sea.

In other respects Mrs. Nicholson's conversation was pretty much like that of other elderly gentlewomen. She talked of her good husband, the doctor, and showed his portrait in a bracelet*—a faded miniature in full canonicals—displaying at the same time a chalk drawing of herself as a shepherdess, which had been taken at the same period by an artist of similar talent. She praised the weather of her youth, and abused that of the present time, as every body begins to do who has turned the point of forty; she was afraid of the opposition, and attached to the ministry; did not like the taxes, but hated the French; disliked new fashions; deprecated late hours; always petted Viper, and sometimes snubbed Miss Day.

* How fashions come round again! Many a fine lady now carries on her fair wrist, her husband's "picture in little," although the costume may be presumed to be somewhat different. Indeed, in these degenerate days, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to match the full swelling burly buzz wig, and the rustling bustling silk gown, redolent in every fold of clerical dignity, bearing the defunct owner's D.D.-ship on their very front. Nothing has been seen like them since the gown and wig of Dr. Parr.

II.—THE COUSINS.

TOWARDS the middle of the principal street in my native town of Cranley, stands, or did stand, for I speak of things that happened many years back, a very long-fronted, very regular, very ugly brick house, whose large gravelled court, flanked on each side by offices reaching to the street, was divided from the pavement by iron gates and palisades, and a row of Lombardy poplars, rearing their slender columns so as to veil, without shading, a mansion which evidently considered itself, and was considered by its neighbours, as holding the first rank in the place. That mansion, indisputably the best in the town, belonged, of course, to the lawyer; and that lawyer was, as may not unfrequently be found in small places, one of the most eminent solicitors in the county.

Richard Molesworth, the individual in question, was a person obscurely born and slenderly educated, who, by dint of prudence, industry, integrity, tact, and luck, had risen through the various gradations of writing clerk, managing clerk, and junior partner, to be himself the head of a great office, and a man of no small property or slight importance. Half of Cranley belonged to him, for he had the passion for brick and mortar often observed amongst those who have accumulated large fortunes in totally different pursuits, and liked nothing better than running up rows and terraces, repairing villas, and rebuilding farm-houses. The better half of Cranley called him master, to say nothing of six or seven snug farms in the neighbourhood of the goodly estate and manor of Sanford, famous for its preserves and fisheries, or of a command of floating capital which borrowers, who came to him with good securities in their hands, found almost inexhaustible. In short, he was one of those men with whom every thing had prospered through life; and in spite of a profession too often obnoxious to an unjust, because sweeping, prejudice, there was a pretty universal feeling amongst all who knew him that his prosperity was deserved. A kind temper, a moderate use of power and influence, a splendid hospitality, and that judicious liberality which shows itself in small things as well as in great ones (for it is by twopenny savings that men get an ill name), served to ensure his popularity with high and low. Perhaps, even his tall, erect, portly figure, his good-humoured coun-

tenance, cheerful voice, and frank address, contributed something to his reputation; his remarkable want of pretension or assumption of any sort certainly did, and as certainly the absence of every thing striking, clever, or original, in his conversation. That he must be a man of personal as well as of professional ability, no one tracing his progress through life could for a moment doubt; but, reversing the witty epigram on our wittiest monarch, he reserved his wisdom for his actions, and whilst all that he *did* showed the most admirable sense and judgment, he never *said* a word that rose above the level of the merest common-place, trivial, inoffensive, civil, and safe.

So accomplished, both in what he was and in what he was not, our lawyer, at the time of which we write, had been for many years the oracle of the country gentlemen, held all public offices not inconsistent with each other, which their patronage could bestow, and in the shape of stewardships, trusts, and agencies, managed half the landed estates in the county. He was even admitted into visiting intercourse, on a footing of equality very uncommon in the aristocratic circles of country society—a society which is, for the most part, quite as exclusive as that of London, though in a different way. For this he was well suited, not merely by his own unaffected manners, high animal spirits, and nicety of tact, but by the circumstances of his domestic arrangements. After having been twice married, Mr. Molesworth found himself, at nearly sixty, a second time a widower.

His first wife had been a homely, frugal, managing woman, whose few hundred pounds and her saving habits had, at that period of his life, for they were early united, conduced in their several ways to enrich and benefit her equally thrifty but far more aspiring husband. She never had a child; and, after doing him all possible good in her lifetime, was so kind as to die just as his interest and his ambition required more liberal house-keeping and higher connexion, each of which, as he well knew, would repay its cost. For connexion accordingly he married, choosing the elegant though portionless sister of a poor baronet, by whom he had two daughters, at intervals of seven years; the eldest being just of sufficient age to succeed her mother as mistress of the family, when she had the

irreparable misfortune to lose the earliest, the tenderest, and the most inestimable friend that a young woman can have. Very precious was the memory of her dear mother to Agnes Molesworth! Although six years had passed between her death and the period at which our little story begins, the affectionate daughter had never ceased to lament her loss.

It was to his charming daughters that Mr. Molesworth's pleasant house owed its chief attraction. Conscious of his own deficient education, no pains or money had been spared in accomplishing them to the utmost height of fashion.

The least accomplished, was, however, as not unfrequently happens, by far the most striking; and many a high-born and wealthy client, disposed to put himself thoroughly at ease at his solicitor's table, and not at all shaken in his purpose by the sight of the pretty Jessy,—a short, light, airy girl, with a bright sparkling countenance, all lilies and roses, and dimples and smiles, sitting, exquisitely dressed, in an elegant morning room, with her guitar in her lap, her harp at her side, and her drawing table before her,—has suddenly felt himself awed into his best and most respectful breeding, when introduced to her retiring but self-possessed elder sister, dressed with an almost matronly simplicity, and evidently full, not of her own airs and graces, but of the modest and serious courtesy which beseemed her station as the youthful mistress of the house.

Dignity, a mild and gentle but still a most striking dignity, was the prime characteristic of Agnes Molesworth, in look and in mind. Her beauty was the beauty of sculpture, as contradistinguished from that of painting; depending mainly on form and expression, and little on colour. There could hardly be a stronger contrast than existed between the marble purity of her finely-grained complexion, the softness of her deep gray eye, the calm composure of her exquisitely moulded features, and the rosy cheeks, the brilliant glances, and the playful animation, of Jessy. In a word, Jessy was a pretty girl, and Agnes was a beautiful woman. Of these several facts both sisters were, of course, perfectly aware; Jessy, because every body told her so, and she must have been deaf to have escaped the knowledge; Agnes, from some process equally certain, but less direct; for few would have ventured to take the liberty of addressing a personal compliment to one evidently too proud to find pleasure in

any thing so nearly resembling flattery as praise.

Few, excepting her looking-glass and her father, had ever told Agnes that she was handsome, and yet she was as conscious of her surpassing beauty as Jessy of her sparkling prettiness; and, perhaps, as a mere question of appearance and becomingness, there might have been as much coquetry in the severe simplicity of attire and of manner which distinguished one sister, as in the elaborate adornment and innocent showing-off of the other. There was, however, between them exactly such a real and internal difference of taste and of character as the outward show served to indicate. Both were true, gentle, good, and kind; but the elder was as much loftier in mind as in stature, was full of high pursuit and noble purpose; had abandoned drawing, from feeling herself dissatisfied with her own performances, as compared with the works of real artists; reserved her musical talent entirely for her domestic circle, because she put too much of soul into that delicious art to make it a mere amusement; and was only saved from becoming a poetess, by her almost exclusive devotion to the very great in poetry—to Wordsworth, to Milton, and to Shakspeare. These tastes she very wisely kept to herself; but they gave a higher and firmer tone to her character and manners; and more than one peer, when seated at Mr. Molesworth's hospitable table, has thought within himself how well his beautiful daughter would become a coronet.

Marriage, however, seemed little in her thoughts. Once or twice, indeed, her kind father had pressed on her the brilliant establishments that had offered,—but her sweet questions, "Are you tired of me? Do you wish me away?" had always gone straight to his heart, and had put aside for the moment the ambition of his nature even for this his favourite child.

Of Jessy, with all her youthful attraction, he had always been less proud, perhaps less fond. Besides, her destiny he had long in his own mind considered as decided. Charles Woodford, a poor relation, brought up by his kindness, and recently returned into his family from a great office in London, was the person on whom he had long ago fixed for the husband of his youngest daughter, and for the immediate partner and eventual successor to his great and flourishing business:—a choice that seemed fully justified by the excellent conduct and remarkable talents of his orphan nephew, and by the

apparently good understanding and mutual affection that subsisted between the young people.

This arrangement was the more agreeable to him, as, providing munificently for Jessy, it allowed him the privilege of making, as in lawyer phrase he used to boast, "an elder son" of Agnes, who would, by this marriage of her younger sister, become one of the richest heiresses of the county. He had even, in his own mind, elected her future spouse, in the person of a young baronet who had lately been much at the house, and in favour of whose expected addresses (for the proposal had not yet been made—the gentleman had gone no farther than attentions) he had determined to exert the paternal authority which had so long lain dormant.

But in the affairs of love, as in all others, man is born to disappointment. "*L'homme propose, et Dieu dispose*," is never truer than in the great matter of matrimony. So found poor Mr. Molesworth, who—Jessy having arrived at the age of eighteen, and Charles at that of two-and-twenty—offered his pretty daughter and the lucrative partnership to his penniless relation, and was petrified with astonishment and indignation to find the connexion very respectfully but very firmly declined. The young man was much distressed and agitated; "he had the highest respect for Miss Jessy; but he could not marry her—he loved another!" And then he poured forth a confidence as unexpected as it was undesired by his incensed patron, who left him in undiminished wrath and increased perplexity.

This interview had taken place immediately after breakfast; and when the conference was ended, the provoked father sought his daughters, who, happily unconscious of all that had occurred, were amusing themselves in their splendid conservatory—a scene always as becoming as it is agreeable to youth and beauty. Jessy was sitting about like a butterfly amongst the fragrant orange trees and the bright geraniums; Agnes, standing under a superb fuchsia that hung over a large marble basin, her form and attitude, her white dress, and the classical arrangement of her dark hair, giving her the look of some nymph or naiad, a rare relic of Grecian art. Jessy was prattling gaily, as she wandered about, of a concert which they had attended the evening before at the county-town:—

"I hate concerts!" said the pretty little flirt. "To sit bolt upright on a hard bench

for four hours, between the same four people, without the possibility of moving or of speaking to any body, or of any body's getting to us! Oh! how tiresome it is!"

"I saw Sir Edmund trying to slide through the crowd to reach you," said Agnes, a little archly: "his presence would, perhaps, have mitigated the evil. But the barricade was too complete; he was forced to retreat, without accomplishing his object."

"Yes, I assure you, he thought it very tiresome; he told me so when we were coming out. And then the music!" pursued Jessy; "the noise that they call music! Sir Edmund says that he likes no music except my guitar, or a flute on the water; and I like none except your playing on the organ, and singing Handel on a Sunday evening, or Charles Woodford's reading Milton and bits of Hamlet."

"Do you call that music?" asked Agnes, laughing. "And yet," continued she, "it is most truly so, with his rich Pasta-like voice, and his fine sense of sound; and to you, who do not greatly love poetry for its own sake, it is, doubtless, a pleasure much resembling in kind that of hearing the most thrilling of melodies on the noblest of instruments. I myself have felt such a gratification in hearing that voice recite the verses of Homer or of Sophocles in the original Greek. Charles Woodford's reading is music."

"It is a music which you are neither of you likely to hear again," interrupted Mr. Molesworth, advancing suddenly towards them; "for he has been ungrateful, and I have discarded him."

Agnes stood as if petrified: "Ungrateful! oh, father!"

"You can't have discarded him, to be sure, papa," said Jessy, always good-natured; "poor Charles! what can he have done?"

"Refused your hand, child," said the angry parent; "refused to be my partner and son-in-law, and fallen in love with another lady! What have you to say for him now?"

"Why, really, papa," replied Jessy, "I'm much more obliged to him for refusing my hand than to you for offering it. I like Charles very well for a cousin, but I should not like such a husband at all; so that, if this refusal be the worst that has happened, there's no great harm done." And off the gipsy ran, declaring, that "she must put on her habit, for she had promised to ride with Sir Edmund and his sister, and expected them every minute."

The father and his favourite daughter remained in the conservatory.

"That heart is untouched, however," said Mr. Molesworth, looking after her with a smile.

"Untouched by Charles Woodford, undoubtedly," replied Agnes; "but has he really refused my sister?"

"Absolutely."

"Does he love another?"

"He says so; and I believe him."

"Is he loved again?"

"That he did not say."

"Did he tell you the name of the lady?"

"Yes."

"Do you know her?"

"Yes."

"Is she worthy of him?"

"Most worthy."

"Has he any hope of gaining her affections? Oh! he must! he must! What woman could refuse him?"

"He is determined not to try. The lady whom he loves is above him in every way; and much as he has counteracted my wishes, it is an honourable part of Charles Woodford's conduct, that he intends to leave his affection unsuspected by its object."

Here ensued a short pause in the dialogue, during which Agnes appeared trying to occupy herself with collecting the blossoms of a Cape jessamine, and watering a favourite geranium; but it would not do: the subject was at her heart, and she could not force her mind to indifferent occupations. She returned to her father, who had been anxiously watching her motions, and the varying expression of her countenance, and resumed the conversation.

"Father! perhaps it is hardly maidenly to avow so much, but although you have never in set words told me your intentions, I have yet seen and known, I can hardly tell how, all that your too kind partiality towards me has designed for your children. You have mistaken me, dearest father, doubly mistaken me; first, in thinking me fit to fill a splendid place in society; next, in imagining that I desired such splendour. You meant to give Jessy and the lucrative partnership to Charles Woodford, and designed me and your large possessions for our wealthy and titled neighbour. And with some little change of persons these arrangements may still, for the most part, hold good. Sir Edmund may still be your son-in-law and your heir, for he loves Jessy, and Jessy loves him. Charles Woodford may still be

your partner and your adopted son, for nothing has chanced that need diminish your affection or his merit. Marry him to the woman he loves. She must be ambitious indeed, if she be not content with such a destiny. And let me live on with you, dear father, single and unwedded, with no thought but to contribute to your comfort, to cheer and brighten your declining years. Do not let your too great fondness for me stand in the way of their happiness! Make me not so odious to them and to myself, dear father! Let me live always with you and for you—always your own poor Agnes!" And, blushing at the earnestness with which she had spoken, she bent her head over the marble basin, whose waters reflected the fair image, as if she had really been the Grecian statue, to which, while he listened, her fond father's fancy had compared her: "Let me live single with you, and marry Charles to the woman whom he loves."

"Have you heard the name of the lady in question? Have you formed any guess who she may be?"

"Not the slightest. I imagined from what you said, that she was a stranger to me. Have I ever seen her?"

"You may see her—at least you may see her reflection in the water—at this very moment; for he has had the infinite presumption, the admirable good taste, to fall in love with his cousin Agnes!"

"Father!"

"And now, mine own sweetest! do you still wish to live single with me?"

"Oh, father, father!"

"Or do you desire that I should marry Charles to the woman of his heart?"

"Father, dear father!"

"Choose, my Agnes! It shall be as you command. Speak freely. Do not cling so around me, but speak!"

"Oh, my dear father! Cannot we all live together? I cannot leave you. But poor Charles—surely, father, we may all live together!"

And so it was settled; and a very few months proved that love had contrived better for Mr. Molesworth than he had done for himself. Jessy, with her prettiness, and her title, and her fopperies, was the very thing to be vain of—the very thing to visit for a day;—but Agnes and the cousin, whose noble character and splendid talents so well deserved her, made the pride and happiness of his home.

MARION WILSON; A TALE OF THE PERSECUTING TIMES.

BY THE LATE ROBERT NICOLL.*

—They lived unknown
Till persecution dragged them into fame,
And chased them up to heaven.—COWPER.

ON an evening in the month of December, 1684, a rustic maiden left a country village not many miles distant from the small town of Wigton, and bent her footsteps towards that ancient burgh. The earth was covered deep with snow, over the frozen surface of which the keen north wind came laden with double coldness. Not a single cloud was in the sky, and the twinkling stars and the cold pale moon seemed set in the majestic deepness of its pure blue. Though the night was cold, the maiden felt it not. Her heart was full of far different thoughts, for she was on her way to take a last look of one who had been her protector in days of danger and distress—her betrothed husband—on whom the angel of death had laid his hand. While she wended on her lonely way, she would sometimes stop and listen with breathless attention; for the fear of lawless and godless men—of a soldiery ready for deeds of blood and wickedness, was in her young and innocent heart; and the tears chased each other down her fair cheeks, when she remembered that the arm of him who had sworn, before their common God and Father, to protect her and hers, was nerveless and powerless now.

The maiden cautiously approached a small farm house in the outskirts of the town of Wigton, from the window of which light was streaming. Having tapped at the door in a peculiar manner, it was instantly opened by an old gray-headed motherly woman, who bore in her hand a flaming torch of some resinous wood.

"Come in, Marion Wilson," was her salutation to the maiden, "an' look for the last time on my son, an' sit for a time by the side o' the waefu' mither o' your betrothed husband."

"Is he awake?" queried the maiden addressed as Marion Wilson.

"No," was the mother's answer, "he sleeps;" and, after a pause, she added, "Oh!

Marion Wilson, it is a sorrowfu' sight to you to see the beloved o' your heart pining awa in his prime. Ye will mourn him sair, sair; but, Marion Wilson, your grief canna be like mine. My darlin' son, on whom the very sun shined mair sweetly than on ither, as the only son of a widow—the last earthly stay o' an aged parent is fadin' into the grave before my een, and wha's grief can be like mine? But I maunna greet, I maunna mourn as ane that has nae hope." The door was closed and bolted, and the two lonely women entered into one of the apartments of the house of mourning.

The roof was low, and the ceiling was formed of axe-hewn wood. A bright fire was burning on the low hearth, by the light of which the wasted body of a young man was seen lying in sleep upon the settle. Tears started into the eyes of the poor young girl when she looked on the dying man, but she restrained herself through fear of disturbing his sleep, and seated herself in silence by his side.

"Have the men of Belial who oppress us, again visited your father's house, Marion," at length said the old woman, breaking silence.

"No," was the answer, "we have now nothing left to plunder or destroy."

"Naetheless," continued the first speaker, "ane on whom I can rely has tauld me, that baith your brither an' yourself are marked out for destruction. But I trust that when that day comes you winna dishonour the choice o' him wha lies there—dishonour yourself—by refusin' to bear testimony to the truth, even unto the death."

Marion Wilson's woman's heart shuddered and her cheek grew pale when she heard the dreadful intelligence, for she lived in the days of indiscriminate murder, in the accursed "slaying time;" but the thought that she was suffering for the truth came to her aid, and she said meekly, "God's will be

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done; I am ready to suffer the worst that wicked men can do unto me."

A pause ensued, which was broken by the feeble voice of the dying man saying, "Marion, I see you are come. Take my hand into yours for the last time in this life, for I feel that my moments of existence are numbered. I die in peace, but oh, what will become o' you, Marion, and my mother in these wild times? You will be oppressed and perhaps murdered, and not one to help or comfort you."

"James," said his mother, solemnly, "are not our lives in the hands o' the livin' God, that He may do with us according to His will?"

James tried to answer, but he could not. His hour was come. One gasp, — one struggle, and all was over, — death had done its office. —

Invidious grave, why dost thou rend asunder
Whom love hath knit, and sympathy made one?

Long did the childless mother and the bereaved girl weep by the bedside of him who *once* would have been the first and kindest comforter to their grief, but whose ear was now dull, dull and cold. But long before the morning's dawn, Marion Wilson left the mother alone with the dead body of her son, and bent her steps homewards; for she dared not allow the morning to dawn on her path, through fear of the cruel oppressors of the land, who were ready to commit every deed of darkness that the wicked could devise and the devilish execute.

Next morning, as Marion Wilson was standing in the door of her father's cottage, looking with tearful eyes in the direction of Wigton, she heard, with a start of fear, the sound of a trumpet, and presently she saw a troop of horse approaching the village. The alarm was speedily given, and immediately all who thought themselves in danger, withdrew themselves from the village into the neighbouring woods and glens. Among these were Marion Wilson and her brother, a boy of about seventeen years of age, who had been detected at a conventicle about a week before. Amid the cold snow did the fugitives stand for hours, until the military had wrought their will upon the village and departed. They were then preparing to return to their desolate homes, when an old man, the patriarch of the village, was seen approaching them. He brought tidings that all might return to their homes, with the exception of Marion Wilson and her brother, whose death the soldiers had sworn, and

whose father they had warned to expect condign punishment if he dared to shelter, protect, clothe, or speak to his own children. All eyes were turned on the brother and sister at this announcement; but there was no fear in the firm step of Marion, and there was courage and hardihood in the bright dark eye and unblenched cheek of her brother. "Farewell, friends," she said, and while their neighbours returned mourning to their ruined homes, they took their way to the mountain fastnesses for shelter.

December passed away, and with it the old year; January came and brought the new. February went with its keen blasts, and April with its sleety showers, and still the brother and sister were wandering through the hills of Galloway, Nithsdale, and Ayr. They had felt the sea blasts, and borne the winter's storms among the hills of Kirkinner and on the Knock of Luce. Many times they had escaped from their enemies as if by a miracle, and many times they had met with friends when in the last extremity with cold and hunger. Happy were they if they got a sheltered glen as a resting-place, and thrice happy if they got a drop of goats' milk from the solitary mountain shepherd. They never dared to read their Bibles save on the topmost rocks of the mountain far above human view, where they sang the songs of God, till the precipices gave back the sound, as if singing an accompaniment to their heartfelt hymn. But all these adversities had not gone and left no trace behind. Marion's cheek had grown pale and her eye dim, and her brother's strength had become weakness under the accumulated effects of mental anxiety and bodily toil. At length the month of May came with the freshness of spring time to cheer their drooping spirits; and, as the storm of persecution had lulled for a moment, they enjoyed rest for a time among the green and lofty hills that separate the counties of Ayr and Wigton.

About the middle of May, impelled by a desire of again looking on their home, though at a distance, they left their hiding-place among these hills, and took their way into Wigtonshire. At sight of Wigton, a strong desire of visiting the mother of her dead lover took hold of Marion's mind. In vain her brother represented the rashness and danger of such a step; she was determined to go. Charging her brother to stay where he was until her return, she one still evening departed on her journey. There was a thin summer mist on the hills, and

now and then the song of a mavis or a black-bird came from some bush or tree, but Marion heeded it not. She was soon to look again on the mother of one who had been dearer to her than ought else on earth—she was soon to look on the bed in which he had died, and on the spot where, in the trustfulness of youth, they had first pledged their hearts.

Her path lay through a small rushy valley, where a few stones, gathered by the burn-side into a rude cairn, marked the resting-place of one of Scotland's Martyrs. The maiden paused by the lonely grave, in which lay the remains of the godly and venerated patriarch of the district, John Morrison, of Mossylea, who, skulking in the hills from the hot pursuit of a party of the Highland Host, had here been surprised while snatching an hour of repose, and mercilessly shot down in cold blood. The heart of the maiden melted into tenderest pity, yet swelled with indignant feelings as she thought of the good man, whose blessing had often in her childhood descended on her fair head—"How long, O Lord!" was her suppressed exclamation, as she slowly held on her way.

There was a light in the cottage which Marion sought, and, as she looked in at its window, she saw the old woman on her knees in prayer. She silently lifted the latch of the door, and entered the apartment. On hearing a footstep, the aged matron turned round, and in another moment Marion was in her arms. Both had much to tell and hear in a short space, for if Marion Wilson was found in Wigton at daybreak, her life was forfeited. They had not conversed long together, when Marion was certain that she saw a face looking in on them through the window. The old woman went to the door to listen, and the next minute they were both in the hands of the military. Wigton jail, a dungeon and irons, were their portion that night. Long did Marion's brother wait for her return, but she came not; and he at length learned that she had fallen into the hands of her and his enemies. And all this misery was created by the efforts of the tyrant and the oppressor to twist to their own purposes of enslavement and evil, the precepts of that gospel that proclaims "on earth peace, good will towards men." Oh! Christianity, what have men made thee? How different from what thou really art?

After lying in a loathsome dungeon for some time, Marion Wilson and her old friend were brought forth to be tried by a court martial, composed of men, with iron on their heels and

in their hearts. Their judges were the Laird of Lagg, Captain Strachan, and Major Windram, commander of the forces in that part of the kingdom. For attending conventicles, and sundry other crimes, they were condemned to be tied to two stakes, within the tide marks of the water of Blednock near Wigton, and there left to drown by the gradual rising of the waves. The women received their sentence unmov'd; and, when they were taken back to their prison they sang praises unto their God.

On the day of the execution an immense crowd collected from all parts of the country to witness the horrible tragedy. From Ayr, and Dumfries, and Nithsdale, and from the head lochs of the Blednock in Carrick, came crowds of people to witness the death scene of the virgin martyr and her aged friend. Some few came to glory over the death of an enemy of the church; some few to look on the strange and awful scene; but the greater number came clad in hodden gray, from far and near, to feed with the sight the fires of vengeance that glowed within their breasts. Among these last was one with a heart full to bursting, and an eye dim with weeping,—the brother of Marion Wilson. He stood unnoticed, and saw his sister brought forth to her death, and he groaned in agony when he saw the strength of the troops, and that the people were unarmed. He saw the soldiers lead the old woman to the stake allotted for her, and tie her to it. The waters began to rise—up—up—they reached her chin—she moved not—another dash; they went over her head, and she was dead. He turned to look at his sister. She stood unmoved, and there was a holy calmness on her face that said, my peace is made. Her companion had been drowned first to terrify her into recantation, but she was firm. Her brother saw her placed in the manner prescribed; he saw the waters begin to rise; but she neither moved nor cried. He bit his lip till the blood ran down his chin, while he groaned out, "My sister, my dear, my noble sister; what can I do to save you?" He was on the point of kneeling to the officer, and offering to suffer for her; when the thought of the men he had to deal with, told him that he would by doing so lose his own life without saving hers. While he stood irresolute, he heard the command given to unloose her, and offer her life if she recanted. It was done, and Marion Wilson was laid faint and sick on the bank. On the officer putting the question to her, she refused; but a hoarse voice at her

side whispered, "Dear Marion, oh! recant;" she looked up into the speaker's face, and her eye seemed to brighten; it was her brother. A soldier had observed the communication, and approached to seize him; but a lane was made for his escape, and closed after him. He could bear the sight no longer; he fled to the hills, like a maniac in agony of spirit. Marion, on refusing to recant, was again tied to the stake, and in a few minutes she was a lifeless corpse.

Her brother continued to wander among the hills, until the attempt of James to govern by priests instead of nobles, brought about a Revolution, when he entered the

army of King William. After rising to a very high rank, and distinguishing himself in Flanders, he retired to his native land, and there lived respected to a good old age; but from the day of his sister's death, a smile was never seen on his countenance, nor the voice of mirth heard within his dwelling. God of mercy! how much of misery may a man create who has the power, and the will. How many noble hearts were turned back upon themselves, until their gentleness became bitterness; how many families—thousands of families—were turned into congregations of woe, and mourning, by the tyrant Stuarts, and their accursed minions!

VIOLET HAMILTON; OR, THE "TALENTED" FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

GREAT and brilliant events were impending in the populous and thriving town of W—, upon a certain dull, cold morning towards the close of 1830. A brisk canvass had, for two days, been going on, previous to an election which was expected to be hotly contested, and very "near run." The clank of the hammers employed in knocking up the hustings had already awakened the sleepers in the vicinity of the Town Hall; the chimneys of the Royal Oak were already smoking with the hospitable preparations for the late dinner of the *Blues*; and the orators of the *Yellows*, having concluded the public breakfast—at which the Independent clergyman said grace, and the Baptist minister returned thanks—were just visible through the fog, haranguing a motley assembly of men, women, and small boys and girls, from the windows of the White Hart. Carriages and horsemen were pouring into the town by all its avenues. Music, and banners, and jubilant crowds, followers of the *Yellows*, were encountered in every direction, by the opposing squadrons, and met with cheers and counter-cheers. Young ladies, smartly dressed, were, thus early, seen scudding across the Market Square—interest in the contest, and curiosity, overcoming the real, with the affected, terror of the mob.

"Three cheers for Polly Cripps! Huzza!" was shouted aloud, as a brisk, black-eyed damsel, with the yellow colours on her breast, passed on, dragging along a delicate, slight girl in deep mourning, who hung down her head, and wrapped shawl and veil more closely around her. "Her colour—her colour—Blue or Yellow, Miss?" was shouted; and

the young women might have suffered some annoyance, if not absolute insult, from the crowd, when one of the orators of the "White Hart" gallantly rushed to their protection. This was Mr. Charles Herbert, the young friend of the popular candidate, and the very darling of the mob. One word from Herbert was enough for his vociferous admirers.—"Pass her! pass her! She's a pretty girl, Mr. Herbert's friend! Huzza for the Yellows!" Mr. Herbert would have attended the ladies into the inn, with which proposal Miss Polly Cripps would willingly have complied, but her pale and agitated companion, in a voice, the earnest tones of which could not be mistaken, implored—

"Let us go home!—home, I entreat!"

"You are not able to support yourself, Gabrielle," returned the other.

"Do me the honour to lean on me. Suffer me to see you through the crowd," said Herbert.

"No, no, thank you. I am quite well—quite able. Oh, Miss Cripps, let us go home. Do, sir,—oh, do, for mercy, leave us!"

Mr. Herbert was at a loss what to make of this passionate remonstrance, until his arm was twitted by a grim-featured person among the Yellows.

"It won't do here, sir, to show Lon'on tricks—hurt our canvass among the godly. Sir George stands or falls by the Dissenters. If you, his friend, are seen in the streets, in open day, with a sporting lady——"

"Sir?" demanded Herbert.

"Ay, with the Primma Donney——"

"I will see the ladies safe through the crowd, whatever be the consequence," returned

Herbert, haughtily; and his adorers again cheered him, as he led off the ladies.

At the suggestion of Miss Cripps—for her companion seemed now deprived of speech—he conducted them to a milliner's shop, where he left them, till the poor young girl should really be able to go home. He had gathered that she must be a singer or comedian. "Poor little thing!—not over and above adapted those feelings of hers to her way of life," was his compassionate thought; but, in another ten minutes, he was again haranguing the crowd from a window.

There was a double feud in W—. It was not merely Blue against Yellow in this election, but Kersey against Silk, Town against County, Aristocracy against Democracy, Church against Dissent,—and as bitterly Dissent against Church. Every element of wrath was abroad.

The election was not the only great event impending in W—. Among the Blue and Yellow placards which tapestried the walls, appeared the rose-coloured announcement of—

MR. CRIPPS'

GRAND FAREWELL CONCERT;

First Appearance of Mademoiselle Gabrielle, &c.,—

An affair much more interesting to the younger part of the inhabitants, than even the election. Mr. Cripps had been, for ten years, the organist and music and singing master of the town, which, previously very wealthy from the rapid increase of its staple manufacture, had, during his residence, made an equally sudden stride in the fine arts, in fashion, and refinement of manners. This happy revolution might, in part, be attributed to the influence and example of Mr. Cripps and his "talented family," who, if not *standards* either in morals or manners to their wealthy if less refined neighbours, had been patterns in good breeding. From the head of the house to the smallest child, the Cripps were a singularly *talented family*. Sir George Lees, the candidate of the *Yellows*, when attempting to seduce or withdraw Mr. Cripps from his long allegiance to the *Blues*, privately assured him that he was lost in this stupid place; that the metropolis was the field for his splendid talents, and those of his promising family. Mr. Cripps was predisposed to believe the flattering tale. He had often fancied the same thing himself, and had even discussed the subject with Mrs. Cripps.

This lady had halted, for some years, between ambitious enterprise and matronly

prudence. She had known the pains and penalties, the whips and scorns, of bitter poverty, too intimately, during the first twelve years of her wedded life, to be rash, now that those early difficulties were surmounted, and she was blessed with a modest competence, which promised to be permanent. Though not without maternal ambition, her prudence had hitherto combated the adventurous desires of her husband, until the flattering assurances of Sir George turned the scale against caution; while maternal affection lent its weight, and fairly kicked the beam. Mrs. Cripps remembered—when could she forget?—that her eldest-born—her "beautiful, her brave"—Mr. John Quintin Cryppes, more familiarly called Jack Cryppes, was already settled in the metropolis,—if the word could be legitimately applied to Mr. Quintin's desultory connexion of six months' standing with the newspaper press, as a picker up of paragraphs. And now Sir George, on his third call, when the loyalty of Mr. Cripps to the *Blues* had melted before the favouring sun of the *Yellows*, assured Mrs. Cripps, in emphatic whispers, as he tenderly pressed her hands in her own hall—

"Your husband's genius is totally lost here, ma'am. London, my dear Mrs. Cripps,—London, believe me, is the mart for great talents. The magnificent voice of your charming daughter, properly cultivated, is a fortune in itself."

"My husband's pupil, Mademoiselle Gabrielle, Sir George, not our daughter:—our eldest daughter, Polly,—Maria," corrected Mrs. Cripps, "is thought a brilliant pianist for her years, by partial friends. Her father does not permit her yet to use her voice much. All our children have great musical talent, and great general talent—forgive a mother's partiality, Sir George. My eldest son, Quintin, now settled in London—" But Sir George, smilingly, squeezed the hand of Mrs. Cripps, in a style so politely, yet imperatively gagging, that she at once gave in.

"I am sure I have your interest in this struggle, Mrs. Cripps: Mr. Quintin Cripps." The candidate pulled out a card—"Have the goodness to give me your son's address, ma'am. It shall be one of my first pleasures, on my return to town, after this awful affair is over, to seek out Mr. Quintin Cripps—Cripps, my good fellow, do set about trying what you can do for us this afternoon. Half the ladies of the town have been your pupils, at one time or another; and you are, I find,

so popular among them;—the Orpheus of W——, making the brutes dance to your magic flute. Ha! another young gentleman, and, I am sure, by his face and figure, a Cripps," exclaimed the candidate, as a whey-faced, lanky lad appeared.

"My second son, Edwin, Sir George." The introduction took place.

"I must, to-night, after the canvass, inquire about your views for Mr. Edwin." This said, Sir George actually took Mr. Cripps' arm, to convey him to his committee-room for instructions.

Mrs. Cripps had not thought so highly of her husband for ten years before. No, not even on those proud days, when the delicious tones of his violin had enraptured the noble and gentle amateurs collected at his ANNUAL CONCERTS, in the time of the Assizes or the Races; and brought down thunders of applause, and showers of gold tickets. The London project now appeared not merely feasible to her, but alluring.

The velocity with which millions on millions of ideas, the most dissimilar and incongruous, glanced, darted, whirled, danced, and rushed through the excited brain of Mrs. Cripps, for the rest of the morning, might have furnished metaphysicians with an apt illustration of the mighty difference between the material and the spiritual in man's organization and essence. It was, however, the process only that was remarkable for the spiritual. The ideas themselves were of the earth earthy, of the world worldly, and embraced no large range even there. The very extremes were bounded by a coach for Polly, when she married, and a certain old puce-coloured satin gown, new-dyed, looking very well in London as a second-best; the tea-china conveyed without cracking, and the doubt if Sir George would keep his promise, implied, to Edwin. How cheaply a common dress might be purchased for Mademoiselle Gabrielle; and, how the cask of elder-berry wine, the annual present of the rector's maiden sister to the organist, could be conveyed with safety to the metropolis, were all among her mazy thoughts.

It was not so much the quality as the quantity and velocity of Mrs. Cripps' magnificent or homely ideas, when speculating on the advance of her husband and "talented" family, which were miraculous. With vulgar details of finance, and ways and means, were mingled dazzling generalities of what *might be*; and natural and kindly affections interlaced and adorned the airy fabric of specula-

tion. The pride of her heart, her handsome, gay, careless, and volatile, though affectionate Quintin, would again live in her eyes and under her wing, reunited to his family; she thought of the joy of Polly, who had so long sighed after the metropolis; and of the delight of Susan, who was turning out almost as poetical and clever as Quintin, and who sadly wanted a medium through which to display her literary talents to an admiring and a paying public.

If, through the interest of the kind, generous Sir George, a place was found in London for poor Edwin, the felicity of the family would be complete—too great. Mr. Cripps might also have an opportunity of bringing out his pupil to the best advantage at one of the great theatres, and perhaps make another fortune through the genius of Mademoiselle Gabrielle; but on this his wife did not reckon much: she knew that Cripps was always an enthusiastic schemer, and had often told him so.

Mrs. Cripps had present duties to discharge as well as ambitious speculations to indulge; and to these we leave her, to look in upon another household of the excited and distracted town of W——.

No scheme of sanguine and ambitious vanity had ever appeared more rash and ridiculous in the eyes of Mrs. Somers Stocks, the lady of one of the principal bankers of W——, than that which had been hatching in the head of Mr. Cripps for a long period, and which, for the moment, had turned the brains of his wife. The project had occupied Mrs. Stocks much more closely than the election, though Mr. Stocks was one of Sir George's committee. She had been the first patroness of Cripps; his unfailing friend at his annual benefit concerts; his employer, his counsellor. Mrs. Stocks, in short, possessed titles manifold to the gratitude of the organist, and now he was going off to London in spite of her advice, leaving her Juliana without a teacher for either piano, guitar, harp, or voice! Mrs. Stocks was vexed as well as angry; and no sooner was the state of the canvass, the great topic of the hour, discussed after dinner, than, helping her husband, unasked, to a few more hot chestnuts, she broke forth:—

"You must have heard, my dear—for the town is ringing with it—of the madness of Little Cripps?"

"I have not heard a word—Is Cripps mad?"

"Going off to London, bag and baggage, with his whole family and his pupil! Does

not that look like madness?—to make all their fortunes by their wonderful talents! So talented a family!"

Mr. Stocks did not encourage his lady; but, as he quietly peeled his chestnuts, and seemed to listen, she continued:—

"So much as *we* have done for him: and Juliana just at that critical period, when the mechanical drudgery of music is over, and genius in the science beginning to be developed. Cripps—and I must say that for the silly creature—is a first-rate instructor, or he never should have had my patronage; and now to go to London!"

"It seems a bold step in Cripps; but I suppose he has his reasons," replied the banker, who looked as if he felt perfectly indifferent to the weal or wo of "the talented family," Mademoiselle Gabrielle included.

Mrs. Stocks was somewhat provoked; but to the want of sympathy in her husband, to having her feelings and motives "unappreciated," she was case-hardened by fifteen years' endurance; not indeed altogether without complaint. Knowing her husband's commercial and civic importance, she had some vague expectation, that, if her feelings had been appreciated, he might have interfered to prevent the suspension of Juliana's musical education, by stopping the Cripps in their meditated transit, as he would have stopped the circulation of a forged note.

"The infatuated creature has got more pupils, and all of good fashion, than he can overtake. Polly Cripps finds young scholars among the middle ranks. And you were willing, Mr. Stocks, with your usual goodness, to receive Edwin into the bank at a salary of twenty-five pounds; such certainties and prospects to be thrown away! Cripps has the two Miss Wordleys at the Hall, the rector's grand-niece, the three young ladies at Oakwood, and my Juliana,—*County* families; and, to my certain knowledge, he was promised dear little Lady Anne when the family came to the Castle."

"County families, all save your own, Jane," replied Mr. Stocks, who was, by birth and feeling, of the town faction!—"Do the county gentry pay Cripps higher than we do?"

"That don't signify, Mr. Stocks. There is, to a professional man like Cripps, an immense difference in the rank of his pupils: he had not above three hours in genteel families till engaged to attend our Juliana; but after his first month at the Castle, employment quite flowed upon him."

"With the help of your patronage, my

dear," returned the banker; whose humour found vent in such small jets as remarking to his lady—"And when Cripps becomes famous as a composer in London, fancy how the honour will be enhanced of having those six Sonatas dedicated to Mrs. Somers Stocks."

The tone of her husband's voice, his carelessly-crossed ankles, his drumming on the table, the easy indifferent air with which he sipped his wine, were altogether too much for the nerves of his lady.

"You are pleased to jest, Mr. Stocks; but my feelings will not permit me to see a thoughtless wretch, with a large family—lively, clever, pleasant creatures, all of them—throw away his prospects in this manner. You will see him back to W— ere a twelvemonth be out, with a begging subscription."

"Set your heart at rest, Jane. If he do come, I am sure you will subscribe handsomely. But I've a notion that the Cripps, like the cats, will fall on their feet, light where they may. Drop them penniless on London Bridge, and they are the sort of folks that will scramble their way,—and, as the Scots say, either make a spoon or spoil the horn."

The use of vulgar and idiomatic phrases, was a practice from which Mrs. Stocks had never been able to wean her husband; nor could she banish from her recollection, that, though Mr. Stocks went properly to church with her, his father had been at least a *wet* Quaker; and that his grandfather, and all his remoter ancestors—if clothiers could be supposed to have had ancestors—had been strict Quakers. It is rare that the entire motives of any human being come wholly to the surface, in an affair which deeply affects their passions or interests. The ingratitude of Cripps, and the injury to Juliana, were strongly resented; but there was another motive: the gay, handsome, young and fashionable wife of the senior partner in the bank, the rich uncle of Mr. Stocks, had taken a kind-hearted, if inconsiderate, caprice, rather than a serious liking to the Cripps family, and had suddenly usurped the place of her matronly niece-in-law, as their patroness. And Cripps, though he denied the fact, had as completely transferred his allegiance from Mrs. Somers, to Mrs. Richard Stocks, as he had transferred "his vote and interest" from the *Blues* to the *Yellows*. He had whispered in the safe ear of Mrs. Cripps, that his original patroness was an ostentatious, vulgar, under-bred, exacting pretender—with

no more true appreciation of musical genius, and no more music in her than in a cart-wheel. Mrs. Richard, on the contrary, was a lady-like creature, who did know something, and feel a great deal, of music. Mrs. Richard possessed other advantages. She had a chariot and phaeton at her command, and lived at the *Grove*. The dwelling, handsome, commodious, and well-furnished, of Mrs. Somers Stocks, was only over the New Bank in the Market Square of W——, and was her unvaried residence throughout the year, save a few weeks at Buxton or Matlock, and latterly at Leamington. But the most enviable distinction of Mrs. Richard was, being connected, by inextricable cousinships with "the county people." They visited her at the *Grove*, and she visited them in all their Halls and Places; and if Mr. Somers Stocks occasionally grumbled at the uses to which the local aristocracy, Mrs. Richard's high-blooded connexions, sometimes sought to turn their intimacy at the Bank, he durst not yet complain to his uxorious old uncle. Mrs. Richard laboured under one disadvantage. She had no child, no Juliana, to scold and dote upon by turns—to spoil by fond, weak indulgence, and torment and chafe by capricious checks.

"You won't carry your displeasure so far, Jane, as not to attend Cripps' Farewell Concert on Friday, I suppose? I must see for tickets to you and Ju," resumed Mr. Stocks.

"It must altogether depend on family arrangements whether I shall be present," replied Mrs. Stocks, with an air of matronly dignity. "I have not quite made up my mind. Of course my daughter must go to her master's benefit concert. So pointed a slight from our family to Cripps, fool as he is, I could not show at this time; and Juliana cannot well go without me. I understand the family from the *Grove*, with all their fashionable guests, are to be there. Mrs. Richard has sent twelve sovereigns for twelve tickets—gold tickets;—a fortunate woman is your uncle's wife—rolling in wealth, and with nothing to do but amuse herself."

"No wonder so unfortunate a woman as yourself envies the lot of my old uncle's very young and pretty wife, Jane."

"Indeed, then, I do not. Heaven forbid! Have I, Mr. Stocks, ever repined at my severer domestic duties, or our more limited means. The pains I bestow, the trouble I take with our daughter's education, maternal affection renders a pleasure, not a task."

"What a pattern of a wife this ungrateful man has got!" was perhaps the shadowy reflection of Mrs. Stocks; while Mr. Stocks, as if in sympathy with her conscious virtue, checked the humour which prompted him to commiserate the sad fate of his lady, under the necessity of giving her orders direct to her cook, instead of communicating with that functionary through the dignified medium of a housekeeper; of doing her marketing, and paying her bills herself; and teasing her daughter with incessant care, of which nine-tenths might have been spared with great advantage to Juliana's mind and temper. Mr. Stocks hemmed away his sarcastic propensity, sipped his wine, and remarked—

"You will forget and forgive, Jane. Little Cripps needs a lift at present; and though I don't deal in *gold tickets*, I trust you will be generous to Juliana's old teacher and her playmates, his children."

"Generous!" exclaimed the aggrieved lady. "I was his first and fastest friend. Did I not, twice a-year, send Emily Cripps Juliana's left-off things—did I not—"

"You *have* been kind to the fiddler's family, I believe, Jane," interrupted Mr. Stocks, cutting short the muster-roll of his wife's benevolences; "and you will still be kind—only *no London introductions*:—my purse is at your discretion, but not my name."

"Cripps will not want for introductions, I assure you; he will, as Mr. Charles Herbert says—what a very gentleman-like, elegant, and prepossessing young man is Sir George's friend, Mr. Herbert!—'Cripps will find a way or make one.' He was yesterday, with his daughter Polly, at a *dejeuner* at the *Grove*, to meet Sir George, who is quite a *fanatico*. Cripps, no doubt, has splendid talents, the creature."

"Were they actually fiddling in the forenoon, while we were sweating, canvassing for him?" exclaimed Mr. Stocks, setting down his glass, with an emphasis, and raising himself bolt upright in his chair; half repenting that he had allowed himself to be placed on the committee of so degenerate a Whig. "He'll gain much of the sort of knowledge, which I fancy he requires as the representative of a commercial community, by fiddling away his mornings with fiddlers and fine ladies. Were the *Blues* to hear of this—in the very heat of his canvass!—and the fellow seems much in earnest too."

"Mrs. Richard had a few musical friends to meet Sir George; and it is really so good

of her, when one considers that all her early connexions and secret prepossessions must be for the *Blues*, and against the *Low party*. But she is a well-bred young woman, and the usages of good society, my dear——”

Now, if there was one topic under the moon more than another which Mr. Stocks detested, in a matrimonial *tête-à-tête*, it was this same “usages of good society,” with which his lady had been indoctrinating him for fifteen years, and, as she feared, to very little good purpose. He abruptly left the room for his office and London correspondence, at the same hour that Mr. Cripps was going the rounds of the best society of W——; disposing of, or rather taking orders for tickets for his Farewell Concert, and soliciting votes for “his particular friend Sir George, as a personal favour.”

It was not without some grounds that the grateful Baronet afterwards whispered him, as indeed he did fifty other voters—“Your zeal has turned the election. It is impossible that I can ever forget it: this is not merely political service—it is disinterested personal attachment. Upon my soul I feel it.”

It was not, however, improbable that more than one young man, already secretly favourable to the Liberal *Yellows*, had been moved to confer the parting kindness of a pledge on his old violin master; and quite certain that twenty young wives and favourite daughters, Cripps’ former pupils, solicited and coaxed the suffrages of their relatives for Sir George, “who could be so useful to Mr. Cripps and his family in the metropolis, and who had already promised Edwin a place in the Ordnance Office. Cripps was such a good creature—so polite and kind to us at school; but we were always favourite pupils.”

All Mr. Cripps’ pupils, it was remarkable, had been favourite ones; and every member of Sir George Lee’s committee, had, simply and singly, carried his election, which was equally remarkable.

If Mr. Cripps was polite and urbane, his high breeding was not unaccounted for. He had been bred in the atmosphere of a Court. He had originally been one of the singing boys of the choir in the King’s chapel at Windsor. The Princes there were of a royal, and he was of a musical, race: yet there was an impenetrable mystery about his origin; and even Mrs. Cripps could not tell whether the blood in the veins of her children was that of kings or fiddlers. Mr. Cripps, in his early years, never seemed to

have settled the question entirely to his own liking; and as personal vanity, or pride of art, predominated, he was either the offspring of a certain Royal Duke, by a Maid of Honour, whose reputation required that his father should never acknowledge him, or the descendant of “the divine old man,” his maternal grandfather, an eminent German violinist, “who had first put a bow into his hand!” and of whom, in moods of enthusiasm, Cripps spoke to his children with tears in his eyes. Those eyes!—there was a prominence, an unsteadiness about them, with a fulness of the muscles of the cheeks, in an otherwise slender and meagre man, which gave some countenance to the romantic or mysterious part of Mr. Cripps’ history. The remarkable musical gifts which his whole family possessed—those children to whom flutes, violins, clarionets, pianos, and guitars were in place of the coral and bells, bats and balls, of other children, augured a divine and hereditary right. And from the period of Cripps’ settling in W——, where plebeian morality valued legitimate birth far above high blood, the wife of a peasant above the mistress of a prince, Mr. Cripps showed tact enough to conceal his pretensions. To his art he was ever enthusiastically true. He had been born a musician—his soul was in music; and he must have been touched by its poetry; for, however it might be with his aspiring younglings, or his clever wife, if music was the means of his ambition, it was not less beloved for its own sake.

If Cripps had repined at his hard fate, in being, with his tastes, feelings, and skill, cast among the rich, boorish, timber-toned, and timber-souled population of W——, such as on his arrival he had found it,—among persons who could no more appreciate his music than could Mr. Somers Stocks the refined feelings of Mrs. Somers Stocks, his pity was as much given to them as to himself. They were as the dumb or the blind. They wanted a fine sense which he possessed in an exquisite degree: they deserved his pity. Seasons of refreshing came, with a stray amateur, like Sir George Lees or his friend Herbert, who could understand and feel the real superiority of Little Cripps; and gales of paradise floated on the praises of his talent, by a beautiful woman like Mrs. Richard Stocks, praises which, he said, “had awakened his sleeping soul within him!”

“But, ah! I fear my charming patroness is as far out of her place in this ungenial clime, as I have been in W——,” was his

somewhat familiar whisper, on the morning of the concert at the Grove, in the ear of Mr. Charles Herbert, whose admiration of the lovely hostess was quite apparent to so critical an observer as Mr. Cripps, bred, too, in the purlieus of a court.

The young gentleman was disposed to resent the impertinence of the remark; but "it was only Cripps," who, successful thus far, ventured the small request of the favour and honour of the company of Mr. Herbert at the rehearsal of his Farewell Concert that evening.

"My talented pupil, Mademoiselle Gabrielle—whose only drawback is excessive timidity—and every member of my family, take a part. You shall judge of us, Mr. Herbert, as a musical family.—To-morrow every Cripps of them shall come forward to say adieu to the kind boors of W—. . . . In Mrs. Cripps' private society I am sternly select."

Mr. Charles Herbert did not smile outwardly. Whatever might have been the faults of this young man, he was not of the sneering school. He had some remorseful idea that his friend, Sir George, was misleading this poor little Cripps and his family; but he wished to see how Mademoiselle had recovered her spirits; and he felt that the family of Cripps was a great resource to idle young men of fashion, in a stupid town, where there was not even a billiard-table.

When Mrs. Somers Stocks expressed her astonishment at the audacity of Mr. Cripps—in giving these invitations—to the rector, who dropt in to take tea with her, he smiled, and rather thought Sir George and his friend would go, just like themselves.

"Conceive a party of good fashion at his house!—with its dirt, confinement, squalling babies, pupils, and what not; and the expense! I always knew Cripps was naturally a thoughtless extravagant creature—"

"But his wife—pardon the interruption, madam—so active, managing, and notable a person as Mrs. Cripps—"

"Well, she is so, considering; though as vain and ambitious as himself. And this party!—they have sent to borrow a hundred and fifty things of me. It would have been utter folly, you are aware, to risk my best cut glass. Borrowing my best *epergne*! Such total ignorance of the usages of good society! I *can-not* believe, Mr. Mortimer, that Sir George will go."

"Don't be certain, my dear madam. Music, like gaming, love, and, I must add,

canvassing, in these new times, levels all distinctions. And gay London bachelors, accustomed to Club life, are far from being so stiff as we provincials. Mr. Herbert, who, I understand, flirts, sings, and dances quite as well as he harangues, will be sure to countenance the defalcation of Mr. Cripps from the *Blues*."

"Is he an honourable, this Mr. Herbert?"

"Cannot tell, ma'am. I have not even seen the paragon who has turned the heads of half our ladies, and changed their hearts from *blue* to *yellow*. He is given out as a man of large moneyed fortune, with a fine estate in Somersetshire. The only child of one of the great, *great nabobs*."

"But, tied up by his father's will from enjoying his property, or marrying under the age of twenty-five, unless with the consent of his stepmother."

"Ah, ma'am, why ask me for news, when you are always so much better informed yourself?" said the sly rector.

"Mrs. Richard Stocks was very intimate with Mrs. Herbert at Cheltenham. She is a most accomplished, beautiful, and still young-looking woman; and quite devoted to her step-son, who repays all her affection. She was expected at the Grove, on a visit during the election, but has not been able to make it out."

"Aunt expects to meet Mrs. Herbert in London next season," put in Miss Juliana, who took deep interest in the conversation.

"Is this clever Mr. Herbert—they say he is fresh from Oxford, though so sad a rebel—so very handsome as the *blue* ladies maintain, Miss Julia?"

"Oh, very handsome indeed! such an orator!—with an air so *distingué*, Polly Cripps says;—and a seat on horseback like an angel," exclaimed Miss Stocks.

"Softly, Juliana—no occasion for the display of so much natural emotion, my love. The quiet, subdued, lady-like manners sanctioned by the usages of polite society, my love, forbid—"

"Mr. Cripps has sold 250 tickets," interrupted the lively and tractable Miss. "Mr. Herbert has taken ten at a sovereign a-piece."

"Well done Mr. Cripps! he will go off at last with the eclat he so dearly loves," said the rector. "Mr. Herbert possesses the true secret of changing *blue* to *yellow* I find."

"It was not *blue* or *yellow* at all, sir," continued the well-informed young lady. "Polly Cripps wrote him a pretty twisted note on *pink* glazed paper, soliciting his patronage

and support for her charming friend Mademoiselle Gabrielle, who is to make her *debut* at the concert, after the polling."

"She is a brisk damsel enough, Polly Cripps," returned the rector. "Did the other girl know of this pretty plan, Juliana? Why, the Cripps' family are far riper for the metropolis than I had fancied; the mysterious pupil seemed to me a retiring, modest young creature—poor thing!"

"Violetta know? Oh, no—that she does not; Susan Cripps was vexed at it—and begged Polly not to send the note; it would so hurt poor Violette if she ever heard of it. She is very nervous about the concert of to-morrow. While she was giving me my lesson, when Mr. Cripps had gone out canvassing, the tears fell drop-dropping on the keys. I pretended not to notice, as she did not, I am sure, wish me to see. I don't know if she knew herself. I dare say, mamma, Mrs. Cripps scolds and worries her—as she does her own daughters sometimes—and makes her cry."

"Happy Juliana! to have no idea of other cause of suffering than a mamma's worrying," said the benevolent and smiling rector. "I am afraid, Mrs. Stocks, this poor girl is not very happy where she is. . . . And what has put it into Cripps' scheming head to Frenchify her English name? Can a *Prima Donna* not be received by English people under the simple, English appellation of *Violet Hamilton*?"

"That is the girl's name, then!" cried Mrs. Stocks—"Mademoiselle Gabrielle, indeed!—so like Cripps."

"Violet Gabrielle, so baptized; and a Protestant, madam," rejoined the rector. "I received a long and earnest letter about her to-day, from an unknown brother-clergyman in Guernsey. She is the orphan child of an officer who was in the Indian army, and who, when he died, three months back, bequeathed her, with his little savings, to the Organist of my correspondent's church; a small respectable farmer, with whom Violet and her father had lodged for seven years; and who, with his wife, are as much attached to her as if she were their own grandchild. I wish it may be a wise arrangement which has led these generous, disinterested, but simple-minded people to give up her little property, and something additional from their own small savings, to have her article to our friend Mr. Cripps, that her musical education may be thoroughly completed."

"Cripps makes such a mystery of it," put

in Mrs. Stocks. "Why, the bills came through *our* bank, soon after he had brought the girl over from the Channel Islands. Mr. Stocks, always prudent, is mute as a fish on all such matters,—so best in affairs of business; but I have authority for saying, that Cripps changed one bill for £100 at Smith the draper's, when he paid the dresses for the concert and his old account; and I have reason to know that £200 are now lying at his order in London."

"He is a good-natured little man on the whole, and a thorough musician," rejoined the rector. "His wife is a shrewd woman, and a capital disciplinarian; so I hope this poor young lady will be tolerably happy among them. My sister and I mean to visit her as soon as the distraction of this Concert business is over—poor, young, friendless thing!"

"I mean to call on her myself," said Mrs. Stocks; "but really I begin to be cautious on the side of the Cripps family, and especially of Miss Polly. There is an audacity in the bold black eyes and sergeant-major stride of that girl, a freedom of manners with her superiors, and so obvious a want of proper tact, and knowledge of those usages which characterize persons accustomed to good society—But here comes Mr. Stocks! My dear, make your apologies to the rector. His good, old-fashioned politeness would not permit us to begin tea without you."

The election, the concert, the sudden conversion of Blues to Yellows, and Yellows to Blues, and the great London enterprise of the Cripps family, furnished abundant topics for tea-table talk.

CHAPTER II.

The Musical Soirée of Mrs. Cripps.

"The web of life is of mingled yarn," says one who, to his other titles, may add that of being the greatest of human life's philosophers. The saying held of what, nevertheless, was by a hundred degrees the most brilliant party which Mrs. Cripps had ever given in the course of her twenty-five years of married experience. A critical English eye, such as that of Mrs. Somers Stocks, must have seen many defects, flaws, and positive wants in the machinery—the *material* of festivity and elegant enjoyment; yet, taken as a whole, the "*let-off*" was by no means the despicable affair which Mrs. Stocks had predicted. The redeeming elements were the genuine musical talent of the party-giving

family; their good-humoured fudge, polite manners, and the desire to oblige and please their guests, carried to the extreme of flattery. Flattery was indeed a natural characteristic of the whole family of Cripps; a habit become second nature. They flattered every one, and they flattered each other, even when alone; and every Cripps, at every hour, sung the praises, and attested the virtues and accomplishments, and amiable dispositions of each and all of the Crippses. A habit so established could not be taxed as insincerity; for it by no means prevented family brawls, politely conducted. It was the caressing, demonstrative style of the head of the house, carried down improved to the juniors; and it was pleasant as the sign of family affection, in a household now knit together by force of blood, as in after life, by considerations of a common interest; when the Crippses were still "each for all and all for each," as their best policy and most beneficial family compact. There was at least no insincerity in their mutual admiration. Polly never doubted that her brother Quintin—her "brother the barrister," as she learned to designate him—was the greatest genius and the finest gentleman of his age: there was certainly nothing like Quintin among the dullards of W—. That her father was the most accomplished musician and perfect gentleman that was to be met with, was the strongest article of Susan's faith; and this opinion was a nearer approximation to the truth.

As Mr. Cripps and his lady stood at the door of his teaching-room, converted for the night into the principal reception-room, in their best dresses, and very best, because happiest, looks, they appeared for their years an exceedingly genteel and agreeable couple. Cripps, always neat and spruce, shone in his glossiest black suit and finest gala waistcoat; his lady was very well and becomingly dressed; both were distinguished in W— for good manners, with perhaps an exuberance of *manner*, an *empressement*, an elaboration of courtesy, which yet did exceedingly well in W—, and which rather harmonized with the relative position of the hosts and their guests.

A great majority of the latter reckoned themselves, out of sight, the "betters" of the Crippses, whose invitations had, however, been very generally accepted. The fashionable world of W—, happily for Mrs. Cripps, had not the choice of twenty parties of varying attraction, in one night; and it so hap-

pened that almost every body went; each, where vanity or propriety suggested the need of an excuse, finding one in some amiable motive, actuating the condescending individual. The worthy rector could not make up his mind to vex his departing organist by sending an apology; and he went so far as to acknowledge to his sister some curiosity about Mademoiselle, which she courteously and truly imputed to benevolent interest in the young and forlorn stranger. Besides, if he stayed away now, as he had been in the habit of taking tea with the Crippses about twice or thrice a-year, it might be fancied that he felt piqued by the desertion of Mr. Cripps to the *Yellows*. This would have been a victory over the *Blues* which he, as a Tory, a gentleman, and a true Churchman, despised yielding to misled men, Radicals and Dissenters.

Mrs. Somers Stocks was actuated by different, though equally amiable motives. When her scout, the housemaid, informed her that the rector and his sister, both in their clogs, but in full dress, had certainly entered the blazing dwelling, which made sunshine in the shady Mall, her doubts were resolved. Save the few finishing points of cap, scarf, and gloves, Mrs. Stocks was already "dressed enough for such a party." And now that the rector and Miss Mortimer had set the example of forgiveness and graciousness, she would also grace "poor Cripps;" who must be demolished by so decided a rebuff, so dead a cut, as the banker's lady not looking in upon his party.

Mr. Cripps, from his obliging manners and agreeable talents, was highly popular among the young people of the town; and now that he was going away to London, under the Member's patronage, there was a universal and friendly excitement about himself, his beautiful, mysterious pupil, and, indeed, the whole family. Had the invitations been twice as numerous, it is probable that nearly all those asked would, for one sort of civil reason or another, have appeared. Cripps had been, as he had said, "sternly exclusive;" though, by means of old connexions, family intimacies, and the young companionships of Polly and the absent Quintin, of Susan and Edwin, the rule was sadly infringed upon; and though Mrs. Somers Stocks could not approve—could, indeed, barely tolerate such promiscuous association—the party proved exactly so much the happier for those breaches in the rigid demarcations and the etiquettes of "good society."

The vulgar appliances and grosser elements of refined amusements—the air they breathe, and without which they die—were abounding. Mr. Cripps understood all this. There were plenty of wax lights—Mrs. Stocks took pains to ascertain the fact of wax—abundance of refreshments, most hospitably distributed—pretty, well-dressed girls—good-looking lads—enchancing music—and, on this popular evening, not too much of it.

Mr. Cripps, by bitter experience, had learned the true nature of a W— musical audience. He was no longer the enthusiast he had once been ; fancying that every one who professed to like music partook of his exalted feelings. He would not throw his pearls before pigs, and neither Sir George nor Mr. Herbert had yet appeared ; so, with just as much music as offered no restraint or interruption to the more popular amusements of chattering, flirting, and eating ices and cakes, an atmosphere of freedom and gaiety, of ease and enjoyment, imperceptibly arose and diffused itself through the crowded small apartment, which proved contagious even with dignified and ungenial natures.

"Does not Cripps' party go off charmingly," whispered the rector to Mrs. Stocks, who, seated in state at the head of the room, was unconsciously relaxing in dignity, and, from a spectator, becoming a sharer in the pleasures of the evening, until recalled to the recollection of her injuries by the rector's speech. "It does me good to see so many of my young parishioners so innocently happy ; and to witness the overflowing delight of Mr. Cripps and his fine family, in having their friends around them."

"Cripps would rather, though, see Sir George and Mr. Herbert enter, than all of us put together, sir. Do I not understand the vain and ambitious scheming creature?" returned the lady, whom Mr. Cripps, by every art of polite assiduity, had done his utmost to conciliate, almost to the neglect of other matrons, with equal claims upon his attention.

"Pardon my vanity, if I cannot think so poorly of our noble selves, citizens of W—, ma'am. There is a time for every thing. Cripps is, I am sure, a well-disposed little fellow at heart. . . . I fear, though, I shall have to depart before I obtain a glimpse of the great folks. It is *style*, I fancy, for the courtiers of the Mob to appear here just as their inferiors are going off. I am more disappointed at the absence of poor Made-moiselle Gabrielle ; between whose spirits,

and her fine appellation, there is, I imagine, little accordance to-night. Poor thing, we saw her—Sarah and I—from the parlour window, walking alone under the church-yard elms this afternoon."

"There is something very suspicious—very suspicious, indeed, in that affair," returned Mrs. Stocks, now deeply in earnest. "It was not from Guernsey the whole of the money came for the girl's premium, as I have now learned, but from America. She is an American born—a Virginian, I believe."

"Quite wrong, pardon me, ma'am. English, I assure you, by my correspondent's letter. He and his family, and, as he states, the whole neighbourhood, feel the greatest interest in the young lady's welfare. She must be an amiable creature to have touched so many kind and simple hearts. He says 'she is the beloved child of our parish.'"

At this moment, the "glass of fashion and the mould of form" to the aspiring youth of W—, — Mr. Charles Herbert, namely,—entered, loudly announced by Mike Twig, the probationary page of Mrs. Cripps, and followed by the very *elite* of the dandies of the *Yellows*. Their appearance produced certainly a more visible flutter, if not a stronger sensation than an event so important to the young and fair portion of the company might have done in the higher regions of Almacks, or throughout May Fair. Gaiety and mirth were momentarily checked, curiosity was sharpened, and sentiment deepened.

It so happened that Miss Polly Cripps (from this night forth Maria) was sweeping the chords of the harp as the gentlemen entered. A string snapped ; and Maria laughingly rose to meet the greetings of the guests as they were in turn released from the eager and overpowering welcomes of her father and mother. It was now in vain that the latter, during a full half hour, whispered—"Maria, you are not perceiving your old playmate, Mr. Benjamin Jeffrey, who is trying to catch your eye." Maria could not have been wholly oblivious of the presence of the wealthy and bashful young manufacturer, who had incurred the severest displeasure of his father and mother, and awakened the maternal hopes of Mrs. Cripps, by attentions which the young lady did not in the least mistake ; but which, not caring one farthing for the bashful Benjamin, she treated with derision, from the moment that the London scheme was fixed. Mrs. Cripps, like every prudent mother, was never contemptuous of an eligible *pis-aller*, not even when ;

heart swelled with all a mother's pride as Maria was conducted up stairs to the attic closet, as Mrs. Stocks maliciously named it, where, under the name of, the Refreshment Room, jellies, ices, lemonade, &c. &c. were dispensed to all comers, by the smartly dressed housemaid.

The airy cage of the Crippses on the Mall of W—, with three perches on each stage, was of a size which neither admitted of large rooms, nor of thick partitions between the apartments. In the adjoining closet, or small bed-room, not attic—that representation being a spiteful sarcasm of the great lady who lived over the New Bank—was now seated, with wan cheeks and dimmed eyes, the forlorn future Malibrán or Grisi of W—, the *Prima Donna* of to-morrow's concert, whose non-appearance below stairs had caused wonder and disappointment to both ladies and gentlemen.

Mr. Cripps had urged and pleaded; Mrs. Cripps had taken the tone of affectionate command; Polly had coaxed and flattered; and Susan, Gabrielle's favourite in the family, had entreated; but the unvarying tearful answer had been—"Do not urge me, dear Mrs. Cripps; pray, dear sir, excuse me: who will miss me? I cannot—indeed I cannot sing before so large a party. I never did,—I do not think—I am very sure that my father, nor yet my poor kind friends, ever meant that I should be a stage singer. They only intended that, through your instructions, sir, I should be able to gain my bread, as the organist of our quiet parish, and as a teacher there. Any thing but that," was her secret thought. "I would be a maid servant; or work from sunrise to sunset, with my needle: any thing but a public singer! A single appearance would annihilate me. Miss Cripps, who has so much more firmness and self-possession, and who has, from infancy, been accustomed to display her brilliant talents in company, must succeed, and be admired and applauded. But I—!"

"Indeed, sir, you are entirely wrong about this" she said aloud.

Mr. Cripps was too polite, perhaps too feeling, and undoubtedly too much interested in the result, to urge his "gifted pupil" beyond the point of endurance. Her natural disposition was singularly gentle and pliable. And she appeared anxious to oblige him—capable of understanding his superiority in his own art—grateful for his devoted attention to her improvement, and assiduous in her studies. He at last assured her, that she

should neither be asked to sing nor play, save as was agreeable to her; but he did expect that she would join the party: he was convinced, that going more into pleasant, improving society, would be of advantage to her health and spirits. Violet promised to dress herself, and to slip down stairs some time in the course of the evening.

Every member of the family was too hurried and distracted with the "duties extraordinary" of the day, to think more about her. A brilliant display was to be made, which would have required the exertions of a proper complement of well-trained domestics, to fulfil Mrs. Cripps' orders, and do Mr. Cripps' spiriting; and there were only available the maid-of-all-work; Mr. Brown, the confectioner's servant, who having assisted in preparing the sweets and delicacies, now came to administer them; and the man of universal work, Mike Twig, the son of the bellows-blower, now on trial for preferment in the capital, as Mr. Cripps' page. "Impossible to get on in London at all without a man-servant!" was Mr. Cripps' reply to his wife's remonstrance on the gormandizing propensities of Mike, who worked for one boy, and ate for three men.

The sad and lonely *Prima Donna* having tried to drive away her headache and compose her spirits by a solitary walk under the churchyard elms—her own voluntary promenade—returned to the house. The scene into which the folly and forwardness of Miss Cripps had that morning forced her—the insulting language of the crowd, hardly understood in its full import, yet revolting to maidenly pride and delicacy—the idea of how she must have appeared in the eyes of the gentleman who had come to the protection of her companion and herself—and a vague feeling of insecurity and degradation, connected with her position—had haunted her ever since the occurrence. It was impossible to banish the recollection of those stinging expressions of the unthinking people; and to such mortifications was it her future lot to be continually exposed?

"O my dear, dear father, why were you taken from me when most I needed your protecting kindness," was her exclamation. "My kind friends—never surely—never would you have placed your little Violet under this bondage, had you been aware of its consequences." Gushing floods of tears effaced the restorative effects of the air upon the eyes and complexion of the incipient *Prima Donna*, who—blaming her own in-

gratitude to her master, to one so courteous, who so disinterestedly held out to her ambition hopes of fortune and fame—yet could not conquer that deep dislike, which the affair of the morning had increased to insuperable repugnance to his plans. “Any thing but this—any thing.”

The mournful meditations of “Mademoiselle Gabrielle,” were only terminated by the necessity of dressing herself, in order to redeem her promise to her master. She resolved that, before she slept, she would write him a note, declaring her fixed determination not to appear at the public concert. Rather than comply, she would at once forfeit the little means placed in his hands, by her humble friends, for her board, and for the completion of her musical education; and seek employment in some other way. She had heard of the disappointment of Mrs. Somers Stocks from the communicative Juliana; and a hope arose that, perhaps in lieu of a better teacher, that lady might accept of herself.

This idea was another inducement to go down stairs, where she might see Mrs. Stocks, and judge of the probable success of the plan.

She laid out her modest finery; and Mrs. Cripps, having positively interdicted faded mourning, Violet attired herself in plain white muslin; fixed her few jet ornaments, put on her tiny black satin slippers, black lace gloves, and scarf; thinking to herself—“I am looking shocking enough to-night; but who is there to notice or care about how I look: only, I hope, in goodness, *that gentleman*—that Mr. Herbert—is not below, or will not see me. It would kill me with confusion to meet him.”

The thought had not passed, when Herbert’s voice—its tones were perfectly remembered—and that of Miss Maria Cripps, were heard, in gay talk, in the adjoining Refreshment Room. Mr. Herbert “hoped that Miss Cripps’ friend had completely recovered the alarm given her by the rascally mob.”

“Oh, quite, and so grateful for your gallantry to us poor damsels in distress, that she has talked of nothing else ever since. We had heard so much of your eloquence, and were so desirous to hear you speak— . . . Papa is nursing Gabrielle to-night, that she may be in full force to-morrow. She lost her father, poor dear, some few months back, and is in indifferent spirits at times: when she gets to London, no fear but she’ll cheer

up. I am predicting to her, when we laugh alone, that Quintin will fall in love with her. He is such a fellow for falling in love with every lady with any pretensions to good looks; and Gabrielle is pretty. Papa says she will be much handsomer by and by. Edwin is more in Gabrielle’s style than Quintin: Edwin is a sentimental and swinish chap, now Quintin is all life and fire; but yet I prophesy Mademoiselle will make a conquest. I hope it will be a mutual attachment. Their *styles* are quite opposite, certainly; but discords in character, where both parties are amiable and enamoured, make harmony in marriage, I have been told.”

Mr. Charles Herbert fancied Maria Cripps a singularly well-informed young woman for her years and opportunities. What thought the inmate of the next room?

“Her brother in love with me!” was the indignant idea of the mortified, involuntary listener. “I do wish Miss Cripps would just say nothing about me to Mr. Charles Herbert, or to any gentleman or person. To say I had talked of nothing else save his gallantry ever since! It is very odd of Maria.”

The noises in the next apartment intimated the arrival of more ice-eaters, and, peering timidly out, to see if she could not make her escape into the crowd below unnoticed, Violet flew down stairs, and, gliding into the room, stole behind a whist-table in the door corner, where Mrs. Somers Stocks was now established, her daughter Juliana leaning behind her chair. Violet stood a good while unobserved, save by the latter.

“Dear mamma,” said the daughter, coaxingly, during a deal, “this is Miss *Violet Hamilton*.”

The girl fondly held Violet’s hand.

“Indeed, my dear!” replied Mrs. Stocks, with unusual benignity; for she could be kind and generous also, our Mrs. Stocks: we have seen this lady hitherto on the wrong side. “I am very happy to make the acquaintance of Miss Violet Hamilton. But I must ask Mrs. Cripps to introduce me properly. Can you not find a seat for your friend, Juliana?” continued the patronizing lady, in a kinder tone, as the pale and lovely girl stood before her, only half conscious of where she was—her fragile but gracefully moulded figure slightly bent—her dewy eyes cast down.

“She is a Virginian,” was the conclusion of the scrutinizing Mrs. Stocks. “Quite the American style of beauty—a breath would

dissolve her into air. An odd dress, too; but she is a sweet-looking — a really fascinating girl."

"Mamma! Mr. Herbert taught us such a pretty game just now: he said all the young ladies at the *Soirée* should be flowers — Miss Susan Cripps is the *pink*, and Miss Polly the *dahlia*, and sweet Lucy White the *hawthorn blossom*. Miss Violet had not come down then. I won't call her the *violet*, though she be one, but the *lily*. Oh, yes! the pure, white lily she is! I shall go ask Mr. Herbert if I have not chosen right for Miss Violet."

"How your tongue runs, my Juliana," replied the gratified, smiling mother, as the lively girl danced off indecorously, through the gay crowd.

"I am aware, Miss Violet," said Mrs. Stocks, "that it is quite contrary to the usages of good society to be acquainted with those to whom we are not properly introduced; but in peculiar circumstances one dispenses with strict etiquette. I am promising myself a most delightful treat — quite a musical banquet — at your *debut* to-morrow; the rare merits of your instructor I am well acquainted with, (my own discovery they were, I may say — for, between ourselves, we are not a musical community in W——,) and I am quite aware of the loss my daughter must sustain in the change of style, even should I obtain a superior new teacher; but I waive these considerations at this time, and shall certainly do myself the pleasure of witnessing your *debut*."

"You are very kind — very good, ma'am; but it is all a mistake!" said the girl, in a low, earnest, and very sweet voice — her pale cheeks becoming suffused with a delicate rose-tint: "I will never come out as a public singer — NEVER! Mr. Cripps has been most kind: but this — I have no taste, no heart, an utter repugnance. . . . My poor father would *never*" — she could not proceed. . . . "If — if any lady would do me the very great kindness to receive me as her daughter's musical teacher, or as a needle-woman, or in any capacity." Violet could get no farther. The words stuck in her throat. The blood ebbed from her face, leaving it more pale than before; she trembled in every limb, and durst not look up to her judge, who was now, however, looking with eagerness at some one behind her.

"Ah! Mr. Charles Herbert! it is you: we short-sighted people are so stupid."

"Have not I named her right?" cried the rather intrepid Juliana. "The gentle lily, bending on its stem."

Violet shrunk away like a ghost, nor stopped until she was again bolted in her closet-chamber, when a burst of tears relieved her choking bosom.

"I fear I have interrupted your conversation with Mademoiselle Gabrielle, ma'am," said Mr. Herbert, after an awkward pause, and without replying to Juliana's appeal for his verdict; "and frightened her away, too. I am a sad blunderer."

"Ah, poor thing! — but our conversation can be renewed. You overheard, then, her petition to be received into my family, as my daughter's governess?"

"O mamma, delightful! Surely you will engage Violet at once?"

"I will do my duty, my giddy Juliana," returned the prudent, if still smiling mother, probably remembering that Juliana was nearly fifteen, and Mr. Herbert not entitled to marry, by his own choice, for three years yet. "Mademoiselle's talents are brilliant, of the first order: no question of that; but the *morale*, Mr. Herbert."

Mrs. Somers Stocks gave her head a Burleigh shake, which, communicated to her blonde lappets, set every spray of her redundant fuschias a-waving in sympathy with her virtues.

Mr. Herbert stood musing — "That sweet, lovely, and certainly timid girl — so very young — looking too, so innocently modest."

Herbert was neither of the age nor character which leads to harsh or uncharitable conclusions; and the poor girl appeared so unhappy in her present position, so disinclined to what seemed her destiny, that, had she been as plain as she was beautiful, she would have interested his feelings. Would she, or would she not, appear to-morrow? He half wished that she might keep her word, and revolved how he could be instrumental in procuring her the favour of Mrs. Somers Stocks, as he led that lady to her cloak, clogs, and lantern, and now first recollected to assure Miss Juliana "that she had hit on an admirable choice for Mademoiselle Gabrielle, who, with her slender drooping figure, and in her white dress, had all the lily's delicacy and purity."

"Don't you, Mr. Herbert, please sir, call Violet by Mr. Cripps' nickname. Her own name is Violet Hamilton; and one day, when she was very sad, she said to me, 'Don't you, Juliana, call me Mademoiselle Gabrielle; do

give me the pleasure to hear at least one kind voice sometimes call me Violet as my father did.' I assure you, mamma, I almost cried; and now both Susan Cripps and I always call her Violet when we are by ourselves."

"Oh that chatter-box! Thanks, thanks, Mr. Herbert. That gold hook and eye—never mind it—you are too good. Well, good luck to us to-morrow at the poll! I conclude you will be off for London as soon as the poll closes?—The Concert cannot commence before then."

Mr. Herbert gave no satisfactory answer, and Mrs. Stocks set out, marshalled by the bank porter carrying the lantern. The rector was also gone, nearly all the dignified presences had withdrawn, and the younger part of the company became gayer than ever. There was now music in earnest. Violet slipped open her door, and stole out upon the stairs as the thrilling and delicious tones of Cripps' violin raised her into a world of enchantment.

The poor *Prima Donna* was not missed in the revel. Miss Cripps, ably supported by her father, took the abdicated part, and sustained it with undaunted courage, and, save to the ear and judgment of her fastidious father, with splendid success.

Sir George now, at long and last, dropped in; and was received with rapturous welcome by the whole of the grateful and delighted family, while he obtained the earnest whispered thanks of Mrs. Cripps for the couple of dozens of champagne which he had taken the liberty to send to her. Choice wines, of all sorts, had been sent from London for his election dinner of the former day, together with fruit, oysters, venison, &c. and the remainders were placed at the command of Mrs. Cripps for her party, — Sir George stating that he ventured the freedom, because he was so well aware that it was impossible for Mrs. Cripps to get things as she would wish to have them in W —.

The landlord of the Royal Oak grumbled at the innovation, and resolved to remonstrate, on his lawful perquisites going away in this illegitimate manner; but he recollected himself in time, and put his grumbling in the bill.

An ample and luxurious supper, where, from the want of space, the gentlemen first gallantly waited on the ladies, speeded the laughing hours; and the night concluded with comic and convivial songs, glees, and catches, in which the old chorister of Windsor jollily and heartily bore his part. Violet

fell asleep to the distant lullaby of "A Friar of Orders Gray."

"He is a fellow of infinite fun and glee my little friend Cripps, is he not, Herbert?" said Sir George, as the friends took their way to their inn, at an hour which it would not have been safe to have mentioned to all the *Yellows*. "He has done me immense good, in his small way, in this canvass; and I like it all the better that it is for myself, and not like Stocks, and those yea-forsooth fellows, who support me for my Liberal principles, forsooth! We must do something for him when he comes to town."

"Is not that a hazardous cast:—and the good little man and his family so snug here?"

"Hazardous!—has he not that girl, his pupil, to produce? Some would propose to Italianize her for a couple of years. I say, *No*. English feeling can yet appreciate English talent and genius. That girl has both. Mademoiselle—what the deuce does he call her?—coming out as Polly, in the Beggar's Opera—sterling English—none of your *Mandane's*; and his own pert Miss, as Lucy. . . . Don't let that girl get too affectionate, by the way, Herbert. I noticed your *petits soins*, my friend. It won't do. Remember I am security to your mother for your good behaviour. . . . But, as I was saying—Polly and Lucy; little Cripps holds a flush—Tom Welsh never held such trumps. And the gipsy must give herself airs, too; take headaches and caprices, as if she already had a salary of fifty guineas a-week!"

"How came you to hear her sing, Sir George, as it seems this is a favour she rarely bestows on an ordinary audience?"

"Oh! little Cripps had me stowed away in the next room. 'The delicate organization of his pupil—her excessive timidity'—all humbug, you know. She warbles like a dear angel, though; and we must lend her a hand when she is fit to produce. Cripps is quite the fellow for managing the puffing, the press, and all that sort of thing."

On the morning after the GRAND FAREWELL CONCERT, and the election of Sir George Lees, by a majority of five, Mrs. Somers Stocks sent a polite note, requesting to see Miss Violet Hamilton immediately, on business of importance. Her note was returned. Mr. Cripps, his daughter Maria, and Mademoiselle Gabrielle had gone off to London by the early mail; Mr. Charles Herbert and Cripps outside—the Member and the ladies within! Mrs. Somers Stocks, at first stunned

by the intelligence, in five minutes rang to order her clogs.

"If any particular friend calls, I am only ever at the rectory, Sally.—There will be news of this hasty journey!" was an aside.

CHAPTER III.

"KNOWLEDGE IS POWER," said the philosopher; and that knowledge of the world, of Life, and of "the Town," is power to gull the town handsomely, at least for a time, if not finally to lead it by the nose, ruminated Mr. now magnified into Professor Crippes. This sort of knowledge, with its many subordinate requisites and appliances, was already in the possession of the principal branch of the talented family; and it had fairly taken post in that arena where such faculties are most successfully cultivated, and displayed to the best advantage.

"Right, right, Sir George; *London*, after all, is the great magnet, the grand mart for talent. Sir, I have lost twenty years of my life!" Thus spoke "*Professor Crippes, Mus. Doc. No.—, Regent's Park*," so designated on his handsome cards of address, as he looked round the elegant saloon of his new dwelling, and almost fancied that his life, for the last month, had been a fairy tale.

But there are no effects without adequate causes, save, perhaps, in novels; so we shall glance back for an instant upon those which had produced this sudden and brilliant transformation; not that all was yet gold that glittered in the establishment of Professor Crippes.

Let us first, however, bestow a word upon talented families in general. There are persons so ill-natured as sometimes to term them adventurers, swindlers, and what not. We are, we trust, more charitable and discriminating. Though it be not, at all times, easy to trace the exact line which divides classes that are so apt to converge into each other, from having no original fixed position in society, success, we should say, is the general distinction of a *talented family* or *talented individual*, as opposed to *adventurers*; who, without the presence of that essential element to British respectability, success, may remain, though gifted with the higher quality of genius, adventurers or swindlers to the last hour of their career. Talented families may be found, in every wealthy and luxurious society, the instruments of its amusements and pleasures: but the mixed government and free institutions of this happy

country, which throw open the path to wealth and to the highest distinction, to every man possessed of ability, perseverance, and honourable ambition, are alleged to be peculiarly favourable to the development of talent. And it does happen that a scheming, supple, servile lawyer, of obscure birth, may, once in a half century or so, creep very high; or the tutor or chaplain of an influential patrician house be somewhat oftener beheld transformed into a bishop; though one never hears of a General being found in the ranks, or an admiral before the mast. Talented families, in their first generation at least, are rarely met with in the regular or learned professions. The education of their members is usually scrambling and immethodical; and their highest line of enterprise is generally confined to the arts, and the lower walks of literature. They are painters, players, sculptors, adepts in new petty inventions of the decorative kind, quack-doctors, ushers, itinerant-lecturers on elocution, dentists; manufacturers of shoe-blacking, patent coffee-powders, and soda-water. They are, in short, to be found in all the fluctuating grades of middle-class society, though more generally among its loose-fish and *raffish* members. It is not less true that, in Talented Families, are found many of those individuals who form the grace and ornament, if not the strength of society. The Sheridans, the Burneys, the Kembles, and, in their own walk, the Porters, for example, belonged to the better order of *talented families*. From such households have arisen individuals, illustrious alike from genius and worth, and also not a few charlatans, impudent pretenders, and worthless, though successful political adventurers.

London, as Professor Crippes and Sir George Lees have declared in the eyes of our readers, is the great mart of such families; which, like all other families, succeed best when numerous and united. As a general rule, they may be pronounced eminently successful, when, after struggling on through one generation, they fairly emerge and take place in the next, and when all the daughters make good matches, and all the sons obtain lucrative posts. A nice moral sense, a scrupulous conscience, and a dignified self-respect, would often be serious obstacles to the success of a Talented Family: but, on the other hand, regular conduct, so far as the observance of the decorums and appearances, and the most punctilious attention to pecuniary engagements, are as indispensable to

success as good lodgings and handsome dress. Such individuals as Sheridan or Wilkes, gifted with consummate ability, or insuperable effrontery and ready wit, might, in their own day, have got off from the tribunal of decorum by pleading the dispensing power of genius; but this plea would scarcely avail even those great geniuses in *moral* age, and would at once be quashed if urged by inferior rogues. A woman, by surpassing beauty and accomplishments, or a man, by fine address and great intellectual power, may succeed for a short time, in spite of reckless extravagance and irregularity of life; but Professor Cryppes was early aware, however unsteadily he might at times act upon his convictions, that, in England, the foundations of solid prosperity are not so laid. It was, however, equally his belief, that the enterprising spirit which "bodes a robe of gold and wears it," when accompanied by knowledge of the world and a modest assurance, will generally realize its own ambitious expectations, though reflecting and strait-laced persons may regard them as altogether extravagant or preposterous. They look only to the ends, and the small means for accomplishing them, which, fettered by conscience, they have power to employ, without capacity of taking into account all the resources of unrestrained talent.

The nicety in such cases lies in hitting the delicate medium, and seizing Time by the forelock; of taking prompt advantage of that tide in the affairs of men, which our Mr. and Mrs. Cripps—now, in London, Cryppes—both fancied set strongly in for them on the evening of their Musical Soirée, and when, accordingly, they launched their adventurous bark, without a moment's delay. There was no sleep for their eyes on that night; nor had our poor heroine, their young inmate, enjoyed four hours of repose, when she was abruptly roused by Miss Cripps, attired in travelling costume, and in the highest spirits, joyfully announcing the sudden journey, and entreating her to dress herself in all haste. Miss Cripps could imagine only one cause of dubiety or delay—the attention necessary to trunks and handboxes.

"How wildly you do stare, Mademoiselle! quite an Ophelia," cried the excited young lady. "Never mind about your dresses and things; mamma and Susan will manage all that. Just put on any thing. Here is your black silk frock; and throw your cloak over all. Do let me shake you up, Gabrielle. Here is Susan with a cup of coffee for you.

My mother and father have not been in bed at all. As soon as papa learned, after they went, that our gentlemen were booked for London for this morning, he got our places. Fancy the delightful chance of having such fellow-travellers as Sir George and Mr. Herbert."

"But why should I go—to London—so abruptly;—why with these gentlemen?" said the bewildered girl, folding back her hair under her nightcap, as if to clear her brains.

"Gracious, Mademoiselle! surely you are not awake yet; surely prudery does not go the length of not being able to sit in the same stage-coach with gentlemen whom we know, and under the protection of Mr. Cripps."

The heart of Miss Cripps was on this cast. Her father, as the most delicate means of carrying his own purpose, had said—"If you can get my pupil ready in time, you shall both go to town with me, Maria; *both*, or neither."

"Do, dear Mademoiselle, get up; I assure you Mrs. Cripps is not in the humour of listening to *whys* and *wherefores* this morning; and papa is so anxious that you should have the immense advantage of hearing the *Pasta* before she leaves England. Fancy, Gabrielle, how delightful! London! Pray do make haste; that's the coach horn, I am sure; and mamma scolding below, and papa swearing. The coach is to take us up; think how kind! Here, Susan, sleepy Susan, do lace Mademoiselle's stays;" and the half-mad Miss Cripps darted away, as Violet began, with trembling hands, and painful and confused thoughts, to dress herself. Her reason chided her alarm. She was under the protection of her master; sooner or later she was aware the family were to remove to London; Mrs. Somers Stocks had made no sign; and, above all, the sorrows of another at this moment came in contrast with her own lighter grief; for here was Susan breathing in despairing accents:—

"O Violet! how I wish that I were you—going to London!" And, after a pause, spent in stay-lacing, to recover breath and courage, she went on;—"Perhaps, dear Violet, you will hear something of one of whom you must have heard, though I never could find courage to speak of—*him*. Quintin knows him well, and also his haunts. I know how foolish I am: but I am indeed very wretched; and not one of my own family, not even one, to pity me. You know

how hard my mother is on some points; you know the unhappy affair which drove him away? For months now, long, long, dreary months—years of misery they seem—I have not even heard his name whispered. You know all that; but not how deeply, how tenderly, with all his faults——”

“Yes, dear Susan; if I can give you comfort, rely on me,” replied Violet, turning round and kissing the pale face of her friend, now interesting, nay, almost beautiful, from emotion, in spite of its natural homeliness of feature; and as Susan fervently returned the embrace, she hastily placed a letter in the bosom of Violet’s dress, which the latter had not heart to forbid. She had heard of the unfortunate and indiscreet attachment of Susan to a young man who had been a clerk in the banking-house of Mr. Somers Stocks, and who had been dismissed for some of those improprieties which commercial men cannot, ought not, to overlook; and thrown, with all his weaknesses about him, into the wilderness of London. In the hurry and tumult of her own feelings, Violet could still sympathize with the deeper unhappiness of her young friend; though short time was allowed for thought or word, when a new train of ideas was awakened in her fancy, as the lamps of the coach flashed, for an instant, against the stately columns of the New Bank. “What must *he* think of this sudden journey—of my change of purpose; for sure he heard, last night, my application to Mrs. Stocks, when, like a fool, I ran away?” was the timidly admitted and rapidly discarded idea, as Sir George Lees and Miss Cripps exchanged salutations; and the former, in answer to the young lady’s inquiry, replied that “Mr. Charles Herbert was aloft.”

When the travellers stopped for breakfast, Violet declined to alight. She “had breakfasted;” and, at mid-day, the new M.P. apparently bored by the taciturnity of the lackadaisical *Prima Donna*, and the flippancy of her companion, requested Herbert to exchange seats with him for a stage, that he might enjoy a cigar, and a sight of the country. To the courteous, if somewhat over lively greeting of Mr. Herbert, which jarred upon her feelings, the *Prima Donna* replied by a silent bow, pressed herself yet closer up into her corner, and drew her cloak more tightly around her. The sudden change of purpose of the young lady, in whom he had felt a rather singular interest, had passed for a moment unpleasantly across the memory of Herbert: but, bowling along, at a spanking

rate, through a fine open country, in a clear bracing winter’s morning, it is probable that the *insides* had thought more about the outsides than the latter had leisure to reciprocate.

“I am afraid you have had a chill drive, Mademois——” Herbert’s feelings checked him. He remembered Juliana Stock’s affecting history of the nickname, and would not, could not, adopt the style of the Cripps family; and one glance at the averted countenance, turned to the window, as if gazing out into the country, completely recalled his feelings of the former night. Juliana’s “Fair Lily” was drooping, bent by the storm, “surcharged with rain.” The few more words which he addressed to Violet, were spoken in a voice which had softened involuntarily with the changed character of his feelings. There is, perhaps, no expression of sympathy more touching to delicate sensibility, than that which cannot be counterfeited, cannot deceive, the tones of the voice, involuntarily attuning themselves to the tone of the heart that is spoken to, more by their music than by any form of words. Violet half looked up; but she did not yet reply.

“Mademoiselle Gabrielle is scarcely awake yet,” said her lively companion, as if to atone for Violet’s want of courtesy. “Our journey was rather an *impromptu*, in which I delight. Mademoiselle so longs to hear Pasta; and I am wild to meet my brother; and, to say truth, to be in London.”

To Violet the painful thought would ever return as they journeyed, “What must Mr. Herbert think of me?—and what does it signify what he thinks?”

As they drew nearer the metropolis, deep, long-buried memories awoke in her heart. It so chanced that the whole W—— party were now inside, as Mr. and Miss Cripps had insisted upon accommodating every one. The afar-off hum of London, the low, growling thunder of its mighty voice, and the sight of the lamps, together, probably, with the rapidity with which wine, which must be paid for, had been swallowed by Mr. Cripps after dinner, had raised the spirits of the long-exiled man to an extravagant pitch. He talked incessantly, became boastful and hyperbolic, and pointed out, at intervals, the rapid succession of objects, with the authority of a man to the manner of town-life born.

“What a philosopher you are, Miss Hamilton!” whispered Charles Herbert, leaning over, towards the wrapt-up, silent *Prima*

Donna, who had declined to dine, as she had to breakfast, from very shame of showing her tear-stained, wan face, and who, for many miles back, had not spoken one word. "I had imagined it impossible for one so young to enter mighty London for the first time without some token of excitement."

"But this is not the first time—oh, no!—not the first!—"

The rest of the reply was lost in the inaudible or inarticulate voice, which silenced Mr. Herbert's observation. Violet well remembered that, when between six and seven years of age, she had come from her convent in France to London with her father, on their way to Scotland. She remembered something of the river and the ships, and, especially, of a dismal chamber in the Tower, in which the two boy princes, the sons of Edward the Fourth, were said to have been murdered. But her most vivid memory was, sleeping in a crib in her father's chamber at the hotel, lest, as he said, she should be stolen; and of a kind Scottish woman, hired to be her attendant to Scotland. These were a few, among the multiplicity of broken images, which floated back upon the mind of the orphan girl, and shut out present scenes. That sense of utter loneliness and desolation; that sinking and inanition of the affections of the heart, to which we give the name of low spirits, was stealing over her. In all that "Mighty Heart," throbbing tumultuously around, there was no memory or thought for her—no place for her image. It would have been relief could she, at that moment, have recalled one human being—but one—as existing in London, whom she had ever before beheld or spoken to. When Mr. Charles Herbert placed her in the hackney coach, which was to convey the Crippses to the hotel selected, Violet felt as if she parted with a friend, almost her last friend; yet they were not even acquainted. This day their intercourse had been merely in dumb show; and when he returned to the coach door, saying, "You have dropped this letter, ma'am,"—as he held out the epistle of Susan Cripps, which had fallen from Violet's dress in getting from the mail-coach into the other vehicle—from fear that Susan's secret might be detected, and a nameless feeling of shame and vexation, she blushed and faltered, and, eagerly grasping at the letter, forgot to return thanks to its preserver. "A billet-doux, ready prepared," said Maria Cripps, with a laugh.

Prompt, active, and indefatigable person

as was Mr. Cripps, and much as lay before him to do, nothing could be accomplished that night, though much might be planned and discussed. He was still in unusual good humour and good spirits. Tea was ordered, and was immediately followed by a slight supper and mulled wine, as "Mademoiselle had fasted all day." A hundred plans for pleasure and amusement were chalked out,—visits to the theatres and concert-rooms holding the first place. The season was just opening; and London promised to be unusually full and gay. It was the first year of a new Parliament, and of a new and popular reign. Mr. Cripps enjoined his pupil to sleep long, and recover her spirits and good looks before she faced London; though they were to be quite *incog.* save to a few particular friends, until Mr. Cripps had got a house. A house, a *good* house, was his first object. "Much, young ladies, very much depends on the sort of house and establishment one launches with in London," was his text. Violet strove to be edified by the sermon; strove to be grateful and cheerful, and to school her reason to her fortunes.

Fatigue and exhaustion seconded the kind injunctions of Mr. Cripps; and his pupil slept profoundly, long after the complicated machinery of the Modern Babel was snorting and roaring around her.

When she descended late to the drawing-room, which Mr. Cripps had engaged, that gentleman had gone abroad. Breakfast stood untouched; Miss Cripps had not appeared; and Mike Twig, with an extra polish on his shoes, and an extra brush on his blue livery, (both in honour of London,) stood at the door, in waiting. Violet thought of Susan's letter: Would Mike prove either an intelligent or a faithful emissary? for, beyond the simple name, "Mr. Robert Mortimer," Susan's letter bore no address; the want of that was no small part of Susan's affliction.

Violet's pride and delicacy revolted from tampering with the awkward booby, who amused her by his more awkward imitation of the airs of the alert and smartly-dressed waiters, whisking about the passages, or lounging in the outer lobbies. Mike placed a chair for her; poked the fire, in their style; and pushed over the morning papers, in which his master had been house-hunting. The imitation was hopeful: Mike was an improvable subject.

CHAPTER IV.

A house is, as Professor Cryppes had remarked, a most important affair to every man settling in London. In country towns, a family may give the respectability to a dwelling, which, in London, they must borrow from it. There the man belongs rather to the house, than the house to the man. But to an unknown professional man, or an artist, a dwelling is more than to any one else. But though a house is much to such an aspirant, a locality, be it street or square, row or terrace, is often more. The long estrangement of Mr. Cripps from the metropolis, though he had made a run up occasionally to refresh his musical tastes, had thrown him far behind the age in knowledge of eligible localities. It was an anxious subject; and, like the Irishman's pig, Mr. Cripps, on his mind's locomotives, "ran up all manner of streets." In his heyday of youth, some of the Piccadilly streets were "tiptop;" such a place as Upper Baker Street most respectable; and Harley Street, if somewhat *passé*, still almost an aristocratic quarter; Grosvenor Street and Albemarle Street, were then more than unexceptionable; and New Bond Street, for a professional man, had its eligibilities. A fashionable quarter was, at all events, indispensable; and, that gained, not to be too far out of the way of the Clubs, the State offices, and the Houses of Parliament, came next: but the great desideratum was, to unite a good style of house with some regard to economy. Yet even frugal Mrs. Cripps herself had said—"Now, Cripps, don't be penny-wise." For the Professor was, at least in theory, a rigid economist; as he well knew that no man could long get on agreeably who did not manage, by hook or by crook, to make both ends meet about the 31st of December; and his only mistake was the capital one, of imagining that impossible results were to be brought about by that knowledge of the Town on which he piqued himself, together with Mrs. Cripps' management. Now, that a guinea (and, still more easily, a thousand of them) will, in London, or anywhere else, go farther under one system of economy than another, is undeniable; but we defy it to do the *fair* business of two, or even of one and a half—Mr. Cripps' details were faultless, it was the magnitude of his scale that was wrong.

He had taken a cabriolet on this morning, and driven to several places, which, by the antediluvian notions of 1814, were perfectly

unexceptionable; and was still absent, thus engaged, when Mike Twig announced to Violet, as he nearly swung the door off its hinges, "Maister Squintin Cripps, Marmozell;" and a phenomenon of the Yellow Glove School entered.

Violet had previously seen some rather remarkable specimens of the genuine provincial dandy, and caricature engravings of rampant metropolitan samples; but the real and tangible Jack Quintin Cryppes, out-Heroded all her real or imaginary Herods. Every point about him—person, features, and equipments—appeared the very caricature of exaggerated low dandyism: his mother's large nose—not Roman, but approaching the order—was in Jack enlarged to absurdity; an eyeglass, fixed permanently in his left eye, could not conceal a comical, rather than disagreeable, obliquity of vision; and from the bristly jungle covering the most of his face, those features looked fiercely forth, the whole crowned by the admired and studied disorder of a redundant fell of coarse black hair. Violet could scarce take note of the accoutrements of this extraordinary personage, of the embroidered satin cravat, the ditto waistcoat, the snip-tailed, amber-coloured coat, the French *bootikins*, into which midland-county feet were most mercilessly squeezed—and the badge of the order, the yellow (soiled) gloves—from very wonderment at the wearer, and the air with which, by a swinging bow, he threw himself forward, hat in hand, *à la*—. But we must not mention the ultra-exquisite, whom Jack Cryppes had the audacity to copy as happily as any man-monkey may a monkey-man. "I have produced a sensation," was Jack's thought. "Such a figure for Maria to rave so much about," was the thought of Violet. "Oh, enviable eyes of sisterly affection, what *glamour* lurks in you!"

In the meantime, Mike Twig, totally forgetting his manners, with the door-handle in his paw, gazed upon the transfiguration of Jack—like Tam O'Shanter upon the madly hilarious dance of the witches—

Glower'd like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd—

and at a loss where to fix his chief admiration. It must probably have been on the mustachios, an ornament which, from that day, Mike began to cultivate on his own upper lip.

"I presume I have the honour to see Mademoiselle Gabrielle, the talented pupil of Professor Cryppes," said the figurant, with another swinging bow.

"If you address me, sir, my name is Miss Hamilton," said Violet, with sudden dignity. She had risen without advancing.

"And I am, at your service, Ma'm'selle, Mr. John Quintin Crypp-es. I must introduce myself, I find. The Governor is abroad, it seems; and I suppose my sister, whose note I found at my chambers, when I returned from the—the opera, this morning, has not appeared yet. Will you, Mister—what is your name? My father's man, I suppose you are? Will you inform Miss Crypp-es that Mr. Quintin Crypp-es is below?"

"Dunna ye know mae, then, Meister Squintin?" grinned Twig, "Mikie Twig; but I has growed some, I reckon." And Mike drew up his head like a plough-boy at his first drill, as if pleasantly conscious of the change for the better in person and demeanour, which had rendered Mr. Squintin oblivious of an old friend.

"Sir!" enunciated the dandy, in a voice meant to change Mike Twig into stone, and which for the moment did freeze his smiling cheeks into the consistence of ill-set, muddy jellies,—“carry my message to Miss Crypp-es, fellow.”

"A wull tell Miss Polly," said Mike, doggedly, and rather slamming the door,—that favourite organ, upon which an angry domestic plays off his wrathful fancies.

"Where can Professor Crypp-es have picked up that animal? His good-nature is ever leading him into such scrapes." No reply.

"Chawming mawning this, Ma'm'selle!" And now Mr. Quintin exhibited his paces and dress, to the admiration of the young lady, by lounging about the room. "I understand that my friend, Mr. Charles Herbert, and Sir George Lees, travelled up with my father yesterday?"

Violet bowed slightly; scornfully thinking, "His friend! Mr. Herbert never even spoke to him, I am sure."

"Hot work at the election, I understand. No doubt, the W—— Dons fancy *they* carried it; not aware of the great guns bearing on them from the centre, the London Press, Mademoiselle—thunder directed by—to speak more plainly——"

"Quintin! dear Quintin!" exclaimed Miss Cripps, who now entered, jumping into her brother's arms with real joy.

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." The lovely face of Violet kindled into sweet smiles, as she beheld the affection-

ate greeting; and she turned next to the placable domestic, whose mouth, that potato and bacon-trap so abhorrent to Mrs. Cripps, widened from ear to ear in sympathy.

"Dear Quintin, I am so overjoyed to meet you in London! How charmingly you are dressed, and looking so handsome; don't you think so, Gabrielle? But you never saw my brother before. Let me introduce you! Mademoiselle, papa's pupil, of whom you have heard so much. My eldest brother, Mr. John Quintin, Mademoiselle:—there now, do be friends!" and the introduction ended in a giggling whisper, which made Mr. Quintin fix his eyes, as directly as apparently they could be fixed on any object, upon Violet.

"We will be quite one family, by and by, Quint.; and you such an acquisition to us as a beau; for, at first, we shall have so much to see, you know. But you don't inquire for the poor souls in dull, stupid W——. Thank my stars, we have cut it at last!"

"How are Suke, and Neddy, and the old lady, and little Emmy?—does she grow up a beauty, the little creature?"

"Quite lovely, I assure you. Is not my sister Emily quite a beauty, Mademoiselle?"

"She is a very sweet, pretty girl, indeed," replied Violet, glad to be able to say this much with a safe conscience; for the youngest Miss Cripps was certainly a pretty girl. Mr. Quintin was protesting the delight it would give him to run about everywhere, to fashionable sights and places, with his two beautiful sisters, and their "chawming" friend, when "the Governor," as he affected to call his father, returned from his early house-hunt, and, after a cordial greeting, breakfast was begun. As it proceeded, Mr. Cripps made a furtive examination of his elder hope; who was now in full career of second-hand metropolitan small-talk. Whatever personal improvement was apparent the paternal heart of Mr. Cripps acknowledged to the utmost: but, to his critical and experienced eye, many faults were visible in those very points on which Mr. Quintin prided himself most,—dress, air, and language; faults which might have been overlooked in a high-born, superlative coxcomb, but which would never pass in a Jack Cripps, who had his way to push by talents and address, and neither fortune nor connexion to bear him out. Mr. Quintin was loud in speech; so loud in laughter as to horrify the nerves of the old Court-bred singing-boy of Windsor; dictatorial, and affected. But his father was aware that Jack did not wholly want for the instinct or

the tact necessary to the success of talent; and his own experience was fully equal to giving both paternal hints and checks. Both were required.

In the meantime the conversation turned upon the search for houses, which, after breakfast, Mr. Cripps proposed to resume with the ladies.

"Hang it, Governor," said Jack, with a touch of swagger which delighted his sister, "you surely do not intend to plant yourself, and grow into house-leeks and cabbages in those dingy holes? Whereabouts is Harley Street? Depend upon it, I know something of the town. There is an order of persons who may live any where—your old-fashioned high nobility—Duchesses of three tails, as my friend Barker calls them: but, for persons of our style, the Regent's Pawk, sir, or that vicinage, is the thing."

Mr. Jack Quintin squeezed an egg-shell in confirmation of this decision; and Miss Cripps exclaimed—"O yes, the Regent's Park; I vote for it; Mrs. Herbert lives there, and Sir George." The elder Cripps was rather nettled by the disparagement cast by implication on his knowledge of "the town" by his gifted son—and before his daughter and his pupil too. But there might be something in what Quintin alleged; and it is certain that the character or fair fame of a street, like that of a woman, once whispered away can never be restored, though those having an interest in the buildings and ground-rents cannot sue for damages. But with all this momentary superiority of knowledge as to the localities calumniated, Mr. Cripps felt that the young gentleman knew the town only on its surface; and feared, moreover, that he had fallen among a horridly bad set of under-bred fashionables and literati.

"Have you forgotten how to speak English since you came to London, Jack," said the father. "Say *Park*, if you please, sir, and leave under-bred persons to establish their claims to fine breeding by slang and superfine pronunciation." Mr. Cripps himself spoke English with such perfect purity and nicety, and freedom from all peculiarity of accent, that, when he had first settled in W——, it became a doubt, with the higher classes of that town, whether he was a native Englishman or not; so much had early contact with the "best society" refined and simplified his speech.

Mr. Jack was, in his turn, offended at the open rebuke on a point where he was keenly susceptible; but he affected to laugh while

he repeated *Parr-k* with a running fire of *r's* like a Norman or Northumbrian; and his father prudently reserved his opinion on Jack's slang, and also on his strange "set-out" for a gentleman in a morning, to a private opportunity. The only caution, or rather command, which he directly and decidedly gave, was, that Mr. Jack should not venture to introduce any one of those five hundred learned friends of his who had each a play coming out at Drury Lane or Covent Garden, an article on the Turf to appear in the next *Quarterly*, or a historical painting in progress, by private command of his Majesty, until his father or mother gave permission. Jack was sulky for a minute, not more, for he was not ill-tempered, and the ladies were now equipped to go out.

Though the senior Cripps was satisfied that he knew "the town," from its core to its cuticle, much better than his son, the industrious Jack, might, he thought, in his few well-employed months, have learned something of its ever-changing garbs, tastes, and usages, which had escaped his sire. Jack had daily perambulated every fashionable quarter, and freely ranged from the Opera-House, on the one hand, to the lowest haunts where pleasure is sought and life seen, on the other. New shops, fashionable tailors, popular eating-houses, clubs, and hells, &c. &c. were, at least externally, quite familiar to him; and this "Regent's Pawk" sounded well. Jack knew of one very elegant though small house, exquisitely furnished, and to be let on very moderate terms.

"'Tis only a bachelor establishment," said Jack; "you would require to huddle; but, it is exquisitely appointed, and the reception rooms are splendid,—the coach-house and stable, though a little way off, first-rate. No more knowing fellow in the city of Westminster, than was the Honourable Frederick Shuffleton."

"And where has he shuffled to?" inquired Miss Cripps.

"Levanted, my dear, to Brussels, I believe, or somewhere at these German watering-places, where black-legs most do congregate, to see if he can't find a Hungarian, a Russian, or, haply, a Yankee pigeon. Plucked himself, he plucks again."

"And his creditors let his house for him. Well, Jack, what is your wonderfully cheap—supposing the place should suit my views?"

"Oh, not above some fifty or eighty guineas a-month! The house is small; but a conservatory—capital place for a sly flirtation

—capital coach-house, belonging to it, and an airy stable for four horses. I have examined them.”

“For which papa has no manner of use, you know,” said Miss Cripps, looking at papa, suggestively,—as if prompting, if not a new chariot, yet some sort of showy vehicle of the genus phaeton.

“You don’t suppose, Poll, that the Professor is to pad the hoof among his fashionable pupils, or, on rainy days, job a cab? That would be no go. What lady, as Barker said to me when we talked the thing over, would give five sovereigns for a half-hour’s lesson for her daughter, if the *Maestro* walked up to her door on his own legs, and left his clogs and Mackintosh with the porter?—No, no, pretty Poll, that won’t do.”

Mr. Cripps’ opinion of his son’s wisdom rose with every word.

“The Barker you mean is the clever journalist, Jack! We must know *him*. He has some place in society; and the pen, in these times, *is* an instrument!”

“You need not, however, call me Polly, if you please, Quintin,” said Polly, in a tone of pique. “It is vulgar, and I hate it:—that was an old quarrel of ours. But I fancy you are quite right about the difference, to a professional man in London, between walking and riding in his own carriage. I have often heard my mother say, that, till papa got a pupil among the County people at W——, he had scarce one pupil.”

But, Jack Quintin could not tarry for his mother’s words of wisdom. “Not call you Poll, my dear; for sure I did not call you Polly? I shall though. You like to be called Maria, perhaps?”

“’Tis my baptismal name, Jack.”

“And you may use it again in your marriage settlements, and in your will; but, till then, I shall call you Poll. The Marias are all gone down in fashionable life, down to the basement floors and the provinces, with the Lauras and Louisas, and Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs. In drawing-rooms and green-rooms, it is now Jack and Kate, Meg and Ned, Pat and Poll.”

Mr. Cripps feared there might be some truth in the vulgarity hinted at by his son. The refined manners of his youth were evidently at a discount in fashionable life. Nobody seemed to mind any body or any thing, save his own ease and convenience; and the only recognisable rule of good breeding, was the greatest amount of selfish enjoyment and egotistical indulgence, with the

least possible interference with the selfishness or egotism of one’s neighbours.

“Suppose, Jack, we take a look of this toy-shop, or bird’s cage, at eighty pounds a-month. It may amuse the ladies.”

Mr. Cripps rung to order Mike Twig to call a coach.

“*Volontiers, mon cher gouverneur,*” cried the elastic Jack, springing to his feet.

“However you manage about Poll and Suke, I don’t choose to be ‘the governor,’ sir.”

“Million pardons, *aimable papa*; the *Professor*, only.”

Jack bowed, and his father smiled. The compact was established; the honorary dignity ratified. The idea, though Jack’s, was good. Something of the kind had before crossed the mind of the Professor. He was not like Juliet. To lovers, there may be nothing in a name, though very much to a talented gentleman, hunting for patronage, among the vulgar great, in the jostling herds of London.

“Mike, call a coach, and look it be a decent one, with brutes not quite fit for the knacker’s yard.” Jack interfered.

“With deference, Professor, I say no; from sunrise to gas-blaze, there is no longer any *hackney* medium between one’s own bit of blood or one’s own carriage and one’s proper legs; unless a man is on a lark, or bound for his solicitor’s or his banker’s, or a visit, on the sly, to some of the by-streets.”

“What percize species of vehicle would you want, sur,” inquired Mike Twig, desirous of displaying the knowledge he had already acquired of the names of queer conveyances never seen in W——.

“The Professor don’t require a coach, Mister Michael; you may withdraw. . . . Never, Poll, my love, throw away a Mike upon a lout like that, or any menial. Mike, like Jack, is for our familiars; that easy familiarity among ourselves, in our ordinary intercourse, which is now the order of the day, renders it indispensably requisite to be strictly punctilious with our domestics. Were the creature your brother, you could only call him Mike. I can’t imagine, by the way, what tempted you to lumber yourselves with the animal: he is far too overgrown for a tiger, too clumsy for a page; and he knows nothing of town, or of his duties.”

They were now at the door of the hotel.

“Shall I have the honour of giving my arm to la Belle Hamilton, as De Grammont says—ah, the witty rogue!” and Jack suited the action to the word. Violet shrunk

back among the attendant and observant waiters.

The elder Mr. Cripps was more than suspicious that the flashy cravat and waistcoat, and swallow-tailed amber coat, and dirtyish yellow gloves, were not quite apropos to morning pedestrian exercise. He came to the instant rescue of Violet, with, "Jack, take care of your sister;" and the somewhat discomfited Jack walked off, but soon rallied. The girls might not be quite the thing; their W— bonnets were of a past mode; but it was something to have the amber swallow-tail, with its gilt buttons, seen in Regent Street near a petticoat of unsuspected character. Jack's acquaintance in London did not yet lie among young ladies to whom very particular introductions were required. He had got much better on among the men than the women. The English are a sadly unsocial race. He might have said, with Lord Dudley—"There is not a respectable house in London into which I can walk and get a cup of tea." Now he had had, in his own town, mother, sisters, sweethearts; and it did him good this morning to be in female society once again. Besides, the girls were worth casting a second look after, at least at so early and empty an hour, in any street of Westminster. Polly Cryppes was what is termed a showy girl. Without peculiar grace or elegance, she had a good figure; carried her head well; beat time wonderfully well to Jack's pace, for a rustic then first on the stones; and had enough, and to spare, of fresh complexion, with large black eyes which might be defined, mathematically, as a superficies, "having length and breadth, but no depth." They deepened in time. Polly already made more violent use of these orbs than her father fancied in good taste, or altogether to the purpose, though they were eyes which the mass admire in prescriptive right of colour.

As they advanced, Mr. Jack looked back at proper junctures, to establish publicly his claim to the intimacy of the respectable, compact, and neatly-dressed little gentleman in black, and the sylph-like creature that hung on his arm.

The spirits of Violet improved with the air and the animated scene around her. She was particularly attracted by the print-shops; and Professor Cryppes was desirous of gratifying her curiosity, especially as it afforded him an opportunity of keeping an eye on his offspring, and estimating their real standing in street society.

In the course of the walk, two or three young men, also of the order of *les gants jaunes*, nodded familiarly to Jack as they passed, and honoured his companion with a broad stare; and two other young men, resembling rakish medical students in pea-jackets, with knowing caps set to the side of their heads, and cigars in full puff, who were much oftener to be found walking the streets than the hospitals, honoured their friend Jack Cryppes and his companion with a deliberate survey. While Violet stood absorbed in the plate of a Holy Family, from a painting by Raphael, Professor Cryppes could hear the one say—

"What bouncer is that Cryppes has picked up? She goes well on her pasterns."

"Don't you know her? Sir George Lees' mistress; an extravagant little devil. She has about cleared out Lees. And now that he has got into the House, and must do the moral, I fancy he has no objection that Cryppes, or any one else, get the reversion of her."

"You are wrong, my Trojan; that girl is not Lees' mistress. I have seen the real nymph in his phaeton fifty times; and I believe I should know every kept woman in May Fair, or belonging to it."

"To be sure you must be deeply learned, Tom; this is your *second* winter."

"That is the girl who came out at the Adelphi last Wednesday. She is paying off Cryppes for getting Barker to puff her, by taking his arm, the puppy, just up two streets, before, as she thinks, any one is abroad."

"Mercenary jades, all of them, Dick. It is not what a man is, but what he has to pamper their vanity, that any one of the harpies thinks of."

"Why, Tom, thou art an absolute philosopher this morning; a sage, a Hippocrates, a Galen. I fear me the expected remittance has not come to hand. Have you quarrelled with —?"

The loitering pair of friends got beyond earshot of Professor Cryppes, whose attention was by this time otherwise engaged. A middle-aged, handsome-looking man, well put up, and admirably well-appointed, from the trouser-strap, under the sole of the boot, to the bridle-rein, so jauntily held in doe-skin gauntlet; a man that, in the Professor's younger days, wont to be described as "a Parkish," or "Hyde-Park-looking" cavalier, faced his West End charger up to the edge of the pavement, and graciously extended a

fore-finger to salute Jack Cryppes, evidently for the purpose of taking a bold scrutinizing stare at the lady in his company. Even the easy self-possessed Miss Cryppes seemed somewhat abashed and indignant, until Jack stopped short to announce to the rest of the party his friend Colonel Rivers, one of the most stylish fellows of his years in London, who would be their neighbour if they took Shuffleton's house. "He has contrived to fix himself," said Jack—"as one of his most ostensible ways and means—upon a widowed sister, with a single heiress and a fat jointure. I wish mother or daughter would take me. Don't you think they might do worse, Poll?"

"How you do rattle, Quintin! You will make Mademoiselle stare as if you were in earnest."

"Earnest! and am I not? . . . There, next house, a capital one, dwells another wealthy widow, Charles Herbert's stepmother; a devilish fine woman she is, and in such excellent preservation, that I dare say Herbert sometimes wishes there were no such canonical prohibition as 'a man may not marry his stepmother, his father's wife.' I would not make bones about accepting her:—that's her house—the third off, with the what-d'ye-call-'ems in the balcony."

"Camellias," said Violet, looking with admiration upon some beautiful and tree-like specimens of the camellia, set out for air on this soft and sunny winter's morning. A lady of very youthful appearance, in a handsome morning-dress, was giving orders to a footman about placing the jars; and Violet fancied, though it might be only fancy, that she had disappeared abruptly before the business was completed, as if dissatisfied by the staring of the undaunted Jack and the very curious Miss Cryppes.

"Marry you, indeed!" was Violet's thought. "That lovely, graceful woman, a Mrs. Jack Cryppes!" The idea diverted her, and so did the odd person from whom it sprung; so unconsciously impudent, and yet occasionally so clever and amusing in his impudence.

"Did you see Mrs. Herbert, Gabrielle? Such a love of a cashmere over her dress; a clear-muslin morning robe, lined with pale lilac, and a Mary Stuart cap; I have seen nothing so truly elegant. Blowzy Mrs. Somers Stocks went to wear a Mary Stuart——"

"Apropos, Poll, how is my little sweetheart, Juliana," interrupted Jack. "She will be worth a Jew's eye by-and-by, that girl: . . . But here is your home, ladies;

that is, if the Professor does not play stinky."

Mr. Jack Cryppes rung at the gate of a very pretty house, somewhere between the style of the cottage ornée and the ornamented suburban villa. There were, at least, abundant white plaster, architectural enrichments of all sorts, French plate-glass windows, a veranda, shrubs, winter flowers, verdure,—and all in the highest order.

"So finished, and in such exquisite taste," said Jack. "It is a nonesuch."

"So enchanting!" exclaimed Miss Cryppes.

"So fresh and airy,—and so sweetly clean," said Violet.

"Atweel an' it is clean, if it be nae mair," said Jack, the respectable-looking Scottish matron who admitted them, and who lived in the house to show it.

"Do you like it, Mademoiselle?" inquired the gratified Professor, pleased to see his pupil take interest in any thing. "Then, I hope, we shall find a pretty apartment for you, and your music, and books."

"Oh, never mind me," replied Violet; "all houses are much the same to me."

The custodier of this fairy palace, whose homely or uncouth appearance formed a grotesque contrast with the flimsy elegancies around her, stood ready with her keys. The furniture, if not the richest that could be procured, was of a description which surpassed all the previous ideas of Professor Cryppes and his daughter, notwithstanding their experience at the Grove, where the purse of the doting old banker had been an Aladdin's lamp to his gay young bride, realizing honeymoon dreams of enchantment. In this small establishment there was an exquisite adaptation of the parts to the whole; a selection of whatever Taste, as the Minister of luxurious refinement, could procure from France, England, or the East; of whatever Italian Art could contribute to embellish and enrich, or the most refined English notions of comfort and domestic privacy suggest for personal accommodation. Every one was delighted, but Miss Cryppes was enraptured. The music room, one of the suite of drawing-rooms, was declared exquisite; and the pale yellow silken damask furniture, and rich golden, or golden-like fringe of the suite, left her, she declared, "nothing to wish for." As the gentlemen went off to examine the stables, she protested that Mrs. Cryppes would be quite satisfied with the kitchen and the offices. Violet admired the implied condescension.

"Is it not a perfection of a house, Made-moiselle?"

"It is very pretty—for London, very. One can see the blue sky—to-day, at least; and there is a promise of verdure and flowers." And though there was neither sea nor river, hill nor meadow, village church nor farm house, cot nor mill—essential attributes of a home view to the imagination of Violet—she again said, "It is very pretty, indeed, for London."

"For London! really Gabrielle, one might fancy sometimes you had dropt out of the moon. What place is there, on the face of the earth, to be compared to London."

Violet sighed deeply.

"The young Miss may think, that brave and bonny as this muckle Toun is, it's no just like *hame*," said the old housekeeper. Violet looked up with eager emotion; while Miss Cryppes stared at the odd-looking person, Dutchwoman or Scotchwoman, most probably the former; for Miss Cryppes had seen both Jeanie Deans and Moggy Macgilpin on the stage at W——, and the old woman's dress, though peculiar, was not like theirs in the least. But this idea, with Miss Cryppes, was short lived. The mirrors, the stoves, the couches, the ottomans, the pier-tables, the large China vases, in one room, and the endless nick-nackeries in all, were to be examined; and were each, down to footstools, and bell-ropes, and gilt-bellows, and feather-dusters, themes of admiration. Polly finally tested the truth of every looking-glass; proved the softness and elasticity of every *fauteuil*.

"O do, Violet, coax Papa to take this darling pet of a house," exclaimed the young lady, now squatted, *à la Turque*, on an ottoman, in the attitude which she had heard was become fashionable among English fine ladies, though the more prudish still scrambled to their perpendicular legs when gentlemen were approaching.

"I wish he may better bruike it than him that's left it," said the old housekeeper, in an accent much more broadly Doric than the Doric of these refined days; for she had left her native country nearly forty years before, and still retained, in original perfection, the sweet speech on which sad innovation has been made.

"You are from Scotland?" said Violet.

"Indeed am I; and, what's mair, I'm neither ashamed of my kintra nor my tongue. What for should I?"

"I know not, I am sure," said Violet, smiling. "Proud rather, I should say, of both."

"Ay, that is as it may be; though pride is no for man, let abee woman. But there's flory fules frae my kintra that's ashamed of baith the ta'en and the tither; the mair mis-leared are they for their pains. Scotland may hae gude reason to be ashamed o' them:—they hae nae reason, I trow, to be ashamed o' Scotland. Na, na."

Violet was amused and pleased with this natural ebullition of nationality, and paid some compliments to the old lady's country; while the latter peered closer into her face, as they stood alone.

"The other Miss named ye Violet. She'll miss mair than she'll catch that ane, or I'm mista'en;" and the old woman grinned scornfully at the grimaces which Polly Cryppes was making to her own image reflected in a pier-glass, ere she continued—"I went *hame*, about a dozen years syne, wi' a widow gentleman, who had a dochter, a bairn named Violet, to take care o' her; and a bonny, weel-conditioned bit lassie she was, poor motherless thing." Violet was now gazing intently into the old woman's face, as if trying to remember its features.

"Ye canna be—such a lang slender miss as ye are, just like a willow wand—the Major's wee Miss Violet, that was sae fond o' our auld-wairld tales o' the Riding times, and our ballants, sic as 'Gil Morice;' and wha grat sae sair for the 'Bâbes in the Wood.'"

"I do hope I am, though," said Violet, holding out her hand, while a glow of pleasure kindled at her heart, which had not visited her bosom for many months. "And you—you are—I am almost sure—my most kind nurse, Marion Swinton. Is it not so?"

"Gude be about us!—and it's yoursel! But I'm no a gentle Swinton; only a Linton, hinny—though the Lintons had their day. And the Major? Oh, I see—I see—poor dear young leddy! I'm a rash woman o' my tongue, and wae to have vexed ye; but I meant nae ill."

"I am sure not," said Violet, trying to restrain her tears.

"Ay, hinny, ye maun e'en try to be resigned to His will, wha orders a' things richt. A' flesh is grass, and the glory o' man like the flower o' the field. First the mother ta'en away; and sair, sair the Major took that to heart; he never could name her name. Then the father; the parent stem, cut down, or e'er the blossom could weel sustain its ain wecht. But ye maun strive to be resigned to His will. . . . And it will be like,

an uncle, or some ane near o' kin, ye are biding wi' now?" continued the Scotswoman, in whom the unconquerable spirit of curiosity, inborn, and cherished by early habits, was as sharp as on the day when she, and every man, woman, and child, "up the Water, or down the Water," that is, the pastoral stream of her native valley, knew exactly what every other man, woman, and child, was saying, doing, or projecting. The teeming wilderness of London had not, in thirty years, been able to extinguish this hereditary disposition,—the natural growth of a thinly peopled country; and it now mingled strongly with more kindly and delicate feelings.

The tears of Violet could no longer be restrained as she tried to whisper, "No friends!—no kin!" And she retreated to a window.

With a natural, if not very amiable, mixture of kindly interest and eager curiosity, Mrs. Marion Linton, leaving Violet to recover her composure as she might, applied for information to Miss Cryppes, who was again upon the ottoman, acting the languishing sultana.

"So Miss Violet has lost her father, poor dear. And she wadna be that ower weel left, I'm jalousing. Short outcome frae the half-pay, Miss; and, it may be, that same forenailed. The Major, though nae sma drink, as we say at *hame*, in the way of blude and connexion, wasna ower walthy in warld's gear—which to some is a snare. It's no aye 'The warld to the worthy,' I trow, in this dispensation o' Time."

"I don't understand Scotch," replied Miss Cryppes, disdainfully: and the Scotch blood flew up.

"Scotch! Ca' ye that Scotch? My truly, I hae knappit English ower lang wi' the best o' ye, no to be able to speak your tongue now, to my sorrow, when it suits my turn. Scotch, quo' she!"

Miss Cryppes rose with dignity, and walked to a window; but instantly started, exclaiming, "Heavens, Gabrielle! there is Charles Herbert below, with Papa and Jack. He is entering the house, I declare!"

"And a good right *Maister* Charles Herbert has to do that same, Miss," said the house-keeper, laying strong emphasis on the *Maister* so unceremoniously dispensed with by Miss Cryppes. "A gude right to come into his ain cousin *Maister* Shuffleton's house, although I hadna sent for him on particular business.—Come away, *Maister* Charles," continued

the old lady, smiling very graciously, her opinion of the 'sponsibility' of the candidates for the lodging, rising considerably from their apparent intimacy with Herbert.

"Good morning, Mrs. Linton. I have been out of my duty to you: but I only found Mr. Shuffleton's letter when I returned from the country last night, enjoining me to write him how you and the turtle-doves were flourishing."

"Bravely baith, Mr. Charles," replied the companion and contrast to turtle-doves, with those radiant smiles which showed how prime a favourite Herbert was. They were evidently upon the most cordial terms. The old lady took the liberty of offering him refreshments for his friends, probably with a hospitable eye to her own newly-discovered friend, "Miss Violet."

Mistress Linton was a person of trust; she was honoured to carry keys, both of cellars and cellarets, which she did with sobriety and fidelity that did credit to her country. She might also have an eye, in her civilities, to the letting of the premises; for, although she neither admired "the young fule, wi' the hassock o' hair on his mouth," nor "the upsettin' Miss," the old gentleman in his blacks looked like a respectable person, who could pay his way; and he, moreover, "wore linens like a drap o' May dew." Mistress Linton had her own way of judging of character and circumstances—and she was seldom far wrong.

When the young girl, who acted as her adjutant, or orderly, returned after her carrying a tray, Herbert was paying his respects to Violet in the window, to which she had retreated.

"His presence be about us!—an' do ye ken Miss Violet too! This *has* been a mornin' for the forgathering o' auld freends. Ane might think the fairies and warlocks had been among us; for Miss Violet is just a bairn o' my ain, if I may be sae bauld; and a bonny bairn she was—and will be again; wan and shilpy as she now looks in this reeky, unhealthsome toun. . . . But d'ye think the gentleman, your friend, is like to come to terms for the house?—for I haveither twa or three jobs i' my offer."

The confidential business of Mistress Linton, for some years back, had been that of taking charge of the houses of absent families of distinction which were to be let; and she had found it both profitable and creditable. Business of this sort now quite flowed upon her. If houses were to be let furnished, she

could guess, at a glance, who would take proper care of the furniture; and who would promptly pay the rent; or the reverse. And her fidelity and shrewdness had so generally recommended her, that if Mrs. Linton had been able to divide herself into quarters, she would have found two houses to take care of for each. Her first impression of the Cryppes party had not been favourable: but she was a Scotchwoman, — Miss Violet Hamilton appeared domesticated among them, and Mr. Charles Herbert was their acquaintance.

Whether this young gentleman shirked appearing *en famille* in very public and fashionable streets with so gay and striking a division of the Talented Family, or whether he really had the document to seek out and despatch by that day's post to his cousin at Brussels, of which he spoke, he remained to search for it, with the help of Mrs. Linton; and perhaps with another thought. He had been much struck with the manner of Violet on the former day. He had followed the party for some time, when she was walking with little Cryppes. It was the first time, save, for a few hurried moments, on the morning of the hustings, that he had seen her in day-light. She was beautiful—yes, very beautiful; and there was around her the "something than beauty dearer"—sympathy, affinity, fascination. Charles Herbert did not then attempt to trace the source of the emotion or interest with which this fair girl was suddenly inspiring him. He pitied her; that he distinctly knew. And she seemed so ingenuous, so sweetly modest, so unlike all around her, so ill-placed; so truly the "fair lily" of Juliana Stocks. Mr. Herbert escaped out of the maze of reverie by thinking, "She is a fine spirited girl that Juliana Stocks, and will turn out a fine woman, in spite of her mother's nonsense."

"This looks like—this is, the paper which Mr. Shuffleton wants—'MS. *Hints for the Game of Short Whist, by the late Colonel S.*—' Yes, this is it. And so you knew Miss Violet Hamilton in Guernsey? You have been a great traveller, Mrs. Linton."

"Deed, sir, I did nae sic thing. It was at *hame* (her constant term for Scotland) that I kenn'd Miss Violet, and her father, the Major, afore her; though as to what Hamiltons they properly belong I never could get satisfaction. The Hamiltons lie mostly west awa, the way of Lenerickshire and Renfrewshire. And I'm no just sure—that is, a'thegither sure—whether the Major was hame-born, or in America. I defy ye, now, to ken

a Scot by his mother tongue; were it but the skipper o' a Berwick smack, they maun a' knap and yaff English. When I gaed hame with the Major and Miss Violet, I met a sair change, let me tell ye, on the kintra, Maister Charles: but as for speakin' English, ye ken we heat ye clean at that, like a' thing else, ance we begin." And Mistress Linton gave a patriotic chuckle.

"You went with them to Scotland, then?"

"Ay, to be sure I did, wi' the Major and his little daughter; I was head cham'ermaid—that's, I had charge o' the napery, in thae days, at the hotel where they put up,—M——'s, that now is: but a thought o' hame often cam owre my heart; there was a child—but, touts, what need I tell you o' that! I had eneuch o' world's gear gathered amang ye; and I thought if I could get a bit cozy cot-house, like, and a kail-yard, about the Borthwick water-side, and sit under a gospel ministry—though Lon'on is no scant o' savoury preachers, nor yet o' kirk ordinances, I maun say that for't—and if I might, after my experience, set a pattern to the wives o' the parish, and may be mortify a trifle for the poor in the hands o' the Kirk Session, and set up a bit grave-stane to my honoured and godly parents, under which I might at last lay me down in peace mysel', as the Psalmist says—"

"But you came back to London," interrupted Herbert, anxious to come to the main point; though in so fair a train of obtaining the whole personal history of Mistress Marion Linton.

"Ye may say that;—cam back! and am mair than ashamed o't. But I found sore alteration yonder; and though in spirituals, and the wechtier matters o' the law, we may hae the heels o' the English—which they darna deny!—yet there are a hantle slaistry, clarty ways o' doin' about a house, and a table, that I had fallen out o' the use o', to say nae worse, while in Lon'on."

"But Major Hamilton? he was a gentleman;—a man of good family, I mean. His profession of course made him a gentleman."

"A gentleman, Maister Charles! Gude save us!" cried Mistress Linton, making wide her glog, gray green eyes, in very wonderment; "wasna he a Major o' Licht Horse, a Hamilton, and a Scotsman? I'll uphaud him gentle to the day o' Judgment, if I should haud him by the lug till then—ay, every inch o' him; though the gentry at hame have a confounded trick o' pride, in stapping a' into the auldest son and trooping

aff the lave wi' deil-be-licket, an it be na a bit post, or a commission at anorra time; and that foul-mouthed tinkler ye ca' Cobbett, casting it in our teeth, till I'm sure, if I had the means, I would rather pay it out o' my ain pouch than disgrace the kintra. . . . You English have more sense than divide your gear amang your bairns that gait."

"It is an abominable trick, indeed, Mrs. Linton: then, I fear, the Major was not very rich?"

"Ye may say that. Rich! And the puir young leddy;—do ye ken ony thing, Maister Charles, of how she gets her bread? She says she has neither kith nor kin alive; and she does na look very fit for hard wark neither; though, to be sure, there's the mantua-making line was ance very respectable for born gentlewomen at hame, as weel as the millendrey and the gum-flowers. Your ain mother, Maister Charles, could put mony a bit job in Miss Violet's way for a word o' your mouth. She is bound up in you, that leddy; and the best of leddies she is. It was her wished me to this hoose."

Charles Herbert could stand this maundering no longer; so he left his garrulous informant abruptly, and without answering one of her official queries relating to the probable solvency of the house of Cryppes.

* * * * *

A month had passed; the domestic arrangements of Professor Cryppes were completed, though his family had not yet joined him; his house was open to company; and, much to the relief of Violet, he had peremptorily settled that Mr. Jack should have apartments in the Temple, and cultivate the muses, politics, and knowledge of the town; merely graced by the knowledge, diligently spread among his cronies, that he had a handsome sister, and a father, the celebrated Professor Cryppes, who had a fine villa in the Regent's Park, and kept a carriage.

During this eventful month, the Professor had been most diligent in the use of every possible means available to Talent; but his patient labours and admirable tact, while his fortunes were thus between winning and losing, must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER V.

THE information which Mr. Charles Herbert received from our heroine's Scottish nurse, now a house-letter in London in high trust, gave food for meditation during a long and solitary ride, on which the young man did not permit even his servant to follow him.

On the whole, Mrs. Linton's information had been much more satisfactory to Mr. Herbert than was the intelligence which Mistress Linton had been able to extract from him, either relating to business or friendship. The old lady liked a reasonable *quid pro quo* in all things, and fancied herself rather unhand-somely treated when Charles, her great favourite, neither promised her his interest with his mother for her former nursling, "poor Miss Vilet," nor came to the point about the finances of Professor Cryppes. "Professor" sounded with dignity in her Scottish ears; but paying eighty guineas a month for a house, and three more for the stables, was astounding, whether for St. Andrews or Old Aberdeen.

With Mr. Michael Twig, who was shortly afterwards sent by his master for a copy of the inventory, the Socratic, or, more correctly, the Scottish mode of questioning, or pumping, proved sovereign; though the result of the process was any thing but satisfactory to Mistress Linton as a woman of business.

"A music schulemaster!—a fiddler that plays on the organ, the kist of whistles, in their Prelatic kirks, to set up to pay for a hoose like this!" was her indignant meditation over her tea. "And Miss Vilet breeding up for a play-actor! I think black-burning shame o't; were it but for the name she bears:—e'en the Cawmells, that were sic deacons at the trade, didna openly disgrace the country; they had the decency to ca' themselfs *Kembles*—set them up! And Major Hamilton's daughter to turn play-actor! Surely the misguided lassie might find a better calling: I'll speak to her myself; it's my duty, as a countrywoman, to a fatherless and motherless young thing. And the clanjamphry she's among to run riot in a hoose like this! Mr. Charles would need to look for sicker caution for the rent, I can tell him. And the waste o' the carpets, and clouring o' the knives, and smashing o' the chinee," &c. &c. &c.

On this subject, the judgment of Sir George Lees coincided remarkably with that of Mrs. Linton, the shrewd Scottish house-agent. The agreement was no sooner concluded, than he assailed Herbert, when they met at their club, with—"What scrape is this you have got into, Charles, with little Cripps and Shuffleton's house? What the deuce has put it into his scheming head to take a thing of that sort!—He'll be borrowing of us next; and Shuffleton's attorney will never get one penny from him."

"He has me for surety," replied Herbert, in a tone of quiet irony. "To be sure that is not much."

"I cannot admire your prudence so much as his impudence, Charles. How could you be so raw?"

"What the deuce could I do? When Shuffleton's attorney asked for references, and—the scrupulous knave—for security too, Mr. Cripps did me the honour to refer to me. It had been wiser had he done you the honour, Sir George."

"Thank you!" was the thought of the baronet, who said aloud: "And to plant himself, with all his tribe, just under our noses:—it is enough, by Jove! to desecrate the entire quarter. Could you not have given Shuffleton's *doer* a hint to say that another negotiation for the house was all but concluded—that the rent was a hundred and fifty pounds a-month—that—"

"I did not think it worth while to *lie* about it, Sir George," said the young man, coldly.

"Ah, well, Mrs. Herbert, dear kind soul, must just pay them when the time comes—though I hope she may not need—"

"As do I—for she sha'n't;—that I am determined on, whatever be the consequence. My stepmother has been far too generous—too indulgent to me already. You know well, Sir George, the sacrifices which my generous mother has made to clear off my foolish Oxford and Turf encumbrances, and save me the exposure which I richly deserved. By heavens! I adore the spirit of my father's wife—I were the most ungrateful, insensible cub alive else."

And yet there were times when Charles Herbert was tempted to be thus ungrateful, and to wish that his stepmother, with much less indulgence, allowed him a little more personal independence. Lightly and gently as she carried the rein, he felt that the bit was there; though it was only felt from the restive motions of the proud and but half-broken colt. The extraordinary settlement of his father, which left him, even in pecuniary matters, so dependent on a lady on whose affections he had no natural claim, was more galling to his spirit than his reason justified, when he reflected upon the entire devotedness to him which, from early boyhood, Mrs. Herbert had shown. A mother could not have been more tenderly indulgent. He was aware that, still in the prime of life, and in the full possession of those personal charms which Time had mellowed into richer beauty,

she had refused several flattering offers of marriage; though so far from being unambitious, her greatest weakness lay in the other direction; and though she valued rank and distinction in society so highly, as to be jealously susceptible about that mere sufferance or notoriety after which ladies, more vain and less proud, panted, and bent their lives and fortunes to attain. Charles Herbert could scarcely believe that so young and beautiful a woman had entertained any deep attachment to his father, whom, he understood rather than knew, she had married from pique and disappointment. His friend, his advocate, almost his ally against his father's severity, and more like an affectionate elder sister than a harsh stepdame, Mrs. Herbert had early gained the heart of her son. He knew her latent ambition; but its aims were generous, and they were for himself. The object dearest to her heart was, that Charles should marry well; and her ideas of "marrying well" were neither sordid nor vulgar. About a year previous to the period of which we speak, the mother and son had been at Baden, where, among the English visitors, they became acquainted with the Earl of Tarbert, a widower, and his only daughter, Lady Laura Temple, in whom Mrs. Herbert saw her *beau idéal* of a wife for Charles, with probably a title in reversion. The Earl had been long in public life as ambassador at a great German Court; and Lady Laura, after her education was finished, had lived with him abroad. She was three or four years older than Charles Herbert, though this circumstance did not in the least, in the estimation of his stepmother, detract from the many advantages of the noble, intelligent, and charming Lady Laura.

"She is too good, too grand, too *superior*, as you ladies say, for me," would Charles laughingly reply, in parrying his mother's indirect attacks or attempts to direct his affections in the right channel; to elevate his sentiments and character, as she thought, by the influences of the noblest and the most generous affections; by the admiration and passionate love of woman's surpassing excellences, all combined in the dignified Lady Laura.

"It would be the dearest happiness which life now promises me, to see you, my dearest Charles, the husband of Laura Temple; such a union would leave me nothing to desire, securing, not merely the happiness, but the dignity of your existence. I should feel that, at length, I had discharged my debt to

your father:—you know not, Charles, its extent."

Charles began to think that his mother's extreme anxiety for this alliance, though at first most disinterested, now involved a little struggle for power. This was not the way to succeed with him. He discovered, too, or at least told his mother, that he wished to travel for two or three years; that he was too young for marriage; and that the Lady Laura, by some few years his senior, was ages beyond him in maturity of judgment and experience of life. His constant gay plea was, that he was quite unworthy of so high a destiny.

"She is a fine, intelligent, dignified creature, and I hope will marry some prince, and share his principality; and if you, *Maman*, will repent, and accept the Earl—and what brows more beautiful could grace his strawberry leaves?—I should be proud to claim Lady Laura as my most illustrious connexion. . . . Besides, she never shows me the smallest particle of favour."

Mrs. Herbert coloured and frowned. "This is not a theme of light talk, Charles. I have gone far, and perhaps too far, in permitting you to see my own impression. Laura Temple is not the woman, whatever were her rank, to be won unsought."

By degrees Charles learned that, in declining the addresses of the Earl, Mrs. Herbert had declared her fixed intention of never marrying, and of settling her whole fortune upon her husband's son, if he were happy enough to gain the favour of Lady Laura, to which, she insinuated, he aspired. In stating this to the Earl, Mrs. Herbert did not mean to deceive. Her ardent wishes half deceived herself.

The Earl was wonderfully indifferent. His views for his daughter might, ten years before, have been more ambitious; but now, so cool, independent, and impracticable a young lady might safely be left to her own judgment; and the Earl was desirous that she should marry some one. In her rank, a woman of twenty-seven is very near being confounded with the old maids; and besides, his daughter's marriage would remove every obstacle to his own.

The families separated in the previous autumn, the Earl and his daughter both well-disposed to young Herbert; and Lady Laura, with the ardour of a generous nature, making up to Mrs. Herbert by increased esteem and affection for her previous suspicion of the arts employed by the quiet,

composed, but ambitious widow, to captivate her uxorious parent. Again, before leaving Germany, and when Laura herself had become favourable to the union, Mrs. Herbert decidedly refused the Earl; while, so far as delicacy allowed, she expressed renewed anxiety for the marriage of the younger pair. She was certain that Charles had no other attachment, or none, save of the most transient nature, likely to interfere with the splendid connexion on which she had set her heart and hopes.

The Earl and Lady Laura were now expected in London for the first time for four years; and Mrs. Herbert could not help flattering herself that her darling project had some influence in their determination, as they had become almost naturalized in the circles of Vienna. In the meantime, to ward off the worse mischief of a serious attachment, she had been rather pleased with the "harmless flirtation" struck up between her friend, pretty little Mrs. Richard Stocks of the Grove, and her volatile stepson; and still more satisfied, when, in a mood between the love of fun and the first stirrings of ambition, the young man had thrown himself into public life at the W— election; where he had relished the sport so much, that he declared the taste had whetted his appetite, and that he was almost tempted to become in earnest "The saviour of his country!"

Mrs. Herbert did not fail to expatiate upon these hopeful symptoms, in her epistolary communications to Lady Laura Temple, who, she justly said, was intended for something better than being the wife of a mere self-indulging, idle, and fashionable man of fortune. That Charles did not think of getting into Parliament, she imputed to his youth. That, like too many clever young men of the day, he was inclined to *Liberalism*, she did not think it needful to repeat; rightly concluding, that in a man of very large property, married to the only child of a peer, this error was either likely to be speedily abjured, or never carried to an imprudent length.

Since the return of Mrs. Herbert and her son from Baden, the latter had lived in Chambers, ostensibly for the advantage of greater seclusion in prosecuting his studies, and his new vocation of statesmanship. It was an arrangement which suited both parties; and it was with renewed zest that Charles daily left his confined lodgings to fly to the splendid dwelling and choice society of his refined and affectionate stepdame.

With her he dined almost every day; or if at his club, or with a friend, his evenings were either spent with her at home, or in attending her to public places and parties. They were indeed inseparable. It was in gaily relating to her his varied adventures at W—, on the evening of the day that he had met the Cripps party, and become the surety of "the Professor," that Charles became conscious of something unusual in the reserve, or awkwardness, or complication of emotions, which led him, in his provincial sketches, to omit all allusion to the existence of Violet Hamilton. Misfortune had either hallowed the beautiful orphan to his imagination, or that mystery in which young love ever enshrouds itself, was already stealing over him; not that he had forgotten the friendly suggestions of Mrs. Marion Linton, nor how much Violet required a powerful and benevolent friend of her own sex; but that, really wanting confidence, he tried to believe he had not yet sufficiently pondered on the method of introducing the subject so as to ensure success.

Mrs. Herbert had been amused and interested by his adventures and sketches, and gay repetitions of his oratorical efforts. "And now, Charles," she said, "in return for your news, I have charming intelligence for you. Lord Tarbert and Laura are to be here immediately. I have been so fortunate as to secure a first-rate house for them, such as almost please me for yourself, had you already the felicity to call Lady Laura your own."

"Pray, my dear mother, don't make me too vain," replied Herbert, annoyed, however, by the renewal of the old subject, now become more disagreeable than ever. "All-conscious of my own demerits and her bright perfection, I am afraid lest any hint of my ambitious audacity get abroad; besides, I have serious thoughts of espousing the Commonwealth—dedicating myself, like so many more patriots, to—My country!"

"And Laura Temple is the very being to give form and steadiness to such noble ambitions," replied Mrs. Herbert, who would not be joked out of her attack. "How, Charles, you will yet bless my memory for raising your thoughts to this noble creature!"

"Far too good for me, I am sure; I would as soon think of proposing to the Majesty of Britannia ruling the waves, upon the reverse of one of our old coins, as of asking Lady Laura to be my bride. Remember, mother, that though I may turn out a very great

Parliamentary orator, I am still but a mere mortal."

"I thought better of your good taste, sir, than this style of conversation warrants."

Charles Herbert could not bear to offend his mother, nor to live under her seeming displeasure. She had learned, perhaps, in the course of her married life, to cherish a little sullen wrath, gilded over by a calm exterior, which would have corroded the warm and candid bosom of her son. He now hastened to implore forgiveness and vow amendment; and, while he kissed hands on his pardon, ventured, like a true man, to offend again, by saying—

"I shall learn to hate Lady Laura if she become, however innocently, the cause of disagreement between us, who, until we met her, had not alone the most cordial affection, but a league, offensive and defensive, against all mankind; hating and liking exactly the same persons."

Mrs. Herbert was about to retort, but wisely recollected that she might injure her own cause; and when Charles requested, as a sign of complete forgiveness, that she should grant him "one favour," she graciously acceded, saying—

"But I beseech you do not let it be that I should take up Professor Cryppes and his musical daughter; you know how sensitive I am on the head of *lions* and *geniuses* of every description—but particularly those of the female sort. . . . What, Charles, is the mighty favour?"

Herbert did not reply promptly. He looked embarrassed, uneasy.

"Merely, merely," he said at last, "that you give up the Opera, and go with me to Covent Garden to see Macready to-morrow. Since I became an orator and a public character, I am becoming curious about the graces of declamation."

"With the greatest pleasure, my dear Charles," replied the lady, with the proud alacrity and warm devotion of a real mother; "with the greatest pleasure; fine Operatic lady as you sometimes call me, I will accompany you to the theatre as often as you please."

"What a kind, charming woman she is, could she be but persuaded that a man is generally the fittest person possible to know the sort of wife that best suits himself. . . . If this sweet, modest Violet were but Laura Temple."

While Charles Herbert was studying declamation, or meditating in his solitary

chambers upon the means of creating for Violet that interest in his mother's heart which she was fast gaining in his own, Professor and Mr. Jack Cryppes were not dallying in their arrangements.

Jack suggested that his father should instantly treat for the purchase of Mr. Shuffleton's small cellar of "choice wines," which, however, was not for sale. The attorney fought shy. Jack himself bought the phaeton, though, probably, owing to his being the negotiator, the person from whom the carriage—"quite as good as new, the property of a person of quality who had no farther use for it"—was purchased, insisted on having £80, hard down, to account—a proceeding which the Professor thought shabby, if not insulting. Sir George Lees, with an order on Mr. Cryppes' banker in his pocket, undertook, in the meantime, to look out for horses,—the family council held on one splendid horse or two handsome ponies, having been conclusive for the ponies.

Sir George was a thorough judge of horse-flesh, and an adept at bargaining for it. Sir George had even been flattered by the commission, humbly solicited as the greatest kindness by his quondam W— canvasser.

"Will Lees really jockey little Cripps?" was Charles Herbert's secret and uncharitable thought. He rebuked it,—but it would return. He had begun of late to think that Sir George was neither overburdened with heart nor intellect; that he was more *hard* in his worldliness than most other men; all men being, he began to fear, more or less worldly. And though a knowing, pleasant, gentleman-like person, Sir George had ways of talking, and of thinking too, on many subjects, and particularly about women, which were disgusting, and at times abhorrent to the young man who had been the spoiled child, or indulged younger brother, of the refined and delicate Mrs. Herbert; him who had admired the lofty and noble-natured Laura Temple; and who, with deep reverence for womanhood, was beginning to be fascinated by the freshness and sensibility of heart, the ingenuous candour and delicious softness of the lovely and friendless girl, whose image was taking possession of his fancy, the more irresistibly, as it seemed, from his efforts to banish it. Her, above every other woman, he could not now endure to hear named by the profane lips of his friend Sir George, without a thrill of indignation, not the less vehement that prudence demanded the concealment of his emotion;

for how was he to constitute himself the cavalier of "Mademoiselle Gabrielle?"

But here we outrun our story.

On leaving the house in Regent's Park, (now his own,) the Professor—his case stuffed, in passing, with the cards of address which he had providently ordered that same morning—engaged the best looking equipage that could be obtained for hire; and, though it was already getting dusky, resolved to drive round to scatter them among a few of his particular friends.

"Any objection, till dinner time, to a peep of London by gas-light, ladies?" said the Professor. "I can take you all." Jack, always alert, was, meanwhile scribbling the number of Shuffleton's house in the corners of the tickets his father was going to distribute, in a very small and neat back-hand.

"I vote for lunch, the fireside, and a song from La Belle Hamilton," cried Jack, squinting up into Violet's face with a look which instantly made her reply—

"I will be very glad to accompany you and Miss Cripps on your drive, sir."

"Then hey for the city! I must settle about the house."

This was accordingly done, and, as we have seen, well done, by giving a reference to Mr. Charles Herbert; and then the Professor went on his rounds.

He was not one of those enviable persons who, on entering London, have merely to sow cards and reap invitations; but he had power of its own kind, and, what was far better, knew well how to turn it to good account. In the course of this zig-zag and round-about most eccentric drive, the Professor dropped his card at at least twenty doors of different orders of respectability; his industrious daughter diligently hunting up the Court Directory for him, and Mike Twig being kept in hot exercise. In London he had several old professional friends, who had thriven, and now held a respectable place in good musical, theatrical, and convivial society. He also claimed acquaintance with itinerating concert-givers, managers, and semi-managers, and wandering stars from the metropolis, who had enjoyed his hospitalities on the Mall at W—, and obtained his friendly offices with both the Whig and Tory newspapers of that opulent but tasteless town. In London, several of his old pupils were now settled in the world; and, among others, an enthusiastic scraper on the violin, who had, however, prudently given over crossing the soul of his city uncle, and taken seriously

"o' mornings" to the serious business of the banking-house. His evenings were still devoted to the fine arts and pleasure.

After a call at one or two music-shops, when the ladies alighted, the drive terminated, so far as they were concerned. Some new music was carried away, and a grand piano-forte chosen and ordered to be sent positively next morning to the new house. The Professor gave his orders, not in the undecided and sneaking way which defeats itself, but in the tone of a man able to enforce them as tradesmen best love.

"I have provided for your pleasure, Mademoiselle, to-morrow evening. I do not mean that you should appear at the Opera till your dress is a little Londonized; but to-morrow evening, after the play, we shall try, with a few friends, what echo Shuffleton's walls give to good music."

The Professor had one more call to make—the last—in which his son was to accompany him. The ladies were, therefore, set down at their hotel; and Jack jumped up as they entered, his hands filled with beautiful exotics.

"For La Belle Hamilton! 'Sweets to the sweet!' Is not this a winter bouquet worth looking at, Polly?"

"From whom?" inquired Polly.

"Oh, ho! All my eye, Miss Polly. . . . Never tell tales out of school, Mademoiselle," said Jack, with an impudent but good-humoured wink, meant to be sly.

"Charles Herbert, I dare say. Gabrielle was raving about flowers to him this morning. Go, Quintin; you keep your father waiting," said Polly, sharply.

Violet, with a beating heart, made one step forward to rescue her welcome property, if it were hers—and then hesitated.

"They cannot be for me;" and her eye rested fondly on some beautiful white camellias, which she was sure were at least twin-flowers of those she had admired that morning in Mrs. Herbert's balcony.

"Not for you, Ma'mselle. Oh, no! this is not your address, I presume;" and Jack handed her a card which established the fact.

Violet was unable just then to feel offence at any thing.

"Flowers are too precious to be refused on slight grounds," she returned, blushing slightly. "I welcome the lovely strays;" and she put out her hands to receive them. "Will you have some, Miss Cripps; here are plenty for both of us."

"No, I thank you," said the pouting Polly.

"Don't quarrel about your lovers, young ladies," cried the undaunted Jack; "London has abundant adorers for you both. I'll bespeak Burke Barker, for you, Poll."

"What a tiresome fool you are, Jack."

"If Barker is engaged," said Jack, taking his place by his father, "with any important affair—cutting up Grey, or smashing the Whigs for to-morrow's *Cerberus*—you mustn't get crisp or snuffy, Professor, should he refuse to see us. I have known him slam his door in the face of a Cabinet Minister before now; or, at least, a Minister's Sec.; 'I turn you out, my Lord, the more effectually to keep you in,' was his neat epigrammatic turn on one such occasion."

"All vastly fine, Jack. . . . I hope Barker will see me, though; for I want him. If these fellows who came down to W— were so anxious about small puffs in its paltry prints, what must be the power of the metropolitan press. . . . I fancied your friend a Liberal."

"So he was; but the proprietor of the *Cerberus* changed last Wednesday. We are now decidedly Conservative; Church and State—to the backbone."

"Jack, I think you don't altogether want sense," said the Professor, who had given but slight attention to the sudden revolution in politics of the *Cerberus*.

"Thank you, sir!" returned Jack.

"You know of what consequence it is to me and my family—yourself included, puppy—that I start well."

"Ways and means, papa?" said Jack, peeringly. "Mademoiselle is to be our philosopher's stone, I presume; the Cryppes' Eldorado; stony enough she has proved to poor Jack, who, *entre nous*, Professor, was never more in want of a few pieces than at this blessed moment."

The Professor drew out his purse.

"If you, Jack, with your abilities, could behave with but common discretion and tact—" The Professor counted out five sovereigns.

"Do make it the ten, father? You know I am about to make your fortune. For myself, hang law and letters, I will never make salt to my broth by them. I speculate on a dash in the line matrimonial:—Have at a city fortune! You won't come down the ten—make it even money, then?"

And six sovereigns were slipped into Jack's left hand, as, with the right, he rung at the door of Barker's chambers.

In the absence of his servant, who, he said, had gone to fetch his horse, that gentleman opened the door himself, and a dark, tall, and thin, saturnine-like person, met the respectful scrutiny of the Professor. Mr. Burke Barker was, probably, not above thirty years of age, if so much, though in the tear and wear of Journalism, he was already quite bald; and, indeed, derived no inconsiderable advantage in physiognomy from the polish of what is called a highly intellectual head.

Whether it was that Professor Cryppes was neither a Minister nor a Minister's Secretary, and that the Editor of the *Cerberus* saw no use in playing grand, he received his courteous and gentleman-like little visitor with frank affability.

Mr. Barker had too deep a knowledge of the seamy side of life, to err by over-estimating the talents of any new provincial aspirant whatever; though he was disposed to judge favourably of the person soliciting his friendly offices as journalist. He knew that Cryppes was a good organist and pleasing composer; and that, though his manners savoured of the pomposity and elaborate courtesy of the past generation, and his musical principles might be equally ancient, he was not a quack. The Professor had had a thoroughly good and systematic musical education. Even Jack, with all the mountebankery for which Mr. Burke Barker sometimes rated him in a friendly way, was a young fellow of quicker parts, and more universal acquirements, than ninety-nine in the hundred of those raw youths that yearly arrived in the metropolis with a collection of manuscript poems in their carpet-bags—and a determination to become famous, and make their fortunes.

In Barker, on the other hand, the Professor saw, in the first five minutes, a man whom it was folly to attempt to humbug in the ordinary way; and he, at once, took the line of sense and propriety. It was, therefore, neither on his brilliant talents as a powerful journalist, nor his inestimable services to his patron, that the Professor plied Mr. Burke Barker with delicate and well-turned compliments, implied rather than expressed, but upon the uncompromising independence, the stern integrity of his inflexible public principles.

Jack could not forbear squinting tremendously and comically up into his father's grave face of hypocrisy; but, fortunately, the obliquity was not perceived by either the

speaker or the flattered person addressed, with whom the bait, or the balm, it is not, we fear, strange to say, had taken.

"Well, I fancied Barker a cleverer chap than that comes to, to be humbugged by the governor; but then he sometimes fancies he has a conscience, and it may require a sop: what a clever old shaver is *Papa*, too!—Turn Burke Barker's flank; but vanity, vanity, all is vanity."

Mr. Barker, in the course of a general lively chat, politely offered his visitor a box order for four for Covent Garden next evening. Macready was to appear in *Virginius*.

"No thanks, my dear sir; it will afford me infinite pleasure if I can be of any use to you. Such trifles, you know, Professor Cryp-pes, circulate freely in our corporation."

Jack had dexterously inoculated Barker with the dissyllable, and the Editor also believed that Cripps had obtained a degree somewhere:—no great difficulty that!

The Professor would accept the order only upon one condition—that Mr. Barker would waive ceremony, and join his family *petit souper* after the play, to meet merely "his friends"—what a host of friends the Professor had—"Sir George Lees and Mr. Charles Herbert, the young gentleman who had cut so promising a figure at the W— election."

Mr. Barker, although the proprietor of the *Cerberus* had changed politics since Wednesday, courteously accepted the polite invitation, and the nearer subject was modestly introduced. The Professor implored, not patronage, but advice. Mr. Barker, with his tact, must know perfectly how the land lay:—he asked for no undue favour, though friendly counsel was above all price."

"A fair start in London, Mr. Barker, is all that I want—all that I am entitled to expect for my gifted pupil and myself. Of *her* talent, *her genius*, I ought to say, there can be no question. I have listened to Mara, sir, in her best days. I am getting an old fellow, Mr. Barker, as that tall rascal proves, and have sat at the feet of Billington and Storaci, sir. I have heard Salmon, and Mountain, and Dickens, and so forth, need I say how often? as for Sontag and Kitty Stephens, they are but chits."

The little Professor began to swell and blow out, when the eloquent squint of Jack gave needed check to his vanity, and recalled his better sense.

"My pupil is a rare and wonderful creature, Mr. Barker," he continued, in a quieter

tone. "No doubt, I may be partial, but I could stake my reputation that the girl will make a noise. She is very young, and peculiarly shy and sensitive, nor am I fond of familiarizing her to the public eye ; but with *real* friends, such as I am proud to call Mr. Burke Barker, and real judges too, the case is different. I do not bid you praise Gabrielle—no, sir !—I am proud for my pupil. I only entreat that you will hear her and judge of her yourself, and I am not afraid of the result."

The Professor dropt a few mysterious hints about the private history of his pupil, while Mr. Barker nodded gravely, from time to time, as if taking mental notes, and the visitors rose, with apologies from the Professor for intruding on moments so precious.

"We may depend on you, Barker, to assist at giving Mademoiselle and my sister welcome to their new home to-morrow night—Regent's Pa-ak, you know—Shuffleton's China Closet."

"Nay, nay, Jack, I did not promise for the young ladies," rejoined the Professor, laughingly. "They may be over-fatigued and out of looks, poor dears, and have not got dresses yet, and all that."

"Pho, pho, governor—so much more needful, if they are fatigued, of a spoonful of white soup, or a lobster paté, and a glass, or, by're lady! a couple, of champagne, with a little music to recruit them and set them to rights."

The Professor frowned and smiled at his incorrigible heir-apparent ; and Mr. Barker, by some sudden freak or other, or perhaps from the natural reaction produced by Jack's high airs, relapsed into editorial dignity.

"If I possibly can ; but pray don't expect me. My cab will be ordered for ten, at all events ; for I must look in at the theatre—a few words will be looked for in the *Cerberus* in the morning ; and Macready is a devilish good fellow."

"You don't hear him, governor—we don't hear you, Barker, I mean," cried Jack, offering as if to put his fingers in his father's ears, as he hurried him off. "He says he will come. . . . All my eye," continued Jack, as the carriage drove off. "I wish I were as sure my six sovereigns were sixteen, as of Barker appearing at the hour of eleven. . . . Heigh-ho, what a whirli-gig of a world it is, father. You ish humbug—I ish humbug—all ish bumbug!"

The Professor was resentful ; and the rest

of the drive was devoted to a lecture upon propriety of manners and dress, and about idle frivolity that would never come to any thing. Jack looked out at the window, and set his lips to whistle the air to which he durst not give breath.

"When did Charles Herbert fall in love with your pupil, father mine!" said Jack, at last. "I had an eye to her myself, if she make a hit . . . A delicious little creature she is."

"Hold your tongue, sir."

Jack rarely cherished anger, or even spite. His affections possessed the qualities of a sieve. With a certain degree of art and cunning, he was so perfectly what the world terms good-humoured, that he had never even known what malice or rancour meant, and had often been utterly astonished to learn that his satirical verses, and lively sallies in the *Cerberus*, which were termed falsehoods, malicious slanders, and scurrilous libels, could be deemed other than as exceedingly amusing and pleasant by their unfortunate subjects, as they were by himself. The fire-brands, arrows, and death, which Jack scattered, were really thrown about him in sport—and for some small pay. Malice, Jack utterly disclaimed. He hated no one, and rather liked his mother, and Polly, and Susan, and Ned, and several "good fellows" and pretty girls—one, two, or three at a time, as it happened, for it was much the same to Jack. At the moment he was somewhat out of sorts with the governor : "Yet the old boy in this dash upon the town shows blood," thought Jack, whose high animal spirits and sanguine temper were a fortune in themselves. With six gold pieces in his pocket—generally cleaned out—and a good dinner, a bottle of good wine, and good music in prospect, Jack soon recovered his best humour.

Violet did sing that night :—she sang with her master ; to his accompaniment ; by herself ; and she sung enchantingly ; seeming no more aware of the presence of Jack, or of his *bravas*, than if he had been one of the music-stools. The Professor was charmed. His fortune was made, and in the way most gratifying to his pride ; for he would rather, in his grand moods, have been the instructor of an acknowledged *Prima Donna* than the father of a duchess, who might settle a handsome annuity upon him.

In his dash, *en Cossaque*, upon the metropolis, Professor Cryppes, like other soaring and ambitious spirits, depended much upon rapidity of movement : on taking the enemy

by surprise, carrying the war into his country, and there making war support war. Were we to state the real amount of his funds for this great enterprise, our veracity as historians might be questioned; and it may be enough to hint that, of the money placed in his hands for the premium, board, and clothing of his pupil, and the handsome results of his Farewell Concert, much less remained than Mrs. Somers Stocks calculated upon. That little was threatened to be made less. A letter by the next morning's post, from Mrs. Cripps, announced the irritating fact, that the shopkeeping churls of W—, that wretched, insignificant den, to which the Professor had sacrificed his prospects for so many years, were resolved, with every good wish for his prosperity in the metropolis, to have their little bills settled before the family and furniture were removed. They did not scruple—the more barbarous among them—to insinuate that the Professor had stolen a march upon them; besides, the accounts were too long past due already, and must be discharged in full.

"Dem'd nonsense to expect any such stuff," cried the insulted gentleman, throwing down his lady's epistle. "Let them wait, and be cursed to them; serve them right; write instantly to your mother, Polly. Had she had the gumption to send forward the light luggage, they might have kept the trash." Violet was just entering with a letter in her hand; her presence was ever a restraint on the Professor's vivacious sallies, recalling him to propriety of demeanour, when irritation banished his customary suavity. "Ah, Mademoiselle! musical genii, I see by your eyes, have been all night hovering round your pillow!"

Violet liked the Professor less in his high-flown fits than even in his irascible humours; but the sudden and forced changes from the angry to the treacherous mood was worse than either.

"I have thought it right to apprise my friends in Guernsey of my sudden change of residence," said Violet, composedly. "Our rector is to be in London in June; and, with your permission, sir, would take me home during the summer vacation, which I could then pass agreeably, without embarrassing the plans of Mrs. Cripps and the family."

"Totally impossible, Mademoiselle. This is the very crisis of your fortune. To-tally impossible! My own plans for the summer are not yet fixed—time enough. Perhaps I may take you a run over to Paris, or rather

Vienna, if we can't manage both, or only Brighton perhaps. Of course, when the season closes, we must go somewhere."

The Professor, though at present dazzled with bright fitting visions, would have been a poor violinist indeed if, in this great emergency, he had not had in reserve two or more strings to his bow. A concert at Brighton to stamp fashion, a stroll to wealthy Manchester and ostentatious Liverpool, after a *coup de main* upon Dublin, were all included in the possible; not, however, until London had been fairly tried. Violet's face betrayed her disappointment. In intimating to her affectionate and humble friends that morning, the vague doubts and fears that were thickening in her path, they had taken a more marked form to her own mind; and, though she could not tell all she felt, she strongly expressed her apprehensions of being as unfit as she was disinclined for the arduous, if brilliant and conspicuous, part to which her master directed her ambition.

Professor Cryppes was not altogether selfish in his designs. The development of the musical talent of his pupil—of that "divine gift" which she probably possessed in the abundant measure which he sanguinely believed—while it redounded to his large profit and immortal honour, must also crown the enviable possessor with glory in the eyes of all Europe, and ultimately secure her a handsome fortune, with, perhaps, rank and title, in a matrimonial alliance. What more common, if she played her cards well?—which he hoped she would; his own character and interest being deeply involved in the game. Besides, however insensible his wife or daughter might be to the charms of the gentle and lovely orphan girl, the Professor's was no jealously feminine, nor yet "savage breast." Musical geniuses may be as intensely selfish as any other class of bipeds, and, by training and position, fully as profligate and depraved, but there is always some lurking enthusiasm, some latent sympathy with the beautiful, in their original nature; and the hopes which the Professor had placed in the success of his pupil, the pains he had taken with her education, her rapid improvement, and the unconscious, undesigned fascination of her manners, had obtained great influence over his mind. Where he might have bribed and flattered an inferior girl placed in the same circumstances, relative to his own aspirations, he really liked, and warmly praised Violet. She had not yet thwarted his views. "Cryppes is a fool about that

girl," was the not unfrequent remark of Mrs. Cryppes.

"Before your summer plans are fixed," said Violet, "I hope something may occur to change your views respecting me. In Guernsey I shall not be idle, I assure you. I was born a bird of the wild wood, and don't sing best in a cage. You are too good, indeed, to think of Germany or Italy for me. Your kindness would be worse than thrown away; for I never—*never*—"

"Bah! my dear Mademoiselle. . . . I beg a thousand pardons—but I am busy this morning," interrupted the Professor. "As for my *kindness*, as you politely call it, you more than repay it by your attention and improvement in our divine art. 'Tis not common care, nor yet common attention, that can give Europe a new *Prima Donna*, my dear. Apropos, Polly, you know my plans for the day. . . . Stay, your wardrobe needs a little repair probably. While you pursue your studies, and keep up your spirits and good looks, you must not neglect your toilet, Mademoiselle." The Professor took out a rather well replenished note-case. It was said of him, and the case is, we fear, too common among great professional geniuses, that, even when at the richest, he never sought the security of any desk or banker save his breeches' pocket. "This, in the meanwhile, for trifles to-day; to-morrow, when we obtain a local habitation, you may order what you require from our neighbour Mrs. Herbert's milliner, who supplies my friend Mrs. Richard Stocks."

"Madame Ramsden," said Polly; "Charles Herbert was telling us a funny story about her, one day that he met Mrs. Somers there."

"Good! The Directory will instruct you where to find her; and she must be a proper person. . . . It is scarce for me to give advice in affairs so far beyond a gentleman's province. The stage is a law to itself; but, for private life, I should cite our Shakspeare's great rule, Mademoiselle—"Rich, but not gaudy." . . . Safely may all this be left to my charming pupil's native good taste."

"Really, papa, I am glad that mamma is a hundred and fifty miles off," said Miss Polly, pertly; and the proud heart of Violet swelled with the sense of insult, and her eyes first flashed, and then filled with tears, which pride kept in their lucid fountains.

"Bad taste, Miss Cryppes," said the Professor, sternly, while his angry thought was,

"There is a grain of coarseness in that woman's children, which, with all my pains, is enough of itself to mar their fortunes in respectable life."

"Whatever Mademoiselle may want, I am sure I want every thing," said Polly; "ribands, flowers, shoes, gloves, a fan, and a bonnet monstrously!"

Violet was conscious of her own more pressing wants; and also of a circumstance which the Professor, in the exigencies of his more important affairs, had perhaps forgotten, namely, that the funds had been placed in his hands which were to supply them. Her mourning was becoming very shabby, she was afraid; and on her good original supply of linen, the Misses Cripps had made unconscionable inroads. Petticoats were required for Emma, who was growing so fast, and night-things for Susan; and Miss Polly particularly admired Violet's French handkerchiefs and silk stockings; while her notable mamma declared that any thing above two or three changes was utter nonsense for a girl, and Mademoiselle could have new things, fashionably made, as she needed them; yet, how could Violet now hint to her master, that she required some of her own money to make up for the plunder she had undergone?

There is certainly some national instinct which renders it next to impossible for English people to speak about money with that frankness and directness with which they can discuss any other simple matter of business. Though all the world knows that obtaining the payment of debts, "getting in one's own," is often the subject nearest the heart, it is not to be approached, save with Chinese etiquette, vast circumlocution, and positive insincerity—"Oh, no matter about that; why mind such a trifle? it will all be in very good time; pray, don't mention it," &c. &c. Violet said nothing of this sort! but she was so far under the common English influence, that when she wished to ask for a few sovereigns of her own money, she blushed and hesitated, and began to stammer out what she could not express, when the quick tact of the Professor divined the exact nature of the case. The note-case was again in instant requisition, and the face of Violet was covered with deeper blushes, while she half feared that she might be taking her generous master at disadvantage, in robbing him all at once of so very much money, although, no doubt, it was her own, and she required at least a part of it.

"Indeed, sir, you give me far more than enough. Twenty-five pounds a-year was, I think, my allowance for clothes; a very great deal too; more, I am sure, than I ever ought to spend upon myself, alone. Pray——"

The Professor politely doubled up the small lily hand upon the magic bit of paper—bowed on the hand, as if he meant to kiss it, with a manner between paternal tenderness, and old-fashioned gallantry, whispering—

"Be prudent, but not shabby. Show me young ladies who will not disgrace the Opera circle one of those nights. Take good care of Mademoiselle, Miss Cryppes, and see that she is handsomely dressed. My idea is black satin—we'll see whether a few appropriate ornaments may not be found to relieve it."

The Professor, kissing his hand, hurried away on a thousand engagements, while his daughter burst into a fit of ironical laughter at the dismal looks with which Violet regarded the note.

"You don't suppose it is forged, Mademoiselle, or that it will turn into slates or ashes, like the devil's wages? If ever I heard of a young lady distressed by having too much money to buy clothes before! But do get your bonnet, if you mean to carry the Professor's generous designs into effect. . . . Perhaps you mean to stay in rather, lest any *friend* should call. Charles Herbert did seem curious yesterday about our plans."

"You ought not—it is unkind, Miss Cripps—to put such interpretations on trifles; of what consequence can Mr. Herbert's calling or not calling be to me? . . . I meant to go out whether you went or not, to make a few trifling purchases."

Violet having first deposited the Professor's money in her little desk, to be all, or nearly all, restored to him, took her way with Miss Cripps, attended by Mike Twig.

The kindness with which Violet sometimes looked at, and, at others, interposed to save this provincial importation from a round rating, for his provoking and incorrigible stupidity, had touched Mike's heart; and rendered him, to her at least, a most devoted squire; but London sights had, at the same time, turned his head; and, long before they had reached their destination, Mike and the young ladies had parted company. Early as it was, the streets were somewhat full of loungers, who gave themselves full liberty of staring at the pedestrian damsels.

"If you wished to avoid Charles Herbert,

you had better have stayed at home, Mademoiselle," cried Miss Polly, as they defiled into St. James' Street. "There he is. A handsome man enough, certainly, at a distance;—there, with an officer—a guardsman, I dare say—no; the colonel, though, who honoured me with such a broad stare yesterday. I fancy he will know me again, that gentleman. How you drag one, Violet,—that's not the shop we want."

Mr. Herbert bowed as he advanced; seemed for an instant to hesitate; and then moved, as if to pass on with his military friend, whom Violet fancied the most bold, disagreeable-looking Ogre she had ever seen. Miss Cryppes was disposed for farther parley.

"Sure you were created for the express benefit of forlorn damsels, Mr. Herbert! . . . Here we are again completely wrecked. That gaping booby, our country servant, whom we were silly enough to bring out instead of Eustache," (the last-named gentleman a mystery to Violet,) "has contrived to lose sight of us in staring about him."

"Can I be of any use," said Herbert, looking earnestly at Violet, to whose side he unconsciously passed; while his friend, seeing nothing in the account of the other lady particularly to alarm him with ideas of intrusion, wheeled round also, and mounted guard on the left flank. Whatever might be the cause, Violet was seriously distressed. She stopt short.

"There is not the smallest need for your turning back, Mr. Herbert," she said, for once speaking for her party. "I noted every turning. Pray, do resume your walk. We can get a coach at the next stand; we are merely about some small shopping."

Mr. Herbert was too well-bred to press his services where they were so evidently distressing. He lifted his hat respectfully, almost deferentially, and took his friend's arm, as if to turn him also; when, all at once, with a little girlish start of alarm, Violet shrunk back at the apparition of Jack Cripps!

Jack, fortunately, did not notice even his sister, so deeply was he engaged in watching a lady on the opposite side of the street, ere he dived into a cross lane. Miss Cripps looked back, and nodded gaily to Violet at Jack's absence of mind and gallant occupation; and the gentlemen tacitly resumed their former positions—the Colonel and his companion stepping out to give way to the passers by. It was not difficult to keep Miss Cripps in play in a scene like this. Charles

Herbert was less fortunate with his lady. He tried several topics before he hit upon Mistress Marion Linton.

"The old lady is a warm admirer of yours, Miss Hamilton. She is, in her own way—and a very good way it is—a noble-spirited and highly-estimable person. With all her worldly sagacity and shrewdness, there is a spice of romance about her too."

"Indeed!" said Violet, smiling, "'Like is an ill mark,' as she was wont to say to me long since."

"I don't know how my mother, with whom she is a favourite, obtained the delicate confidence, but that hard-featured, cross, old woman was a lover once, and beloved; and 'he she loved proved false,' and sought a richer bride than poor Marion; though I have heard her boast, with not the mildest Christian charity—'I could now buy out their beggarly generation—ay, twice ower!' Between the affront and the disappointment, the spirited young woman left her native place, and travelled on foot to London, without a single friend before her. It was long believed that she had taken the lover's leap, over some of the *lincs* of her valley, till she finally emerged a woman of property, and still a spinster, who has had offers, as I have occasion to know."

Violet made no reply.

"Is it not strange, Miss Hamilton, to fancy that the same emotions which have thrilled the heart of the noble, the young, the beautiful, and the refined, should linger in the memory of that poor old body?"

"And you laugh at her?"

"On my soul, no!" replied the young man, with earnestness. "There are true loves which appear abundantly ludicrous: but Mrs. Marion's smouldering flame is not one of those.—But all this, remember, is a dead secret, which, I am sure, you will not betray."

Violet smiled—"You may rely upon my discretion."

They walked on for a minute or two in silence, ere Herbert, with some hesitation, remarked—

"The public business of your profession seemed distasteful to you, madam. You must pardon me for having played the eaves-dropper on the night of Cripps' concert; indeed, I could not well avoid hearing what you said to Mrs. Somers Stocks, although it had not been so peculiarly interesting to me. May I now inquire if your opinions have undergone any change?"

Violet was about to reply, when the same apparition of Jack Cripps, who again suddenly emerged before them, made her once more recoil. Jack was this morning more the exaggeration of low, and even dirty dandyism than ever. A pink check shirt, which was decorated with some glittering fixtures, although, apparently, it had not called on the washerwoman for some days, was a new feature in his morning toilet; and he looked, altogether, like a rake who had not been in bed. The involuntary backward movement of Violet, and her almost ludicrous horror of the recognition, were not lost upon Herbert, who now first respectfully offered his arm, which was silently and gratefully accepted; while the Colonel, also apparently afraid of Jack, at once recollected an engagement. Miss Cripps lost not a moment in introducing to Herbert—

"Mr. Quintin Cryppes—my brother the barrister."

And Jack salaamed his "friend, Charles Herbert," whom, to say truth, he had known by sight for some months; since Burke Barker had pointed him out one day entering Brookes'.

"You were asking about a cake-shop, Miss Cryppes," said Herbert, anxious to lead Violet into the retirement she seemed to desire, and also to escape himself. "This is one Mrs. Herbert uses. The good, civil lady who keeps it was the housekeeper of a friend of ours."

"Most happy to patronize any protégée of Mrs. Herbert. Pray, Mademoiselle, remind me of this—we are just looking out for all sorts of tradespeople."

Herbert led the way, and the party entered the confectioner's, and chatted, and ate; Jack, in particular, playing, in both sorts, a swingeing jaw.

"Ta'rnation clever chaps those Yankees, with their mint juleps and cock-tails," said Jack. "Here, in London, it is ever munch, munch. The French themselves like a taste of summat *chassé*. A sip of cherry-bounce, now, ladies, let me recommend; or —"

"Fie for shame, Quintin," interrupted Miss Cripps, laughing. "Quintin is the oddest harum-scarum creature, Mr. Herbert; but, indeed, you must not mind him."

"I sha'n't, ma'am," said Herbert, drily.

"Papa says it is excess, an absolute overflow of imagination, which makes Jack so droll and playful. . . . Oh! here is the Highland woman again, Gabrielle. I am

surprised you don't wear a *plad* petticoat, or a boddice, Missis What-is-your-name? I hope you have got the house in high order for our reception to-night. Mamma is very particular about domestic matters, I assure you—*very*."

It was, indeed, Mrs. Marion; who first stared with some surprise and sternness, gradually relaxing as Violet came eagerly forward.

"I am so happy to have met you again," she said. "Yesterday, I had not sufficient presence of mind to arrange about another meeting, and I feared it might be long ere I should see you again."

"It can matter little meeting an auld stoure earlin like me, Miss Vilet, while sae mony braw young gallants are fluttering about ye." And the speaker scowled on the preposterous dandy, her strongly-marked features varying in their expression from contemptuous scorn to ludicrous contempt. Violet reddened, and appeared disconcerted by these free remarks; and Marion added in a kindlier tone:—"But I am happy, at any rate, to see your father's bairn; and, I dare say, you may be pleased to see me too—ye may ha'e newer, fairer-fashioned friends, but ye are no likely to ha'e mony truer to ye than his were."

"Alas! I have none other, and none that I can so dearly prize."

They talked apart, in a low voice, and in Gaelic, as Miss Cripps opined; she being one of many aware of no distinction between the Scotch and the Erse languages.

While the brother and sister were again ardently engaged in the business of eating, with interludes of laughter and talk, Jack, dragging hither and thither his elf-locks, and curling his mustachios with the tip of his little finger, and Polly setting her bonnet to a smarter or more *degagee* curve, Herbert saw a letter which he believed was the same that he had, two days before, picked up and restored to Miss Hamilton, slided, after some earnest whispering and demur on the part of the receiver, into the hand of the old woman, who said,—

"If it must be so, far better that I seek out the young ne'er-do-weel in these sort of waff houffs, than you, hinny. . . . But when am I to see ye? Ye wouldna like me to come to you, ye say, as we couldna have a free crack before strangers. Now, then, can ye come to me? There's the Sabbath. Surely ye dinna play your music on the Lord's Day, Miss Vilet? and, oh, my dear young leddy, ye are surely no sae far left as

to bring shame on your country and your name by turning a singing play-actor?"

Violet, a pang at her heart, made a feeble effort to smile, and replied,—

"I hope I will never do any thing that you would disapprove."

"In proof of the young lady's docility, try if she will obey you by taking my mother's carriage home. I see it returning from setting her down at the Earl of Tarbert's new place. Here it comes;" and Herbert telegraphed the footman. "It threatens rain, too."

"I see no sign of wet, Mr. Charles; but if Miss Vilet and you agree about it, her bit weight can do little seathe to the coach."

Violet would have declined the courteous offer; but the earnest whisper of Herbert made her little heart throb.

"I cannot endure," he said, "to see you in company with that hirsute monster:—it is intolerable—it is degrading; and it is impossible to get rid of him. Do, pray, oblige me by accepting, with Miss Cripps, of the carriage."

The soft moist eyes were gratefully raised in thanks and sweet consent.

"I wish I had that head between my knees, and a pair of gude het tings," said Mrs. Marion, grinning disdainfully at Jack, who was still playing antics before the looking-glass with his hair and mustachios.

"What does the old lady say, Mademoiselle, about hot tongs?" asked Jack, looking rather fierce.

"Telling how cleverly they singe a sheep's head in our country," grinned Marion, answering for herself, "when there is more hair than harns about it."

Jack's response was lost, for the carriage drew up; and the delighted Miss Cripps, with a bagful of cakes in her hand, scarce needed invitation or help to jump in.

"What an enchanting carriage," cried she, throwing herself languishingly and luxuriously back in the place of honour. "Claret-bodied; and the hammercloth so magnificent! These fellows drove off, though, before I could say good-bye to my brother. Charles Herbert had employed him to pay the cakes; but I fancied Charles coming with us?"

"How delicious an odour of flowers," said Violet, taking up a small volume lying open upon a cushion, which turned out to be "Rochefoucault's Maxims" in the original, which Violet had always thought a very disagreeable *wise* book.

"Our elegant future neighbour has been carrying flowers, I dare say, to the house she is getting ready for her friends the Tarberts."

"They are expected to dinner, Mistress Confectioner mentioned," said Polly; "but Mr. Charles Herbert is not to know. There is to be a surprise."

Violet was thinking what silly things surprises are, while Polly began vehemently kissing her hand, smiling, and bowing repeatedly to Mr. Benjamin, her W—— admirer, who, just dropped from a north country coach, was hurrying along, followed by a porter, as if looking out for an omnibus to transport him to the city. He seemed turned to stone by the sight of his beautiful flame in a splendid private carriage, with at least one tall footman behind it.

"So much for the native," said Polly, laughing aloud, conscious that, save to draw the attention of the young manufacturer to the equipage, she would not have noticed him in London in any shape. "Fancy, Gabrielle, the comfort of having such a carriage of our own after our *début*:—you, at least, who, papa swears, must succeed triumphantly in your peculiar line; though talents suited to a more general line of business may prove as useful in the long run. The voice is liable to so many accidents and chances."

"For which reason, it cannot be very wise to trust much to it. Don't, pray, Miss Cripps, talk any more about my coming out on the stage, or being a public singer: it never can be,—and it so vexes me."

"Nonsense, Mademoiselle; no use, you know, for airs when nobody is by—mind, I don't say Charles Herbert; I say *nobody*. But, of course, you would not wish to make your fortune, and keep your carriage—not you! nor to marry highly—perhaps a lord—either?"

"I do not care at all about it," said Violet, answering to the last count only. Miss Cripps laughed jeeringly, and drew the check-string; and, to the horror of Violet, in a decided manner, ordered the carriage "to Mrs. Herbert's milliner's."

The servant appeared disconcerted. By the direction of his eyes, he seemed to Violet to be consulting the looks of the coachman, an older man, and one of more trust with their lady. The telegraph had probably given an ambiguous response.

"Mrs. Herbert employs different persons in that capacity, ma'am," said the footman, mechanically touching his hat, though his manner was not very deferential.

"Madame Ramsden, I mean," persisted Polly; and it happened that this did not take the carriage an inch out of the direct way home.

"How you vex me, Maria," said Violet, repenting having accepted Herbert's courtesy. "We are taking a very great liberty, indeed, with a lady who is, and probably desires to remain, a total stranger to us; for any sake, since we are here, let us go home as fast as we can; or dismiss the carriage and walk home—that would be better."

"You *are* so tiresome, Mademoiselle," returned Polly. "A mighty obligation truly, to be set down by a returning empty carriage. Mrs. Herbert and her people have more sense, although her son had not pressed the thing upon us."

Violet refused to enter the house, (not shop of the milliner,) and her absence left a freer field, in which Miss Cripps, who, if a rustic, was scarce a novice, might display the manners and the Arts which melt a milliner's soul. If Polly was not altogether a novice, neither was Madame; who, herself, gave audience; the hour being still too early for the press of aristocratic or noble "clients," as she termed her customers. At one glance, the practised eye of Madame detected something wrong; and seeming, all the while, to obey the hests of her equivocal customer, she contrived to advance to a window of the saloon, which, in military language, commanded the door. The carriage which had last stopped, was, beyond a doubt, Mrs. Herbert's. Madame made a fresh *reconnaissance* of her customer, and with more impartial eyes. The new client might be a great provincial heiress, and not, after all, as she had suspected, a friend of the lady's maid and the footman on a lark; for Madame had known of such audacious proceedings in great families.

"I have seen such lovely things from your house, Madame, with my friend, Mrs. Richard Stocks of the Grove. You display exquisite taste! But French *artistes*!"

It might be inferred, from the tone in which this was said, that duly to paint the transcendent abilities of French milliners, and especially those of "Madame," exceeded even the eloquence of Miss Cripps.

Madame, who by the way, had been born above forty years before, and within the sound of Bow-Bell, was not to be done by a compliment to her works, conscious as she was of their superiority; but she perfectly remembered the pretty little bride, the

country friend of Mrs. Herbert, skipping about in her Temple of Fashion, and issuing her orders with the liberality of a Russian princess; and the fond old gentleman, chuckling with delight, as he hobbled after his animated latest purchase with his purse in his hand, calling out—"What's to pay, darling?—what's to pay, Cary?" Thus intimating his thorough understanding of the tacit conditions of the marriage contract.

The man was barbarous, horrible, vulgar; and Madame Ramsden generally liked "to book" her safe "clients," though the practice of the provincial banker had its recommendations. His lady soon enough came to book in spite of the injunctions of her husband. These reminiscences had their effect; and, though Polly Cripps had no rich old husband to follow her about crying "What's to pay, my angel?" yet, as Mrs. Herbert's friend, she was almost as well received as if she had. Her head swam in giddy exultation, though she did not wholly lose her self-possession.

A full half-hour elapsed; and Violet, overhearing the gorgeous coachman make some guttural observation to the footman about a draught round the corner, and his "hosses;" and being, in spite of herself, exposed to the gaze of the loungers, who uniformly turned their eyes from her face to the arms on the carriage, she could almost have jumped out and run away, when three very small human hybrids, each a finer gentleman than Jack Cripps, almost as fine indeed as the pretty fellows one sees in the perfumer's windows, and smelling overcomingly of musk, tripped out, holding each something jauntily between the forefinger and thumb, which, kneeling on the steps of the carriage, was presented, with bland whispers, to the divinity within. The lace, the flowers, the stockings—"finest quality," "latest styles"—had been ordered out "by the lady whom Madame had the honour of attending within." Violet had too much sweetness of nature to be capable of an incivility to any one; and the very existence of each of the dainty small gentlemen appeared to depend on her fiat touching the said lace, stockings, and flowers; and they whisked out and tripped in so nimbly, and brought more and more, and pleaded with such gentle insinuating pertinacity, as if for life from her hands, that the poor girl, abashed and confused, let them construe her wishes just as they pleased, and was even rejoiced to have the power of making the doll-like creatures so happy. And then Miss Cripps

appeared, enacting the majestic, and they drove off.

"As you would neither descend nor condescend, Mademoiselle, I ventured to order a few things for you, along with my own, after papa has been so generous to you, Gabrielle; and he detests so, as you know, to see the ladies of his family dowdy or ordinary. His respectability at this time depends not a little, let me tell you, upon the appearance of his family; and I am determined that my toilet shall be no reproach to him."

With all her simplicity, Violet had no doubt whatever about this. She mentioned that she had requested the little civil gentlemen to send in her own bill immediately; a proceeding which had not raised their ideas of her condition, though, on the whole, their report of her to Madame was favourable.

Professor Cryppes, as he ate the soup ordered for his refreshment, after a morning of hard work, had the felicity to see his pupil and his daughter descend from a handsome private carriage.

"There is blood in that girl," was his proud, paternal thought; and Polly, a stranger being present, explained the circumstance to her papa in "very good taste," as if it were the slightest and most natural thing in the world, to have taken advantage of Mrs. Herbert's carriage. The ambiguous stranger stood apart, and Violet and Miss Cripps soon comprehended that Monsieur Eustache Latude, though evidently a foreigner, was not a foreign visitor, but merely the intended *maitre d'hotel*, of whom the latter had already heard. This accomplished person, who told that he had nine times made the tour of Europe, with noblemen and gentlemen of distinction, and been three times in Turkey and Greece, twice at the Upper Cataracts of the Nile,—but not that he had once had an imminent chance of visiting the Australian colonies,—had been, like so many hundred-thousands of his countrymen, an officer in Napoleon's Guard.

"Fortune of war, sare! Mon He-ro—my Empereur, perish on de rock. I perjure my contree—I rone—I fly—I seek de ass-all-lhum in de free gin-ruse Brectain. I tro my —"

"Ah! well," interrupted the Professor, "no doubt, no doubt; but the people here can recommend you?"

"Sare," cried the Frenchman, whipping out a soiled pocketbook, and taking from thence sundry scraps of worn papers.

The Professor talked apart with his daughter.

“And you engage to procure to-night the proper assistants: a female cook, merely, and a housemaid, to begin with.”

There was no possible undertaking less than finishing the Thames Tunnel next day, for which Monsieur Eustache would not, at this moment, have readily promised. From the state of his wardrobe, it must have been a very long time since Napoleon's Guards were disbanded; and the prospect of even a female and English cook was better than having no connexion with any cook, which had too long been his case.

With a five-minutes' character from the principal waiter, glad to be rid of the talented Eustache, five pounds of ready cash for trifles, and large discretionary powers, Eustache, a man of parts, who knew “the town,” and indeed, all European capitals, as they are known by such characters, protested largely, and, for this day, kept his word. His cabriolet flew from the splendid door of the wine-merchant to the museums of the fish-monger, poulterer, and fruiterer; from the den of the coal-dealer to the baker and pastry-cook who had last opened, at the true and ultimate West End. His first orders were judiciously but boldly given, gladdening the heart of each tradesman with the hope of a good *new* country family. There are few ruminating animals so credulous as a young tradesman just commencing business in London, and amidst great competition. If suspicion occasionally half-opens one eye, influences not less potent oftener, for a time, seal both. In a few weeks, Professor Cryppes might have obtained unbounded credit, every dealer striving who should first have the honour of placing him on his books.

His final orders to M. Eustache, before going to the theatre with the ladies, were —

“See all the luggage properly conveyed to my house. Let the people here send their bill to the Regent's Park. Mademoiselle, your things are, I presume, in readiness? See, Monsieur, that the apartments are properly warmed:—the old Scotswoman has kept up fires.”—By the way, Marion never afterwards forgot to mention, as often as his name occurred between her and Violet, that “the scrubby schoolmaister body, had never said thanks to ye, nor shewed the colour of his coin, either for coals or kindlin.”

“Let the house be lighted up in proper time, and see that the piano is placed where I directed. And, look ye, keep the female

domestics out of sight, and hire in any extra male assistance that you may require. At small select parties I throw etiquette overboard, and study only the ease and pleasure of my friends; the supper and the wines; but, above all, their condition, their *condition*, remember, Monsieur, I leave to you.” At the *petit souper*, in a word, I am more French than English—always was, Mademoiselle.”

The national pride of Monsieur Eustache was touched. He bowed low, striking his right hand upon his left side, more, perhaps, in the style of the valet of the old regime than that of an officer of Napoleon's Guard, and as if overcome with the proud consciousness of high responsibilities; and describing with his right leg some segment of a circle of about two feet diameter, recovered the erect position with the prouder consciousness that the confidence of “Monsieur le Professeur” was not misplaced.

The latter was not altogether satisfied with his new domestic, but allowance was to be made for foreign manners.

“Your dress, of course, Monsieur,” he gently hinted. “You are to wear plain clothes.”

Whatever were the half-admitted thoughts of Violet, on witnessing the absurdities and incongruities around her, she tried to look at the bright side of things.

She especially regretted that she had not been able to explain to Herbert that her non-professional views were not changed, but confirmed; for had he not said that he could not endure to see her in an awkward or degrading position, and that her conversation with Mrs. Somers Stocks had deeply interested him?—That surely was very kind in a stranger. Then she had arranged for an interview with Mistress Marion on the first Sunday, and she might have the pleasure of sending some sort of intelligence of the lost one—perhaps consolatory intelligence—to poor Susan. With such pleasant thoughts she entered Covent Garden Theatre.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR heroine, if not much more excited and charmed on first entering a great theatre, than upon her entry into the metropolis—which dulness must have been owing to uncultivated taste and provincial education—was however agreeably entertained. Three acts passed; and then Mr. Burke Barker, having probably demolished the Whigs with greater ease than he had anti-

pated, entered the box with his friend Jack Cryppes, who, by candle-light, and in such a scene, was not nearly so overpowering as in broad day.

The ladies, in turn — “Mademoiselle Gabrielle, my gifted pupil,” and “Miss Cryppes, my eldest daughter,” were presented to the man of letters who could make or mar their fortunes. There were other “Orders” and other friends of Mr. Barker in the same box, and the Professor judiciously kept his pupil rather in the back-ground, separating her by the interposition of his own dapper figure, from the possibility of annoyance, till the box filled to overflow, when he cried — “Here, Mr. Barker;” and the young ladies were placed between them, — Jack Cryppes standing behind Violet, and sometimes even leaning on the back of her chair, however she might fidget, indulging in brilliant whispered sallies, and laughter far louder than his father approved.

“Ha, Barker, Virginia is playing at this box — palpably playing at you. Don’t you see that? Can you stand that appeal? Have you a human heart, my friend?”

“Hush!” said the critic, looking solemn, and he scratched the few pothooks on a card, on which the fate of Virginia depended. “Do you like her, Mademoiselle? Will she pass?” said he, languidly.

Violet was now fairly interested in the passion of the play. It might partly be the sympathies of youth and sex, — but the actress had also found the way to her heart, which had not before been touched.

“Pass, sir! — is she not a creature of beautiful powers? So pathetic a voice; so” — but Violet’s encomiums were suddenly brought to an awkward close: —

“Our friend Herbert — it really is, Mademoiselle, entering that box in the lower tier,” said Jack; “the third off — that’s his mother on the arm of the Earl of Tarbert. I saw the Tarberts arrive at the charming widow’s to-day; — grand-looking, aristocratic-nosed, old fellow — cut me out with pretty Mrs. Herbert — eh, Poll?”

“And who, pray, is the younger lady?” asked Polly. “She is, though foreign-looking, rather handsome, don’t you think, Mademoiselle?”

Miss Cripps levelled Barker’s glass at the box, whispering him — “The Herberts, you must know, are great friends of ours.” Polly, after all, found her unaided orbs more efficient than the glass.

“Lady Louisa Temple, the only child of

the old un’, but no fortune. Father and daughter were spoken of in the clubs to-day, in conjunction with the Herberts, as the *quadruple alliance*. Rather goodish, Barker, that, wasn’t it? Do for the *Bon Mot* column of the *Cerberus*, eh?”

Professor Cryppes was interested in the new arrivals.

“I had the honour of numbering Lady Laura — not Louisa — among my pupils, when she lived long ago, at Windsor with her grandmother. I shall wait upon and renew my acquaintance with her Ladyship. She ought to know something of music.”

“Gracious, papa! how old she must be, and not married yet,” cried Polly; and the heart of Violet, which had been sinking with the heavy sense of desolation which so often of late overcame her, experienced that relief, to the sick and weary, produced by a momentary change of feeling. “What is it all to me,” was her painful thought; and she tried to give her mind to the scene; though, ever and anon, her eyes involuntarily wandered to the box which so interested the rest of her party. The younger couple sat together and in the front; the young gentleman evidently giving his fair companion flying notices of “existing circumstances,” which seemed to entertain her, — for she smiled from time to time; and then her rather large, but finely-formed and very regular features, gained something of the softness wanted in their general expression.

An indifferent eye might have noted her companion as politely attentive, but too lively and disengaged to look like what Mrs. Herbert wished to see him — a lover. And this lady’s were not unheedful eyes. She could not see his face; but in his restless motions, the turn of the head, the involuntary fits of wandering, when his eyes were certainly turned to a particular box, and, above all, the sudden recall of the truant gaze, betrayed to Mrs. Herbert, by the quick turn of the head, there was something inexplicable. And then came to him the gracious bow and beaming smiles of Miss Cripps, irradiating the circle.

“Many pretty faces here to-night, Charles, though this is not the most brilliant place of beauty’s resort,” remarked the old peer, lounging in the back of the box, and raking the house, from pit to ceiling, with his glass.

“Very many, my Lord. Indeed, wherever Englishwomen are gathered together, the average of good looks is sure to be pretty equal.”

"Charles, Charles," remonstrated Mrs. Herbert, tapping him with her fan, "compare Almack's or the Drawing-Room with Greenwich Fair!"

"A good deal to be said for the latter place, ma'am," returned Herbert, who was not disposed, especially at this time, to flatter his stepmother's aristocratic prejudices.

"All authority is against you, Charles," continued the lady, smiling. "But I believe gentlemen don't allow, my Lord, that ladies are good judges of female beauty."

"I am," said Lady Laura. "Are you in search of pretty faces, papa? Look—but not just yet—to the box, the third off, above."

The Earl did not wait long.

"A handsome woman, indeed—fine eyes—good bust."

"You have not hit her, sir. I mean *my* beauty. She is not the lady standing up who bowed to Mrs. Herbert just now——"

"To me, love—not to me, I assure you," cried Mrs. Herbert, who would not for worlds have been suspected at this moment of knowing an unknown or a *parvenue*. "I have not the honour, I assure you."

"Charles must be the happy individual," said the Peer, still endeavouring to find out the beauty. "Of course, it cannot be an acquaintance of Laura's or mine. Here, nobody can recognise us after all these years."

"You have not hit her yet, papa—my retiring beauty. Mr. Herbert, you have. The *very* young girl, with the white camellia drooping over her temple among those light brown ringlets. This is true English beauty, Mrs. Herbert. One may look for it in vain over all Europe, save when it is exported. Feminine sweetness and delicacy, united with the indescribable expression of a high intelligence."

Charles Herbert looked admiringly on the fair speaker.

"A pretty, little, thin thing, Laura, who may grow into a fine woman," said the Peer, recommencing his examination of Polly Cripps, whose evident desire, and laborious efforts to attract and charm, amused him. A little pantomime was enacting in the "Order Box," which interested Herbert.

"That camellia is coming loose, Mademoiselle, and is so *limp*—every body is staring at it. This is what comes of wearing *natural* flowers, though at first they may look almost as pretty as French ones."

"Allow me," cried the alert Jack Cripps, bending over Violet's shoulder, and offering

to fix the fugitive flower among the silky tangles of her ringlets.

Herbert thrilled with rage, and felt the strongest desire to knock the distant offender down; while Violet, snatching the flower, made a gesture of haughty impatience, and turned away her head.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, how cruel," said the undaunted Jack, laughing aloud to carry off the rebuff of his gallantry; while Polly, directing a sly look to Mr. Burke Barker, maliciously warbled in *sotto voce*, two lines of a once admired song—

"Love's cherished gift, the rose he gave, is faded;
Love's blighted flower can never bloom again."

Above all this impertinence and annoyance rose the overpowering idea—"How childish, how silly, how very foolish, to have chosen this ornament! What must *he* think of me? and what does it signify what he thinks?" and Violet could have wept for relief, had but the mute sympathy of her solitary pillow been near.

"Hush!" said the critic; "the curtain rises."

Violet furtively thrust the faded flower into her waist-belt, and drew the drapery of her scarf over it. To throw it away, late so fresh and beautiful, like a worthless weed, to have it trampled under foot!—Ah, no! Its brightness and bloom were gone; but there was sweetness in it still. All eyes were now directed to the stage; and, though Violet had made a covenant with her eyes, she could not resist gazing for a few moments on Charles Herbert's mother. This lady's beauty was of a much more engaging character than the austere composure of the lofty Lady Laura: there were here repose, delicacy, grace, and soul-breathing, if somewhat languid expression; and, when Charles stooped to whisper to her, a smile so sweet—so heavenly! Pleasure, the deep pleasure, was felt by Violet in the distant contemplation of that lovely and placid countenance, which is experienced by a mind of sensibility from gazing upon one of Raphael's Madonnas. "I can never hope to be known to her," thought she, turning away her eyes, and sighing.

The distinguished party which had engaged the attention of the Crippses departed early; Violet steadily fixing her attention on the stage as they rose, even when Polly whispered audibly—

"Charles Herbert is taking farewell of us with his eyes."

The Professor remained to the last; making a tour of the boxes in which he recog-

nised the faces of old acquaintances, and in every direction enlarging the circle of his friends, and of his supper party.

When he reached home, he found that Monsieur Eustache, completely renovated in dress, had succeeded to admiration in every thing, save in getting the luggage home. The saucy people at the hotel had recommended daylight, and presented their long bill. The Professor was about to storm, but wisely restrained his anger, and stated, in the hearing of all the servants, that, while so many tricks were played about dressing-cases and desks, the caution was proper.

The supper party consisted mostly of theatrical persons, with only two ladies, no longer of tender age—a singer and an actress. The former appeared an old acquaintance of Mr. Cripps. Violet entreated to be allowed to retire, and Polly was indifferent to her movements; but the Professor would hear of no apology. He would not permit his pupil to mope herself to death in this way. It was proper that she should begin to mingle in the society which she was destined to adorn.

The night passed much more agreeably than Violet had anticipated. There was a prevalent tone of gaiety, which, if not cheerful good nature, formed an excellent substitute; and the wit, if as evanescent as the bubbles on the sparkling champagne, served the same good purpose, of temporary exhilaration. Violet had never in her whole life heard so many clever green-room anecdotes and stories, and droll, if somewhat silly comic songs. Repartees bounced and whizzed across the table faster than the champagne corks; and Mr. Burke Barker was finally prevailed upon to give his famous imitation of Macready, which the actress and the female singer, and all who had professional reputations to sustain, and benefits to look forward to, applauded most vehemently. Miss Cripps took the same cue.

Violet, who had from nature a quick perception of the ludicrous or incongruous, was especially diverted by her master, who, as the night waxed later, appeared like a man restored to his native element. His manners became swelling and theatrical. He filled to "ladies' eyes a round," and swore by his "honour," "egad," and "gadzooks," in a style which would have horrified the bumpkins of W—. Jack took the liberty of quizzing the governor; and Mike Twig, as principal aide-de-camp to the accomplished Monsieur Eustache, gave way to outrageous bursts of laughter at jokes which no footman's

ears had a right to hear, and drolleries which no footman's eyes had a right to note, and which drew upon him the unmitigated, if silent, wrath of his fuming master, and the burning glances of his young mistress; while they furnished some capital fresh ideas to the gentleman who did "the low comic parts." The latter good-humouredly sued for Mike's pardon; which application, being backed by the ladies, was at once successful.

Neither the M.P. nor Mr. Charles Herbert had yet appeared. The latter had, indeed, sent an apology. The unexpected arrival of friends at his mother's prevented him the pleasure, till a later hour than he had anticipated; and supper was over before Sir George Lees appeared, and banished much of the ease and gaiety of the party; for he brought with him no less a personage than a Count—a German one,—but still a Count, Count Rodolpho Zanderschloss, the eldest son of a Hungarian grandee, on his travels in England; principally with a view to improve his estates—more extensive than half Yorkshire, Sir George whispered his host—by the introduction of English husbandry, and the Merino breed of sheep. This sudden accession of brightness quite dazzled and also damped the party. The Professor, though in general a well-bred man, could scarcely contain himself; and Miss Cripps at once ceased the flirtation to which she had stimulated the saturnine journalist and critic, to gaze in mute admiration upon the Count.

Mr. Burke Barker began to ply Sir George with politics; and the comic actor, who looked doubly droll as he surveyed the Count with side-long glances, and Violet, who saw in him a nondescript monster, more ridiculous and more exaggerated than even Jack Cripps, were the only other members of the party who, in its altered circumstances, retained perfect self-possession. The Count Rodolpho certainly had the advantage of Jack Cripps in pre-eminent ugliness; besides, his bristly mustachios were now brindled by a copious powdering of the dark-coloured snuff which he socially dispensed from a gold box richly set with diamonds, surrounding the portrait of some bright lady love.

"Is he connected with the embassy—the Count? When did he arrive in London, Sir George? What a tremendously ugly fellow it is," said Mr. Burke Barker. "Any, the least chance, that he may be a Chevalier d'Industrie, after all?"

Sir George Lees regarded the speaker with a look of haughty surprise.

"My associates are not usually swindlers, Mr. Barker. I never saw the Count before to-night; but I have often heard of him in good society, and I know that he came to dine to-day with Lady Buzz, and in a Cabinet minister's carriage; and was selected by her Ladyship to do the honours of her table. There was some disappointment about his cabriolet, and he was seated in mine before it appeared. I chanced to mention this party, the Count's ears are athirst for music; I knew I might take the liberty with my friend Cripps—and behold!"

Mr. Barker beheld the Count Zanderschloss paying assiduous homage to the daughter of his host, the handsomest or most conspicuous woman present; and Miss Cripps, recovered from her first awe at talking to a live Count, with five Orders on his breast, rallied him on the portrait of the beautiful lady,—who, the agreeable Hungarian nobleman protested, with many laughing grimaces, was "mein tear sistere, Derese." He offered his arm to conduct the exulting charmer through the open folding-doors to the music room.

"Music, Count," said Polly, in the sentimental tone which she did not usually affect, "music is the universal language—now we shall understand each other."

Sir George Lees and Mr. Burke Barker had simultaneously offered an arm to conduct Violet, who honoured the editor of the *Cerberus*; and then the whole party, rising from table, moved on.

"You wont sing to-night, I suppose, Mademoiselle?" whispered Polly, while her father was engaged with the Count. "What would you advise me to?—German music, of course. What do you think of the Count? Such polished manners! Though his English is still but imperfect, it, somehow, does not seem awkward—which must be the effect of superior breeding."

"Perhaps," said Violet.

"Don't you think the Count has a strong resemblance to my brother Quintin, Mr. Barker?"

"As like to Monsieur Eustache," replied Barker, looking to that full-dressed and fully-employed functionary; "nor easy to say which is the uglier fellow."

"Jealous already," thought Polly, drawing off her gloves to play, while again the grimacing foreigner advanced, prepared to turn over the leaves of the music; and with many pretty airs Miss Cripps began—

"Have you been singing to-night, Mademoiselle?" asked Sir George Lees, advancing

to the corner where Violet sat, Mr. Barker standing rather sulky beside her.

"No, I have not."

"Ah, then, I am still in time—I congratulate myself."

"'Tis a pleasure I have not yet enjoyed," said Mr. Burke Barker. "I promise myself very great pleasure indeed, from hearing you, Mademoiselle."

"But I have," cried Jack Cripps, making a vivacious skip forward, and squatting himself cross-legged on a low stool at Violet's feet. "What care you for angel strains, Barker—you rugged Demo; you fierce Republican. His friends were wont to call him DANTON, Mademoiselle."

"A young man of superior abilities generally starts with Republicanism," observed Sir George, who did not wish to stand ill with the editor of the *Cerberus*.

"And ends with?" asked Jack, knowingly.

"Ends with those sound constitutional principles which naturally result from longer experience and a more matured judgment," said Sir George, as pompously as if he had been already in the House.

"Is he meditating raving already," thought Mr. Burke Barker, compressing his lips, and looking fixedly at the new Liberal M.P.

"Ay, ay, gentlemen," said Jack, in his own imitative and humorous style; "it will be all one a hundred years hence—that's my philosophy. 'Taste life's glad moments,' Mademoiselle—that's my precept; and none so glad as those which allow of the delight of listening to your syren strains."

And the undaunted Jack, placing his hand on his heart, squinted up into Violet's face with an air of impudent languishment, which, coolly contemptuous as she generally was of him, provoked her, and she coloured and rose. Mr. Burke Barker again offered his arm. Violet was meditating escape by the side door; but the music was still going on, and, to her rustic feelings, it seemed rude to withdraw till the piece concluded. She, therefore, suffered herself to be led into conversation with the *ci-devant* republican, whom she found, in a new and quieter scene and divested of airs of patronage, intelligent and gentlemanlike.

Jack again approached, without an idea that Mademoiselle could be otherwise than delighted with his pleasantries and compliments.

"I warn you off the premises, Mr. Cripps," said Barker, gaily; "Mademoiselle,

banishes you from her presence for the next half hour;" and Jack, affecting to be smitten to the earth by this severity, turned away in despair.

"By the way, is the family name Cryp-pes or Cripps, Mademoiselle? I had fancied the former."

"Really, it is more than I can tell you, sir; and, indeed, I hardly sometimes now know my own name. I had imagined no right of my own either to the name or honorary title which I bear in this family."—Mr. Burke Barker looked up with a quick glance of his sharp, eloquent, and penetrating eyes. "And now I must wish you good-night; the music is about over." Violet disappeared.

"Clear, this girl is neither a Cripps nor a Cryp-pes," thought Barker; and, as Miss Cripps was now promenading the room on the arm of the Count, on the happiest terms possible for so short an acquaintance; the singer and the Professor engaged in preliminary matters about the piano; Sir George in a flirtation with the actress, who was an old acquaintance, and the watchman calling three o'clock, the Journalist also stole away, revolving generous designs for the interesting and lovely *debutante*, who, as she seemed to understand her own position, could also probably appreciate his motives.

In this instance, at least, they were good-natured, and tolerably disinterested. Even from a *Prima Donna* Mr. Burke Barker had little to expect. At most, she could but give him a supper, now and then, where he might meet agreeable people, and be a pleasant acquaintance herself; but "that sort of gentry altogether—there was nothing *solid* to be expected from them." He half resolved to give up the entire departments of musical and theatrical criticism to his subaltern in the *Cerberus*, Jack Cripps, and stick to politics as the better line; but he, in the meanwhile, penned a few really judicious paragraphs for the general benefit of the Cripps family, in which he had a friend, as friends go in the world; and, in spite of the superior attractions of the Count, fancied he might yet find a mistress.

CHAPTER VII.

VIOLET felt some curiosity next morning to learn what judgment the terrible *Cerberus* had pronounced upon the performance which she had witnessed; and her perusal of the critique certainly raised her opinion of the discrimination, taste, and delicacy of the

writer. If Mr. Burke Barker displayed supercilious airs of patronage to "the poor players" in private society, he ventured upon no such absurdity in his journal. True, the actors here criticised were fixed stars; each, by inherent lustre, irradiating its own sphere. Yet, had they been lesser or unknown lights, there was nothing in the ordinary course of his critical journalism to discredit the opinion of the reflecting minority, that the periodical press, with all its political and moral imperfections, generally displays the greatest indulgence and leniency, even to obtrusive dullness, and the most kindly sympathy, with a vast deal of indulgent good-nature, to young or unfriended literary aspirants, actors, and artists; which the latter, in the unfledged state, often misconstrue, and rarely, if ever, appreciate aright. Let one only reflect upon the multitude of dull, stupid, or uncongenial books, trashy pictures, and indifferent theatrical performances with which a popular newspaper editor is bored or annoyed; and on which he is expected, as of right, to spend his time and patience, and his own and his reader's paper and print, not unfrequently, to reap the reward of being pronounced a superficial, shallow coxcomb, who never had painted a picture, nor written a book in his life; and who, moreover, must be art and part in the notorious conspiracy which exists among the newspapers and literary journals to crush rising merit in general, and extinguish the aggrieved individual's genius in particular;—and all this after the unhappy journalist has probably strained his conscience, and certainly outraged his taste, in bestowing the unsatisfying modicum of panegyric. There can be no question that journalists are the most long-suffering, good-natured, and worst-requited of the scribbling genus. The public, also, begin to guess that it is not altogether by instinct, or pure editorial sagacity, that journals divine, and announce to mankind, the important fact that "Miss *Syreninia Warblinia Quaver* is upon a visit at Grandeville Park, where, by her wit, her talents, and her beauty, she forms the charm of a brilliant and noble circle;" nor yet that Lady Basbleu's forthcoming novel is to eclipse all her Ladyship's former fictions, and every other lady's; or that Mrs. Lynx embarked last week in the *Great Western*, and that the Old World should keep a sharp look-out for some very astonishing revelations from the New World in the course of the next year. And all this "monsterring of nothings" is laid to the door

of the poor editor, who is, as likely, often annoyed by those momentous announcements; though being, as we aver, the best-natured, and least-thanked man in the world, how can he refuse a small favour so delicately, or haply so importunately, solicited.

"How very clever a man Mr. Burke Barker must be," said Violet, perusing, a second time, those

"Things often felt,
But ne'er so well expressed."

"And how gratifying to be the subject of such delicate praise, and to feel conscious that it is all deserved: a pleasure I anticipate speedily for you, Mademoiselle," added the Professor.

If Violet's little heart fluttered proudly for a moment, it was not more.

"Ah, sir, you forget that I was behind the scenes last night," she replied, smiling; "I am the little country mouse, and do not envy the grandeur and luxury of the town mice. Were it possible for me to achieve the feast, I should still say

"Give me again my hollow tree,
A crust of bread and liberty."

"We are but a few days in town; you have not even been at the Italian Opera yet. We shall discuss all this a month hence," returned the Professor.

The young ladies now found pleasant occupation. The orders given to Madame Ramsden, the milliner and merceress, had been diligently executed. The dresses were already made; for Madame sympathized in the pinch of ladies, just arrived from the country, without a thing to wear; and the wan or tea-coloured sprites who did her hests, had only to add one more vigil to the fifteen which had occurred within the last busy month.

"How beautiful! how exquisite! how nice!" was the frequent climax or anti-climax of Polly Cripps, as every fresh packet was undone by the female attendant, from Madame's house. Nor was Violet unmoved; her black satin dress fitted to perfection, and was so tastefully trimmed, that it did not look in the least too heavy for her delicate figure; and her bonnet was "quite a love," Polly said; and she exchanged with her, and then re-exchanged. This pleasant pastime was brought to an end by Madame's agent presenting, with great civility, the bill, which "the lady had, when giving her order, requested to be sent with the goods."

On seeing the sum total, Violet became blind and faint. £44, 16s. 10d.! Were those

spectral figures? And did she already owe so much money to a milliner? She, who had never had above five pounds at a time in her own possession before! The milliner's assistant eyed her observantly; and the attention of Miss Cripps being awakened, that clever damsel made a needful rally.

"Mademoiselle requires a few more things, which will be included in the same bill; you may go now, young woman."

"But stay," interrupted Violet; "the luggage is come from the hotel—I may pay a part at least; and, perhaps, Madame Ramsden would be so good, as the things are quite unsoiled——"

"Go, young woman," said Polly, decidedly, ringing hard at the bell. The milliner's assistant curtsied submissively, and moved off.

"Gracious, Gabrielle! how can you be so silly as to expose yourself and the family in this way to a milliner's apprentice!"

"Is it not fearful, Miss Cripps, for me, a young girl, to owe so very much money, which I cannot pay. Oh, those odious little mannikins, for it could not be you, Polly. And I am sure I never ordered half so much; but I will write to the lady, and send what money I have—that twenty pound note I got from Mr. Cripps yesterday; and, perhaps, she will take back the most of the things."

"Really, ma'am, one does not know what to make of you at times," rejoined Polly. "That you ordered those articles, there can be no doubt, and that Ramsden may have charged you unconscionably, is as likely; but to make a fool of yourself before her assistant, and disgrace my father; it is shameful, Mademoiselle, and not at all, let me tell you, what Professor Cryppes is entitled to expect from you."

Violet sat condemned, a conscious culprit, yet pitying herself.

"Don't think more of it," said Polly, more mildly. "I dare say I am twice deeper in Madame's books. But what does it signify—no doubt she will be paid some time."

This was slender consolation to Violet, who went from Polly's chamber to her own, loaded with her inauspicious finery, and resolved to abide by her purpose of attempting to return it. When she had fixed what she had best keep, or rather what the milliner might the most readily take back, she began to open her little desk, which, with her father's smallest military trunk, (now her wardrobe,) and her work-box, had just been brought from the hotel; not, however, before the exorbitant bill had been discharged, which left

Professor Cryppes a very poor man in ready cash, though he prudently swallowed his chagrin at the rudeness of the hotel-keeper, and graciously intimated that, so well pleased had he been, he would certainly recommend the house to his friends.

Violet opened her desk — the lock moved easily — every thing was in order — the few sheets of paper, the pens, the wax, and the various little treasures and memorials which she kept there; but the bank note so carefully placed in the safest compartment, — too surely it was gone! and the loss of thousands at another time could not have been more appalling to any poor heroine. Another and another search was made, — and too surely she was robbed, bankrupt! Such small and everyday events, which are of no account whatever in the estimation of half mankind, and quite below the dignity of romance, were excruciating trials to Violet. Shrinking from drawing suspicion upon the innocent, or upon any one, and almost feeling her loss as a crime, it cost Violet an effort of resolution before she could go down stairs to make it known, which she at last did with trembling and hesitation, as if it were wrong to hint at having been robbed. Professor Cryppes was startled. The luggage had lain all night at the hotel, and had been fetched a considerable way that morning by common porters; yet on none of those his suspicions rested; while on Monsieur Eustache, who was at this moment before him, nailing up something about a drapery in the back drawing-room, his eyes involuntarily fixed. Nature herself had legibly written *rogue* about the parouet beak and up-turned corners of the mouth of the late officer of Napoleon's Guards. Yet this was supposing rather sharp practice in a Major-Domo, hardly yet installed. And what was one poor twenty pounds, filched from a young woman, to the risk of detection, and the loss of character and place? The character was, perhaps, of no great sterling or marketable value; but place must be something to one who had apparently not been without the pressing need of it; or who wished for better opportunities of plundering.

"Are you quite sure you have examined your desk properly?" asked the Professor.

"Oh, for that," returned Violet, attempting to smile.

"Well, my dear, you must not mind it; it is a loss and a provocation: but I will not let you annoy yourself. What is a poor twenty pounds?"

This was frank and kind; yet Violet felt,

nevertheless, that a poor twenty pounds was just now very much to her. She would have told of her predicament with Madame, but this Miss Cripps evaded, by saying, with forced gaiety, "And we are both drowned in debt to the milliner, papa. I am not sure but Mademoiselle will, to-night, dream of bailiffs and the Fleet."

"The Professor laughed heartily ere he said—

"In the present circumstances of the family, with all the servants new, and the luggage having been transferred from one place to another, I deem it prudent to say nothing about this inexplicable loss; but it must be the last."—And, with this consolation, Violet was left to be entertained by Polly with anecdotes, with which her youth had been instructed by her father, of eminent singers, managers, literary characters, and Members of Parliament, who cut the best figures of any people about town, yet never possessed one shilling of their own, and always spent the most recklessly when they had not a farthing to spend, and were drowned in debt.

"They must be very wretched and low-minded people those, who willingly subject themselves to such mortification and mean misery, and only to maintain a false show that imposes on no one; although such deception were not in itself most contemptible."

"Virtuous indignation!" returned Polly, scoffingly; "I must say, Mademoiselle, that, for a *strict* young lady, you are remarkably free in the use of the phrase 'low-minded.' What do you mean by it?"

"The phrase is plain enough, I think," returned Violet; "though I was not aware that I used it so frequently; low-principled, low-thinking people might be as apt. You often yourself speak of low-lived people."

"To be sure I do—vulgar, mean people, that potter on in a paltry, peddling way, when they might rise, if they had spirit, and better themselves. But here comes Mr. Barker to act explanatory dictionary for us."

Mr. Barker had a gracious reception from both ladies; he planted himself, on this wet morning, at their work-table; and then there was music, and then lunch; and the Professor and Jack came in together, the former looking rather gloomy.

"You are quite right in your conjecture, Barker. My father may go whistle for that paltry place promised to Ned by Sir George

Lees. I am convinced he has given it to another already; the fellow was scarce civil even in lying to us this morning."

"Just like the man—like them all," replied Barker; "got all he can of you, and will be most grateful for favours to come. Charles Herbert, who is a generous, open-hearted fellow, while a minor, involved himself thousands deep to help that *friend*—ruined himself, in fact, for Sir George and one or two more of those scamps; and would have been utterly ruined had not his step-mother been a woman of uncommon generosity. Yet, I do not fancy that he likes his dependence on her altogether; yesterday, he was sounding me, in a roundabout way, about the probability of a man at his age beginning the study of law or medicine. The latter I declared the most eligible profession, as a man's blunders cannot so easily be detected there."

"Apropos, medicine was the favourite pursuit of my son Edmund, whom Sir George Lees has used so infamously."

Jack squinted tremendously at his papa before he rejoined—"Ah, Ned is half a doctor already: he pounded six months with Bolus. But I have another idea: that theatre the proprietors of the *Cerberus* were erecting—it won't do; but it is in a populous gin-drinking and psalm-singing neighbourhood, and I understand they speculate upon converting it into a tabernacle. Now, if Ned have a vocation—as he is a tolerable spouter—his bread is baked."

"Make a Methodist parson of my brother!" cried Polly, tossing her head disdainfully.

Pays well, Poll, let me tell you! And those sanctimonious fellows are almost sure to marry rich old girls; one, two, three of them in succession. I wish I had a vocation; but it won't suit."

Violet looked up with a feeling of horror; but the Professor put an end to what seemed to her the sacrilegious project.

"No son of mine shall descend to any such low, paltry profession," said he, solemnly, "to the eternal disgrace of his family. If ever I have a son in orders, it shall be in the Church, sir, the Church of England—the only church for a gentleman—and not among low-lived puritanical sectarians."

"Nay, father, you might have thanked me for the hint, any way. Suppose, then, as Ned did pound drugs for a few months, we make him a doctor? What say you, Barker?"

The profession of medicine requires the

study of years, which will scarce serve me at present for my son."

"Years! nonsense, papa. Barker will tell you better things. There are three lines: first, obstetrics, then dental surgery—a coining of money——"

"A dentist!" interrupted Polly, with contemptuous disgust. "Surely, Quintin, you forget yourself altogether."

"Sheer provincial ignorance, Poll, my darling. In London a successful dentist is a great man. But the town is overrun with them—that's the fact; so I vote for obstetrics—unless Ned could be a nerves doctor—go to some foreign watering place, and coddle and curry favour with some woman of quality, who will trumpet his praises, and make his fortune. He is a smooth-spoken, well-looking, imposing young fellow, my aforesaid brother Ned, Mr. Barker, who will learn to curry favour among the women. He were not papa's own son else." [Here the Professor smiled conceitedly, and shook his paternal head at his incorrigible elder born.] "A single season may float him; and I would rather prefer obstetrics;—the nerve line is uncertain—fine ladies are dem'd fickle and capricious, even to their doctor."

The plan was worth considering. The Professor was convinced that one literary gentleman was quite enough in the family; and a learned Profession looked well. "Dr. Edmund Cryppes, the celebrated accoucheur." It sounded well.

"With the aid of the *Cerberus*, and our connexion, we might, at worst, carry a city hospital lectureship for Mr. Edmund," said Barker; "and that is an opening."

"You are too good, sir," returned the Professor, bowing: "and if Edmund, with his present medical knowledge, matured by a winter at Edinburgh——"

"Paris, father, and a little judicious puffing," cried Jack; "Barker will tell you how. Ned must write in the foreign medical journals—that can be managed for him—and get a tail of capital letters to his name, an' open correspondence with the learned, like himself, abroad. His recommendations ought to do a great deal for Dr. Von Rutsch, or whatever it might be, at Stockholm, or Vienna,—and, no doubt, the *savans* will return their learned correspondent like kindness. It is all my eye, that sort of flip for flap. But I would try the women first; one fashionable petticoat is worth fifty thesis-makers to a young town physician."

"How you rattle on, Jack; why, Made-

moiselle, as usual, is believing you in earnest, I suppose," said the Professor, as Violet, with grave abstraction, sat apart, more deeply engaged with the idea of her overwhelming debts than any thing else, though a needle and a bit of womanly pretence for idleness were in her hands.

Once it occurred to her, and the idea brought relief, that she might take Mrs. Marion Linton into her counsels, and employ her to negotiate with the milliner; but though she believed the Scotchwoman to be both honest, shrewd, and kindly, her manners were gruff, or not such as invited the confidence of a young and sensitive girl. She now longed for the arrival of her friend Susan, to whom she could have partially opened her mind; but days and weeks passed on, and Professor Cryppes appeared to have forgotten that he had either a wife or children in a provincial town. His oblivion might have been forgiven, as, between business, pleasure, and finance, the Professor was occupied to distraction.

The first paragraph, which really told usefully on the fortunes of Mr. Cripps, ran nearly as follows:—

"We are authorized to state that the august mother of an illustrious Princess, in whom the dearest hopes of England repose, has engaged the celebrated composer, Professor Cryppes, (the instructor of Mademoiselle Gabrielle,) to give her Royal Highness finishing lessons in singing, for which purpose he goes three times a-week to Claremont. The Professor's admirable style is said to combine the energy of the German school with the purity and beauty of the Italian."

There was, as things go in the world, no great harm, perhaps, in this announcement; and if a few people knew it to be totally false, it was scarce worth any one's while to contradict it. In another week, the Professor's phaeton-cab and tall horse, (another purchase besides the fawn-coloured ponies,) might have been seen at several fashionable doors at the West End; and, before a month elapsed, ladies of title, fond and anxious mothers, were besieging his door, entreating that the names of their beautiful daughters might at least be placed on the Professor's list; and that, if not in the present, then in the following season, they might have the immense benefit of his instructions, or those of his pupil. But neither money nor love could prevail with the Professor to allow his accomplished pupil to give a few lessons to the Ladies D——, and the Honourable

Misses E——, and the rich Portland Place heiress, Miss F——, whose fortune was half a million at least. The Professor ever smiled, shook his head mysteriously, and was proof to influence, cajoling, and entreaty. Mademoiselle, the wonderful Mademoiselle, never sung save in his own house, and rarely to strangers even there. It was such a favour to be invited at all to his musical parties; and, after waiting a whole night, Mademoiselle—who was as capricious as the most spoiled and the highest of her tribe—might have headache, or cold, or hoarseness, or, as likely, airs.

It was, however, as the Professor began to have a guess, a thing quite possible to overdo this. In London, no mere lion or lioness can possibly draw out a very long existence:—their nights are numbered.

The spring was advancing, and sovereigns were still flowing in, in a golden tide; but they were at least as rapidly running out again; and Mademoiselle's original repugnance to make the desired effort was become stronger, if that were possible. Her health was suffering from anxiety, her bloom vanishing, and her mysterious reputation could not much longer be supported either by paragraphs in the *Cerberus* and other prints, or by the whispers of those thrice-fortunate *attachés* and young men of fashion who, frequenting the Professor's parties and *petits soupers*, spread abroad her fame.

"Cryppes' Musical Box," "Cryppes' Nest of Nightingales" in Regent's Park, became a kind of by-word among the minors in the Clubs; and the well-managed affectation of an exclusion which really excluded nobody, enhanced the value of the *entrée*. Sir George Lees had so far conquered the fear of the Professor attempting to borrow money from him, that he went almost every night. The great *Signiors* of the Opera-House—not yet opened for the season—had never absented themselves when they had no better engagements; and now the *Signoras* condescended. It was an exceedingly pleasant house. Many of the best men of the season were to be met there, and not too many ladies; and, if every thing was not quite *au fait*, ease, pleasure, and gaiety atoned for mere mechanical defect. As for the wonderful Mademoiselle, once seen, she was not so very formidable. It was the opinion of the professional people that she never would appear on the stage at all, and, most certainly, not succeed if she did. She wanted "nerve."

One of the most regular visitors, at this

time, was the Professor's friend and security, Mr. Charles Herbert, who had a general invitation, both for the two Public nights of each week and the Family night. Ever chiding his own irresolution, Charles felt, when the hour came, unable to stay away. Violet did not always appear ; and sometimes, when she did, she looked perfectly wretched, as if she had been weeping, or as if anger or violence had been employed to force her upon an uncongenial scene.

The kindling glances, the flush of innocent pleasure with which Herbert was welcomed by her, when appearing unexpectedly, now spoke even less plainly than the shy timidity with which, at other times, she avoided his approach ;—spoke plainly to all save to him, whom love had taught fear and reverence.

After her arrival in London, Herbert had often joined the little quiet parties which the Professor made to show his pupil and his daughter the most celebrated places in the neighbourhood ; and on the day at Richmond, and the other at Windsor, and a third at Hampton Court, when Mr. Burke Barker was giving his attentions to Miss Cripps—with whom he was more in love than the editor of the *Cerberus* supposed it possible he ever could be again with any woman—Violet fell, as if by a natural arrangement, to the care of Herbert. These days had been the happiest of his whole life ; and their memory was fondly dwelt upon ; for now the presence of her who had made them blest, was often more painful than her absence, from the equivocal circle by which she was surrounded. There was, however, more to excite the disgust of Herbert than to alarm his jealousy. Count Zanderschloss was evidently more odious to Violet than was Jack Cripps. Russians, Bavarians, and Neapolitans, *attachés* of all nations, seemed alike indifferent to her, where they were not absolutely disagreeable ; though none of these foreigners were so disagreeable as Sir George Lees and Colonel Rivers, whom she would have avoided by taking refuge in a quadrille with Jack himself. Mr. Burke Barker was the only individual with whom she cared to converse ; and he, whatever else he might be, was well educated and literary, and the evident admirer of Miss Cripps.

The coincidence in opinion and sentiment between Charles Herbert and herself, at this time, often struck Violet as almost miraculous. Their minds—their young, fresh, and loving hearts—were as instruments attuned ; and, with bewitching simplicity, Violet would

sometimes be surprised into the involuntary expression of her astonishment at Herbert saying the very thing she had been thinking ; and that their walks, readings, or conversations, suggested the same images, sentiments, and ideas. In these harmonious sentiments Herbert had often at first associated his mother, saying—"You are after my mother's own heart, Violet ;" or, "This is exactly the opinion of my mother ;" and, in such moments, the bosom of the orphan girl dilated with pride and happiness ; but, latterly, Herbert avoided mentioning his mother, who had declined the rather obtrusive advances of her neighbour, Miss Cripps. Once or twice Violet had met Mrs. Herbert walking near her own residence. The lady at first gazed fixedly at her ; and once blushing deeply, Violet curtsied by an involuntary motion, and the lady had not returned even the slightest token of recognition. Violet, indeed, felt that she had no right to expect this civility, though the incident covered her with deeper confusion, and imparted a sense of affront ; and the dim hope that she might be made known to one whom, at humble distance, she admired, vanished, and left in its place mortification and shame, and many painful thoughts. The son sought her society, but the mother whom he adored avoided her.

Professor Cripps, as we have noticed, in the excitement, bustle, and anxiety of his new life, seemed entirely to forget that he had a wife in the country ; and his daughter, oscillating between vanity in the attentions of Count Rodolpho Zanderschloss, and a few more of her father's gay and fashionable visitors, and pride in the conquest of the "talented Journalist," shared in this temporary oblivion of distant domestic ties, and at last came to say—"I dare say, on the whole, papa, it is more prudent for mamma and the rest to remain where they are for a while, save Edmund ; they could not, in the meanwhile, do us any good here, and London is so horribly expensive to people who attempt any kind of style, as we *must* do." But not so thought Violet, who longed for the presence of even the uncongenial, hard, and acrid matron, to give some appearance of respectability to the establishment, and to introduce the order and economy which, she feared, were sadly wanted in the regulation of the household ; and not so thought the indignant and neglected wife and mother herself, who, one fine day, when the family were assembled at lunch, more to the surprise than the joy of her husband and daughter, arrived in a

hackney-coach, loaded and stuffed, outside and in, with all manner of boxes and bundles, much like a stroller's van; to the eternal disgrace of the Professor's elegant doorway, and the endless amusement of the ladies'-maids and footmen in the neighbourhood, those of Mrs. Herbert included. From Jack alone his mother's reception was sincerely cordial.

"This is, indeed, an unexpected pleasure," said the Professor, embracing his travel-stained lady, whose natural temper a cold and fatiguing night journey had not improved.

"Soh, Cripps!—You have got every thing vastly fine about you here. A merry world, if at last, sir," observed Mrs. Cripps, untying the strings of her bonnet, to give herself air or vent.

"O mother, such nonsense," said Polly, advancing to assist her mother. "You don't observe Mademoiselle. . . . My father is in the fair way of making a handsome fortune. Your ideas must expand, mamma—indeed they must. We are in a new world here."

Mrs. Cripps nodded to Violet, and gazed on Jack, yet without those symptoms of gratified maternal pride which might have been expected.

"What refreshment will you take, mother? We have just had lunch, and don't dine till eight, when papa's business engagements are over."

"Dine at eight!—very pretty!—two dinners in one day. I fancy it was about high time I was looking after you. Finé management, truly!—and company almost every night. . . . But I'll take any thing—a bit of cold meat and a glass of porter. . . . And so that palavering fellow, Sir George, has done nothing for you, Cripps,—nothing but eat your ham and chicken, and drink your wine, and fancy you highly honoured all the while. It won't do, sir. It won't do, I can tell you. You are on the wrong scent:—and Edmund kept back; that is one of my particular errands to London."

"Let us give this hour to pleasure, my life," said the Professor, with affected vivacity. "We discard business for this day. I have taken a line, my dear, and all is in train for Edmund; we have a plan—so hang Sir George and his paltry places. Welcome to Regent's Park, Mrs. Cripps."

The Professor required the renovating glass of Madeira, which he filled up as Mike Twig entered to announce that the hackney coach-

man waited for his fare—seven shillings and sixpence; and hoped, as the parcels were so numerous, the lady would remember him.

"Monsieur Eustache will settle it," said the Professor, frowning; "those trifles are his department."

"Seven and sixpence!" exclaimed Mrs. Cripps. "The rascal has not brought me a mile and a half—pretty extortion, indeed! Remember him!—yes, I'll remember him! He ought to be horse-whipped."

"Mounsheer ha'n't got no money," put in Mike, drily, in the first pause, "Mounsheer had none to give the milkman, yesterday; and the coal ain't sent in, becuz—"

"Hold your impertinent tongue, fellow," interrupted the angry Professor. "Miss Cripps, have you any small change?—these coachmen never have a rap of change about them, and a sovereign is scarce safe in their fingers. Monsieur, who is my cash-keeper for small matters, is run out also it seems. In the Regent's Park one ought to keep a stock of silver."

Miss Cripps rather feared she had not as much, expressing herself with embarrassment; while Jack for himself gaily cried—

"Not a tester, papa mine, to keep the devil from dancing a hornpipe in my pocket. Indeed I have given up carrying a purse—'tis a low and an ungentlemanly practice, and only exposes one to being spunged. Oh, Mademoiselle! I see you are of the old *regime*," he continued, as Violet, blushing and hesitating, offered her last half sovereign to Polly, trying to affect an air of indifference, and, like other desperate debtors, thinking "what difference does it make," though fully aware, from the many little circumstances, forced upon her notice during the last month, that her own bit of gold was to-day probably the only gold coin under that splendid roof, or around a board loaded with expensive delicacies for the plain noon-day refreshment. The Professor now hurriedly rose. His cab was waiting—and waiting also were the Ladies V—, and the Ladies W—, and the Hon. Misses Z— for their weekly lesson.

"Have something nice for dinner, Polly, to welcome Mrs. Cripps to town. Adieu, ladies. Perhaps some friend may drop in to dinner with me."

Mrs. Cripps, on Polly's prompting, rose to see her lord drive off; a little natural vanity or conjugal exultation neutralizing her previous acerbity.

The family had been going a-head at a furious rate, while the prerogative of its liege lady lay in abeyance; but lunch fairly over, she lost no time in entering upon her onerous duties, in which she showed herself a woman of action, and one determined to assert her rights, from the cellar to the attic, over the household, the amazed Monsieur Eustache included.

"*Quelle bête! Peste! — sacre!*" ejaculated Monsieur, as he attended her from place to place, giving but a lame account of his stewardship.

The preternatural exertions of Mrs. Cripps on this day did not in the least unfit her for making up long arrears with the delinquent Professor, as soon as they were left *tête-à-tête*, by Polly having followed Violet, to pour into some sympathetic bosom the interesting confidence that Mr. Burke Barker had proposed! The congratulations of Violet were warm and sincere; for Polly seemed so happy, and, for the time, so amiable, that it was impossible to withhold her sympathy; yet she wondered that a man so clever and accomplished should have admired Polly Cripps, handsome as she certainly was, and agreeable as she could seem. But, to ladies of all ages, it will, we fear, to the end of time, remain a wonder and a puzzle, how certain men can fancy certain women. And Polly was assuredly not sordid in her preference; for her W—— admirer, the manufacturer's son, was much richer than Barker; and on this Violet grounded a sincere compliment

"Oh, Mr. Benjie may or may not be rich: all will depend on his father and mother, and old Methodist aunts; and I know they hate me, and all of us, as much as I despise them. Barker has at least a thousand a-year, and very great prospects, if *our* party get it; or whether they do or not, they cannot want him. He is going down to an election next week—if I let him—where he will be every thing."

"A thousand a-year is a handsome income."

"It will do for a beginning. If a clever man like Barker, in London, really love a woman, he can, somehow, always contrive to maintain her as becomes her station. My father has always said that. No doubt I might do better; and, even as an actress, gain a larger income; but, no matter—I have accepted dear Barker. My mother may not be satisfied; but all the rest of the family think that she ought; and I am of age, and may please myself. I wish Charles

Herbert had my spirit, Gabrielle; but he has not, and most luckily for you; for any connexion of the kind would be utter ruin to your professional prospects—you that may be rich and famous, and marry much higher than any thing that proud Mrs. Herbert's son can offer you. What an insolent, supercilious woman that is!"

"How can you talk so, Miss Cripps. Why should Mr. Herbert's name be associated with mine? Though for me, certainly, Mrs. Herbert may marry her son to any one she pleases; yet that gentle being surely looks any thing rather than insolent or supercilious."

"Well, my dear; but don't cry. I am glad to see you show so much proper spirit. Nor is it altogether right to have Charles dangle so much about us, now that I am known to be engaged. I must speak to papa about that."

"Any thing you like," said Violet, hardly able to refrain from tears. "Only I would much rather nothing whatever were said on the subject. Mr. Herbert has been very civil to us; but for particular attentions—oh, no, no—for heaven's sake, do not expose me to the ridicule of having imagined"—She could get no farther.

"Well, Gabrielle, never mind him," replied Polly, too much wrapt up in her own good fortune to heed the distress of her companion. "Be a singer in high reputation, and you will bring Herbert to your feet. Good-bye, dear. How strange it is to be a bride, Gabrielle, or about to be one. I feel like a winged creature."

While this was passing, and while Violet sought her little French bed, with feelings any thing but joyous and spousal, Mr. and Mrs. Cripps were holding, below, not the most amicable of family councils. The lady was full of complaints and reproaches; and the burden of every oration was—"Where is all this to end?" and Mrs. Cripps threw herself about on the damask sofa, making its joints creak in a way that would have horrified its refined owner.

"They wish to get you out of this trumpery house already—and the sooner the better. Don't fancy that I am not aware of your goings on, Mr. Cripps. . . . Polly, at least, I fancied, would have played her cards better, when I gained the point, with no small trouble, of Mr. Benjamin carrying up letters to her; and I'm certain, the smallest management would have made him renew his addresses, when out of the reach of these old, greedy wretches. But I suppose your

fine doings here frightened him, as they must any sensible man. You are the talk of all W——."

"D—n W——," returned the Professor, who could not plead guiltless to Shuffleton's attorney having impertinently intimated that the house would be required, at farthest, immediately after Easter, and who was conscious that many "trifles," as he called long bills, were already pressing upon him; but was it like a woman of sense — was it like a wife, to reproach the man who had done and was doing such great things for his family, and who had made such way in society. "Come, *now*, my dear, be reasonable, good-humoured, like yourself—you know that all W—— and Mrs. Somers Stocks, on the back of it, is bursting with envy to hear of the way in which we have got forward."

Mrs. Cripps hoped this was true, and she was softened, yet she returned to the charge.

"But, Cripps, I see nothing solid—nothing *solid*, sir—such as our daughter's connexion with a man of a wealthy, if vulgar family, would have been: and as for that Mr. Burke Barker——"

"You have taken a prepossession against my friend, Barker, ma'am; your son Jack's best friend. There is a man worth cultivating. There is no limit to his rise. He may grow into a second Sherdian!"

"Fiddle faddle, Cripps—Benjamin will have fifteen thousand pounds, every penny of it."

"And never get a step farther, take my word. Barker will, in all likelihood, get into Parliament—his talents——"

"And why not my son Jack, as well. Is he cleverer than our Jack? and I don't above half like Jack's appearance either, poor fellow. Mr. Benjamin would have settled a jointure of three hundred a-year on Polly, I dare say, if she had managed well."

"Miss Cripps gives me a son-in-law worth, to my family, ten hundred a-year, madam."

"Only he has not a sixpence, gambles, and is very extravagant, and drowned in debt."

"Poh, poh, Mrs. Cripps; you are not to judge, by vulgar rules, of a man like Barker. Polly likes him too—and the girl has a right to please herself——"

"Oh, surely, sir; please herself. Your son Edmund too, who, like an idiot as he is, has been sighing and dying for your wonderful pupil, for these five months, should also please himself, and propose for her, though Juliana Stocks, a girl of fortune, has been almost throwing herself at him."

"Foolish puppy! my pupil!" replied the Professor, contemptuously; the man of taste and genius, for the moment, triumphing over the father.

"I fancy my son is not good enough for her, Mr. Cripps," retorted the angry lady, who had not forgotten the pride of a mother. "Mademoiselle attired in the first fashion, and driving about in her carriage, must marry a man of family and fortune, sir; while your daughter throws herself away on a fellow who has not a penny save what he scribbles for. Upon my veracity, Mr. Cripps, you have managed finely with your family. That wretch, Susan, too, peaking and pining for a still lower fellow of that sort. I shall be glad to make her over to Mistress Stocks, as a governess, to keep her away from London,—for I make no doubt but that she will run off with the vagabond, if she once find him."

"What do you mean about my pupil madam, marrying a man of fortune, or any man whatever?"

"I mean Mr. Charles Herbert, sir. A man of large estate—no less. I mean that, after all the trouble and expense at which you have been with that girl's education, Mr. Cripps, you will never make a penny by her for your family."

She was, beyond doubt, a coarse-minded person, Mrs. Cripps: the Professor often felt that; which, however, only meant, after all, that she went directly to points, which he approached gingerly and by circumbendibus; partly, perhaps, to conciliate the feelings of others, and not a little to spare his own.

"My pupil is my pupil, ma'am; firmly articulated; under heavy penalties. . . . I know my ground, Mrs. Cripps—you have done well about that foolish Susan; but my daughter Maria, she is the pride of my family: in her prudence and tact I have the utmost confidence. If she has bestowed her affections on my friend Barker—I despise sordid considerations—I give my daughter with confidence and pleasure to my friend!"

Mrs. Cripps growled inarticulately.

"We have made up a little party to dine at Richmond to-morrow; I fear you will be too fatigued to join us; and my pupil has long requested liberty to spend a Sunday afternoon with an old Scotch nurse, who lives somewhere off the Strand. Mike Twig, or, if she prefers, one of the housemaids, may attend her, and fetch her home, or she may take a coach, at least back. She is not to hear of, nor be in any way annoyed with

this nonsense you tell of Edmund's passion; nor by any member of my family, ma'am." The Professor's tone became imperative. "You understand me, Mrs. Cripps. In this family, my pupil is a person of the utmost consequence."

Mrs. Cripps was a little subdued, and also too indignant to reply. Father, daughter, and pupil, together, were bearing too hard upon her; even her darling Jack was grieving and disappointing her. No doubt his air and demeanour had improved astonishingly; but he had not pushed his way one inch on what she called "solid ground." So reasoned Mrs. Cripps in the strength of provincial ideas and impressions; but they gradually gave way. She was now living in a fine house, however uncertain might be the tenure by which it was held; she was driven about by her son in her husband's handsome phaeton; her husband's income, reckoned by his own arithmetic and the W—— standard, seemed immense; handsome dresses had been ordered for her, but not at Madame Ramsden's; her children were to be brought to town immediately, and her eldest-daughter was a bride! Mrs. Cripps had been more or less than wife, mother, and woman, could her ill-humour or her reasonable fears have stood out against so many mollifying influences; and, besides, Mrs. Cripps had full domestic employment.

In the meanwhile, not the least satisfactory circumstance to her was, that the want of small change, so pressingly experienced on Saturday morning, had vanished before Tuesday noon, when Mr. Cripps put twenty sovereigns into his lady's hand, telling her that their tradespeople supplied every thing, and all the bills would be settled after Easter, or, at any rate, at Midsummer; this sum was for the postman and pocket-money—mere current nothings.

Before an hour had elapsed, Jack had coaxed his affectionate mother out of a fourth of her stock of ready money; but, on that same day, he did the family some service.

CHAPTER VIII.

"BARKER won't go it, governor; he is so engaged in courting Poll, and—between ourselves—raising the needful for his matrimony, that no good is to be got of him. I am aware of the emergency, and have made a glorious pen-and-ink splash myself. The rascally tradesmen cannot have the bowels

of Christians who will annoy you after this announcement, till your great venture is tried; and don't deserve a half farthing in the pound if they do. Hearken!" and Jack read:—

"Laud we the Gods! The genuine English Opera is about to be revived with more than the brilliancy of its pristine era. We understand that the celebrated Professor Cryppes, the Italianized-English composer—" ["No, hang it, I must score out Italianized; that don't chime," interjected Jack.]—"English composer, is engaged upon a serious opera, in which his pupil, Mademoiselle Gabrielle, of whom fame speaks wonders, is to sustain the part of the heroine. The subject of the opera is the beautiful Queen of Scots, and the enamoured and ambitious minstrel and cavalier, Chasteller, who expiated his daring gallantry upon the scaffold, not without suspicion of having created a very tender interest in the bosom of a Princess ever devoted to music and poetry. It is whispered that the pens of Mr. E. L. B. and T. M. are engaged upon the recitative and lyric parts of this splendid composition, which excites no small sensation in the fashionable as well as in the musical world. One superb scene was rehearsed last night at the Professor's residence, in the Regent's Park, before a distinguished party of foreign amateurs and the *élite* of the London musical world. At its close, the Princess di L—— clasped Mademoiselle in her arms, kissed her repeatedly, and, plucking the jewelled tiara from her own regal brows, placed it with her own hands among the fair tresses of the lovely syren who so charmingly personated the beautiful Queen. Mademoiselle is still so young, that, careful as her education has been, her teacher is of opinion that the full powers of her astonishing organ are not yet completely developed, any more than her artistic skill. Her face is extremely lovely, and her figure of the most sylph-like mould. Notwithstanding her foreign name, which is believed, for many reasons, to be assumed, her style is purely English. The new syren is understood to be sprung of a noble, but decayed French family, a younger branch of the house of Chatelrault, and ruined by the Revolution. Mademoiselle, though a strict Protestant, was educated in a convent, where her magnificent voice, remarkable, among the choir of nuns and pupils, for its purity, flexibility, and compass, was accidentally discovered by the manager of the Italian Opera of Paris, who chanced to be at Dieppe

with the Court. Save for her religious scruples, the young Catalani would have been adopted by the Duchess d'Angouleme, who settled a pension upon her. The late overthrow of the Bourbon dynasty again reduced this gifted creature and her family to the utmost distress; and, overcoming her strong repugnance to public life, she has nobly sacrificed her own feelings to the interests of the beloved family, of whom she now forms the sole dependence. The youthful syren——"

"Stay there, Jack," said the Professor, gravely. "Is not this a *lecture* too strong?"

"What, sir, my *chef-d'œuvre*? Too strong? not a bit of it: your own hints merely paraphrased by Barker. Come, order Eustache to fetch another bottle of claret, and we shall discuss the heads *seriatim*. My good papa, you *are* behind the age. Now, I flatter myself, I begin thoroughly to understand this sort of work: either how to tickle John Bull, or touch him gently on the *raw*. If you come it too hard, the monster gets fractious, and bolts, and perhaps kicks you down in his uproarious fits. Barker may be cleverer at using the stronger alkalis—he has the trick of it, and the nature too; but let me alone for applying the 'soft sawder.' But I'll call down Barker, who is billing with Polly up stairs, to convince you. . . . Fancy so acrid a chap as that in love—yet he is, as they call it.—Let alone, any sort of girl—if she but knows how to entangle a man's vanity—what a precious fool she may make of him. Poll's health, governor—you have a daughter, sir."

The Professor mused, and Jack went off, and re-appeared arm in arm with his friend, when the study was resumed.

"Is not this the very thing, Barker?" inquired Jack, when, with due emphasis, he had again read over his paragraph. "Is it not a *chevy-devy*, now? Let me alone, Professor, for knowing a thing or two. Depend on it, this is just the neat thing for you. Had your pupil been a dashing, dominant, foreign beauty, with a Parisian, or even a St. Petersburg fame, blazing before her path, the case would have been totally opposite. Ask Barker else. Then the leading events would have been, a flight to Ham-
burgh in the disguise of a courier, to escape the amorous persecution of some Grand Duke or Prince of the blood,—or haply the jealousy of the Empress. Every man should best understand his own trade. Leave puffing to me."

"I must say," replied Barker, "that this, as a preliminary announcement, is not far amiss, Jack. Honest John Bull—bless him for a dear, credulous, good-natured soul—rather enjoys being pleasantly duped. It does him good, if he does not find it out; and no great harm if he does: it makes his bile percolate. Next to being the most conceited of monsters in his extreme nationality—his English Clayism—the contradictory brute can either fancy nothing in art, of home production, at all tolerable, or else that it is the pink of all perfection. Then he loves, nay worships aristocracy, all the while affecting sturdy independence; and, as for beauty, no beauty can equal English beauty; in which the animal is for once right—by accident. But John is a soft-hearted monster at bottom, and, with all his airs of bravado, values the domestic affections, perhaps, above every thing else; though he makes the most ridiculous mistakes about what best promotes and cements them. No, no, sir," continued Barker, rapping the nails of his open hand smartly upon Jack's masterpiece; "this is the very thing. Great talent accidentally found out; but that should have been by yourself: sound Protestantism—extreme personal beauty—noble birth—decayed family—most painful sacrifice to filial and sisterly affection. Stay, suppose we add——" and Barker seized the pen and wrote at lightning speed—"It happens by a remarkable coincidence, [every body likes coincidences, which are often any thing but remarkable,] that, in personating the lovely Mary Stuart, the fair debutante claims descent from the Scottish house of Darnley through the noble house of Chateaufort."

"I—I am unlearned in the Scottish peerage," hesitated the Professor.

"Why, for that matter, so am I; but small genealogical knowledge will serve the turn here. One or two plodders may detect inaccuracy—["Hang them; they find blunders in every thing," interjected Jack]—but the busy millions and the idle thousands, alike will know nothing of it; and what people don't know, does them no ill. Yes, this will take, sir, and tell in two worlds. We will conquer America, sitting here in London! But remember, Cryppes, not in the *Cerberus* first; that would hurt the cause, our connexion being known; we can follow it hard up there." With this the sitting broke up.

Mr. Burke Barker, who was to set off by

the night-mail, on that electioneering business in a southern county, which promised so rich a harvest, and had come so pat, had still to kiss away the gems flowing in anticipation of a ten days' separation from the bright eyes of his tender bride. Yes! Polly was now a bride, and the marriage was to take place immediately after the election; which, whether it succeeded for the candidate or not, must succeed for Mr. Burke Barker. It seemed as if Heaven had been graciously pleased to call an old Earl to itself, at this particular juncture, and his son to the House of Peers, to speed the hymeneal bliss of Polly Cripps; for it was on the strength of the coming contest that Mr. Barker had proposed, not wholly uninfluenced by the delicate hints of the distressed damsel, that, now her mamma was arrived, she might be forced into the arms of that detestable rich manufacturer, hateful to her long before she had come to London, or felt any attachment—but now!—

With any plodding, matter-of-fact man, beyond the age of what the Scots call "calf-love," and not blindly in love, or burning in the hot stage, Miss Cripps would never have succeeded so easily, strange as this may appear, as with the acute, penetrating, and experienced Barker. Soured and perverted as his original mind was become on many points, he still possessed excitable imagination, which an artful woman might play with; and sensibility to what seemed warm and disinterested personal attachment. In his position, isolated and solitary in the midst of crowds; with hundreds of selfish or vain employers and patrons, and as many nominal friends, yet with scarce one for whom he could feel greater esteem, or on whom he could place more reliance, than on Jack Cripps, and few whom he could like so well as Jack, it was soothing, as well as flattering, to be loved and preferred by a handsome and accomplished woman, of fair reputation, who might have made what the sex almost universally term a better match. On first acquaintance, though the free, decided manner—a good counterfeit of the thoroughbred aristocratic—of Cripps' very handsome daughter, together with her marked attention to himself, had made that impression which time and care may deepen, he had also been much struck with her less obtrusive but not less attractive friend. On the night of Covent Garden, in particular, when Miss Cripps had first excited and then piqued his vanity, by her flirtation with the redoubted Count Rodolpho, he had been peculiarly charmed

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with what he had seen of Violet; but, at succeeding interviews, though to him she continued particularly civil and pleasant, his own quick observation, and the hints of Jack and Polly Cripps, "that Charles Herbert and Mademoiselle were ages gone in love with each other," restored Barker to the allegiance, which every day confirmed. Miss Cripps became proud of her conquest, and more cautious in her flirtations; and Jack's declaration, that "Diogenes Barker, the democrat, was in love, and his sister Polly, the deuce of a clever wench," recorded an unquestionable fact. But "Polly was in love too." Jack could not quite comprehend that—but so it was.

"My daughter will prove a doating wife," said the Professor, sipping his claret on the day of the final arrangement.

"Where do you propose to get shifts and nightcaps for her?" remarked Mrs. Cripps, sharply.

"Some things—nay, many things—I must have, for common decency," urged Polly.

"As you are only to be in furnished lodgings—to have no house—the less the better," rejoined her contradictory mother. The Professor always counted so largely on those vast vague sums, which he was to receive at Easter, that it is probable he had come to believe that, at that date, he really could pay all his debts, and afford his daughter a handsome *trousseau*, and suitable wedding presents. All his life he had entertained vague expectations of somehow getting money. This was one of his constant hallucinations.

"I'll drive you to Madame Ramsden's tomorrow, to hear her ideas for you, my dear." Polly was but too familiar, of late, with Madame's ideas. They had been strongly represented to her every week for a month back.

"I don't think I shall employ that person more. Her style is but second-rate after all, and she charged Mademoiselle monstrously for a few trifles. She runs up such a bill!"—And this introduced the story of Violet's missing bank-note, and Mrs. Cripps' notions of the extravagance of Mademoiselle and the folly of the Professor.

"She'll be quite as glad, by and by, to make a good *débat*, as you can be to have her, father," remarked Polly, "if you manage well. Madame duns and quite frightens her out of her wits, poor dear. I believe Madame is a greater scarecrow to Gabrielle at present than Mrs. Herbert herself."

The information was generally correct, and
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the hint was not lost. Violet was, indeed, made utterly wretched, by what rather annoyed the intrepid bride herself; and now her misery was complicated, by the idea that this appalling debt had been contracted under the most suspicious appearances; when, like an absolute swindler, she had gone to the milliner's in Mrs. Herbert's carriage. If she had not directly, herself, used that lady's name, she had suffered it to be understood that Mrs. Herbert was her acquaintance, and, perhaps, her hostess.

The very civil and mild young woman, who had called that morning to inquire if it would then be convenient for Mademoiselle Gabrielle to settle the bill, had said—"Madame directed me to say, that she believed that you and the other young lady were particular friends of Mrs. Herbert, ma'am." Violet instantly disclaimed the acquaintance, and as earnestly as if it had implied disgrace; but how to answer the other query? To tell that she had been robbed was easy, but could she hope to be believed; and then the sum-total of the robbery was not the half of what she owed. Her misery was strongly depicted on her pale face; and the merciful dun, of her own motion, gently hinted—"Perhaps it may not be convenient to-day, ma'am? Shall I tell Madame you desired me to call in a week hence?"

"Yes," faltered Violet. "Not in a week, but in ten days, for then I may have heard from my distant friends." She felt there was an implied falsehood, and added—"Heard what they advise."

The girl went away; and Polly Cripps—at this time being, like all brides, as restless as a turtle that has lost its mate—came in, and found her in tears.

"That odious woman dunning you again!" said the bride. "Why should you heed her. Don't patronize her more; I shall not, I assure her. But I need money at present quite as much as you, Gabrielle; and if we could guarantee each other, I think how we could raise some."

"How, Maria?—for I am sure I cannot, unless Mr. Cripps would be good enough to advance for me; and how can I expect that?"

"Indeed you need not; my father has not half enough for his own emergencies. But Charles Herbert——"

"Good heavens, Maria!" cried Violet, starting; "you cannot think of any thing so horrid?"

"I do, though; and where is the mighty harm? I would guarantee you."

"You, Polly?—have you any money more than myself?" said Violet, with rueful simplicity, where another might have laughed.

"I shall be a married woman in a few weeks, as Herbert knows; and I fancy a married woman's debts may be recovered," returned Polly, smartly, and like a woman of business, and her mother's own daughter, or her mother's self writ large.

Violet made no reply. The plan of Polly had brought more vividly to her mind the most distracting idea by which it had for some days been haunted, that of Charles Herbert hearing of her disgraceful embarrassments, and in the very worst form.

"So you will not go into my scheme?—for your own relief, Gabrielle, remember."

Violet shook her head mournfully. "Any thing but that!"

"Then I have no more to say to you. I meant you well; and this is your gratitude, ma'am!"

Miss Cripps reflected that, whatever became of Violet's debts and her own, she, as a bride, must have money; and from her father there was none forthcoming. Of the sums raised by bills, and other ways and means, concerning which the Professor received illumination from some of his professional friends, his son and his son-in-law cleft, nearly the whole had been swallowed up; and, from some occult cause, the civilest tradespeople of January had become the rudest of March. Charles Herbert had already repeatedly complied with the urgent demands of the Professor's polite notes; and other young men, frequenters of his parties for a time, agreed that they were too pleasant not to be paid for, in a reasonable way, by small forced loans. But, on the whole, Mr. Cripps found this was a bad plan; his fashionable friends were beginning to absent themselves, and, suffer who might, they must therefore be spared. To enjoy both the countenance and money of aristocracy, was too much to expect. Thus was the bride of Barker left to her own resources; and, bolting her chamber door, to keep off her mother's domiciliary visit, Polly, when she left Violet, hastily arranged her writing materials, soliloquizing thus:—" 'Tis all I ever made of the spoon, if I make out this, for the plague he has given me, save a few paltry trinkets, which I will return with the money after I marry;" and she began to write:—

"REGENT'S PARK, LONDON.
"26th March, 18—.

"MY DEAR BENJAMIN, — You will, I am confident, forgive the familiar appellation of our happy childhood, when to each other we were 'Benjamin and Polly,' the inseparables in every dance and nutting party.

"Papa and I were exceedingly disappointed when we found that you had left town without seeing us again, especially as our foreign servant, though he had general orders 'Not at home,' was particularly desired to admit you, whom I flattered myself he could not fail to recognise from my description. I think I could have recognised you among a thousand, as on that day when the carriage drove past you in St. James Street; and I am sure you fancied me mad in bowing to you. I fear you may have gone away under the impression that we declined seeing you; which is one urgent reason for my addressing you. The recollection, I assure you, of dear W—, makes any one from that beloved quarter precious to us, much more one of our most valued friends. I judge of your feelings by my own heart, when I say so.

"I am confident you will be delighted to hear of my dear father's astonishing success and brilliant prospects. He has much more of the first musical employment in the metropolis than he can overtake; and he teaches none but the daughters of the highest nobility, on terms that would have frightened us, in the days of our simplicity, at dear W—. By the newspapers, you will learn that the Professor is bringing out an opera, for which the greatest success is anticipated; and a successful opera, let me tell you, is a fortune in itself.

"In the mean time, the heavy expense, incidental to getting up the piece, and our launch in London, have, I fear, though I dare not seem to guess it, pressed hard on dear papa's funds; and a certain delicacy in which I can fully sympathize, prevents him from applying in this emergency to even the most intimate of those friends who would be delighted to assist him. You will, in these circumstances, my dear Benjamin, forgive, I am sure, the tender feelings of a fond daughter, distracted between her native delicacy and her devoted filial affection for such a man and such a father. Nothing short of these emotions could enable me to make the present application; nor is there another man in existence but yourself, the friend of childhood and youth—though now far distant—to whom I could bring myself to state the

necessity, for which I blush even on paper. From one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds, would, I am convinced, materially relieve papa, until returns come in, for the great expense attending the approaching event. [Polly thought that here she had avoided telling a lie. How silly are those cunning sinners who fancy it so very easy to cheat the devil.] Mademoiselle Gabrielle will most gladly be my guarantee, if between old friends, as I cannot help still fancying that we are, any thing of the sort is required. As I anxiously wish no one in the family to suspect the bold step on which my feelings have urged me, I pray that you will write me, under the cover of Mademoiselle.

"Adieu, dear Benjamin! If you have my vivid memory for old times, you will not again leave town without gladdening the Regents' Park with tidings of dear W—, and with the most welcome sight to be met in it, the face of an old friend. Never, amidst the beauty and gaiety of this splendid quarter, can I forget the sweet summer-house in your garden, and the old black cherry tree.

"Your affectionate and faithful

"Humble Servant,

"MARIA CRIPPS,"

Thou false and treacherous Polly! who couldst thus convert the best affections of a simple, kind, and unsuspecting heart into the means of gulling and plundering—"seething the kid in its mother's milk;" marrying Barker on Benjamin's gold. That "sweet summer-house!"—It was the very spot where the bashful Benjamin, in the effervescence of his boyish passion, had first essayed his uncouth infant arts of courtship to the endless diversion of the bold romp of sixteen. It was, as even a statesman, in extremity at human nature's naughtiness, was once compelled to exclaim, "too bad;" and, we venture to think, that if Mr. Barker had been cognisant of the whole case, there might have been some danger of the affianced wife being repudiated, as slight punishment of a thing so *broad*; done for so paltry an object. There was a waste of character and eloquent deceit which might have sufficed to trick a whole constituency, employed on one booby, to gain one poor hundred pounds. It was a ruinous, small-ware, female trick, which he never could have sanctioned. He knew the world too well for that. Jack Cripps, on the contrary, would have enjoyed it as "a famous hoax," and shared the spoils.

Though Mr. Barker came afterwards to

understand some of the consequences of this manœuvre, he fortunately never learned the precise contents of his bride's letter. It is more important to tell that, in due return of post, an answer came, under cover to Violet, who amazedly saw Miss Cripps snatch what appeared a bank order with rapture, and fling its tender envelope, half-read, into the fire; vexed to find that *business* was to bring her correspondent so very soon to town, and assuaging her conscience with the resolution of returning his trumpery coral necklace, and other pledges of love, with her wedding-cards and a slice of the bride-cake.

While Violet was looking on in wonder, sensible of a little curiosity about what she witnessed, and uneasy at the involuntary share which she had borne in an unacknowledged correspondence, an equally exciting scene, in which she was also involved, was acting in the neighbouring residence. There sat Mrs. Herbert with her step-son at a very late breakfast; the young man, between whiles, gleaning from the morning papers such pieces of intelligence as he fancied likely to interest or amuse her. All at once, on commencing a new paragraph, his voice dropped,—and he abruptly stopped short, after having read, "Laud we the Gods!"

Mrs. Herbert, quietly observant of his movements, and able to read much more of his secret thoughts in his ingenuous countenance, than Charles at all times cared to reveal to her, perceived his colour heighten, and his brows knit, as he flung down the paper with an air of irritation and impatience, and as hastily snatched it up again for another perusal. Mrs. Herbert, though with the most well-bred absence of manner, failed not to observe every shade of change in the reader, nor yet to note the page and column of the newspaper which had proved this stumbling-block. "Consummate impertinence!" was the muttered expression, ere Charles so far recovered his presence of mind as to ask for another cup of coffee, while he placed his elbow on the obnoxious journal, as he cursorily perused one or two more. When he rose from the breakfast-table, he said, lifting the self-same print, with an affectation of indifference which half amused his mother, when viewed in contrast with the usual cordial frankness of his manners—

"You don't patronize the wicked *Cerberus*, I believe. I dare say you are quite right." And he put the newspaper into his pocket, as he went out, saying, "Do not expect me

to dinner—I had forgot an engagement. An Oxonian is to dine with me—an old friend."

"Then I presume, he is a presentable person: pray, rather fetch him with you to my small, my cabinet dinner; only the Tarberts, and one or two more. It would be a pity to leave a stranger alone, when you join us."

"I—I am afraid I cannot shake him off."

"I don't want you to shake him off, Charles; you don't understand me."—"I read you better," thought the smiling lady.—"Language, it has been said by Talleyrand, and long before him, was given to men to conceal their thoughts; with my poor Charles, even writing will hardly do that. I have no doubt whatever about his present thoughts; but I must see farther."

Charles Herbert had not been three minutes gone when his mother ordered her maid to desire the youngest footman, Robert, to go to Regent Street, for a book which she wanted; and, among other newspapers, the *Cerberus* of that day. No copy of the print was to be had.

"Robert is so stupid, ma'am," remarked the smart soubrette, who read her lady almost as fluently as her lady did Herbert. "Perhaps I could get the poem for you, ma'am; the paper with it, I mean, if you please?"

"It does not signify, Jenkins," returned the lady, who was arranging flowers in a vase; "though, if you are going out on other business——"

"I must, ma'am, have soaps, ma'am, for Mrs. Herbert, and some extra and particularly nice thread, to take up that rent in the Chantilly veil, ma'am; and——"

"Yes, that must be had, Jenkins: I am only surprised that a person so extremely attentive to your duties as yourself should have neglected that; and, as you will just pass the newspaper place, you may try. And, by the way, is not Mistress Linton to come to-day about that matter you mentioned?—which yet I am persuaded cannot be correct."

"Perfectly correct, ma'am, I assure you, ma'am; if you mean about the new people in Mr. Shuffleton's house, ma'am. Mistress Linton herself, with her own eyes, saw the identical gold or molo *pangdool*, ma'am, which stood in Mr. Shuffleton's back drawing-room, over the hottoman on the right side of the fireplace, under a glass cover, ma'am; and the identical inlaid chess-table and shoobert set of chess gentlemen, ma'am, which cost five hundred or else fifty pounds in

Paris, ma'am, in that same pawnbroker's in the city, as I told you, ma'am, which a young gentleman, who squints, in a blue Spanish cloak, brought there, in a close hackney coach, which the coachman said was from the West End—our End, ma'am.—”

“Well, you may have done now ; and see that I am informed when the Scotchwoman comes, and secure me ten minutes to talk with her, whatever visitors may call.”

“And the newspaper for Mrs. Herbert, ma'am, if you please ?” Mrs. Herbert did not choose to appear too anxious, she therefore merely nodded assent ; and Jenkins, knowing her cue, tripped off. The two hours of her absence seemed ten to her anxious mistress ; yet Jenkins, if tardy, had not been idle.

The incipient passion which, in right of her age—only yet some twenty-eight—and her position in the family, Jenkins had, three years before, begun to conceive for the young Oxonian, had smouldered away under his entire indifference ; or rather that provoking insensibility or abstraction, worse than indifference, which appeared to render the young man, on his periodical visits home, quite as insensible to the small-featured and trimly-dressed airy soubrette, as if she had been the fat coachman. In these circumstances, her transitory flame had expired and been succeeded by an affection quite as natural—a restless, insatiable curiosity about all the affairs, but especially the love affairs, of the only young gentleman connected with her “present family.” The servant who had attended Charles on his electioneering expedition, had been as communicative as any reasonable waiting gentlewoman could desire ; nor did the domestics of the nearest adjoining houses by any means preserve that stiff and awful distance maintained by the mistress of one of these residences. It was from the accidental hints of Jenkins, who, most innocently, referred to the day (merely as a date) on which “Mr. Charles had sent home the Miss Cryppes in the carriage,” or “on which the Miss Cryppes had gone to Madame’s, to order things, in the carriage,” that Mrs. Herbert learnt a circumstance offensive to her pride. This had been followed by other occurrences, even more painful and alarming, arising from her son’s intimate connexion with “those people.” She had herself seen him escorting the young ladies ; and she was aware that, along with a whole set of thoughtless young men and rakish elderly ones, Charles was a constant frequenter of the

Cripps parties ; nay, that he had failed in engagements, by which he ought to have felt honoured, to attend those vile parties. It had cost her a great effort, at different times, to prevent him from entering seriously upon the subject of her equivocal neighbours ; and, when playful avoidance was no longer possible, she had, in the tone of entreaty, commanded that he would not speak of them. One day, with tears in her eyes, she had said, when Charles urgently begged that she would hear him :—

“Charles, my dearest son—Heaven is my witness how much dearer you are to me than all other interests and objects on earth put together—I will not listen to you on this one point. Certain things are best left unexplained even between the nearest friends. I look forward for you, and I cherish your feelings of self-respect too tenderly to permit your now saying one word of which you shall ever, in any circumstances, live to be ashamed. You shall not have to remember, much less to regret, that in any rash moment of your life you have laid your heart too nakedly open before even me, your most indulgent friend.”

Charles kissed the hand stretched out to him ; and still he would have spoken and have pleaded against this misconception, and protested against the shadow of shame being involved in what he had to say and to urge.

“She is not a member of this family, mother. She is an orphan girl of good parentage.”

Mrs. Herbert would not listen. Violet was not Lady Laura Temple, whoever she might be, and that was enough.

Mrs. Herbert rose hastily on the occasion mentioned, her handkerchief at her streaming eyes, and motioned her son not to follow her.

By Jenkins, who could “draw an inference” better than many students of logic, and as well as ever a waiting-maid in London, these scenes, if imperfectly seen, were shrewdly interpreted. After her return from the hunt of what she was pleased to describe as “the poyem” in the *Cerberus*, and an intermediate conference with Mike Twig, with whom she had condescended to walk home, she was in fine condition to furnish her mistress with explanatory notes, had the slightest opening been offered or permitted. But Mrs. Herbert did not even stop her reading to receive the newspaper. She pointed to the little table beside her, as if she desired not to be disturbed ; and Jenkins

placed it there, left the room, and in one instant returned, apologizing for forgetting to mention before, that she had met Lady Laura Temple's "waiting young lady," and that her ladyship was very well that morning.

There was an exulting sense of gratified revenge in perceiving that Mrs. Herbert was already engaged with the paragraph of which Jenkins herself was fully mistress.

"Let her pride be her punishment," was her spiteful thought. "Great ladies will place no confidence in their young ladies. Why should we care for them? let her take it indeed!"

The malicious wishes of Jenkins did not, in this instance, take effect. Derision, and a scornful sense of the ludicrous, curled the beautiful lip of Mrs. Herbert, as, flinging the newspaper on the hearth-rug, she beckoned the abigail to withdraw, and resumed reading. But why did she pick it up, and again spell it over? It was to make assurance doubly sure.

"'Consummate impertinence,' you well might say, Charles;" and her features brightened, and her eyes sparkled. "No, no, my dear boy, unless you were more mad—more infatuated than ever young man, fancying himself in love, was before you, there is no danger to be apprehended here. Your pride and nice sense of honour are my security against this Mademoiselle, although, for a moment, your understanding should fail you."

On the whole, though Mrs. Herbert resolved to give a hint to Shuffleton's attorney about the system of swindling which his odd tenants were commencing, she still deemed it wise to be silent to Charles himself. Silent, kind, nay most indulgent, but resolute to prevent irremediable disgrace and misery, she would treat him, if matters came to extremity, as one might a dear friend under delirium—restrain him for his own safety. Every passing day showed her more clearly how wrong-headed Charles was capable of being, where his generous feelings were interested—or his haughty sense of independence, rendered morbidly acute by his father's extraordinary will, aroused. To look coldly on any animated thing, which, from its very weakness appealed to his protection, was, above all, to rouse the spirit of Charles; and, in such cases, his heart or his impulses, as his mother reasoned, seldom carried to take counsel of his judgment. One of the most violent quarrels in which Mrs. Herbert had ever been called to

mediate between the father and son, had no greater cause than a mangy puppy which Charles, when a little boy, had found dying in the fields, dripping and shivering, and with a stone about its neck, as if it had just escaped one mode of death to meet another more lingering and pitiful. The whole family had been annoyed with his favourite, though he had nursed it in the stable, and in his own room; and the housekeeper, who hated it, complained of "the poor brute," Charles said, "which had not a fault or a vice, save that it was ugly and mangy, which it could not help, and he would rub it well and cure it." Mungo's accuser retorted, that it was filthy and troublesome, and would certainly go mad, and bite him.

Mrs. Herbert smiled in reflecting upon the young boy's generous sturdiness of disposition, for which she loved him all the better at the time, and his open defiance of his father's anger, when he proclaimed—"If you put away Mungo, I'll go with him—I will—I don't care for being bit." Nor could she forget how her own affectionate and dexterous management of the boy had reconciled every difficulty. Mungo was pensioned off with an old soldier, who undertook for his complete cure, and Charles visited him every day, until the dog got well. When Mungo no longer needed his affection, he became gradually indifferent to the brute, and Mungo was promoted into the confidential post of a carrier's dog, after which Charles totally forgot him.

"I must forbear, not alone the girl, but the whole Cryppes tribe," thought Mrs. Herbert, "or we should have mangy Mungo over again; and Charles not 'caring to be bit' by 'the lovely Scottish orphan'—that is her style, I believe. What fools young men—ay, the ablest of them—can be made! Men in love are really greater fools than women, only their madness seldom lasts so long."

"Mistress Marion Linton below, ma'am, to wait upon Mrs. Herbert, ma'am," was the fresh announcement of Jenkins to her lady.

In respect of her age, and probably of her confidential functions as a woman of business, Mistress Linton was usually honoured with the *tabouret* in Mrs. Herbert's dressing-room, though that lady was not at all remarkable for the ease of her intercourse with "the lower orders."

"A cup of chocolate for Mrs. Linton, Jenkins—and you need not return: let Robert fetch it. I am daily more pleased with your young countryman, Mrs. Linton"

—he does credit to your recommendation."

"I am proud and happy at that, mem," returned the Scotswoman,—"aye weel pleased to hear o'ny gude o' my country-folks, though no a drap's blood to mysel; the mair be here, that it's about ane o' them—puir, young, freendless thing—I have ta'en the liberty to come this same day to trouble ye."

"I said you need not wait, Jenkins," [Exit Jenkins, pursing in her thin lips.] "Any of the people in Mr. Shuffleton's pretty house, is it? Nice people are they, who take good care of his furniture! I am sure *you* will wish that."

The house-letter shook her head.

"I hope it may be sae; but I misdoot, from all I can gather, it's no that like, my leddy."

"Then you don't like them, I fear?"

"I have, with your pardon, no right either to like or dislike them, whatever I may do;" and she added, drily, "and they are great friends o' Maister Charles, which *must* be ae gude sign o' them."

"Of my son?—very slight acquaintances only, that I am aware of; you know enough of gay London society not to consider young gentlemen *friends* in all the houses where they go to parties," replied Mrs. Herbert; and the shrewd Scotswoman at once found ground.

"Tis a professional family, I believe," continued the lady: "rather an odd quarter for them; as the families resident hereabout are not likely to suit them at all."

"You mean, mem, not to tak' up wi' them—not to countenance them: the leddies, ye mean? for the gentlemen are jocose enough wi' the Professor's folk, as they ca' him; though in our country, at least in my day—for there's a new world there, too, noo—a professor wha kent never a word o' the Latin tongue, let-a-be Greek, and Philosophy, and Mathew Matticks, wad been thought but a droll professor; and, indeed, I canna but fear that this same ane, even wi' the customs of England, is muckle better than a downright swingler, mem,—who has entrapped into his custody and keeping an innocent young leddy o' good birth and family; an orphan, my leddy, fatherless and mitherless, and sae having a claim on a' good folks' regard and kindness; trepanned her to make a singing play-actor o' her, as other villains have stolen Scottish bairns to make them gipsies or chimbly-sweepers:—forbye, he is

harrying and spulyieing Mr. Shuffleton's house, as sure as ever the Scots did the English langsyne."

"This is intelligence for Mr. Shuffleton's attorney only, not for me," returned Mrs. Herbert, now rising, predetermined not to hear one word of Mrs. Marion's orphan countrywoman. "I am just going out; but I shall send a note to the attorney if you wish it. I am sorry I have no leisure to-day—Good-bye."

"Your most obedient, madam," said Mistress Marion, stiffly, on being thus summarily dismissed; "and I hope I have not given you owre muckle trouble. . . . I'll see to business mysel; many thanks." And she retired discomfited, but not cast down.

On that same evening, there was to be a particularly brilliant musical party, a sort of rehearsal, at the residence in Regent's Park, from which Professor Cryppes had been duly warned; and, odd as it may seem to rustics, between that brilliant party and the visit to the city pawnbroker, of the young gentleman who "squinted, in a blue Spanish cloak," there was close and essential connexion.

Jack, who had put the frightened governor up to the thing, received no more brokerage on the transaction than five pounds in loan, out of the twenty-five which had been raised on Shuffleton's "pangdool and chess gentlemen," and given to Mrs. Cripps to carry into effect the elegant but not expensive entertainment. In some quarters, the family credit was still good. The green-grocer had taken alarm long before the more aristocratic wine merchant,—living apart from "the whisper of a faction" of mop-sticks and shoulder-knots, who resented the intrusion of the pretenders into their genteel quarter more loudly than their masters and mistresses, if not so deeply. So one twenty pounds might do very well for the night, for trifling articles; and, besides, presents of fruits, flowers, and game were now often appearing, sent from the estates of considerate young estated visitors, in Covent Garden market and the poulterers' shops. The Professor, by the way, never knew whereabouts the estate of Colonel Rivers lay; nor learned, save by report, of the famous preserves of Sir George Lees, though he noted both gentlemen as among the most voracious, or, as it pleased them, dainty consumers of his cates.

Let us at once, however, quit, or soar above, such sublunary and vulgar purse-and-trencher matters. On this night, a foreign lady, with the title of Princess, was to be present at

the rehearsal, of which Jack had obtained the second sight; and Count Rodolpho Zanderschloss had prevailed with the Professor to receive two of his particular friends, young American *attachés*, from whom he expected letters of introduction to the United States. Mademoiselle was positively to appear on this night, and to sing; and Herbert passionately longing to see Violet after a whole week of absence, broke his engagement with his mother and his own resolution, and took, as if by instinct, the accustomed route.

And several circumstances had arisen to justify, as he imagined, that change of resolution, since he had perused the egregious puff to which he was certain she could be no party. Already his hopes of conciliating his mother were low, and now Violet was about to be unconsciously betrayed into placing an impassable gulf between them for ever. By a little delicate management, or, perhaps, tacit connivance, he had come to learn the nights on which Violet would appear; and on these he went early, and sometimes was so happy as to find her for two minutes alone. These were what the Professor called his Family Nights, when he did not receive persons of the very first distinction.

On the great night, which had taxed to the utmost all the resources of Monsieur Eustache, and almost driven Mrs. Cripps mad, Herbert, with the faint hope of finding Violet alone, and anxious to have some conversation with her, went very early, and was fortunate; for after he had waited about half-an-hour she entered, and started, and blushed, and looked brightly glad for an instant, and suddenly as grave; protesting business, which was to direct some plants to be removed to the staircase from that conservatory off the saloon, which Jack Cripps had pointed out as so famous a place for a little sly flirtation.

"Mike Twig, who is the best creature in the world, is to carry these bow-pots for me; I can't think what has become of him," said Violet.

"Accept of me in his stead. I fear, by the figure Mike cut when he admitted me, he has not yet put the finishing touches to his dress. I know I am very early; but I have been so unfortunate as to miss you the last two times I have been here, and I come charged to-night with a special message from your friend Mrs. Linton. After visiting my mother, she visited me to-day, at my chambers."

"This way," said Violet, leading the way

into the conservatory, half afraid of the purport of the message.

"Mrs. Marion has trotted over the half of London, and not been able to find out the young man. Here is your letter. Am I mistaken in thinking that once before I gave you back a letter with this address? Am I impertinent in venturing to inquire who the man so honoured may be? You are very young, Violet—young in heart and in experience of life; your old rough friend—forgive me for hinting it—seems disturbed about this correspondence, and if I may dare to say so—about the character and habits of the young man who has so strongly interested your feelings."

"I have never even seen him," said Violet, emphatically, but blushing deeply at the same time, and lowering her eyes under Herbert's fixed gaze. "Alas! I cannot find any trace of that most unhappy person. If you, Mr. Herbert—I have thought of it often, but durst not ask you—if you, who are always so good-natured, would make inquiry?"

"I, Violet!—but if you wish it?"

"That I do, most earnestly. One morning I did get up very early to try to find him out myself; in *that* St. Martin's Lane, where I overheard Quintin telling his sister the poor fellow harboured; but it was so—oh! so horrible—so disagreeable—so— Yet it is not pride, I am sure—I am not an aristocrat—I should be humble enough."

"You, Violet? You absolutely frighten me. You search for this man, by yourself, in such haunts?"

"Yes, I did; and I might have found him too, had I not been such a coward, and so afraid of detection."

Charles Herbert was almost bewildered.

"And you really wish me to try——"

"To find out poor Susan's lover? Certainly I do; and would bless you. They have been attached since childhood—so long, so tenderly; and she sees no errors in him as others do. She is so wretched, and her mother so severe and harsh—but I must not betray if I cannot console poor Susan."

"Her mother!" repeated Herbert with strong emotion. "All mothers are alike, I believe; all cold, proud, ambitious. . . . And you, dearest girl, you can thus pity one who loves unhappily—one who is but the more wretched for cherishing the deepest, strongest, most passionate love? *Then, Violet, pity me,*" and he wrung the trembling little hand which he had seized.

The words thrilling in her ringing ears,

sent a sudden chill to her heart, a choking feeling of indescribable anguish; as if she was about to die, and could not die. Herbert then loved—desperately, hopelessly loved—perhaps that proud and beautiful Lady Laura; and now Violet first felt without any disguise the humiliating truth that she had hoped for, sought to gain—though in all maiden modesty—passionately yearned for the affection of one who was all to her, and to whom she was nothing!

Her emotion could not be wholly concealed as her dry lips imperfectly uttered—

"Pity you, Mr. Herbert? Oh, surely!" and she laughed low and hoarsely. "But I believe I am wanted; I am engaged to dance," and she tried to withdraw her hand.

"Stay, Violet, you do not, you cannot affect to misunderstand me? Whom do I love save yourself—you, dearest! loveliest! But, you are ill—very ill."

There was another powerful revulsion of feeling; a sudden flood of exulting, ecstatic bliss; an eternity of joy compressed into an instant of time; and then a languid suspension of the pulses of life; and, as consciousness returned, a soft kiss lingering on her lips;—but that, after all, might have been a dream. It was certain that she was leaning in an easy chair, to which Herbert had carried her, and that she saw Mike Twig rush in, buttoning his knuckle-deep wristbands, and heard Herbert whisper—"Call the housemaid quietly. The lady is better: the heavy odour of these plants made her ill a minute since, but she is coming round;" and as Mike fled to communicate the event to the household, Herbert seized the instant to pray that Violet would see him soon—to-morrow, if possible—but, if not, the first day possible, at Mistress Linton's; and she had sighed consent, ere the hurly-burly began, and she was carried up to her chamber by the agitated Professor and the maid-servant.

"It is tight lacing," said Miss Cripps, "I have often warned Gabrielle of that; she pinches her waist so, Mr. Herbert."

CHAPTER IX.

We took leave of our simple heroine, in what is generally considered the most vital and delicate crisis of a woman's existence; that to which every circumstance of her girlhood points, and which is essentially, if not finally, to seal her fate to weal or wo; or to consign her to the cheerless, monotonous state of passive endurance, which, in deaden-

ing or obliterating her highest faculties and finest sensibilities, dwarfs her intellect, benumbs every generous affection of her heart, and perverts the noblest purposes of her being.

During the first tumultuary excitement of her feelings, Violet, the most blest of mortal creatures, though outwardly calm, yet really wild and dizzy with the exulting sense of rapture throbbing at her heart, imagined that she could never again know anxiety or sorrow. Evils which, to her inexperience, had looked appalling, and which really were of serious magnitude, disappeared for the moment; and it seemed treason to every nobler attribute of her nature to indulge one cowardly misgiving, one melancholy apprehension, while blessed beyond all imaginable blessing with the rich treasure of Herbert's love!

Mrs. Cripps, whose matronly assistance had been summoned when Mademoiselle was carried up stairs in a swoon, from which she had, however, instantly recovered, reported, on rejoining the family circle, that she knew not what to make of that girl.

"A very plain case of affectation," said Miss Cripps, with a fling of the head; "a pretty manœuvre to alarm Charles Herbert, when found so opportunely in the conservatory; perhaps to quicken his dull mind, and draw forth the *ray-ther* tardy declaration."

"Extremely likely," added Mrs. Cripps; "for, at all events, the Mademoiselle is no more seriously ill than I am, unless she be going out of her senses, which the ridiculous fuss that is made about her *genius* and her *beauty*, and what not, renders very probable. Fancy the silly chit beginning to weep on my bosom: but I know how to manage hysterical young ladies—she soon came to herself."

Professor Cripps, evidently alarmed for his pupil's sanity, on hearing so extraordinary a circumstance, eagerly expressed his concern.

"Pray don't afflict yourself, my good sir," said his meek helpmate: "saving a look of idiocy, tears in her eyes, and a fatuous kind of smile playing on her lips, I never saw Mademoiselle look in better health."

"Nay, I did think Violet exceedingly lovely this evening, even when at the worst," said Cripps. "Expression, as Barker says, is the soul of her face; expression varying with every mood of her soul."

"Mr. Barker must always be saying some clever nonsense or other, which papa takes seriously," said Polly; "but I dare say something has occurred to flutter the meek dove. I fancied she was going to tell me all about

it; but I presume the second thoughts of *prudent* young ladies are best."

In the rapturous feelings of the moment, and with the instinctive craving of the young and warm heart, at such seasons, for womanly, for motherly, for sisterly sympathy, poor Violet had been tempted to reveal what, but for maidenly bashfulness, she could indeed have proclaimed to the whole world—her new-born bliss—bidding it share in her abounding joy. Her affectionate tenderness, and even caressing manners to mother and daughter, when they approached her with offers of assistance, were so unlike the measured civility to which their uncongenial minds, and the harshly repulsive manners of the elder lady, had long restricted their intercourse, that Mrs. Cripps' severe treatment of hysterical cases was probably required to awaken the sense of dignity, and restore Violet to her ordinary constrained demeanour with these ladies. Yet even then, the absent wandering air, the moist eyes, and the faint smile fluttering on her lips, spoke of those ecstatic feelings, the signs of which no exterior circumstances could repress; and which betrayed her, at least to the younger lady, who, at the subsequent family conference, proceeded to say—

"I could swear Charles Herbert has told his flattering tale, if he has not this night actually proposed."

"Then I wish to goodness he had her, and paid you forfeit, Cripps, for your runaway apprentice. £500, are not the penalties? You will never, I prophesy, make half so much out of her."

So hard run up was the Professor at this time—driven to such miserable and dangerous shifts to recruit his finances and "carry on the war in style," till the tide of fortune flowed—that the words *pay forfeit* sounded magically on his ear. Yet to abandon his swelling schemes of professional glory, as well as of great aggrandizement, was highly imprudent, even in a pecuniary view—so he made himself believe—and also most mortifying. His mind was thus divided between the urgency of present necessity and the hopes of future gain, when the demon which ever stands ready to dodge the elbow of the needy, weak-principled, and vain man, in moments when conscience sounds a parley, appeared in the shape of his hopeful son.

Jack drew his papa aside, and whispered something which banished the Professor's colour, and made his hands tremble. Jack himself maintained the utmost composure,

and began to joke with his sister about her lover, and her very handsome "upper Benjamin," in allusion to her elegant robe, with an innuendo about the W—levy, which made the blood mount higher in Polly's face. She hastily, as a diversion, mentioned her mother's scheme of making Herbert pay forfeit.

"Capital stroke; but a wretched pittance, after all—only £500.—Were the case as you suppose, Poll, my darling, which is, after all, mere conjecture—not Herbert's love I mean, but Herbert's proposal—so poor as he is, and where there is no *blunt*, no *tin*, in the case—that paltry penalty would be but wretched indemnity to my father for the pecuniary loss he must sustain by his pupil bilking him, as the lawyers would say—*In re CRYPPES versus HERBERT*, damages £10,000—after—"

The black lustrous eyes of Mrs. Barker elect flashed heathen fire, as she looked to her ingenious brother; and interrupting his nonsense, which, such was Jack's weakness, often came in the way of his finest ideas, she replied to her own thoughts.

"If Herbert had any *solid* fortune, any command of cash or means to raise it, I do indeed see an opening for you, papa. His pride will never brook to see the woman he intends to make his wife on the stage. Mr. Barker detests the idea of professional life for *me*;" and the young lady, whose most ambitious wishes had so lately been the stage, drew up in disdain of the vocation in which her father placed all his hopes and glory.

"Let Herbert have her, in Cupid's name," said Jack; "only she must run away either *with* or *to* him. All my fear is he won't bite, or not in time for us; for, somehow, fellows like him in high life, when money must be had, always contrive to get it. The Wind must be raised, that's flat, though it should blow great guns to drive us out of the water; and for to-morrow morning, too;—no dallying with a certain order of ugly customers."

Professor Cripps looked with perplexity and anguish upon his comforter and financier.

"MY UNCLE, Heaven bless him for a friend in need, the truest I have ever found!" continued Jack.

"I will not hear of it, sir," interrupted the Professor of Music, flushing with a sense of anger and shame, which his son was utterly incapable of understanding. "I feel utterly disgraced by what you have led me to do already in that line. The old Scotchwoman,

I am convinced, suspects us, if she has not proof positive."

Mr. Cripps alluded to the valuable furniture, pictures, and plate, which his son had persuaded him to pawn, or send to the auction mart, to raise temporary supplies, when forced loans, bill-brokers, Barker's credit, and every other means had failed them.

"Take it easy, papa:—there, smooth your raven down, and go down stairs to receive your guests. Put a good face on the matter; and the deuce is in it if, in the broad and fertile field of London, with brilliant talents and splendid opportunities, the Cryppes family, if true to itself, do not make a living,—ay, and a figure too!—'The world's my oyster, and I with brains will open it.' There is an idea germinating here"—and Jack, leering up with his most comical squint, tapped on that part of his high and broad forehead where Spurzheim locates imagination—"With but a trifle in hand, a nest-egg to tempt my golden goose to lay, by showing that its golden deposit is safe, I could make a stroke."

"Another Bubble Insurance Company?" inquired his father with bitterness; "More paintings by the old masters? A mine in Eldorado?"

"All very good things, papa, in their way, but my present idea is sinking a shaft in the golden mine matrimonial."

"My affairs do not admit of impertinent jesting, sir," replied the angry father.

"Nor do I jest; upon my honour. But I will take Poll alone into my counsels! Mrs. Barker elect has more of the inventive fertility and resource of high genius than all the rest of her family, self excepted: that stroke at *Benjie* was a master-stroke," he whispered.

"No more of your nonsense, Jack," retorted his sister, angrily; modestly declining the compliment her talents merited. "If one need a trifle, to whom can one apply save to an old and intimate friend."

"True, you clever industrious creature; though no friend would advance a rap for me to save me from hanging: women, particularly young and handsome ones, have many advantages over us poor fellows; so much more ought we to make ourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness. There is Scripture for it, Polly.—Old Stocks has a daughter, a golden girl—you look astonished.—But, hark! the footmen's battering rams! This will be my father's most brilliant private night for the season; the *Princess* is positively to come. Come, Poll, don your upper *Ben-*

jamin;" and he wickedly pulled aside the Chantilly scarf purchased with Benjamin's sovereigns, "and let me lead you to the saloon. The man don't deserve you, girl, who won't make a stretch to maintain so fine a creature in the splendour to which she lends grace, and seems born to be surrounded with." And the conciliated sister, while Jack fastened her pearl bracelets, and gave to better view the cameos which looped up the drapery of her lace sleeves, smiled in acquiescence with the self-evident proposition. "*Thieves' literature*," now so fashionable, was even then beginning to be popular; and Jack, as he led her away, chanted, in an under voice, a stave of a forgotten but once favourite ditty:—

"In Limerick I was bred and born,
On Tyburn tree I die in scorn;
In Dublin I learn'd the baking trade,
Where I was counted a roving blade.

"I took to me a handsome wife,
Whom I loved dear as I loved my life;
And, to maintain her both fine and gay,
Though all the world for it should pay,

"I often used for to resort
To Hounslow Heath and St. James's Park,
Where I robb'd lords and ladies bright—
Five hundred pounds in a moonshine night."

They were on the second landing-place—"Rat-tat-at-tat—rumble, thump, clash—ay! that must be a flunky who fancies his lady-mistress no swipes. But stay"—continued Jack, peering curiously over the railing of the corridor; and now even the undaunted Jack faltered, "What ugly mugs are these below? The Philistines are upon us!"—and Jack nimbly slipt back and vanished; while Miss Cripps, running down, saw her father pale as a corpse, a cold perspiration breaking on his face, sitting on one of the hall chairs, surrounded by three or four singular-looking persons, who yet could hardly be presumed foreign visitors.

Polly had an instant apprehension of how the case stood, and of the danger, for her thoughts travelled fast in the direction of self, which menaced her matrimonial prospects from this unlucky *contretemps*. Nor was she without considerable affection for her father, or the natural feelings of a young woman new to scenes of this painful kind, and to whom an arrest—the actual presence and contact of those hateful phantoms, *bailiffs*, is always terrible. Yet her wits did not in this emergency forsake her. "Miss Cripps, my dear," faltered the father, "send your brother to me, you may remain above stairs; I have some trifling business with these gentlemen; the apartments are open for

company : but in the—the butler's pantry, gentlemen, we will not be observed. There, my own angel, command your feelings. Has Barker come?"

"My brother has left," said Polly, readily and coolly, aware that Jack might have very particular reasons for avoiding recognition. "I believe Mr. Barker will not be here; but Mr. Charles Herbert is in the house. The gentlemen will surely allow you time, papa, to summon your friends around you. To whom shall I send? to Sir George Lees?"

The Professor shook his head wofully. More company was arriving.

"The butler's pantry; the servants' room, below; any place save this," he cried, in anguish, attempting to retire; and the butler's pantry was retreated to, and the singular party supplied with lights and wine, by Polly's orders; after which she flew to her mother, and her brother. The former sobbed, scolded, and cried; cried, scolded, and sobbed. The latter was quite self-possessed. Jack was indeed writing cards with great rapidity.

"A couple of flambeaux at the door, and a lugubrious tale, will suffice to turn back the mass of company to-night: but some of the expected must be treated with more ceremony. Never mind reading my notes, Poll; seal and address, girl:—Domestic calamity; sudden and alarming indisposition of Mademoiselle; excruciating spasms: if one now could have leisure delicately to insinuate that Monsieur Eustache, the secret agent of Malibran, has given her a *leete* dose in an ice; but one can't do every thing. Don't, however, burn your charming fingers with the wax in your haste, Poll. Send off the notes, and pay well the messenger that shall make despatch. I must slip out by the offices, but will be back in an hour, at most, with the supplies; meanwhile, keep the gemmen below in good humour, and set Mademoiselle on Herbert. Lees is flint harder than the nether millstone. The *gents* in the butler's pantry, to a gentleman like papa, will show civility for his money."

With the utmost deliberation, Jack took down an exquisite cabinet picture, the pride of Mr. Shuffleton's dressing-room—subject, a Cupid mounted on a swan—which he tied up in his pocket-handkerchief, and next he took the silver standish, from which he had just been writing; poured the different inks into the fireplace; put the silver-mounted ink-glasses, taper-stand, and all the other appendages, into his bosom—for Jack had

no pockets, nor much use for them—and dexterously passed the body of the standish up his back, between his coat and waistcoat, tightly buttoning the former garment, while his admiring sister looked silently on.

"How do I look, Poll? Demnetion blousy; but, never mind, no one will see me at this hour—only raff abroad."

Jack had no sooner disappeared, than Miss Cripps sent a message down stairs, requesting to be favoured with a minute's conversation with Mr. Herbert; but he had gone away immediately on hearing that Mademoiselle had perfectly recovered from her swoon. A few individuals, early comers, were now assembled in the principal drawing-room; and it seemed odd that none of the family appeared to receive them. After a short consultation, Monsieur Eustache was deputed to acquaint the guests with the "domestic calamity," or Mademoiselle's violent spasms; and the gentlemen walked off and procured hackney vehicles for the sullen ladies, whose excessive condescension to Professor Cryppes and his pupil, was thus rewarded by disappointment.

In the meanwhile, the imagined victim of excruciating torture, all unconscious of the troubled scenes passing under the same roof, had from the mere exhaustion of overwrought feelings, sunk into soft and tranquil sleep, and, wrapt in Elysian dreams, fancied herself sitting in the viny arbour of the well-remembered Jersey cottage, between her father and Mrs. Herbert, who both smiled fondly upon her, and talked to her of Charles, and bade her sing to them.

"Ah, were the sweet vision real, or all of it that Heaven still permits, how blest were I, beyond all imagination of earthly bliss!" was Violet's thought, on recalling her delightful dream. Would the mother of Charles ever smile on her, and talk of her son? She remembered the stinging words so lately wrung from him—"All mothers are alike; cold, proud, and ambitious." And did these words too truly speak his experience of the mother whose generosity to her stepson was the theme of praise—of her on whom his fortunes depended—who had, until now, held the first place in his affections—with whom he had lived in as cordial, confiding intimacy, as perfect reliance, as if she had been the most devoted elder sister. "Is it my lot to sever hearts so affectionately knit, so tenderly united?" was the more mournful and regretful idea of Violet, in pursuing this train of thought; and then hope, the ever-springing,

would whisper—"If she would do me the honour to know me—so amiable and gentle as she is, so indulgent and kind as Herbert speaks her—prejudice might lessen. But identifying me with this family—with the forward audacity of some of them, and the equivocal position of all of us—can I blame Mrs. Herbert for seeking to withdraw her son from such society, and especially from an intimacy which she must consider unworthy and degrading? How will he venture to tell that proud and dear lady that his thoughts have strayed to poor me?—Heaven forbid that I should be the means of creating a breach between them!"

With the generous elevation of genuine affection, ever seeking as its greatest good the happiness of its object, Violet fancied she *could* resolve, and that she certainly *would* resolve to do whatever the lady, whose claims on the duty and gratitude of her lover were so strong, and who so disinterestedly desired his honour and happiness, should deem most for his advantage. Yes, she would voluntarily give him up; try to forget all that had passed—her hopes, her dreams; and there came soothing with the energetic thought—"Whatever is best for Charles, that I can do." And then crept in the sweet sophistry of love, whispering that perhaps her great sacrifice might not be required—to this overwhelming extent not.

That after her indisposition no one came near her during the long night, was not surprising to Violet in this family: but she wondered that no noise of company, no sound of music or dancing, was heard. And then she imagined that she had slept long; that it must be very late; that most of the company were gone; and the young men, and the few ladies who usually remained, set in to that stillest of pastimes, deep play. As she lay in the dark, her imagination in full activity, the sense of dead stillness became almost oppressive. Once or twice she fancied it broken by a footfall, and a rustle of motion near her door, under which the light as of a candle suddenly streamed, and she at last called out—"Is any one there?"

"Marmarzelle, it's I," was blown through the keyhole, in the voice of Mike Twig. "Marmarzelle, open; I have a summut to say from Master Charles; it's life and death!"

Violet instinctively rose, hurriedly dressed herself, and opened the door, where stood Twig, screening a candle with his broad hand, seemingly much afraid, and yet looking particularly knowing.

"Marmarzelle, Master Charles says you must cut your stick," whispered Twig; and Violet stared in amazement.

"What do you mean?"

"You must run off, Marmarzelle, break your 'prenticeship—that's the thing! The 'ole 'ouse has been a' topsy-turvy while you were a-sleeping. Sally sent off her box last night, and cook will steal off this morning; the p'lice is after Master Jack Squintin, and the cotchpols have a-got the governor. There's a resurrection in the house, Miss; and if you would like your bits o' odds and ends smuggled out, I would get Mrs. Herbert's Bob to place 'em in the hay-room with mine till dark, as you are a fellow-servant in distress, like."

And Mike nodded complacently; nor could Violet, however perplexed by the friendly proposal, be offended by what was meant in honest kindness.

"Thank you very much, Twig. Although there should be an execution in the house, which I do not understand, I shall not require your services; at least not yet, nor in the way you mention: but you have a message for me, you said. How is that?"

"A letter, Marmarzelle," whispered Twig; "but hush, and I'll tell you all about it first. You see, Miss Polly sends me with a letter to Mr. Charles to his mamma's, where was a grand party, to go bail for Mr. Cripps, I s'poses; and so he comes and has a conference with the bums, and pen-and-ink work; and then they walks off, and then I lets out Mr. Charles; but more of 'em comes since. 'Twig,' says he, 'you are a clever fellow;' and he tips me with a half sovereign, Miss. It was too much, it was," said Twig, overcome with the recollection of the largesse. "'Could you,' says he, 'deliver a note from me to Miss Hamilton, either to-night, if possible, or else very early in the morning?'"

"'With all the pleazare in life,' says I; 'I'll send it up in Marmarzelle's little boots, when I clean 'em.' And so he laughed, and out with a gold pencil in the hall, and scribbles like fire and tarnation; and 'here,' says he, 'deliver this yourself, with safety and speed, and you shall not repent it.' And so, Marmarzelle, knowing I was but a poor lad, without a place or a character, who might soon be on the wide world, I promised; and I wished to give you a warning, too, Miss, and help off your boxes to Bob's hay-room."

"Give me the letter," cried Violet, eagerly, "and be in the way, pray, in an hour or less. Hist!"

"O Lor' ! it's Miss Polly and the old dragon not a-bed yet ;" and Twig, extinguishing his candle, ran off ; while Violet shut and bolted her door, undiscovered.

"Are you asleep, Mademoiselle?" said Miss Cripps, in a minute afterwards, trying the door. "I hope you are quite well, now. I wish particularly to see you for a minute ; open your door." There was no resource. "I have a favour to beg of you, Gabrielle. Barker and I have agreed, to-night, the license and all being ready, instead of a vulgar wedding, to steal quietly away to church to-morrow morning : you must accompany me. We shall spend the day at Richmond, and, perhaps, make a little home-tour ; but you can return from the church door with Jack. There, that's a love," kissing the elected bridesmaid. "Now, do be drest in time. Don't you envy me ? but your turn will come, dear. Good night."

The probable nature of the missive in the custody of Mr. Twig was, to our heroine, an affair of much greater interest than even a wedding and the office of bridesmaid to the prudent Polly, who had discovered that no time was to be lost in securing her matrimonial felicity. But Twig had either gone to sleep, or been afraid to come back ; for three anxious hours of broad daylight had elapsed before, rapping on the chamber-door, he sung out "Marmarzelles' boo-orts!" in the manner he had acquired in his first place in the inn at W—— ; and, with a beating heart, Violet extricated her letter, and nodded in return to the knowing look of Mike, who whispered her :—

"I'll take 'em still, Miss, to Bob's hay-room."

The hasty note of Herbert ran thus :—

"DEAREST VIOLET, — The affairs of poor Cripps have taken a turn which compels me to urge you, for your own sake—may I not venture to add, for my sake—to leave his house immediately. Would that you had never entered it! This I had resolved, at all events, to urge upon you in the interview which I promised myself the happiness of having with you to-day, but which a series of most perplexing and unforeseen events will, I fear, prevent. I had trusted to find my mother's house open to you in this emergency : but her prepossessions are not easily overcome. Delicately as we are situated, I must not, as I at first proposed, take you away myself, although you were as willing to rely upon my prudence as I hope you are

to confide in my honour and my love : but I go, on the instant, to provide a temporary refuge for you ; a safe and respectable, if a humble one. It is with your faithful old nurse, Mistress Linton. The person who delivers this is honest and respectful, and will give you every assistance in his power : but it is upon yourself I rely,—upon your decision and courage, in this, the first of many difficulties which we may have the happiness to encounter and surmount together. I shall be in misery until I hear of your being safe in Fleet Street, which unless I learn by ten o'clock, I shall be compelled to brave all consequences and carry you off. But I rely, my own dearest Violet, upon your firmness and promptitude where their exertion is so needful to us, who, with one heart have henceforth but one honour, one interest, — Poor Cripps is not so bad as those about him."

The part of Violet, on receiving this note, was easily determined. She found a pretext for again seeing Twig, whose greatest distress seemed to be "Marmarzelles" not getting her boxes smuggled off into Bob's hay-loft. The main difficulty now was the "ugly customers" who, having charge of the house, kept possession of the keys, and who were still asleep upon Mr. Shuffleton's rich damask sofas, on which they had unceremoniously thrown themselves. When awakened by Twig, though the principal growled a little, no opposition was made to a very pretty girl who carried nothing with her, not even a basket, going out on an errand, and Violet found herself alone in the street, and without a home. Comfortless and perilous as was that which she had clandestinely forsaken, it was not abandoned without pain. Feeling that every eye was upon her, reading her story in her face, and half afraid that she had taken an improper and rash step ; reproaching herself with leaving the family in their distress without a word at parting, she flew on, rather than walked, until, after making more than one wrong turn, she found herself in Fleet Street.

The tenement, of which Mistress Linton occupied a floor, in this ancient locality, was her own property. The principal floors were let to a tailor and milliner, who had taken their lot in matrimony together, but with whom Marion had few dealings. In her own phrase, she "lived within herself." Instead of using the common kitchen of the sunk floor, Mrs. Linton had, by well-planned alter-

ations, formed out of the attic floor a complete suite of apartments for herself—a house within a house—of which its owner's great boast was, that she "could lock her own stair-foot door, and put the key in her pouch; a comfort which Lon'oners, living in joint-occupancy, never knew, living as they do *higgledy-piggledy*, and cheekie for chowie, gentle and simple, good and ill, a' through ither."

Marion flattered herself that she had apartments which, both from their comfort and seclusion, were not unworthy of receiving "a born gentleman's" daughter in distress.

It was with some faintness of heart and misgiving that Violet timidly rung the bell at the door up two pair of stairs which shut in this Scottish fortalice, in the heart of London. The consciousness of her very delicate situation, and the recollection of the gruff and homely, if not rude manners of her patroness, did not lessen the sense of shrinking apprehension, for which there was never less cause. The door gave way at once, as if Marion had stood behind it; and there she was, her shrewd and intelligent features beaming with cordial welcome, ready to receive her expected guest.

"You knew, then, I was coming?"

"And glad and proud was I to hear it. Over lang amang that crew o' rieving tinklers, hinny; but," and making a signal of silence, while slightly pointing to the regions below, she carefully bolted inside her "ain stair-fit door," and then ushered her guest up the narrow and rather dark, but neatly carpeted stairs, and suddenly threw open the door of her parlour, of which the sunny lightness, the extreme neatness, and even elegance, made Violet start, and half scream with delighted surprise. The dwelling was more like the lantern of a light-house than an attic floor in Fleet Street. It was in the back of the house, looking to the Thames, and commanding a gay sweep of view, bounded by the Surrey hills.

"It is a decent bit pairt," said the flattered landlady, in reply to Violet's exclamatory compliment, "and maybe cost twa or three bawbees striking out the outshot window, and making the other bits of repairs and easements: but what is world's gear without world's comfort. A proud woman its mistress will be, if ye find it a pleasant hame till a better offer: but the coffee is ready and hot, and ye have had a race this morning, I'm thinking, Miss Violet."

A silver coffee-pot was simmering over a spirit-lamp of the same metal, and, on a

rather small table, covered with snowy damask linen, breakfast was set out with peculiar neatness. There were even fresh flowers, and cream, and Scottish marmalade,—the whole served in delicate china.

"I would like weel to make ye comfortable," said the hostess, kindly.

"And this is the very seat of comfort. How have you contrived to make so nice a home out of a London garret, and to gather so many elegancies, and even luxuries about you?"

The open window of the airy chamber in which Violet had deposited her bonnet, admitted the soft, fresh breeze from the river, that moved the light muslin curtains of the little French bed, which Violet afterwards learned had been hastily put up early that morning for herself; for Marion's dwelling had hitherto contained but one substantial, old-fashioned bed.

"I was bred amang the great folks, and like things right and tight about me; and, in my line, I have had good opportunities to pick up an orra thing or twa, as a bit china, or an auld-fashioned bit o' silver wark, or the like o' that ebony knock on the bracket aboon the buffet—they say it was the Duchess of Marlborough's; or that japan clock—it is real japan the case; and, the auld spinnet—to think o' me buying a spinnet! a spinning-wheel would be liker me; but I have ane, too, ben the house, a cock-up, made o' cedar-wood, with ivory virls. They say it was Queen Mary's—no the Queen o' Scots, but Dutch William's Queen: but they may be a' lees thae clatters."

"Your house is a perfect museum of curiosities and beauties."

"It's weel eneuch; but I'm proud o' the spinnet, since you are here, Miss Violet. Keep a thing seven years, and ye'll get use for it, they say: but it's far travelled that spinnet. It's been over the Border and back again. It belanged to the auld Duchess Anne, of Monmouth and Buccleuch, they say; though I'll no just uphaid that. But I have walth o' books, too; ye'll no need to feel languor here, I hope. There's Burns, and Allan Ramsay, and the Marrow, and Logan's Sermons—that was a present, and no my choice of a divine—and some o' Sir Walter's nonsense, and the Ettrick Shepherd, and Christopher North, who is far mair naturaler, to my thought, and gars me mony a time rive my cheeks wi' laughing by my lee-lane here. I dare say pussey there thinks I'm daft."

"You live in Fairyland," said Violet, approaching the large broad window, and gazing out upon the bird's-eye prospect, where the endless variety of objects was seen as if by a camera obscura.

"A fairy land in which ye maun dree your wierd for a time," replied Marion, smiling graciously. "But ye maun take some breakfast before we have any farther speak, though I ken fine what your een are asking. Meat and mass never hindered wark."

They sat down; and Marion, in a distinct and solemn voice, reverently craved a blessing upon the "offered mercies," and breakfast was begun. If there was any thing amiss, it might be the excessive pressure of hospitality.

"I have not made so good a breakfast in England," said Violet, in warding off fresh attempts to force food down her throat. "Every thing is so excellent and so nice; and—I suppose Mr. Herbert called?"

"Ou, ay did he, or how should I have kenned I was to have the pleasure of getting you to mysel for a gliff, hinny? But I have never been able to fa' into the fashion o' the hungry London breakfasts, lang as I hae sojourned in the tents o' Kedar; a bit wizened toast, scarted ower wi' a scruffin' o' butter, and a blash o' tea, without milk or cream; but if Mr. Charles had sooner advertised me, I could have had a rizard haddock, as well as a caller egg for ye."

"Many, many thanks! but indeed you are too good to me; you must not mind me so much, else I shall fear that I am troublesome."

"Ne'er say that word again," said Marion, hastily. "But I see ye are hungrier for my news than my refections, which is but natural; sae just sit ye down a blink, and crack to the canary; the cat and him are grand freends; we are a weel greening family up in the sclates here. I cannot say one word till all my odds and ends are put to rights about me."

Violet amused herself with observing the quiet neatness, the despatch without bustle, with which this notable housewife restored her gala breakfast equipage to its place, and arranged her bird-cage, her "lamp-o'-light" parlour, as she called it; yet, imperceptibly, Marion's young guest sunk into reverie.

"Heh! but that was a lang deep sigh to come from so young a breast, Miss Violet; d'ye ken the freit of our country, my dear, that at every sigh a red drap o' life's blood falls from the heart? Ye maun have been tyning mony draps of your young heart's blood of late, I fear, hinny?" continued the

old woman, sitting down by Violet, and saying, in yet kindlier and more earnest tones, "And now, dear bairn, what think ye is to come o' ye?"

This was one of those questions that are much more easily put than answered.

"Alas! I cannot tell!" replied Violet, in pathetic and desponding tones.

"Weel, weel, I was an auld fool to speer. At a' rates, jewel, ye must not let down your heart,—that is, a'thegither down; for if it be between Mr. Charles and you, as I jalouse—na, as he as good as telled me, when he knocked me up out o' my bed yestreen, for he is an honourable gentleman—though there may be a crook in your lot just at the first, if ye are baith leal and true-hearted, which I cannot misdoubt, a' will come right at the last—I cannot fear it."

Violet's soft moist eyes beamed sweet thanks for this consolatory hope. "Mrs. Herbert," continued Marion, "is, no doubt, a lofty, pridefu', scheming woman; and she dotes on Mr. Charles, whom she thinks mair than worthy of the Princess Royal of England, if we had ane, let alone Lady Laura Temple; and if she thought ye were to come between him and her Ladyship, I believe she could see ye at the back-o'-beyont, lady-born though ye be, and bonny innocent lassie as ye are."

Another deep involuntary sigh was the only commentary.

"To mend a young man's fortune by breaking his heart, is a queer proof of regard; though, no doubt, it is a grand match Yearl Tarbert's daughter; and Lady Laura, by a' accounts, is out of her mind for Maister Charles."

Another deep sigh was, to the garrulous old lady, the silent reproof of her inconsiderate talk; and, as if afraid of crushing her young guest too far, she now attempted encouragement.

"But if ye are his fancy, hinny—and, for my part, if I were a young gentleman, I never could fancy these high-mettle stately dames—if ye are his fancy, that settles the matter in a sense; though, as to Mrs. Herbert's consent, I own I see no hope o' that; and for Mr. Charles to marry without it, would not only be undutiful, all matters considered, but certain beggary and ruin to ye both. Now, though I'm far from believing that it's aye the case that, when Poverty comes in at the door Love flies out by the window, I fear there is something in that, like every ither auld byword; or, at

any rate, love finds but a cauld and dowie fireside. Weel, but sigh nae mair; that does nae good."

"I cannot help it," said Violet, sadly. "When Mr. Herbert comes, I shall know better what to think. I have but one right course of action—whatever is best for Charles; and that must be to part. What would you, my kind friend, who are wise and experienced, have done in my painful circumstances?"

"Now, Miss Violet, that's a puzzler. The wisdom of Solomon could not manage to please a' parties; so I am gay and feared that, at your years, I would just have pleased myself and him I liked best:—ta'en my joe and my chance of his having the world for the winning—and left the leddy-mother to come to hersel' when she tired; though I'm far from saying that would be the right course. Puir working folk, like me, have the whip-hand o' the gentles there; for it's no' what they really want with the great folk, but what nonsense and bravery they maun hae, whether they need it or no."

Mistress Marion was now obliged to go out on household errands, as well as to carry the gratifying intelligence to Herbert that their mutual plan had succeeded; and it was agreed that, as the safest way, Violet should be left under lock and key.

Left alone, and having read over Herbert's note at least six times, she tried to amuse herself by reading the newspaper, where the paragraph, grandly announcing her appearance at the private rehearsal, and detailing her romantic and imaginary history, made her cheeks tingle with anger and proud shame.

"And this tissue of impudent falsehoods is to meet the eye of Mrs. Herbert. How she must despise the heroine of such a tale!"

These painful reflections dismissed, she endeavoured, for the fiftieth time, to imagine what detained Herbert; how he could be occupied, that at such a crisis he could not spare one five minutes to converse with her. At all events he could write; and, perhaps, Marion might—nay, she certainly would—bring a note from him on her return.

Making a mental picture of the curious and valuable antique moveables crowded around her, was her next employment, which was interrupted by a ringing at Marion's stair-foot bell, gradually becoming more furious, and which, at length, brought out some of the other lodgers, to announce to the

noisy assailant that Mrs. Linton was probably from home, and had, as usual with her, locked up her apartments. To this the voice of Jack Cripps responded, in Jack's loudest and most brassy tones, that "the old woman might go to the devil and shake herself, but that there was a young one certainly secreted in her apartments, who had, early that morning, eloped from her guardian; that he was empowered to find and carry her back to her lawful protectors, and her he would have." The tailor, followed by his lady, the milliner, now came forth, to expostulate with the clamorous gentleman who startled the house from its propriety; but Jack stormed and swaggered the more, and threatened the police, that ultimate horror of respectable London housekeepers; and that he would throw the door on which he thundered on its back, if it was not opened: when, at this critical juncture, Mrs. Linton herself appeared.

"Break open my door, ye dirty dandy!" cried the indignant Scotswoman; "let me but see you try your hand at it. Open my door at your command indeed! ye needy, seedy, swindling skemp! Gie the young lady up to your custody, or your father the Professor either—that is, allowing I had her in mine, of which there is no proof;—no, if I wared the last plack in my purse, and the last drop of blood in my veins, to keep her frae ye, and the pack o' ye. A black sight it was when first she saw ye. Sae down the stair wi' ye, ere I take the besom to ye."

"I take you witness, ma'am," to the milliner; "you are my witness, sir," to the tailor; "and all of you, that this woman, forcibly and illegally, secretes a runaway apprentice—my father's artied apprentice—whom I am empowered to carry back to her master; and who may be sent to Bridewell for her misconduct, with this old lady to keep her company."

Scottish blood could endure no more, and Mistress Marion, making a desperate clutch at Jack's whiskers, while the tailor interfered to keep the king's peace, exclaimed—"A prentice! ye ill-faured, hairy-faced, misleared knave! Major Hamilton's daughter—a born gentlewoman, highly connected wi' the best blude in Scotland, a fiddler's prentice! A bonny like tale." And Marion laughed aloud in bitter derision, shouting again, "Tramp, sir! aff wi' ye, or I'll mak ye."

"I scorn to answer your vulgar abuse, you

foul-tongued Scotch beldame," said Jack, grandly. "Once more I order you to open your door and give up the girl, or I shall call in the police and have it burst open."

"Ay, call the police, my bonny man, it will save me the trouble; for I was just thinking o' calling them myself. Have ye any notion whereabout that picture of the naked laddie riding on a goose, Mr. Shuffleton was so proud of, rode off to this same morning, or late yestreen? A picture that cost £85; but a fool and his money is soon parted. Do you, Mr. Snipson," to the tailor, "that haves long kept lodgers, know any thing anent the statutes against their pawning or stealing the furniture o' their rooms?"

"What does the old witch mean?" said Jack, somewhat taken aback, and faltering in tone.

"I mean *Bow Street*, and no less; to be followed in due time by the Old Bailey, unless ye take the ill-favoured, bristly, pig's-face o' ye off, and never let it darken my honest door again."

"I tell you, good folks, this odious wretch has a young girl locked up in her rooms, whom she has sold to a gentleman. That girl is my father's apprentice; you will surely assist me to rescue her from ruin."

"Will ye dare, ye most impudent of profligates!" bellowed Marion. "Let me at him; let me at him, Mr. Snipson. My corruption is fairly raised now. Sell her to a gentleman! It's you and the like o' you would put innocence into peril and temptation; and there is news of that same the day. But Providence is aye a match for the devil in the long run; and, under Providence, her ye mean, ye vagabond, is in the care of friends, who both can and will protect her."

"Under the protection of Mr. Charles Herbert? I suspected as much, ma'am," replied Jack, sneeringly, "though I scarcely expected you to be so frank with me."

"Let me be guided to hand my hands off him," screamed Marion, now fairly shouting for the assistance of the civil power. "If ye get Botany Bay, or strap for it, as mony a prettier man has done for far less, ye're blood be on your own head, birkie. Let him that stirs up a fray beware of the redding stroke."

How the matter might have ended, it is difficult to say; for Jack, seeing affairs getting unpleasant, nimbly tripped past his foe-woman, and, with a volley of genteel slang oaths, promptly took his departure, but whistling, as he descended, to show the tailor and

his wife that he was not afraid. Jack's shabby-genteel appearance, and the weight and consideration of Mrs. Marion as a woman of property, and a housekeeper of long standing, made exactly the impression which a low fellow, apeing the gentleman, running in debt on all hands, and, above all, bilking his tailor, might have been expected to do on Mr. and Mrs. Snipson; to whom the most odious and detestable of all human compounds was exactly such a character.

Without pausing to gratify their curiosity about her alleged inmate, Marion opened her door, locked it, as usual, inside, and ascended to her *sanctum*, where she found the fair cause of dispute pale and trembling.

"I must crave ye ten thousand pardons, Miss Violet: ye heard the collieshangie then, dear?—The dirty dandy!" Marion's most contemptuous expression of her strongest feelings of disgust for filth and finery. "I had little to do to file my tongue wi' him. If it had not been that I am amaist as unwilling to have your young name brought into a brulyement, or posted through the public prents, as Mr. Herbert himself can be, I should have laid his feet fast; but ye would be made come forward as a witness, and be reported in the papers, wi' your name at full length; for if a cat kittle in Lon'on, now, it maun be gazetted the next mornin'."

"I am afraid something very unpleasant has happened to Mr. Cripps and his family."

"An Old Bailey business it should have been—pack of swindling vagabonds—and that unchanged, impudent dog the worst among them: but they are, like all such gentry, ower weel friended. If a poor starving family had played a thousandth part o' their tricks from pure want, it would hae been transportation at the least."

"Weel, but I have not tell'd ye I have seen Mr. Charles wi' a this, and a glad man was he. But I'm glad to see you smile again. He took hand and glove o' me to take the best of cares of ye, till he could come himself; though there is some mischief the matter wi' him the day, that I cannot make out. He's no himsel'. One thing, however, I have to cheer ye; though not from him, but Mr. Shuffleton's attorney, Mr. Charles, like a man of spirit and honour, as he is, has redeemed your captivity, whatever that gley'd blackguard means by persisting in calling you his father's prentice. Last night, when they met in conclave—auld Cripps in the custody of the officers, and as near transportation as a man can weel be,

that's no tried yet—Mr. Charles took the whole affair, anent Shuffleton, on his own shoulders—and, I warrant ye, £1500 will not clear him—on condition that he got up your indentures, or whatever the black bond is called: so ye are a free woman, hinny, and he a sair-bound man, I fear, unless he come in his lady mother's mercy; for I'm sure he can no more raise fifteen hunder than I can fifteen million."

Violet was overcome with the conflicting feelings to which this announcement gave rise.

"O, what can I do for him who has acted so nobly by me?" she involuntarily exclaimed, clasping her hands passionately, while the tears burst forth in streams.

"Indeed, hinny, ye must just make him a good wife, and a *very* good wife; I ken nae ither way ye have of making it up to him."

"That is a happiness of which I dare not dream."

"Hoot, ay! It would be hard if huz bits o' silly women bodies durst not have our bit dreams: but ye must take a morsel of dinner, hinny; I ordered a cutlet or two, and an apple fritter, from a place I can trust; and there's a bottle or two o' good auld sherry in that *gard-de-vin*, with the brass hoops; and that's the callant with the tray at the lower bell. Na!" continued Marion, listening, "it's that confounded claverin tawpie, Jenkins, Mrs. Herbert's waiting-maid, come to deliver herself of some nonsense, or else to spy out the nakedness o' the land; but, either way, she'll meet her match here. It's like she's so fu' o' news she cannot carry hame without spillin'; so I'll let her in, and ye'll step into the inner chaumer, hinny, and never heed what she says, for it's just as like to be lees as truth."

Marion seemed to have great faith in locked doors; she turned the key upon Violet, and went down stairs to admit the lady's-maid.

Mrs. Jenkins was a person of immense importance in her own way; and one of the first information, particularly in whatever related to matters with which she had no concern. After recovering her elegant West-End fatigue, from ascending so many flights of vulgar steep stairs, she announced that she had come abroad about the outfit of Mr. Charles, in what she delicately termed "under wearables." "The careless fellow is so accustomed to depend on *us*, that I don't think he could do more for himself in getting a new *chemise* than a baby."

"Is he going to be married that you are fitting and outfitting the young gentleman?" asked Marion.

"Not that *we* know of, at least not *officially*. The truth is, ma'am, *disagreeables* will occur in the best-regulated families; *our* young gentleman has got into a scrape and completely forfeited favour; a sad rumpus there has been about it. My Mrs. Herbert diplomatically allowed Mr. Shuffleton's solicitor to carry matters yesterday to extremity with these Cryppes or Croppes, or whatever they are, to shame Mr. Charles out of an intimacy so very improper, and the foolish young man has plunged himself the more deeply into the volcano. He has, *entre nous*, been inveigled by an artful and immoral girl into a *ley-azong dangerouse*."

"A what, said ye?" interrupted Marion, gruffly.

"A connexion, ma'am, which young gentlemen will form with improper creatures of the other sex, not of the most moral kind; and which English modesty veils under the delicacies of a foreign language," responded the refined waiting-maid.

"It's a confounded lee! and that's plain braid Scotch, as ye may tell your leddy mistress frae me, or whoever else says the same to ye. If Mr. Charles is attached to a young gentlewoman, who is his full equal in blude and birth, or if he has made her an offer of marriage, it is all in honour and innocence, I'll be sworn, as becomes them baith; and that I have from a sure quarter."

"Indeed, ma'am! Well, to be sure, great liberties are taken with young ladies' names; even I myself have been victimized in that style. But it must be all a mistake," continued Jenkins, with a sarcastic air. "You ought to know better than a *confidential* like your humble servant. It can't be true that *my* lady has cut off her stepson with a shilling, and settled the whole of her fine fortune on the younger children of Lady Laura Temple, when she shall be Lady Laura Herbert; or, failing that, upon Lady La. herself. The truth is, Mistress Linton, we saw that nothing but strong diplomatic measures could save that misguided youth from ruin; Charles goes abroad immediately as ambassador-*sub* under the Earl. Lady La., dear creature, accompanies her noble father; our young man forms a member of the family; so it is all *en traing*, as we say. You will, I fancy, find my information, pretty correct, ma'am," continued the lady, rising with dignity.

"And has Maister Charles really agreed

to go abroad?" inquired Mrs. Linton, somewhat taken aback.

"Is he stark mad, think ye? An extravagant, self-willed young man, without a shilling, but what my lady pleases to give him, dispute my lady's plans for his own honour and advantage indeed! However, *entre nous*, and under the seal of confession, as you are an old adherent, like myself, of the family, I think I may be a little more frank. But if one word should transpire to alarm the delicate pride of Lady La. about this creature——"

"Then ye better keep your news to yourself, mem."

But Mrs. Jenkins brooked no such check.

"We have but one course to take with our young man: he *must* go abroad ambassador-sub, as I said; and, in due time, marry Lady La.; or walk into the Fleet if he please; for he has taken engagements upon himself for that improper girl, from which, without help, he never can extricate himself. Well, yesterday, the King, who quite swears by our friend the Earl, sends for him post haste to Windsor—her Majesty, the Queen, lately taught Lady La., who is quite a prime favourite, a new stitch in knitting, that I'll show you some day—and dubs him ambassador, when he drives post to our house in the Park, and proposes the sub-ship for our misled young gentleman. My Mrs. Herbert quite jumped at the offer. 'It has always been my ambition,' she remarked, 'to see Charles devoting his talents to the service of king and country.'"

"The country is vastly obligated to her and the like of her," remarked Marion, gruffly, and not at all sure how this arrangement might affect the feelings or interests of her guest in the inner-room.

"Well, but there was a counter diplomacy on foot, most afflicting to us;—the very means taken to bring the swindlers to justice, a sad, low, immoral set, those to whom you—and I am sure inadvertently—let Mr. Shuffleton's house, ma'am,—turned against us; and in the general break-up, our foolish boy is inveigled to take the girl into keeping; and, would you believe it, fought a duel about her this morning, with our old family friend, Sir George Lees. Hist! what noise is that? sure no one overhears us, ma'am."

"Go on," cried Marion, impatiently staring and bursting. "He was not hurt, any way?"

"O no, only a trifling graze in the occipital regions: no wound save in honour! That, as my lady said,—'that is deadly.' She

was half frantic; the family solicitor killed a horse in driving round in a cab to gag all the editors. But the fracas will get wind; and fancy the foolish boy meeting his best friend Sir George on the hostile field about such a paltry concern as that, and telling my lady to her face, that he would marry her to-day yet, if she would have him; there was no other course left him, as a man of honour, and that my lady only precipitated, by her rash interference, what must be."

"Bravely said, Maister Charles. It's just like ye:—but it's a ravelled hasp altogether," said Marion, hoarsely.

"As if to exasperate us beyond endurance, what does Madame Ramsden to-day, on hearing the Cripps were turned out of doors in disgrace, but send in a bill which the girl had run up with her, one day that our poor infatuated Charles took the very great liberty of putting her into our carriage; when, like a true female swindler of the first water, she drove round among our tradespeople, and ran up enormous bills for goods of all sorts."

"That would be Miss Polly."

"No, the other Miss."

"I'll hardly believe that."

"Oh, because she is Scotch; 'good patriotism, but bad logic,' as my late lady said one day." And Mrs. Jenkins, now on her feet, and smiling at her own wit, twitched her shawl, while she aimed another dagger. "Nothing can be more illiberal, I am aware, than national reflections, ma'am, which are quite cut in good society; and, no doubt, improper female characters may be found even in England; but a circumstance occurred, immediately before I came abroad, that you will allow really was a little too much. Fancy this creature sending her boxes into our house, to be taken care of for her, after she had gone off to our deluded boy—sent, no doubt, by his direction. I thought it a duty incumbent upon me to apprise my lady. 'Any thing but this I could have forgiven,' she observed. I never saw her so angry before. 'This is unpardonable insult to my widowed roof. My husband's son must learn that it is possible to press me too far.' Yet, so dotingly fond is she of this unpardonable young man, that, if his disgrace could only be concealed from Lady Laura, and he could be coaxed and got abroad with the Earl, I fear she would have the weakness to forgive him all."

"I am not just sure of how far her gracious forgiveness is needed," said Marion. "We have a' something to forgive to ane anither;

though I am wae to think so much should have come between such near and dear friends. She was so fond and proud o' him; and he was as fond of her as ever real son was of true mother."

A faint groan from the adjoining apartment startled the waiting-maid.

"I beg your pardon; but I was not aware you had company," said Jenkins, colouring.

"I have company, mem, and good company, but safe company too; so ye need not fear for a' ye have said here, though ye should be cautious o' your tongue elsewhere. And now, good afternoon to ye; let na me keep you longer from preparing Mr. Charles' outfit; it may be needed."

When Marion, her visiter fairly down stairs, unlocked the door of the chamber, its inmate fixedly looked on her in silent, unutterable anguish.

"Dinna look to me that awful way, hinny sweet. Surely ye cannot believe the half of that prying pyet's clavers. Hers is but the chamber-maid's gospel, according to the key-hole; and ill-hearing makes ill-rehearsing. If there be truth in it, we will soon hear a' the outs and ins from Maister Charles himself. And was no ye proud to hear what he said o' you, dearest? A rash word it was to his proud mother, too; but he said nearly the same thing in substance to myself this forenoon:—"Mrs. Linton, ye must give me Miss Violet, and your blessing, when I come next to see you, an' I'll no believe myself a sair ruined man: do prepare her to accept me." Only he said it, no doubt, in English; but that, ye ken, comes to the same thing.—And what is mair, since a' has come to a', I think ye maun just take him aff hand."

"How shall I deserve his matchless love?" cried Violet, rising up from the bed upon which she had flung herself in anguish; and her eyes gleaming as if with the sudden inspiration of high resolution, she went on:—"I have but one course left, and if *it* fails, honour forbids that I should longer shrink or throw from me the crowning blessing of my life, the immediate hope of being Herbert's wife. Oh, let me now deserve that dear happiness, by proving myself not wholly unworthy of it, and I leave the rest to Heaven."

"What, dearest Miss Violet, do ye mean? Sit down, hinny; ye are sair flurried."

"No, no; I cannot rest. I will go to Mrs. Herbert, and will throw myself at her feet: I will tell her the whole truth; I will compel her to listen to me—for the friendless orphan's sake; for the sake of honour and

womanhood; for his sake, so inexpressibly dear to us both. And I have a presentiment that she will listen to me. I will put my heart, my fate into her hands!"

Mrs. Marion looked, for a minute, as if overcome, and as if fearful that her young friend was going deranged; but she was a woman of clear head and strong character, quite capable of comprehending the course of action which Violet indicated, and gradually her troubled eye cleared and brightened, and she too rose, saying with solemnity—

"Then go; and the Lord speed your errand! and He will, for surely this is His inspiration. Light is comin' in on us out of darkness. But let me help ye to dress, hinny; or will I rin for a coach?"

"Come with me yourself; that will be better—and no time be lost."

And this was done. Though, on reaching Mrs. Herbert's house, and having ascertained that she was alone, Marion contrived to smuggle her protégée up stairs without the knowledge of the vigilant lady's-maid, she also judged it better not to tarry herself, save just to see Violet rush in and throw herself at that lady's knees.

CHAPTER X.

Mrs. HERBERT sat, sad and solitary, in a corner of her elegant drawing-room—a book lying open on the small table near her easy chair—sunk in mournful reverie, and the traces of tears still visible on her pale face. When Violet, bent on the enterprise described in the last chapter, silently glided in and knelt before her, she started to her feet in agitation, at once recognising in the intruder the subject of her thoughts.

"Forgive me, madam, oh, forgive me!" cried the suppliant. "If I have forced myself into your presence, it is because I am the most wretched creature upon earth; and, save you, there is no one can aid me."

Mrs. Herbert stood like one struck dumb; when Jenkins, her maid, who had gained tidings of the stranger, and of Marion's manoeuvre to procure the secret interview, entered hastily and much flurried, crying—

"Miss Cripps—the youngest Miss, ma'am. Did Mrs. Herbert expect to see Miss Cripps?"

"Certainly I did not expect," replied the lady, hesitatingly; for the clasped beseeching hands, and expressive face of the distressed and agitated young creature now trembling before her, involuntarily softened her voice and manner;—"not any one," she added;

"but, I presume, the young lady has business with me. You may withdraw, Jenkins."

"Don't you fancy she may be mad, ma'am," whispered Jenkins, "to run up stairs like a wild thing, without being announced. I shall have the men-servants at hand in case she should be violent. To have the audacity to disturb Mrs. Herbert the very day after Madame Ramsden's ugly business; and the carriage and trunks!" whispered Jenkins, who had drawn the lady off, affecting great alarm for her personal safety.

Violet felt Mrs. Herbert's keen questioning eye upon her, and summoned all her resolution. She recalled to memory the confidence which Herbert had so lately said he placed in her energy and firmness. The remembrance was invigorating. It was for his sake as much as her own that she had come hither; for him she was called upon to act in this delicate emergency; and affection came in aid of understanding: the child, the timid, bashful girl, merged at once into the devoted, but intelligent and spirited woman.

"I am not mad," she said, gently smiling, "though I own my present conduct baffles apology. My friend, Mrs. Marion Linton, who accompanied me hither, will vouch for my sanity." And she continued, turning to Jenkins—"You need not fear to leave me alone with your lady."

"I'm here, hinny, to back ye," said a voice; and Mistress Marion, who was not far off, ventured to advance, and to tell Jenkins that the young lady had very confidential and private business with Mrs. Herbert.

"Miss Cripps confidential business with me!" replied Mrs. Herbert, haughtily and coldly.

"You are under a great mistake, mem, if ye think *my* young lady has ony connexion with the clan of fiddlin' swingers that spulyie the public under that name; and if ye wad be so gracious as to hearken till her story be told, ye'll maybe have no cause to repent your goodness to the fatherless and motherless orphan."

"Ordinary courtesy imposes this much on me," replied Mrs. Herbert, civilly; "though I cannot imagine the cause of so singular a request. Will you show the young lady and her friend to my dressing-room, Jenkins?—I hope I do not encroach on your time too far, ma'am, if I request you to wait for a few minutes before I can listen to the *story*?"

Violet, colouring slightly at the insulting emphasis, curtsied, and withdrew as directed.

"The *story*, qu' she!" said Marion, when

they were left alone, and mimicking Mrs. Herbert's stately manner and sarcastic tone. "But she wants to prepare herself, my dear. For as grand as she speaks and looks, she was shaking, every limb o' her, like an aspen leaf, and as white as my mutch: and what business has she to confound you with the gang, in spite o' a' Maister Charles or me can say—that's if she wad listen? But she's a politic, lang-draughted gentlewoman, and will listen to nothing but what suits her ain purpose."

"Then there is no hope left me!" sighed Violet.

"What!—d'ye think Maister Charles will be man-sworn, break his troth-plight, and gang back o' his word?"

"Oh, no, no; that I do not, though no *troth* has been plighted. But am I to blast all his prospects in life, to estrange him from his best friend, from this lady whose disfavour it is my deep misfortune to have incurred?"

"And most causelessly. Ye are carrying this ower far, my bairn: ye maunna forget yoursel a'thegither. If ye had not gained Mr. Charles' heart, I ken none would be readier than this very gentlewoman—I'll no wrong her behind her back—to have befriended a young orphan gentlewoman, in your sore plight; and now—and I am sure it is for no fault of yours though—it is plain she cannot abide ye,—and all for the sake of that lang Leddy Landers that her pride is set upon for her daughter-in-law. To give her the siller, too! My certy, auld Mr. Herbert must have been but a simple man, and her a cute madam, when he put so much in her power."

"You will never forgive that disposition of the fortune," said Violet, smiling, but sadly.

"Indeed an' I will no. I tell ye what, Miss Violet, it's no safe to gi'e womenfolk, gentle or semple, ower muckle power o' siller, or ony thing else, till they first get mair sense."

"You are not complimentary to the sex," returned Violet, now smiling rather less sadly.

"It has given me little cause. As lang as ye gi'e women-bodies a' their ain way, it's a' right enough, and they cannot do enough for ye; but once contre them, and I rede ye to expect but scant justice at their hands. They want *sense*, that's the truth o't; and where man or woman wants sense, though they may even have some glimmering o' conscience; never ye expect justice at their hands."

"Mrs. Herbert must believe that she is doing what is best for her son."

"That's the very mischief o't—for what right has she to believe ony such thing? None; but just because she likes it best herself. Every one best kens where their ain shoe pinches. Nae doubt, to her, this Leddy Laura is a silk and gowden slipper; but if the shoe pinch Mr. Charles' tae, or call it but his corn, that is, his notions, or his whims, surely he is no to be plagued for life to pleasure his stepdame's pride. The truth is, in a reasonable way, I'm a friend to true-love matches, and young folk suiting themselves. Marriage, so far as I have observed, who am but a single woman of little experience, would need to set out with all the regard and good-liking folks can muster;—with husbands mair especially, for our silly set are fond simple creatures, if we're but half-weel guided. But for Mrs. Herbert to give her idol o' quality a husband who, in his secret heart, far prefers another woman—and that's yoursel, hinny—is waur than daft; and men are contramacious mulls, [mules,] Miss Violet, as she or any woman should ken, that has had ony experience o' them. How would she like to hear that, though married to Leddy Laura, he liked another a' the better that he could never hope to get her; and maybe hated the poor innocent lady to whom pride and plottin' had yoked him; hated her in spite of himself—or, if it's no hatred, what is it but worse—life-long misery to all concerned?"

"You place the matter in a strong light," replied Violet.

"In the true light, hinny. Though I'm far from saying headstrong young folks have a right to please themselves only; yet *I am* saying, for the Lord's sake, Miss Violet, never ye countenance marrying only to please others. They take mair than a fitting 'sponsibility on themselves who would dare to demand that o' their fellow-creature, were it parent and child."—There was much to interest Violet's mind in this homely and disjointed talk; much that was jarring to her feelings, though soothing to her hopes. The conversation was, however, interrupted by a servant announcing that "Mrs. Herbert waited for the young lady."

The lady was found more composed than before, but quite as stately in her civility. She, however, beckoned her visiter to take a seat; but Violet, curtsying, did not sit down. "I attempt no apology for this intrusion," she faltered out. "Save for the

sake of one very dear to you, madam, I durst not, uninvited, and, I fear, unwelcome, have thrust myself into your presence. Mr. Charles Herbert, ma'am"—and there was a pause.

Though Mrs. Herbert perfectly recollected the girl whom she had seen at the theatre, and had met both alone and with Charles on the street, near their common residence, and whom, in spite of herself, she could not help thinking *exteriorly* a very lovely and engaging creature, the mention of her son's name ruffled her temper; and, suddenly losing her calm civility, she quickened the hesitating manner of Violet by saying—

"May I crave, *at once*, to learn your business with me, ma'am. It must be of more than usual urgency, since it makes the ordinary forms of society be laid aside."

"I have dared to think so, else had I not been here," returned Violet, finding courage in her pride. "Mr. Charles Herbert has done me the honour to give me his esteem,—nay, to pay his addresses to me. Why should I conceal that of which I have reason to believe you perfectly aware?"

"And you have accepted them," interrupted Mrs. Herbert, in a tone of bitter scorn, and rising from her chair. "This is scarcely intelligence which you, ma'am, could fancy particularly agreeable to me."

"I have not accepted them," returned Violet, quietly, but firmly. "Would that I might!"

"What! you tell me that you have not accepted Mr. Herbert's attentions! But I am not in his confidence. I can know my stepson only as the affianced husband of a most estimable and amiable young lady, of high birth, and of excellence that far surpasses her exalted rank, to whom he was all but married, with the warmest approbation of friends on both sides,—and the fairest prospects of happiness in a fitting and honourable station in society."

"And these fair and brilliant prospects it is my ill fortune to interfere with," faltered Violet.

"I have said that in me my son places no improper confidence," said Mrs. Herbert, sternly. "If a whim, a young man's caprice—I can impute degrading folly to no higher or more stable motive—should have interfered, it will, I make no doubt, pass away. Mr. Herbert will assuredly *some time* regain his senses; and, I trust, ere it be too late."

"Oh, do not speak so severely. I am ready

to do all you wish — to renounce my dearest hopes for his sake, that he may do his duty and be happy; but not, ma'am — pardon me — to hear the sentiments that Mr. Herbert has professed for me so mistaken."

"I conclude you have learned that, unless Mr. Herbert marry the lady to whom he was engaged —"

"Was he engaged?" interrupted Violet; "did he indeed profess to love her?"

Mrs. Herbert's face fell before the earnest, inquiring, nay, rebuking eye of Violet; but she quickly replied:—

"There are many kinds and degrees of attachment, and of what is called love. The exalted sentiment which the noble lady, to whom I refer, is calculated to inspire, may differ from a fond youth's infatuated but fleeting admiration of a pretty face, and yet afford a much more solid basis for the esteem essential to the married happiness of a man of understanding and honour. I do not mean to hurt your feelings, ma'am, by what is merely a general observation. I intended to say, in return for your unexpected frankness, that the fortune which I held solely for the advantage of my son, and as the steward of his father, is already settled upon the lady whom I had reason to believe he was to have the honour to marry; so that fortune as well as respectability is bound together in that auspicious union. I talk very freely to a mere stranger; but I have reason to think that you are not unacquainted with our family circumstances, though not probably aware till now that the young person who marries my stepson, marries a beggar, bred in luxury, and without friends, fortune, or profession."

Violet flushed with displeasure from the conflict of many feelings, but she kept silent.

"The language which I use may sound harsh; but there is none other that may truly describe the condition into which Mr. Herbert's imprudence must plunge him in the circumstances contemplated."

"Were want of fortune all that is to be dreaded, I would not, madam, have intruded upon you to-day," said Violet, mildly.

"Nay, the lady may be so well endowed with worldly gifts, as to make their absence of less account in the gentleman," said Mrs. Herbert, with keen sarcasm; and the eye of Violet kindled and flashed, yet, in an instant, she whispered—

"You do not know me, madam, or I feel that you would be kinder in your judgment — more just."

"Pardon me," returned Mrs. Herbert, quickly, half-ashamed of herself, and smitten with the candid look and gentle rebuke of her visitor. "I do not indeed know you, Miss Cripps; or, pardon again, I believe that is not your name."

"I am not Miss Cripps, madam; I am nobody: a friendless orphan girl, whom Mr. Herbert has honoured and blessed by his regard. Yes! he has said he *loves* me; and though we must part—perhaps for ever—I do, I *must* believe him!" and the passionate earnestness of her features spoke exulting belief.

"What a strange creature," thought Mrs. Herbert, fixedly eyeing her.—"Is she mad or very artful; or an enthusiast like poor Charles himself? Can she fancy that she is able to fool me as she has fooled him?" The idea was irritating, and Mrs. Herbert quickly said—"Since so very good an understanding subsists between you and Mr. Charles Herbert, ma'am, I fancy it entirely unnecessary to take me farther into your confidence, especially as you must know, young woman, that it cannot be in the least agreeable to my feelings. Was it to annoy or to insult me with my lost son's infatuated folly—was it to triumph over my distress, that you came hither?"

"Oh, no, no! Alas, you do not know me! I came but to kneel at your feet, as I do now, to entreat that Mr. Herbert may be restored to your favour; and that in a little time, a very little time, I may pass away and be forgotten:—I am come to place my fate in your hands; to bid you dispose of me, decide for me."

"Singular girl: but rise, I entreat you, and sit down by me;" and the lady, taking the poor young creature's cold and passive hands, Violet was placed on a sofa, where Mrs. Herbert sat down by her.

"Am I, as I flatter myself, to understand that you see the propriety of putting an end to your intercourse—the propriety I mean of—of—your breaking off your engagement, if it ever went so far, with Mr. Herbert; of forgetting the unfortunate attachment, which bodes no good to either of you, and which to him is certain ruin. I have dealt frankly with you. Mr. Charles Herbert may, independently of me, marry whom he will. I have shown you the inevitable and distressing consequences to himself, and whoever may be connected with him."

"You do not yet understand me, madam," replied Violet. "It is enough that through me he shall never forfeit the esteem and

affection of the mother whom he loves so dearly, values so highly. It was in telling me of the tender affection, the cordial, endearing, and confidential intimacy subsisting between you, that he first taught me the more to love himself."

Mrs. Herbert's generous feelings were at last fairly touched. She hastily bent forward, as if to embrace the weeping girl, but stopt short, saying—"You are a strange, a very strange, and a very charming creature. Do not mistake me, however; you can never be my daughter: nay, take away your sweet pleading eyes: there is but one woman on earth, who, with my consent, can ever be Charles Herbert's wife. . . . And he talked to you of our uncommon affection? Very uncommon, I believe, in such a relation as ours. Is he aware of your present visit to me?"

"No, indeed: all day I have not seen Mr. Herbert."

"I presume he has been pretty closely engaged," replied Mrs. Herbert, smiling for the first time. "It is then your own spontaneous movement, to your own good sense I owe this visit? I cannot enough praise your wisdom—nay, your generosity. Charles, in his present humour, would scruple at no degree of folly, though I cannot flatter you that he might not afterwards regret his precipitance; perhaps impute a little blame to the more innocent party. I conclude that you mean instantly to return to your friends in Scotland. I have understood from Charles, that you are not altogether happy in Mr. Cripps' family; besides, they are unpleasantly situated at present."

"I have no friends in Scotland, nor any where else," replied Violet, sadly.

"No near relatives, you mean. You have had the misfortune, as I learn, to lose your parents; but friends you must have. I wish that I could in any way contribute to the happiness of one whose present line of conduct fills me with admiration."

These were flattering words; yet the heart of her to whom they were addressed, was sinking and faint. The loneliness, the hopelessness of her condition, brought before her by Mrs. Herbert's remarks, contrasted with the happiness which she thus voluntarily, and perhaps unwisely, surrendered, from an overstrained sense of what was best for him for whom she had presumed to judge. Circumstances had rendered necessary the immediate union for which Herbert had sued, and of which he had already that day

spoken to her through her humble but maternal friend. As her husband alone could Herbert give her that protection which her present condition required; and though Violet thought with glowing disdain of *her* reputation, *her* honour, depending one iota upon the casual breath, whether of praise or calumny, she also keenly felt what was due to herself. After a silence of some length, she said:—

"I have not yet spoken all that is in my heart. I came to say, that without your approbation I will never marry Mr. Herbert, but on one condition."

"You are a noble-minded, sensible creature; and I cannot say how much I admire your spirit and understanding," interrupted the somewhat hasty, and delighted lady; "but do tell me all that is in your heart. Sunshine and peace must soon gladden it, if your conduct is what I expect. You give up Charles——"

"Alas, madam, do not try me too far. To-day Mr. Herbert has let me know, through Mistress Linton, that at all hazards, and for reasons which ought to make him tenfold more dear to me, he desires our immediate union. The only friend I have in this great city—a humble, but a sincere and affectionate one—says that, in the painful circumstances that have arisen, I owe it to myself, and as the woman honoured by Mr. Herbert's choice, to consent; for——" and Violet reddened with proud shame; and with the beautiful scorn, which gave a new and higher character to her lovely face, continued—"They say that I eloped with Mr. Herbert; that I—— But I cannot further degrade myself by explanation. Will you, madam, his mother, be yourself my protector; or does honour plead with love for our immediate marriage?"

Mrs. Herbert—a woman of warm and generous sensibilities, though too much under the conventional influences to which fashionable society, more or less, bends all its members, and to which a strong attachment had, for the time, made, as she fancied, her son unwisely indifferent—was now deeply affected. With fervent admiration she clasped in her arms the girl who made this proposition, saying affectionately—

"Noble creature! yes, I will be your protector, against this and every base infamy. Welcome to my home and bosom! If any woman, save Laura Temple, could deserve my Charles, it is you, sweet Violet! You see I have already learned your pretty name. What a load you have taken from my heart,

in restoring my son to me. It is death to me to quarrel with Charles."

Violet could not fully participate in all these raptures; yet, many humiliating apprehensions were allayed by this frank offer of an honourable and safe asylum; and the soothing idea that, by her means, Herbert was reconciled to his best friend, promised to spread peace in the bosom in which hope was, probably, not yet quite extinguished.

Mrs. Herbert was not a woman to do any thing by halves where her affections were interested. An earthquake in the Regent's Park would not have surprised Jenkins more than the order given to her that the housemaid should prepare a particular chamber described, for her guest; and that Jenkins should accommodate her from Mrs. Herbert's wardrobe with whatever she required for the night. Mrs. Herbert's next and most pleasant duty was to extend the olive branch to her son, with which she proposed immediately sending forth Mrs. Marion to the Albany. The missive intrusted to this faithful emissary, bore the important tidings that Miss Hamilton was safe under the roof of the writer, where she was to remain for the present as the guest of Mrs. Herbert, and probably afterwards as her companion. "All was forgiven, forgotten; all would be arranged: let the past be buried in oblivion:" yet Charles was delicately informed, that it was expected he was to hold himself in readiness to accompany the Earl of Tarbert to Germany, and that the preparations were in a forward state. By the promptitude of the solicitor, the fracas with Sir George Lees had been hushed up without getting into the newspapers, and pecuniary matters would soon be in train for arrangement.

Not finding Herbert at his chambers, Mistress Marion, having left the note with his servant, returned to her own house, where she found him in the act of coming down stairs after a vain attempt to gain admission.

"The bonny bird is flown away, Maister Charles," said Marion, with an air of mirth that showed there was no cause for alarm; for Herbert did look alarmed: "and where has she lighted, think ye? but I'll give ye three guesses for that."

"Miss Hamilton cannot have been so unkind as to have set off for Jersey, without even seeing me," said he, "after the serious message which I am sure you delivered to her."

"Na—no just sae far. What wad ye think if she had flown over tower and tree,

mast and steeple, to find a cozy mother-nest wi' ane Mrs. Herbert i' the Regent's Park."

"You do not mean it, Marion?"

"Ay, but in good troth do I:—that's a cut aboon the common, is it no, Maister Charles? To think of Miss Violet casting her glamour ower Mrs. Herbert as weel as ower you and me, which was mair easy and natural!"

"It looks witchery indeed," replied Herbert, with animation. "If I could believe this, it would make me the happiest of men. My mother, if she once know, cannot fail to love Violet—prejudice must give way. She has already, then, felt Violet's fascinations?"

"She is there sure enough, billeted in your ain chaummer; I'm no just so sure, though, that all is to end fair at ance, like the peacock tail of auld ballant or playbook; though so far so good. But to think of the high spirit of the bit gentle creature, for as backward and diffident as she is of her nature. "Ye'll ne'er ken what spirit is in some lassies till they are tried. Now she may defy the Cripps and Crimps.—The dandy dyvour, the gley'd son, was after Miss Violet this forenoon. The auld ane is in Whitecross prison, they tell me."

"Then I am sure you gave the fellow his errand for his pains,—or a warm reception."

"What think ye I should have done, Maister Charles? for, I dare say, Miss Violet thinks me an auld randy!"

"Kicked him down stairs, in the first place," replied Herbert, laughing.

"Atweel! and I hae done many a worse turn in my time; and I'm able for this, too, if I am vexed and made fractious."

Herbert laughed. The report of Jack's attempt helped to reconcile him to the disappointment of not finding Violet here, and made him the more rejoice at the thought of her security, which had indeed removed a load from his mind. He was damped again—for what so fluctuating as a lover's moods—when, in answer to his warm expression of thanks to Mistress Linton for her unceasing kindness, before hastily taking leave to proceed to the Regent's Park, that sagacious old woman advised him to go to his chambers first and read his mother's letter.

"I'm no just sure that it's i' the bond that you are to gang courtin' under that leddy's roof, though she has kindly ta'en in the young orphan gentlewoman, maybe to keep her out o' harm's way. Ye'll no find Mrs. Herbert sae simple a body as me wi' young folk; and indeed, Maister Charles, to be

plain wi' ye, I could not either have had young gallants like you coming about my quiet house. It might hae gotten a single maiden like me a light name in the gate-end." And Marion laughed off the imagined sharp point of her jest.

"You know the nature of my present errand. I had fondly hoped that Violet, situated as we are, would have been mine with all the despatch which the forms of marriage permit. This was the object of my present visit, as much as the pleasure of seeing your guest and you."

"Nae doubt, there is great pleasure to a young gentleman in coming to see an auld wife like me! However, that's all past: new lairds, new laws, Maister Charles. Since Miss Violet is in the good custody and ward where we would both best like to see her, that may aiblins make a total change of views; or, at any rate, a delay of measures."

This was meant for a fishing observation; but Herbert either failed to perceive its drift, or was not disposed to be communicative. He went away; and Mistress Marion, after the toils and anxieties of this eventful day, upon the whole rejoiced at the turn which matters had taken with her beloved nursling—yet somewhat disappointed that her nice French bed, her uncorked pint of Sherry, and other domestic arrangements and festive preparations, had gone for nothing—sat down to her "refreshin' cup o' tea," and thus soliloquized or addressed her constant confidante, who purred up to her side.

"Aweel, pussie lass, there is no saying how all this may turn out yet for our poor young leddy. She's a lang-draughted, upsetting woman that's gotten the young thing into her clutches. I am far from either saying or thinking ill of her: but she compassed her ain ends wi' the faither, and maybe will no speed less ill wi' the son; and what comes of our bonny orphan lassie then, pussie, my woman? Oh, she'll just tyne heart a'thegither, poor dear bairn. Ay, ye may *meo!* Are ye wae for her, or are ye sayin' we'll get her back to oursels yet? And blithe would we be, pussie; but I'll no just say that Miss Violet would think an auld wife and her cat, let us do our best for her, equal to Maister Charles for her gudeman, and her ain fire-side. 'Deed I wish she had just bidden still wi' us, and we had made a waddin o't. Ay, ye'll set up your back and *mi-au* at that, ye sly limmer?" And here Marion fondly and briskly caressed her pet, and confidante.

"Na, I'll ne'er believe but that beast kens

everyword I say," continued Mistress Marion, who often found an escape for brooding thought, a safety valve, in such confidences and communications to her cat as the above. There was, however, one resolution which she neither told the cat nor her own left hand. This was, early next morning, and at her own risk, to discharge Violet's debt to Madame Ramsden, the milliner; the true history of which Violet had told her as they hurried to Mrs. Herbert's, and which Marion felt almost as a personal stigma, and a national disgrace—something that concerned the honour of Scotland, and the house of Hamilton. Violet had made a similar communication to Mrs. Herbert; and, at the same time, explained and apologized for the impertinent liberty which the zealous Mike Twig had, without any authority from her, taken in sending her trunks into Mrs. Herbert's premises without the knowledge or sanction of the owner.

How trivial now appeared those petty circumstances, which had given her hostess so unfavourable an impression of her character, when thus accounted for. Mrs. Herbert was too much ashamed of her uncharitable suspicions to acknowledge them.

Jenkins, when that night undressing her lady, attempted to revive the tale of the trunks, and received a sharp check for her pains; though, on a subsequent morning, when she maliciously informed her mistress that the bill to the importunate milliner had been settled by an *anonymous friend*, as she emphatically termed Mrs. Linton, she had the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Herbert look disturbed. Mrs. Herbert could not doubt that the "anonymous friend" was Charles, or some agent of his. This, however, was but a trifle to what she had already encountered from the same cause, and had still to meet, before her schemes were placed on a fair footing, and the desire of her soul was accomplished. In the meanwhile, nothing was so pressing as Herbert's departure from England. That effected, and his transient boyish passion kept from the knowledge of Lady Laura, there was no obstacle that time and management might not remove.

Deeming it prudent to prevent all unnecessary intercourse between her stepson and her protégée, Mrs. Herbert anticipated the expected visit of Charles by driving at a very early hour to his lodgings.

Charles was as much delighted as surprised by her appearance, of which he, however, suspected one motive; and yet once more to see in radiant good humour the face which

had never been turned on him save with kindness and affectionate frankness until yesterday, filled him with sincere joy.

"How gracious, dearest mother, to bring me your forgiveness yourself: let me hope that our first, and surely last, misunderstanding is for ever past."

"Past for ever, Charles!" replied the lady, as they cordially shook hands. "It is, I assure you, no such light matter to be, for a whole day, angry and vexed with one I love, as to make me long for the renewal of misunderstanding."

"Then, now that we are friends again, let me confess that I was rash and, perhaps, petulant the other day; but remember, dear mother, how I had been chafed, how tortured by one thing or another. I was at this moment on the eve of hastening to you, when your kindness prevented me.—Violet!"

"I had so much to say and do that I was up betimes to-day, and resolved to see what kind of bachelor housekeeping you hold. May I beg some breakfast from you, while we talk seriously of very serious business."

"If I could hope my servant might satisfy such a *gourmet*—I hope there is no feminine to that French noun—such a *gourmet* in coffee as you are."

"Robert, ma'am, begs to know if the carriage is to go home or to wait," said Herbert's servant, entering.

"To wait, by all means. I mean immediately to carry you to kiss hands, Charles;"—and Charles suddenly reddened from the delicious idea to which the words gave rise;—"to *kiss hands*," she continued, "at Earl Tarbert's, upon your appointment,—or your selection, should I rather say? It is the acknowledgment of a courtesy, nay, of an act of real and substantial kindness in the Earl, which should not be delayed for a moment. I could name twenty most eligible young men, who, with their families, would have been delighted had they your good fortune." Mrs. Herbert did not fail to interpret aright the cause of the sudden glow, and as sudden pallor, which overspread the tell-tale countenance of her son, though it was not her cue to notice these symptoms. "That ceremony over," she continued, "we must drive to my solicitor's. I shall not know an hour of peace until you are free of every paltry embarrassment. With the preparations for your journey I wholly charge myself; though the Earl must be my counsellor and guide in the needful and the becoming."

Herbert saw that his fate was sealed.

Honourable employment he had often longed for; and now the exigencies of his fortune, his deep and pressing pecuniary involvements, so much increased by what he had undertaken for Professor Cripps, and in order to Violet's release, made employment more necessary than ever; though his immediate revenue as an *attaché* certainly afforded no prospect of extricating himself without the liberal assistance of Mrs. Herbert. That was given so frankly, so cordially, so delicately, and yet so much as a matter of course, as if the fond and happy unfelt sacrifice of a mother for her darling son, that Charles could no more speak his gratitude than stop the impetuous current of her generosity, or thwart her strong self-will in fixing his destiny.

"I offer you *carte blanche*, my dearest Charles; only let us be friends; nor shall I now say one word about Laura Temple. I know what else you would say; you know I hold the key to your thoughts. Miss Hamilton is safe under my protection; no ill can happen to her, I assure you. Dame Linton and I for that, against all the Crippses in Christendom! She is, indeed, a sweet, pretty creature; and I am sure that, after you are gone abroad, and we are left to ourselves, I shall become very fond of her. At all events, it will not be my fault if she forfeit my friendship."

"I feel your kindness to Violet more, a thousand times more, than were it shown to myself," replied Herbert, warmly. "The assurance that she is safe under your care—a member of your family—makes what yesterday looked so formidable—nay, so impossible—comparatively easy to me; but I must, indeed I must, first converse with Violet. Without her approbation, it is my happiness to think that I have no longer a right to fix upon any course of life which she may not prefer, and which may, for a long period, divide us, and delay the hopes I so lately and fondly cherished."

Mrs. Herbert frowned and hemmed continuously for a second or two,—stirred her coffee, and subdued her temper.

"Miss Hamilton has constituted me, so far as depends on her, the arbiter of your fate, Charles. I would ill discharge the task I have undertaken if I failed to give you both what I consider the best counsel. Are you ready to accompany me to Earl Tarbert's?"

"As his secretary, grateful for his kindness, and anxious to show my sense of it by the zealous discharge of my duty, *Yes*; as

the humble suitor of his daughter, *No*; highly as I esteem Lady Laura Temple, and amply as I understand you have endowed her."

"Charles, and do you blame me for that?" replied Mrs. Herbert, colouring violently, and then turning very pale. "I may have been rash; I may have been misled by my anxious fears for you, by my strong affection for you, supreme over every other feeling. I had, indeed, some cause, you will allow, to imagine this poor girl a very different person from what I hope to find her."

"What you already *know* and *believe* her," said Herbert, firmly; "but pardon me for the ungenerous allusion I ventured to make just now. I have been deeply wounded by what has passed; but not alone because it leaves me a very poor man: your fortune was your own to dispose of at your pleasure."

"My fortune was mine to promote the happiness and prosperity of my husband's beloved son,—of my dearest Charles. If I have failed, the heavier punishment is mine; but we will say no more of this. Come—"

"Dearest mother, let us understand each other. I am ready to purchase your protection for my poor Violet at any price consistent with honour, and what I owe to her and to my own happiness. Ask no more. Why should those so dear to me be divided? You will learn to love her."

"Nay, Charles, I will neither ask nor accept more. Is not even the very step you condemn a proof of how dear your honour and happiness are to me?"

Had Mrs. Herbert said, "your worldly exaltation," Charles had probably fancied the phrase more correct; but he said nothing.

They drove away in somewhat forced good spirits; and, to ward off graver discussions, Mrs. Herbert gave an amusing or burlesque account of the circumstances attending the ejection of the Cripps family from Mr. Shuffleton's house, and the doings of Mike Twig, from what she called "Jenkins' edition." This brought them to the end of their drive, when the graceful mother and grateful son expressed their warm and united thanks to the gracious Earl; and without seeing the dreaded Lady Laura, who, they were told by her father, was engaged in ordering preliminary arrangements for the journey. Mrs. Herbert, on that day choosing to see no one at her own house, then drove with her son into the city. The engagements under which Charles had first and last come for Professor Cripps, and, latterly, for the

redemption of Violet, amounted to a sum which made the solicitor look grave, and which did not improve the spirits or animate the talk of any of the party. The lady made one condition, the delicacy of which Charles warmly appreciated, though the motive might be double; it was, that she personally, and not her son, should undertake the responsibility of indemnifying Cripps for his pupil forfeiting her engagements. This was now formally done, so far as depended on her; and Mrs. Herbert gaily whispered—"Now Mademoiselle is my 'prentice; but don't look dismal, Charles; I do not mean, like Mrs. Brownrigg, to starve her to death, and lock her up in the coal-hole; so I shall go home and give her some dinner. I have been such an early stirrer to-day, that I believe I must shut my doors against all the world to-night, even Lady Laura, and rest myself. You also Charles have enough to do—"

"Then I shall only present myself at your breakfast table to-morrow morning, though to-night I had hoped—"

Mrs. Herbert broke away, affecting not to hear. On returning home she found her "apprentice" looking anxious and melancholy. The excitement of her enthusiastic resolve had subsided with Violet, though her judgment approved what she had done; and the continued absence of Charles—whose name Mrs. Herbert, talking gaily of fifty things during dinner, never once mentioned—filled her with uneasiness and vague apprehension, increasing as the evening fled, and he did not appear. Mrs. Herbert, after a time, seemed absorbed in her own reflections, and pleaded fatigue as an excuse for retiring early; having, in the course of three hours, which they spent together, dexterously defeated every little scheme which her guest devised for leading to more particular conversation, until, as they shook hands to say good-night, she hastily said—"I have seen my son; we are the best of friends."

On the first night spent under this roof, Violet had been almost happy; but now, on retiring, she wept without restraint, and almost wished herself back with her humble friends in Jersey, and far away from this proud lady, who certainly treated her with politeness, nay, marked kindness, but with neither confidence nor sympathy; and with whom she was probably to be considered, while Herbert remained in England, as a kind of state prisoner. And was he to leave England, on the destination to which the waiting-maid had alluded, and in society

fatal to her hopes? Leave England, perhaps, without one word of farewell! True, she had voluntarily taken those decided measures, pointed out by a high and pure sense of what was right, and which had, in gaining for her the protection of Mrs. Herbert, also rescued her from a painful and embarrassing position, and restored him to his mother's favour:—but at what a price was this accomplished—that of the happiness of her whole future life!

Violet went to bed in a state of great nervous depression; which, when another tedious day had elapsed—like the last, spent in solitude—became anxious, torturing misery.

On the third morning, Mrs. Herbert could not help noticing how pale her young inmate looked; and, by many little, unobtrusive attentions, she attempted to cheer her. "Poor little thing," thought that lady, giving a half sigh to certain tender though faint reminiscences; "I know what she is suffering, and can pity a love-lorn damsel. Woman's lot is on her: to suffer and pine in secret—to fancy she is to be a wretch for ever—to gradually forget—to become resigned—to form new hopes—to indulge more aspiring wishes and views—to make an ambitious, if not a mercenary marriage—to have a carriage—a certain rank in society—to be, on the whole, if not a rapturously happy, yet a tolerably satisfied woman, as this girl may yet be."

As they sat together, at work, in the early hours of the morning, at every knock and at every ring Violet would half start, and, changing colour, betray her thoughts. There was one loud, prolonged knock, which Mrs. Herbert could not mistake.

"The Tarberts, my dear," whispered she. "Perhaps it might not be pleasant to you to see company. I fear you are rather nervous this morning. I am keeping you too close a prisoner; but, next week, when my friends are gone, and my time is more at my own disposal—"

Violet, becoming very pale, could but bow, and glide tottering away into the back drawing-room, whence she hoped to escape up stairs without encountering the visitors. Did Charles accompany them?—but what to her did this signify? Had she not renounced him; promised that, without his mother's approbation, they should never meet; that she would hold no correspondence with him? Love is not remarkable for consistency; and Violet once more almost repented what she

had done, and fairly wished herself back in Marion Linton's attic. She feared that she had been rash; and was even so unjust as to indulge the idea that her protectress had outwitted her, and taken an unhandsome advantage of her complicated distress. Her reason rebuked this injustice of feeling, but without mitigating her mental anguish.

The visitors remained much beyond the time of an ordinary morning call. When they went away, Mrs. Herbert sought her young guest; delicately avoided noticing her evident misery, and proposed a drive, to which Violet passively consented. Before, however, they could set off, Mrs. Herbert was again occupied with unexpected business. During dinner she looked abstracted, and, Violet fancied, cold; and when the servants had withdrawn, taking Violet's hand within her own, she said, with an effort at cheerfulness—

"My sweet guest does not repent the conditions of our agreement, or the step which has raised her so high in my esteem?"

The silent trickling tears were no satisfactory answer, nor yet the faltering—"I never can repent what is best for Mr. Herbert."

"Mr. Herbert has got it into his head, my dear, that you do not know your own mind—an opinion which men are too apt to form of ladies. Will you do me the justice to set him right, so far as to say that all that has occurred between us has been the dictate of your own understanding. You must write yourself, and explain exactly how we stand. Every hour just now is most precious to Charles; and I have promised, since less will not do, that he shall know your mind from your own hand. Let me recapitulate;—but I do not need. The fate of Charles is in your power, Miss Hamilton; and I rely upon your excellent principles and generous feelings,—so infinitely above those of an ordinary love-sick damsel, so worthy of a noble and intelligent woman."

Violet heard this unmerited praise in silence, and with downcast eyes; while Mrs. Herbert took a strange delight,—a pleasure analogous to that of an enthusiastic chemist engaged in some delicate new process, or of an anatomist in a minute dissection,—in watching the play of her features and her proceedings, as, with an absent air, she arranged the writing materials, and vacantly held the pen—her busy and painful thoughts far distant.

At last, on Mrs. Herbert rising and ap-

proaching her, she was roused to present duty:—"What shall I write, madam?"

"That I cannot dictate."

Violet made several attempts to write; commencing with saying what she felt to be chilling, and far too little, and as uniformly ending with so many more "last words," gushes of passionate feeling, as to go much farther on the other side. At last the note, which Mrs. Herbert declined reading, was sealed and despatched; and then that lady, to beguile her thoughts, kindly begged for the Scottish ballad which Violet had sung to her on the former day. It was an unlucky choice; and Violet, choking in the effort to proceed, at last, in good earnest, "Let the tears downfa' for Jock o' Hazledean;" and Mrs. Herbert, quietly kissing her brow, and whispering a few soothing words, kindly left her to herself. She remained for an hour afterwards seated on the same chair, and in the same woful mood, when her heart leapt to the sudden voice of Herbert talking in passionate tones to his mother in the front drawing-room, ere he burst upon her, holding her open letter in his hand.

"Faithless, cruel girl! can you thus forsake me? My mother is right. Had you ever loved me as I fancied, you could not now forsake me thus."

Without attempting to explain, without rightly comprehending what was said, she sprung forward, and rushed into his arms; and Mrs. Herbert, who had followed him, became the silent and affected witness of the passionate embrace which gave them back to each other.

"Oh, Charles, I feared you would never, never come!" was Violet's low exclamation; but, seeing Mrs. Herbert, she shrunk back, while Herbert, clasping her by the waist, gently held her.

"Then, dearest Violet, you have wished for me—while this cruel letter? But I knew it was not you—not to yourself I owe this."

"Miss Hamilton, is this fair to me?" cried Mrs. Herbert, angrily and sternly; "is this honourable dealing—is this what I have a right to expect from you?"

"Oh, no, no; pardon and pity me! I am very wretched: but I will do all you will, all I ought. Charles, we must not meet again, that I know: though, when I saw you, I forgot every thing;—but that is all past."

"This, then, is to be a last interview," said Mrs. Herbert, mildly,—commanding herself and advancing. "Miss Hamilton, in her

letter—her own spontaneous letter, which I have not even read—has, I presume, communicated her decision to you. Be assured, her decision is unbiassed by me. Is it right, Charles, is it generous, to inflict unnecessary pain upon her? From you, Violet, I expect more firmness and self-command," continued the lady, turning to Violet. "You have gained that place in my esteem and affection which it would be most painful to myself to see you forfeit by conduct which I cannot approve. In you I have found the duty and gratitude wanting where I flattered myself my claims to both were much stronger, as they were of much older date."

"Do not reproach him," whispered Violet. "'Twas but a moment; never again will you be offended in this way."

"Forgive me, mother, if I cannot see with your eyes—feel with your feelings. Honour and affection alike forbid me renouncing the hope—the claim I have been allowed. Violet, you may give me up under a fatal delusion—from an overstrained idea of duty, or from pride; but I cannot so part with you, while I am happy enough to indulge the dear hope that I possess your heart, in spite of your pride."

The timid, stealthy glance of Violet, the soft pressure of the hand which held hers, were not lost upon Mrs. Herbert, even while the blushing girl tried to extricate herself from her lover's clasp.

"We must talk apart, sir," said the lady, in a haughty tone. "I would avoid giving pain to one whose late conduct has awakened my highest admiration. I know that Miss Hamilton's firmness will be found equal to her high sense of womanly dignity; that sense of dignity which forbids any young lady from entering a family where, though not undervalued, she may be presumed unwelcome."

Violet coloured violently; and, freeing herself from Herbert's clasping arm, stood erect and alone.

"Mother!" he exclaimed, indignantly, "this is too much!"

"Forgive me, dear Miss Hamilton, if the pertinacity of this young man betrays me into rudeness: this is not a topic to discuss in your presence; we will leave you for a little. Mistress Linton is, I believe, waiting to see you."

Herbert whispering—"I must see you again, Violet; I have much to say which is solely for your own ear," followed his mother, and Marion was ushered in to witness the

passionate burst of love, pride, and sorrow, which could not be repressed.

"Hinny sweet, what *is* the matter? Is it the proud stepdame has grieved ye? It cannot be the young gentleman: I'll never believe that of him."

"Believe no wrong of him—he is too noble, too good, too generous; and I am the veriest fool, the most miserable creature that breathes."

"I'll no hear ye say that, Miss Violet: d'ye ken, hinny, it's a sin! Young, and healthy, and bonny, and good, and weel-beloved by a man like him with whom your lot is to be cast! Eye for shame, hinny! It *is* a sin, as I make bauld to tell ye. But, heh! they're loud i' the loan i' the next room! Is she flytin' on poor Maister Charles, think ye?" continued Marion, 'bending a keenly listening ear, until the angry or passionate tones of Mrs. Herbert's voice were lost in a violent fit of sobbing, which made Violet instinctively rush as if towards her, and from delicacy, as instinctive, hold back before she had opened the folding doors. The voice of Charles was heard in soothing entreaty, and presently all was hushed; but, in a few minutes, Mrs. Herbert advanced, leaning on the arm of her son, and said—

"Miss Hamilton, my son craves a few minutes conversation with you. Violet, I feel that upon *you* I may rely."

"I have said, madam, that, without your approbation, I will not marry Mr. Herbert, nor could he wish that I should; that I will hold no intercourse with him unsanctioned by you. More I cannot promise." And her eyes turned sadly on Herbert.

"Mak nae rash vows, Miss Violet," said Marion, whispering hurriedly; "come under nae promise. She disna ken her ain mind, Maister Charles; what lassie does, about her ain marriage? though, if ye ken whereabouts the young heart leans, ye may guess the rest; begging your pardon, Mrs. Herbert, madam, for puttin' in my oar. But ne'er ye heed her, Maister Charles," continued Marion, whispering him soothingly apart, while Mrs. Herbert led Violet to a distant window to breathe her wishes; "ne'er a fear but she'll jump at ye when the right time comes; sae keep ye a calm sough, and come in the leddy's will: ye'll see how Miss Violet will win round her. When she was but a bairn she could hae wiled the laverock frae the lifts: and a' will be right enough yet, never a fear, though I'm sure I pity ye between the twa leddies—between love and pride—an' o'

them being far mair than enouch to drive a man daft."

"I have your interest, any way," said Herbert, smiling.

"That ye have heartily."

"And if it should be possible," he said, very earnestly, "that when I am far away, this dear one is less than happy where she is—that, in short, any untoward event should arise—on *you* I am sure I may depend, until I can hasten to her; you, at least, have not promised not to correspond with me."

"It's no that like! And I see no cause Miss Violet had to be so rash. But what, now, if 'out o' sight out o' mind,' and some ither young leddy should wile her joe frae her?" said Marion, laughing, but, at the same time, fixing her keen gray-green eyes scrutinizingly on the young man. "It might be what she would deserve for colloguin' against him; though it would break the poor thing's heart, nevertheless."

"Do you fancy Violet one that is likely to be easily forgotten?" said Herbert, gazing with fond admiration on his beloved.

"That do I no!—for where saw I ever her marrow, there where she stands?—and better than she's bonny."

This clandestine talk was put an end to by Mrs. Herbert calling Mistress Marion to come away with her, and leaving Herbert to the private interview with Violet, for which he had stipulated. As we have already seen but too many of the pranks of the wicked little naked urclin who rules the world, according to Marion, "riding on a goose," we shall merely intimate that, in an hour and a half by Mrs. Herbert's pendule—and the watch she held in her hand—in ten minutes by the mental calculation of Charles, he joined his mother, and was in more composed if not high spirits. Violet had gone to her chamber, sending her apology by him for not appearing any more that night.

"Now I am ready to leave England," said Herbert; "to be separated, perhaps for years, from all that is and ever must be dearest to me. You may inform the Earl of Tarbert that I am now at his disposal; though I would prefer the mail coach, and the company of my own thoughts, so far as Dover, to making one in his retinue, if that could be accomplished."

"Every thing shall be accomplished that is most agreeable to you," replied Mrs. Herbert. "It will easily be imagined that I wish to detain you until the last moment. At Dover, then, you will overtake them."

Charles remained to a *tête-à-tête* supper with his stepmother; and their conversation turned chiefly on necessary pecuniary arrangements, and Mrs. Herbert's plans for the summer. Let us thus leave them, and turn for a few moments to our *Talented Family*, now under dire eclipse.

CHAPTER XI.

FIVE dreary days had elapsed, during which Professor Cryppes had, nearly in total solitude, contemplated the rain-drops through the dingy grated window of a spunging-house. The most mortifying circumstance to himself, attending his arrest, was, that it was, after all, at the instance of a milkman, for the paltry sum of £17, 8s. 2½d. which Miss Cripps had diverted from its proper and prudent destination to the purchase of a pair of earrings and bracelets, most temptingly ticketed in a pawnbroker's window at only £18, 18s. The arrest had been the signal for revolt among all the already alarmed tradesmen; and Cripps was now the prisoner of butchers, poulterers, bakers, harness-makers, &c. &c. "The mere *canaille* tradesmen," as he remarked; for his wine-merchants, his coach-builders, his musical instrument makers, his booksellers, were all persons of liberal ideas; and it is certain that the wary and wealthy among them deemed it folly to throw good money after bad; while the younger men both fancied their first loss enough, and were afraid of the injury which persecuting a *nob* like Cripps, might do them with his fashionable associates, some of whom were among their best customers. In the meanwhile, Jack had been labouring hard to effect his father's emancipation, though still far short of the necessary means; and the Fleet was in full prospect, the Professor being no longer in a condition to satisfy the expectations of the sharp lady-manager of the hotel, whose custom was, not alone prompt, but previous payments.

On the third day, the Professor had been ejected from the second best drawing-room, to make room for the Honourable Ludovic Grandison, who, having been ousted from his seat in Parliament, by the operation of schedule A on his father's borough, did not in this year enjoy that best privilege of the Commons, freedom from arrest. The Professor had, without much ceremony, been transferred to a stifling dull room or closet, whose grated window looked into a back-

court,—the lady of the mansion informing her husband that she did not care how soon Cripps marched off, as not a penny was to be made of gentry like him; whereas for chaps like young Grandison—who had ordered dinner and champagne for a party of five—friends were always sure to come forward at last, were it only to save themselves from disgrace.

It wore late in the afternoon of the fifth day—the waiter had received the prisoner's last half-sovereign, before bringing in the cup of cold creamless coffee, which, with an untasted muffin, stood on an old japan tray on the small table, by which sat the Professor, unshaved and shabby, dismal and melancholy, the score of his unfinished opera lying before him, with several old letters and accounts which he had drawn from his pockets in search of consolation. Most impatiently had he been expecting his son, Jack, who, to do him justice, had left no stone unturned in assisting the family. Already had Jack managed to place the matron, summarily ejected from the Regent's Park, in handsome lodgings at Hampstead, where her husband, Professor Cryppes, *Mus. Doc.* (whose embellished cards, together with those of other great personages, Jack liberally distributed in the drawing-room,) was to join her so soon as his town engagements permitted. These engagements promised to be of longer duration than Jack had anticipated; and the Professor had angrily and dolorously informed the keeper of the spunging-house, that he would that night go to the Fleet, as his ungrateful friends had, to a man, deserted him in misfortune; when his son was at last announced.

"Made up your mind to go to *quod*, papa! O fie, fie! unlike a gentleman," said Jack, on hearing the intention announced, and preventing the load of complaint and reproach which his father's visage foreboded.

"What a lucky dog you are, old fellow, to have such a son as self—eh! Not a word, now, papa, of ingratitude, neglect, &c. &c. Mrs. Burke Barker has been on her marriage jaunt. My mother;—but she called for you?"

Mrs. Cryppes certainly had halted the hackney coach, which bore her to Hampstead, to load her husband with reproaches, and to recapitulate her old prophecies, of the ruin he would infallibly bring upon his family; and it was not to be expected that Mrs. Barker was to dim the lustre of her bright honeymoon in the dingy damp of a spunging-house, though it held the parent whose favourite

child she was, and whom her unprincipled extravagance had helped to send there.

"My sister impatiently expects you," said John. "She has been home for some days, and gives her first dinner and At Home this evening. We should be incomplete without you. Barker fancies you down at W——, raising the wind. No use for family affairs to travel out of the family."

"Her first dinner—is it to be in the Fleet?" asked the Professor, bitterly.

"Hang it, Governor, why so doleful?" said Jack; and he put the coffee to his lips, sipped some, and made a face of disgust. "Come, off with this cold slop, and let us have a few oysters and a broiled kidney, or a cutlet, or something comf. — for lunch;" and Jack rang for the waiter, and accompanied his order, according to the rule of the house, with a sovereign in advance. "I have good news for you," continued he; "Why, one might fancy you the first gentleman ever was under eclipse, so melancholious and dismal you are. Hark! don't you hear Grandison singing below. Before you have been three or four times through the mill, you will take the grinding more gaily, I guess, old gentleman."

"Then you have prevailed with Bounce to purchase my Opera," said the Professor, laying his hand fondly on the cherished production of his genius, about, as he imagined, to escape his grasp, to immortalize some fictitious composer, and enrich the manager or patentee of the King's Theatre. "Then, sir, you surely stipulated that the name of the *real* composer—*my* name—appears; and that I superintend the rehearsals. What does he give?"

"Bah!" cried Jack. "Never mind, father; the present market price of trunk-lining, perhaps; and so many new poems and novels, by persons of quality, are coming out,—that that, I understand, is looking down. Your opera, however, is a good sterling opera. I say it, who, in music, know a thing or two; but you may keep the copy-right, I dare say, and the authorship too. Well, never mind, it will have its chance yet. To force it out just now, were madness. Wait the tide in the affairs of music. We have other resources: congratulate yourself, sir, on having a son who is a father to you."

"Who has plucked me over head and ears in debt, and almost disgrace," replied the mortified composer. "Had not Herbert come forward to hush up that affair of Shuffleton's, the honour of my name and family

had been tarnished for ever. I might have been criminally prosecuted, sir; and you know it. Yes, criminally! good heavens! a man of eminent professional respectability, and of good fashion, the head of a family of highly accomplished, and talented young people, moving in the best circles of West End society. O boy, boy! what your levity and your dear sister's thoughtlessness have brought me to!" And the Professor theatrically struck his open palm on his forehead; while Jack, fearing that something really was going awry in that region, squinted peeringly at his revered father, ere, seeing all was right, and Mr. Cripps only in heroics, he said—

"Mon cher Gouverneur, take it easy, pray. Ah, here comes lunch. My compliments to your master, Wattie, and say, if I find his champagne fair, I mean to give him a small order; he is a private dealer, I know, and a deuced civil fellow. Let him have Professor Cryppes' discharges ready to sign; we shall go as soon as we have lunched."

Wattie the waiter, and an old acquaintance of Jack's, disappeared. Having first helped his father, he drank two glasses of champagne in rapid succession, thrust his finger into the bottle to preserve the effervescence, and swallowing open oysters as if for a wager, Jack cried—

"And now to business. If Herbert—by the way, he has got a devilish brilliant foreign appointment; but no brass, no salary beyond midshipman's half pay,—nothing a-day, and find yourself,—if Herbert acted like a gentleman to us, he could not well do less to old and intimate friends; besides, he wished to keep all snug about a certain Mademoiselle—. I should not wonder if he marry that girl some day. She certainly is a bewitching tantalizing little devil. Conceive, after having her in keeping at the old hag of a Scots-woman's, who has so plagued our family—a foolish and low place, by the way—that he has been able to get her palmed off on Mrs. Herbert. But Herbert was always sly. It would have been too much to attempt, all at once, to get her over with the rest of the ambassador's smuggled baggage."

"I will not hear this," replied the Professor, indignantly. "You *lie*, Jack, and you know it. Do you fancy me, sir, a libertine and profligate, like a Sheridan or a Dodd; a man without morals, like the managers and masters of the old school, with their actresses and pupils."

"By the simplicity of Venus' Doves!"

but you are the most original and innocent elderly gentleman I ever had the honour to hear of, father. . . . Whatever be the reason of Mrs. Herbert harbouring your little runaway apprentice—and it may be only to keep Charlie a good boy, and out of the way of mischief—I for one rejoice at it. 'Tis another capital name and party to our action. Prepare, old fellow, for a master-stroke! Health, papa, and success. Your action is already raised; damages £12,000; and son, mother, and the old Scotswoman, who is as rich as a Jewess, all in the scrape. The deuce is in it if we don't squeeze out a neat thing among 'em."

"I don't exactly comprehend, John."

"You can comprehend that you are at liberty to leave this dog-hole: very respectable quarters, though, begging its pardon; only it was dem'd shabby of Snatchem to turn you out of the drawing-room to accommodate Grandison: I and my friends have been good customers to his house. Well, but you comprehend that, with the rich and beautiful prospect of this action of damages aforesaid, the respectable firm of Bubble, Squeak, and Nickem—Barker's Chancery Lane friends—have advanced the needful for present exigencies; nay, have come down, for a liberal consideration—I never stand upon trifles in business—advanced the sinews of war for my other grand spec."

"I see, I see—I am to be released; you have raised cash—how much?"

"Enough for your purpose, old fellow. Come, we shall reckon of that as we jog along. You shall dress at my new lodgings—a half-way raffish place I have taken for convenience, in Fleet Street, right under the old Jezebel Scotswoman. Blow her up some night, as she did me with my landlord, the tailor; whose wife—shabby roguess—made me come down with a week's rent in advance."

Professor Cryppes had been musing. "After the handsome and liberal way in which Herbert has behaved to me, Jack, can I in honour—after he has taken all the Shuffleton liabilities on himself, and got up my pupil's papers—can I—"

"Can you? To be sure you can, and will too, get out of this pleasant retirement as fast as ever you are able. You may be sure Bubble, Squeak, and Nickem think well of the project, else had they never tabled, and buckled frankly to a ready-money risk. Come, tie up your music; a fine mess Mademoiselle has made of it for you: she ought to be well mulcted, the young baggage."

Professor Cryppes had felt some transient compunction to move, or be a party in this transaction. Where the mere victimizing of a tradesman was all, he had no scruples whatever; but Herbert was "a gentleman, and had behaved like one." But then liberty, bright goddess! wooed him; and the discomfort and filth of a jail were as disgusting to his habits as its disgrace was to his pride; but, above all, the fate of his opera fairly turned the scale. He must be present at the rehearsals.

"It is quite true," said the yielding man, "no one can estimate the pecuniary loss, and the much greater loss in professional fame, which the defalcation of my pupil, at so critical a juncture of my fortunes, may have inflicted."

And thus came neediness and vanity to stifle the temporary feelings of conscience and gratitude; nor were they often unsuccessful with the Professor.

"Not easy to calculate your loss, indeed; but we have made a rough guess, £12,000.

"£12,000! Well, my opera might have had a run like that poor stuff—stale Scotch and Irish plunder the *airs* are—the Beggars' Opera; or like Pizarro, or—"

"True, true; why should it not? But make haste; we dine with Mrs. Burke Barker. Polly has been receiving congratulatory morning visits as a bride,—quite resplendent! Took the shine out of every woman in the upper tiers last night. Barker is perfectly uxorious—as proud of his wife as if she had brought him a title or a plum."

"And well he may, sir. The talents and accomplishments of Miss Cryppes, independently of her very great personal advantages, may well render proud the man who has had the good fortune to obtain her hand. . . . Polly ought, though, to have come to see her father in this beastly hole."

"*Ingpossib*, pa-pa," said Jack, who often, as a mark of breeding, spoke either the Cockney dialect or French *patois*. "Polly has received Eustache from us, and come down for you—positively she did—£25, dear creature! which had been allotted to a Parisian cashmere, for which Ramsden would not tick!"

"Excellent creature! There is, indeed, a daughter to be proud of," said the Professor, in his grand original court manner, which the flippant and impudent style of Jack often ruffled, but could not subdue.

"Bravo! pa-pa. That is a truly Siddonian touch! 'A daughter to be proud of!' Now

I am a Keanite; not a Kembleite—all nature and fire; and I think Poll a deuced clever wench—a capital tactician for her years and sex. Wonderfully shrewd, cool, and self-possessed, considering. Why, it was Poll put me up to our present enterprise; but here comes Mister——” Jack bowed to the bailiff; “your name has quite escaped me, sir, but I perfectly recollect your face.”

“Possibly,” replied the sheriff’s subordinate, emphatically, “as I have had the honour of seeing you before, I believe, and oftener than once.”

The milkman’s claim was produced: £17, 8s. 2½d.—expenses, £34, 6s. 5¼d. It was promptly discharged. But then came another and another. They were like Banquo’s shadowy offspring. Jack’s money ran low: the Professor fumed at seeing it depart.

“Very unhandsome this, sir: why not at once have told me of all these claims. I would, upon my honour, rather have gone to the Fleet than have been treated in so ungentlemanlike a way.”

“D’ye hear that, Snatchem? My father would have left this cool sequestered grot of yours and gone to jail rather than have countenanced the impudent villany of those low blackguards. Why, this I call diddling me; give me back that skim-milk fellow’s money. If my father don’t get out, as well that the whole lot go in the same schedule, when he is whitewashed.”

“Thank ye, sir; but that is not the way we do business here! The gentleman is quite welcome to stay or go.”

Cripps was so enraged, that, for the moment, he would have gone to jail rather than have yielded to what he termed this most ungentlemanlike treatment; but Jack had more wisdom in his anger, and, in this particular line, more personal experience than his progenitor; and, one by one, “the paltry bills of the pitiful, peddling, *canaille* tradesmen” were discharged, the original amount often doubled by costs.

“Thus it is to have to do with low vermin for trifles,” said Cripps, now breathing freely in the streets. “I must give my daughter, at the outset of life, warning on this head. Never, Jack, my dear, go in debt for small sums to low, sordid tradespeople; they have no feeling, no sense of honour, or of what is due to gentlemen!”

“Thank ye, papa; I have tried it both ways; can’t tell which is best.”

The meeting between the emancipated

Professor and his newly-married daughter was quite a scene. The former was, beyond doubt, delighted to see his daughter in handsome lodgings, richly dressed, and in remarkably good spirits, in anticipation of presiding at her own table and her first party; while Mrs. Burke Barker, fully alive to all and each of these advantages, was in her best looks, and altogether in a most complacent humour, “transported,” as she expressed herself, “to see her dear family around her in her own apartments.”

“We shall be quite *en famille*,” said the lady. “I expect only the Count, and, perhaps, Sir George, if he can find a pair. Conceive, papa, the impertinence, nay, downright rudeness, of Gabrielle:—after I had overlooked her elopement, and sent her my marriage tickets and a slice of bridecake, as if to an old friend that I meant to countenance after my marriage, never to call on the days I received visitors, as a bride; and, when I called myself, to-day, at Mrs. Herbert’s, and asked her to join our family party, telling her I expected mamma and you from the country—to decline! High airs, indeed, for Mrs. Herbert’s toady to give herself to Mrs. Burke Barker!”

“Why, Polly, darling, the girl has obliged us,” said Jack. “Here would have been a *premunire*, the runaway Mademoiselle dining with her prosecutors!”

“I did not think of that; but now, please, Jack, call me by my own name. Barker don’t like these freedoms with his lady. And not a word to him, pray, of—of—of Edmund’s flame. Literary and political characters, like Barker, don’t like to be mixed up in silly love affairs or runaway matches.”

Mrs. Burke Barker had taken her brother’s arm, and led him away for a private chat.

“Edmund! the embryo Professor of Obstetrics! no, no, Poll, it is the Count is the man, I tell you.”

“No, indeed, Jack! I have thought better. One may be pardoned for doing something to help a love-sick brother to a rich wife; there is fashionable precedent for it; but, a stranger like the Count?—one could not hold up one’s face to that.”

“But I have negotiated with Rodolpho, Mrs. Barker, signed and sealed. He is our best card, I assure you. The whole tot of the Stocks would soon learn to gulp a Count—a gilded pill! Now, the Professor of Obstetrics—still in the *crystalis* state—our poor Neddy, would, I fear, revolt them.”

“No such thing, Quintin,” interrupted

Mrs. Burke Barker. "Though the Stocks' women at first went mad after the Count, when he went down to the provinces about purchasing merino flocks for his Hungarian estates, the banker pulled up. There was some awkward overdriving or bill business, and vulgar rumours afloat, such as are ever rife in dear, dirty W—. Now, at worst, we can hold up our faces for Ned. . . . My father's son is surely equal to Stocks' daughter any day, in all but pelf; and the young people may be in love, which Juliana never could be supposed with Rodolpho, as she had gone away to school before her wise mother fêted him."

"Have you spoken to Edmund?"

"No."

"Then don't. I have unlocked to the Count, and he won't let me off, I'm afraid. Eustache, too, has been sounded."

"Then be on with him yourself, sir, for I shall have nothing to say to him. Have you no regard for your own family interests, Quintin? Besides, I could not have the least reliance on Rodolpho, either word or bond. He would make his peace with the old people, and we should be left in the lurch. Barker has a very bad opinion of him—always had."

"A fiddlestick end for opinion, Mrs. B. B. A properly executed bond is, in business, worth fifty opinions. You will allow that Bubble, Squeak, and Nickem, in business, are matches for all the counts and quarterings of the Germanic empire, whether *genuine* or Brummagem. And how the Count adored your charms, Polly! really you owe him a service." And Jack looked most provokingly impudent.

"I have said," replied Mrs. Barker, with dignified firmness, and drawing up her head.

"Then Rodolpho must taste booty, that's poz, Poll, or he will blow us; and Eustache, too, that pearl of price—"

"Blow us! What do you mean by using vulgar slang to me, sir?"

"*Pardonnez moi, madame,*" said Jack, bowing with mock contrition. "You are a novice in business, my dear, though with natural genius which a veteran might envy. . . . Now, you must know that, in matters of this sort, all must be in honour—upon the square. You take me? The spec. is a fair spec., a capital spec., nay, a most promising spec.; and we can't manage it well without you, Polly. The girl gets a husband—the very thing all girls most desire; old Stocks a son-in-law, with sixteen

quarterings, or a tailor's pattern book, equal to thirty-two; Madam Stocks adores a title, and here is one, at all events, quite as good as any of the new-baked English ones. Why, we ought to receive a *douceur* from both parties; the something handsome from the Count, *under the rose*; and a per centage from the old folks, who catch a match for their Miss; which, but for us, they never could have dreamed of."

From the somewhat incongruous luxury, the gaiety and mirth, the sparkling wit and the flow of music, which graced Mrs. Burke Barker's first party, no one would have imagined that debt, danger, disgrace, and a jail were immediately behind several of the company; and before some of them a project which the law of the land regards and punishes as a capital crime, namely, the stealing of an heiress. That idea, they would, one and all, have repudiated. They merely designed to assist in a runaway love match, and secure half of the lady's fortune for their trouble.

CHAPTER XII.

CHARLES HERBERT, having lost the Dover mail, in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain another parting interview with Violet, was posting after the Earl of Tarbert, when the pole of his chaise broke, a few miles beyond Feversham; and he walked forward to procure help for the postboy, and, if possible, a fresh vehicle for himself, as he was afraid that the Earl, his daughter, and retinue, would embark that night. Pushing on up a slight ascent, a carriage was heard behind rapidly approaching. "If here should be only a single gentleman," thought Charles, "I might, save for English reserve, tell my plight and beg help; or even offer myself as an agreeable companion in a post chaise, if our road lie the same way." He had not well ended these ruminations, when, stopping to survey the vehicle, the screams of a female suddenly issued from it, while an outrider, who struck Herbert as monstrously like Professor Cryppes' celebrated and ill-favoured valet Eustache, seized the reins, and urged on the horses. "Mr. Herbert! Mr. Herbert! save me! save me!" was screamed forth, and then the voice was stifled as if by violence.

Herbert, surprised and excited, commanded the postboy to stop, and leapt down from the high footway where he stood, in order to seize the horses; but on they dashed, and he

found himself, in five minutes, alone, and a full half mile behind the vehicle, which he endeavoured to keep in sight. It took a cross road near a farm-house, whither Herbert immediately repaired to prevail with the country people to join him in the pursuit; but so much time was lost, before he was mounted, himself on one of the horses of his own chaise, and the postboy on the other, that the carriage and the suspicious party were fairly out of sight.

That his own name had been called, Herbert was perfectly certain. The lady, whoever she might be, then knew him and claimed his protection. For a moment he thought of Violet; but that idea was dismissed as utterly absurd. The unknown was, however, a woman, in distress, and in the power of a person whom he believed capable of any roguery, if not of the blackest villany.

On he rode, frequently obtaining contradictory tidings from the country people, until, several miles off the great road, in a narrow lane, where the trees met overhead, his postboy recognised, hanging to a branch, a signal of distress, a cambric pocket handkerchief wet with tears, and having in one corner, delicately marked in hair, JULIANA STOCKS, No. 18. The case was now plain; and Herbert, on learning that the Rector, whose snug parsonage, seen through embowering elms, was basking in the warm beams of the setting sun, was a Justice of the Peace, at once demanded an audience, and told his adventure, mentioning, at the same time, his own name and the purpose of his present journey. He obtained the most prompt and efficient assistance; and the Rector, as soon as he heard that the suspected persons were foreigners, anticipating violent resistance, made one of the constable's followers take pistols.

The precaution was wholly needless. Never was damsel surrendered so ingloriously as poor Juliana. They had not followed the track above a mile, when the forlorn girl was found sitting on a carpet-bag by the roadside, bitterly weeping. The ardour with which Juliana flung her arms round Herbert's neck, and clung, sobbing, to his bosom; the vehemence with which she afterwards, laughing and crying by turns when attempting to speak, clasped her united hands through his arm lest he might escape and leave her again alone, or in the power of the villains who had fled, might, at another time, have brought a smile to his face. Despatching his attendants in pursuit, he could only soothe the young

lady with the assurance of her perfect safety, and begged to know how she came to be found in this plight.

Juliana Stocks was a comely, good-natured, and pleasant girl, and, moreover, a person of some consequence in society, as the presumed heiress of very great wealth; Herbert, besides, remembered her as the admirer of their *Fair Lily*, when she thus began—

“Oh, Mr. Herbert, had Miss Violet come to be my governess, this never would have happened. Mamma brought me last month to a grand school, a very grand and a very strict school, at Blackheath; quite a fine place—high walls, gardens, greenhouses, carriages, and every thing—where the young ladies were so watched, that we called it The Convent, and the mistress our Lady Abbess; but it was no joke to me.

“That Mrs. Barker, that wicked, detestable Polly Cripps—they say she is married, but I don't believe any one would marry so bold and wicked a creature—came, the day before yesterday, I suppose—for it looks like an age—in a chaise and four, in violent haste, saying my papa, my dear father! was taken suddenly ill, and was dying, and that I must instantly go with her to see him. Mrs. Benson—she is properly the Honourable Mrs. Benson, mamma says, but the Honourable is sunk for family reasons—hesitated, and would not let me go home: but I cried and screamed so to go to my father; and Polly Cripps produced mamma's letter: but it was all forgery and lies, Mr. Herbert. And when I got away at last, and into the chaise, there was Neddy Cripps, my father's clerk-boy, who was dying in love with me, forsooth! as Polly said; and we must be married! It was all a joke, she owned, about papa's illness; but Edmund was dying in love with me, and would shoot himself through the temples if I were cruel to him. I thought I should have gone mad, and I screamed so. And, when we came to a large inn, where was that odious Jack Cripps, whom I remember before he went to London; and an ugly foreigner, with four stars on him; and that other foreign fellow with the hook nose, you saw on horseback; I was afraid of my life: but when they left me with Edmund, to pay his addresses to me, I think I soon frightened Neddy.”

And Juliana, now safe, laughed heartily at the recollection of her spirit and prowess. “I told him I was an heiress; and that, if any one dared to marry me whom I did not like, papa would have him hung. He is

a poor sneak, Edmund ! Polly then tried to frighten me, and to coax me ; but I would neither be frightened nor coaxed ; and, when Ned came near me, I kicked and screamed till he got afraid, I fancy ; for I overheard Polly say to Jack, ' Nothing can be done with that spooney ; ' and, after some time, she said, if I would only be quiet, and not scream so, she would take me back to Mrs. Benson's, and tell that we had met an express on the road, saying papa was much better, and that I need not proceed home. What a fool I was to trust her ; for, oh, dear Mr. Herbert ! the worst was not come yet. Oh, you are my guardian angel ! indeed you are ; and I would rather have had you to save me than any one else in the whole world. Well, it was too late to return to Blackheath that night, and so we had a gay supper at the inn, with that foreigner who, Polly said, was a man of high rank, and a Count—the same nobleman my friends had entertained at W—— ; and who knew me, for he had fallen in love with my picture in mamma's drawing-room ; that thing in crayons, you remember, Mr. Herbert. I was not in love with him, any way. Oh, the ugly fellow ! But I tried to be cunning with them all ; and at night bolted myself well in my room. Next morning we were to be off for Blackheath, at five in the morning. ' Are you awake, my love, the chaise waits to convey you ? ' said Polly Cripps. They called her Mrs. B. B. I was quite ready ; for indeed, I had never undressed. I have never undressed yet ; and such a figure I am ! and my eyes are so dim, I dare say, with crying ! I went down stairs at once, and into the chaise ; and in after me jumps the abominable Count and the other ugly fellow ; and off they drove at once without Polly or any of the Cripps, while I screamed like mad, and dashed my hands through the glass, and cut them."

"Horrible !" said Herbert, compassionately, pressing the fair hands affectionately and confidingly clasped on his arm.

"You are sorry for me, dear Mr. Herbert ? Oh, how very kind and good you are ! You are my guardian angel ; and I shall bless you and pray for you while I live. I fell into fits from terror and passion. They stopped at a house to get some water for me, and then I shouted so wildly for help, that the people really believed I was mad, and a foreigner, as the wretches said. Mrs. Benson had all her pupils dressed like French girls, too, which confirmed it. Then the

ugliest fellow — but they are both so ugly — went outside, and the other tried to quiet and coax me : but always came on the other fit ; and I heard them consulting — for I understand French pretty well — about how they were to get me across the Channel, if I screamed so. They agreed to go to some village on the coast, where French smugglers came. I thought I was now for ever lost ! — and my dear father and mother ! But just then, dear Mr. Herbert, you appeared ! Heaven sent you to deliver me ! Was it not odd that it was *you* I met ; and neither of us ever in this part of Kent before ? But Heaven ordained it."

"I shall ever rejoice at the accident which broke down my chaise and delayed my journey, Miss Juliana."

"And you, though in such haste, would not abandon me," said the grateful and tearful Juliana ; "and came so far out of your way for me ! Oh, dear Mr. Herbert ! I am sure you will take me, yourself, to papa ; I can never part with you again, till I am at home ; I shall die or go mad, if you leave me ; and I am such a fright ; and my eyes and face so spoiled ; and my hair all so disordered. I shall be ashamed to be seen by the young ladies at the rectory."

The young ladies at the rectory did their best to comfort and soothe the rescued damsel, and even attended personally to her dress and her hair ; so that the poor girl was able to appear with more propriety before his Reverence, who lost no time in issuing warrants for the apprehension of the persons that Herbert described as Count Rodolpho Zanderschloss and his emissary Eustache Latude, regretting exceedingly that his power, as a magistrate, did not extend to Sussex and Middlesex ; though he thought it his duty to acquaint the proper authorities in London with the abduction of Miss Stocks, and the share which the Cripps family were believed to have had in the conspiracy.

Herbert immediately wrote a particular account of the adventure to Mr. Somers Stocks, and also to Mrs. Benson ; and, to both epistles, Juliana added a postscript, expressive of her life-long obligations to her dear deliverer, to Mr. Herbert, "her guardian angel, who had come to her aid in extremity, just like a hero in a story-book."

It was not until Juliana had taken Herbert's promise for the fourth time, that he would not leave her till she was with her parents, that poor Juliana, whose head was half-turned with what she had suffered,

dreaded, and escaped, consented to go to bed.

The three laughing daughters of the rectory, Caroline, Helen, and Isabel, then held a private chapter on the marvellous adventure, not forgetting the handsome person, and delightful and elegant manners of the knight-deliverer, who, the eldest ventured to foretell, had found an heiress as surely as the Count Rodolpho had lost one. Six weeks later, and the dressing-cases of these young ladies sparkled with brighter gems than had ever before been seen in the rectory of Swanstoun; and the small sideboard there shone and groaned beneath the set of rich salvers commemorative of the rescue of the heiress of the wealthy provincial banker, and of the kindness of the family who had so hospitably received her and her deliverer. Nay, as one good deed is often parent to another, next year, the three young ladies, lost in that sweet but isolated parsonage, having gone on a long visit to Mrs. Somers Stocks, the eldest was, next season, married to the *ci-devant* admirer of Miss Cripps, Mr. Benjamin, with the entire approbation of his wealthy parents, and to the perfect contentment of her own family, who offered no objection to her younger and prettier sister marrying into the same manufacturing connexion, and, in the meanwhile, being the well-salaried governess of Juliana Stocks.

"So odd," Mrs. Somers Stocks remarked, "a baronet's grandchild my daughter's governess; and all owing to the Hungarian Count—sad, wicked man—falling in love with my Juliana's picture in crayons, and bribing Polly Cripps with two thousand sovereigns and the brilliants of his order of the Golden Fleece, to let him run off with her." For Mrs. Somers Stocks persisted in believing the Count, whom she had entertained, and who had run away with her daughter, a true and genuine Count, in spite of whatever evidence could be produced to his being a very different character. She, however, did not say as much when her husband was in company; for the prejudices of Mr. Stocks against the Count were quite as invincible as the dislike of his daughter to that noble person.

Very different, indeed, were the feelings of Mr. Somers Stocks, who—in the first heat of his resentment at the audacious and wicked conspirators, aggravated probably by a pecuniary loss to which he had previously been subjected by his own vanity or the address of the German Count—would, without

remorse, have seen each and all of them punished with the utmost severity which the law inflicts on that black and dangerous, and in England rare, crime, the abduction of an heiress.

Before Mr. Charles Herbert had returned to Blackheath, to place his charge under the protection of Mrs. Benson, the officers of justice had arrested Edmund Cripps; were hot in the track of his brother, Jack, and looking sharply after the foreigners; though it was not until Juliana had again been examined by a magistrate, on coming to London, that a warrant was issued against Mrs. Burke Barker, the lady of "the celebrated and talented theatrical critic and political writer," and also against himself, though nothing had transpired, directly or indirectly, to implicate Barker. He was, in reality, perfectly ignorant of the daring scheme, which he knew the world much too well to sanction openly, whatever might have been his private opinion of its moral quality if successful.

The surprise and indignation of Barker—a proud, ambitious, and sensitive, if an unprincipled man—at finding his newly-made wife involved in an abortive attempt of this sort, may, therefore, be imagined. In vain did Polly deprecate his wrath, and protest that ardent affection for her brother, who idolized the banker's heiress—who returned his love—had alone induced her to lend her assistance to promote the union upon which the happiness, nay, the very existence of the lovers depended. Mr. Barker, though but a six weeks' husband, was not to be so duped. In vain did his lady protest that, to the subsequent adventures of Juliana Stocks with Count Rodolpho, she was a total stranger. Even on this point Mr. Barker was incredulous; but shame and pride here aided the weeping wife, and, having established his own innocence to the satisfaction of the magistrate, recognisances were accepted for the future appearance of his lady.

At this pinch, Mrs. Barker had not scrupled to make a scapegoat of her brother Jack, which she did with the less remorse, that she believed he had been warned by the arrest of Edmund, and was safe from the pursuit of justice; and she was the less apprehensive, on her own account, as Jack was not likely to confront her, or contradict her specious tale. That tale which, if delivered by a poor, old, ill-dressed woman, might have totally failed to impress the worshipful Bench, when gracefully narrated by the handsome

and insinuating Mrs. Burke Barker, whose pathetic tones and melting tears spoke the tender and sympathizing friend of the young lovers, ignorant of the legal consequences of her conduct, and only alive to their distress, produced a very marked effect; and, save for the admonitory whispers of a cross-looking, legal assistant of the magistrate, probably much less susceptible to the softening influence of beauty's tears, Mrs. Barker would have been triumphantly dismissed without farther trouble. Yet, at the moment when the recognisances of Sir George Lees, the family friend summoned in haste in this emergency, and her husband, were accepted, she knew not whether being sent off to Bridewell, or ascending the hackney coach waiting to convey herself and her gloomy-browed lord to their home, were the direst sentence. It was a respite when Sir George accepted her earnestly-pressed set-down at a certain specified corner, not in sight of the windows of his club.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN the meanwhile, our heroine, ignorant of these transactions, was beginning to feel returning tranquillity under the roof of Mrs. Herbert. This lady, though prudently resolving to wean the thoughts of her protégée, as far as possible, from her lover, had, somehow, from the hour of his departure, talked of nothing else than the subject that filled her heart. Anecdotes of the boyhood and youth of Charles; traits of his spirit and generosity, his frankness and cordiality, intermingled with fond conjectures as to how far the traveller might, from time to time, be advanced on his journey, or how the wind stood for the little voyage across the Channel; matters "fond and trivial," yet full of kindly interest to the speaker and the listener, occupied and beguiled their social hours.

Those trunks, belonging to Violet, about which Mike Twig had shown such sympathetic concern, and which had helped to bring her into suspicion with her hostess, had not yet been unpacked; and while Mrs. Herbert indulged her customary hour of quiet, or "her beauty-sleep," as her maid Jenkins called it, after her coffee, Miss Hamilton, with the assistance of her friend, Mistress Marion, who timed her visits most judiciously, set about arranging her wardrobe and other belongings in the drawers of the chamber allotted to her,—or in "Mr. Charles' room," as it was familiarly named in the household.

Mistress Marion, upon her knees before a large sea-chest, in which her arms were plunged up to the elbows, remarked, in reply to Violet's observation that she had not come to see her for two long days—

"I mustna encroach on Mrs. Herbert's rights, hinny, now that you are her ain; but, this day, I just took a longing to see ye, though I had trailed ower this muckle town on business, frae the screech o' day till noontide. I'm sure if I have scraped two or three pennies thegither among the heathen Englishers, it's not without doing service for it. So, after I had looked ower my inve'tors, comparing them wi' my bits o' jottings when I made the rounds o' my houses the day, and gotten the dish o' bohea, and was a wee thing refreshed—for I can do no good without it, more shame to me! for never an ounce of it was in ower my father's door—says I to pussie, What would ye think, mawkin, if I should step to the Regent's Park, and see how our young leddy is coming on? and the cretur *miaw-ed* and waved her tail, ye'll no believe me, as if she would have spoken out like a Christian—'Even do sae, mistress mine.'"

"Your cat is, indeed, wonderfully sagacious, and also very kind to me," returned Violet, smiling.

"Ye think me a fool about pussie, Miss Violet; but I have an ill brow o' them she sets up her back at. Now, there is Jenkins pussie cannot thole, that's *endure*, hinny; for I must interpret our gude Scots tongue even to you; but as for Jack Cripps, when he came to my door this day, I thought she would have torn the house down, and floun at the hairy face o' him."

"Jack Cripps at your door again, Marion?" returned Violet, reddening, as she remembered his former impertinent visit.

"Ay, ye may wonder what the fallow wanted with me! I fancy pussie thought he was coming to court us!—he! he! he! for it was snug quarters he wanted in a strait."

"To lodge with you?"

"Ye may say that! but Maister Jack's impudence is up to and beyont my garret story. . . . But, hinny, this kist has been through hands ere now: it's double bottomed, too; d'ye hear how it rings to my knock? There's been harriers here, Miss Violet. Have ye an inve'tor o' the contents, hinny?" And Marion, by main force, raised the lid of the double bottom, and gave to sight a confused mass of papers and writings,

“tied up in lawyer style. “Preserve and guide us! but here is a sight. What if there should be a Last Will and Testament among these musty bundles and muckle broad seals; though I misdoubt if we have had the first overhauling o’ this kist.”

“It was my dear father’s from the time he entered the army; and, I have heard his old servant tell, had been with him in every quarter of the globe.”

“To my brother, the Right Honourable John Earl of Tarbert,” read Marion, on taking up an empty envelope, to which a broken seal was still attached. “How could this deaf nut come here, hinny? and in a lady’s handwriting; but I’ll take my Bible oath this chest has been spulyied. When had ye it last open?”

“Never. It was sent to me very lately from Jersey; and I never felt sufficiently at home with Mr. Cripps to unpack or even look into it.”

“Then some one has done that for you, my dear; and, it’s no unlike, the very rogue that plundered ye o’ the twenty-pound note.”

“It is indeed inexplicable; perhaps the disappointed persons who looked here for my property may have deposited these papers by accident, or merely to be rid of them.”

“Violet, my love — Miss Hamilton,” was said in the sweet voice of Mrs. Herbert, who softly tapped at the door, “leave your business to Mrs. Linton, pray, and come to me — I have had so singular an adventure just now in the shrubbery.”

Violet hastily opened the door; and there stood the lady, the corner of her large India shawl filled with written papers.

“I was making a survey of the shrubs that I wished to have pruned to-morrow, when the gardener comes; and see! Hid they were in the thickest of the wilderness, as we are pleased to call my morsel of greenery. I do believe I have found a whole manuscript romance, or a play in five acts.”

“The very papers Major Hamilton’s chest has been plundered of!” exclaimed Marion. “I could swear it; and I am far up to the tricks of this wicked big toun.”

When the affair was explained, Mrs. Herbert allowed that the conjecture was probable; and she at once gave up her spoils to Violet for more leisurely private examination.

“Can we not go over them together,” asked Violet, simply.

“Na, hinny, the Major’s auld papers are

not *our* business, but *your* business,” said Marion, quickly; “that is, if any body’s business. So we’ll neither make nor meddle till ye please to report, or communicate your loss to the magistrates. For an auld wife like me to take an advantage, and pry into the matters of an innocent young lady whose heart is in her mouth, would be far from right; so ye must not affront Mrs. Herbert with any such proposal, Miss Violet. See there, now, I have locked up your papers; and keep your key yoursel’, hinny. All is safe under this honourable roof.”

Mrs. Herbert looked rather blank when Marion, as a matter of course, disburdened her of her load; yet it was impossible to offer any objection; and Violet, aware of her worthy nurse’s warm attachment, shrewd sense, and knowledge of her early history, at once acquiesced, so far as to receive the key, while, smiling with melancholy sweetness, she said —

“I fear my poor father’s keepings must have sadly disappointed the pillagers, whoever they may be. His was an old soldier’s legacy — a sword which had done some service in the field, a pair of tarnished epaulets, a first commission, a few worn gazettes, and flattering letters from superior officers. This was the amount, I believe; and I shall deeply regret the loss, yet I do not feel justified in saying more about it.”

“Ye’ll see and judge at leisure, after ye have looked into your affairs; but it is, if not a sin, surely next door till’t, to let vagabonds off in a hail skin who prey upon the public, and, what is worse, on the orphan and the fatherless.”

“I quite agree with Mistress Marion,” said Mrs. Herbert; “and I assure you, Miss Hamilton, if we had but the least clew to detection, I should have no scruple, but the very reverse, in letting justice take its course.”

“But I have a clew,” returned Marion briskly. “I needed but a hair to make a tether o’; and I have a full crop o’ them, or I’m mistaken. I’m no saying Maister Skip-Jack broke open the kist with his ain hands; but he is, I make no doubt, concerned, ‘airt and pairt,’ as our lawyers at hame say, with the foreigner, and guilty after the fact.”

Upon this, Mistress Marion took her leave, volunteering future services of all kinds, and making a particular request that Miss Violet would next day visit her at her own house, as she believed that she had still in her possession, among her endless variety of inventories, one belonging to Major Hamilton,

which might help to identify some of the imagined missing property. Mrs. Herbert agreed to set the young lady down, on her way to visit a valetudinarian friend, and take her up on her return.

"And if you should invite me to step up stairs," said Mrs. Herbert, gaily, "I should feel delighted. Miss Hamilton has so excited my curiosity with the beauties and wonders of the light-house you inhabit in Fleet Street."

"It is mysel would be honoured!" returned Marion cordially, and they parted thus; Marion pursuing her way home to her cat, which advanced purring to her call by the open casement, from the top of a meat-safe, or hanging larder, on the roof of which, when alone, pussie often basked herself in the sun, and watched the martins and sparrows sporting about the chimney-pots and the eaves.

"Ay, come away, ye sly limmer; ay, ay, pussie; ye are just like a' the world; a great wark ye'll hold about folk when ye're ain end is to serve; I'm sure ye got ye're tea no that lang syne; but it will be your supper ye are for now. Let's see what is in the safe!—I am sure, ye cuttie, ye fancy it was allenarly for your use it was put up, that it might keep your dainty morsel fresh, and let ye beek yourself in the sun, and watch the bits o' birds on the tap o' it, among the wall-flowers and mignonette o' our Babylonian hanging garden."

Thus maundered Marion, addressing her favourite, while vainly attempting to rekindle her fire, which, though generally preserved like the vestal fires, had for once fairly expired. Blaming her want of providence in having neither flint nor Lucifer-matches at hand, and in her jealous and even unneighbourly independence, disdaining to be indebted for light to the tailor's family, who had incurred her displeasure and suspicion by letting a room to Jack Cripps, she left her door on the latch, and descended, with her little lantern, to procure a light two doors off. At the street door, Marion met with two persons whom her practised eye at once recognised as policemen or bailiffs, though they were at this time distinguished by no peculiar garb. With promptitude, and even a certain vindictive pleasure, she gave them the information they required about the tailor's lodger, and somewhat more. Great, however, was Marion's astonishment and anger, on her return, to find her own door open, and that the same men, and two or three more persons, were searching her apartments for the supposed criminal. Loudly and vehemently vocifer-

ating against those who had ventured "to dare to break open her door!" and vowing that her countryman, Sir Peter, in whom Marion had great faith, should "make them smart for their impudence," she advanced.

"Your door stood open, Missus," returned the man who seemed the leader; "and though it had not, I should have felt warranted to break it open, in search of a thief concealed from justice."

"Me skug a thief, ye misleared loon!" retorted Marion; "there never yet was thief or liar kened o' my kin; and the Lintons are no just of yesterday: but if so be the thief is here, take him wi' ye in gude's name. Is he i' the garde-de-vin, think ye?" cried Marion, tramping forward; "or has he crept up the lum? whereabouts is he, man? Hae ye looked below the bed, or in the coal-scuttle?—Ha! ha! ha! but ye are clever chields, you London police. The very cat is laughin' at ye," continued she, in bitter derision.

"Wherever he be, I'll swear I saw the swallow tail of his pea-green coat whisk in through your door, Missus; and so had a warrant to follow him," replied the officer.

"Ye saw! Ou, man, there's been glamour in your eyne. If he whisked up here through my keyhole, where did he whisk to next?"

"Nay, the Devil knows," returned another of the baffled men; "for he certainly is not here, Dobbs."

"Na, ye'll better examine my thimble and my nutmeg-grater, gentlemen, before ye take your departure, since ye are here; or keek into the mustard-pot," continued the aggravating Scotswoman, in a taunting tone. "And let me tell you, sirs, that yours is the first visit o' the sort my house was ever honoured wi'; and there will be news o't.—Break open my door, indeed! And this is the law o' England, where ilka poor man's house is his castle, wi' their tale!"

The man who had led the idle chase again protested that Mistress Marion's door, which she had left on the latch, was found wide open; and that, however the aforesaid John Quintin Cripps or Cryppes had escaped, he had undoubtedly been seen to enter her dwelling.

"Ye'll threep it down my throat, will ye?" retorted the indignant matron, more and more provoked. "If he entered, he must have gone out again; and how? There is not, were it but a mouse-hole, open to that roof," pointing upwards, "that is not grated and bolted. I ken you Lon'oners' tricks ower weel, not to have up my fences."

"Nay, the woman is in the right, Dobbs; the fellow could not have come up here," said the hawk-eyed, hook-nosed person, who, in the midst of the wordy tumult, had quietly taken note of every hole and crevice. "Sorry for troubling you, Missus,—but our duty. The chap is concerned in a very serious offence; for far less many a better fellow has swung."

"Na, it will surely be only a fourteen years' transportation business," returned Marion, a little shocked. "The gallows is an awful ending, even for a hand-wailed blackguard like Jack Cripps."

"Less will not serve the turn," replied the man. "In my country, now, ould Ireland, we make less of the matter of stealing a pretty girl, though she has a fortune; but here——"

"Stealt an heiress! the unhang'd villain!" screamed Marion. "He is waur than Rob Roy, the Highland reiver. But wha might she be?"

And the officers, as a propitiation for their precipitance, gratified Marion's curiosity to the utmost of their power; concluding with solemnly assuring her, as persons well qualified to judge, that if the sister happily got off with a long imprisonment, the brother could not fail to suffer death for the capital crime.

"It is no joke in England, Mistress, where money is every thing," said the bailiff, "meddling with girls that have cash. Had Miss Stocks been a poor, pretty Irish lass, the chap, if she would not marry him, might have got off with a seven years in the hulks, or so; but, as it is, he must hang by the neck until he is dead, dead, dead; and the Lord have mercy upon his soul!"

"Amen!" ejaculated Marion; and started at what seemed the echo of her words,—while the police-sergeant at once looked on the alert.

"By the Lord Harry! he is harboured here still," cried the man who had first alleged that Jack had entered the house, springing to his feet. "Look to the door, men."

The door was made fast; and one of the men placed his back against it, while the others resumed the search.

"What do you mean, sirs?" cried the indignant mistress of the house. "Will ye, as I said before, break open a lone woman's door, and then threep down her throat that the vagabond ye are after is harboured under her honest roof, which is worse insult? Pack

off with you, or it may be the worse for ye. I'm no without friends, nor a'thegether unkent to your masters. Ye have searched every corner o' my dwelling, without saying, wi' your leave, or by your leave. Will not that content ye? Surely ye must be but ill up to your thief-taking trade, or ye would have found the rogue, had he been here. But look into the bird's cage, gentlemen, ye have forgotten that hidie-hole; it would be hard to miss the blood-money for lack of pains."

"Keep a civil tongue, mistress," replied the chief of the band; but he added the order for retreat, saying—"He can't have got out on the roof; even the old woman's chimney is grated. It is impossible that a child of two years old could be concealed here."

Offering those apologies to Mistress Marion which she disdained to receive, the men retired; and, locking her door on herself, she set about lighting her fire, while addressing her cat, she alternately vented her indignation at the myrmidons of justice, and speculated upon the probability of Jack Cripps being hanged, and his sister sent to the treadmill for a couple of years.

The shades of evening fell; Marion's little fire beamed brightly and cozily; her neat crystal oil-lamp shed its beams on the large-print Bible, over a chapter of which Marion's eyes habitually travelled, night and morning, wherever her wandering thoughts might be; and pussie purred and blinked in that delicious mood—that real *dolce far niente*—which, in busy England, sick-nurses, watchmen, and cats, alone truly enjoy. The evening lecture, which breathed of mercy, or, perhaps, "the weeping blood in woman's breast," the milk of human kindness, which, if in the lapse of time grown somewhat acrid, still lingered in Marion's bosom, disposed her, at this hour of self-communion, to thoughts of mercy even towards Jack Cripps; and she said aloud, as if continuing a train of rumination—

"I'm glad, mawkin, the beagles didna rin down the bit o' carrion within our bounds. Save us, sirs! but the black gallows-tree is a fell growth o' timmer for a Christian land. E'en that idle, dandy vagabond, if he be unfit to live, is surely far less fit to die."

The cat, to whom this was apparently addressed, at this moment sprung up on a high table or dresser, by the window, mewing frightfully, and betraying the most violent alarm; and then threw herself down, and

ran bickering across and around the kitchen floor, as if going mad.

"What de'il ails the brute," cried Marion, throwing her shoe at the cat. "This is like nane o' her fits o' daffin when she was a daft kitlin langsyne. She has surely gane gyte, or seen the hangit man's ghaist. . . . Na, she will dash hersel' through the window glass. There is something the matter by ordinar wi' pussie this nicht."

In vain the caressing "*pussie, pussie,*" and "*cheet, cheet,*" of Marion wooed her favourite to her lap. The cat, violently excited, sprung at the window, spitting and swearing, as angry cat-language is interpreted by the Cockneys.

"It's some cat-concert on the selaites ye're after, ye cauterwauling limmer:—ye maun be out, maun ye?" and as Marion angrily lifted the window, out went pussie with a tiger-spring, and lighted on the roof of the meat-safe, where she scratched, screamed, and tore worse than ever. The night was now quite dark, but a slanting ray of Marion's lamp streamed on the safe, which, as if by some strange internal impulse, swayed round on its hinges to the window sill. "Gude be about us! the de'il's i' the safe!" screamed Marion, dashing it back, and fixing it to its moorings by the iron rod and hook, adapted for this purpose.

"Gad, I shall be dashed in pieces!" whispered a familiar voice, neither of earth nor air, but somewhere suspended between them; and stout-hearted and ready-witted as Marion was, she yet screamed aloud when poor Jack Cripps, venturing his head a little way out of the meat-safe, in which he lay snugly coiled up, repeated—"Dashed in pieces on the pavement, by gad. For Heaven's sake, old woman, let me into the house, and I'll make it well worth your while. Are the hinge-bolts strong?"

Marion, perceiving how the extraordinary case stood, at once recovered her self-possession and ready wit,—and replied, "There's twa words to a bargain, my man, a' the world over." She suddenly closed and bolted her window, and, after a moment of pause, burst into a long and irrepressible fit of laughter at the ridiculous nature of the adventure.

"Jack i' the box, pussie!" she exclaimed, between the peals of laughter. "Jack i' the box. That's the play ye were sae diverted wi', my bonny leddy, and me to misdoubt ye;" and Marion again cautiously drew up a bit of the sash, holding it ready however to be closed in a twinkling.

"For Heaven's sake, woman, if ye have any mercy," was whispered from the safe, "let me out of this detestable hole: my life is in danger every moment: I shall be cramped to death."

"I'll no say your airy, roomy bower is just the securest of chaumers, though called a safe. But speak laigh. Od, if your landlord the tailor's lang lugs hear ye?—and little passes in this hoose that crew gets no an inkling of. . . . And to twist yourself up there, a grand dandy beau, like the reel in the bottle, and cheat the beagles' keen scent, and the widdie too!—Na, ye are a clever chield, Mr. Cripps; I never had half so high an opinion o' ye before. Pussie, pussie, jump in, lass; it's a freend after all that has frightened ye, and nae ghaist yet."

"Assist me, then, for mercy's sake," whispered the gentleman in duress. "I have it in my power to requite you. I am momentarily in peril of being precipitated headlong to the pavement; and I have information at this moment in my possession for which Miss Hamilton and Charles Herbert, or any friend of theirs, would give a fortune. It is worth one to them; it is; 'pon my honour it is! I counted on making something handsome by their gratitude—you shall have all—thousands. For Heaven's sake, open the window, and give me something to hold by, in case of the worst, while you pull the safe round."

"Hoolie, freend!—hoolie! Fair and softly goes far. I'll no uphold that your present domicile is just so secure or grand as Mr. Shuffleton's best or even second drawing-room; but it has its advantages; and it was o' your ain choosing. I'm sure I ne'er boded it on you. As safe it is as the end of a tenpenny tow, ony way; and as hearkeners seldom hear a good tale o' themselves, I reckon ye heard, short syne, of your likelihood to succeed right speedily to that heirship."

Whatever might be the real feelings of the tortured prisoner, he durst not give them vent. He was indeed in the most unpleasant though original predicament in which an unfortunate gentleman has probably ever been placed.

"Will you keep me here all night?" groaned Jack piteously, who durst not move, lest motion had loosened the fastenings of his eyry.

"Why, 'deed I cannot say," returned Marion, gravely and deliberately. She had

perfect confidence in the strength of her roomy meat-safe, and its capacity of sustaining many more stones than Jack weighed; and she also felt a strange delight in tormenting him, besides entertaining a vague scheme of compelling him to pay a handsome ransom in justice to Violet for his liberty.

"But for any sake keep still," she continued, persisting in the same strain, "and no' try the hooks ower muckle. I hope it will no' be a very windy night; for I have kenned your airy cabin rock in a storm like a boat in a rough sea."

"If I could get hold of the wretch's demmed cat," thought Jack, considering of a hostage, and putting forth his long fingers towards the roof of his cage, where pussie still sat, though now more quietly.

"Ye villain, keep hands off pussie, or I'll be the death o' ye! Next to Miss Violet hersel', I like poor pussie; and she's nowadays, about a' I hae to like."

"I would not harm a hair of her whiskers, chawming creature," whispered Jack, cordially wishing both mistress and pet at the deuce.

"I'm fully sensible o' your great regard and respect for my cat, myself, and my country," returned Marion, in a low, ironical tone. "So, as a preliminary to our farther treaty, ye'll just lie quiet till she jump in; or, by my forebears' soul! I will put a sneck before your nose, till I can make ye ower to them that has the best right to ye! But pussie in fairly, I shall hear what you have to say anent the matters of a certain young leddy; and, if ye play fair, ye shall not rue it."

Willingly would Jack have seized the furred hostage in the spring to which her mistress, cautiously and fully opening the window, invited her: but he exercised a wise forbearance; the cat bounded in, and Marion as nimbly drew down and bolted her sash, and opened an upper pane, which was fitted as a ventilator to her attic abode.

"Now we are in a condition to parley," said Marion, through this new medium; "and your neck, remember, young man, is in the one scale, and Miss Violet or Mr. Charles Herbert's relief from that villanous law-process raised by you and your father in the other. That, in the first place, must be ended, under hand and seal, before another word is said of your deliverance."

"Good God, ma'am, how can I do aught while here," groaned Jack.

"Whisht! Your landlord, the tailor, below, who sleeps wi' his lugs open, will hear ye; and see, then, what ye have to expect from him; while Mr. Stocks, on a' the walls o' Lun'on, offers a round £100 for your apprehension, and the Government another. 'Deed they are aye lavish eneuch o' ither folk's siller. But ye can scribble bravely where ye are all that is needed. Daylight will soon be in. I'll hand ye ower an ink-horn and a bit paper on the end of a fire-shovel, and ye'll write it a' fairly down. Nothing like black and white in business."

"Surely you will not keep me here all night!" wailed Jack, pathetically. "I'll suffocate."

"Ye'll choke?—never a fear o' ye; there's plenty o' good free air about ye. I have kept a dead pig or a Christmas goose there fresh and caller for three weeks at a time ere now."

And Marion was seized with another fit of provoking laughter at Jack's plaintive tones and her own wit, ere she resumed,

"Keep ye all nicht! My certy! I see little to hinder ye from being my boarder for a month to come. Some folk never ken when they are in gude quarters. But say your prayers, and take a nap in your Patmos there; I'se uphold nothing comes ower ye, if ye dinna kick and fling about. But make up your mind to make a clean breast o't, and redeem your captivity: for, as I'm a living sinner, out o' that ye'll no come till I get justice o' ye, and maybe a thought mair."

CHAPTER XIII.

WE took leave of our friend Mr. John Quintin Cryppes, junior, in a somewhat unpleasant predicament, though, as all mortal ills are relative, one in which he had, upon the whole, some reason to congratulate himself. Contentment was, however, so far from being Jack's prevailing feeling, that, in answer to Mistress Marion's good-night, now become quite desperate, he implored for release from the apartment she had so lauded. But Marion was inexorable; and, calmly bolting, first her window, and then her shutters, she sat down to meditate on the terms of capitulation which it would be proper and safe to dictate to her captive. His tale of the fortune, or of a discovery worth a fortune, she would have considered of no value save for the pillaged trunk. Of having

pillaged it, she gave the full credit to Monsieur Eustache; though she made no doubt that Mr. John Quintin Cryppes was not ignorant of its contents.

The watchman, in passing, called "Half-past eleven!" not indeed that the words, if to be called articulate language at all, bore the remotest resemblance to what should have been their sound; but Marion, like the other inhabitants of London, from long custom, and the intimations of her own clock, knew what was meant by those gutturals; and also that the industrious tailor below, who rose with the lark, must have been asleep for an hour; and Mr. and Mrs. Herbert's solicitor, after his day's labour, tasting the sweet of the night in a certain tavern near his nightly rendezvous, Covent Garden Theatre. He was a gentleman of the old school; and so far true to his character as an old bachelor, an attorney, and a play-goer, as to be rigidly regular in what men of more modern times were pleased to call his irregularities.

"I could trust to my ain judgment in the matter," thought Marion; "but what is the soundest judgment, ay, Solomon's itsel', to the quirks and wiles, and nonsense and clavers, o' the English law—common law or statute law—for they are baith alike clean contrar to common sense; so I'll e'en, pussie, lock up my Jack-in-the-box, and take a step Mr. Gryphon's length. I am no' a bairn; and I have been on Lon'on streets at a' hours, and ne'er saw waur than mysel yet, an it be no' thae miserable waifs o' women, causey-paikers. Lord look on and help them!"

The old Scotswoman was not of a character to dally in any good purpose once fixed; and in her present errand great and pressing interests were involved.

Though the soberly carousing attorney could scarcely be made to understand her design, when his head was once fairly penetrated, and he found that Marion was resolute to tell him no more than that she had young Cripps in "safe custody," and at her mercy, he formally wrote a document, by which father and son jointly gave up every right to prosecute Miss Hamilton or her friends, for the recovery of the large damages laid for the loss alleged to have been incurred by the Professor from his pupil abandoning her engagements.

Fain would Marion have admitted Mr. Gryphon, whom she knew to be a humorist, into the delicious secret of her "Jack-in-the-

box," but prudence and real kindness of heart restrained her.

"He's a funny gentleman, nae doubt, Mr. Gryphon," was her rumination, as she wended home, "and would half kill himself at the joke of the first prisoner in my Tantalion; but will the sly cat let the silly mouse slip alive through her clutches, after having tossed it up and played with it? I trow no. Now I wadna scruple to let the shabby-genteel swindler rub shouters wi' the gentle gallows; but, save and bless us! it's an awful thought to see e'en a Jack Cripps dangling like a sea-tangle at the end of a tow; and as the bit lassie, Miss Stocks, has got skaithless out o' their fingers, the daring villains! else I wad have helped to hang them wi' my ain hands! and as Jack promises fair to our Miss Violet, his blood shall no be on my head; besides, he placed himsel' in my mercy, under the shelter o' my roof, or at least o' my beef-stand, whilk was aye a plea for protection, even to an enemy fleeing wi' blood on his hand, in the gallant auld times o' my ain country."

And thus, for reasons and considerations, personal, friendly, chivalrous, and patriotic, Marion resolved to be, on certain conditions, merciful in her future dealings with her prisoner. Her first care on her return, was, therefore, to allay his fears for personal safety, by opening her ventilating pane, and giving assurance that her safe would stand ten times his weight; and this done, after receiving his parole of honour for good behaviour, she supplied him, on a fire shovel, with a pint of stout, a biscuit, and a slice of cheese; all most gratefully welcomed, both for their own sakes and as a token of the friendly dispositions of the giver.

Yet long and wearily passed those hours to poor Jack in his cage, in which, in spite of his confined position and the continuous caterwauling of cats on the neighbouring roofs, strange to say, he dozed from time to time, until day fairly dawned, and the sparrows began to chirrup, and the tailor below arose, and, opening the window of his chamber, almost immediately under Jack's place of durance, for a breath of air, commenced talking to his wife as he dressed himself.

"The fellow never ventured back to the old nest all night: too good a thing to come our way—£100 by the young lady's father, and another from the Home Office. Now, if you had had the sense, Ju., to tip him the wink ere he bolted, he would have drawn back like a well-waxed thread, as soon as

the coast was clear; but that would be too much to expect of you, Julia."

"To sell Cripps' blood d'ye mean, Snippy? No; thank Heaven, I am too much the lady for that. He is a clever, genteel, young fellow, and paid handsomely when he had it; and where was the great to do about running off with a girl, as if such things were not done every day in the year?"

"D'ye think I'd touch blood-money, mum?" retorted the tailor. "But you may fancy it better the blood-hounds lick it than that it come to your family of small children, Mrs. Snipson. . . . How the deuce, after all, could the fellow get off? the street door was watched—Gad, I suspect that cunning grannie up stairs still. It was like her to pretend to be out, and leave her door open."

"How you do talk, Snippy, dear. Do let me sleep, will ye? No doubt he ran down stairs into the back kitchen, and scrambled over the wall of the court-yard. Was there a place in Lady Linton's garret they did not poke into, even that great box which it is thought she has full of silver plate? Catch her showing her keepings to any neighbour."

"Well, if you must sleep lovey, I'll watch, and hope still. But do remember to lock the door after you when you come down stairs; and that Mrs. Deputy Dubbin's cap for the *Day June à la for chat*, at Queen-hithe, must be sent home with the Deputy's velvet vest by ten o'clock at the farthest."

"Umph!" growled the drowsy milliner.

"Egad! she is a jewel of a creature that bandy-legged tailor's wife; she deserves promotion," thought the unseen listener above. "Could I but venture to swing myself down with any chance of safely entering her room, generous creature! and so escaping by her connivance; for this old hag——"

"Shut the window, will ye, Snip; do ye mean that I should catch my death of cold?" came from below. "My compliments to Mrs. Deputy Dubbins, and she may either wear her second best cap, or stay at home for me. If that don't please her, let her whet her beak and fly up;" and with this respectful sentiment to her very best customer, and death to the newly-conceived hope of Jack Cripps, the tailor shut the window, and the saucy milliner committed herself for another two hours to the arms of Morpheus.

It was not until she had descended to adorn and despatch the head-gear of Mrs. Deputy Dubbins, whom she was far from seriously intending to disappoint on so mo-

mentous an occasion, that Marion fairly opened parley with the prisoner, to whom at dawn she had handed her document for signature, with silent menaces against any attempt to escape. Jack would, by this time, readily have signed the warrant for his own execution to effect his release; and Marion, first sarcastically telling him that he had passed the night as snugly as if a passenger by the York mail, with only six insides, promised him the indulgence of jumping into the kitchen window, in which apartment he was to remain locked up until the treaty was fairly concluded and guarantees given.

"But if ye dare to stir a peg out of that till I give the signal '*once, twice, thrice*, and a *jump*,' I'll raise the house about ye; and ye are as sure to be in the gled's clutches as ever Gilderoy was. I am aware it would not, now that broad daylight is up, either suit your purpose or mine, to keep ye langer swinging out by there, so once, twice, *thrice*!" And while Marion, as nimbly as when at fifteen she had played at Bogle-about-the Stacks, during her first service at Branhholm Mains, ran out, and turned the key, she rewarded her own and Jack's feats of agility with another burst of laughter, while he stretched his limbs in her kitchen, and flew to her bit of looking-glass to see if it were indeed Jack Quintin Cryppes who had passed so extraordinary a night, and now stood here in safety, but with the skin off his nose and a horridly long beard.

Mistress Marion had him still at vantage, and was not likely to lose an inch of ground, or abate in her demands one jot; so the parley was renewed, but now more safely through the key-hole of the kitchen-door.

Jack, for his own part, was quite ready to sign any paper she pleased; but the signature of his father—the Professor's surrender—was of ten times the importance, and by ten o'clock Marion sallied forth with Jack's letter to his father, specifying, quite to her satisfaction, the only conditions on which his freedom could be secured, and pathetically alluding to the peril in which he stood, unless the demands of Mistress Linton were instantly complied with. This Marion did not fail to expatiate upon to the father, though she absolutely refused to say where the fugitive son lay concealed, or, more than that, she would become bound for his safety, and to get him smuggled off for Leith in a Berwick smack, where he might lie bye for a while, if the Professor frankly and at once dropt the action against Miss

Hamilton. She finally intimated, that she was not to be begging or praying longer : "It was their own affair."

"I must first consult my daughter, Mrs. Burke Barker," said the perplexed father, with some hesitation.

"And I maun off to Bow Street," cried Marion, decidedly, and wrapping her shawl energetically round her. "I have neither leisure nor liking for this shilly-shally off-putting work. Mrs. Burke Barker, as ye ca' her, is as deep i' the plot as your son Jack, if no deeper, though not like to smart sae sair for her doings, which may darken her judgment o' his case."

"Where is my son, woman, my dear boy?" cried the mother, now entering. "My Edmund in a gaol and his brother skulking! Was it for this, Cripps, that you left your respectable employment to set up for a fine gentleman in Lon'on, and ruin your family, sir; was it for this, sir?"

"Dinna let me stand in the way o' family matters," interrupted Marion, in a dry tone and going off; "I made ye a fair offer, sir and madam, and I have my mends."

"Stay, woman!" thundered the Professor, "Where is my son? I will apply to the Magistrates; I will issue out a habeas corpus! How dare you thus trifle with the feelings of a lady and a mother?"

"Ye'll no need to fash their honours the Magistrates," replied Marion; "for I'm just going their way mysel'. So ye have no answer to your dear son's letter? He may go to the gallows for you. Na, ye are a vera Roman Brutus."

"The gallows for my son, you impertinent, audacious woman!" exclaimed Mrs. Cripps; "Mr. John Quintin Cryppes!"

"Ay, just Mr. John Quintin Cryppes, mem. I ken him weel enouch; mair by token he got a snug night's quarters in my good meat-safe last night, where a' the beagles in Lun'on could not have found him: but that's my thanks for my hospitality."

Passion had now betrayed Marion's prudence.

The astonishment and horror of the Professor and his lady at this intelligence were prodigious.

"My boy! my dear, unhappy boy! disgraced for ever!" cried the Professor, in violent emotion. "The abduction of an heiress—what is it?—'tis but a boyish trick, pardonable under the ardour and excitement of youthful passion; but, heavens and earth, in a— a meat—"

"A meat-safe!" added the stronger-hearted mother; "and very lucky it was too. And now, good woman, if you do get my Jack fairly off till this business blow over, I don't care, Cripps, what becomes of that odious girl, who has been at the bottom of every mischief that has ever happened to my family. Give the letter Jack wishes for, Cripps— give it instantly, I say. Who shall dare touch a hair of his head?"

"The gallows-tree has small respect o' persons, mem," said Marion. "But let the Professor take his mind o' the matter. Only, understand this, and for the last time, this false action against the young lady, whose name ye profane, either drops, or Mr. Stocks proceeds against my friend i' the place yonder, which shall be nameless, since it offends ye sae sair, sir."

"My friend, General Wickam, was saved, in the shipwreck of the *Penang*, by riding for five hours on a hencoop," said the Professor, half in soliloquy, and as if soothing his own wounded pride by the instance or precedent which lessened Jack's or the family's degradation. "Surely, my good woman, you can never be so cruel and inconsiderate as disgrace my family—a family of talent and distinction—by mentioning this awkward incident in the career of my eldest son? Ridicule, Mrs. Cryppes, my love; ridicule, ma'am," and he turned to his lady, "in a position like ours, is more fatal, much more ruinous to our prospects in a certain grade of society, than any youthful indiscretion chargeable upon our dear boys."

"Weel, this dings dinty!" thought Marion, indignantly and contemptuously. "The auld, vain, donnert, doited born-idiot, is more mortified at his good-for-nothing gett being saved in this queer fashion, than pleased that the scamp has escaped. I'll put up with this nonsense nae langer.—I'll give just one other five minutes, Mr. Cripps, mair for your runagate son's sake than your own, let me tell you," she said, aloud, once more tendering Mr. Gryphon's paper for signatnre.

"Cripps, I bid you do as the woman desires, I say! Is my Jack to be brought into trouble and disgrace for that girl? I don't believe Mrs. Burke Barker or her high and mighty husband cares one farden what becomes of my boys, if they were well out of the scrape themselves. Sign, I say, sir, this minute."

"Give up a just claim to £5,000, my love?" replied the embarrassed Professor.

"No such thing, Cripps. If she sell her

shift for it, we shall have the damages off her yet ; but let my Jack be saved," replied Mrs. Cripps, whose reasoning was not at any time what is termed consecutive.

"What sacrifice is there which I am not prepared to make for my dear children," said the Professor, in his very grandest manner, as he affixed a flourishing signature to the paper, which Mistress Marion, who liked a reasonably good bargain, eagerly seized, thinking "Half the ransom is paid."

Bent on a high mission, Marion, with less than usual ceremony, demanded an audience of Mrs. Herbert, who was both highly amused and delighted with the manner in which she and her son had been thus unexpectedly freed from their threatened entanglements and lawsuit with Professor Cryppes.

"'Twas impossible that a claim so unjust and unreasonable could have been sustained in any Court," she said : "but I am, nevertheless, always glad to see the end of a lawsuit. I shall instantly write Charles of our mutual deliverance, and the amusing means by which it has been effected by Sergeant Linton."

"Oh, how can I ever thank you enough," said Violet, pressing the old woman's hard, hot hands, and loosing the strings of her bonnet. "You are indeed, Marion, my good angel."

"Your *brownie*, hinny—your faithful, industrious *brownie*. But had you seen me and pussie yestreen, Miss Violet, when our 'Jack-in-the-box' first cheepit ! I thought I would have cracked my sides wi' even-down gaffawin' :—ye might have bound me wi' a straw ; I was just powerless wi' lauchin. But I'm no done wi' the rogue yet. When I have swallowed this dish o' chocolate—this is the right sort, Mrs. Herbert, mem, a real cordial—ye maun show me the bits of odds and ends o' papers left i' the kist ; for I have a notion that I am on the right trail o' the plunderers ; and, by my certy, if it be sae, I'll work them !"

Violet reddened all over, and became exceedingly agitated. She had by this time perused several disjointed fragments of the papers remaining in the double bottom of the trunk, which had whetted her curiosity to see more.

"They are chiefly written by my mother, whom I can scarcely remember," she said. "She died while we were in America, during the late war. After the peace, I was sent to a French convent, until we went to Scotland, and finally settled in Jersey. I believe

my father never had the courage to read these writings left by my mother ; yet if I can believe their imperfect evidence, though it seems like dreaming, my mother must have been the sister, by the second marriage of his mother, of—you must think it very strange, ma'am ?—of your friend the Earl of Tarbert."

"Good heavens, Violet ! you the niece of the Earl of Tarbert ! Laura Temple's cousin ! How very extraordinary ! But, my dear girl, had you no previous idea of this yourself ?"

"I had a general idea that my mother was highly connected :—that much I understood, or perhaps divined, from my poor father's conversation. His pride resented, perhaps too strongly, the neglect shown by my mother's noble brother, whoever he may have been ; and he accordingly repaid coldness with haughty scorn. You must have heard of the family pride of the Scots, ma'am," continued Violet smiling. "If my mother was highly connected, my father, with few or no powerful living relatives, was far-descended, and had probably his share of the national failing."

"The blude o' kings ran in the veins o' Claude Hamilton," said Mistress Marion, who was also deeply imbued with the national fantasy. And Violet, graciously, yet with an expression of comic humour, smiling to her, continued—"It might have been unwise in my father to hold so completely aloof from my mother's family ; but they were rich and powerful, and he poor and proud, and morbidly sensible to the miseries to which, as a child and a boy, he had been subjected from poor relationship. While labouring to advance my education, as the only means of independence within my power, I have often overheard him say, to our good friend the Rector, that he would rather prefer for his little Violet the lot of a maid-servant in a humble Jersey farm, than that of the tolerated hanger-on in the saloons of great relations, although they had been willing to receive her. In these ideas was I educated,—and I thank Heaven for it."

"It seems altogether so extraordinary," said Mrs. Herbert, attending more to the facts than the philosophy of the case, "so romantic, almost—yet I cannot believe the Tarberts knowingly capable of ungenerous conduct to so near relatives as you and your father. It must have been in ignorance."

"Nay, I do not accuse them. If it shall turn out that the Earl was really so nearly

connected with my mother—for even that point, by the abstraction of these papers, is left in doubt—I am inclined to think that he may still be ignorant of the death of my father, and of my existence altogether. My mother's death was formally notified to him; but if he ever wrote in reply to her husband, or made any inquiry about us, such communications never reached my father."

"The Earl was long absent from England; for many years in Germany, and at one time at Constantinople," said Mrs. Herbert, as if in palliation.

"Nay, we too were drifting about the world, and more likely to miss letters than a person in the distinguished station of the Earl of Tarbert; though nothing could induce my father to make a second attempt at explanation, when he subsequently learned from the newspapers that the Earl was at Vienna. Children have quick ears, and, where their feelings are interested, quick wits: though no particular Earl was named in the conversations with the Rector, I learned that I had an uncle of that rank, and, perhaps unwittingly, to share in my father's prejudice against him; so far, at least, as to disdain dependence. The pecuniary claims my mother had, in right of her mother, my father forbore to press, unwilling to risk our little all on the uncertainties of a Chancery suit."

"Had not Mr. Gryphon better get a glisk o' your bits o' fragments o' papers, Miss Violet?" said Marion, pricking up her ears at pecuniary claims. "If any man in Lun'on can unravel sic mysteries of iniquity, its himsel'; though he has his weak side in hankering after plays and play-actors."

"Alas! I fear the case is more hopeless than ever;—the most important papers appear to have been abstracted, if they ever existed."

"Hopeless, hinny! na, ne'er ye say that word. I have got you out o' one scrape the day, and, with the blessing o' the Almighty upon our poor endeavours for the orphan, we've get ye out o' this too. I ken now what the vagabond meant by bragging o' what he had in his power. But I'll make little out of him unless I can frighten him back into his Patmos, and compel him to surrender on my ain terms. Troth, it would be gude sport too," said Marion, chuckling at the amusing idea rising in her mind, and on which she speedily acted.

Bustling up her own stair, she began to talk aloud to the tailor's children, so as to

be overheard by the impatient Jack:—"So the police have been back again after your mother's lodger—have they, bairns? Ye are playing there at *hide-and-peek* little Jacky? or is it—*hey spy!* Hide, Jack—hide, up there—

Keep in, keep in, wherever ye be,
The greedy gled is seeking ye,"

continued Marion, apparently addressing Jack minor on the stairs, while aiming to frighten Jack major above now, intently listening. He had not been without strong suspicion that the protracted absence of his jailor was for the purpose of betraying him and securing the whole of the reward to herself. But, at present, she seemed to be playing fair to him; and in this opinion he was confirmed, when he heard her shout to the tailor who had come forth—"Watch my door! search my house again, the blackguards! do they dare to propose that? But let them! I make them welcome. Call them up from the tavern, where they are carousing, keeping watch on my motions, and if Mr. Jack Cripps, or any other Jack, is found under my roof or on my floorhead, I'll come bound to eat him. Watch me, indeed!"

The reply of the tailor was imperfectly heard, though it seemed a broken lament for so much good money being lost to the house; but Jack's motions were quickened by Marion's distinct reply:—

"Certainly, come up yourself; seeing is believing." Jack pulled up the window. "Satisfy yourself." Jack wheeled round the safe. "But surely this is the wrong key?" and Marion fumbled about the lock, while her warned lodger once more snugly enconced himself—though with a beating heart—secretly cursing the tailor, and not even sparing Marion, who he thought should have stood on the defensive, till actually compelled to give in.

When Marion concluded that her plan had taken effect, she found the right key of the outer and also of the kitchen door, which she threw open widely; and ostentatiously invited the tailor in, while she quietly pulled down and secured the window, and drawing its muslin half-screen, took her seat by it, inviting her neighbour to sit down by the fire.

"It is an awful business, to be sure; and hard to see £200 gang bye ourselves; for, I reckon, ye would have shared and shared the reward alike with me, had it been my luck to have secured the chap up here?"

"On honour, mum; to the last fardén,

Missis Linton. And as some un must get it, as well us, mum, as another."

"Certainly; but I'm mair like to lose than make by him. I bestowed a penny but e'en now, coming along the Strand, for his last dying speech and confession, pair fallow! No doubt, the hue-and-cry is hot after him; but I hope it's no just come to the last speech yet; that is, if he does his best to make amends for a fault: ne'er ower late to repent, Mr. Snipson. But wad ye like to take a look o' my apartments? Na, nae excuses; just open the doors, and look about yourself."

Mr. Snipson protested entire disbelief of any one being concealed here, but, nevertheless, did as he seemed to be desired; all the while, as he opened one cupboard after another, declaring how utterly impossible it was that the culprit should be concealed there, or that a person of the known substance and respectability of Mrs. Linton was capable of screening a notorious criminal.

"And losin' the reward, too, ye ken, Mr. Snipson," said Marion, in a sarcastic tone. "Deed twa hunder is not a soom I wad like to fling ower my shoulder; and I cannot but think that if so be the villain were ta'en by my means, and in my ain hoose, I would have a gude right to the maist feck, if not to the whole of it."

Mr. Snipson seemed reluctant to surrender his claims to the shadowy substance, and in some doubt about how much sterling money the Scots "maist feck," which Marion claimed, might amount to.

"Ye see, Mr. Snipson, I would not only have a title as first informer, but the rights of my own rooms, and of my easements and appurtenances, providing he were found here; and also my hypotheic rights as landlady and overlord of the whole premises, down to the street and the sunk story."

"Hang her, old devil!" thought Jack; "she surely delights to torture me."

"You Scots are such scholars, and so up to trap, Missis Linton; but I venture to think, that nothing could be claimed by either of us until conviction were certificated, mum, by the judge, nor, pr'aps, till the hexecution were hover."

"D—n him!" groaned Jack, gnashing his teeth, "if ever I walk London streets again, I'll victimize that low blackguard. A good part of my wardrobe remains in his beggarly lodgings, too; which, save to give a central rendezvous to Eustache, I had never entered."

"Indeed, it's a reserved point for lawyers

that same, Mr. Snipson," said Marion; "but at any rate, the time between sentence and hanging is never lang in your country; little time for a pair sinner to make his soul's peace; and this unhappy chield is but young, too; not much ower five-and-twenty, I should think."

"Thirty, I'll swear for him. Bless you, mum, Jack Cripps has been on the town, and spunging on the Trade this dozen years at least."

"It's a lie, you rascal," muttered Jack, gnashing his teeth in his lair. "I have only been four seasons on town, and am not twenty-seven till St. Crispin's day."

"It's lucky that ye will, after all, lose but little by him, Mr. Snipson," said Marion, in her dry manner; "his bits o' duds—for he was aye fond of dirty bravery, come from where it would—will clear you I reckon; especially as Mrs. Snipson was sae prudent as aye to insist on a week's rent beforehand."

"Trash, mum; mere seedy trash; a Jew would not accept a gift of 'em. Dress shoes you might throw to the dustman; and a pair and a half of fancy silk socks, washed and worn to mummy; the top pulled down to the heel."

"Scoundrel! my olive surtout, lined with Lyons silk serge; my new, light-blue, brocade waistcoat—bill not sent in yet—my, my"—Jack sputtered with rage, and almost shook his airy asylum, while Marion laughed heartily at the tailor's *catalogue raisonnée* of a decayed dandy's belongings.

"But there will be some other property?" she then said; "a bit dask, or a pickle books or papers; he was a great auwthor, ye ken, for the prents and the play-house."

"A greasy, thumbed copy of *Life in London*, mum, with half the plates torn out, and some trash of old plays, farces written in pot-hooks and hangers, which I mean to cut up into measures."

Marion was now all alive, and wary.

"Really, Mr. Snipson, the funny way in which ye describe the dandy's duds, makes me long to see his kit:—were they locked up, the bits o' manuscript plays?"

This question seemed scarcely necessary, since, whether locked up or not, the property of the lodger had been subjected to scrutiny by his landlord; yet it rather puzzled the tailor, who, however, answered boldly—

"Not a bit of them—a filthy mess altogether: a pink gingham shirt, never washed since first bought, and yellow kids, smelling. I

made the girl throw the whole out this morning in the ash-box."

"All save the measures," said Marion. "Gae awa', for ony sake, and bring up an armfu' o' the plays, and we'se have a screed o' them. It will be good sport; and ye'll take a snack o' luncheon at the same time. I have gotten a famous Bologna sausage, and hae a cold green goose out in the safe there—maybe ye wad prefer it devilled, and well peppered?"

"You are too good, mum: 'Bologna sassaenger is Snipson's weakness,' as my Ju. remarks; but any way you prefer, mum; beggars must not be choosers; really I have no choice; you make my mouth water, Missis Linton; and the Scots are halways so 'ospitable, mum—as I always say to my missis, after your little neighbourly treats—the Scots are a most hobblin', 'ospitable people."

"For our ain ends, it's sometimes alleged, Mr. Snipson."

"O Lord, mum, never minchin it," replied the tailor, chuckling at this home truth, to which, in secret, he heartily subscribed.

"And there might be worse reasons, too; so, while I get the tray—na, I must put down one bottle o' my brown-stout; I ken ye like my bottled porter, and a single bottle between two is surely no great debosh: but do bring up Jack's bits o' sangs."

"Plays, mum."

"Weel, be it plays, that will be the better diversion; but, gude sake, ye maun not let Mrs. Snipson get jealous o' us."

And the tailor, laughing heartily at the joke, which, such as it was, had the merit of coming from his entertainer, went off.

Marion was aware that her tenant of the first and second floors, though a first-rate fashioner among the second-rates—for he was no Stultze, nor Doudney—was no great scholar, though it was probable that his lady might have made something of written papers. Indeed, Marion had an idea, that while she herself, in virtue of her Scots schooling, could make out all manner of crank inventories submitted to her inspection, the tailor, though not wanting in ready address to cover his deficiencies, could not tell a B from a bull's foot. Before his return, Marion had placed her refection on the table, and donned her spectacles, utterly regardless of the agonizing "Hist, hist!" which issued from the safe, save to cry, "Are ye mad? Be quiet there, pussie." Mr. Snipson speedily returned with his commission.

"Eat ye a bit, and as I have my nose ready saddled, I'll try my hand at Mr. Cripps' nonsense. But such a scart o' a hand, Mr. Snipson. It's liker a hen's scraping among dirt than a Christian's hand o' writ," said Marion, handing over a page, which Snipson, between mouthfuls, sagaciously surveyed, holding the top downmost, and remarking, "All hands come much alike to me, mum."

"I would like to pick out something very funny to divert us, since we are at it," said Marion, examining every separate paper. "But will ye win to the board," and, while warmly pressing him to eat, she secretly admired the style in which her Bologna sausage was being mowed down.

"Something funny, eh! to be sure; but aloud, pray, ma'am," for now Marion's attention was fairly riveted on the paper she examined.

"Surely, surely, I'll read aloud;" and she thought to herself, "Weel, no ane kens what they may need, or what may bestead them at a pinch in the weary journey o' life. When I learned these blethers of Allan Ramsay's, little did I think——"

"You can't make 'em out, ma'am? nay, I felt the hand deuced crabbed myself. Admirable sassaenger this; your health, ma'am."

"Make him out? fine that! But will ye care to hear the nonsense; it's a' poetry; now, the sassaenger is gude, plain, savoury prose."

"Poetry! Missis Snipson quite doated on poetry before marriage; but marriage makes a difference with you ladies, mum." Marion now appeared so wrapt in her silent studies, that a strange feeling of suspicion crept into the tailor's mind.

"P'raps I'd better tie up Cripps' pot-hooks, and not bother you, ma'am," said he, reaching over his arm to sweep away the papers.

"Bother me! I could read them were they a' black print; but, troth, I'm mair tempted to throw them in the fire, did ever mortal hear such downright clavers!" and Marion alternately read aloud and silently, or, as the Scots say, "off her loof," with admirable presence of mind and precision. Thus the real phrase, "And to the said Gabrielle Violet, the reversionary disposition of £15,000, accruing to her by the death of her mother, the above-named Sophia Amelia, widow of Charles, second earl of Tarbert," was rapidly translated into—

"This sunny morning, Roger, cheers my blood,
And puts all Nature in a joyful mood;
How wholesome 'tis to snuff the caller air,"—

Silently—"Secured upon the said Earl's estate of Coombe Flory, parish of Dundon, county of ——"

"Go on, mum," urged the munching tailor; "what a blasted rigmarole! What can the fellow be after by 'caller hair?' I've heard of caller 'errings."

Sorely did Marion blame her traitorous memory, which, when she was alone, as she now thought, would be wickedly suggesting all manner of nonsense of old tales and ballads, but completely deserted her in this strait, though she boldly dashed into a very extraordinary medley or cross reading, depending a good deal for success upon the tailor's ignorance of the Scottish, and every other literature. She commenced, by drawing upon her earliest reminiscences, while seeming to read—

"Will ye go to the ewe-bughts Marion?"

"In London was young Bekie born,
And he longed strange countries for to see;
So he passed through many kingdoms great,
Until he came to great Turkie.
Oh, they rode on, and on they rode,
And by the light o' the moon,
Until they came to his mother's ha' door,
And there they lighted down.

"Get up, lady mother," he says "—

And here Marion fairly floundered, but bravely bolted into the tragedy of the "Laird of Wariston," after that the "Douglas tragedy," and a few broken stanzas of "Johnny Armstrong."

"Cussed rigmarole!" ejaculated the tailor, between a bite and a draught.

"Ye may say it," replied Marion, contemptuously throwing down the manuscript among the cushions of her easy chair. "The Last Speech will be better diversion than that poor stuff. Jack Cripps has but sma' ingine as an awthor, I'm jalousing."

Marion having dexterously secreted the paper she considered of the greatest importance, trusted the remainder to their fate, though resolved, if possible, to secure the whole; and took up the "*Hue and Cry*," in which, to the manifest delight of Mr. Snipson, she, amidst peals of laughter, read the following description of the culprit:—

"Five feet seven inches in height——"

"Demmed lie," muttered Jack, in his place; "I'm five feet eight and a quarter—I am."

"Sallow complexion; muddy, greasy

skin," read Marion; "sandy-coloured, thin moustaches, but may probably have shaved them off."

"No, curse them!" thought Jack, with some difficulty drawing his hand fondly over the most cherished ornament of his face, and soothed by feeling that all was right there, "I have my moustaches still."

Marion continued:—"Very large red ears, placed low on the head."

"Na, faith, Mr. Snipson, but the lang ears may be useful to him at this present creesis—ha! ha! ha! Weel, puir Jack comes out here nae beauty."

And she resumed:—"Swivel-eyed, and squints strongly with both eyes, as if looking to his nose."

"Demnation!" thought Jack; "and this atrocious libel is publicly hawked through the streets of London."

"I must have a read of this for my missis, mum," said Snipson. "Missis Snipson has a fancy that the chap is 'andsome, or 'as a genteel hair. I saw from the first that he was a seedy scamp."

"Some leddies have odd tastes, Maister Snipson; but for one with a buirdly, personable, good-looking husband like you:—weel, weel, every one to their liking, though I'm sure ye're no aboon five or six inches shorter than the vagabond."

"Not an 'alf inch, mum," cried the tailor, starting to his legs, and drawing himself on tiptoe up to, and beyond, his full height, while Marion dexterously secreted another document.

"Cursed shrimp!" muttered Jack. "Want but half an inch of *my* height! the Cockney pigmy! By Jove, my first deed shall be to massacre that tailor and run off with his wife."

"Ye shall get a loan o' the speech—or is it a *Hue and Cry*?—for the special benefit of Mistress Snipson," said Marion. "For that matter, ye may keep it a'thegither for her behoof when I have finished perusing Jack's beauty marks." And Marion again read aloud:—"Very large nose, a little awry, and the skin at present off the bridge. Usually dresses in a shabby blue or olive-coloured surtout, with braid and frogs much worn; gay-coloured, dirty, figured-silk waistcoat; and sky-blue satin cravat; tight plaid trousers, and gaiters. Had on, when last seen, rather dirty linen; morocco boots, much too small for his feet, which makes him waddle or shuffle in his gait; a union shirt-pin, turquoise and mock diamond; and

mosaic-gold watch-chain, but, it is believed, no watch. If any pawnbroker," &c. &c.

"Waddle in my gait! the libellous monsters!" thought the nearly distracted gentleman; at that very moment, as indeed all night long, writhing under the torture of the "bootikins," of which he had been unable to rid himself.

Jack, between torture of limb and irritation of mind, was wound up to the most desperate attempt; even to knock down Marion, assassinate the tailor, rob the house, and escape; when a loud ringing at Marion's door-bell, and an unusual bustle, at once changed his mood, and made him hastily draw back into his shell.

"It's Mrs. Herbert and my young lady," said Marion.

"It's the police, p'raps, mum," added Mr. Snipson, excited.

"Then never a foot o' them enters here," cried Marion. "My blood is up, and I'm on honour." And, much to the relief of Jack, she prepared for active resistance.

"Mr. Gryphon the solicitor, only, after all," said Snipson, who opened the door. "Could you," he whispered, "to serve a neighbour, be so hobbliging, mum, as get his idear of the law of the case as to the few rags, and hods and hends, Cryppes left in the place below?"

"Mr. Gryphon! and Maister Charles at his back! Welcome back again, sir! I thought ye were ower the salt sea. This is a sight for sair eyne; and I ken of one fair lady, or maybe twa"—and Marion winked sagaciously with one eye, while she unconsciously placed chairs—"who will thank the wind that blew ye back this way. But, Lord sake! what am I about! ye must not sit down in my kitchen. The best o' my house is no good enough for you. Ye'll excuse me, Mr. Snipson. Business will not brook delay, and I have business with these gentlemen," she said, sharply, to the curious and impertinent tailor, who seemed strongly disposed to remain at the conference, which he somehow connected with the tempting reward of £200 offered for the discovery of Jack Cripps.

"Let me fust tie my papers in the 'andkercher, mum," he replied, sullenly, and trying to collect them; but Marion, made bold by her fresh backing, now stood on high vantage ground.

"Take away the papers! I dare you to do that at your peril! Stolen goods, Mr. Gryphon; family papers plundered from

Miss Violet Hamilton's charter-kist, by some unken't villain thieves, and found in the custody of his lodger, Jack Cripps. Away! away, Snipson! and think yourself lucky if ye be not called to strict account anent these documents. I am advising ye as a friend, and promise ye, to set your mind at ease, before these gentlemen, that if I make plack or bawbee by the wierdless wight's hanging, ye shall get the half o' it; will that content ye?"

The tailor, pale and trembling, on learning the awful predicament before the law in which he stood with the papers, and reading his doom in the stern brows of Mr. Gryphon, the well-known lawyer, sneaked off; in his heart cursing the Scotswoman, who always, he alleged, got the better of him in the long run.

And now the distant voices and loud laughter of the three who sat in Marion's parlour in council on very momentous affairs, however merrily they were discussed, fell dismally on the "large red ears" of the hungry listener.

"Will the witch starve me alive in her hole," thought Jack, "That bloated imp regaling on bottled brown stout, and a full half yard of Bologna sausage, and I——" And, with this, Jack made a desperate clutch at some eatables lying near the window: a tremendous rumbling noise and smash of glass was heard; the cat squeaked; and Marion, followed by the two gentlemen, rushed back into the kitchen, where stood the fugitive in much worse plight than he appeared even in the *Hue and Cry*.

Housebreakers was the first idea that presented itself to Mr. Gryphon, the only individual present who did not at once understand how matters stood; though, after a moment's observation and reflection, he affected acquiescence in Mistress Marion's dry announcement of "a friend of mine, Mr. Gryphon; a stranger to you, gentlemen, who wishes to be private. Pussie, ye misleared limmer!" continued she, affecting to beat the cat, "was it you made this stramash, and broke the window? Be so kind as accompany Mr. Gryphon back to my bit parlour, Mr. Charles, and I'll attend ye there presently."

Charles took the hint, and gave no direct token of recognition when Jack squinted towards him and then at Gryphon, in a very agony of terror and supplication; but kindly drew off the lawyer, leaving Marion to deal alone with her guest.

"I see how the land lies with our hostess and her lodger," said Gryphon, not choosing to show his sagacity and quickness of apprehension at fault. "But such affairs are not my province. Let the law make its own of Mr. Cryppes, when it gets its claws over him: I shall make my own of him while time serves. The fellow, if he have not Miss Violet Hamilton's papers, must at least show us where they may be found, or it shall fare worse with him."

"I do not affect to deny that yonder queer-looking customer is the veritable Jack Cryppes, after whom the pursuit of justice is hot," replied Charles Herbert; "yet, to connive at his escape—almost to compound a felony—to gain a private object,"—

"Make yourself perfectly easy, Maister Charles," said Marion, advancing into the parlour, after a short and sharp, but most satisfactory parley, with her prisoner in the kitchen. "Ye are both gentlemen"—and she looked fixedly at the lawyer—"and did not come of your own free will under my roof-tree, to interfere with my guests; or, to speak it plainly, to hear or to see aught that it was not intended you should see and hear. I'm on honour with him, gentlemen, and so are ye; reckoning, however, on a reasonable satisfaction."

"Unquestionably," replied the lawyer, with a significant smile, "otherwise we were most unreasonable persons: so now, ma'am, for your 'reasonable satisfaction.' I confess that the scraps of certain writings which have been so singularly recovered, whet my curiosity exceedingly for what is behind or missing. Unless I am greatly mistaken, this young lady is heiress to at least as pretty and promising a Chancery suit as I ever happened to advise withal, were there but funds to prosecute it with spirit; for I make no doubt but that resistance, backed by a long purse, may be anticipated."

"A promising plea!—and you really think so," said Marion, earnestly; her head giving the little nervous shake, which, with her, denoted intense interest, while she fixed her eyes keenly on the lawyer. "Ye have a good opinion o' the case, which is a sure sign, sir; and, if an orra hunder pounds, or, what though we should say twa, could help it on, it will no be ill spent. It may not become the like o' me to interfere in affairs so far aboon my commission; though, in anither sense, and that a better ane, it weel becomes me, in fau't o' grander friends, to step for-

ward in behalf o' an orphan gentlewoman, my countrywoman and my auld maister's bairn. So, wi' you to back us, sir, we'll venture to bell-the-cat e'en with that proud yearl, and try whose purse stands langest out, when justice, and nothing more, is the commodity sought for."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the lawyer, laughing heartily. "This is frank. You volunteer to supply the sinews of war; and I shall be answerable for the result, if the missing documents—most important links in the chain of our evidence—still exist."

"Exist!" exclaimed Marion. "There's a half peck o' them; o' auld papers—I mean writs and evidents—stowed, at this blessed moment, under my easy chair." And, to the best of her memory and ability, Marion described the nature of the documents which she had secreted; while the solicitor rubbed his hands, as if chuckling in prospect over a gained case.

"Fetch them ma'am—fetch them into court. I begin to fear I shall have no work. The case is so clear that the enemy won't show fight. That £15,000, left at the disposal of the Earl of Tarbert's mother, and which she very naturally devised to her daughter by her second marriage—the mother of the young lady I saw last day with Mrs. Herbert—must now, by accumulated interest, be more than doubled. The Earl's niece, or half-niece, will, eventually, be a more considerable heiress than his daughter; and a charming young creature she is too." Here Marion ventured a sly look of congratulation and intelligence at Charles Herbert, while the lawyer proceeded:—"Is Miss Hamilton, my fair client that is to be, related to Mrs. Herbert, Mr. Charles, or merely her friend through the Tarbert family?"

"Miss Hamilton is my mother's friend and present guest, but on a quite different footing from what you suppose," answered Charles. "You forget that she is, probably, still entirely unknown to the Tarberts. But, excuse me for a moment: since law is to be given to the vermin in the next apartment, I may at least satisfy my conscience, by trying to make him impeach his rascally foreign confederates."

"Let them hang as high as Haman, by all manner o' means," said Marion; and while Charles was admitted by her into the locked kitchen to confer with Jack, she returned to take what she fancied the right course with Mr. Gryphon.

"I think ye have, as well as professional regard, a fatherly likin' to that young gentleman, sir," said she; "and that ye will not be a bit less zealous in this cause when I make bold to spare his modesty, and tell ye how matters really stand with him. The plain fact is, that, heiress or penniless, he is troth-plighted to Miss Violet Hamilton, and to wish him the husband of Lady Laura Temple is to wish him nae good. And this is really a remarkable dealin' o' Providence, that, after his stepmother had been so ill-advised as, in spite of your opinion, sir, to will away to Lady Laura the fortune which, as I have heard, was, in spite of your sound and judicious advice, left in Mrs. Herbert's power by her husband, it should as good as come a' back, by another righteous dispensation, to the right owners; and that is just Mr. and likewise Mrs. Charles Herbert that is to be, otherwise Miss Violet Hamilton that now is."

"O ho! I perceive," returned the lawyer, gratified by the implied compliment paid to his judgment in the opinion which he had, on both occasions, most disinterestedly given to his clients, indifferent to the effect which his advice might have upon Mrs. Herbert. She, however, had been so just or high-minded as not to resent his interference; resting in the proud consciousness that, whatever the world might say, she had, in making the extraordinary settlement of her fortune, been guided by the single-minded motive of advancing the prospects and securing the happiness of her husband's son. She had, moreover, until within the last few days, never doubted that what she had intended for the best really was the best; but the devoted attachment of the youthful lovers, when brought more immediately under her notice, assumed a higher and more sacred character than she had been disposed to assign to what she wished to consider as the violent, but boyish and fickle admiration of a young man for a pretty new face; and the disposition and manners of her guest, at once gentle and lofty, sweet, modest, and ingratiating, confirmed the conquest of a naturally affectionate heart. The first indication of her change of opinion, or imperceptible yielding to the genuine feelings of her kindly nature, and the innocent fascinations of Violet, was seen in her delight to find the latter so nearly connected with the noble house which had awakened that worldly ambition, which was saved from being unworthy because it was principally felt for another; and in her avowed delight that Violet had a fair chance of being

handsomely provided or. A feeling of heartfelt satisfaction mingled with a secret tingling of shame at her own rashness, while she half-owned to herself—"If such is to be the destiny of Charles, ought I not to rejoice that the effects of my precipitance may be atoned for in so singular a manner, though not atoned for by me." Other recollections unwillingly forced themselves upon her. Though the proud, high-minded Lady Laura had openly and strenuously opposed the inconsiderate pecuniary arrangement, the Earl, affecting the same reluctance, had, in reality, shown a very different disposition, thinly veiled by the assumption of generosity, and, finally, by the repeated declaration of—"Well, well, my dear madam; since you will have it so, to your determination we must submit. Do as you will about Lady Laura Herbert's pin-money, and the additional provision for her younger children: it certainly, as you remark, comes to the same thing in the end for our young people."

The remembrance of these and similar expressions, and also of the occasional, and certainly unconscious, aristocratic hauteur of Lady Laura, were probably not without their effect; and yet so complicated are the feelings of this poor human nature, even in the best characters, that some taint of bitterness mingled with the mortification which Mrs. Herbert experienced, when a few days afterwards, Mr. Gryphon, at a sort of family conference, laid before her the opinions of a celebrated counsel whom he had consulted on the claims of her protégée. She checked the unworthy feeling; and though her pride shrank from confession before the keen, and perhaps triumphant man of business, whose warnings she remembered, when alone with Charles and Violet, she said, with tearful eyes, and that warmth and candour of manner which to her son atoned for all her sins against himself—sins incurred by true if mistaken affection—

"Charles, don't wholly despise me, while you saucily fancy you have obtained a well-born and well-dowered charming wife, in spite of my small intrigue for your advancement."

"How can you, dearest mother, do such injustice to yourself—to me," replied Charles, respectfully and tenderly kissing his mother's hand. "Fortune as it may be; but you have learned to appreciate Violet, and my feelings for her:—that is enough."

Mrs. Herbert was deeply affected. Turning abruptly to Violet, in a strange mood of self-reproach and confiding fondness, she said

—"You are aware of the injury I have done or attempted to do you? But yet I bid you heap coals of fire upon my head; repay mistrust and dislike—which, however, after knowing you, I have found it impossible to entertain—by generous kindness. I have, I begin to fear, rashly made our Charles poor: dearest Violet, you must for my sake make him rich. I am now convinced that you alone can make him happy: for his sake, I need not ask that of you."

Violet hastened to seat herself on a low stool by the sofa on which Mrs. Herbert sat; burying her proud and happy blushful face in the lap of the lady, whose hand she covered with kisses of love and gratitude for the thrice-welcome if oddly-expressed consent. Mrs. Herbert clasped her in a silent embrace; and, after a moment, as if half-disconcerted at having given so far way to her feelings, and of being involved in that horror of English people, a *scene*, she rose, whispering, as she withdrew—"We understand each other now."

Charles detained her to explain why, finding himself so near London, when he restored Miss Juliana Stocks to her school, he had stolen a day for "more last words."

While the lovers were thus left to their own concerns, Mrs. Herbert assumed the delicate and, to her, in the peculiar circumstances, difficult task of preparing Lady Laura Temple for impending events. She secretly accused herself of having formerly represented or insinuated to this young lady that the attentions and gallantry of Charles were already of the serious character which she hoped they might yet take, rather than what his feelings really were—namely, respectful admiration for a handsome and highly accomplished woman, into whose society he had been intimately thrown, while no other young man was present to pay her those little attentions which it was grateful to himself to show, and which were always well received. The long epistle, which it cost Mrs. Herbert infinite pains to concoct, so as to announce the engagement of her son with Miss Hamilton, without wounding the pride of Lady Laura, went by the same mail which carried the formal announcement, made by Mr. Gryphon to her father, of Miss Violet Hamilton's various claims.

Lady Laura Temple, who had been disposed to look favourably upon the implied suit of Charles Herbert, was more alarmed and agitated by the mysterious letter she received, than she had believed possible; but

it was not until her father informed her of the strange communication which had reached himself, that she understood the full bearing of the case, or began to suspect that she had been misled, if not betrayed, by the ambition of her *parvenue* friend. Her pride, her sense of personal dignity, and those gentler affections which lurked under a cold and lofty bearing, were outraged and wounded; but whatever were her secret sufferings, no visible sign of them was permitted to appear. Urged probably by her pride, she at once wrote to her rival, frankly acknowledging the relationship, courteously offering her friendship, and regretting that the absence of her father from England, for probably a long period, must withhold from her the happiness of being personally known to so near and amiable a kinswoman, whom she gaily congratulated on the joyful event at which her friend Mrs. Herbert—to whom she begged to be remembered—had delicately hinted. The Earl of Tarbert, to whom, before sealing it, she handed her letter to her new-found cousin, secretly admired the strength of mind, and also the female *diplomacy* of his daughter; but he was too much absorbed in his own concerns to have much time to bestow upon hers, until, with the greatest apparent calmness, she informed him that the gentleman to whom their new-found cousin was engaged was Charles Herbert. The surprise of the Earl could not have been greater, though the previous secure disposition of Mrs. Herbert's fortune in his daughter's behalf probably made his chagrin much less at this intelligence than otherwise it might have been at losing a desirable match for a daughter now almost thirty years of age.

"I fancied, Laura—so indeed did my friend Mrs. Herbert—that you were, at one time, disposed to show the young man some small degree of favour," said the Earl.

"All the case required," replied Lady Laura, carelessly. "But now that the lady you mention has had her freak out, and finds her grand project frustrated, I presume she may have back her money; which, if we had not saved it for her, might have been thrown away in some other ambitious matrimonial scheme for her stepson, which would have yielded even less return."

"I have no reason to suppose that Mrs. Herbert regrets the settlements which she pressed upon you, Lady Laura,—forced upon us, indeed. To return that money—even if you had the power, which is placed in your trustees, Sir George Lees and myself—would

look as if you had trepanned the silly woman into the arrangement, and were now ashamed of yourself——"

"Which, perhaps, I am," replied Lady Laura, coldly. "In those settlements I unwillingly acquiesced, when my prospects or my ideas were somewhat different from what they now are. May I now beg to know what you have learned of my cousin? Are her claims just?"

"Just or unjust, I am afraid they will be pertinaciously maintained: that fellow Gryphon made himself exceedingly troublesome and disagreeable on a former occasion."

"When he wished to prevent Mrs. Herbert from committing a folly, into which he probably fancied that the Earl of Tarbert's artful daughter had betrayed her. . . . The matter, altogether, has become exceedingly unpleasant, and the sooner we are rid of it the better. I shall not lose a moment in doing my part."

"Stay, Laura," cried the Earl, stopping his daughter, who moved to leave the room. "This must be left to those who better understand business than we can pretend to do."

"Oh! surely, sir: we give the orders; they properly execute them."

The Earl became peremptory and even harsh, until, after a protracted discussion, he forbade his daughter's interference, and dutifully expatiated on the folly of his own mother, who not only made a foolish second marriage, but settled, or attempted to settle, at accumulating interest, a sum nearly equal in amount to the half of his yearly rents, upon the daughter born of that marriage, and his own only sister.

"When my grandmother bequeathed this money to her child, your Lordship's sister, I conclude she had the power to do so?"

"That remains to be tried: at all events the affair must be thoroughly investigated by the big-wigs. Are you aware, Laura, that, with my growing embarrassments, this girl's claim, if sustained, would involve me in difficulties probably for the whole brief remainder of my life? Have I not double reason to rejoice that, whatever may occur, you at least, through the just partiality of Mrs. Herbert, are independent and wealthy, and able, as I know you are willing, to be generous to your father?"

"At the expense of *those* Herberts?—of injustice to the son, and now, I doubt not, of regret and remorse to the foolish mother? No, dear father; we may be poor together; but we shall not be mean, nay, *dishonest*."

The Earl made a peevish ejaculation about women's romance, and ignorance of the world and of business; and his daughter, accustomed to think, and, by his indulgence, to act for herself, at once wrote to Mrs. Herbert, congratulating her upon her son's approaching marriage, and informing her that the fortune, which she affected to consider as a toy, placed by the caprice of a spoiled child in the keeping of a favourite, and then pettishly reclaimed or desired back, was now at her service.

Mrs. Herbert was both gratified and deeply mortified by this letter. It proved Lady Laura the noble creature which she had always believed and maintained, in the face of the suspicious lawyer Gryphon; and also, that her confidence had not been misplaced. In the vacillation of the moment, and charmed with the sentiments of Lady Laura, she almost sighed that the choice of Charles had not been fixed before he had seen one possessed of much greater feminine attraction, softness, and gentleness, though not of a more elevated mind. Nay, she even boasted to Violet of the conduct of Laura, when the former ran in, full of delight, to show Mrs. Herbert the letter from Laura to herself, to which we have already alluded.

"Noble, indeed, she is, as people of the world may think," said Violet; "though only what one might expect in a right-hearted woman. But how happy I am that she does not love Charles so much as you supposed, else she never could write me thus. I can bear Juliana Stocks to be in love with him, but not Lady Laura, who, if she had loved Charles as I do—and, I am sure, seeing him so much, I wonder how she escaped it—could never speak thus of him, so kindly, and so handsomely congratulate me on my prospects."

Yet Violet was a little discomposed when Mrs. Herbert, in the enthusiasm of the moment, boasted to Charles of her magnanimous and admirable friend; and she was also, in her simplicity, a little surprised that Mrs. Herbert showed no hesitation in taking Lady Laura at her word in returning the fortune. A consultation of lawyers followed, and then one of the lovers; each of the pair alike disposed to do homage to the exalted virtue of Lady Laura, and anxious to make the sacrifice as light as possible to her.

Ten days later, the Lady Laura, who had been at open feud with her father, entered his apartment as he was about to proceed to Court, having just received important des-

patches from England. Letters had come to his daughter by the same courier.

"Well, Laura, is it peace or war?" asked the Earl, attempting to be gay.

"Peace, if you choose it, sir," replied his daughter; "and I am now in a condition to offer you advantageous terms. My cousin, Violet, though the youngest, is the ablest diplomatist among us." Lady Laura pointed to the open letter which she held in her hand. It was written by Charles, in the name of his affianced wife, and, as he stated, at her suggestion. The scheme of adjustment proposed was hers. "You cannot, even by the admission of your own lawyers, who are anxious to see the affair in the most favourable light, hope much longer to ward off the claims of my cousin," said Laura, "although you wished it, which I am sure you do not."

"Have you come to congratulate me on that score?" returned the Earl, sharply.

"No, my Lord; but to announce that, during your lifetime and mine, we shall have no trouble, on condition——"

"Ay, the condition?" demanded the Earl, eagerly; the letters which he had just received disposing him strongly to any measure by which the repayment of nearly £50,000, to which his mother's original bequests had now mounted, might be evaded or deferred.

"On condition that justice is done by us to my cousin's future husband," said Laura, with the forced emphasis and slightly tremulous tone of voice which betrayed her feelings. "That Mr. Charles Herbert receives back from us the smaller fortune of which the world thinks we have deprived him, by working on the facility or vanity of his father's widow."

This was said with bitterness; for Laura Temple could no more forgive her own weakness, than the conduct of Mrs. Herbert which had encouraged it.

"Hang his father's widow!" cried the Earl, yet somewhat relieved. "Show me the letter, La. What will Gryphon say to it? 'Tis quite impossible that the Lord Chancellor would have saddled me with that monstrous amount of interest, where I was perfectly unconscious of any existing claim. You give up £40,000, Laura. The claims of this girl would, in all likelihood, be extinguished by £30,000. Are you aware of what you surrender?"

"Perfectly: a burden and a disgrace I surrender, for incurring which I shall never

forgive myself. The generosity of these young persons shames us."

"Not quite so generous or disinterested as you may suppose, Laura. After my apotheosis—when the title and estates have gone—to the devil—by the law of entail, Herbert's and his wife's claim will still, I imagine, hold good against the said estate of Coombe Fleurie, on which my sensible mother's money was secured. Much good may it then do them! My pretty niece is surely as near and dear to me as that sneaking black rascal down at Glo'ster, who will inherit the honours of the Tarberts; because my great-grandfather's younger brother, being half-witted, chose to marry the gamekeeper's daughter."

"Both nearer and dearer, certainly, father. Then this is fixed. I may write to— to Charles Herbert. I conclude that he now surrenders his appointment in your suite."

"That I leave to his discretion. Herbert has now another claim on me: and his pretty little wife would make a charming addition to your society, Laura."

"Leave it rather to my discretion, father," said Laura, with a sigh, which the father felt; "and write Charles that his appointment is otherwise filled up. You are going to court?"

"To the Minister; to solicit, among a hundred and fifty things, for the arrest of some blackguard travelling Count or other, who has been coming it rather strong over honest John Bull, and even going the bold length of running away with his heiresses. If my excellent countrymen insist upon being gulled by these gentry, I cannot see why they should be balked in their fancy. But the girl's father has some parliamentary, or, I ought rather, nowadays, to say *constituatory* influence; and he insists on having a certain Count Rodolph Zanderschloss hung, as a warning to all travelling counts, and for the better protection of English heiresses. What idiots the admiration of titles makes the half-caste British gentry. Any man, not of our nation, must have known that a person with so preposterous a title must be an impostor—never could be a German noble. My Count, I find, was originally a barber, and afterwards an itinerant dealer in spurious Eau de Cologne, and other quackeries, about the watering-places of his own country; but, in mine, he emerged a magnate of the first grade."

"And where is the unfortunate young lady?"

"Ah, there is the beauty of it. He did

not even get her; nor, what is worse, a stiver from her papa's money-bags: and yet papa must have his revenge. It has been altogether a losing bargain to the Count, who has, moreover, been blown and driven from England before he had fully reaped his harvest."

Lady Laura smiled, as she remarked:—"Yet the vanity or credulous folly of the one, cannot excuse the villany of the other party; nor, though the scheme of this person has failed, is his guilt the less. I do hope your application for his arrest will be successful. I presume this is the case to which Mr. Charles Herbert referred, in which he rescued the young lady, when he was lately following us through Kent?"

"The very same distressed damsel and *proux chevalier*. But now, Laura, I insist upon your getting rid of your three days' *migraine*, and appearing in the circle to-night. He is, though a travelled and accomplished Hungarian, no mock Count who would glory in placing you in the van of the march of improvement in his semi-barbarous principality."

The Lady Laura turned away with an expression of pain on her countenance, which warned her father not then to press the topic farther; but her appearance at court that evening proved that she was not indifferent to what gave him pleasure.

CHAPTER XIV.

WE have, as is not unfrequent with the members of our craft, dropped a stitch in our knitting, which it is now necessary to pick up. In plainer terms, we left Mr. John Quintin Cryppes safe in the custody of Mistress Marion, who, on many accounts, was desirous to be handsomely rid of him; though Jack, now tolerably reassured by her hospitable treatment, began to fancy that he might be in much worse quarters, and to hint that he could pass the night with great comfort in her leathern arm-chair. This Marion would not understand; and a plainer intimation of Jack's desire drew forth a point blank order to tramp.

"I have done my part by you," said Marion; "that you cannot deny: and I am ready and willing to fulfil the conditions of my paction, and get you smuggled to Leith along with my meal ark, which goes down once a-year to be replenished; and on it, or in it, ye may go and lie as snug as a thief in a mill."

"To Scotland; cut off from my London resources!" said Jack; "my wardrobe in so bad a condition, and my finances exhausted."

"Your resources! My certy, they are to brag of!" returned Marion; and Mr. Jack, who seldom lost any thing, for want of bold attempt to obtain it, changed his tactics.

"Without some small temporary supply, your goodness to me—that noble dealing with a foe, which distinguishes your ancient and gallant nation—were worse than lost, ma'am."

"So ye would butter us up, would ye?" returned Marion, scornfully; but either her heart was somewhat mollified, or else the kindness which, for excellent causes and reasons, she had already shown, naturally disposed her towards the farther benevolence which might render it available to its object; and she said—"It's no to be thought that I will supply your profligate extravagance, even for an hour; but as I have, thanks to my ain four quarters, made my own of you, I would not grudge a trifle to put you in a way of winning honest bread, by industry, and of forsaking the wicked courses that must lead you to the gallows. Ye are but a young chield yet; and, they tell me, no altogether without tawilents and capacity, if ye had steadiness. As a dancin'-master, now; or, say that ye united singin' wi' dancin'; and the tunin' o' pianofortes, and cleaning clocks and mending broken china, the like o' you might make a shift from dale to dale among the store-farmers that have families to educate, and are far from market towns, and respectable instructors of youth: though, I'm sure, I ken not how I durst venture to recommend you."

There was much that appeared to Jack so exquisitely ludicrous in such a scheme, as connected with a person of his own importance and pretensions, that his pride was not offended; and, in his present pinch, any thing was better than remaining lurking where he was, so thoroughly well-known to the police; and, besides, the scheme diverted him. After a moment of hesitation, he replied, "Egad, it might be an amusing lark enough: see something of life—eh, old lady? As good as a tour with the tinkers, or a campaign with strollers. And then I could write my *Travels in Scotland*, with *Illustrations*:—perhaps induce some of my keenscented friends in the Row to advance a few pieces on the spec. Were you, ma'am, frankly to advance me twenty, or say twenty-

five pieces, now, I should at once give you an order upon my publisher for thirty or forty, a month hence, which I consider a handsome profit."

"Greatly obleeged," replied Marion, in her driest tones; "but I could not think of robbing you. Ye must surely consider us Scots clean Jews and usurers, that we would take such advantage of a gentleman in distress. Besides, I am no money-changer, young man: what I give I give."

Jack found that he was on the wrong lay.

"Hearty that, egad! I like it. Well, ma'am, a lady of your penetration and sagacity can easily comprehend my present pinch. I should, as matters stand, be most happy to embrace the romantic scheme you have suggested of making a raid into Scotland, if furnished with a trifle and a *carte du pays*."

"I may not object to *pay* whatever I consider needful to your frugal and sober, but decent, maintenance between this and Berwick or Newcastle, and a cast beyond; and if ye make a bonfire of these Rag-market duds, that would make the very craws in my country tak' ye for a potato-bogle, I maybe have a couple of shirts and a suit of second-hand blacks in my drawers, to make ye a thought more respectable, and liker a dominie."

Jack laughed outright. The very absurdity of the scheme, its imaginary monstrous incongruity in relation to himself, served to recommend it. He had also heard of young men of title and rank (whether real or pretended) travelling as wandering pipers, and faring luxuriously under the assumed character. Nay, heiresses had been honestly, or, at least, safely, achieved by gallant gentlemen thus disguised. He became even impatient to embark; and less from apprehension of the danger which really menaced him than anxiety to commence his adventures as a chevalier-errant in the north.

The munificence of Mistress Linton fairly exceeded his expectations, though displayed in a manner quite characteristic of the caution of her country. To the most comfortable stock of linen and under-clothing which Jack had possessed for some years, she added another and another pair of her own substantial, knit woollen hose, and some silk handkerchiefs; and drew forth another and another half-crown, that he might not, she said, require to change one of his five sovereigns until fairly landed, and advancing on his inland march.

"After ye get up among the hill-farmers on the Southland Border, ye will need for nothing," said Marion, "and be in the way of makin' instead o' spendin'. I have kenned a well-behaved lad, who could give instruction both in psalmody, and foursome reels and high dances, carry off a matter of five-and-twenty or thirty shillings from a clachan, after a sojourn of only six weeks, or two months, in a winter."

This to the accomplished son of Professor Cryppes, who, for a musical lesson of twenty minutes, had lately received five guineas, and might have had ten! But Jack, with five sovereigns and sundry half-crowns in his pocket, clinging to the idea of a lark into Scotland, and, at least, two volumes of illustrated travels, was not dismayed.

"Hang money!" cried Jack; "I have a soul above pelf — always had. I shall have shooting and fishing, romantic and magnificent scenery to sketch, ay, and pretty Scots lasses to court — eh, old lady?" And Jack leeringly squinted inexpressible meanings.

"Forgie me for letting loose such a swindlin' profligate on my native land!" thought Marion: and she said aloud — "An' it had not been, Mr. Cripps, that I have ta'en my ain out o' you, and that I consider your bonny tittie, Mrs. Burke Barker, a greater loon in the matter of stealing the heiress than your worshipful self, who were likely to suffer the hail penalty and dirdum, it should have been long ere I had sent such a roving blade among my young countrywomen, though I consider the muirecocks in no great danger frae cockney shots."

Jack, under the first implied accusation, smiled most complacently; which, provoking Marion, she added — "Howsoever, those who see you London dandies in daylight, will not be ower ready to rin off wi' you in the dark, Mr. Jack; and to make ye less killin' and more safe, I must have aff these moustaches. My pussie really envies you o' them; — but they are beauties!"

"My moustaches, ma'am?" cried Jack, petrified, and fondly drawing the forefinger and thumb of the left hand over the cherished appendages. "Be assured I shall not part with my moustaches."

"Not part wi' them!" cried Marion, rising, and flourishing her scissors; "then, be ye assured, the police will no part wi' you. If ye did not hear me read that description of your beautiful person which the tailor's lady below has gotten to keep for a love-token,

ye might have heard it. Come, come, no nonsense. This is as much as your neck is worth."

"If it were necessary to disfigure my face in this horrible style, I would require an expert *friseur*; or, at any rate, a razor to perform so delicate an operation myself."

"There's no razor here, were it wanted to sned your weasand," cried Marion, while Jack warded off the threatened assault of her sharp instrument. "Ye surely do not mean to insinuate that I have a beard? And, as for shaving, I have clipped a tawted sheep mony a time ere now, and may surely perform on you. But if ye should prefer to perform the task yoursel, I'll just owerlook ye."

Finally, Jack's hairy honours—such was his hard fate—fell beneath his own hands, Marion looking exultingly on.

"There, now, ye are no altogether so like a monkey and a mountebank as before. If the half of the whiskers were sent to the fire in company, there might be some kything of a human face about ye still."

"So you really think, old lady, I look handsomer," said Jack, complacently regarding his denuded upper lip in Marion's small looking-glass. "Gad a' mercy on the poor Scottish girls!"

Marion's temper could scarcely stand this, diverted as she had been by the infliction of the late awful punishment.

"Get along with you," she cried. "The tailor's gay lady is sleeping by this time; and, Adonis as ye are, might think a good £200 better than your bulk; and, I have reason to be thankfu', I am over auld to fall in love with you, though I maun convoy ye safe as far as the wharf. It will be a sight for sair eyne to see auld Marion Linton linking east Fleet Street arm-in-arm wi' a fashionable dandy."

Though Marion's stomach rose at the degradation of the public exhibition, she submitted, the better to elude the suspicions of the watchmen and police; and Jack, also overwhelmed with confusion at being so accompanied, consoled himself with the recollection that the hour was late and the quarter unfashionable.

"No one can detect me," said Jack, aloud.

"It's no that like," returned Marion, as they turned off from the street door. "With me by your side, a clean shirt on your back, and the hair off your mouth, forbye that pair o' stout shoon on your feet—you cost me nett 5s. 6d.—you are mair decently dis-

guised, I dare say, than since the day ye were first breeched. But ye'll keep quiet now. The skipper expects ye. Ye sail wi' the tide. And, whatever he may jalouse, he will be canny wi' ye for my sake, or—for reasons as substantial."

They proceeded quickly and quietly along the nearly deserted streets, not without that sense of danger which, for the moment, established a feeling of common sympathy in bosoms so discordant.

"My poor mother," whispered Jack, in a natural and softened voice, as they drew near the appointed spot, and found a man like a sailor or porter waiting to receive them. "The old lady is so fond of me," he continued, in a whisper to Marion, "I wish I could have sent her or the governor some token of my dutiful remembrance of them."

"No doubt ye are her bairn, whatever else she or you be," returned Marion, somewhat melted. "And now, the Lord pardon and guide ye, and forgie me, if sae be it is sin to try to save your young blude frae the gallows, and gie ye time for repentance and amendment of life, especially as ye hae tried to make some small reparation to Miss Violet. Stay: there's a bit Glasgow pound-note in my hussey-case. It's no easy getting silver for them in this toon without losin' a shillin' or a sixpence by the job. Take it wi' ye, and be a wiser and better man. It's ne'er over late to repent. I'll maybe see your parents the morn, and set them at ease about you."

"Thank you, old lady. Remember me to Miss Violet and my friend Charles.—Gad, I might, in an hour or two more, have wheedled her out of another five pounds," thought Jack, going on with his guide. "What the deuce can all the women, old and young, see in me! There's that tailor's handsome wife, too: devilish hard to be shipped off so critically. Thanks to my charming sister, Poll, who would have stored the harvest, and left me the stubble for my share, like a goose as I am. And now for beggarly Scotland, ho!—where I cannot have worse fortune than the cursed hag chalked out for me." And Jack continued—"Stay,—I might be a Polish refugee noble, or an Italian picture-dealer, or twenty characters. None, however, to start with, fairer than a young nobleman travelling incognito, and tuning pianos, for a frolic, to gain access to the pretty performers upon them. If the vulgar Rodolpho, with his ugly phiz and broken English, humbugged the Warwick-

shire folks in style, why may not I charm the Scots. London, though, as my sage governor was wont to say, is, and ever will be, the grand mart for talents. Adieu, Alma Mater! If I prosper, it shall not be long till we meet again."

And with this the good old smack, the *Eydent*, began to drop down the Thames, bearing to Scotland a cargo of bones, empty oat-meal bags, and Russian bristles, together with Jack Cryppes and his fortunes.

CHAPTER XV.

It was the opinion of Mr. James Winkin—the respectable head-waiter of the Crown and Mitre, the principal inn in a certain ancient cathedral city on the great north road—that "the house" had not been so crowded since the irruption of the Highlanders in 1745, as during the passing season, and especially on that particular night, the duties of which were congregating awfully before him. The memory of Joe Crabbe, the dowager-dowager Boots,—who still crept about the stable-yard, getting a bone from the scullion, or picking up a penny for pitching a chance carpet-bag on the top of the night heavy-coach, while the present incumbent snatched his fitful repose,—had no parallel to this season. It was Joe's firm belief, that the world was going topsy-turvy, and old Jobson, the landlord, making a rapid fortune out of its madness. Not at the assizes, not at the convocation of the clergy, not even in that famous and well-remembered race-week, when the great match came off between Bobadil and the Bishop, had any thing ever before been known to equal every day and week of that season,—when company absolutely overflowed, and travellers, bent on endless quests, crossed, recrossed, and jostled each other; knocked up the waiters, half-killed Boots, and fairly murdered five pairs of Jobson's post-horses. Newly-coupled doves were returning from Gretna, languidly and at leisure, secretly disappointed that there had been no hotter pursuit; Scotch M.P.'s were going down to speechify their constituents into good-humour; and jovial sportsmen, bursting away from courts, counters, clubs, and counting-houses, with the glee of school-boys at a breaking-up, were thus far advanced on their annual progress towards the enjoyment of that saturnalia of fagged, worried, and bored gentlemen,—grouse-shooting on the Scottish moors. "Commercial gentlemen" were, as usual, in full activity, in their

periodical transit from Glasgow to Manchester, and *vice versa*; and there was a handsome sprinkling of Liverpool Lakers, of both sexes and all denominations of Christians, pushing on for a glimpse of "Abbotsford," and subordinate to that rampant lion, "Scotland" and the "Highland locks." All this was only in the ordinary course of events; and several extraordinaries were impending on Jem Winkin: the yeomanry dinner annual, and the bachelors' ball quinquennial. Besides this, the players were in the town; and though the saints had made considerable head on the sinners, since the last periodical visit of the vagrants, a "bumper-house" was confidently expected for the Benefit of Mr. Henry Adolphus Fitzwagram, who, though new on the Northern Circuit, had emerged at once, by the mere force of his transcendent and versatile talents, a star of the first magnitude! When young Mr. Greenthwaite the draper, son of old Greenthwaite the Quaker, summoned courage to go behind the scenes, and directly put the question to the manager, for the information of self and friends, all warm patrons of the theatre, who Mr. Henry Adolphus really was, that functionary was not prepared either to affirm or to deny, directly, that Fitzwagram was not Charles Kean; though he fancied the other conjecture of Mr. Greenthwaite as probable; and that Fitzwagram was quite as likely to be a young man of family and fashion, an amateur, whom a passion for the stage had led to assume an *alias* and the character which he sustained with such *éclat*.

"It must be so, sir. Why he knows every thing and every body. The palace, the cabinet, the greenroom, the clubs, the hells, the turf, the ring; the three great worlds, of fashion, literature, and politics, are alike familiar to Fitzwagram," said Mr. Greenthwaite,—“a wonderful fellow, sir!”

"A wonderful fellow!" returned the manager, slightly elevating his eyebrows. "I only wish I could fix him for the circuit."

"Don't look for it; a clear case of escapade, though *I* have fixed him. Our Shakspeare Club are to have the honour to entertain Fitzwagram to-night to a farewell supper. . . Fought shy; but I nailed him, on condition—you must not be affronted—that we were to be *rigidly* exclusive. Fitzwagram said, when pressed, 'I cannot decline the invitation with which the rising spirits of this venerable city,—the juvenile patrons of literature and the drama, of whom you, sir, are the envoy,—have honoured me; but I must make a

distinction : no salary-payer, no man of properties, for the private society in which I unbend !'—Gad ! he's a high fellow ; but we don't think he can be Waterford after all : he is too accomplished, too clever for that idea Can he be a Berkeley or a Lennox, think ye ? But you are not affronted by Fitzwagram compelling us to exclude you ?"

"Not a whit," replied the manager ; "we poor strolling managers must not take amiss the airs of the *Stars*. I am but too proud, Mr. Greenthwaite, when I have the good fortune to engage an actor whose abilities come up to the ideas of my generous patrons in this venerable city and vicinage. Besides, I believe Mr. Henry Adolphus Fitzwagram will indubitably open and unbend much more graciously when freed of the restraint of my presence."

"You are to be congratulated on your good fortune, sir : a decided hit. A universal genius ; and such accomplishments ! fencing, dancing, singing, the piano,—farce, tragedy, comedy, all seem to come alike to Fitzwagram. And at Penrith he gave, I am told, such a lecture on Phrenology ! All the Quakers attended,—sly way of seeing and hearing Fitzwagram, eh ? But come now : there's a good man ! who really is he ? I shall be silent as the grave,—only one's private satisfaction."

The manager smiled significantly, shook his head mysteriously, and replied, "How can I, sir, tell what I have no right to know, whatever my private suspicions may be ? But of this much I am convinced, Fitzwagram's name will be yet heard of in histrionic, or else in some other annals."

"I thought as much," returned the gratified young draper.

The town was furiously divided on the respective merits of Mr. Fitzwagram and Mr. Edmund Belville, the old favourite of the circuit, who had, for seven years, done tragedy and genteel comedy to every body's content, until Fitzwagram had appeared, the transcendent genius, the star, who shone more brilliantly off, than on, the boards, as those, like the fortunate draper, admitted to his private society, enthusiastically affirmed. Greenthwaite was the furious leader of the Fitzwagramites ; and was that night to preside at the supper, which the great tragedian was to do the choice spirits of the town the honour of accepting, provided it was very, *very* select,—no one present save those he named and approved.

VOL. II.

As Greenthwaite stood at the door of the Crown and Mitre, unfolding his final ideas to Jem Winkin, as to the arrangements for the party, the proper distribution of the wax-lights ordered—for he had heard Fitzwagram pronounce gas-lamps "*intensely vulgar*"—and the icing of the champagne, and the preparation of the lobster salad—a handsome equipage from the South drew up, to add to the crowding and confusion of the caravan-sary ; and a handsome young man, with an air of distinction, not lost on the experienced Jem, assisted a fair slight girl to alight, with care and tenderness which at once told their history. Not for Gretna ; for there was no haste nor perturbation as the lady was conducted in ; Jem, meanwhile, leaving Mr. Greenthwaite on the steps, and leading the way to his best parlour, in honour of the handsome couple and his own honeymoon ideas. A rapid glance at trunks, hat-boxes, and umbrellas, revealed nothing as to the name and condition of the new arrivals ; and to interrogate either the postilion or footman required some little time and address : so Jem, in virtue of his unerring instinct, as a head waiter of fifteen years' standing, while he summoned the principal chambermaid, whispered—"Honeymoon jaunt—no doubt of it—lovely young creature ; you may give 'em one of your best chambers, Missus Hannah—pay handsomely at such times."

The sovereign princess of comfortable repose in the Crown and Mitre, under which hundreds of her Majesty's fatigued subjects nightly disposed their wearied frames to rest—the sole empress of sheets, towels, and wash-hand basins, was equally experienced, if less enthusiastic than Jem Winkin ; and not to be as easily done out of a "best chamber," as he had been out of his best parlour, without any thing like due cause shown.

"Own carriage ?" inquired she, coolly.

"'Es—handsome landaulette—Long Acre built—stylish turn out : servants, harness, and every thing."

"Post-horses ?" continued Miss Hannah.

"Own cattle—pair well-matched beautiful bays—blood to the ear-point."

This was so far satisfactory ; yet, in spite of the excessive over-crowding, Hannah had still a few secondary chambers to let for the night ; and she continued—"Lady's maid ?"

"Not a bit of one."

"Humph ! No. 159 may do. Boots !—the luggage to 159," cried the lady of the keys :—the want of a lady's maid having lowered her ideas of the guests several degrees,

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and mentally exalted their sleeping apartment two stories.

"No, it won't; won't, I tell ye;" said Jem. "They're the right sort: that's their servant coming along the passage. . . . Letters—the Post-office—right opposite, sir. . . . But Tom will go. Fly, Tom! letters—Charles Herbert, Esquire—Mrs. Charles Herbert—Boo-oots!"

Boots did not fly: but he went at his own time and pace; and found letters—a whole half-dozen of them—addressed, as if by men of business, simply to Charles Herbert, Esquire; and one, in a lady's hand, to Mrs. Charles Herbert, Post-office, &c. &c. Jem—in taking a passing look of the envelopes, before carrying them to the gentleman—was somewhat disappointed to find neither "Honourable," nor any patrimonial title;—not even the impress of a coronet, on any one seal; yet he persisted in his original belief, that the new arrivals were "of the right sort," and on their marriage tour; though he afterwards learned, from the servant, that that happy event had taken place some months since. The young people had been rambling about in Wales, in Derbyshire, and last, at the Westmoreland Lakes; and they expected to be here joined by the gentleman's mother, on their way to Scotland. The servant went to eat his dinner, while the luggage still lay about waiting the fiat of the landlady, to whom James had appealed against the decision of the chambermaid for No. 159. Boots was often distracted by a divided allegiance to the rival potentates of the bar; though he generally obeyed the sovereign *de facto*—which, at present, seemed James—"the master" being away at Newcastle to purchase horses. James was an old and faithful servant of the establishment, who had perseveringly fought his way from ostler's sub, through all gradations of public service, until he had reached his present responsible office. His word went far. Although, in general, a very obliging person, and bound to universal civility by the threefold ties of natural disposition—the hope of immediate reward—and the expectation that old Jobson, rich and gouty, would retire, some time soon, and leave him the good-will—he had never been amicable with the head chambermaid, a late importation from the Bath Road—who now, tossing her head, repeated, "A plain *Mister*,—and no lady's maid! I say, 159. If I am to be interfered with in this way—dictated to in my own department—the sooner, ma'am, you look out for my successor in office . . ."

said the indignant lady of the bed-chamber.

"The gentleman's mother is expected in her own carriage to-night," said James. "They may stop some days with us, if made cumfutable. She is a widow lady of large jointure, with a handsome house at the West End; and keeps" (her crowning glory!) "a full establishment of servants. The young lady is a niece of the Earl of Tarbert, and has a great fortin'."

"Where are they last from, James?" inquired the portly landlady, as if his report were to settle the dispute; "from Lowther Castle, or Brougham Hall, or any where?"

"This morning from Keswick, ma'am—lunched at Penrith—a handsome supper ordered, to be in readiness when the other lady's carriage arrives."

The landlady, to whom Keswick was "nowhere," was not quick in her response; and her jealous *aides* hung each on the lips which decided victory.

"I think they know the Bishop, and are perhaps to visit at Netherby," said James, hesitatingly: and he muttered in an under voice, as if in atonement to his conscience, "At least the gentleman spoke of a bishop, and the lady inquired about the 'Netherby clan.'"

"The Bishop, James!" cried his mistress; "send cook to me. . . . Your best spare chamber directly, Mrs. Hannah; game, blackcock—fresh—I mean fresh-dressed—patties—apricot tartlets—jellies—stay—my own keys!" and the landlady, moving in quick time, repaired to those extra-extra stores, preserved in her own sacred keeping-places, for grand and rare occasions, repeating "The Bishop!" while the chambermaid, darting glances of detection of a palpable lie, and of fiery indignation at her triumphant foe, also moved off to obey.

The supper ordered was hastened by the gentleman, with the addition of mulled wine and biscuits; for the young lady, on reading her letter, found that the expected friend, who was crossing the country from York, had been detained by an accident to her carriage, of no alarming nature to herself, but which would delay her for a day, till it could be repaired.

Meanwhile the waiter having donned a white neck-cloth, brushed out his whiskers, and, according to the modern practice of fashionable English gentlemen before entering a room, combed out his hair with his fingers, in honour of the lady within and his own

charms, assisted Mr. Herbert's servant to lay the cloth; placing himself at supper directly behind that gentleman's chair, and, consequently, opposite the imagined bride, in virtue, perhaps, of the ancient privilege which permits a cat to look at the king. Before quitting the room, but after snuffing the four wax lights, set in the best silver branches, and placing the decanters in parallelograms, James, looking at the lady, and respectfully addressing the gentleman, took the liberty to hope that "the lady would not be disturbed nor annoyed by the party assembling in the twin-parlour—all highly respectable young gentlemen of the town, who were that night to give a farewell supper to Mr. Fitzwagram, the famous play-actor, who was just a-going to America."

"I see there are only sliding-doors between us," said Mr. Herbert.

"Yes, sir; sliding oak-panels—our large dining-room when we have the county gentry at the races, or their honours, the judges."

"And a very commodious and handsome one," replied Herbert, thinking more of the languor visible in the beautiful face on which he tenderly gazed, than of the splendid and convenient dining accommodations of the Crown and Mitre.

"There will be catches, and glees, and toasts, and speeches, sir; and all that sort o' thing,—beg pardon, sir—for the freedom, sir—by the young gentlemen; and, if it would be any amusement, sir, to the lady, sir:—beg pardon! When we have such parties, ladies are often spectators, sir,—just here, sir, where the panel fits into the map of Yorkshire, sir—the Miss Lowthers, sir, and Lady Brampton, sir, and the Honourable Missus Faskarlie—I've seen 'em all having a sly peep!"

"Thank you," said Herbert. "If the lady should not be curious, perhaps I may . . . if the company are not private?"

"O Lord, sir!—most happy, I am sure, if you'd do 'em the honour to drink a glass of wine with them, when Fitzwagram gives 'em a benefit. It's quite a thing, sir, in this town to-night.—Ten thousand pardons, sir!—But I know, gentlemen travelling like to see what is a-going on, sir. . . . The negus is just a-coming, sir—Missus Jobson mixing it herself."

"Thank you," said Herbert, as both attendants retired,—Mr. Herbert's man utterly horrified at the assurance of the waiter, which he charitably attributed to vulgar north-country breeding.

The young strangers who had caused such commotion in the house, were glad to find themselves alone.

"You are not well, Violet;—either you are cold, or you have taken cold," said Herbert, now leading his wife to the sofa, which he had drawn close to the fire he had ordered. "This rambling and boating have been too much for you. . . . My mother will scold me for not taking better care of you, dearest one,—and I deserve it."

"I wish she were here to do so," replied Violet, in a languid tone, yet with eyes brightly smiling her grateful thanks.

"Then you are tired of me already;—in one little three months, Violet, longing for a third in our social parties."

"Don't fancy I shall incur our mother's censure of spoiling you longer, Charles," said Violet, laughing. "A little wholesome contradiction, called the assertion of independent judgment, will now be a pleasant variety for us both."

"Saucy rebel against legitimate authority! Don't you deserve to be well punished for this?" And the gay young husband proceeded to inflict the gentle punishment which, hitherto, had not been very violently resented.

"Herbert! dearest Charles! don't, pray—let me alone. I am so frightened, nay, I shall be affronted with you."

"Don't what, little fool?" said Herbert, laughing. "Are you offended?"

"Gentlemen coming into the next room. . . Only an oak board!—and, I am sure there are voices there that I know, too. Hark!"

"Nonsense!—So it is not kissing, but being caught, you fear?—Fie, Violet! Yet, the dews of heaven never fell softer on the rose-buds. Let us kiss and be friends, however!"

"Dear Charles, are *you* quite well?" cried his wife, who almost feared the champagne had taken speedy, if evanescent, effect on his brain.

"Perfectly well. But what *is* the matter?" And now indeed the alarmed Herbert had a delicate duty to perform, in kissing away the fast-gathering tears. "Violet, my own love, have my spirits been too boisterous for you; you are surely ill,—nervous? I wish you would go to bed before the noise begins. I wish my mother were here to nurse you."

"I believe I am nervous; . . . but I like no nurse half so well as yourself, Charles." And the flattering preference was repaid by a repetition of the original offence, not this time resented, though more gentlemen might

have been overheard coming into "the twin-parlour."

"Not my mother?"

"No, indeed."

"How proud you make me;—not old Marion?"

"Nay, you love to tease."

"Then you do prefer her nursing to mine?"

"Oh no, no. . . . What a fool you make of me. . . . But, Charles, there is one thing. . . ."

"Well, love? But tell me, and never mind those gorgon-Gryphon letters, which seem basilisks to you."

"When our mother comes to-morrow, Charles. . . ."

"What then, love? Why hesitate, why blush?"

"We must be sage, you know,—not giddy and indiscreet; remember we are old married people, now almost three months, and these raptures. . . ."

"Almost three! fled like a bright short day. . . . And 'these raptures,' must they give place to lectures? and is this your first attempt in that line? Must I then try to seem to love you less?"

"I won't humour you by chiding. And there, I declare, is the man with his negus already." And Violet, like a guilty thing, started from her husband's clasping arm, and planted herself demurely, leaning on the mantel-piece on the other side of the fire. The waiter,—it was not Jem Winkin,—quietly placed the rummer on the table, and went away. "Sit down, pray, Mrs. Charles, opposite me, to a quiet conjugal *tête-à-tête*. But first pledge me in this hot spicy liquor, to the waning of our honeymoon, since you warn me that it sinks to-night, with my mother's appearance."

"And another long era of happiness begins."

"So I fervently hope and believe; and not less bright, dear love."

"Not less sweet and serene; the sober certainty. . . . But do keep your own side of the house, pray, or I shall certainly run away,—and, to spoil my quotation—fie! . . . And the gentlemen in the next room! There!"

"Hang the gentlemen in the next room!" said Herbert, laughing. "But you must sit down, and any where you please, at least till you have sipped your negus, my mother's old-fashioned remedy for chills taken on the water; or, Violet," and he looked earnestly

in her eyes, "has your cold not come by *post*?"

There was some reason for the question, as, ever and anon, her eyes wandered, and pensively fixed upon the unopened letters strewed upon the table, while her thoughts involuntarily glanced back to the last bright and fleeting period of her young life, and forward into a future, which already looked troubled and dark.

"Not for us," was her secret reflection, as she recalled the contents of Mrs. Herbert's late confidential letters to herself,—“but for *her*, born and nursed in the bosom of affluence and refinement, to whom luxury has become absolute necessity:—loving, united, together we can brave any fortune, and extract purest happiness, dearest pleasure, from our affections, and the exercise of our faculties. But for *her*!”

In this depressed mood, arising from a cause which she was not yet permitted to reveal to her husband, Violet now allowed herself to regret every thing, save only her marriage. That alone, the source of her pride and happiness, was never to be repented of by her; and Heaven avert that another might ever repent! As she mused, Herbert, having silently watched her for some minutes, approached, and, unhidden, sate down and drew her towards him, kindly trying to cheer her depressed spirits, which he now again affected to impute to fatigue, as his former hint had disturbed her.

"Can I leave you alone to vex yourself reading over all those ugly letters—Gryphon's, and that one from Lord Tarbert's agent, and that from Mr. Cryppes' solicitor. What a dowery of trouble and vexation I have brought you, Charles."

"Hush, Violet, lest I be angry with you. I must begin to try if I can chide, if you will be unjust to yourself—unkind to us both. I am going to smoke a cigar; and—Hark, the bonny Christ-church bells! 'The gentlemen in the next room' do reasonable justice to what the Cryppeses did so masterly, you remember."

Violet could not attend to the singing. She was wrapped in her own agitating thoughts; and, pressing the hand that fondly clasped hers, she at length found utterance:—

"Do you remember one lovely evening, Charles, long, long since, now, in Mrs. Herbert's garden-alcove, in Regent's Park, that we were alone, talking of our marriage, and that I tried to talk *prudence*. It was but talk, I fear"

"And I, perhaps, was singing, or rather feeling what I durst not say—

Ah, who could prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him ?

But you were so often talking of prudence and delay, and I was so unwilling to listen, that I cannot precisely remember ;— and, ah ! those evenings they were all so lovely !"

"This was one in particular," faltered Violet, looking fondly in his eyes ; "when you said . . ."

"Oh, tell me what, then ?" urged he more earnestly.

"It was—'I could live upon your breath !'"

Herbert's face brightened. He well remembered the moment when he had first inhaled rapturous life from the sweet breath on which he hung. "Yes, dearest, I well remember—and I am not ashamed ; was it not a love-inspired sentiment ? I feel its power now. What were life without you—?"

"But, Charles . . ." gently remonstrated the lady.

"But nothing, Violet, . . . Why torment yourself, and disturb our new-born bliss—for is not this but the birth-day of an eternal happiness?—with doubts and fears, for which there may be, can be, no just cause."

"And leave you to bear alone what ought to be our mutual cares and anxieties, while I am only to be caressed and deceived for my good—the sharer of your joys only. Unkind Charles ! this is to be but half a wife :—this imperfect confidence—this want of reliance, of entire sympathy, distresses me more than could the worst ills my fancy paints :—were my only grievance redressed—if the heart that is my own gushed forth to me in pain and sorrow, as it overflows in happiness. . . ."

Herbert looked excited, yet pleasure glowed in his eyes, while he said—"If you would promise me not to be annoyed ;—yet if such be your sovereign pleasure, I fancy I must not dare to resist your wish. . . . The delight of fretting over things seems to do ladies good."

"Things that concern those we love. Yes, surely, the greatest imaginable to me—to share your whole heart, Charles— not one dark corner hid from me."

"Well, sip your black draught, and let me see you safely to No. 159, or where is it ? I mean to have a cigar, and a glee through the boards, from those merry souls, while you undress ; and to-morrow you shall be bored

to your content, with Gryphon's legal despatches."

Content, almost light-hearted, and smiling brightly at this arrangement, the happy young wife was led away.

If prudence had not urged the immediate union of Herbert and his bride, neither had wisdom—poverty in the back-ground, joining in chorus—lifted up her potential voice against it. The documents so singularly recovered, which established Miss Hamilton's legal claim to a handsome, if not a large fortune, had satisfied the remaining scruples of Mrs. Herbert, the only friend deeply interested, that if not rich as riches are reckoned by the standard of the English ancient nobility and gentry, or even by that of English commercial wealth, they would, with Violet's good sense and simple tastes, have enough for the easy means of comfortable living, and for the real enjoyments of refined life. Mrs. Herbert, besides, entertained a fond, proud, real mother's flattering opinion of the capacity and attainments of her stepson ; and the reasonable expectation, that a yet closer alliance with her friend, the Earl of Tarbert, through a marriage with his half-niece, would not narrow Charles's prospects of—all that he required—an introduction into public life through the Earl's patronage. Spite of his early embarrassments, arising more from a generous imprudence than personal extravagance, when his affairs were finally adjusted, she was persuaded that a handsome reversion would remain from his own patrimony ; and though her fortune was tied up, and for ever disposed away from the family, a circumstance of which she now thought with bitter self-reproach, her income was ample ; and her generosity as boundless as her affection for "both her children." Thus she now named them ; and in her conduct, and even in her heart, she made no distinction between her son, and that sister-daughter, who, coming in the place of a hundred frivolous female acquaintances, had dignified her feelings, and doubled her enjoyment of life, by giving her one friend in whom her faith was perfect—one domestic companion, of her own sex, with whom her sympathies were entire ; for they, without jealousy, worshipped the same fortunate man. The union of the lovers was, therefore, the seal of her own happiness ; she gained a daughter, and kept her son.

But mortal pleasure, what art thou in sooth ?
The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below.—

The first intimation of danger came from

Lady Laura Temple. It was not in her own power to make the restitution to Mrs. Herbert which her pride and her sense of justice equally dictated. Nay, there were grave doubts, from the nature of the absurd settlement, whether Lady Laura could ever possess the right of disposing of money vested in several trustees, of whom her father was one and Sir George Lees another, for the behoof of her younger children, without respect to whom the father of said children might be. Lady Laura was indeed clearly entitled to dispose of the income of this property when, on the death of Mrs. Herbert, it should accrue to her. But this was a distant view, and she had perfectly comprehended the dilemma, when she made, as she imagined, that happy compromise with her father, which led to his conceding the claims of Miss Hamilton without opposition. But whatever might have been the real wishes of the Earl respecting his half-niece, neither was he a free agent. It was found that he had people of business, and also creditors, who must be consulted, and, in particular, one provincial creditor, Mr. Stokes, who, having advanced very large sums to rescue him from bad and dangerous hands, now claimed, or assumed, the sole direction of his affairs. It was not a fortnight after the joyful marriage of Herbert and Violet, ere Mrs. Herbert, alarmed and vexed, apprized Lady Laura of the unexpected turn which the affair had taken, and that the Earl's people of business were prepared to resist to the utmost the claims of his niece—that, in short, a suit had been unavoidably commenced, in which Mr. Charles Herbert and his wife were the prosecutors, and the defendant, the Right Honourable Dudley Temple, Earl of Tarbert. Nor was this the only vexatious affair; for the same prosecutors were also compelled to become defendants, in an action to recover damages, brought by "Professor Cryppes, Mus. Doc. against his late pupil, Violet Gabrielle Hamilton, otherwise Violet Gabrielle Herbert." The parties were, in the mean time, in the height of their honeymoon bliss, travelling leisurely, as pleasure or inclination dictated, through some of the most beautiful scenery in England. Their affectionate and anxious mother was most reluctant to disturb the joy of the young pair; and, though she was at last obliged to forward letters of business to her son, Care could not long survive in the bright presence of Rapture, even had Charles been of a disposition to cherish the churlish guest.

Yet Herbert's communications with his

solicitor, Mr. Gryphon, gradually became direct and frequent; and so much was involved in the issue of one of the suits—for he could not speak of the prosecution of Cryppes, without ridicule and contempt—that it was not possible to banish it wholly from his thoughts. If the lawyers of the Earl—for that noble person constantly disclaimed all share in the affair himself—were able to set aside the claims of Violet, the young couple, left entirely dependent on Mrs. Herbert, or nearly so, might, in case of her death, be involved in serious distress, which Herbert felt it was wise and manly to look at once in the face, and provide against;—and this was to be his first duty immediately on returning to town. Had he been aware of the apprehensions entertained by his mother, and her East India friends, for the solvency of a great house in Calcutta, in which the bulk of her fortune was placed—and which she had confided to Violet—he could better have appreciated those feelings of extreme uneasiness which his wife, as bidden by their mother, hid in her heart, though she could not believe that concealment was either well-judged or justifiable. And, now that her husband had promised to keep no painful secrets from her, she resolved to solicit Mrs. Herbert to allow her to treat him with the same candour and confidence.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN the mean time, Herbert having attended his wife through the long and labyrinthine passages and stairs of the Crown and Mitre,—with tenderness and gallantry which excited the lively admiration of all the peeping chamber-maids, and convinced the skipping young waiters that the "handsome couple" in No. 16, could not have been married above a week at the most,—returned to his cigar and the newspaper, to spend the permitted quarter of an hour. But several hours elapsed before he joined his sleepless and anxious partner, who, but for very shame, would long before have risen and alarmed the house, or have gone herself in search of him. It is now our purpose to account for Herbert's long absence, and that first transgression against domestic rule, to which there had been some temptation.

While Herbert smoked, mused, and scamped the London newspapers, he at the same time drank in the mellifluous sounds of the amateur glee-singers on the other side of the oaken panels; and learned, from the grumb-

ling tones of some of the party, that they were still without the effulgence of the Star of the night, and the more substantial comforts of supper; which was now becoming a matter of some interest, as early dinners were the old-fashioned, frugal habit of the town.

"Fitzwagram has to wash the paint from his face, and throw off his stage-clothes. Don Felix to-night—and super-admirable! though tragedy is his forte"—said Greenthwaite the chairman, anxious to preserve good humour. "But here he comes: quick—Glorious Apollo! strike up!"

It was a false, if flattering alarm; and Greenthwaite's neighbour, Mr. Sturt the ironmonger, a middle-aged citizen—a candidate for the dignity of alderman, and, of late, more of a politician than a dilettante—though he had seen the day—now growled exceedingly. He had come out rather against his will, and, moreover, had dined at one o'clock.

"Draw Fitzwagram out in the political line, Greenthwaite," said Mr. Copper the young watchmaker, and vice-chairman. "The fellow, sir"—addressing Sturt—"is up to every thing and every body in London—man, woman, and baby. That row, and pulling of caps, between the queen"—but here the discourse, *minching* treason, died away into an unintelligible whisper; though Herbert was left to conclude that the other belligerent was the queen-dowager. "Fact, sir," continued Mr. Copper, as the ironmonger growled unbelief. "Women, as Fitzwagram remarked at the time, are pretty much the same every where, when they get hold of each other's caps, and into a real passion—palace or fish-stall 'all one.'"

The position of Herbert, with his cigar in his mouth, and his legs tilted, Anglo-American fashion, on each side of the stove, was too luxurious to permit curiosity to get the better of laziness; so he was contented with what he could learn of palace anecdote without moving nearer. "No one must cross-question him," continued Copper, "or he bolts at once—a high, fractious chap; it must all come of his own side."

"Humph!" said the ironmonger, speaking in the natural language, or, perhaps, in that of a people in the interior of Africa, named the *Sow-Sow* nation. "Sits up all night, and lies a-bed all day; no one ever yet saw the face o' un on the pavement in sun-loight: a queer customer—squints like dinkins."

"A common habit of men of genius," said

Greenthwaite, "to 'consume the midnight oil.' And that cast of the eyes—what effect it gives to his Shylock! Then the expression of Fitzwagram's face is so decidedly intellectual! What are mere physical advantages?"

"Ay, ay," grumbled the ironmonger, drily, and measuring, with the tail of his sly eye, the sixty-five-inches length of his friend—

"Remember, sir, Garrick was a dwarf; and the husky voice and stunted figure of Kean."

"That creatur had an eye in its head like a toa-ad's," said the ironmonger, excited by the remembrance of his own play-going days—"There was real stuff in yon little body."

Passing whiffs of the savoury cookery, for which the Crown and Mitre was renowned, at least within its own precincts, now ascended the stairs, and whetted the impatience of the company. Mr. Greenthwaite, on the principle by which a skilful manager propitiates the impatient and angry gods, called for more music; for the abbey clock struck ten, and the ironmonger, rising in wrath, threw a crown on the table, as his share of the bill, and swore he'd "be danged if he'd wait another minute for face of man." Greenthwaite and Copper interposed between him and the door, and ere the "Chough and Crow" had fairly taken wing, "Glorious Apollo" once more struck up, and loud and long-continued plaudits announced to Herbert the arrival of the illustrious guest. The bustle of the waiters, and the clanking of dishes drowned the explanations and apologies, save that Mr. Fitzwagram had found London despatches at his lodgings, which he was obliged to answer in course of post. "And, gentlemen," he continued, in a hollow theatrical whisper, "you may look out for news!"

"By the gods of the Greeks!" ejaculated the solitary smoker, rising half laughing, "but I suspected as much! Jack's alive! Here is news for Violet and Marion!" and he advanced to the partition.

"News!" respectfully re-echoed Greenthwaite, who was now installed in the chair, Mr. John Quintin Cryppes, *alias* Henry Adolphus Fitzwagram, on his right hand, the ironmonger on his left, and a large turkey smoking before him.—"What have we got here?" said Jack, clapping his glass to his eye, and looking round—"Turkey, goose, and bustard!" And Mr. Copper the Vice, who at once apprehended the joke, was

convulsed with laughter, as he explained to his neighbours who was goose and who was bustard.

"Foreign or domestic, sir?" inquired the ironmonger, who had more self-assurance than the younger men, probably from his late experience of great ones in the town-council and in electioneering matters.

"Foreign *and* domestic," was the pithy and emphatic reply, which produced quite a sensation. However, supper was to be despatched, and Fitzwagram did ample honour to the entertainment: praised the cookery as wonderful for the provinces, and sent his compliments to Mrs. Jobson and her cook. Greenthwaite was too evidently absorbed in the honourable but onerous duties which awaited him, to attend to mere trencher-filling, in which the ironmonger officiated; and at length King, Queen, Duchess of Kent, Queen Adelaide, Duke of Sussex, Army, Navy, and "all the rest of the royal family," having been rapidly swallowed, Mr. Greenthwaite rose, bumper in hand, to propose the toast of the night; and Mr. Fitzwagram modestly veiled his face with his hand, allowing himself merely a vista, between the third and fourth finger, through which to survey the company, while the orator, on his legs—or rather see-sawing from leg to leg, like her Majesty's government for the time being—with equal modesty and humility, first proclaimed "His entire and utter unfitness and unworthiness to discharge the great and important duty which had devolved upon the humble individual before that honourable company."

After several more of the same kind of deprecatory flourishes, which the ironmonger in a gruff *aside* called "all bam," he fairly launched out into a harangue which glanced from heaven to earth, and threw a sweep-net over the "Roman Roscius," Shakspeare, Garrick, the great Columbian lion-queller, to whom "he of the bean-stalk" was but as a dwarf; and the "Centaur Ducrow." Mr. Copper remarked, in a whisper, to the critics at the bottom of the table—the top being given up to the wealth and respectability—that this was inapt to the occasion, as Fitzwagram was devoted to the *legitimate* drama, and not to be classed with Ducrow and Van Amburgh. The orator, however, recovered this slip, if it was one; and having previously borrowed a certain work from the Town library, went through the whole bead-roll of eminent British actors, and wound up the peroration by placing Fitzwagram infinitely above them all, as,

"Him, gentlemen! who, to the classic purity and *statutesque** dignity and grandeur of a Kemble, the fire and passion of a Kean, the massive majesty of a Macready, added the cordial hilarious *brusqueness* of a Sheridan Knowles!"

Thunders of applause, in which Herbert joined gaily, followed this burst of eloquence; glasses were emptied and replenished, and down sunk Mr. Greenthwaite, leaning back on his chair, and wiping the perspiration from his brow, and up rose Mr. Fitzwagram, murmuring, indistinct, heavy-breathed, "overpowered," "the very humble individual before them," "so impressed," "so overwhelmed by the honour just conferred upon him by the respectable, the enlightened, the intelligent, the accomplished assembly he had the delight to see around him; the *élite* of an ancient city, long distinguished for critical taste and acumen in matters relating to the drama; for audiences whose approbation was at once a sure passport to that goal of every histrionic aspirant's ambition,—the London boards!" Loud applause!—the company were almost as proud of their town as of its citizens.

"Impudent dog!" thought Herbert, who now fairly dragged forward his chair to the slit in the partition, where the map of Derbyshire afforded a full view of the room and the company,—a circle of ruddy, beaming, hilarious John-Bull faces, all turned to the eloquent Fitzwagram, which it was really, to a man of social feelings, comfortable to look upon. Herbert had placed another chair to accommodate his legs, lighted a fresh cigar, and disposed himself so as to see and listen at his ease; as the chamber-maid entered the parlour,—the identical Mrs. Hannah—an over-dressed good-looking woman, with the faintest tinge of rouge giving lustre to her black eyes, many strings of coral beads incrusting her white neck, and long cork-screw ringlets, through which gleamed longer gold earrings. The lady started, or affected to start; but stood her ground while offering to withdraw, until she had explained that, fancying the parlour unoccupied, she had stolen in for a peep of the *star* and the company. The gallantry of Herbert could not baulk so harmless a purpose. Nor did she remain long to tax his politeness. The glance of a minute, during which Herbert closely watched the changes of her face, so far as he could see it, satisfied her and him; and,

* So afterwards printed in the Tory county paper.

curtsying, she withdrew in some haste, as if afraid of being detected in her peeping propensities.

Many more speeches were made, and toasts drunk; but Herbert was more amused by the green-room anecdotes, with which Fitzwagram crammed the chairman, and astonished the ironmonger, who sat with a face of strange perplexity, hearing of Tagliani's bust, which was not quite what it should be; and Madame Vestris's legs, which were absolute perfection; and the suspicious *liaisons* of Miss —, which made Mr. Sturt shake his head, — and, for the sake of the morals of young Greenthwaite and Copper, beg rather for another conic song, as of better moral tendency than such perilous stuff. Fitzwagram's comic songs and comic imitations, fairly, in the ironmonger's opinion, eclipsed his tragedy — but this the younger men would not allow; yet the imitations of Charles Mathews the younger were so good, that Herbert himself laughed aloud in his concealment, and the ironmonger was nearly choking. Most of the company had now dropped away, but a few stanch hands and choice spirits crowded the closer round the chairman and Fitzwagram; and Copper proposed "the health of Charles Mathews, Esquire, and the Comic stage!" which again called Fitzwagram to his feet to return thanks, which he did, according to the flat newspaper report, only "in neat and pointed terms."

"Ah! I ought to do my best for poor Charley," said the eloquent actor, receiving the compliments of his audience, as he sat down, with a nonchalant yet gracious and patronizing air. "He is a good boy, Mathews. — Ay, many a time and oft have we together heard the chimes at midnight, since we first gave each other black eyes at Eton — ay, and at Ivy Cottage made up the quarrel over mince-pie, and the least tiny drop of champagne, that charming Mrs. M — thought good for boys — ay, ay; I grow an old man."

"He was at Eton, you remark," said Greenthwaite, aside, to the ironmonger, eager to catch the slenderest cue that was likely to unravel the mystery of Fitzwagram's incognito. "Capital school, Eton," continued Greenthwaite; "the first men in the country are bred there."

"Eton, did I say! — what a blabbing blockhead I do become, when set down among choice friends. No such thing, I assure you — not Eton, nor yet Harrow: —

I was bred nowhere, gentlemen; I am the Wandering Jew, — the Man in the Moon, — that mystery in an Iron Mask, found in the Bastille, egad."

"In the brazen visor, Jack!" was said in a hollow voice, which seemed to proceed from a portrait of the late Lord-lieutenant that hung overhead; and which Jobson had got liberty for an itinerant artist to copy from that in the Town Hall, in part-payment of a long bill.

"Who speaks?" cried the chairman, firing at the insult offered to the distinguished guest, and rising to his feet; while Jack, *alias* Fitzwagram, also rose, looked round uneasily, and buttoned his coat, as if instinctively preparing to bolt, while his friends stared at each other.

"Dem'd impertinent jest, — some of those scamps of under-waiters for a trick, I fancy."

"I'll put them to death without benefit of clergy," cried Greenthwaite, seizing Fitzwagram's sword-cane.

"Bah! not worth while," said the great man, recollecting himself, and resuming his chair; and matters of greater pith and moment soon made Herbert's boyish exercise in his old and boyish acquirements in ventriloquy be forgotten. From the interior of the Palace, Fitzwagram had got into the Cabinet Council; and his mute audience, now become small and select, appeared fully to appreciate his whispered, mysterious confidences, — not made, however, until each had vowed perpetual silence.

"Fitzwag knows all those high fellows," Mr. Greenthwaite was heard to remark. — As the night wore away, and familiarity increased, the draper had gradually dropped, first the ceremonious *Mister*; then the final syllable of the great man's surname; until, under the full pressure of two bottles, the appellation diminished to Fitzwag and Fitz. But he still appeared fully sensible of the value of the rare and sacred information confided to him, — even when it began to ooze out as the punch flowed in.

"Pon my soul, I saw the letter — addressed Burke Barker, Esq., Baker Street. — He gave me Barker's autograph, — show it you to-morrow; does all the dramatic criticism, — knows the thing and the actors so well that he does not care whether he sees the play performed or not. Has more freedom of style without: — But an awkward thing happened —"

"Why, Barker the famous editor! do you

really know him, sir?" respectfully inquired the admiring Copper. "What a cutting up he gave the *blues* in his paper, at our last election. What a fellow that! what a pen he wields!"

"With help," was the sententious reply of Jack, delivered in a tone which made Herbert smile; though he was now becoming anxious that the party should break up, as he desired most particularly to say two words in private to their illustrious guest, and did not wish to draw the attention of the company, or even of the sage James Winkin or his myrmidons, to the circumstance, by a formal message.

"I wish you saw some of those London whelps of the press, gentlemen," resumed Mr. Cryppes, grandly. "No man is, you know, a hero to his valet."

"Fitz knows all those dons," hickupped Mr. Greenthwaite, now considerably cut,—but more proud than ever of his great friend and himself.

"Familiar as my garter," responded Jack, who now lighted a cigar, and lolled back in his chair with an air of ineffable enjoyment and superiority.

"I say, Fitz, my boy," ventured the chairman, prompted by the importunity of the inordinately curious Copper, and rendered audacious by the condescension of the lion of the night, "do, pray, tell us—we are only friends here—that capital thing D'Orsay said to you about young D'Israeli, or something. It was a rum go, that."

The President of the Shakspeare Club, it was to be feared, was becoming forward and vulgar. Mr. Copper frowned upon him severely, while Fitzwagram, not in the least discomposed, replied:—"Ah, poor dear D'Orsay!—*Mirabel*, you mean; we say *Mirabel*, now. I know no D'Orsay, save the dentist. But *Mirabel*! the finest creature that breathes, though, alas! he ages apace:—

All that's bright must fade,
The brightest still the fleetest!

as the countess whispered to us one day in her yellow boudoir, when the count made his *accost*, after a whitebait dinner at Greenwich or Blackwall—I really forget where we had been,—which had somewhat deepened the incipient crow's-feet."

Copper and Greenthwaite exchanged admiring glances.

"But you shan't, Fitz, my boy, get off without that capital story," said the latter.

"It isn't fair, gentlemen, to tell tales out

of school. I am mum. I shall get huffed with you, Greenthwaite, my good fellow, if you have either eye or tongue for what falls from a friend in confidence. I remember now, it was neither at Lady B.'s—a great many Lady B.'s in the peerage, you know—nor yet at the Athenæum, *Mirabel* let drop that pearl of wit, but at one of the celebrated Professor Cryppes' famous musical parties, which turned the head of the town last season, and at which all nations were represented by their regular ambassadors."

"—Any thing to the family party in Newgate for running away with Stokes, the Warwickshire banker's daughter?" inquired Copper; but Fitzwagram did not hear.

"Bulwer and a few more men," he continued—But there was a cross fire from the ironmonger—"What came of that business?" he inquired; "any body hanged for it yet?—sarve them right—"

"—Bulwer and a few more men came straight from dinner at the club; but Sir George Lees, who had been on an election committee, was obliged to go home to dress—"

"The member for Wolverton?" inquired the ironmonger.

"Ditto—he went home, as I was saying . . ."

"Which he won't long be," rudely interrupted the ironmonger. "A *rat*, and a fellow of bad morals."

"When was that found out, pray," asked Jack, sharply, and in a voice full of meaning,—"since he *ratted*, as you, sir, term the thing?"

"The Stokes' connexion have resolved to oust him, for the countenance he has given to the blackguards engaged in the abduction of Miss . . . (if *Juliana* could have heard herself called *Miss*!) I had that at the first hand—from the traveller of Stokes Brothers, wire manufacturers, in this very room, where he gave a few of us a supper on his last journey. They will spend ten thousand on it, but they will have Lees out, a Stokes in, and bring the vagabond Cryppes to justice."

"You are a politician, my good sir, I perceive," said Fitzwagram, squinting arrows and death at the fair round stomach, with good roast-beef lined, of the ironmonger; at least, as Jack's oblique glance appeared to people of ordinary vision.

"No, sir, I am no politician; I am here to enjoy good fellowship and discuss the drama and the fine arts, and—hang politics—ch, Greeny?"

Mr. Greenthwaite nodded and smiled entire approbation.

"Hang swindling vagabonds that would run away with a young girl, sir, against her own and her parents' will, for her cash, sir,—for her cash!" spluttered the ironmonger, who felt strongly. He had daughters himself, two of them,—one of whom, with a portion of £1500, he might have bestowed on Greenthwaite, had the dilettante draper been more steady; and he had eaten salt, if not with the Messrs. Stokes, yet at their expense; he was, besides, a very honest man, barring that he was unable all at once to grant country customers the full benefit of those reduced prices of Birmingham and Sheffield wares which filled him with horror and unfeigned alarm for the safety of the British Constitution!

Mr. Cryppes, notwithstanding his philosophy, was not perfectly at ease under this unlooked-for infliction. He merely took his cigar from his lips to attempt a diversion, and to repeat—"I detest politics save in the gallery of the house, when a friend's motion is on; or, with *The Times* in my hand wet of a morning, over my *café chassé*. As O'Connell remarked to me one morning that Sheil and I went home with him,—after he had floored Stanley,—to partake of a noggin of smoky whisky-punch, screeching hot—"

"O'Connell, sir!" shouted the admiring ironmonger.

"Yes; I presume you have heard, in these northern parts, of such an individual?"

"Drink whisky punch with Mr. O'Connell!"

"Why, ay, man; and yet the stars have not fallen and smothered me. What do you take me for, now?"

The ironmonger was past speech; yet in his eye there was shrewd questioning. The statement of Mr. Fitzwagram might have been quite correct; and many a strange playfellow Mr. O'Connell must have encountered in his long bustling day; yet our friend Jack was not perfectly easy; he, besides, hated cross-questioning; and he gave a new turn to the subject by repeating—

"Ay, whisky punch—punch of *potéen*—darling little name! Whisky, gentlemen and friends," and he sung jollily,

"Which came from a *still*,

Saug under a hill,

Where eye of gauger saw it not!

Know Dan O'Connell? Perhaps I don't know him.—Ask him."

Jack looked prodigiously knowing; and, after a pause of mingled consternation and admiration, he proceeded more quietly:—

"When I was, last season, at Darrynane Abbey—where a few rollicking boys of us made a run up from Killarney—ah, Greeny, my dear fellow! I see you are slyly taking notes: well, write *Darrynane*—not *Derry-nane*, as the Cockneys have it: a trifle, to be sure; yet such things, as Croker says, mark the difference between bipeds;—when I was last with O'Connell at his seat—by the way, Greenthwaite, would you like a letter of introduction to O'Connell, when you next run up to town for your winter fashions?—Pray, remind me of it to-morrow—"

"When you were last at Derry-nane, sir?" said the now half-envious ironmonger, who saw no right that Greenthwaite, so much younger a man in years, and of lower standing in the corporation, had to get, before him, introductions to great men. He recalled the speaker to the question, "But ain't that Croker a danged Tory? Tell us of O'Connell—Croker's no go. . . . You would have lots of politics, of course?"

"Devil a bit of it:—hunting, like Nim-rods, all the morning, and carousing all night; with interludes of the ladies, waltzing, Irish jigs, and Irish melodies, for us young fellows. Dan and the priests generally stuck by the bottle. *Rint*-day was not come round; and in London and Dublin O'Connell gets a stomachful of political blarney. Besides, we differ in sentiment: Mr. O'Connell is a good Catholic—all my eye!" and Jack touched not his eye, but his wry, or as he called it, *Italic* nose. "I am a devoted Churchman; we, therefore,—differ, but amicably."

"You are against Repeal, I dare say?" said the ironmonger, earnestly.

"Repeal!—you shall hear. The morning I left Darrynane, O'Connell and Prince John—Bruen and I call him the Pretender—"

"Bruen?—ain't he a Tory that fellow, sir?" said the ironmonger.

"Bruen! perhaps it was not Bruen. It might be O'Ferrall, or O'Callaghan, or Fitzmaurice, or ———. I can't remember half their dem'd Milesian names; and when not absolutely certain, on points of fact, I am apt to be even superstitious in my scruples."

"Right, sir, right," said the earnest ironmonger. "Nothing like stark truth."

"Nothing like it, sir. Tell truth and

shame the devil. Said I right? An Englishman's maxim. . . . But where was I? Oh! on the road to Tralee. Emphasis on the last syllable—*Tralee*, Greenthwaite. The Saxons bamboozle Irish names exactly as they do Irish interests. We were at a turn of the road—'Halt,' cried Dan, drawing bridle opposite an old dilapidated farm-house—'There, Fitzwagram, my dear fellow,' said he, addressing me, 'there stands the humble home in which the Liberator was born; and in which my grandmother—blest be the place of her rest!—reared twenty-two childre.' Bless his rich Munster brogue! for it flows from his lips like honey and oiled butter."

"A bull! a bull!" shouted Greenthwaite. "How could O'Connell remember the rearing of his grandmother's children?"

"Hold your gab, if you please, Dick, and let the gentleman tell out his story," cried the ironmonger, who, being a politician, was now really interested.

"Nay, if I am to be interrupted?" said the speaker, drawing up statelyly.

"A myriad of pardons, Mr. Fitzwagram; my vivacity ran away with me—never can hold in a joke."

"Keep a small check-string over your fancy, Greenthwaite, my dear fellow; you are a good creature, but—*green*." The ironmonger chuckled, and Jack went on:—"Daniel don't want feeling I assure you, gentlemen. 'Tis said he is altogether a humbug; now, I don't think it above half; his sentimental vein is not *altogether* affectation. We had allowed the party to outride us; O'Connell pretending to give his favourite garron, Paddy, or Padroon, or something, a breathing, that we might, ere parting, have a private chat. My notion is he wished to win me; but never mind that. 'When I look on that humble mansion,' said Daniel, 'on my brave boys cantering before us, think on all that has passed, and gaze on my own lovely green land, that shall yet be—

Great, glorious, and free,
First gim of the earth,
And first isle of the *say*!"

"Ay, ay! that's him, sure enough!" cried the excited ironmonger, his eyes radiantly twinkling. "You may know O'Connell any where by that rhyme;" and Jack continued—" 'When I look out on those sparkling waves,' said Dan, 'yet to bear to our ports the rich commerce of every land; and on the shamrock-clad turf of my own Emerald valleys'—Soh, ho! King Dan,"

interrupted I, "you old dog, you would have Ireland all your own then!"

"Cod, O'Connell must have been 'nation mad," said the ironmonger, hitching on his chair, leaning his arms on the table, and, on them, the broad, beaming face turned admiringly to the speaker.

"Not a bit of it, sir," continued Jack, coolly; "instead of flying into a passion, he began solemnly to protest—'No, Fitzwagram! let me but see my lovely and beloved country free.' . . . Sheer humbug! O'Connell ought to have known I was not quite so innocent. I stopped short at once, reined in my animal, and said, with some firmness—for, hang it, I *was* in earnest,—'Mr. O'Connell, you are an old man; and I am, though young in years, not quite a greenhorn. Know then, sir, that in this Repeal humbug I *cannot* countenance you!'"

And Mr. Henry Adolphus Fitzwagram knitted his brows, looked fierce, and slapped the table, till all the decanters and glasses chimed in chorus with the truly British sentiment.

"To his face?" whispered the awe-struck ironmonger.

"To his beard!" and the questioner looked up with an expression of face half-comic, half-sheepish, but so exquisitely ludicrous and John-Bullish, or *gullish*, while he said—"May I believe you, sir?" that Herbert involuntarily smiled.

Jack answered the singularly simple question by an awful frown; and the enthusiastic Greenthwaite, fancying his friend insulted, took up the subject.

"Believe! yes, sir, you may believe!" He seized his empty glass. "It is thus one man of great soul dares to speak to another . . . Waiter! Jem Winkin! a bottle of claret, and cha—arge it to me."

Thus encouraged, the imaginative Cryppes crowded sail, and told figment upon figment, "thick as the leaves in Vallombrosa." It became tiresome at last.

"The scapegrace will waste the whole night: not another ten minutes shall I dally here, if he should hang for it," thought Herbert; and, fortunately, the call for more wine raised the ironmonger, who was a staid family-man, and already much too far beyond good "shop hours." Cryppes seized him by the button.

"You must hear how Dan and I parted. . . . I took a firmer tone: 'There must be truce with the angry boy, O'Connell,' I said. 'Stanley, to be sure, *is* a sour crab, but a

fellow with both pluck and bottom ; ay, and of a good old stock, too. I like him !'— Now, what do you suppose, gentlemen, Dan answered ?"

But no gentleman durst hazard even a guess of the reply which such audacity must have drawn forth from the insulted "Liberator ;" though the ironmonger, coming to his wits, as he surveyed the "queer customer" before him, fancied it might have been kicking ; and the simple and tipsy Green-thwaite, gazed intently on those compressed lips, which alone could reveal the mystery, and fancied he had never before seen Fitzwagram so great ; not even in Iago, in which he had backed him against the old favourite of the northern public, Mr. Belville, and the entire county palatine.

A long pause followed, ere Fitzwagram, with a total change of expression, breathed, in a hollow sepulchral whisper, "Why, demn the word, as I am a gentleman !" and Herbert, from his lounge, burst into loud, uncontrollable laughter at the irresistible goose-looks of the astonished surrounding group. Fitzwagram, hearing the sound of laughter, started to his feet, suspecting some peeping sniggering waiter behind the sliding doors, and flourishing his sword-cane, and exclaiming, "A rat ! a rat behind the arras ! Dead for a ducat !" — he pushed aside the boards, and Herbert was scenically revealed, stretched on his substitute for a *chaise longue*. Mr. Greenthwaite began to bluster ; but Jack himself seemed quite taken aback ; till Herbert, without moving a limb, coolly said, "When your friends are gone I have a word for you, sir,—nay, *you* don't stir from this ;" for Jack moved away, then halted, and changed colour. It was but for an instant. Jack, the intrepid, the undaunted, whose distinguishing quality, like that which Hazlitt attributes to his fat namesake, was, in all circumstances, "a masterly self-possession," made a speech which told on both sides of the house :— "Mr. Charles Herbert — an old *chum*," he whispered, drawing Greenthwaite aside, "knows all my family, — *intimately* ; — leave us, pray."

"I feared so," replied the sympathizing, yet curious Greenthwaite, "the grand-looking fellow I saw arrive with a lady to-night. Will he 'peach ?—give you up to your friends ? What can we do for you, my dear Mr. Fitzwagram ?"

"Nothing, nothing, my dear fellow, — yet stay ; keep out these dem'd police, or Mayor's beaks, if Herbert has informed on me. . . .

Perhaps Jem Winkin might let me off by the back way —"

"I'll make him !" responded the loyal and enthusiastic Greenthwaite, going off.

"Cautious, my dear friend, . . . I think you collected the bill just now. I fear I have forgot my purse in changing my stage clothes — a small *douceur* to Jem might be useful. Oh ! a thousand thanks — just five pieces — not a stiver more ! and be sure you put me in mind of them to-morrow. By the way, will you and Copper dine with me ?" Jack bore a conscience ; or rather he was on honour ; for he might, at that moment, have had the whole twenty pounds collected to pay the Shakspearean supper.

Meanwhile the ironmonger also had learned, or partly guessed, how matters stood with the unfortunate gentleman. His yeomen blood rose ; and though he could not approve of a young man's deserting his home, his duties, and his *estates*, to go about with vagrant players, no aristocrat, he swore, should be allowed to lay a hand on Fitzwagram against Fitzwagram's will. He would go to the Mayor — he was almost an alderman himself. He could put in bail — he could issue out a writ of *Habeas Corpus* ; no d——d aristocrat should seize O'Connell's friend, Fitzwagram, and force him to be a nobleman, or man of estate, against his inclination.

Mr. Fitzwagram was highly gratified by these assurances ; but he was not afraid. He had been playing truant, he confessed, but he would be forgiven ; and his new friends at last agreed, on his entreaty, to leave him ; but resolved to take a glass of beer in another room, and be at hand, — Copper, who was a boxer, swearing that no officer of the law should enter the Crown and Mitre that night save over his body ! Our two old acquaintances were thus left alone, the sole occupants of that large, and now opened dining-room.

"A glass of wine, Mr. Herbert?" asked Jack, in a rather uncomfortable tone, and helping himself to Greenthwaite's untouched claret.

"I have taken my wine," replied Herbert, coldly.

"Done the Cumbrian flats !" Jack whispered, putting on his most insinuating comic leer — his John-Wilkes' face ; but Herbert, who had often admired that roguish leer, gave this time no token of approbation.

"I take it for granted, Mr. Cripps —"

"Gad-a-mercy, my dear sir, no surnames in public rooms, I beseech you."

"I take it for granted, sir, that you are really going off to America, and by the Liverpool night-coach. It will be up within the hour."

"Perhaps you think I had better?" said Jack, anxiously, looking on an enemy, as he now feared. "I rather think I shall—. . . Heavens and earth, Mr. Herbert, what can a poor sinner in my place do? Had my father bred me a draper, like that little pert Greenhwaite, or got me into holy orders—"

A slight smile, in spite of himself, wreathed Herbert's lip at so preposterous an idea; and on such faint encouragement Jack proceeded—

"If you could only figure the degradation and actual misery I have endured since I have been exiled from London—cut off from my resources, banished from my friends. . . There is some fatal disorganization in British society, Mr. Herbert:—the false position into which men of talents and acquirements, formed to be the ornaments of society, are too often forced by untoward circumstances: the false medium, sir, which interposes between genius and its rewards—. . ."

"No nonsense, Cripps.—What cant is this you have been learning on your travels?—What has this philosophy to do with the villainous, unmanly scheme in which I found you engaged in Kent? By heaven, I can scarce forgive myself for conniving at your escape once already!"

"Do you really think so, Mr. Herbert? . . . Now, do you know that frolic never struck me in this light before. . . I would rather have married the little girl myself, than have had such a racket about it—though, after the splendid creatures you have seen,—and I have adored. . ."

"One of them in this house, I suspect," interrupted Herbert. "No fooling, Mr. Cripps; believe me, your affairs don't admit of it—even if I had a taste for nonsense. There is a woman here whose presence bodes you no good. Do you remember the beautiful waiter-girl in —'s chop-house, whom you admired some five years since?"

"Hannah White! You don't say so?—then, by Jove, I am sold! But I did not ruin that girl—upon my soul, no, Herbert—Mr. Herbert;—and I offered to get her an engagement at the Surrey. But she was always a mercenary creature—would take no advice,—would go to service."

"I am not curious," said Herbert, drily; "that woman has seen and recognised you, as I did her."

"Cursed ungrateful jade! but what need I say? my own sister has deserted me. The Barkers, sir, have conspired to keep me from London,—a brother's poverty is a stain on their rank and fashion. Polly will not even answer my letters; but by —," and Mr. Cripps looked horribly malignant as he vowed destruction to his iron-hearted sister. "If you could but guess what I have endured, Mr. Herbert. Yon solemn or conceited asses here to-night,—they are absolutely men of refinement, compared with the coarse, brutal, bacon-bolters I have encountered,—rich knaves, who have wives and families, go regularly to meeting, and have their beef and pudding every day, while a man of talents and education—. . . I have, to be sure, seen something of life,—the social antipodes of the world, I may say.—But this cursed woman—what do you advise, Mr. Herbert?"

"Why, unless you wish to see the world also at its *geographical* antipodes, Jack, you will be off without delay. There is my cloak and cap,—the window is not high,—drop from it when you hear the horn, and climb the night-coach. I wish to give you one more chance for repentance and amendment of life."

Jack was somewhat touched. His voice softened, his eyes moistened, as he watched Herbert counting out ten sovereigns, neat ten—for Herbert no longer told his gold by handfuls—and he said, "It's dem'd hard for a man to amend his life upon an empty pocket, Mr. Herbert. I am not justifying all my youthful follies; and in this lark,—this affair in Kent, that she-devil, my sister Polly,—fancy her refusing me a guinea in my utmost need, and her, as I see by the *Satirist*, dashing away at Epsom in ermine and jewels, like a duchess, with that black-guard Lees. She has behaved like a fiend to the fondest of fathers, and the most affectionate of brothers;—let Barker look to it: she may next play him a trick."

"Shame, Cripps—hold your tongue—your own sister! I never before fancied you malicious, with all your faults."

"Nor am I—but that woman!—all those dem'd women!—this unsettled life, it has changed my milk to gall!"

"Vastly fine, Jack! but to business,—that woman will give you up to-morrow to the authorities, as sure as she rises:—there is the pecuniary temptation,—and there is revenge."

"Save, for the fear of betraying herself," said Cripps, who in his mind had already

run over the charges for and against him; and he continued, "But she will be ready to damn herself to ruin me, and get the pittance of blood-money. . . . I must off—Thanks for the loan of the cloak. Oh! really I am ashamed, Mr. Herbert. Ten pieces; and I believe there was some trifle between us before. The horn! hist,—softly with the window. God bless you, Herbert! you are a noble, generous fellow, and will die a secretary of state,—I say it. I shall get up slyly behind, and look like a regular trader— Good-by: my respectful compliments to your lady. Ah, you are a happy fellow, Herbert! Do, when you go to town, drop in and let the poor old governor and my mother know something of their scapegrace. Let them try, above all, to get me back to London. I shall die out of London."

Jack's escape, owing to his own coolness, was managed with great ease; wrapped in Herbert's cloak, and with Herbert's travelling-cap pulled over his brows, he dropped from the window into the street, climbed the coach unseen, and was gone!

Herbert cautiously shut the window, lighted his chamber-light, and first bethought himself of what "his lady" must be thinking of his absence. "But I will carry her Jack's compliments," was his thought, as, with a lightened heart, he ascended the stairs,—Jem Winkin rushing before him with a candle.

CHAPTER XVII.

To this day, and probably for as long as the affair shall be discussed—whether in the reading-room, when the gas-lights "o' long October nights look rousingly," or on "the pavement" on sunny summer noons—the appearance, and still more the abrupt disappearance, of that wandering star, who, under the appellation of Frederick Adolphus Fitzwagram, had, like some brilliant, fitful meteor, irradiated the dramatic heaven of the ancient northern town which formed the scene of our last chapter,—will remain a mystery and a puzzle.

His especial patrons persisted in affirming, that the variously and richly-gifted Fitzwagram, whose private sources of court, fashionable, and political intelligence, were so extraordinary, must have been an errant nobleman of no ordinary consideration; while, on the other hand, Jem Winkin, the head-waiter of the Crown and Mitre, had his own reasons for suspecting that the "play-actor gentleman, with the cast of the eye, and

wry-nose, as *bolted* by the Liverpool heavy coach," had carried off, without leave asked or obtained, Mr. Herbert's cloak and travelling-cap; as well as forgotten to pay his landlady, 9s. 4d. being three weeks' rent, coal, and candle; besides 1s. 10d. for pork-chops, two pots of beer, and the washing of a pink-striped *fancy* shirt; though the lodger had left goods to the estimated value of 3s. 6d.,—being the shirt aforesaid, an embroidered pale-blue faded satin waistcoat—which, however, the manager afterwards claimed as one of the properties of Don Felix—a dagger without the hilt, a foil *ditto*, half a pair of gauntlets, and a well-worn hair-brush. Mr. Fitzwagram's personal friend, the draper, probably for his own sake, hushed up the landlady's clamours, by paying her off at the rate of 10s. in the pound; and as Mr. Herbert said nothing about his losses—a circumstance which confirmed the popular belief of Fitzwagram's being some very great personage, however disguised—and had emptorily stopped the inquiries of his servant after the cloak and cap, Jem Winkin, for the credit of the house, was also dumb.

Mr. Herbert might be supposed otherwise occupied; for, before that gentleman left his room next morning, a messenger, by express, brought him a letter, upon the receipt of which he instantly ordered his carriage, and a pair of additional horses.

In carrying up the tray of coffee, which Mr. Herbert ordered for his lady, to the bed-chamber, Hannah White had been intercepted by that gentleman; who, as Amy Dobson, a younger maid, five minutes afterwards, whispered Jem Winkin in the bar, "gave her a piece of money," and whispered in her ear, "better say no more about it, my dear; the past cannot be recalled: here you are in a reputable station; why risk your own good name, or provoke inquiries into your past life, for the poor pleasure of exposing another?"

To all this Amy could solemnly depose. She had been standing, with her slop-pail, snugly ensconced behind the open door of No. 59, in which the gentleman had slept whom Boots had neglected to call for the Liverpool coach, and who had made such a row. And, indeed, save the "my dear," a pleonasm into which Amy very naturally fell, the report was substantially correct; and fully accounted to Jem for the young bride drawing her white veil closely over her face, when, some minutes afterwards, he, as representative, or viceroy of the absent landlord,

attended the travellers to their carriage, to express the thanks of the house for their patronage, and see that all was right; and also confirmed his previous suspicions of the domineering London head-chambermaid, to whose inauspicious appearance he mentally attributed the sudden retreat of the Herberts, and the loss of a "genteel party" to the establishment, together with servants' and horses' keep.

Jem's future prognostics of Mrs. Hannah were all and only evil to the hitherto unspotted fame of the Crown and Mitre,—till now a famous House; for all the civil waiters had been honest and active; all the pretty chambermaids tidy and modest.

The emotion which the sagacious Jem—arguing most logically, though from wholly false premises—had imputed to jealousy, or to the young wife discovering the early gallantries of her lord, certainly did, like much more earthly evil, originate with a woman; though the sinner was not Hannah White, but Jane Jenkins, the waiting-maid of Mrs. Herbert.

The carriage was no sooner fairly out of the town than Violet laid her pale face upon the shoulder of her husband, and gave way to that passionate grief with which the sympathetic Jem Winkin had seen her struggling, while hurriedly preparing for the sudden journey.

"I entreat, nay, Violet, I could almost command you, not to distress yourself so much. At first I was myself alarmed; but I know Jenkins too well. Depend on it, she has used the privilege of a true lady's maid, to exaggerate her mistress's little attack of nerves, or vapours, into this deadly illness."

"Fainting fits,—long deadly faints: and the cause, dear Charles? Let me read that letter once again. It is too dreadful! If Mrs. Herbert should be dead!—and—how slowly they drive."

For the fourth time, Violet perused the hyperbolic epistle of Mrs. Jenkins; in which, after many vague expressions of intense alarm, and prophecies of a fatal catastrophe, that circumlocutory person, in substance, informed Mr. Herbert that, immediately after the receipt of letters from London, Mrs. Herbert had been seized with spasms and fainting fits; and, at once changing her plan of proceeding northward, had expressed the utmost anxiety to reach London, and to be joined there, as soon as possible, by Mr. and Mrs. Charles; and, farther, that she had afterwards become so much worse, that Jen-

kins had taken the liberty to write by express;—and so forth.

The cause of this sudden attack was no longer a mystery to Charles, to whom his agitated wife had just revealed every secret of her heart, and, in the interchange of confidence, first found consolation and returning fortitude; nor for that matter to Jenkins, who was naturally a little anxious to know something of her lady's affairs, both from motives of curiosity, and, perhaps, also to learn how they might affect the personal interests of her lady's lady's-maid,—who, with a very handsome salary, and many small emoluments of office, would ill have liked to resign without good cause. Bramah locks to writing-cases are useful impediments in ordinary circumstances; but if "Love laughs at locksmiths," chambermaids may surely outwit Bramah. Mrs. Jenkins was fully aware that the affairs of the Calcutta House were in a very bad way; and, consequently, her place in her "present family" in imminent jeopardy. Her affairs, as well as those of her mistress, therefore, demanded an instant appearance in London; and Jenkins considerably proposed going forward by the mail "unprotected," to have every thing in order for her lady in Regent's Park. Her lady was, if not in a condition to be left without a friend, at least most happy to dispense with a waiting-maid, whose suddenly changed conduct gave her a mortifying foretaste of reduced fortune.

Mrs. Herbert was therefore left alone, at an inn on the road, to commune with her own heart, and wait the arrival of her children: not dying—not indeed in any serious danger—but far from being so well as Charles argued, while soothing his wife's impatience, and quieting her apprehensions.

"At worst, it is but the loss to my mother of the greater part of her fortune," said he; "nor will I believe that she, who never was worldly in the mammonish sense of worldliness, can now have permitted herself to be overcome by mere pecuniary adversity."

"'Tis for *your* sake, dear Charles, for *us*, she suffers; and that deepens my concern—is indeed its spring. But now that the worst is known, the worst is past. Were we but once again together, Mrs. Herbert will soon surmount this misfortune, and we shall yet be so happy."

"In any event, my mother will have her widow's pension—that poor three hundred a-year, which, in the pride of riches, my poor father considered so paltry for his

beautiful and high-bred young wife, that he advised she should, after his death, make it over to certain venerable spinsters of her early acquaintance, at whose school she had been educated. This she has avoided, lest the formal gift might have appeared ostentatious; though I believe she has never yet applied any part, of what may now be her sole provision, to other than benevolent purposes."

"How good and amiable she is! We shall still be rich enough, then," said Violet, trying to smile, and making no more distinction in her words than in her thoughts between the property of her husband and her mother-in-law, than if it had all been her own. And Herbert also smiled, kindly but gravely, at her simple manner of thinking on subjects where clearness of ideas generally comes only too soon to the simplest.

"Thank Heaven!" he said, at last, "my mother, if no longer wealthy, will not be utterly destitute: though the difference between three hundred and nearly three thousand a-year!—alas! And for ourselves, dearest:—It is a man's duty to provide for his wife, ay, and a man's pride and happiness, too: and who ever had motives so tender, so strong as are mine;" and he drew her to his heart, whispering, "you know our plans?"

"You make me too proud—too happy, dear Charles—and a wife's duty? But my own heart shall teach me that. Oh, that we were but all three together again!—settled, employed, very *very* busy, and so happy! Mrs. Herbert must feel privation the most, but she shall not more than enough. I am sure I can supply Jenkins' place to her: she is always best pleased with how I do her hair. And if we could only live in the country: I can be so useful in the country—you smile, but it is true: you have no notion how much 'useful knowledge,' how many independent and useful habits my father's condition and my happy education forced upon me, both in my convent and in our dear little Jersey farm."

"And how many charming ones, I am sure; and both to bless and gladden our home wherever it may be, humble or great.—My poor mother!—she must, no doubt, as well as we, change her residence, and greatly reduce her establishment; yet we must, I fear, my own notable housewife, however well you may understand baking loaves, and the management of the dairy, remain in or near London:—where else am

I to look for useful friends, or for professional employment, were I even fit for it?"

"Then so will Mrs. Herbert. I am not angry though you are saucy, Charles, and laugh at me. I know—I can answer for her affectionate heart:—what could make up to her for the loss of you and me?"

"Thank you for your good opinion of her and of us," replied Herbert, affectionately; and he continued, more earnestly and gravely, "We must not, dearest, encroach on my poor mother. With all your useful, and all your charming knowledge, you have, I fear, no idea of the many requirements of a fine lady. Even with Mrs. Herbert's restricted means, ladies of good fashion, in such places as Bath—nay, in Paris or London—contrive, in *pensions*, to enjoy many of the comforts and luxuries which habit has made necessary to them. My mother is the richest of our party; we must not be selfish."

"Selfish, Charles!" returned Violet. "In wishing Mrs. Herbert to share our happy, if humble home—to have a common home, a common fate—to be her loving children, her zealous servants, her cheering companions: to lavish all our tenderness, all our cares upon her—go, sir," and she playfully, though in earnest, pushed him away, "you may know Greek and mathematics very well, but you have yet to learn a true woman's heart. To compare 'a genteel boarding house,' 'a comfortable dowager *pension*,' with its old footman; and jobbed 'roomy carriage,' and whist-table every evening, with our bright and genial home! Would you place, in any comparison, a loveless, joyless existence, embellished by a few of the faded trappings of vanity and the indulgences of sense, with a life like that which ours will be? Oh, Charles!"

"You may be right; I am certain you ought to be so."

"Nay, I am; as the heart of woman answereth to that of woman, can I truly answer for her. 'A genteel boarding-house!' I could scold you for so meanly appreciating Mrs. Herbert."

Violet could not help thinking that the world had already tainted the mind of her husband with distrust, if not with cold pride, else what should he think it could signify which of the three was the richest, save to render the fortunate individual the most zealous to minister to the other two.

In the meanwhile, at a considerable town, where they halted next morning to obtain refreshments and change horses, Herbert, with Violet on his arm, repaired to a banking

establishment opposite the inn, where he thought it probable he might obtain information, interesting to all commercial men, about the great failures in Calcutta; and of the particular FIRM, the HOUSE, in which his stepmother was interested; for by these stanch appellations erections of pasteboard and rags are as freely denominated as the most solid and enduring structures of Lombard Street.

Severely tried as the *House*, according to the first accounts, had been, its clients were not prepared for the worst; for later intelligence represented it as bankrupt past retrieval. The handsome balances, originally announced, had now dwindled into almost nothing. The richest imagined proprietor of the banking-house had, it was found, for several years, ceased to be a partner; and, while it continued to flourish upon faith in his credit, he no longer incurred liabilities. The credit and assets of the House were gone off in company, but its *honour* remained untouched;—so Mr. Herbert was assured by the spruce and very civil little gentleman whom he saw at the banking-office. It had been unfortunate in large indigo speculations; more unfortunate in silk speculations; and its good luck in a magnificent opium venture to China,—a half desperate throw, a touch-and-go business,—had not, by nine days, been in time to avert the crash, and save the credit of the establishment.

“Yes, sir, if the House had been able to keep afloat for but another week, the trade-wind would have borne it triumphantly off the breakers,” said the metaphorical banker, “and it would have netted £30,000 by the spec. at the lowest figure. . . . I am afraid you are touched, sir?”

“My personal share of the common calamity is trifling,” replied Herbert. “My present anxiety is caused by the distress of a very near relative, and of many estimable friends, either ruined or irreparably injured by this unprincipled gambling with their money.”

“Fair speculation, sir, pardon me. If the *Firm* had not long speculated boldly, and fortunately too, it never could have stood that high rate of interest which obtained for it the confidence of so many ladies and gentlemen. Think, sir, what it paid—higher, sir, than American securities!”

Herbert shrugged his shoulders. In his conscience he allowed that high interest must be accompanied by corresponding risk, and that the outwitted parties might sometimes

have been the dupes of their own blind avarice.

“It is an unsound and bad system, I fear,” said he; “covetousness, deception, and fallacy on all sides; nor is it always easy to say which party is the more culpable.”

“My dear sir, your ideas are quite of the old school;—would cripple the very wings of commerce;—pinion down the buoyant energies of credit.”

“Had the gentlemen in Calcutta made a great deal of money by the indigo and silk they bought with other people’s money, would they have divided their profits among those whose cash they risked?” inquired Violet, with simplicity; which made Herbert smile on her, though very kindly, and the man of commerce laugh outright.

“Oh, Lord, ma’am!—But very few ladies—no offence to the charming sex—can be made to understand the principles of business.”

The abashed Mrs. Charles blushed as if she had said something as silly as the remark of the polite Mr. Bigsby seemed to intimate, though perhaps no idea could be more natural than hers.

“It is a pity that the fundamental principles of trade should ever be incomprehensible to plain-minded honest men—or even to ladies!” said Herbert.

“This House, ma’am!” said the banker, in civil explanation, “gave the Nabobs six and hef;—a monstrous rate of interest—worthy of some risk that—wa’nt it, sir? We—Stocks’s House, of which I am a branch—I am leaving, however—are at present doing loans at four;—on first land securities, so low as three and hef.”

Charles Herbert thought of the mortgages, and other expenses, of his small, heavily-encumbered, and now but nominal estate. The reflection suggested prudence; and he had besides already consulted with Violet on the propriety of getting rid of the showy equipage and horses which Mrs. Herbert had presented to him on his marriage; which, he reflected, might perhaps be done to as much advantage in this town as at Tattersall’s. He made the necessary inquiries of the banker; mentioning that they meant to travel by the mail the rest of the way; and to his surprise found his polite friend, after a survey of the goods, disposed to become the purchaser himself of “the stylish London turn-out—quite as good as new.” The bargain, where both parties were frank and liberal, was easily concluded. The banker

promptly gave a check upon the "New Surrey and Middlesex Joint-Stock Bank."

"A banking establishment new to me," said Herbert—"but indeed I do not know the half of them in London."

"Capital, well-known house, sir—does the business of nearly all the eastern counties, particularly in the grazing line—premises West Smithfield. But you ought to know the house—they are our bankers, Mr. Herbert; you must have been consulted in their appointment."

"Our bankers?" inquired the amazed Herbert.

"Bankers to our Company, I mean, sir."

Herbert was more and more perplexed. He laughed, saying, "I don't think I have ever yet had the honour of being consulted by any one in the choice of a banker."

"Your name, sir, is in the list of Ordinary Directors," replied the banker, taking up a newspaper from his desk. "Oh, sir, I have found you out. You have been *touring*, I understand, with your charming lady, and a truant from the shop. Our Ad. may be seen every week in every newspaper north of the Trent. The thing, though I say it, has been pushed handsomely in this county and the two adjoining, as the head-office will admit. Expect soon to extinguish the *Sun*, reduce the *Phoenix* to ashes, and overturn the *Globe*, from York to Grantham—ha! ha! ha! Self-praise, to be sure, Mr. Herbert, is no honour: yet I flatter myself that you, and the whole Direction, sir, may yet find that you might have made a worse choice than your humble servant. Old Stocks would have found me worth an additional £500, I suspect."

Herbert, fearing that the speaker was touched in the brain, became somewhat selfishly apprehensive about the check upon the Joint-stock Surrey and Middlesex Bank—which he would have much preferred on Coutts, Herries, Hankey, or twenty others of very inferior note on 'Change, to these magnates.

"I do not exactly comprehend," said he, doubtfully.

"Ha! ha! Not how your humble servant sees through a millstone? . . . My dear sir, I see your card. I have a hint from head-quarters, or have found out, that a member of our provisional committee was lately married; I see your handsome lady; I put this and that together. Ha! ha! Let me alone. Two and two make four—don't it? I am an old hand at figures."

"Very figurative indeed, sir."

"Ay, ay, and at *action*, as well as figures. The Direction, sir, never made a finer stroke than in my appointment; and you will yet say so. Why, this very day I have had half-a-dozen applications, both from respectable parties wishing to transfer from established offices to ours, and from new insurers. Dr. Jessop, Vicar of Whomleford, £5000 endowment for a niece: suspected to be a daughter—But no matter. The Doctor is a Churchman, and never was married; so the young lady must be a niece. He looks to the *bonus*: does not clutch at our lowest rate—which, by the way, the Company doing things in so handsome and liberal a manner, as to salaries, advertisements, &c. must cut sadly on our profits. But, as the secretary remarks, if we should divide but 3 per cent. what signifies that, if we do three times the business of the high offices of the old school? We shall cut 'em all out beyond a doubt. There is old Mrs. Higginbotham, long the housekeeper, and scandal says, the *chere amie*, of Squire Simpson—the most prudent and cautious of old ladies: she last week bought an annuity from us. I believe she has lied about her age; I don't think her above sixty-eight, and she claims as seventy-three. Well, that, I am instructed from the head-office, don't signify; we do her as seventy-three for the sake of example. She has lately taken a turn to Methodism, and goes about every where among the Evangelical ladies trumpeting up the Old Established Church of England Philanthropic Office for Insurance against Fire, Assurance on Lives and Survivorships, Family Endowments, and Deferred Annuities: all done on terms forty per cent. more favourable to the insurer than in any other office in her majesty's dominions. Archbishop of Canterbury, patron; Bishop of London, ditto, sub. . . . So useful an old lady deserves her policy free of expense, as I have hinted to our counsel, Mr. Barker, to hint to Mr. Twigg."

"Mr. Barker, did you say, sir? Mr. Burke Barker?"

"Ah! have I blabbed? But we are all friends. The truth is, sir, that though only our revising barrister, as I call him in a joke, and not an ostensible partner or functionary, Mr. Barker is the soul of the concern. Ay, there is a man! Mr. Twigg, I understand, though he signs the policies, is a mere capitalist—a man of columns of figures; but for nice calculation, for finance, sir, Barker!

Though holding aloof himself, he was the soul of the Provisional Committee; and, as I suspect, still is, though he does not appear:—and will continue to be—no reflections—*present* company always excepted, you know—the mainspring, the right arm of the Philanthropic.”

Herbert was stunned. “I shall be obliged to you,” he said, “for a sight of one of the Company’s advertisements or schemes. I have been rambling and rustivating for some months, and am quite a stranger to London affairs.”

The truth was, that Herbert, like most persons uninterested, rarely looked at such advertisements as those with which the banker readily supplied him from a heap of newspapers lying beside him, and also with copies of the Scheme and Tables of the “Old Established Church of England Philanthropic Office,” neatly printed in black, blue, red, green, and golden characters. Something like compunction visited Herbert for not warning this credulous though conceited person of his danger.

“Do you, sir, seriously intend to give up your agency for the respectable House of Stocks, and turn your premises—you say they are your own property—into an office for this new company?” he gravely inquired.

“A question not to be asked, Mr. Herbert. Why, I have already been for some months doing a little, on the sly, for the concern. I am a considerable shareholder myself; but, first term, as soon as our new front is finished—beautiful elevation!—I wish you would do me the favour to step into the bank parlour and look at it. I have *carte blanche* for the expenses of alterations;—so down I go with ‘Branch of Stocks & Co.,’ and hoist the colours of the *Philanthropic*. Hurrah!”

Herbert knew not what to say—what to think.

“All the other offices in town are as jealous as the devil of our concern,—and no wonder. Malicious whispers at first went about—commercial jealousy; but I at once threatened prosecution, and had even commenced an action. Mr. Barker, our counsel, advised dropping the affair. He is a prime fellow—a real trump.”

“He was wise,” said Herbert, coldly. “Meanwhile, if you could make it convenient to give me gold for at least a hundred pounds of the check on London, it would oblige me, as I shall require a good deal of ready money on the road.”

Herbert, the married man, was becoming wonderfully prudent.

“Most assuredly,” cried the manager of the “Philanthropic for the Northern Provinces.” “Any thing to accommodate you, sir. Perhaps the whole price of the carriage and horses might be convenient?”

“As you please,” said Herbert; and the sum was promptly counted out in sovereigns and Bank of England notes. “Odd gold this is, which farmer Curtis paid in with bills and notes, in transferring from the three per cents. to the Philanthropic:—endowment for grandchildren—children of his deceased son. . . . I regret beyond expression that your short stay must prevent Mrs. B. and self enjoying the honour and pleasure of entertaining your charming lady and you beneath our humble roof. No getting up a dinner one could ask a gentleman to in this antediluvian beef-and-mutton concern of a town, as Mrs. B. calls it, without several days’ notice: nothing to be had for love or money presentable. Next year, if I have the honour to entertain you, or any of the gentlemen in the Direction, I hope to have both a little more elbow-room and better appointments. Along with the new front for the office, we contemplate a new dining-room, a saloon, and drawing-room. . . . I do wish that you could have leisure to look at the elevations. The mail won’t be up for a full half-hour yet, and I should be so proud to submit the plans to any gentleman who could report on them. Some of the best ideas the architect, by the way, stole from Mrs. B. The present dining-room is only fifteen by nineteen—a cage, sir—we condemn it for a nursery.”

“I am extremely sorry,” said Herbert, again moving to go, his money safe in his pocket. “But I beg seriously to assure you, sir, that I am no Director of this or any other Company upon the face of the earth; and, though a stranger, I must take the liberty of warning you to be very wary how you engage with any new, flash London Company, and break off a safe, profitable, and reputable connexion with so respectable an establishment as that of Stocks.”

“New Flash Company, sir!” cried the northern manager, greatly excited, retiring a step and rising on tiptoe. “You are not then the Charles Courtney Herbert, Esquire, in the list of Directors? This company was first established and chartered, sir, in the reign of Queen Anne, sir—Anno Domini, 1705—capital, *One Million*. . . . It was

intended to revive it by the name of the *Victoria Clerical Family Endowment Friendly Association*; but Mr. Barker approved the old name, recognised in 3 Geo. II., chapter 99th; 15 Geo. III., chapter 45th; and many subsequent acts of parliament; and 500,000 prospectuses were consequently cancelled. Surely you are the Mr. Herbert in the Direction?"

"If I be, I shall not be so much longer. Good morning, sir."

Herbert had no leisure to read the advertisement, or study the flattering scheme of the Clerical and Philanthropic until seated in the mail-coach, to which his new acquaintance attended him. He had not left the town a half-hour when the loungers in the windows of the reading-room, which was conveniently situated opposite the inn, (a great desideratum in country towns,) by some means or other, learned that the gentleman who had set off was a principal shareholder and Director of the office lately opened in the town, and had brought down a handsome new carriage and horses, as a present from the head office, to their zealous, able, and active agent Mr. Bigsby. Several new applications were made at the office next day, both for annuities and assurances.

Herbert and Violet had the good fortune to be the only persons in the inside of the mail-coach; and when, in compliance with his entreaty, and wrapped in his arm, she tried to compose herself to sleep, after two nearly sleepless nights, he laid the prospectus quietly on his knee and began to study it with some curiosity and interest. Though the Archbishop of Canterbury flourished as patron, and a noble lord, then Governor-general of India, and therefore not likely to disturb the Company's appointments for some time as to its governor, Herbert could nowhere see the name of Barker, nor of any one Cryppes, save, "Consulting Physicians, Sir Henry Halford and Dr. Edmund Cryppes Quintin." His own name, or, at least, that of some Charles Herbert, Esquire, was blazoned at full length along with that of Sir George Lees, Baronet, M.P., and a long list of names dear and familiar to the ears of commercial England; arranged in such wise that not one bearing the name could question of the right of the company to make use of such well-sounding, though equivocal, appellations as Cosmo Labouchere, Esquire; Peregrine Bosanquet, Esquire; John Jonathan Hope, of Amsterdam, Esquire; Humphrey Ramsden, Esquire; Donald Trotter Coutts,

Esquire; Colonel Charles Fox Windham; Alfred John Whitbread, Esquire; John Pitt Smith, Esquire; Theophilus Bouverie, Esquire; Payne Smith Spooner, Esquire; &c., &c., on to a whole host of moneyed Esquires, with a very attractive sprinkling of true knights, baronets, barons, and earls. There was but one marquis, but he was worth twenty;—the Marquis of Westminster had the honour. Along with these names there were a good many familiar to Herbert; and the affair seemed so utterly inconceivable as a fraud that he began to imagine that it might possibly be a serious project, and probably a hopeful one. Barker was a very acute man. Herbert knew little of business himself, save through those surprising turns of fortune familiar to every one conversant with English manufacturing and commercial society, which, by the turn of the dice, exhibits a man one day in all the pride of wealth and luxury, and, in the next, rotting in a jail. No Cryppes was to be seen in any department of the concern, save that little bit of patronage bestowed on Dr. Edmund, as Herbert supposed, in an office nearly honorary; which favour might be expected from a brother-in-law. This looked well:—but then Michael Twigg, Esquire, the capitalist?—yet there might be many Twiggs.

At every stage in which Mrs. Herbert had preceded the travellers, they found little pencil notes left for them, which relieved Violet's immediate anxiety. Save that the money and the credit with Herries, which Herbert had brought from London some months before, were sensibly diminishing; that incipient symptoms of what he laughingly termed the "good old gentlemanly vice," were manifested in lessened largesses to post-boys and waiters; and that thoughts of the future, not dark, yet tinged with gloom, would occasionally intrude, he was wonderfully restored in spirits, while bowling along in what the English sage, who had tried different modes of enjoyment, has pronounced the most exhilarating human condition; and with an element of happiness which Johnson did not take into account—the lovely and beloved partner of his life and heart by his side, silent, or smiling, with feelings, in all his varying moods, sympathetically attuned to his.

When at Grantham, the travellers overtook Mrs. Herbert, looking paler and thinner, indeed, than when they had parted, yet much better than the hyperbolic waiting-woman had given them reason to expect;

and when Charles saw the younger lady spring into the arms of the elder, and clasped his wife and mother in the same embrace, a happier three could not perhaps have been found in England. Next day, when Charles, seated between the ladies, heard them exchanging those points in the history of their several adventures since separation, which letters, even ladies' letters, could but imperfectly record, he began to understand how much of their domestic comfort might depend on their living together, and on this lively interchange of grave or mirthful important nothings. How they did laugh and chatter; and how much even Violet found to say, which she had never thought of saying to him. And during the three days they were on the road, the same perennial flow of talk continued, though it became more varied and serious in character; for now Violet, by her picturesque narratives, contrived to interest his mother in details about the cottages and cottage gardens, maidens, children, and matrons, which they had seen, and to which Charles feared Mrs. Herbert might have been very indifferent if heard from other lips. He, therefore, began to believe that Violet had, while judging only by her own feelings, reasoned more correctly than himself; and that Mrs. Herbert might not only contrive to do without Jenkins, and the many pretty new caps and scarfs in which she had formerly indulged, but, also without the society of those semi-fashionable spinsters and dowagers, who found her home pleasant at lunch-time, and her carriage always convenient; or those who had exchanged formal dinners and dull evening parties with her. On the last day, and at almost the last stage, Herbert, who had delayed the explanation which he considered necessary, affectionately requested to know his mother's future plans.

"My plans, Charles!" returned the lady, in some surprise; "like your wife's, my plans must depend on yours. You do not surely mean to discard me, now that I am poor as well as lonely."

"My own dearest mother," cried Charles, snatching her hand, fondly, "then we understand each other."

"Did I not know it, Charles?" cried Violet, with bright looks.

"Ultimately my plans must depend on yours, my son: for the present exigency, I mean to put myself entirely into the hands of Mrs. Charles and old Marion, who have so much more knowledge of what is proper for us. I make no condition, save that we

remain one family. In heart and interest, we never can be disunited; but I will not have even a garden wall separate us."

"Nor shall it," said Herbert.

"A threefold cord is not easily broken," said Violet, pressing to her side the fair and delicate hand which she had clasped.

"Are we not, Charles, quite as we used to be?" asked Mrs. Herbert, in a quivering voice.

"A great many thousand pounds poorer—the *House* is," replied Herbert, laughing, "than it used to be. I, however, congratulate you upon your philosophy, mother, by which I reckon to benefit."

He did not now say that he feared the philosophy had not yet been fairly tested.

"When I reflect upon the misery which this affair has brought upon so many of my Indian friends and acquaintances, some of them ladies in old age, whose incomes were before too narrow for their comfortable maintenance in that style of life which habit has made necessary; and on those with young families, where delay of education is next to ruin, I am ashamed of my selfish regrets; and now that I have got you both back, not, as I foolishly feared, overwhelmed and in despair, but with smiling faces, as well as warm hearts, to soothe or gladden me, what is there that a rational being dare murmur about? I should despise myself as poor in spirit, as well as most thankless to the Almighty for numberless mercies and blessings, if I durst repine."

Herbert was delighted with this firm and cheerful spirit. He no longer hesitated to leave every necessary domestic change and arrangement to the judgment of his female allies, and to turn his thoughts wholly and steadily to his own department.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HERBERT had resolved to begin to study law, as a profession. This demanded a long consultation with Mr. Gryphon, his solicitor, whom he rightly regarded not only as an able lawyer, but also as a clear-headed, sound-hearted friend,—as the term is understood in the best merely worldly sense,—that is, a man capable of giving excellent counsel, and even of performing useful services, which involved no pecuniary risk nor responsibility. Herbert would not willingly have accepted of more than this from his friendly solicitor, who, from very natural prejudice, perhaps

fortified by shrewd observation, entertained serious doubts of any young man of fashion, after the age of twenty-three, being capable of the persevering drudgery—as such a man must consider it—and long course of steady application necessary to make a thoroughbred lawyer. He did not conceal this opinion when Herbert anxiously asked his advice. Indeed, many months elapsed before Gryphon reluctantly confessed, that he might for once have been deceived, and that Herbert might prove an exception to the rule. In the meanwhile, he gave an account of the double lawsuits in which Herbert was engaged. That with the Earl of Tarbert, for the recovery of Mrs. Charles Herbert's fortune, was represented as in a fair train; but Gryphon did not conceal that, although gained, of which there was every prospect, the fortunate winners might be little the richer. The Earl, like many noblemen whose estates are too large for management, was in very embarrassed circumstances; and his death—at his age not improbable, though not at present likely—might renew the suit, if his heirs were troublesome. It was understood that, after the first intelligence from India, which made the Earl feel some alarm for the impoverished condition in which his daughter Lady Laura might be left, if her expectations through Mrs. Herbert failed, he had ensured his life for a considerable sum.

"When the Earl gives up the ghost, we may attach that," said Gryphon.

"The provision made for Lady Laura Temple seized for my wife! O, no; that may never be."

"Will, though," thought Gryphon, who fancied he knew how a very high strain of generosity in pecuniary matters usually ended.

"Of the other provoking case I have better news. Old Cripps is quite willing to compromise it, if you will engage to use your influence with Mr. Stocks, to check the rigorous pursuit of his son Jack. Stocks begins to be sensible that he will do his daughter no good, by blazoning the absurd affair farther; and his passion has considerably cooled down. Besides, the most guilty party, in the opinion of every man of common sense conversant with the case, namely the dashing Mrs. Burke Barker, has got off with flying colours—complimented by the judge! She carries her head higher than ever. Mrs. Barker and her husband are of the mysteries of iniquity of this good town."

"Though I am quite of your opinion as to Jack Crippes's comparative guiltlessness,

scamp as he is, I shall never consent to any such compromise, though a word to Stocks could ensure me against further molestation. Let them and their pettifogging agents drop the shameless suit they never should have raised, and then speak to me about interceding for Jack."

"I think it very likely that it will be dropt. Barker sets his face against it; he does not relish any farther *éclat* connected with his wife's relations; and I believe his voice is potential in that quarter."

"What is Barker about?" inquired Herbert with some curiosity, remembering his provincial friend, the banker.

"Heaven knows; for a time he was overcast; but he has lately flared up more dazzlingly than ever. He has dropt the newspaper concern, I believe, save as an amateur to serve his purposes; but is still a mighty politician; meddling, directly or indirectly, in almost every contested election."

"For the Radicals? He was a Liberal."

"Pooh! Radicals!—where could they, poor devils, enable a man to keep a carriage, and a good house for his wife on Cornwall Terrace, chambers for himself, and all sorts of equipage befitting? Barker chooses again to be known as a barrister—at least nominally—and wishes, as I understand from the old fellow, to devolve his editorships upon his raffish brother-in-law: yet he has got no appointment, no visible means of living."

.. An adventurer like Barker must be fully the master of his masters, before he can compel them to do any thing permanent for him."

Without at this time mentioning what he had learned or suspected of some of the present pursuits of Mr. Barker, Herbert told of his encounter with Jack, who, he imagined, might now be on the high seas on his way to America. But he reckoned without his host. The desire of returning to London, always strong, had seized Jack, as soon as he had a few sovereigns in his pocket, like the *maladie du pays*, or home-sickness of the mountaineer of Switzerland; and as the money he had gotten from Herbert and Greenthwaite, together with the sale of Herbert's valuable cloak, was more than sufficient to bring Mr. Quintin Crippes on the top of the coach round by Liverpool to the metropolis, he pushed forward; in spite of the terrors of the police and its argus-eyed myrmidons, and of his deep distrust of the Barkers, which was almost as great as of the law.

It was a desperate venture; but Jack had,

in fact, safely reached London two days before Herbert, though lurking, half afraid to make his arrival known even to his father and mother. He had not been twenty-four hours in London, and fairly seen his last sovereign melted in a jolly supper, when the folly of the step he had taken stared him in the face. In the ups and downs of the family fortunes, he did not even know in what part of the town his parents lodged; and his last resource was, either boldly to face the Barkers, and by threats of exposure, at all hazards, to wring from them what might carry him out of the country; or to throw himself once more upon the mercy of old Marion. Stimulated partly by the love of adventure, and somewhat by a double dose of brandy and water, Jack finally resolved upon the latter measure; and as, at dusk, Herbert was hastening along Fleet Street, after his long consultation with his friendly solicitor, there came shooting past him from a lane, a few yards from Mrs. Marion's door, the very man whom he concluded to be ten hundred miles off by land or water. He at once remembered what Gryphon had said; and, from this and other impulses, clutched at the elbow of the figure, who for once gave a start that would have done honour to any stage.

"Good Lard! Mr. Herbert! speak of the devil—you know the proverb. I was just thinking to myself if I could fall in with that generous fellow Herbert, he would give me a lift in my need."

"Can it be you, Cryppes?—are you perfectly mad?—What has brought you to London?"

"Mad I would soon have been, if I had remained out of town much longer; but not, even in madness, ungrateful to you, Mr. Herbert. By Jupiter Ammon! you are a noble fellow! I shall never forget your kindness to me in that demned place.—What was the name of it? You make me say in the teeth of Brutus,

Virtue, thou art not an empty name."

While Cryppes was thus speaking, he was keeping, at the same time, a sharp look-out up and down the street; and had an alley or two under his lee-bow.

"But, in short," he continued, "I abhor the provinces; that confounded noise of nothing always humming in one's ears, as somebody says:—I was a desperate man! Like the great Montrose, I resolved 'to put my fortune to the touch, to gain, or lose it all!' If, like so many thoughtless, innocent

young men, I am to be the victim of vindictive law for a frolic, I shall, at least, have the satisfaction of having those blasted Barkers share along with me. Nor to me, can any part of her Majesty's Australian colonies prove more inhospitable than the northern portion of her Majesty's patrimonial dominions.—I am a desperate man, Mr. Herbert. Besides," he continued, in a confidential tone, "there is a delicious little devil of a tailor's wife, right under the old Scotch lady, up there. . . . O, hem! Don't, however, look 'so severe in youthful virtue.' I quite forgot you were married!—but never, upon my soul, can I forget my obligations to you."

"Cryppes, if you have any remaining sense left, try to make your way to your family, and lie by, or, depend on it, you will fall in with those who do not understand jokes. That tailor's wife would as readily make a few sovereigns by your arrest as would Hannah White."

"Pardon me," replied Jack, in a tone of pique,— "can't understand that. Just before leaving London, I had made an impression in that quarter."

"Cryppes, you have been drinking deep. If you have any regard to your own safety—"

"Drinking deep!" interrupted Jack, "I should have been devilish glad to drink a little deeper, had that been convenient, in order to expel the blue devils by a much more agreeable description of spirits—the *ambers*,—brandy and water. . . . Ha! a beak!—I must bolt. I smell 'em out a street's length off." Jack now looked extremely flurried and uneasy. His lately vaunted courage or desperation had oozed out.

"Call at Mr. Gryphon's. You know his chambers? To-morrow, by twelve, you shall hear of me there."

"A thousand thanks!—I shall never forget your kindness.—But for to-night—?"

Herbert took the hint, and slipped a couple of half-crowns into the hand neatly but modestly extended; and Jack shuffled off at an alert pace.

When the family of Mrs. Herbert had that evening, over their coffee, resolved itself into a committee of ways and means, that lady hinted one point, in which lingering and not unamiable vanity prevailed over her better judgment. She would not willingly change her present residence, for the modest retirement which loss of fortune dictated, until the young couple had received and returned those

congratulatory marriage-visits, so long delayed by their tour. She wished that her friends should see how triumphantly the extreme loveliness and sweetness of manners of the Earl of Tarbert's niece, besides her famed musical accomplishments, justified her partiality, and the choice of her son; and she secretly shrunk from the humiliation of the name of Mrs. Charles Herbert first appearing in connexion with some one of those snug, brick and plaster, small houses, with a green door, and a staring brass name-plate, in one of the many "*Paragon Places*" or "*Paradise Rows*," of which the West-end ladies, when they know them at all, entertain either aversion and horror, or profound contempt; identifying them with every thing pitiful, vulgar, and "out of society"—beyond the pale. Herbert was disappointed by this betrayal of latent weakness, which, amiable as the motive might be deemed by those who look only to the surface, was in his eyes, at this time, both paltry and silly. Was his mother still unprepared for that change which was already welcome to him, since in it lay all his present comfort, and with it was interwoven every rational and every ambitious hope for the future?

Had there been no Violet at this crisis, to stand, like a mediating angel, between the son's haughty pride and the mother's milder vanity, and by innocent wiles and gentle persuasion, to have drawn and held them together,—coldness, estrangement, and want of courageous frankness—the bane of domestic happiness—might have followed misunderstanding, to the lasting injury and discomfort of both parties. It was, at the same time, somewhat surprising to Violet, young and inexperienced as she was, to perceive how little either the mother or son seemed to know about those constant petty annoyances and vulgar realities of the work-day world which daily tax the patience and forbearance of ordinary mortals, but from which the wealthy of England are shielded with a sevenfold golden panoply; by a cordon of porters, valets, and accomplished upper servants, whose business it is to divine the wishes of their masters, and suffer no one to prey upon or torment them, save their confidential domestics. Mrs. Herbert, for example, had been exempted from all the petty plagues of life, save those which came to her through the medium of that too clever Jenkins, without whom she had, until lately, fancied it impossible to exist.

The pride of Herbert, at this time, took a direction exactly opposite to that of his mother, and was carried as far to the extreme.

It revolted at remaining in holiday costume, and in the holiday house, only until he and his wife had received the unmeaning congratulations and ceremonious visits of a set of impertinent, indifferent, or prying persons; and had accepted and given a round of parties, for which he could neither afford patience nor money.

"You cannot, Charles," said Mrs. Herbert, "mean to break off all intercourse with society, at the very moment that you have the power of contributing so much to what gives society its highest charm?—now when your marriage marks an era in life; when to form agreeable acquaintances and solid friendships becomes so desirable?"

"Far from it—But there can be no lasting friendships, save among equals—at least in London. Most of my former *friends*, as it is customary to call our acquaintance, were, even before this, my superiors in rank and fortune—many of them my inferiors in ———. But no matter; I shall not care much for the loss of those *friends*." Herbert was beginning to employ bitter tones. The cold or changed manner of one or two of his Club acquaintances had that same day taught him that he was now a poor man—or no longer one of them. "Those sunshine *friends*, who cannot find us out in the brick-house with the two or three small sashes, muslin curtains, and mignonette boxes, ay, though set down from the 'Bus at our green door, I shall not care for."

Mrs. Herbert reddened, and looked vexed at his manner.

"Oh, Charles!" said Violet, reproachfully, secretly fearing that his pride laid his serenity of mind but too much at the mercy of such friends. "Don't believe him, ma'am. He is much prouder than we poor women are, that saucy gentleman—and much more jealous of disrespect.—Disrespect!—as if any one save ourselves had the power of making us experience that humbling feeling!—Do tell him what we have seen this morning, ma'am—good Marion's discovery, Charles.—Our Scotch *Brownie* has been so actively on the out-look for us, since Mrs. Herbert wrote her from Grantham. . . . I am sure Charles will be as much charmed with our good fortune as we were ourselves."

"It is a house and quarter any one might be pleased with," said Mrs. Herbert; still unwilling to renounce the hope that their fashionable acquaintance should receive their first impressions of Charles in his married character, and of his beautiful wife, under as

brilliant external circumstances as possible;—"but for those absurd, conventional notions of localities and neighbourhood which influence people in all great towns, but especially in London."

Violet's furtive pleading glance checked farther sallies of temper; and Herbert listened with interest until his mother, in expatiating upon the beauties and advantages of the residence which she and Violet had been inspecting, forgot her secret wishes respecting the bridal visits. It combined every quality on which Violet had the most strongly set her heart, and had no drawback save the great distance from the spot where Herbert must pursue his legal studies.

"And we will have no carriage," sighed Mrs. Herbert, when this was adverted to. "If Charles drove to the Inns of Court in the morning, he might easily, in fine days at least, walk home for exercise."

"There are the convenient, cheap omnibuses," replied Violet.

Mrs. Herbert said nothing, but sighed more deeply. The elegant Charles Herbert, one of the handsomest and most gentlemanlike young men in London, going and returning from Chambers, to a *boz* near Chelsea, by the 'Bus!

"And the river," said Violet.

That was a shade less dismal to Mrs. Herbert. She strove to exert the philosophy on which Charles had complimented her. Her mind had been so imbued with apprehensions of something squalid and cheerless in a low-rented house, that the one discovered by Marion had proved an agreeable surprise. There was a small garden behind it; a smaller lawn or grass-plot, with flower-borders, in front; verdure, and shady trees; and from the little drawing-room an airy view of the river, and an infinity of gay, pretty, and lively objects.

"So nice and sweet a little drawing-room, dressing-room, and bedchamber altogether for Mrs. Herbert!" cried Violet.

"A much nicer house than my last dear lodgings at Brighton, Charles," said Mrs. Herbert.

"A study for you below," continued Violet, looking into the sweet little garden,— "a very pretty dining parlour, and a set of three airy chambers and closets on the third floor, and a housemaid's attic."

"But what, then, for yourself?" asked Herbert, fondly. "You talk like a Robins' advertisement."

"Oh, I shall niche myself every where;

but there is a little store-room next door to the study—I may have that for my *sluttery*, I dare say. It is rather dingy just now; but with a little paint and paper, which I can put up myself, it will be so snug."

Mrs. Herbert, like any other far-seeing middle-aged matron, concluded that a *nursery* must be meant by this odd name or delicate periphrasis.

"Give your *sanctum* a fitter name, my dear," said she, "than one which is a libel on your orderly tastes and neat habits."

"Ah!" replied Violet, smiling and sighing, "that was the name my poor father went to give to the little niche, with its four little embowered panes, in the roof of our Jersey cottage, which I called my *boudoir*; and where I kept all my treasures, alive and dead, and conned those tasks which were play. You recollect, Charles, it was the name which Swift—there must have been some strange attaching quality about that odious man—gave to poor Miss Vanhomrigh's drawing-room; there were no *boudoirs* in those days, I fancy; and they are, I believe, out of fashion, at least in name, in ours. Swift was a great favourite with my father. I myself delighted in his *Journal* to Stella, and the '*little language*.' Ah, yes, he must have had a heart once!—though pride and ambition cankered and killed it, and by a lingering cruel death. . . . In solitude one gets so intimate, so personally intimate, with one's favourite authors, that their peculiar phrases become household words."

"You have shown cause why we should leave you your *sluttery*," said Herbert; "though the name sounds rudely enough to an English lady's nice ear."

"How I wish we were fairly inducted!" rejoined Violet: "you in your study—I in my *sluttery*. Mrs. Herbert's apartments have quite a *grand* aspect: a balcony for plants over the portico, but above all, a conservatory!"

"A conservatory!—We shall be too grand," said Herbert.

"But so ingeniously and cheaply formed! The *scullery* and some of the offices are, you must know, in one wing. But so clothed, so draped, so richly embroidered, with a perfect entanglement of luxuriant and beautiful creepers, that not an inch of dead wall is visible. It is a perfect piece of living mosaic! Well, upon the roof of the said humble *scullery* is raised a small greenhouse, conservatory, or what you will, with a glass door opening from the drawing-room; and with merely

the cost of a little glass, and a little trouble, there you have it!"

"Most tasteful and ingenious gentleman, or haply, lady of Chelsea!" exclaimed Charles, "who has created an Eve's paradise above a scullery! Were not this house a discovery of Marion's, who knows so well about houses, and many other things, I should fear that the delicious *campagne*, with a view of the Thames, was too expensive for us."

Violet looked at Mrs. Herbert, unable to utter all at once what remained to be told. She had somehow come to understand, that to speak frankly of such a calamity as a lady laying down her carriage, was as shocking as of the impending death of her first-born, or the amputation of her limbs. It was Mrs. Herbert herself who said, "We can let the coach-house and the three-stall stable to advantage—they have a separate entrance from a lane; and so we shall have our house for net fifty guineas."

"Bravo!" cried Charles; "less than Jenkins's salary and perquisites,—we shall make rich at Chelsea. When do we get possession?"

"Since you seriously wish to remove before receiving your marriage visits"—sighed Mrs. Herbert—

"Yes, yes, I do," interrupted Charles; "and to receive the congratulations of our future good neighbours of Chelsea, rather."

"Then, as soon as I return from Windsor:—I must, in common decency and humanity, visit and console my poor old friend Mrs. Briscoe, who quite relies on me in this distressing affair of the bankruptcy. You will, in the meantime, make Mr. Gryphon settle about the house and fixtures; and to-morrow very early, Mrs. Marion comes to us, to direct Violet and myself, what to select from the furniture here for our new abode, that it may be at once removed before—before—the sale. . . . Good night, my children."

"Ah, Charles, is she not the sweetest, most amiable of women," said Violet, as the door closed.

"Of all women, save her who, with much higher intelligence, much purer taste, can still bear with those pribble-prabbles which make me, naughty as I am, sometimes rather impatient—nay, perhaps, love her the better for them. You are one of those happy and only female creatures, Violet, created but to taste the sweets, the honey, of whatever you touch; while I, like so many of my brethren, as if by instinct, suck all or a good share of the acid."

Next morning, long before Herbert, to his shame be it told, was out of bed, the ladies and their valuable auxiliary were at hard work from garret to cellar. It was Violet's duty to make out the inventories of the goods to be left for sale; and anxiously did she study the looks and wishes of the owner, as, one by one, Marion summarily condemned to auction her endless elegancies and luxuries in cabinet-work, silk-hangings, pier-glasses, Indian china, and generally what dealers class as articles of *virtu*.

"Virtue, indeed!" exclaimed Marion. "I see little virtue in them, save in sinking and running away with good siller; but whatever virtue they may have in this grand mansion, I am sure they will be only plagues and encumbrances in the bit *villakin* at Chelsea."

Still Violet often pleaded for a reversal of the sentence, when she perceived how fondly memory, association, or mere habit, had endeared some piece of convenient or beautiful dead matter, to its gentle owner; or openly rebelled against Marion's stern fiat, and begged off the article as if for herself. Mrs. Herbert had herself pointed out—along with her finely-wrought toilet-plate, and many useless and costly toys, in ivory and flagree—toys, as Marion regarded them—for she had great respect for plate—a particular article which Violet knew the owner prized highly, and which had been one of her indulgent, elderly husband's many gifts to his spoiled wife. It was a delicately-formed watering engine of silver; so small, as to seem the mere model of a garden engine, with which Mrs. Herbert had been in the daily habit of watering the plants which ornamented her balcony and rooms.

"Oh, not this, not this," pleaded Violet, who had so often seen the pretty machine gracefully used by its fair mistress, in what was one of the most important daily occupations of her luxurious life. "Do you think that at Chelsea, Mrs. Herbert is not still to have flowers, and plants, and daily use for her pretty watering-pot?"

"Ye'll better just flit bag and baggage, hinnie, if yon bonny bird-cage will hold all your trinkum-trankums," said Marion, humorously. "Ye beg for this easy-cheyre, and that ottoman; and this dwarf book-case, and that wark-table: never a muckle wark, I'm jalousing, was e'er done at the side o' ane o' the frail concerns yet. Wark-tables! Idling-tables, rather! If ye want to see a wark table, gang away among the

puir, wan-faced, shilpit, bits o' millender and mantua-maker lassies : dizzens o' them gathered round a real wark-table, and getting their dead frae its lang, weary hours, and thin fare, puir things !”

“ Mistress Linton is right, my love,” said Mrs. Herbert, who had just entered. “ I guess the motive of your reservations. How self-indulgent, nay, how utterly selfish, you must fancy me, if my personal accommodation is to be the sole study in what we reserve.”

“ Take not blame to yourself, madam,” replied Marion, boldly. “ Ye may observe that Mrs. Charles is just as careful and tender of some other useless or cumbersome gear, as of your delicate up-fittings. There's Mr. Herbert's leebRARY-cheyre. Poor studying was ever studied in one of them, I trow. They are greater deceptions still than the leddies' daidlin' wark-tables. Awa wi' the lazy lounge! I do not believe ever Mr. Charles crooked his hough in it yet. It's splendor new, and will bring a good price ; and let the young gentleman work for and win his easy-cheyre ere he loll in it. They are just fit for pursy deans and gouty prelates, thae feather-bed seats, and no for men, to call men, who have their way to make in the world by unravelling, or, it's just as like, warping and ravelling the toils and meshes o' the law.”

“ Here then goes ‘ a Spanish reclining library-chair,’ ” cried Violet, gaily.

“ That's right ! When the gentleman has once wrought for, and won the privilege of rest, he will find his cheyre the safer. But let the leddy keep her settee ; sorry woman should I be to see the day she wanted it, or any thing else that sae weel befits her station. And now, I am thinking, mem,” said Marion, her face mantling with sly humour, “ since Mrs. Charles has been so considerate and mindfu' of every body's wants but her ain, we must indulge her. I saw she cast a longing eye on that auld hobby-horse of Maister Charles's, up in the garret.”

“ Oh, you wicked Marion,” said Violet, laughing and blushing.

“ We will e'en let her get that keepsake—it would not bring 5s. at a roup the morn :— But there is another piece of gear,” continued she, seriously, “ and this Lon'on has a market for a' wares. Mrs. Burker Barker, or whatever that bounce's proper appellation may be,—I mean the *Professor's* high-flying dochter,—is setting up in a grand way, however lang it may last, and come the siller

frae where it likes ;—and it can come from no good gait. Weel, having got free o' the law, she maun hae, among her many gettings, a leddy's maid no less ; and Jenkins is the very *cut* for her, and will, I guess, keep her at the staff's end.”

“ That person want my maid ! ” replied Mrs. Herbert, in a voice of surprise, in which Violet might have discerned a slight shade of haughty pique ; but it passed off in a moment. Of the endless belongings to be disposed of, there was none half so troublesome as Jenkins, nor of which she was now so desirous to be handsomely rid ; so that, after the momentary shock, she was really pleased with Marion's intelligence.

“ Nay, I did not see Madam Barker myself : it was the mother o' her, the Professor's leddy,—there are sorts o' Professors and sizes o' leddies,—did me honour to call on me last night about 'Jenkins, with *her* tale ; but allanarly, as I suspect, as much about her 'boy,' as she calls the hairy-faced ne'er-doweel I was so simple as to let loose on the country, with my five pound in his pouch. Weel, the woman may have a mother's heart for her blackguard, for aught I ken ; and it does no become me to slight that sawered thing. They could, it seems, get Jack pardoned 'the frolic,' or the thing winked at, now that it has blown by ; and they have something grand in view for him. They are wonderfu' folk, even for Lon'on ;—the auld ane, that was but the other day scambing about in her rusty black sarsnet, with her bit basket below her shawl, trying where she could pick up a cheap morsel of dinner for her guidman, then in Whitecross jail, was dinked out yestreen as braw as Bink's wife when she becket to the minister ; and in comfortable lodgings in Bury Street,—for I ken the house. But this is nothing to you, madam,” said Marion, for Violet gave her apron a gentle twitch. “ She wanted to know when you could conveniently receive Mrs. Burke Barker to inquire Jenkins's character. I said I would myself give her a' the character required, but that would not do ; and so, as I guessed ye would be well pleased to get quit of that piece of goods before going to Windsor, or flitting to Chelsea, I made bold to say this day at one o'clock ; but if it be not convenient—”

“ Quite, quite convenient— the sooner the better,” replied Mrs. Herbert. “ And much obliged I am to you for this and many other kindnesses.”

“ Say nothing about that. . . . I would

have spared you this troublesome visit if I could; but there is a parcel of idle, impudent huzzies about this and a' toons, wha take pure delight in rambling from house to house every term, asking after maids' characters, just to stare about them, and spy ferlies in places where otherwise they could not get in their snouts;—though this is but the sma'er sort of leddies ——”

“I believe Mr. Herbert could tell the poor mother something of her son,” said Violet, compassionating the maternal distress of her former harsh hostess. “Mr. Herbert met that person in the North one evening.”

“That person! Ye must not be sae mim wi' my protty-jee, as Maister Charles calls him;—a very *protty jee* he is, or else no! Have his moustaches sprouted again, I wonder, after the sharp singeing I gave the natural ornaments? He is a beauty without paint, yon!” And Marion laughed aloud at her own mirthful recollections. “I maun hae damages off him when he comes to the kingdom the dam o' them forebodes for her hopefu' cleekin, for seathe done my guid name by giving harbourage for two nights in my meat-safe to the cheat-the-widdie. I'm no thinkin', howsoever, my *protty-jee* the weel warst o' the crew, though he has been made the scapegoat. . . . But where were we? French timepiece *or-molu*—of all ores commend me to the sterling *ore*, for that is aye easy carried about, and keeps its value in the market;—but go on, hinny. Nae-thing but ups and downs in this weary schene o' our pilgrimage; though there is little need, madam, to envy Mrs. Burke Barker of her fine coach and grand dwelling. What says the Psalmist of the unstable condition of the wicked?”

For over it the wind doth pass,
And it away is gone:

—Na, Jack is the best o' them.”

“Mr. Herbert imagines that Cryppes has gone off to America,” said Violet, to whom Herbert had not mentioned his last encounter with Jack.

“To Ameriky? The hail filth and scum o' Europe is spewed out upon that wide land. Yet for a clever, fair-fashioned, sleeky-tongued, lang-headed rascal, or a downright cunning villain, commend me to this same big Babylon o' Lon'on; though it's utter destruction to rogues in a sma' way.”

The inventory, relieved by such disjointed chat as this, was happily accomplished, just as the new, flashy, bright-yellow carriage of Mrs. Barker drew up.

CHAPTER XIX.

WE have somewhat abruptly and unceremoniously left Mrs. Burke Barker in her carriage, at the door of Mrs. Herbert's residence. The old Scotswoman who, in this exigency, lent her aid to the Herbert family, from motives of kindness and the desire of obliging, not much alloyed by the love of what her countrywomen term a “handling,” had taken her way to the auctioneer, as the family agent—an office for which her experience in such affairs, and general shrewdness and trustworthiness peculiarly qualified her—and Mrs. Herbert, on this busy morning denied to every one, was found at home to Mrs. Burke Barker. She was, indeed, only waiting to receive that lady, previously to setting off to her sick or vapourish friend at Windsor; whither Mr. Charles Herbert was to attend her in the common stage-coach! This was a trial, no doubt, of its kind; but a worse was at hand.

Mrs. Jane Jenkins took ample leisure to admire the new crimson liveries, faced with white, before she sought her “present lady” in the back drawing-room, to announce the presence of her “future lady” in the front drawing-room.

“I desired you, Jenkins, to show that lady into the back parlour below,” said Mrs. Herbert. Mrs. Jenkins pouted. The best drawing-room in the house could not be too good for her lady that was to be, whatever might have been suitable for Mrs. Barker.

The brilliant tones of a semi-grand pianoforte, which “the lady,” immediately on finding herself alone, awoke with greater musical mastery than good breeding, was a more characteristic announcement of a genuine Cryppes. Mrs. Herbert reddened with displeasure at a freedom which she would not have admired in any total stranger, and could not forgive in the person who waited upon her.

“Impertinence! She serenades us, I declare! I don't think, Violet, I can see the woman.”

“For Jenkins' sake ——” urged Violet, gently.

“True, O true! To get rid of my worst plague, who this morning has been so teasing and downright impertinent, I have courage to encounter even a female Cryppes. Is she not the girl whom that gentlemanlike, well-dressed man, I have seen with you and Sir George Lees, married? What strange choices men do make! Have they fallen into a

fortune, Herbert, that so soon after the swindling transactions about Shuffleton's house, and that infamous abduction affair, they are dashing out in this style? He is a politician, I believe — employed by the Carlton Club, perhaps — but he is not in parliament, and has no appointment?"

"Barker is a mystery in a close-buttoned, well-fitting surtout and neat cravat," said Herbert, laughing at his mother's curiosity. — "But you had better arrest the voluble fingers of Mrs. B. B., ere she fairly splits our heads with a repetition of that hailstone passage."

Mrs. Herbert drew up her gloves most rigidly, also her head; and tried to look as majestic and awful, aristocratic and cross, as is was possible for so pretty and gentle a fair, little, dove-eyed woman to look, — while she took the arm of the somewhat reluctant Mrs. Charles, and her way to the important audience, the house still resounding with the pealing harmony created by Mrs. Barker. Violet experienced some slight flutter of nerves in anticipating the awkward recognition of her old friend Polly Cryppes, in circumstances so materially changed with them both; but especially after the *éclat* of the abduction of Miss Juliana Stocks. She felt tremulous, and delicately ashamed for her ancient companion; and would gladly have spared herself the embarrassment, and Mrs. Barker the imagined mortification, of the meeting. Her squeamish apprehensions were premature, if not altogether unfounded. Mrs. Burke Barker did not appear to have the faintest recollection of her — *cut* her dead on her own floor.

For a few seconds that lady, wrapt in her own splendid music, remained apparently unconscious of any one having entered the room, until Mrs. Herbert advanced to her side and interrupted her, by coldly begging to be favoured with her commands. This compelled the brilliant performer to notice her presence, and even to half rise and offer some sort of apology. She seemed, however, to have no more knowledge of Mrs. Charles Herbert than if she had never seen her before. Violet, if somewhat amused, was at once relieved from her uneasiness, and rather glad to find that it was not necessary to renew her acquaintance with the very good-looking, and highly and fashionably dressed person before her.

"I must entreat your pardon for the liberty, ma'am; but I am an enthusiast, and claim to be one of the privileged in music. I never

can resist touching a well-toned instrument. . . . I have used the freedom to call to inquire into the character of a person applying for a rather confidential situation in my family, — the place of my own maid, indeed. I understand that she has been for some years in your service. . . Pray, be seated, ma'am;" and the visiter graciously pointed to a seat by herself.

"I am in my own house," replied Mrs. Herbert, haughtily, and still standing as stiffly perpendicular as if she had been some small German reigning Duchess mortally affronted by an enormity, which, however, no audacious Frau durst commit upon sacred and established etiquette. Violet, however, very quietly placed a chair for her, but at a respectful distance from the ottoman of which the uninvited guest had now taken possession; and Mrs. Herbert, having vindicated her dignity, or given vent to her disgust by gently closing the piano, sat down, saying, frigidly — "Whatever *necessary* questions you have to put to me concerning my late maid I shall be happy to answer, ma'am; and as quickly as may suit you: I am just setting off for the country."

Mrs. Burke Barker, whatever were her secret thoughts, put a good face on the matter, drew up her neck slightly, hemmed, and said — "I take for granted that the young woman's moral character is wholly unimpeachable?"

"Morals involve so many points; — far too wide for present discussion. But, I presume that I may safely say, Jenny Jenkins is what you mean by a moral character."

"Have you, ma'am, been in the habit of intrusting her with the key of your jewel-case, and with the other valuable property connected with her department? I should not like to engage a person in whom I could not place the most implicit confidence as to my trinkets and valuable laces; for, to say truth, I am the most careless creature in the world myself."

"You may very safely intrust your *family* jewels to my late servant," returned Mrs. Herbert. "Any other inquiry, ma'am?" she added, looking to her watch; "I am rather pressed, I am sorry, for time this morning."

"Does she get up small linen well, pray? . . Of course I do not expect my own woman to have much leisure for such employments; but I wish her to be able to know when these things are properly done."

Violet remembered that the clever Polly

was herself rather an expert laundress, at least at a smart frill or cap, if for herself ; and, so far from being "a careless creature," that few young ladies were either more vain, or more tenacious of their Birmingham-mosaic and lackered ornaments, than Miss Cryppes had been.

"This, fortunately, is a question which admits of proof," replied Mrs. Herbert to the above query. "Mrs. Charles, my love, be so good as ring the bell for Jenkins to exhibit her starchery."

"Not at all, not at all ; pray don't trouble the young lady. I am perfectly satisfied. Indeed this with me is another quite minor point. . . . Does she dress hair well, and in the newest style ? In short—for I delight in frankness, and coming to the point—does she thoroughly understand the ornamental department of toilet duties ? Has she taste, resource—can the woman, in short, what I call, *dress a lady* ?"

"Jenkins can dress a lady," replied Mrs. Herbert, with emphasis on one word which annoyed Violet, though it probably fell innocuous on the ears of Mrs. Burke Barker, now wholly occupied with the figure she made, and the spirit she displayed ; so that Mrs. Herbert's little bit of delicate irony was so much of a well-bred woman's petty spite, mis-spent. Her visiter went boldly on—

"Then she really is a creature one can tolerate about one. I am delighted to hear it. I have had three of the dowdies in my service within the last six weeks. I am, I own, ridiculously sensitive in some matters," continued the lady, at last rising, (an example which Mrs. Herbert quickly followed,) but stopping short to say,—“By the way, does she write a tolerably genteel hand, if I required her to write a note for me to any thing above my tradespeople ? That she works well with her needle, I understand ; but that is quite secondary. The business of my maid is to *dress* me, not to make my *dresses* ; there are dressmakers enough in Paris.”

Here again were feminine emphases annoying to Violet, who knew that Mrs. Herbert had of late exacted a little work from her maid, however degrading the practice might be considered by fine ladies and their finer maids.

"The salary has, I understand, not been illiberal with you, ma'am, for a person of plain education. That too I consider altogether unimportant ; nothing can be too much for a thoroughly qualified person, in whom one can place entire confidence," continued Mrs. Barker, still standing her ground. "It is

some seasons since she has been to Paris ; but she will have that advantage this winter, which we are to spend in the French capital before we go to Vienna. Without foreign travel no lady's maid can, in the present state of society, be properly qualified for her duties."

"I am no judge," said Mrs. Herbert ; signing to Violet to pull the bell.

Violet was involuntarily contrasting the former bold, brisk, provincial belle, with the would-be woman of fashion,—a part which Polly, in one sense, performed very well ; while the quiet dignity, the balance and repose of her own manner, more perplexed her former acquaintance, who could scarcely believe that the self-possessed and graceful young matron before her, was the shy, sensitive, lachrymose mademoiselle—her father's pupil. "Order the lady's carriage, Robert," said Mrs. Herbert,—compelled to go as near to kicking her visiter down stairs, as one lady could venture with another. Mrs. B. B. drew up, and did move off, honouring Violet in passing with a broad stare.

It is not easy to say whether her parting remarks were the natural impulses of a coarse mind, or proceeded from pure malice. Making a rapid survey of the room, she said aloud, but as if to herself,—“Pretty room, though of the smallest ; nothing to suit me, I think, save those vases and the piano ;” and to Mrs. Herbert,—“I understand you are selling off your furniture, ma'am ? There is nothing, I am sorry, will suit me, I fear, save, perhaps, the instrument. I rather like the tone. It is shockingly extravagant in me, no doubt, with so many instruments ; but I am tempted to become the purchaser of the semi-grand. Pray, do let me have a preference, if possible, ma'am ; and I assure you we shall not quarrel about the price. . . . I wish you a very good morning :” and with the slightest side curtsy, Mrs. Barker brushed past, leaving her victim trembling with indignant and insulted feelings. It was the very first time that Violet had ever seen Mrs. Herbert's sweet, serene, velvety disposition ruffled by merely impertinent trifles. Tears sprung into her eyes ;—“Insolent, underbred woman ! Is this, Violet—is *this* a foretaste of the bitterness of poverty ?”

Violet shared these wounded feelings by sympathy, if not through her understanding ; and she might probably have cried for company, if Charles, who had overheard the whole dialogue, had not advanced from the back room, laughing aloud, and broken the dismal spell which enwrapped the ladies.

"Glorious Polly!—but you gave her as good as she brought; eh, mother? Who could fancy you so satirical and malicious." Mrs. Herbert at once checked her dismal mood, and whispered, "I would not, for worlds, let Charles see that we, silly creatures, are not proof against an impertinent woman! How differently men of the world and foolish women receive such insect-stings. I am ashamed of myself! The men are wiser in their generation."

Jenkins, to the general joy, in half an hour afterwards, made her farewell curtsy, and held her cambric to her eyes according to rule. But not a whisper was extorted from her lady about a certain Geneva lady's watch—Mrs. Herbert's third best only, as to which Jenkins had, for weeks past, given hints, and even made several assumptions. The failure of this diplomacy, perhaps, gave Mrs. Jenkins more fortitude to bear the pang of the separation, which she had all the morning declared would utterly annihilate her: and she went off, at last, in visible discontent.

"There goes a viper and an ingrate," said Mrs. Herbert.

"There goes one of those poor girls, whom ladies alternately spoil by pernicious indulgence and tyrannical caprice," thought Violet. But she had little leisure for these, or even pleasanter thoughts; and, before Herbert had returned in the evening, having left his mother with her ailing friend at Windsor, the whole house was in that lively brisk confusion which precedes a removal.

"Marion and I have so contrived it, to spare Mrs. Herbert the plague and anxiety attending a change of house. When she returns next week, it will be a charming surprise to find us all nicely settled. You must contrive to fetch her to Chelsea at once, under some pretext or other. How much needless pain we shall spare her!"

Herbert warmly approved the scheme; and the diminished household laboured with so much zeal and alacrity, under the directions of Marion, who was accompanied by her ordinary staff of char-women, porters, gardeners, &c. that, in five days, order, comfort, beauty, rose at Chelsea, out of the chaos of tables, chairs, and china ware; and the *villakin* was transformed into a domestic paradise, at least in the admiring eyes of its young mistress. She had even incurred the unsanctioned expense of new chintz furniture and light muslin draperies for Mrs. Herbert's little drawing-room; and there, too, stood the semi-grand, that kind lady's marriage-gift to

herself. And near the few plants in the little balcony, over the portico, was the pretty silver watering machine, on its light stand. Mr. Herbert's books were not yet completely arranged in "the study," for he had not been half so industrious as his lady. Nor was Violet's *sanctum* completed, either in its useful or ornamental appointments of poetry and preserving-pots, work-bags, portfolios, and small household stores; but all was in fair train there: and up-stairs every thing was complete. Herbert, though still secretly owning far too much that power of external circumstances, to which early education and the entire habits of life systematically subdue the well-born English, long before their fashionable education is completed by the omnipotent usages of London society, also admired,—but without forgetting the woful *downfal* in fortune and station which this really charming residence must argue to his former associates. He was compelled to feel that there were here none of the harsh or repulsive features of poverty, nor yet any indication of that penurious, watchful, pinching disposition which entails incessant care,—and which engenders, first, narrowness, and finally, meanness of mind: yet this was not May Fair;—it was not the "West End," properly so called.

His wife was still too young and uninformed—too new at least to artificial society—to be able to comprehend why one suburb of the metropolis should not be quite as good as another, if the air were equally pure, and the views as open and fine. In her bosom,

Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,

had not yet been forfeited to fashion.

The ancient English dower

Of inward happiness—

was still entire in her simple heart. She even greatly preferred their present abode and locality to the magnificent dwellings, and dull, aristocratic squares, which she had been taught to consider the most enviable of residences, without having been spoiled by the lessons. Were there not now before her, first, the *river*—what could replace its absence from the landscape?—skies often blue, and trees richly green; comfortable houses; lovely children, and neat nurse-maids; and sometimes smart little grooms, and nice little carriages; and pleasant, well-dressed people, her new neighbours, ladies and gentlemen whom she longed to salute, walking out, and bringing home books or flowers; and, in the evenings, trails of fragrance from the surrounding gardens, or swells of music from

their unseen bowery seats, or from the boats passing with gay water parties; and then the moonlight was so much brighter and softer here!

"Brighter and softer both," said Herbert, laughing; but Violet would not yield the point. She could not just explain it in words, but was certain she was right; and that not the first house in London—not

Grandeur's most magnificent saloon,

was equal to their sweet cottage; and she was quite sure Mrs. Herbert would feel the same.

That lady was now to be put to the trial; and when Herbert went to fetch her back, he kept his promise, and seconded Violet's innocent stratagem. Yet, as he approached the dwelling, he hesitated, and said,—“If, dear mother, you shall, as is very natural, feel painful change, try to disguise it from that sweet creature who has so exerted herself to contribute to our satisfaction, and who is so innocently happy herself in the belief that she has succeeded. We are already at home.”

Mrs. Herbert, as they left their cheap vehicle, saw, by a glance at the open case-ments, that the house was inhabited, nay, in trim order—in gala costume. Plants were in the little balcony, nay, even her favourite fuschia; plants in the small, but light and airy hall, into which the lady of the house flew forth to welcome her. The caution and prayer of Herbert had been superfluous: the delight of his mother was genuine, and even rapturous. She ran, joyously exclaiming, from room to room, following her blithe conductress, and again and again embracing her as new wonders and delights burst upon them.

“How pretty, how sweet, how nice! such a charming size of a room! O my own dressing-glass, my easy-chair, my — Oh, dear Violet, you have been to me how much more kind than Napoleon was gallant to the daughter of the Emperor of Austria—restored my bedchamber exactly as it was.”

“And transformed your home into a fairy palace,” said Charles. “Let us cherish a good conceit of ourselves and our belongings: it is one true element of everyday happiness. I begin to fancy Violet's Lilliputian palace a much prettier residence than our old house. That was a painted bedizened actress: this is a fresh young Quaker beauty, all modesty and purity, natural lilies and roses.”

“Your comparison is happy, Charles. You

beneficent little fairy! how have you contrived to conjure up such a scene in five short days?”—And Mrs. Herbert playfully pinched the ear of her blushing favourite.

“I don't believe she has slept ten hours during them,” said Herbert; “nor allowed me much more repose. But she had three days of the *Brownie* of Fleet Street, and her ragged staff—her Scots, Irish, and Welsh *aides*.”

“And Charles is so charming a carpenter and upholsterer, ma'am! . . . Now that we have discovered his genius, sha'n't we make him work? He nailed up all those cross sticks by himself—those pales to which I am training the Indian cresses. They, poor dears, are not very rare things, to be sure; but they are luxuriant and rich—beautiful, I think them. For that matter, the stars themselves are not *rare*,—which is just so much the more delightful, as all the world may see and enjoy their beauty.”

“And Violet, with the help, I suspect, of Irish Rachel, late Regent Park housemaid's assistant, now Chelsea brevet cook, has constructed tea-cakes, mother!—no comfortable English cottage-home without *cakes*—and made coffee, superfine, equal to Parisian, which waits you in our drawing-room so soon as you are unshawled.”

The ladies went away; and Violet performed the functions of Jenkins in that spirit of kindness, and anxiety to please and oblige, which rendered her offices true service. They quickly rejoined Charles; and were renewing mutual congratulations on being so delightfully settled, when the gate-bell was furiously rung by a boy, whom Violet, who had heedlessly been guilty of the indecorum of peeping from behind the window draperies, at a first visitor, pronounced—A smart tiger. . . . “And a handsome cabriolet! Who can it be, Charles! There is a gentleman jumping out! I vow!—no, it cannot be; he is plainly, but very handsomely, dressed in black.”

Herbert now came forward; and the gentleman looked up, smiled to him, and, perceiving some shadow of the lady, took off his hat and bowed.

“If it were possible, I should say it was Cryppes, but that figure is clean-shaved: he does not squint. Is it Jack *transmogrified*,—the deformed transformed? But they are ushering the figure, whoever he is, up here—that won't do;” and Herbert intercepted the stranger, whoever he might be, on the narrow, but nicely painted and carpeted

stair, and showed him into the back crib, named his study.

"Can I believe my eyes, Jack? Is it really you?"

"Your ears will be more astounded, my boy—ay, till they tingle. Give me joy, old fellow! You congratulate me—I congratulate you. My fortune is made! and yours, too, Mr. Herbert. . . . I have not forgot your kindness to me in adversity.—I can now fully repay you; but what is that?—demn such paltry repayment. I will make your fortune—I insist upon it,—I have got rid of all my embarrassments—I have cast my slough. Faugh! what a time of it I have had for some years—it turns me sick."

"And your small visual imperfection, Jack—your original—squint the vulgar call it."

"Gone, sir, like other nuisances,—any thing to be done or gotten for money,—and I have the tin, now, egad, overflowing in both pockets;—underwent, three days since, the operation of strabismus,—Barker insisted upon it. He asserts that the slightest cast of the eye gives many an honest man the look of a knave:—many a rogue looks straight enough though. Mine was very slight—an undecided look at times; my mother never could detect it; but it might have been detrimental to my prospects, notwithstanding. What do you think of my turn-out? It is spick-span; though there was no time to have it built for myself. I sail for Hamburg, by the steamer, to-morrow morning. Hey for high fortune! John Bull's land, farewell! But what can I do for you, Herbert? make your fortune, if you will listen to reason and allow me.—Barker would have dissuaded me from speaking to you, nay, prohibited me. I am here on the sly. He is a clever, a devilish clever, but a selfish fellow; and Polly, the jade! looking handsomer than ever, kissed and hugged me, and all that:—but I have not forgot their late conduct. 'Letters miscarried,' all my eye! Nor should I have been taken into favour, unless they had urgently needed my co-operation. The Cryppeses have sung small in London, I guess, since Jack turned stroller."

"Have you seen Mr. Gryphon?" asked Herbert.

"I have. I got the letter you were so good as to leave for me, and the enclosure too; that affair of the lawsuit is all up. My governor has withdrawn his claim for

damages for your lady's breach of engagement: he is sensible of your kindness to me; and our family have now a noble game before them. Will you take a hand, and make your fortune? I hope you will. Let me persuade you."

"To engage in the Old Established Church Philanthropic Assurance Company?"

"Hang the Church and the Philanthropic both; that's Barker's own go, and a set of fellows, fences, he places about him. Gad! what they must have sacked by it already—worth £30,000 a-year, it is said. But Poll would require a third of that for herself."

"Worth all the Company once get their clutches over," returned Herbert.

Jack looked up scrutinizingly and rather gravely,—not quite squinting, yet much farther from ordinary direct vision. The operation for *strabismus* had either not been completely effective, or the muscles of the eye were not yet accustomed to their reformed functions; for, unlike the unreformed British Parliament, they did not "work well." And there was some region deeper than the eye in which Jack, with all his levity, real and affected, appeared troubled.

"I have nothing to do with the Company—it has great prospects—has realized already:—mine is a quite different spec. You remember Count Rodolpho?—Had the Stocks girl married the Count, she would have been a lady of title, the gipsy, and spared myself and other honest gentlemen all this to do."

"I remember that adventurer; what of him?"

"Come, come, Mr. Herbert—you are a man of the world—you understand a thing or two—Rodolpho is a devilish clever fellow, though I am not sure but the idea of this spec originated in London—wits jump, you know. Our snivelling government, to please Wilberforce and the other old women in small-clothes, have abolished lotteries; but the Continent, my boy, the Continent is open to English enterprise."

"And you go to France or Germany to organize a grand lottery?"

"Ay, and to sell the shares to honest John Bull;—warm love to fatherland. I reckon upon many such as my quondam friend the little draper, and the sleek-headed, radical ironmonger: I take them as a fair sample of our English customers."

"A lottery which, whether it ever be drawn or not can make little difference, as the great prizes are likely to be the count's

Merino flocks, or some of his estates and castles in Hungary."

Jack involuntarily laughed. Symptoms of levity in roguery are sometimes more apt to provoke than decent-seeming hypocrisy. Herbert angrily exclaimed—"How have you presumed to make me the confidant of such a villainous scheme? Is it not my duty to go at once to the Austrian or French Embassy, and give such information as will cause you and your confederates, should you go to these countries, be sent for life to the fortress of Spielberg, or the galleys, as you will richly deserve?"

Mr. John Quintin Cryppes was taken a little aback by the tone Herbert assumed; only a little. Jack was not easily disconcerted by a distant view of danger; and far from prone to take offence, and fire up at what men usually regard as insults or imputations on honour. He laughed without much effort; and there was at all times hilarity, and even a colour of sincerity, in Jack's laugh. It was not a hollow chuckle.

"Come, come, my good sir; no use for getting on the high ropes about so simple a matter. You must take those who broached the project for much greater ninnies than they will be found, if you do not guess that they have foreseen and provided for every difficulty. You will find that we have at least the countenance of the mighty gents, whom you would alarm very needlessly,—perhaps a surer hold over 'em. But, 'pon honour, all is *bonâ fide*, the spec a fair spec, and a feasible. All above-board, inviting the closest inspection. To-morrow you will see us flourishing in every morning paper,—in some of them with a delicately-touched editorial paragraph."

Herbert, though not yet free of suspicion, fancied he might have been too precipitate; and, at all events, it was an affair in which he was not entitled, upon mere suspicion, to interfere.

"This could not have been your business with me?—To what am I indebted for the honour of your visit?"

"Not a whit else. Do you imagine that I have no gratitude?—no sense of friendship? I mean you to take an interest in this concern, and net a few cool thousands by it. It shall cost you nothing,—no risk,—merely your name; and if the project fail to realize great profit, you are none the worse. This is but a small line of business for a man of your figure and parts," continued Jack, looking round the humble apartment. "Look to

Barker and his wife flaring up:—The cry of fiddling *diplomats*, and the younger brothers who were wont to honour my father's fiddles, ices, and champagne, are nothing to them now. Barker has absolutely made a way among the city fellows,—the capitalists:—they consult him,—they seize his hints. It must be owned Barker has a genius for finance that astonishes. Land companies in the Falkland Islands; rail-road at the Darien; patent for some entirely new locomotive power, which will supersede steam altogether,—something to be done by electricity:—but I am not a man of science."

"Nor I one of finance; and so, Jack, I must bid you good by,—wishing you, in the words of the toast of your friend, the Mayor of W—, success in all your intentions—provided they be honest."

"Good Gad! and is it possible, Mr. Herbert, that a man, I say it again, of your figure and talents, is, at your age, and with your stylish town habits, to sit down to the study of musty law!—in which you may succeed, though Barker says, it is much more likely not,—and certainly not for many years:—I have calculated all those chances in my time in my own case."

"You, Jack!" said Herbert, laughing; "so you too have dreamed of the Bench and Great Seal in your time?"

"Faugh! don't mention it—who would encounter an old Eldon's worry and drudgery, even to be as rich as old Eldon? Certainly no man of spirit, who knows life—and loves pleasure. Your charming lady, too, formed to adorn the most brilliant lot —"

"Thank you, Jack:—but I fear that that same lady, so much obliged by your good opinion, is now waiting for me." Jack saw that there was no chance of an opportunity of displaying his improved looks and handsome dress to the ladies. The domestic privacy of the "bit of a box" was as jealously guarded by its master, as if it had been a palace. He rose to go.

"My governor charged me to kiss her fair hand as his proxy. He means to offer his congratulations in person some of those days. . . . Now that our house has got the sun on the wall, his opera has again come uppermost with the old fellow. You know what a *fanatico* it is. He hopes that your lady will at least attend the rehearsals."

"My wife must decide for herself about that," replied Herbert, somewhat haughtily. And Jack, with affectionate adieus, walked off—swore at his tiger like a lord—mounted

his own cab with the air of a master, seized the reins and whirled away.

"Was it indeed Jack Cryppes, Charles?" cried Violet, somewhat excited and curious.

"The veritable Jack."

"Well dressed—looking *clean*, even—and a private cabriolet. Wonders never cease!"

"Never in London, while such miracle-mongers abound as certain members of that gifted family. I heard to-day that Emmeline, the third or fourth girl—the romping little thing who, at W—, two years ago, used to provoke us to punish her with kisses, has made a conquest of the grandson and heir of the proud old Duke of Plantagenet. His grace will certainly be fit for a strait-waistcoat if the daughter of a mere Mus. Doc. obtain any chance of his duchess's coronet!"

"Emmeline!—She is very young—and very wild—but not an ill-hearted little thing—a duchess! She was thought in the family very like the portraits of Mrs. Jordan. Is it not strange?"

"A high destiny probably awaits the resemblance of poor Mrs. Jordan. The boy, her lover, lost both his father and mother when a mere child. His grand-parents have not only spoiled him, but lost his affections in the process. He was at Eton with a private tutor, whose severity finished the ruin. The boy—he is far from a fool, too—broke out as wild as a sailor after a two-years' voyage, yet was captivated—though tempted, I believe, as much by Mrs. Barker's chickens, jellies, and champagne, as by the plump charms of merry little Emmy,—who must be endowed with an instinctive cunning—and the adroit flattery of Mr. Barker. They *are* a clever family—over-trump the —. The old Duke has thrown himself at the feet of royalty, to prevent the attainment of his patrician blood. But, thank Heaven, there are no *lettres-de-cachet* in England, although the scions of nobility should disgrace themselves in the absence of the wholesome personal restraint of their fair paramours."

"It is wonderful!—did Jack tell you all this?"

"Oh, no—Jack does not know himself, I dare say, and I forgot to tell him—which, had I loved mischief, I ought to have done. Jack might have spoilt all. The Duke has laid violent hands on his heir just now; but unless the lad revolt of himself—which might happen if he were prudently managed—my life on it, that Mrs. Burke Barker, with the

help of her husband—who of course knows no more of any thing of the sort than the babe unborn—circumvents Plantagenet, and all his kith, kin, allies, and doers."

"Emmeline Cryppes perhaps a duchess!" again ejaculated Violet; that little romp, whose unkempt curls and rebellious shoulder-straps it had so short time since cost her some pains to preserve in propriety—that merry-eyed, neglected child, who had been left with whoever would keep her in the country, until her family gained some footing in town. Emmeline had been sent up at last; and, in a turn of good fortune, her brother-in-law, Mr. Barker, upon nearly the principle which made confessors, nobles, and ministers, throw fair alluring objects in the way of Louis XIV. or XV., (though here with strictly *legitimate* ends,) had made his wife order her dresses; and he bought her a pony, and sent her scampering in all the by-ways round London, attended sometimes by himself, but as frequently by only Mike Twigg. The plan succeeded. The wild, pretty girl, fresh as a May blossom, and seemingly as innocent, caught plenty of admirers; and her sister and brother-in-law knew how to sift the enormous quantity of chaff from the few grains of matrimonial wheat which they speculated on turning to account. It was to Barker amazing, how adroitly the untutored girl took her cue, and performed her part, though no direct counselling passed between them. He was constrained to feel, that there was in Emmeline a more exquisite subtilty, a more refined ductility, than in his own accomplished lady; who with much more experience, and perhaps natural artifice, was more coarsely organized, or had much less original sensibility.

It was a very fortunate circumstance for Mr. Barker, that the young girl formed at once that passionate attachment to her noble boy-admirer, which excited both his vanity and affection, and that she made no concealment of her transports—her *Haidee* abandonment. Had the handsome young Earl been merely the baker's apprentice, Emmeline might not have been quite so easily captivated; although Barker thought even this degree of folly not impossible in her, and at her age; for though she had breathed only the sacred atmosphere of England, where such lapses seldom occur with tolerably well-brought-up damsels, she was wild, giddy, and wilful. As it was, he and his wife had a delicate game to play, though he hoped they were equal to it; and he feared not even the

great Duke with all his influence, so much as the hard, genteel vulgarity of the mother of Emmeline, and the appearance and manners of Jack, whom, in the critical state of matters, Barker was doubly happy to ship off for a time. An affair, so important in its consequences to every member of the Talented Family, may be as well pursued to its auspicious close, before returning to the humble household at Chelsea.

CHAPTER XX.

EARL ST. EDWARD, the youthful lover, was too much absorbed by his new feelings, to remember that he had himself parents to whom he owed submission and duty, much less to think that his bewitching and enamoured Emmeline, who could scarcely exist out of his arms, had either friend or relative, save the delightful woman who compassionately facilitated their meetings, but who, notwithstanding tender pity for her sister, had most honourably warned him, that he might incur the displeasure of his family by an attachment to one below him in station, and whose only recommendation was extreme sweetness and loveliness, and devoted affection for himself. This was an affair which her husband would never forgive her for being privy to. Yet—and Mrs. Barker covered her tearful eyes with her laced cambric—how could she see her dear sister pining to death under a hopeless passion? Unhappy it was that they had ever met—the Fates seemed to rule such things; yet, part they must—though one more solitary ride in the shady lane where the stars had first thrown them together—one more interview, to sigh forth, in the twilight boudoir, the fatal word "which has been and must be:"—But it must be the very last. The young lord was affected. He, too, began to think, that the dire "farewell" must be said. The matter was almost overdone, when the tears, and sobs, and hysterics of the passionate girl, who was disposed to do any thing rather than part with either the lover or the lord, to whom she wildly clung, restored the equilibrium, and carried the day in defiance of the high-minded scruples of Mrs. Barker.

How it happened that her confidential maid—the identical Mrs. Jane Jenkins—ventured to forfeit her mistress's protection and friendship, and accompany the fugitive young lady that same night by a special train to the north, while Mr. and Mrs. Barker followed, in hot pursuit, by the next

train, we are unable to say. How, too, for the sudden unpremeditated flight, she had made certain preparations, must remain a mystery; though it is certain that the young bride did not assume the white silk and pink roses provided, and in which, to her bridegroom, she looked so fascinating, until the obliging blacksmith had fairly riveted the hymeneal fetters, exactly four hours before Mr. and Mrs. Barker appeared. Their pursuit could not well have been closer, as some of the newspapers took pains to explain, because, the young couple had unfortunately got the start by a special train. The Eton tutor, and the Duke's solicitor, Mr. Gryphon, were four hours later still; and the young couple had retired to their chamber, which it was not deemed advisable to invade.

And now, what was done could not be undone. Mr. Barker, like an honourable man, had himself, before leaving London, sent intelligence to Plantagenet House. He was at first savage, and warmly reproached the young lord; but the honour of his sister and his family required that the marriage should now be completed with as little delay as possible; and some Bishop finish what the blacksmith had so hopefully begun. In the meanwhile, he and his wife returned to town, as did the Duke's agents, unable to withdraw the enamoured boy of eighteen from his still younger bride; and, perhaps, fancying that it was best to let him cool at his leisure. They, indeed, feared that his escape was now impossible, though afraid to say this to their principal. They left the young pair so much absorbed in hymeneal bliss, that the husband, for a time, forgot how very unsuitable and degrading an alliance he had contracted, and, what was more surprising, the wife so much in love, that she forgot she had married a nobleman, and might live to be a Duchess. Her charming Albert was far *far* handsomer than Tom, Mr. Stocks' handsome groom at W—, who had first taught her to ride, and to love also, though this was a secret Emmeline had kept from all the world, even from her sister; as Tom, though he had promised to write to her in London, had not kept his word. This neglect had vexed her for a few seconds each day of a week, but was all so much the better now. What would Tom think when he heard she had married a lord—whom she loved ten thousand times more than ever she did him—whom, she rather thought, she had never cared much for after all; for now Mrs. Barker said to those who flocked to her on her return to

town, to learn all the particulars, "Theirs was such love—such enraptured fondness—very improper, no doubt, and exceedingly to be regretted—as happiness seldom attended such alliances, especially to the lady.—But such love! Barker himself," she remarked, "severe and displeased as he was with Emmy, as well as with Lord St. Edward, Barker says it is more like what one reads of in Shakspere, or the poets of Italy, than English marriage. And Barker remembering passages in his own boyhood, had certainly said to his wife, "How blest the fools are! Could it but last, I should almost envy the young lord, that he has got our pretty amorous Cinderella, and escaped some one of the high-blooded dames and damsels that would have been manœuvring for him, or for his estates and coronet, as soon as he had fairly left school. Can she keep him, now that she has got him? But that is her look-out—and partly ours. I have little faith in Emmeline's discretion; and to talk of the *principles* of a woman—of a girl at her age! I look to you for the safety of your sister. I am summoned to the Duke to-day; but all the dukes in Christendom cannot unmarry Emmy. There will be other snares laid for her; but, if she have sense, we can cope with them, and love will, at least at the outset, be her safeguard."

The enraged duke would listen to no measures for the completion of the union, by a repetition of the marriage ceremony in England, even when Barker insinuated that a future Duke of Plantagenet might be born with a stigma, unless the Scottish marriage was sanctioned by English law, which, as Lord St. Edward was under age, was impossible, without his grandfather's consent. But the duke would have paid any sum to the girl, or her family, to quash her claims. Barker was an honourable man; and nothing of the kind would be listened to. The idea was insulting. His wife, when she heard of this proposal, was by no means so sure.

In the meanwhile, the young pair returned to town; and, as Mr. Barker found it both impolitic and inconvenient to receive them; and as the gates of Plantagenet House were rigidly closed, they and Mrs. Jenkins, a greater woman than ever, found a temporary home in a fashionable hotel, where their childish fondness, and more childish quarrels, and immense consumption of confectionary, afforded great amusement to the other inmates, and to the servants of the establishment. More than once during the second honeymoon,

Mrs. Barker had been called in to make up the peace; and she uniformly took the part of the aggrieved husband. The merits of the cases of matrimonial grievance it was, indeed, not very easy at all times to comprehend, beyond the fact, that "Emmeline was so saucy and teasing," and "Albert was so cross."

Not once in all this time had Mrs. Barker permitted her father and mother to embrace and congratulate their most fortunate child. There was time enough for that after the marriage ceremony had been repeated; and Professor Cryppes had become thoroughly acquainted with the Plantagenet peerage in its remotest periods, and through all its minute ramifications, long before he had made the personal acquaintance of his noble son-in-law. One day, however, that the young lord had gone with Mr. Barker to Ascot, Mrs. Barker carried her sister to see her parents, who received her with pride and joy; though Mrs. Cryppes soon remarked, that "it did her little good to have a lord for a son, if they were never to enter his door; nor she nor hers, save the Barkers, be one farthing the better for him." The better-bred Professor hoped, as soon as prudence would permit, he might have the honour of paying his respects to Earl St. Edward, whose mother had been a pupil of his at Windsor, where both she and her cousin, Lady Laura Temple, had lived with their grandmother, the Duchess-dowager of Drawcansir.

"Then that daughter of the Earl of Tarbert must have been as old as St. Edward's mother—far too ancient for Sir George Lees," said Mrs. Barker, who had been for some time appropriating the baronet as a cavalier, more closely than her sharp-witted mother altogether approved. "Is your old apprentice, Charles Herbert's wife, also connected with the St. Edward family?"

"No; with the Tarberts only." And the Professor began to instruct the young countess in her noble family connexions, which Emmy declared puzzled her worse than counterpoint; and hastily inquired about the said apprentice, Mademoiselle Violette.

"And she married that charming man we used to have such famous romps with at W——, when I was a chit! Where do they live? I shall certainly go and visit them, and have them to dine with us. Mademoiselle was so kind to me, when you, mamma, used to be cross and box my ears! I liked

her very much. She thought me pretty then, and made up one of her pink French dresses into a ball-frock for me, when I was a dowdy thing at the dancing-school. — Were not my brothers, Jack and Ned, in love with her?"

"Pretty reminiscence for a countess," said Mrs. Barker. "Fie, Emmeline! are you not ashamed of yourself, after the match I have secured for you?"

"La! You secured for me, Polly! How can you say so? Much obliged to you, indeed, Mrs. Barker. Did not St. Edward fall in love with me at the riding-school? . . . But I will go to see Mrs. Charles Herbert, and take my husband too, — I am determined on that. She has got a charming husband, but she has not got an Earl, though."

"You little fool! I wish you would take pattern by her in elegance and propriety of manners."

"I am a countess any way," returned Emmeline, pouting and hitching up the shoulder-strap in the old fashion — though her dresses were now of a fit to remain quietly upon her, had she been so inclined.

"Something must be done to complete Emmeline's education, papa," said Mrs. Barker. "Barker says that every one, even St. Edward, will, by and by, remark her deficiencies, and want of *retenu*. She ought, at the least, to spend a few hours every morning at my house, where there is no necessity for her masters knowing who or what she is."

"Will she, though!" returned the young countess, saucily. "No, Polly; it is about time to give up lessons when one marries."

"Barker has been seriously thinking, father," continued Barker's lady, paying no more attention to her sister than if she were a bit of wax in her hands, "that if we were to engage Herbert's wife to attend Emmeline, in my house, and under my eye, for a few hours a-day, while St. Edward rides out, we could not form a better or quieter arrangement: and useful to Herbert too, poor fellow, in his poor circumstances. Besides singing, Violet could give the countess instruction on many useful points that I have no leisure to impart. . . . The usages of society — matters of etiquette, I must myself attend to."

"Spoken like yourself, my ever dear, ever talented child! — benefactress and ornament of your family," returned the proud Professor, in his grandest manner, rising from his chair to his tiptoes. "My angel countess, you

must listen to the affectionate sister and talented brother, who have your honour and interest so much at heart. Lovely and gifted as you are by Nature, my darling child, education and polish must still farther fit you to grace your strawberry leaves, and prove, as you must do, one of the brightest ornaments of the future court of Victoria the First."

"I am determined to be presented at court the same day with the other brides; but St. Edward can't think yet who is to present me — not Polly, it seems, would be received, for as fine and clever a lady as she fancies herself: setting herself above every one, and always taking Albert's part against me. I always liked Susan better than Polly." This last was a whisper to papa.

Mrs. Barker had, for some time, perceived, that it was to be no easy task to manage the petted, spoiled, wayward countess. In her, the quick natural parts which distinguished all the family, high animal spirits, a vivacious good-natured vanity, and a singular mixture of shrewdness (some would have said cunning) and simplicity, formed, with warmth of affection, the basis of a character which, under skilful and kind management, might have been moulded to worth and grace; though now, to appearance, Emmeline's ruin, as a moral being, was beyond prevention. Even in her effervescent tumultuous feelings for her husband, there was little of that saving grace, to a very young woman still without regulating principle or restraining judgment — *love*. The fondness with which Emmeline alternately charmed and annoyed her young lord, scarcely deserved that sacred name. Respect for Mr. Barker was another restraining, if not wholesome, influence. Kind and conciliating as were his manners at all times to the pretty animated puppet that he had played for his own purposes, she feared, and, in some measure, loved him; and she entertained the instinctive affection felt by all his children for the courteous and indulgent Professor, whose very flatteries of his family were sincere. Save those feelings, the young countess was far above all the ordinary influences and restraints of the opinions and customs which regulate the conduct of women. She had, indeed, never been under them; having passed at once from the school-child to the ennobled matron. On this subject, Mr. Barker had that morning held a serious conversation with his wife. Emmeline had been piquing the vanity, if not awakening

the jealousy, of her young lord, by certain romping flirtations with, happily not one, but three or four hussar officers living at the same hotel : and Mrs. Barker had chided in vain, Emmeline quickly retorting upon her her own flirtations. Barker had perceived Lord St. Edward's sullenness. The young husband was too proud to complain ; and though Barker again saw the amusing couple, on the same evening, lolling on the same sofa, and eating at the same pine-apple, he was far from being satisfied. "A connexion which secures to Emmeline a station and consequence no one durst have dreamed of," he said to his wife ; "and which ought to be of inconceivable advantage to us and the whole family, may terminate in disappointment and disgrace. . . . If your sister cannot be taught discretion, grinded into the observance of propriety, St. Edward will revolt. Passion is at present his preservative, and her safety ; but there will be sudden and violent reaction ; the blood of Plantagenet will assert itself. He was born and nursed a high aristocrat. He will not long forget what he has forfeited by his rash marriage, unless his wife retain that influence over his mind, as well as his affections, which only mind and affection, ay, and unbounded complaisance, good tact, and a little of her sex's *finesse*, can enable her to retain."

"Where, Barker, are you to look for all this nonsense in Emmy ?" replied Mrs. Barker, peevishly. "She is a pretty, saucy, spoiled child, but she is St. Edward's wife ; and he is a young man, and very much in love."

Mr. Burke Barker did not deign to reply. On this occasion, as on many others, his spirited lady did not always, perhaps, quite understand him ; and he found it more convenient to issue his commands, and exact obedience, than to reason with her.

"Emmeline seems to have an affectionate recollection of Violet," said he ; "and if she, Mrs. Charles Herbert I mean, can be induced to spend a few hours a-day with her—to be in a sort domesticated with her ;—in short, I conceive that the indirect influence of Violet's character may have even happier consequences on the foolish child, than any direct lessons she could receive. The mother-in-law, also, the elder Mrs. Herbert, is a woman of pleasant and graceful manners, and familiar with society,—in short, both are very much the sort of persons Emmeline requires. . . . As Herbert spends five pays of the week in chambers, they must have abundant leisure for the office for which

you have no *time*," Barker politely said, "and for which it would be impossible to requite them adequately !"

"Pooh !—With money that part of it may be managed ;—and to-day I shall sound Emmeline ; the main difficulty lies with her ; obstinate, ungrateful thing, as she is."

We have seen the result of this sounding. The rustic countess was eager to renew her acquaintance with the gentle and sympathizing "Mademoiselle," whose kindness and indulgence had left so grateful an impression on her heart ; but she would be no one's pupil :—had she married an earl to be sent to school ?

"Then, Emmeline, since you are so desirous to renew your acquaintance with Violette, suppose we and papa take a drive to the out-of-the-way place at which she lives !"

"Charming !" cried the countess, springing to her feet, and dancing round. "I never see nobody,—I had more friends, and more fun at W— than since I have been in London, and married ;—but I have not got my cameo bracelets—I should like to wear my cameo bracelets when I visit Mrs. Charles Herbert ; and I wish I had some nice present to make her—she was very good to me,—that girl was indeed, papa."

"Bewitching creature," returned the Professor, "who would not be good to you, my angel,—doat on you ?"

"You were always mamma's *pet*, my own Emmeline," said Mrs. Cryppes, quite blandly, and in unwonted whining tones.

"Was I, mamma ?—humph ! Order *my* carriage, papa. I think you and I shall go alone, and Polly can follow us, if she wish it, in her own. Two carriages following look so dashing."

"I ought also to accompany you," said Mrs. Cryppes, "and wish Mrs. Charles Herbert joy. It is not right to neglect them, poor things, now that they have fallen into misfortune."

"Another day, mother," said Mrs. Barker, decidedly, "will serve your purpose, and you shall go in my carriage, Emmeline,—we cannot have St. Edward's arms blazoning an obscure cottage-door, in an unfashionable quarter." The countess already comprehended this grand difficulty, and gave way, though she still regretted the want of her bracelets ; and while she ran out to set her bonnet and prepare for her drive, and the Professor collected the MS. music of that darling opera in which "Mademoiselle" was to have been

prima donna, and which was even dearer to his heart and vanity than his noble daughter, Mrs. Barker and her mother were left alone.

"Why may I not accompany the countess, my own child, ma'am?" said Mrs. Cryppes, sharply. "Do you and your husband, Mrs. Barker, intend to estrange the affections of my daughter from me? Do you mean to monopolize her and her husband wholly to yourselves, pray? If your father had the spirit of a mite he would put an end to this, and go at once with me to the Earl, telling him who we are. Emmeline is his wife, I fancy, and our own flesh and blood—somewhat nearer to her and him than you and your husband, Mrs. Barker. And I fancy he can do something for us, if he like—and for my son Jack, too,—which is more than ever you have done, Mrs. Barker, rich as it is said your husband is getting in one way or other."

These reproaches were not merely unseasonable,—they were false and unjust; for Barker had been really liberal to his father-in-law—more so, indeed, than the increasing expenditure of his own extravagant household, in the opinion of his lady, justified. Among Barker's secret disgusts with his wife, was that intense selfishness which closed her heart even to her father and mother; and he had often personally atoned for this vice, or fault, by contributing liberally to their comfortable immediate subsistence, and to getting forward the family.

"You, at least, have no cause to reproach my husband, ma'am," said Mrs. Barker, reddening.

"I do not reproach him, ma'am. I admire particularly his patience with his wife, with your extravagance,—and your free, your over-free, conduct, Mrs. Barker, which is secretly cutting your poor father to the heart. Your mother, whom you despise, ma'am, never was so fine a lady as you, perhaps; never had lords and baronets dangling after her; but she always maintained an irreproachable and an unsuspected character, Mrs. Barker."

Mrs. Barker was furious; her large, bold, black eyes absolutely glared on her mother: but both ladies had discretion; and the apprehended return of the Professor with his huge roll of music, and of the little countess, bridled in those upbraiding tempers, to give vent to which was, with both, occasionally a private indulgence. Mrs. Cryppes was, indeed, sensible that she had gone too far; and in a mollified tone she said, "You

must know, Polly, that no one has your interest more at heart than your mother. The attentions and flatteries of fine gentlemen are all very well for a time; but if a woman forget herself and is exposed, what becomes of her? Despised, disgraced, *poor*—and you have no settlement. I trust to your own good sense; but clever, proud men, like Barker, are not to tamper with. . . My other son-in-law, the Earl, is much younger, and probably good-natured; though for any advantage the match promises to your father and me, or to my son Jack, save that blonde cap and satin dress you tell me Emmy sent me. . . . Old Coutts, I have always understood, settled a thousand a-year on his wife's mother; and Harriette Mellon was only the natural child of a low, vulgar Irishwoman; whereas my daughter is the lawful child of respectable and educated parents. When the Earl of Dashaway took Miss Prancer off the York stage, he at once settled seven hundred a-year on her parents; and they were poor creatures, who kept a hedge ale-house somewhere. But she insisted on it; and the sooner such arrangements are concluded after marriage the better; strike while the iron is hot."

"Would you but have a little patience, mother," said Polly; for her mother was coming it too strong even for her. "Would you but have a little patience, till Mr. Barker can properly arrange it all. You cannot complain of his want of attention to whatever may make papa and yourself respectable in society. Look at your handsome lodgings, elegant dress, and to every comfort you enjoy. How different from the old times of wretched W——! such a brilliant career opening to your children! every member of the family, now that Jack is provided for, so happy and prosperous!"

"True, true, thank God, Polly; but how long will it last? I shall never be at rest till this young Earl settle something handsome on me, which I am sure is his duty to his wife's mother."

"All in good time, dear mamma. The Earl is still a boy, and in the meanwhile a very poor one. You are not aware of the obstacles thrown in our way by the perversity of his tyrannical grandfather; but I am sure he is generous, if Emmy can only be prudent, and papa and you keep in the background a few weeks longer. Lord St. Edward fancies you out of town, if he thinks of you at all. But here comes my father. . . . Ah, papa, almost tired waiting for you—so

unlike *your* constant politeness, which, in all tempers, never fails."

If this was meant for an innuendo, Mrs. Cryppes took no notice of it. She fondly laid back the luxuriant curls which clustered over the brow of her youngest daughter, for whom she at that moment experienced those maternal emotions, or yearning she-bear instincts, forgotten since she had held her an infant to her bosom.

"My lovely Emmeline! how beautiful you are! and always were; nay, I must kiss you again. When am I next to see my darling child; and the dear Earl, who is so handsome, and loves my child so fondly—when are we to have the delight of seeing you together, my angel; for St. Edward is already as dear to me as my first-born son?"

"Ah, my poor brother Jack!" said the little countess, gently repelling the overdone caresses of the mother she had never been able to love, and whose tardy demonstrations of affection were now repulsive. "He was such a funny fellow with his wry nose! And he did Punch so cleverly! Jack was good to me, though. Always, I remember, when he had money, he bought me something. Come along, Polly—your ringlets are well enough, I am sure, for so old a lady. St. Edward at first fancied me her daughter, mamma, at the riding-school!"

"Impertinence! a countess indeed! You are fitter by manners for the wife of a gipsy."

Emmeline only laughed, delighted to have provoked her patronizing sister; and, taking her father's arm, giddily whirled him down stairs—the mother following.

"Stay, countess! my angel! indeed, I cannot part with my countess till I know when I am to see her again;" and Mrs. Cryppes inflicted more motherly kisses on the cheeks of her treasure. "My dearest love to the Earl."

"How very kind mamma has grown," said the shrewd and dutiful little countess. "How much she has always loved me—only I never found it out before. You, to be sure, Poll,—or was it mamma?—sent me down an old green silk dress to make a frock when you married, and when poor Susan and I were scuttling about W—, with whoever would keep us for a few more weeks. I was very glad when Susan married though, just when the Stocks of the Grove were obliged to turn me off, because Jack and you ran away with their relation, Miss Juliana. Susan's husband has but two pounds a-week from your old admirer, Ben-

jamin; but they were so merry and happy, and so was I, in my little truckle-bed in Susan's garret, till you grand folks in London were good enough to remember me——"

"How inconsiderately you talk, Emmeline; if you knew half the difficulties your parents have had to encounter in London, you would not think yourself warranted to blame the seeming neglect of you for a time."

"I do not blame,—I was very happy.—I had lovers then, too, plenty of them,—and poor Susan was always—though she scolded me for being giddy—so really kind."

"Do not mention or think of that unhappy connexion, Emmy; if you would not disgrace us altogether:—above all, never let the Earl hear of that unhappy creature,—sister, I cannot call her."

"Susan! my sister, Susan? Sure, Polly, you do not know what you are saying!—Susan's was a love-match just like mine; and her husband and she are very happy and merry, and never quarrel. I had a letter from poor Susan this morning; and mean to make my husband do something for them."

"You! you correspond with those people unknown to us. Oh, papa, will you show Emmeline her folly? She will ruin herself and us one way or other,—that is predestined!"

"My angel," interposed the Professor, who had listened uncomfortably, and was rather at a loss as to the duty expected from him, though sharing in his eldest daughter's alarms; "your charming simplicity,—your youthful innocence, my lovely Emmeline, render you somewhat unfit to judge for yourself in certain matters. Upon your love and obedience, my angel, I entreat you to consult and walk by the advice of your dear sister; a lady who knows the world thoroughly—a woman of the soundest judgment, occupying a high station in the society she adorns."

The countess was much in the mood of saying "Fudge;" but she loved, and, in a way, respected her father; so she merely hitched her shoulder-strap.

Mrs. Burke Barker had always so much to explain. "Emmeline, my love," she said, "you say I have been taken for your mother; and fashionable hours and hot rooms,—perhaps, too, family anxieties—have told on me; but when I come to visit you at Plantagenet Court, the pure air of that princely place, and the kindness of its mistress and that of my lord, will make me young again: a fond mother's feeling for you I do claim."

"I shall be so happy to see you, sister,—and my brother Barker,—and you, papa,—

and mamma too," interrupted the generous patronizing countess, whom vanity warmed into kindness; "but the Duke must die first, you know;—and he is sixty-five, papa. How very old! he surely can't live very long now."

"I adore your delightful frankness, my angel; but my Emmy, you must use a little more caution——"

"O, papa, never fear me," interrupted the lively countess; "I am so cunning sometimes: Polly fancies no one can be cunning but herself,—but I——"

"Hush! you giddy thing," said Mrs. Barker, "cunning neither of us are; artifice is not a characteristic of our family; but in that delicate address so essential to every one living in society, but especially to those having your nice part to play, you are still sadly deficient. I was going to say, Emmeline, that whether I look to be your mother or not, I have a fond mother's feelings for you, and your happiness at heart above every thing."

"Well, well, Polly, I sha'n't be saucy again,—kiss and be friends,—I dare say you like me."

"Let me see then how like a lady you will conduct yourself with Mrs. Herbert. That is their house now, poor things! But we must make allowances."

Before Mrs. Barker and the Countess St. Edward alighted with their father at the humble gateway of the *villakin*, we shall take leave for a moment to look within, and see how this "unfortunate family," as all the world and their friends called them, are prospering.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE Herberts had now for above three months been denizens of the Chelsea box; Herbert meanwhile steadily pursuing the studies connected with his intended profession for five-and-a-half days in the week, and joining the fair part of his family early on Saturdays, when the happiness of a life seemed concentrated into two bright days. The arrangement had in prospect been painful to each of the three, though none of them had openly grumbled; for this sacrifice was part of the reasonable price of future happiness; nay, in the elastic mind of Violet, regret had quickly risen to hope. "Since Mr. Gryphon says so, who is so sensible, and so friendly—" She hesitated. "And you will come so early on Saturday afternoons?—and perhaps I

may tempt Mrs. Herbert to walk a short way with me to meet you."

"And perhaps I may be tempted to make a run out for a breath of pure air, and to bask myself in my mother's smiles and yours on some intermediate day of the week."

"That would be such pleasure,—if Mr. Gryphon thought it right!—or perhaps whether he did or not,—he is an old gentleman and never was married."

"And the most absolute fellow in the world,—with him no make-believe law students, no macadamized or royal road to the woolsack,—tough work—hard and long—but in my case so much to sweeten it!"

"But you may surely, when you close your books, write a little note every night, just to say you are well, and love us—and good-by till Saturday. How I shall long for that day!"

"And I more—and perhaps be miserable from idle apprehensions. Yet how gladly, a year since, would I have compounded for this free and happy, and confiding, if limited, enjoyment of your society;" and as he pressed her to his breast, repining was converted into cheerful thankfulness.

Yet the first week appeared very long to every one, though lightened by the interchange of several notes, sometimes on pretence of business; and at length the rapturous re-unions of Saturday and Sunday seemed cheaply purchased by the previous self-denial of the week; and enjoyment sweetened by toil, and sanctioned by self-approving conscience, possessed double zest.

It was, we are sorry to say, somewhat difficult for Mrs. Herbert to persuade Charles to lose, as he irreverently said, so much of his precious day in listening to some long hum-drum sermon, or suffering his wife to do so; yet he appeared at the church of his new neighbours, and found the sermon not so very hum-drum as he had anticipated; and, as he walked home between the two ladies, whose appearance attracted no small portion of curiosity and admiration, he experienced somewhat of the complacent emotions of a *family-man*—of one who had given hostages to society, and who thence ascribed more importance to its opinions, and was more entitled to, and tenacious of, its respect.

The history of the new family was soon understood in its outline. A lately-married couple, and a lady-like mother—probably the wife's mother—reduced in fortune, but still in respectable circumstances; lived very

quietly ; but were sometimes visited by carriage-people ; and paid every thing ready money. Birds of the air, or those who in great towns supply their place, servants, charwomen, and milkmen, carried round such matters ; and none of them lessened the interest and favourable opinion created by the appearance of the strangers. Though Mrs. Herbert had used a little gentle persuasion to make her son not "Leave the parson in the lurch, and slip away with Sally," she only smiled when, *sotto voce*, over their dessert of late gooseberries, and early plums from their own garden-wall, he chanted this old ditty in Violet's ear —

"Of all the days that 's in the week,
I dearly love but one day—
And that 's the day that comes betwixt
The Saturday and Monday,
For then I 'm drest in all my best,
To walk abroad with Sally;
O! she 's the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley."

"Mother — Violet my *sweeting*," said Herbert, in the gayest spirits, "a new life opens up to us. We begin to discover in what the pleasures of the poor consist ; and this of the Sunday rest is surely among the most exquisite. There is no real Sabbath for the rich and idle. This is almost my first true Sunday. — Mother, let me fill up your glass ; surely you, whom the doctor used to allow two-and-a-half glasses of sherry every day at dinner, may still take two on Sunday."

"I shall do any thing you please, Charles ; but pray do not sing quite so loud. The new housemaid is a Scots girl, and a very nice one, whom good Mrs. Linton has found for us."

"And therefore must have some sentiment — some poetry in her, and so will forgive my involuntary Sabbath breach."

"Thank you, in name of my ancestral country," said Violet ; "but how come the Scots by it ?"

"Probably because they are not, like my countrymen, better fed than taught ; because, instead of fat bacon and dough bullets, they have songs, tales, and ballads for their sole second course, — instead of the Sunday pudding, merely intellectual fare ; and not troubling themselves too much about shooeties, close shaving, and patent blacking, have leisure for higher imaginings."

"I can scarce, however, thank you, Charles, for your reasons why England has never shown one finer sample of the brotherhood of Burns. But now that Mrs. Herbert has left

us, do you not think she is looking quite charming? so much more alacrity of spirits and movement about her ; and strength will come. She can now walk a mile without much fatigue. She has gone down stairs to superintend the Scottish girl—she is a *bonnie, sonsie, golden-haired lassie*, is she not?—in preparing your coffee, which she has been teaching her all the week ; and so pleased Mrs. Herbert seems with every little household duty ! She is quite of those women—the most charming of all—whose happy destiny is to *minister* to those they love ; and it seems only now that she has discovered her true vocation."

This languid lady had, indeed, by the spiriting of her more energetic youthful companion, soon discovered that she was both equal to, and fit for, more important duties than suffering herself to be dressed, tending exotic plants, and doing very small quantities of very delicate needlework, to the injury of her soft eyes ; but neither were these pretty avocations abandoned. Mrs. Herbert was, by natural taste and English training, a lover of order, neatness, and elegance ; and her Indian habits had made her, even in her most dissipated London seasons, an early riser : a custom of incalculable advantage in a small household like what hers had become, and in which the inmates are so happy as to be able to dispense with what in England is somehow felt the bane of all domestic ease—the necessity of much adventitious *help*. Her servants consisted of the young country-woman of Marion, too fresh from her native dales to have fathomed or measured accurately that awful gulf which separates the different orders of womanhood in city-life ; and a middle-aged solitary Irish widow, who had acted as charwoman about the former establishment, and of whom Mrs. Herbert might never have seen nor heard, save for the accident which gained the family, in its changed circumstance, a most loyal, faithful, and useful ally and follower. One night, this poor woman, when leaving her daily drudgery, in Mrs. Herbert's basement floor, to return to her distant home in the city, had been rode over by the cabriolet of Sir George Lees, and seriously hurt. The humane attention of Herbert, who happened to come up as the reckless charioteer drove on, made an indelible impression upon her warm and grateful Irish heart. Her national acuteness and affectionate curiosity about her friends' affairs had not failed to perceive what she considered the helplessness of the family at that general breaking-up, which, as is

usual, had been much more freely and fully discussed in the kitchen and scullery than in the parlour; and there were disinterestedness and true generosity in the motives which led Bridget Moran to entreat Violet, or "the young mistress, his honour's own lady," that she might be retained in any and every capacity; giving Mrs. Marion, at the same time, voluble assurance that she would be "worth her morsel of mate, and was no mighty or nice eater, and her room on the flure-head, any way." Charles Herbert soon pronounced Biddy worthy of the *cordon bleu*. It was as fortunate for him, that he had never been, even in affectation, much of a gourmand, as for the ladies of the family, that they found so faithful a domestic, to come, at first brush, between fishmongers, butchers, and greengrocers, and their ignorance or delicacy. Their successive blunders in marketing furnished so many merry jokes to be kept over for Saturday, that Herbert almost regretted when the office of purveyor was on the third week fully devolved on their "Widow Cheerly," to the manifest improvement of the family fare, and the diminution of the weekly bills.

Mrs. Marion had made them several visits; on each occasion forwarded, as far as possible, per *'bus*, and freighted, like some richly laden galliot, with things useful and things desirable; and as often had she, though only on urgent entreaty, looked into the most minute details of their economy; while to the most liberal and hearty praise she generally added a few hints for farther improvement, which were intelligently caught by the anxious young housewife. Every indication of the newly settled family was hopeful; for though Mrs. Herbert still secretly retained her undefined horror of omnibuses, she had become a determined pedestrian; and, to the delight of Violet, had laughed most naturally and heartily one morning, on catching herself saying, "Mary, order the carriage round?" instead of "Mary, get me my clogs!" There were other hopeful signs. On the third Monday of Herbert's periodical visits *home*, Mr. Gryphon lost a bet of a dinner and wine to the gentleman who assisted or superintended Herbert's legal studies, taken that he would not appear before ten o'clock; and Gryphon was pleased to lose it, when certified that the married law-student had actually appeared before nine o'clock!

"His wife must have compelled him to tramp," said the shrewd, good-humoured solicitor. "These young people have sense and energy: if they have patience and per-

severance also, there is no fear of them. I always liked Herbert,—and now I am in love with his wife."

Nor were Mrs. Herbert's mortifying anticipations of the desertion of her "dear five hundred friends" altogether realized. Adversity served to winnow the wheat from the chaff. Bulk, not value, was lost. Those whom she had liked the best came as formerly; and of ladies of curious dispositions, and active visiting habits, with the command of a carriage, more than enough. A good many of one description of matrons—those whose hands and heads were full of disposable daughters—gave her up kindly, for it was at once. Not only had she lost her fortune, poor woman!—which for so good a creature was a sad pity—but her handsome and fashionable son had also lost his expectations, and rendered every misfortune irretrievable, by an odd, imprudent marriage with an actress or singer, or something that way, which had nigh broken his stepmother's heart. Herbert had been inveigled at the parties of those dashing Cryppeses or Barkers, whose *soirées* were in such vogue with foreigners and the junior club men. The girl was said to be connected with the Tarbert family—most likely a natural daughter, as the Earl was a man of notorious gallantry, and as Herbert was now prosecuting him for a fortune promised with her. So matronhood, in its active sphere, gave up the Mesdames Herbert, younger and elder; though the former, when seen, was generally allowed to be a pretty person—engaging, nay fascinating, like so many of those half foreigners. Violet had, however, one warm patroness among the fashionable matronage. This was the Honourable Mrs. Brabazon, the wife of a general officer now in India,—who, kept on very short allowance by the gambling propensities of her husband, was exerting all her skill and industry to repair the family fortunes, by educating three very pretty daughters for the matrimonial bazaar of Calcutta; unable from want of money or connexions, to afford them, advantageously, the ordinary chances of the best London market. When Professor Cryppes was at the extreme height of his musical popularity, this lady, as a measure of good policy, had incurred the expense of getting lessons from him for her second daughter, who displayed decided musical taste. And she was now not slow to perceive the advantages which the instructions and example of his former pupil might afford to her family. After a

few calls of vehement, peremptory friendship on her friend Mrs. Herbert, she managed to leave her girls three or four times a-week, "to amuse themselves with a little music" with Mrs. Charles; while, with the appearance of the person conferring a kindness with the utmost delicacy, she drove out the elder, greatly-obliged lady for the airing, so necessary to her health, although only wherever her own business or inclination led. Violet felt most grateful for this considerate attention to Mrs. Herbert's comforts and tastes, which she laboured in some degree to requite by her own anxious attention to the improvement of the young ladies, admiring their mother for having the cultivation of their talents so much at heart. This system of lurching and instructing the Misses Brabazon, in requital for a drive, had gone on for a good many weeks, and appeared to be considered a fixed thing. Saturday alone was an inviolable day.

Mrs. Herbert, however, by some perversity, began to consider her airings a bondage, and to fancy Violet's share of the very frequent musical meetings a drudging task. Neither of the ladies were the most penetrating of women into double-minded motives; yet some unpleasant surmises were arising in the minds of both, to which the forwardness of the zealous Bridget, and the outspokenness of Mrs. Marion, gave distinct shape. By character and position the Scotswoman was a privileged person in the family; and Bridget maintained an equal right in virtue of her national humour. One sultry day Marion arrived, just as Mrs. Herbert and her patroness returned from their customary airing; and as Mrs. and the three Misses Brabazon and their loads of music disappeared, with many caressing and affectionate adieus, and an appointment for next day's exercise. Bid- dy the Irish cook and Marion had probably before this compared notes, and come to their own conclusions; and now both agreed that Mrs. Charles was looking pale and exhausted, and, as Marion said, *shilpit*, and that the perpetual Brabazons were smooth-faced, arrant encroachers. Marion, always welcome, had scarcely sat down with the ladies, and unloosed her bonnet strings and budget of intelligence, when Bid- dy, by pre-concert, entered unsummoned, to clear away the wrecks of the simple but ample luncheon of bread, butter, and homely preserves, to which the young ladies had been doing honour. She was either in a cross-humour, or else it was her cue to affect this, to her, unnatural state.

She fancied her young mistress looking particularly exhausted, after the two hours' singing lessons she had been giving.

"Mrs. Brazenbones will surely be thinking of allowing the mistress a trifle board," said Bid- dy, winking knowingly to Marion; "and yourself, ma'am dear, (to Violet,) something for schooling the young misses. Bless them! but it's brave, hearty stomachs they have for the bit of white bread and butter, and lay it on handsomely under the jam, as young craters naturally will do;—but as for the ould one, though it's not a servant's business, to be sure, to put in a word—"

"Whist, Bid- dy," said Violet, earnestly; afraid that Mrs. Herbert might be offended by the woman's freedom, and somewhat shocked at her zealous servitor's indelicacy, which yet had a colour of reason in it.

"Mrs. Browbrazon is one of the leddies that make their father's dochters welcome to whatever they have a mind to, come frae where it like, and at whoever's expense," said Marion humorously, but sharply withal; and Violet, lest worse might chance, glided away, to stop the tongue of Bid- dy, who rarely presumed to address Mrs. Herbert directly.

"So you think Mrs. Charles is looking ill, Bridget?" said Marion, leading directly to the point, and aware that she addressed the experienced "mother of seven childre, blest be their rest!" a fact of which Bid- dy never failed to apprise her friends and sympathizers, at least once at every interview.

"Looking ill she never did, ma'am; but looking poor she does, ma'am," replied Bid- dy, still apparently busy with knives and butter-plates; "and small blame to her, slaving and drilling of them misses in the way she is in. Meeself would rather stand a day at the wash-tub, than be scraiming at that jingle-jangle piany."

Farther explanatory information, whatever its nature might be, was conveyed in a low confidential whisper, though as much was left to the illustrative nods and becks, as to the Queen's Anglo-Irish; and whatever it was, and though it ended in a broad grin, reciprocated by a sympathetic, broader, gladdening smile from Marion, it made Mrs. Herbert change colour, and seem thoughtful.

"I have been unpardonably inconsiderate and careless, I fear," she said, as she hastened to seek her daughter, on whom, for the remainder of the day, and for many days, her looks hung in constant, tender watchfulness. Meanwhile, she had made another happy discovery, to which she was helped by indig-

nation at her friend Mrs. Brabazon. Her "shattered nervous system," which, for many years, had required an annual bracing at Brighton or Leamington, or wherever her fashionable physician divined that her inclination pointed for the season, and any where between Scarborough and Clifton, was this year wonderfully improved. It might be the quiet, the gardening, the freer enjoyment of the open air, pedestrian exercise, and her delightful domestic companionship; but whatever were the cause, the happy fact was indisputable, that Mrs. Herbert, in her adversity, was in better health and spirits than in any summer since her marriage, or for fifteen years!

"I flatter myself that I shall be able to be head nurse to *our* baby," said she, when smilingly, next morning, Violet complimented her on looking so blooming, after an hour's work in the garden before breakfast. At that meal she proposed that Violet should walk with her to a neighbouring nursery, about some horticultural business.

"You forget that Mrs. Brabazon is to take you an airing to-day."

"Not that she announced that intention; but I am otherwise engaged, and cannot accept her kind offer. That encroaching woman!—so polite withal—make me her tool in converting you into a music-mistress without fees! I have learned that she has long since discharged Cryppes, if, indeed, a nobleman's father-in-law can now condescend to give lessons; at any rate, yesterday I took shame to myself, under the handsome, indirect reproaches of Marion and Biddy. Come, my dear, I am coward enough to wish to be out of the way ere Mrs. Brabazon and her young ladies appear. I never was good at saying *no* to any one, though quite alive to the sort of cool people, who, in all civility will only the more encroach on one's good nature, the readier the dupe submits. Come,—I must for once and again prevent your 'musical enjoyment,' as Mrs. Brabazon terms these tiresome lessons to her daughters."

"I wish any one fancied me good enough to give their daughters lessons, and to pay me for it," said Violet, half laughingly, as if feeling her way. "I should consider it no drudgery, but honourable employment; and to be able to add something to the general family stock,—that would, indeed, be happiness! If Mr. Cryppes is leaving off pupils, perhaps—"

"Do not speak of such a thing, my love," interrupted Mrs. Herbert, hastily; "my son

would be more shocked than even I am by such an idea; you do not know the English world yet, my dear Violet, nor the morbid pride of many, nay, of all husbands."

Violet could not fully believe this of her own husband, who, if not always quite a philosopher in his conduct, often now spoke, and seemed to think and feel, like one.

"Men make beneficial use of their talents," she replied, "without reproach or disparagement; why not women, who often so much more require to do so? A public singer I never could have been—for that nature created me unfit; but to give young girls, like the Brabazons, lessons in a liberal and delightful art, if, happily, I were qualified for the task—"

"To your own girls, when we get them, my dear, and to none else, save in kindness;" and Violet, blushing in sweet consciousness, rose to get her bonnet, not ill-pleased to-day to escape the fatigue of lesson-giving, while her friend continued—"I am determined that Mrs. Brabazon, at any rate, shall not swindle you out of your time so very often, and use me as the pretext. The amateurs, like you, Violet, must not injure the regular professors. If she will have her daughters highly accomplished musicians, let her pay for it; and if she cannot afford that, and maintain her present style of life, let her change it as we have done. I have sympathy with poor mothers, ambitious for the improvement of their children, but only contempt for the proud mean."

"But we speak not of them, but of honest people," said Violet, bringing the lady back to the subject at her heart. "Could it be wrong in me, for example, with some talents, and abundant leisure—"

"I know what you would say; I am not arguing, and do not pretend to say what is right and what is wrong in this and many other matters, though there is more wrong in society, perhaps, than I once imagined; but I know that the woman who turns her talents to any profitable purpose, is, in some occult sense—I own I do not comprehend how it is—but she is, in our society, *degraded*. You must have observed, what I have often heard remarked, that governesses and female teachers have fewer chances of respectable marriage than idle and less-educated, or ill-educated girls of the same rank. I neither pretend to explain nor justify; I state a simple fact, notorious in England and every where else."

"Yet all men labour for hire, who labour

at all; the greatest lawyers, the most eminent physicians, all literary men, officers of the army, ministers of state, the highest dignitaries in the church;—all are *paid*, and the more *pay* the greater honour. No gentleman is considered degraded by hire for his work, provided the hire be large enough. Is the rule not hard against us poor women,—often so well inclined, and so capable of being useful and helpful to ourselves and others? There is Edmund Cryppes, for example, but the other day an apothecary's *raw* apprentice, rapidly rising into a fashionable and highly-paid *accoucheur*. His is a profession nearly altogether wrested out of the hands of women, for which Nature has surely the best fitted them, if opinion permitted education to finish Nature's work. But women are held in the bonds of ignorance, and then pronounced of deficient capacity, or blamed for wanting the knowledge they are sternly prevented from acquiring."

"Well and true!—but you must submit to rule, nevertheless. And now prepare for our walk, lest Mrs. Brabazon surprise and make us captive after all."

"But I should like the young ladies to come sometimes; I hope I do them some little good, and so little in that way is in my power."

"Indeed, Violet, you are an arrant simpleton; but make haste, pray."

The ladies were in the hall, sallying out as Mrs. Brabazon and her fair covey alighted at the little gate, their footman bearing the usual load of music books.

Mrs. Herbert, who was, indeed, unless when inspired by passion, indifferently gifted with the useful power of civilly saying *No*, endeavoured to look gay and disengaged, but determined.

"I have issued an imperial ukase, forbidding music in this house till after tea, any day, and then only in moderation. I am not of those ladies—frequent though they be—who monopolize all the music of the house for the inmates, and who never seem to fancy that their visitors know a note. I regard music as a social pleasure; but, in the meanwhile, my daughter must forgive me for depriving her and your young ladies of its enjoyment, since it is for her good. In the present delicate state of Violet's health, so much difficult music is, I am convinced, too exciting; besides, it makes her neglect proper exercise. She was my trainer in pedestrianism, now I mean to be hers. My son

will be home to-morrow, and I must have his wife in her best looks, as well as in her finest voice: both demand repose. We can hardly invite you to walk in."

Mrs. Brabazon was disconcerted, but could not well seem angry. The second Miss Brabazon was offended, and did not try to disguise her displeasure. She had intended to rehearse once more something in which she was almost perfect, and meant to sing that evening at a distinguished juvenile party.

"How cruel you are, my dear Mrs. Herbert!" said the mother. "My Emma will be so disappointed; she finds no voice so truly in accord with her own as that of Mrs. Charles,—neither her sisters nor her young friends. I must beg for the reversal of this decree; and I cannot let you off from your airing. Mrs. Charles must not be disappointed. It is too cruel to restrict her. Is it not, my dear Mrs. Charles?"

Before Violet could do more than smile in reply, the dashing equipage of Mrs. Burke Barker, which put to shame Mrs. Brabazon's quiet Quaker-looking chariot, drove up to the little gate with the fury which bespoke the dignity and importance of those within.

"Two carriages at mi lady's dure at the same minit!" cried Biddy Moran, with a natural swell of exultation. "I hope the neighbour girls see them."

"Professor Cryppes and his daughters," faltered Violet, as the proud Professor, with a daughter on each arm, advanced, smiling and courteously bending his head, up the little garden-path. "Yes, it must be Emmy," continued Violet to Mrs. Herbert; "is she not a lovely creature?"—and before the words were out, the young countess had broken loose from her papa, and bounded like a fawn into Violet's arms, all dimpled smiles and graciousness.

"Ah, I see you don't remember me: I remember you so well, though. I am Emmeline"—the countess did not add Cryppes—"they call me Lady St. Edward now; but I love you as much as ever."

The whisper was not lost upon any one of the group of ladies, who now understood that they had in presence the thrice-fortunate heroine of the tale of scandal which had lately interested the whole fashionable world. Their keen examination was quite as ardent as well-bred.

The Professor was hard at his daughter's back, and tried to cover her breach of the dignity of her new station, by bowing cour-

teously all round; and, kindly and graciously shaking hands with his former pupil, as if they had parted yesterday, he proceeded, in his blandest tones, and most courtly and caressing manner:—"This is an unceremonious accost, ladies; but we are most fortunate in finding you, and in not requiring to announce ourselves. I fear, though, we have interrupted you in going out?"

"Oh, indeed, papa; but Violette sha'n't go out till I renew my acquaintance with her," said the peremptory and half-patronizing little countess, sliding her arm within that of her former friend.

The Professor, as proud as a piper, though haply vowed to a different instrument, smilingly menaced the wayward girl with his forefinger, and then, with alacrity, recovering his habitual sense of decorum, he said—"Allow me, Mrs. Charles, to introduce my daughter, the Countess St. Edward, to you.—Mrs. Herbert, Lady St. Edward." Mutual stiff curtsies.

"Ha, Mrs. Brabazon, I have the honour, madam, to present my daughter, the Countess St. Edward, to you.—Emmeline, my love, the Honourable Mrs. Brabazon."

The young countess bent her head, but with a look of reserve and *hauteur* wonderfully well performed for one so new to her dignities. Mrs. Burke Barker had, in the meanwhile, been more in the background than suited either her tastes or opinion of her own consequence. She had an error to repair. As soon as she had paid her respects to Mrs. Herbert, she ran up to Violet, and took her hand with affected eagerness, exclaiming—"I know not, Mrs. Charles, whether I ought to beg pardon or scold you well. Fancy, papa, that when, some time since, I had occasion to call upon Mrs. Herbert, I did not recognise, in the lady with her, my old friend Gabrielle. It must have been you I saw with Mrs. Herbert; and my stupidity and near-sight! But, indeed, I must chide you. Why not make yourself known to me? You must have been sure that I am not the person to forget an old friend. I assure you, Mr. Barker and I talk of you very often, you were so much with us at the time he was paying his addresses to me. I dare say, ma'am, (to Mrs. Herbert,) this young lady has never told you how slyly we managed our flirtations; sometimes Barker was fancied her lover, and Herbert was mistaken for mine."

Mrs. Herbert, who fancied this a mistake indeed, had stood for a few moments in a

state of vacillation. She had now no choice but to give up her walk, and to invite her visitors up stairs; for, though the Professor was profuse of apologies, no one appeared inclined to give way; and, besides, being a little womanishly curious about a future Duchess of Plantagenet, she was prepossessed both by the beauty of the girl and the natural childish fondness with which she seemed to hang about Violet. Mrs. Brabazon was included in the general invitation to walk up stairs; but, as the young countess was still in disgrace, if even properly married, that lady drew off her forces in good order, and abandoned the field.

"Such an unbred creature for St. Edward to marry!" exclaimed the elder and sensible Miss Brabazon, as the family drove off. "St. Edward must have been bewitched: but he is a mere boy, and, though an Eton boy, knows less of life, it is said, than a child."

"She is absolutely dumpy," said the tall second Miss Brabazon, drawing up her well-rounded shoulders.

"A gentleman's beauty!" said the third, and prettiest. "I really wish, mamma, you would take to cramming us. Sir George Lees told me, last night, that the new Brumagem Countess was as plump as a pig, and as elastic as a puff-ball, with the prettiest foot—Did you look at her foot, Anne?" continued Miss Emma, involuntarily curving the high aristocratic instep, on which she had so often been complimented by her maid.

"The sister is a much more distinguished-looking woman," said Mrs. Brabazon, who was balancing, in her mind, the advantages and disadvantages which might attend the acquaintance of the Barkers—not to herself, for she took pride in being a self-sacrificing mother—but to her daughters.

In the mean time, the Cryppes family had ascended to Mrs. Herbert's little drawing-room, Mrs. Burke Barker graciously praising and lavishing compliments on every thing she saw; while the countess drew Violet into a corner, to pour into her confidential bosom the tale of her romantic love and high fortune—of her courtship—her elopement—her dresses—her excess of conjugal beatitude; and to exact a similar confidence, which was either tardily and partially accorded, or smilingly parried.

"You and Mr. Herbert are not half so much in love as Albert and I," said the little countess, at the inconclusive termination of some interrogatory.

"I think myself—I am sure I am—very much attached to my husband," said Violet, modestly blushing, and yet ashamed of the confusion into which she allowed herself to be thrown by the impetuous beauty.

"Oh, you are so long married now!"

"Yes, almost a year."

"That is an age:—and have you a baby?"

"Not one, I am sorry," replied Violet, laughing.

"That is a pity—Polly has none either; but I must have a baby. Mine will be heir to the dukedom. I assure you, Mrs. Charles, it is very important that I should have a baby; Barker and Neddy, you must know, won't allow me now to take equestrian exercise. I had such charming scampers with a set of hussar officers who live at our hotel. Neddy is so wise, you must know, since he became a *sage-femme*—and Barker is so knowing! Yet it was at the riding-school St. Edward fell in love with me. He used to help me to mount, and almost kissed my toe; and he was so modest, so bashful—I used so to laugh at him, poor soul!"

"What poor soul are you laughing at there?" cried Mrs. Barker across the room, desirous to interrupt a *sête-à-sête*, in which she was certain her giddy sister must commit herself, though happily there was here little danger of betrayal to enemies.

"I am telling Mrs. Charles that I will bring St. Edward to visit her, and that our husbands must be great friends like ourselves. I am sure Albert will like Mr. Herbert. I remember him well: he was very handsome, and an elegant rider. Does he still have as beautiful horses as those he had down at W——?"

This was a troublesome question; but fortunately the interrogator was too much occupied with her own thoughts to pause for a reply.

"St. Edward has no stud yet himself. The family have always been remarkable for their love of horses—and I am so fond of them too. Is it not odd?"

"I can vouch for your passion for horses," returned Violet, glad to find something to say; "for I used to be in torture and doubt whether it was to be your neck or his own that the wild boy, Tom Smith, Mrs. James Stocks' groom, was to break first in your mad gallops."

The countess coloured slightly, saying, "That is so very long since—I was a sad Tomboy then, to be sure."

The Professor had advanced and heard the latter part of the conversation; and he said, in his *grandissimo* manner, his hand laid on his heart—"Highly honoured as my daughter no doubt is by the noble alliance she has contracted, I flatter myself that nature's nobility is not wanting, and that the princely house into which she has been received, and where she must be appreciated, will not find her deficient in that taste for true magnificence which ought to distinguish her order!"

Violet was tempted to exclaim "Bravo!" to her old master's speech, but she suppressed the mirthful impulse; and Mrs. Barker, perhaps thinking that her father and her sister had committed absurdities enough for one day, directing the attention of Emmeline to Mrs. Herbert's pretty nick-knackeries, set her father down to the "semi-grand," and drew Violet into a window.

"I can scarce forgive your seeming coldness to us, Mrs. Charles—we must, indeed we must, be better friends;" and she clasped the passive hand of Violet between her own palms. "Barker and Mr. Herbert were so much attached—for men—so intimate. I must insist upon breaking the ice, and having you and the St. Edwards to dine with us, *en famille*, on some very early day. The carriage can come for you, or I can take you up on my drive—no fear but we manage that. Where there is a will there is a way, as my poor mother says—who, by the way, sent her kindest remembrances by us, and will wait upon you very soon."

Violet could only marvel whither all this cordiality was to lead, almost certain that it could not be without some object.

"I have been so anxious to see you of late, to unbosom myself about Emmeline, whom I know you like. Grieved and shocked as Barker and I were at the rash step she has taken, and sensible as we are of the cruel suspicion and misconstruction which may be put upon the affair, or upon our share in it, we cannot forget that Emmeline is my sister, nor be insensible to the many perils by which her brilliant position is surrounded. She is, though a wife, still a child, poor dear; with much, much to learn in every way. My husband's engagements and prospects now engross so very much of my time, that I am quite unable, however desirous, to devote myself directly to Emmeline's improvement. She is, as you know is flatteringly alleged of all her family, rich in natural talent—indeed a singularly gifted creature,

and yet behind many inferior young ladies in the most ordinary accomplishments. I am ashamed to say she cannot even spell. These deficiencies can now only be remedied by friendship. We cannot send to school or procure a governess for the Countess St. Edward; and, in brief—for I like, as you know, to come at once to the point—it is the joint prayer and petition of Mr. Barker, my father, and myself, that our dear Mrs. Charles Herbert will take this darling of ours under her care; to no one else could we, with confidence, intrust so precious a charge."

"How do you mean, ma'am?—that I should be the instructor of the countess?"

"That you should be the preceptress, the guide, the friend, the guardian-angel, in a word, of the future Duchess of Plantagenet; and, in being so, the benefactress of her whole family: read with her, talk with her, sing with her, cultivate her mind and polish her manners. You are aware how important a person in society Emmeline must become, and how much, as Barker remarks, even in a public view, depends upon her being qualified to play her part with ability and distinction. Money, patronage, influence,—the Plantagenets command them all; but I know your benevolent and disinterested nature, Violet, and am come to entreat, not to bribe, you to be Emmeline's friend."

"Your idea is very flattering, certainly; but, supposing I were qualified for the task you propose, my other duties—my husband—"

"Ah, I knew it would land in 'my husband,'" replied Mrs. Barker, with vivacity; "that you would be quite a pattern wife; but surely, while your husband spends nearly his whole time in chambers, you might spare a few hours at my house every, or say every alternate morning with Emmy."

"At your house?" replied Violet, taken aback.

"Yes, sure; but the carriage should be sent for you and back with you as often as you honoured us, and you would have the countess all to yourself. I am otherwise engaged in the mornings. You might have whatever masters you chose also, both for yourself and your pupil. Suffer me to call Emmeline so—you cannot refuse me."

"I must, at all events, consult my husband and Mrs. Herbert, before forming so important an engagement."

"Ungracious lady! but I will not despair of you. Conceive, too, Violet, how important

such a connexion may prove to the future interests of your husband. The Plantagenets are not only in rank *crème de la crème*, but so enormously rich, with canals and mines, and all sorts of things on the earth and under it,—and with all manner of influence in Church and State,—that to be connected with their family assures fortune. The tutor of St. Edward's late father is now a bishop, solely by the family interest. I shall doubt if St. Edward's tutor find equal luck, through the Duke's means at least; but I see papa is getting fidgety, and we have intruded most unconscionably on Mrs. Herbert:—what a charming, youthful-looking, lady-like person she is! Ah, you remember, long ago, into what tribulation I put you, when we kept possession of her carriage one day. She has no carriage now, poor lady! Well, Violette,—pardon the freedom, I cannot forget the old familiar name,—don't grieve and disappoint us all. This is Friday. I shall be back on Monday to carry you off to Emmeline, I hope."

"There is a dear creature!" cried the young countess, kissing her friend; "you are coming to see us on Monday. Do you know, St. Edward cannot endure to see me kiss my brother Barker, nor even Polly there; so I do it the more just to tease him."

"The Plantagenets are a very undemonstrative family," said Mrs. Barker. "I believe that cake of starch—his grandam, the duchess—never kissed the poor boy in her life, nor allowed any one else; he has had a singular education."

With a profusion of cordial adieus, the party took leave, the countess kissing her hand to Violet, who stood at her window while the carriage remained in sight.

Mrs. Herbert was stunned, amused, and then meditative, over the intelligence which Violet, in all feminine haste, communicated to her.

"It gives me a better opinion of the woman's understanding that she has conceived such an idea," said Mrs. Herbert. "The countess, too, is really a sweet little creature; it were every way a pity that she should be lost."

"Could I save her? She has, indeed, many good natural points of character; but how many chances are there against her becoming either a happy or a respectable woman!"

Both ladies spent some minutes in musing, if not in thought; occupied by the same subject, though it did not precisely suggest the same reflections to each.

The silence was first broken by Mrs. Herbert. "Thank goodness, we are rid of these encroaching, almost impudent, Brabazons, any way. I could despise myself for the silliness which led me to submit to Mrs. Brabazon."

"Yet the motive is so laudable—the desire to improve her daughters."

"At the expense of your time and health. We owe justice to our neighbour, as well as affection to our children."

"Perhaps she would have paid for their lessons, had she thought I would not have been affronted," said Violet, half laughing, again feeling her way; "which I am sure I ought not to be, if the reward of my labours were fairly earned."

"Why, Violet, business flows upon you. Here is the offer of another, and noble pupil. What a blessing, dear Violet, you might prove to that young woman, and, through her, to a wide circle!—yet the thing is impossible."

"The adjective of fools, *Maman*," replied Violet, who had, half in fondness, half in play, adopted her husband's caressing name for his stepmother; "though I fear that, in this instance, we that are *wise* must submit to it. My two hours, or four hours a-day, spent with this wayward, spoiled child, whose head is at present turned with the low flattery of her selfish family and her mercenary servants, and with what she and they consider her amazing good fortune, could scarce even impart much greater proficiency in a showy accomplishment than she already possesses; while the only effectual teaching—*'the precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little'* of a thorough moral education,—would indeed be impossible. How fine, by the way, are those emphatic repetitions of the prophet, who, in one verse, expounds the true principle of moral training much better than all the modern treatises."

"I can easily perceive, that although love to your neighbour should actuate you—and it could be no other motive that would induce you to make the required sacrifice—the attempt, if conducted on Mrs. Barker's plan, would end only in disappointment. My late maid, Jenkins—were there no other evil influence around the simple-cunning, hoyden countess—would, in five minutes, undo your teaching and example of a week; so we will dismiss the subject. I am not sure that Charles would, upon any consideration, have consented."

"I wish he were here, then, to not consent," sighed Violet; "and he won't till to-morrow. The truth is, I have been secretly fretting all the week, and so I am sure have you, after the observation you made on his looks when he left us on Monday morning. What a changed life to poor Charles!—poring over law-books, in those dull chambers, from morn to night—reading such stuff so many hours a day—he who, till now, spent half his time on horseback, or in the open air. What a want it must be to a man, accustomed from childhood to riding exercise, to be without a horse!—yet it seems a trifle in itself. Let us, however, be candid with each other, and say what we think of him. We will both be the better for speaking out."

"Then I must say, that I see no immediate cause for uneasiness, much less for apprehension: though, since the sultry weather has set in, Charles certainly does not look quite his former self."

"I was sure of that—he is killing himself;" and Violet, already worn out, and weak in spirits, burst into tears; and while Mrs. Herbert gently soothed her, and yet permitted her passion of grief to exhaust itself, she strove to check her feelings, and at last spoke out what had for some time lain heavy on her heart.

"If we cannot contrive to make poor Charles's long tasks lighter and safer to him, by some home exertion, then you must join your entreaties to mine, that he will give up his present harassing pursuits, and adopt some scheme of life which shall not be ruinous to his health and to the happiness of all of us. What signifies what it may be, if we are well and together. In my own poor little Jersey, in some of the new Australian colonies—where there are no convicts—we could even, with our small remaining wrecks of fortune, plant ourselves comfortably; ay, and take root and flourish again!"

"If I see that your fears are just—that Charles is really suffering in health from his close and long studies—my entreaties shall not be wanting; but until this lawsuit, on which so much now depends, is determined, we are chained to London and the oar. If you are found an heiress, my love, which I do hope, as I well believe, whatever the law may decide, we may neither need to leave England, nor allow Charles to kill himself: that we sha'n't do, at all events."

Violet tried to smile, but shook her head, saying, "Sometimes I wish that suit had never been commenced. To think of the

large sums that good, kind Marion has advanced—prodigious in her estimation, and for her circumstances, they must be—and they may never be repaid."

"Hush, hush, my dear! You know Mrs. Marion won't let you speak of these things—that generous poor woman! Indeed, if it ease your conscience, I may inform you, that she lately told me, in confidence, she only advanced for this suit what she intended to leave you by will—a legacy of £500; so the loss will be yours and Charles's, not hers, she says, if the money is thrown away at law. But she has unbounded faith in Mr. Gryphon's judgment; and is reassured by the advances which that shrewd gentleman has himself made for what he cannot therefore consider a forlorn hope."

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the postman, who gave Irish Bridget a foreign letter, addressed to Mrs. Herbert, after Biddy had in vain, to the great amusement of the listeners, volubly endeavoured to beat him down from what she considered the exorbitant sum of 2s. 8d. "for so small a concern of a letter."

"Bother to him! it would need to bring good news to be worth the money," said this faithful ally, delivering the epistle, "though a black sale is on it."

The letter, intimating an important event, came from a humble quarter: it was written by a young woman, whom, from having the highest opinion of her character and qualifications, Mrs. Herbert had some years before recommended to Lady Laura Temple, and who now ventured to announce the sudden death of the Earl of Tarbert, and the consequent deep distress of her mistress, to the only friend that, so far as the young woman knew, Lady Laura possessed in England. Without near relations, living much abroad, and naturally of a reserved and rather haughty disposition, which disappointed hopes had not softened, Lady Laura was an instance not rare, among the higher aristocracy, of an individual with a very numerous general or visiting acquaintance, but with few or no intimates, and scarce one friend of her own rank. She had outlived the companionships of her girlhood, and had found nothing satisfactory to her mind or heart with which to replace them. When her father, after having that morning been at the Court of the Emperor, died suddenly while engaged with her in a game of chess, and before medical assistance could be obtained, her only and passionate entreaty to the physician of

the embassy, as soon as she was able to speak, was, that he should give strict orders that no one should be allowed to see her—that she should be left solely to her confidential maid, until she intimated to him that she was able to endure the ceremonial of the condolence and sympathy of her friends. The dreadful shock which her nerves had received, from her father, in what seemed perfect health, suddenly expiring of what was said to be disease of the heart, for a time blunted every other feeling; nor had she manifested any interest about what gave her few English friends in Vienna considerable concern. Poverty, nay, destitution, or at least dependence, was known to be her fate. The affairs of her father had long been embarrassed. His estates, on his death, went at once to the male heir; and he was engaged in a lawsuit which, if it issued as was now apprehended, must still further increase his family embarrassments. For some time, his salary as an ambassador had been his main dependence, and that of course terminated with his life. Letters of an unfavourable nature, received from his London agent on the day of his death, had, it was too probable, hastened the catastrophe.

The brief letter, in which some part of this intelligence was respectfully intimated by the humble, though the truest and most devoted friend that the high-born Laura now possessed, strongly affected Mrs. Herbert; and her emotion, in hastily perusing the note, alarmed Violet, who rose and quickly crossed to where she sat.

"Don't fancy it idle or impertinent curiosity," she said, leaning over the agitated reader; "your friend, your *daughter*, your *sister* cannot witness your grief and agitation, and affect ignorance. Does this—O tell me!—does it affect Herbert,—for nothing, sure, less than that could so distress you?"

Mrs. Herbert had before playfully remarked, that every symptom of distress which visited any of the human race with whom Violet came into contact, was at first sight imagined to be connected with her husband; that she seemed to fancy there could be no earthly suffering nor sorrow, save from real or apprehended evil to Charles.

"Not Charles, thank God! but one—; but read for yourself. . . . Poor, poor Laura! Proud, unhappy Laura! crushed in affection, ruined in fortune."

Tears prevented her from proceeding; and Violet read the letter put into her hand with the rapidity of thought. Her proud rival,

her noble cousin, her *unfortunate* rival, her *orphan* cousin, friendless in a foreign land,—an object of compassion to her own servant, who had plainly, if delicately, stated that she knew not what her lady was to do, as she must leave the hotel which her father had rented, and probably Vienna, as soon as the remains of the earl were sent to England; and further, that cruel-hearted people, creditors of the earl, would even prevent her from taking her own jewels and other property along with her, though they were all she now had in the world. The faithful girl was not aware that, though none of the rich and aristocratic friends of the late Earl and of Lady Laura could afford to relieve her present distress, or secure her future independence, by their own means, they were too good-hearted to abandon her without a strong effort to procure her a pension,—the only mode of provision which, as they said, would not wound her delicacy, which every other offer of pecuniary assistance must do. With streaming eyes Violet laid down the letter, and turned to Mrs. Herbert, crying—“You will go for her—you and Charles—and bring home your friend, my cousin, to us. Is she not one of ourselves now? Poor Lady Laura! so noble in spirit she is! I am sure my endeavours shall not be wanting to make her like me,—and you and Charles she loves already. Where can she find such a refuge for sorrow, such hope of consolation, as here with us?”

“You are, Violet, the best and dearest creature that ever breathed, even when you talk what the world calls nonsense. . . . But if, my love, this suit ends, as it seems more and more likely to do, though Lady Laura may have no legal claim upon you and Charles, how I could envy your power of acting as nobly by her, as she of herself would have done by you! But this, I need not say: your heart needs no prompting. You are aware of my old, foolish, ambitious scheme for Charles, which it pleased God in mercy to disappoint. Laura Temple was deeply attached to my son, who admired and revered her. It is needless to conceal from you what you must already know; but she has all a proud and delicate woman’s passionate strength of character, as well as a reflecting woman’s understanding. The dream my folly inspired is past with her and forgotten; and I prophesy that, of the two, she will like you the best as soon as she knows you, and is known to you: but to fetch her home to this—not *poor*—to this charming

small residence,—this—not paltry, but what her world, and perhaps her unconscious self, must regard as this obscure, and paltry, and mean, and poverty-struck establishment—”

Mrs. Herbert emphatically shook her head.

“You take me quite aback,” said Violet, with some dignity. “We can only offer what we have. If *our* home, with all that devoted sympathy can imagine to sweeten it, and render her lot as happy as circumstances admit, cannot be made agreeable—”

“Agreeable!” interrupted Mrs. Herbert. “Certainly a thousand times more so, in reality, than a pension and apartments in Hampton Court, under the leads, even if Laura were so fortunate as to obtain them; but what will her Grace of Fitzgrundy say?—for she is almost as formidable in May Fair, as is Mrs. Grundy herself in the city and suburbs.”

“Pooh! ’tis little that Laura, if she be indeed the Laura I fancy her, will care for that contemptible scarecrow of the mean-spirited and cowardly. But, hark! that is Charles’s ring;—I know it so well! Can he be worse? what has brought him to-night?” And, without waiting for reply, she ran down stairs while Bridget, who happened to be on duty, admitted her master, with welcome grinning from ear to ear.

Mrs. Herbert was for an instant uneasy; but the appearance of her son in apparently perfect health, and in evidently high spirits, at once reassured her.

“How delightful to anticipate your time, this week especially, when Violet was foolishly making herself uneasy about you,” said Mrs. Herbert, a little anxious to learn what particular cause had brought Charles to Chelsea.

“I am charged with a special commission—we are a family of high destinies! Go, Bridget, get me a prodigious draught of cider—your mistresses’ favourite tippale—or say, even small beer—for I am thirsty as the Great Desert; and only when refreshed shall undo my fardel:—and by the way, Mr. Gryphon is to dine with you to-morrow, ladies, by self-invitation.”

“Sorrow drop ov small beer, sir,” said Bridget. “Sure, when you come so far to see the ladies, it shall be the wine and wather, or the brown stout, at the laste of it;” and Bridget bustled off.

“See what it is to be a man of consequence—the head of a household!” said Herbert, laughing. “When I was a fashionable and

a supposed wealthy bachelor, no one cared what I ate or drank, or whether I were well or ill——"

"But, Herbert, what has given us this pleasure?—and to see you in so good spirits! Mr. Gryphon has good news for us, perhaps," said Mrs. Herbert, while Violet still held his hand, and watched his eyes, rejoicing in his joy, but somewhat fearful about how he was to receive the news which Mrs. Herbert had to communicate.

"Gryphon has news, but not of the kind you anticipate. Would you like to resume your carriage again?—hey, mother?—to have a mansion and an establishment of servants—a stud—a library—a park?"

"You are raving, Charles; or, rather, fooling me. Who is to do all this for us?"

"Nor more nor other than the TALENTED FAMILY of Cryppes."

"Now you are joking, Charles;—a wicked jest, though——"

"Serious, on my honour!"

"Barker wishes you to engage in some of his dark concerns, perhaps?—Fie, Charles! to trifle with us," said Violet, who knew that to Mrs. Herbert some of the things of which he talked so lightly were no trifles.

"Not Barker, but Gryphon."

Both ladies raising their hands simultaneously, exclaimed, "Mr. Gryphon!"

"He, indeed!—the cautious, well-informed, astute Gryphon; nay, I may perhaps get into Parliament—your old dream, again, mother."

"I have—I have always had the highest opinion of the friendliness and judgment of Mr. Gryphon," replied the bewildered lady. "But, dear Charles, don't tantalize us too much—if the whole is not some malicious pleasantry."

"Never was more true, if more serious, in the course of my life. But Mr. Gryphon will tell you all about it to-morrow. You will believe him, if not me, that I have the power of throwing law to the dogs, and becoming bear-leader to the grandson of that Most High and Potent Prince, Geoffrey Richard, Duke of Plantagenet! with liberal appointments and the most brilliant prospects, or at least promises, when my illustrious pupil shall pass from my guardian hands."

Mrs. Herbert again threw up her hands, and turned her meaning eyes on Violet.

"Nay, more, thrice-fortunate ladies!—while I am to have charge of the young earl,

you may have the management of the little countess. It is a joint-stock affair. My mother first lady of the bed-chamber—my wife principal governess."

"You are forestalled, Charles," said Violet, laughing; "I have had that offer already, though perhaps from another quarter—from Mrs. Burke Barker this very day."

"Another quarter, assuredly; for what seemed to me to be considered the main, if not indeed the only, indispensable condition of my engagement, was, that no Cryppes, nor any breathing thing connected with that clever blood, should in any shape approach my noble charge, or the 'young person' connected with him. . . . Their Graces will never be able to call Emmeline Cryppes St. Edward's wife, let the church and the law say what they please."

The affair now assumed a very different aspect in the eyes of Mrs. Herbert. At a glance she perceived ten thousand advantages, present and prospective, to her family, from such an arrangement.

"And what have you done, Charles?—what is concluded?"

"Nay, mother, that either requires a very great deal of consideration, or just none at all. But Mr. Gryphon insists upon you and Violet hearing what he has to say, before I decide. I came to warn, and promised that I was not to prejudice either of you. Mr. Gryphon is negotiator on the part of the Duke, whom I have not yet seen, and probably shall not."

"Very serious consideration indeed, Charles, is required. This offer may change the whole complexion of your life. When I visited the splendid place the Duke has in Staffordshire, the mansion of his chamberlain was pointed out to us. He is a gentleman of estate and family himself; he lives in quite a superior style, and was in Parliament."

"O, mother, mother!" replied Herbert, laughing; "I see Gryphon will have an ally in you."

"Whoever affords you the means of honourably retrieving your fortunes, Charles, will have a most grateful friend in me."

"That is the house of Cryppes, ma'am; I assure you it is so."

"Yet that house does not command my gratitude. But, seriously, my dear son—my dearest Violet—this is a most important affair. What do you think of it?"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE Privy-council, held at the tea-table of the little villa in the neighbourhood of Chelsea, to deliberate upon the splendid and tempting offers, covertly made to Charles Herbert and his wife, upon condition of their assuming the guardianship and tutelage of a future duke and duchess, ended, like many other and weightier deliberations, in nothing perfectly satisfactory to any party. A salary of his own naming, and the most liberal appointments that he could desire, were flatteringly offered to Herbert and the ladies, whose valuable friendship the Duke of Plantagenet had the good sense to wish to secure for the partner of his unhappy heir, and for what he now considered his doomed family.

Of Herbert the Duke had formerly heard the highest character from his late friend, the Earl of Tarbert, as well as from his confidential solicitor, Mr. Gryphon; and, to make assurance doubly sure, he had made private inquiries at Cambridge among individuals of high standing, who had been thoroughly acquainted with the habits, attainments, and character of Herbert, when he studied there.

The result was perfectly satisfactory, even down to the "slight supposed tendency to Whig politics;" the Plantagenets being, if not Whigs, yet patrons of that party. His Grace became hourly more earnest and anxious in the affair; and, as he had determined not to see his undutiful grandson himself until some distant period, if ever, he was the more desirous to have the self-willed, headstrong, and ruined youth placed in safe custody, and, if possible, beyond seas, and out of the reach of those strange, low, and worthless adventurers with whom he had so disgracefully connected himself. The Duke had, though most reluctantly, abandoned the hope of being able to set aside the Scottish marriage. Lawyers and family friends were agreed as to the deplorable fact, that the union must now be held valid. He could therefore only console himself with the project of bringing in a bill to amend the Marriage Act, so far as it related to noble families; and he empowered Mr. Gryphon to offer Herbert *carte blanche*, and appointed the next day but one, at twelve o'clock, to see that gentleman, and conclude the affair. "And the ladies of his family, sir," said the Duke, condescending to rise and follow the man of business to the door of the library, "instead of being an obstacle, as in such arrangements women too often are, I consider not the least

desirable parties to my scheme for the salvation of my unfortunate relation—if it be still possible to save him. The elder Mrs. Herbert is, I am informed, a well-bred, well-informed woman, of strict principles, and a member of the Church of England; the wife an accomplished and amiable young person, and a very pretty person too, I am told, of lady-like manners—and the *blood* relation of my late kinsman, Tarbert. In the unhappy and ever-to-be-regretted circumstances of my family, the duchess and myself imagine that we could not have chosen better." The Duke was certainly very well informed on these points, and, moreover, his informer now stood, hat in hand, at his elbow; a circumstance which, with many of the sort, he was, like other exalted personages, apt to forget; the knowledge for which he was indebted to others, often seeming, and in perfect unconscionness, to have come to him by intuition or inspiration, in virtue of his rank and birth. On this principle, the Duke had most innocently appropriated several rather important discoveries in agricultural chemistry, communicated to him by an ingenious man in want of a noble and influential patron. By his essays on *mangel wurzel* and *bone dust*, published in certain "Agricultural Transactions," he had accordingly established a considerable reputation as a spirited improver and patron of economical science. He had once been engaged in an amicable controversy with "my friend Davy," as he condescendingly called Sir Humphrey, and had personally superintended the preparation of the first batch of oil-cakes seen in his county. It was the more vexatious that so public-spirited and really well-meaning a nobleman, ever watchful for the public advantage, should be so crossed in his private affairs.

"Your Grace has, in this important affair, shown your usual discretion and perspicacity," replied Mr. Gryphon, to the above intimation of the Duke's pleasure. "And I make no question, but Mr. Charles Herbert and the ladies will be most happy to meet and forward your views for the advantage of Lord and Lady St. Edward."

"*Lady St. Edward!*—don't, my good Mr. Gryphon, I entreat, let the duchess hear you thus name that—that—young person. Spare the feelings of that dear woman, whose every hope was wrapped up in this foolish but ever-loved boy. And lose no time, my good sir!" he continued, graciously waving his hand, in token that Gryphon was dismissed. "I will see Mr. Herbert the day after to-morrow,

at twelve precisely. The whole of the intervening time is required to frame the instructions by which I wish him to conduct himself — my little *hints* and ideas, in fact: for I would not for worlds appear to dictate to the gentleman I intrust with the care of St. Edward."

"Instructions!" thought Gryphon. "I must be *mum* on that head, or Herbert, restive enough already, will bolt at once."

The Duke very long before—before, indeed, coming to the title and estates, by the death of his elder brother—had, for five months, held office as a principal Secretary of State, which had given him an inveterate itch or small passion for scribbling all manner of "instructions" to his steward, his foresters, his game-keepers, and, failing those, to his dairy, poultry, and laundry women, in the making of cheeses, hatching ducklings, and getting up fine linen. "Instructions" for the direction of Herbert in the delicate and onerous office in which he was, at the same time, to be left entirely free and uncontrolled, was a more difficult task. It had, however, the happy effect of restoring his Grace to a more equable humour than he had shown since the intelligence of the elopement had driven the gout from his great toe to his stomach, and from his stomach to menace his head.

When the long and dreary solemnities of his dinner were got through, he courteously requested the duchess to hear, and give her opinion of the jottings he had made towards the proper extension of the important document, the final drawing up of which was to be intrusted to his private secretary, and which, before he next saw Gryphon, filled some hundred pages of open wide-margined manuscript, written in a fair hand, and properly secured with demi-official red tape. It was almost a pity that his Grace's voluminous piece of codification, for the education of a young nobleman and his wife, should have been next to thrown away: for it contained, on minor points, many useful remarks, and also various minute directions, which amazingly tickled the humour of Mr. Gryphon, who mightily doubted whether Dame Nature might not show herself too strong and perverse for his Grace's compulsory legislation. Nor were the formality, minuteness, and stringency of the duke's code to be blamed for Herbert's rejection of the offer made him, as he had taken that resolution before he had heard any thing of these copious "instructions." He had been the less rash in his decision, as his

step-mother had evidently set her heart upon his closing with a proposal which would at once, in her language, not only reinstate him in his natural place in society, but from the patronage of the Plantagenets open the most brilliant prospects to a laudable and manly ambition.

While, at the family tea-table privy-council to which we have alluded, Charles and his mother debated the advantages and disadvantages attending the scheme, — both, with great ingenuity and animation, maintaining the side which each respectively favoured — Violet, apparently fancying that she was sewing, and sincerely believing herself perfectly unbiassed, alternately turned her sweet and earnest eyes to each speaker, though they probably lingered the longest on Charles, whose arguments seemed quite irrefragable. Independence—a *home* which, however humble, was all one's own,—ah! these were social blessings beyond all others; and they were not to be found in any species of courtier-life, nor yet beneath any noble patron's roof. Yet again she could fancy Mrs. Herbert in the right. How true it was that poor Charles might wear out long years in irksome preparation for a profession to which he surely could never give his heart, and in which he might, after all, fail, as many an able man had done! Mrs. Herbert now hinted this for the first time, and as her last argument—and drove Violet to sea afresh. True, Charles said that he had conquered the worst drudgery of law, and began to feel something like pleasure in his dry technical studies; and it was most unlikely that he, with his brilliant parts and unremitting perseverance, would fail. Every one admired and appreciated Charles. Only there might be much intervening drudgery, and a long time to hang on and fag; while he might at once, by closing with the Duke of Plantagenet's proposal, be raised to an easy and honourable position—restored to those indulgences and luxuries which habit had made almost necessary, manfully as he had renounced them. And then the dazzling future prospect! Some high, perhaps official situation—who so fit as Herbert to occupy one profitably!—a seat in Parliament—who better qualified by knowledge, eloquence, and liberal principles, to be of eminent service to the country, as a public representative and legislator!—besides the ability to provide easily and handsomely for a family, which was becoming a frequent consideration with a thoughtful young wife, about to become a mother.

When Mrs. Herbert, the last speaker, finally dwelt upon the incessant toil, harassment, and responsibility attending the most brilliant and prosperous professional career, Violet's work fairly dropt on her knee, and she wondered to herself what new objection Charles could make to reasoning so conclusive.

"One thing is wanting, mother," he replied; "but it includes all: I should not be my own master. Independence!

Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye!

the path which he points does not, I suspect, lie through the slippery saloons of either princes or dukes."

"If, by this appointment, you were to forfeit, nay, endanger, your perfect and entire independence, not another word is to be said," replied Mrs. Herbert; "though I own I cannot see it."

"The independence of any man who, at the end of a few years, is left to the kindness of the most grateful noble patron the world ever saw, is in imminent jeopardy. My pupil cannot remain always a boy, nor I a tutor. I should tremble for the time when it might be expected that the master must, in order to please and prosper, become, if not a sycophant, yet a being who must surrender all liberty of action, all freedom of thought, for 'a morsel of bread,' and that uncertain too. It comes exactly to this:—If I am in Parliament by the duke's influence, I must be of the duke's politics and party; if I, confessing myself totally without a vocation, and regarding the idea as little less than blasphemous presumption, were to get a fat living in the Church by the duke's influence, I must be of the duke's and the Church's faith. No, no; common sense and common honesty, wisdom and self-respect, say that I must plod on—stick to the oar."

Violet, though with a little sigh, shook her ringlets in confirmation of this brave decision, which appeared quite incontrovertible.

"You are too far-seeing and fine-drawn for me to-night, Charles," said Mrs. Herbert, in a tone just shaded by pettishness. "I believe the Duke of Plantagenet is a man of liberal feelings, most anxious, certainly, for the good of his grandson, the heir and sole representative of all his family honours, and also that he fully appreciates you. I conclude that I may believe him when he says, as Mr. Gryphon has stated to you, that the obligation will lie on his side, and that of his family; and that the sacrifice of your professional

expectations ought and must be required in some substantial and permanent way."

"All most fair and honourable, my dearest mother, though I fear your generous thoughts do dukes, and all the inferior orders of mankind, a great deal too much honour. But of the duke himself I am not afraid. His anxiety in this matter, knowing his deep mortification as I do, is to me a strong proof of right judgment and of right heart. But there are the future duke and the future duchess, and their many *talented* relatives,—the discordant and evil influences that must at all times be in play to counteract whatever we might attempt for their improvement and honour,—these, I confess, fill me with dismay. In our own case we should surrender a *sure*, if limited, and perhaps very remote prospect, for a troubled uncertainty; and, too probably, find the ground, which it had taken years to gain, cut from under our feet in a night—worse than all, find our pains and cares absolutely thrown away upon a couple of self-willed incorrigible fools, whom no labour of ours could render respectable; since, I fear, nature in his case, and nature and circumstances in hers, make the matter hopeless to any teacher save old Experience. To him their young Graces, like all other mortals, may in time be found somewhat amenable."

"We'll think no more of it," said Violet, quickly and resolutely, and now plying her needle closely and swiftly; "I dare say the boy is spoilt. Emmeline Cripps has had much about her that should make her apology,—if an untaught girl of her age is responsible for any thing. Now, her destiny is in her husband's hands. She still loves him, and is proud, if not exactly of him, yet of being his wife."

"Of being his countess, you mean," replied Herbert. "But I must budge; I only came to warn you, mother, of the temptations and fascinations of Mr. Gryphon, who has set his heart upon making all our fortunes by this great cast—absolutely upon our being conjoint bear-leaders and people of affairs to this young lord, and likewise lady—perhaps some little, but only a very little—for Gryphon is a most friendly man—to keep a future rich client out of the clutches of Mr. Burke Barker, who might direct him to a very different man of business. A rich young duke is a prize worth trying for. Have a good dinner for honest Gryphon any way: he is too much of a genuine philosopher of this world to forget the comfortable

present in the brilliant future. He enjoys a good dinner, and he is self-invited. . . . But if I see aright in this *gloamin'* light, here comes Marion, sweating up the gravel-walk with such a basketful!"

That faithful ally was already in the hall, and in loud communing with the Irish brevet-cook; and Violet, whom Mrs. Herbert sometimes fancied, if not quite forgetful of dignity and propriety, yet somewhat precipitate in her motions, flew down, as was her wont, to welcome her old friend.

"How did I come? I got a cast by water. My lading? It's a Tweed saumon, hinny; and a sma' cag o' the pickled saumont roe Mr. Gryphon and some folk prized so highly. I mind when we threw all such guts, garbage, and sosseries down Tweed; and now it is sent far and near in compliments between gentle folks. So I met Mr. Gryphon in the Strand this morning, and he stopt me, which he seldom does, for he is aye in a hurry:— 'Mrs. Linton,' he was pleased to say, 'have you any commands for your friend, Mrs. Charles Herbert? I am to dine with her to-morrow.' So, kennin' Tweed saumon was reckoned a great daintith, I thought maybe the leddy would be so good as accept my share, who, to say sooth, care little about delicates in the eating line, an it be not a dish of tey, when I have by chance a headache, or am tired going about my house agencies."

"You are too good, too considerate for your friends, Marion; you rob yourself to enrich others."

"Gae way, hinny! These orra things come cheap to me. I'm sometimes jalousing, that if I were a lone body in need, my north-country cousins might not be altogether so mindfu'. Lord pardon these uncharitable thoughts! which this overgrown wilderness of brick and mortar, where, in the daily and nightly strife going on, every ane comes in, like Harry Wynde, for his ain hand—put into a sinner's heart. . . . But I hope the mistress will not be offended by the freedom of my bit offering?"

"Offended! certainly not, with the considerate kindness of our best friend."

"Wishes to be so, anyhow; but the like of her, bred altogether in the lady-line, though a gentle, sweet woman, I'm no just so free to deal with as wi' yoursel, hinny; who, though ye may have better blude in your veins, ken and have seen far mair o' the world."

"I—seen more of life than Mrs. Herbert!" replied Violet, laughing.

"Ay, but 'deed have you—of the real, weary, battling, adverse world, ten times mair. But let me hang my cloak on the pin myself, hinny. . . . What kens the like o' her, in ordinar circumstances, but to eat their meat, and drink their drink, and busk themselves, and take their pleasure, and never speer where it a' comes from, or how long it is to last, more than that maze o' midges wheeling and waltzing this bonny warm night aboon these rose-bushes! What ken they o' the strife and sturt of this mortal schene, if it be not their play-houses and their spinettes; and the inside o' a millender's shop, or a kirk for an hour on a Sabbath forenoon, that's as like a theatre! The men o' them may pick up a little useful knowledge, if they are quick and heedful; but for the women,—poor, useless, vapourish dawdles!"

While Marion thus held forth, and laid aside her clogs, Violet smiled to think of the manner in which this "vulgar old Scots-woman's" contemptuous pity would be received by its fair objects, if they could possibly be made to comprehend any thing so incongruous and ridiculous.

"Then you do not envy fine ladies?"

"En—vy them! what for should I? Is it for the youth and beauty, fleeting at the best, which they do their utmost, by their goings on, to destroy?—or for the idleset which keeps them vapourish and dwining, when there is little the matter with them, till make-believe grows earnest at last?"

"You are unmerciful to the ladies, Marion; but do let me help you."

"They are unmerciful to themselves, and becoming a pest to society. While we had but a sample o' them, o' the real sort, that could afford such vanities, if ever an immortal being can afford to live with no more thought than a bird o' the air or a flower o' the field—a swatch o' them to act the part of hair-dresser dolls for the rest to busk themselves by, it was the less matter; but now, when all must push forward alike, the draper's wife cheekie-for-chowie with the duchess, the women's world seems standing with its heels where its head should be. I am mair than ordinar moved this evening. There's a couple come up from the north, that are lodgers in my neighbour's the tailor. Things have gone sore against them, I can learn. The poor man—and *it's* a vain silly creatur enough—has been ruined by some of these black bubble companies—that of Mr. Burke Barker, I believe: and the poor body is

half crazed. But in the wrack and ruin the ledly was spared her bits o' satin and gauze dud gowns,—(let's be thankfu'!)—and the tinsel hardware gear that kind o' women hing about their persons. So the one time she is in bed drinking tea, and sabbin' and gaspin' in the hysterics, and the other time dizened and dinked out in her auld faded frippery; and either way the yirm is never out o' her head. The poor little man! I could pity *it*,—one o' your sma'-boned, weazened, sharp-faced, cockney cuts—but a mettle creatur. And never a comfortable meal, or a word o' sympathy and cheering, from his tawpie helpmate; and, as I said, the yirm of discontent never out o' her head; though, believe his story, it was allenarly her pride and vanity brought them to the pass of giving up an honest, humble way of doin' for the grand Insurance agency and shares, and so forth, by which they were to make gowd in gowpens."

"Who is to make gold by handfuls, Mrs. Linton?" cried Herbert, leaning over the balustrade; "are you not coming up stairs to tell us the magic art?"

"Ah, Mr. Charles—naebody!—that is, naebody in an honest way. 'He that hasteneth to be rich shall not be innocent;' and that is a word that will hold while Time itself holds."

"I fear, Charles, the poor man, of whom Marion has been telling me, is the person at—who became agent for Barker's Assurance Company;" said Violet, as they ascended the stairs.

"What of him?" returned Herbert.

"What, but that he is a ruined and a desperate man," replied Marion. "A senseless, pridefu' creatur *it* may have been when the world was prospering wi' *it*. I can judge as much by the bits of airs it gives itself yet, betimes; but heartless and humbled enough now, poor bit mannikin, and driven daft and donnert by a handless, doingless, discontentit, repining companion; a wife being aye, Mr. Charles, either a crown of glory and a blessing to her husband, or a perpetual blister on his side."

"The same spruce, well-brushed, brisk little fellow, I fear, that bought my phaeton and horses?"

"The very same: it makes me angry and it makes me wae—I would you could hear him! But I have heard o' 'his carriage,' or else no! Ane might think he had been born with it on his back, like a snail's shell."

"What has brought Bigsby up to town?"

"To get justice, sir,—justice o' that unhanged villain Burke Barker, who has been the ruin of hundreds. But, think ye, he can even get sight o' him? No, no. And there will be mischief among them. The creatur can neither eat nor sleep—although he had any thing to eat—and the hopefu' pair never agree a minute, save when they happen to egg on one another's vanity in blastin' and blawin' about their past grandeur. But that will not pay Madam Snipson's—that's Jack Cryppes's auld frien's—lodgings. She is as real a whinstane as ever paved the streets o' Lon'on. Article by article has she pawned, for the poor senseless things, to pay herself; and now they are come to, whether next the ledly's bracelets or the gentleman's signet-ring on his little finger is to go up the spout—which is to go first! I left them hot at it when I came away. *Bracelets* will carry it, I think; but if *Signet-ring* does yield to his wife, he is, for certain, to be the death of Mr. Burke Barker. He swears that fifty times a-day; and I'll no say what black despair may rouse even yon small bulk to attempt.—Tread on a worm and it will turn. I am truly wae and vexed about the pair, if their provoking vanity would but let me; and would fain have Mr. Gryphon's opinion of their case."

The conversation now took a more general turn; and then Mrs. Linton, duly refreshed with her tea, spoke of returning to town. Marion, though expense was no longer an object to her, had never lost her original mountaineer contempt for the cockney indulgencies of the entire genus of hired conveyances and public street vehicles, save when the modern Omnibus performed for her, at a cheaper rate, the duty of a porter. When she announced her intention of walking to town, Mrs. Herbert, with considerable surprise exclaimed, "The whole distance!"

"And what is it on a fine summer night like this, but a recreation?"

"A fine, sultry, August evening, darkening rapidly, and threatening thunder," said Herbert. "There are, ma'am, but two ways of it: you came all this length with acceptable and seasonable gifts and offerings to please yourself; and now you shall either remain all night with my wife—I know the key of the garrison is safe in your pocket—"

"And pussey's supper provided," slid in Violet, coaxingly.

"I could swear to that: and so, ma'am, you shall either remain where you are, or

share my boat to any place you choose that is nearest home.—I am absolute."

"Aweel, aweel, Maister Charles—a wilfu' man must have his way. I may get worse bodes ere Beltane; and as hame I must be—I cannot get that Bigsby body out o' my mind—I must just close with your kind offer; that is, if you were really going to hire a pair of oars at any rate, and not going into the expense on my account."

"One pair, or ten pair, we shall do nothing unfitting the dignity of the ancient Scottish nation, and the incipient governor of a duke," said Herbert, buttoning his surtout, and speaking at his mother, who was thus provoked to throw in a few more last words on that overture, which, like a good proposal to an over-nice maiden, if once rejected, might never be repeated—probably to the proud damsel's life-long sorrow and repentance. Violet, meanwhile, fearing a renewal of a subject which might be unsatisfactory to all the parties, with innocent wiles, tried to turn the discourse, by again coaxing Marion to stay. She had so much more to tell her and ask her.

"Na, hinny sweet, dinna ask it," said the old woman, smiling her blandest; "for it's ill I like to refuse ye; and I have not slept out o' my ain wee bit hame yonder, in the heart's core o' Lon'on—I wonder what gives me the likin' for it—since I was the proud woman that, after long service with the fremit, was happy enough to own a hame o' my ain."

"It is because you won't break faith with pussey, that you unkindly refuse me," said Violet, in mirthful reproach.

"Not altogether. Ay, ye may laugh; but I believe the creature kens every word I say, and the very hour I promise to be back to her; for she'll snooze and sleep in the easy-chair till she hears the clock;—and my pussey, like mysel', is no aye sleepin' when she's winkin';—and then she'll jump down, and run scuddin' about the floor-head, miauing like a wud thing, and as if she were shod with walnuts:—who can tell what comes and goes in the head o' a dumb creature that has been weel treated, and made a friend and companion o'?"

"Pussey's faculties have been remarkably developed by high culture," said Herbert, laughing. "If there were still witches in the land, I know not what might he said of her and another; but I do owe her a spite to-night, since I believe she is the sole cause of your refusing to grant Violet's petition."

"It's not altogether pussey, Mr. Charles:—and your bonny lady must not be offended. I have refused half the nobility of England—the ladies o' them—and their housekeepers, to visit at their grand places and stay till I tired. It's no few o' them I have come across in my time; and they ken weel who can be serviceable to them; and some of them, which is rarer, ken, and are thankful, when they are weel served—no folk better. There's nae upsetting, unsavoury pride about them, like some of your sma'-beer, new-fangled gentles. But for a' that, they ken their ain place better than they understand the like of mine; and as I am just as independent o' them as they are o' me, I bide by fair good-e'en and fair good-morrow; and am aye ready and willing to requite courtesy with civility and obligingness."

"I know you have refused situations of great trust in several families of distinction," said Herbert.

"Howt ay, have I, half a score o' them, with the greatest grandes o' the batch, and might have made weel out by it, too; that is, if I were wise enough not to follow the fashion and buy a life annuity from Mr. Barker's office with my small savings.—But I aye liked my ain ingle-nook; and if I was a servant—and all must *serve*—it's the Prince o' Wales' motto: the king on his throne, the judge on his bench, must serve—but there's a choice o' masters; and if I was to be a servant, I preferred that it should be of the public at large."

"Exactly my idea of it, sensible Mrs. Marion," said Herbert. "What think you, mother, is comparable to one's own ingle-nook, and for a master,—the public at large?"

"I see no similarity whatever in the cases, Charles," replied Mrs. Herbert. "What we talked of supposed no dependent, no *menial* capacity."

"Ay, so they said," put in Marion, not exactly comprehending what was meant. "You will be entirely your own mistress, quite independent, Mrs. Linton.' But thank your ladyship, or your lordship, as the case might be. I ken ower weel what perfect independence means. It's a stubborn plant that same to grow in a fremit soil; and seldom thrives for the poor man, if the rich has a hand in the culture."

"I should have guessed you for the sort of person who would choose to be your own master," said Herbert.

"Because ye think me a dour, thrawn, headstrong auld wife," replied Marion, laugh-

ing, "that must have my own way, and will no bear to be contradicted; and it may be sae; but still and on,

Ah, freedom is a noble thing,
It makes a man to be a king.

Ye remember, Mrs. Charles, hinny, what our country poet says? But freedom does mair: it makes a king to be a man—and yon bit sky-parlour in Fleet Street a blithesomer, brighter bit, than my Lord Duke of Plantagenet's braw housekeeper's room, or the hail suite o' damasque chaumers that are a' at her command in his grand castle."

Mrs. Herbert had never listened to Marion's eloquence with so little profit or patience as upon this occasion. She wondered more than ever how her young friends, but especially Charles, could listen with so much apparent satisfaction to this egotistical chattering in a barbarous dialect. Something might be due to the old lady's clannish attachment; but the Waverley novels, which had smitten the young world with enthusiastic admiration, real or affected as it might be, for Scottish scenery, Scottish music, plaid ribbons, and smoked whisky, had the credit of having done the rest. It was not easy, she owned, for an Englishwoman to understand it all; and she could only hope that Charles might not live to repent.

The night was sultry and louring, but calm and still, when Charles Herbert and his sage companion embarked at Chelsea Bridge; the courteous cavalier who, at a brighter hour, might not have courted close observation, taking the greatest care of his fair charge. Marion's apprehensions of being run down in the dark by the passing craft, were not altogether without foundation; but, by and by, the sky cleared, and a young harvest moon showed a portion of its broad ruddy face. Many years had elapsed since Marion had enjoyed a frequent and clear sight of the well-remembered orb; and she was endeavouring to give Charles an idea of what a harvest moon really was, as seen in Scotland, and in particular when rising among the hills of Teviotdale, when her worst fears of perils by water were almost realized.

But before we can accompany the voyagers, we are called for a short time to another group, and now claim our privilege of looking round and shifting the scene to a handsomely, or more correctly, a sumptuously furnished dining saloon, in which sat Mr. and Mrs. Barker, *tête-à-tête*—servants counting as nothing in high life at dinner. Both

parties here, however, considered servants so much something, that an effort at lively disengaged talk was from time to time made, though both were moody, or, as the silent observers said, "wastly glum."

The well-cut features of Mr. Barker wore an expression of harassing anxiety and corroding care; he looked almost haggard; and, colourless at all times, he was now deathly pale; his complexion contrasting strangely with that of his lady, whose bold black eyes absolutely flared like flambeaux, over her highly rouged cheeks, as she stealthily watched the countenance of her husband, and from time to time addressed to him some trivial sentence, on the selfsame principle which makes Lady Macbeth, in the banquet scene, endeavour, by overacted courtesy, to cover the abstraction of her perturbed and moody lord. Here there were present only two most respectful servants. Those, however, are happy families who have nothing at any time to conceal from those nobodies, their valets. At last the cloth was taken away; the dessert and wines were placed on the table; and "the gentleman out of livery," or butler, adjusted an elegant screen to protect the glowing face of his lady from the scorching fire; touched the wicks of some of the wax-lights with a light, knowing hand, and glancing round to see that all was in high order, withdrew, leaving the silent pair to unwatched conversation. Mrs. Barker first stole, on the tip of her velvet Parisian slipper, across the room, gently opened the door, found that all was snug, and shutting it, quietly resumed her place, and threw herself back in her chair, waiting until her husband should first speak. He was sunk in reverie, but frequently helped himself to wine, and yet as if unconscious of what he was about. Barker usually allayed his wine with a good deal of Thames—but not to-night.

"Have you seen St. Edward to-day?" asked Mrs. Barker at last.

"No."

"Did you meet Sir George Lees?"

"No; d—n him!—he is shirking me, the selfish scoundrel.—St Edward, too—I don't know what it means; I looked for him twice at the club—at his hotel—in the Park—"

"Could you indeed ride to-day with so much business to annoy you, Barker?"

"Pshaw.—But Emmeline was with you I understand. Have you been at the Herberts? Have you prevailed with Herbert's wife to accede to my plan?"

"Prevail with her, indeed!—oh, simple man, if you could but know what you are saying! Yes, the Herberts will be ready enough to take my sister out of our hands.—Cunning, deceitful hypocrites! . . .

You pique yourself on your penetration, sir; are you prepared to hear, that while you fancied yourself most secure, a mine is ready to spring at your feet, which may overwhelm you? Yes, Barker, you may stare; but the game which has cost us so much trouble is fairly in the hands of these Herberts, unless you instantly fall upon some measure to counteract their projects."

"You speak in riddles, ma'am. Deign to be explicit; and for once straightforward,—if you can."

"If I can! but I will keep my temper, Barker, be as insulting as you will. You have made yourself more the object of my pity than resentment."

"Thanks, gracious madam! and now proceed, pray, and keep as near to the unvarnished truth as possible."

"Do not provoke me, Barker: have I not enough to endure?" and the lady applied her laced and embroidered French handkerchief to her moist eyes; yet so heedfully as not to discompose her artificial complexion. It was not customary for Mrs. Barker to wear rouge in her own house or at small parties, but she had been for some days looking yellow and bilious, and was at this time compelled to look her best, as, in the storm of fate, her husband did his boldest.

"That frantic creature from the north, that Bigsby, who has so often been attempting to see you, annoyed me again this morning. I was compelled to threaten to commit him, but that made matters worse; and, to prevent exposure before the servants, I was obliged to promise that you would see him this evening, and I expect him every minute—"

"Most considerate! He, that person, must be cared for—but never mind him now. Your brother Edmund is likely to call to-night? he likes to have his pill-box on the pavé at all hours."

"I expect Edmund: you are aware of the delicate condition of the countess——. I wish to hear every day what he thinks of her."

"O ay, true—which leads to the main point—the Herberts. I have never yet been able to convince you, Maria, of the importance of obtaining Mrs. Charles Herbert's care for your sister. It will be the salvation of the girl, if any thing can save

her, and of all depending—of all *interested*, I mean, in her proper conduct." Barker would not willingly have permitted the wife of his bosom to perceive how much he felt himself dependent on the noble connexion his address had achieved for her sister.

"You will be gratified, sir, ay, to your heart's content!" replied Mrs. Barker, bitterly enunciating these words from between her set teeth: "O, Barker, how cruel is this corroding scorn with which you speak to me of my family—of my sister! . . . What think you Emmeline has confessed to me?—I have been in utter misery till you came in, sending over all the town, and bursting during this tedious dinner."

"More, I presume, of that d——d groom-boy—that former lover of hers? By the Eternal! I could kill her with my own hand!" hissed forth Barker, clenching his hands and teeth; while his naturally pale complexion became livid with the strife of deadly passions.

"Trash—nonsense;—worse, much worse than that childish stuff is this new affair."

"Worse, madam!—worse than an elopement—than utter disgrace to her, the young wanton! and ruin to us?—what the Duke of Plantagenet longs for—would rejoice at; what that fellow, Gryphon, who to-day at a meeting of these cursed proprietors, has baited me till my blood boils—what he would bribe for, plot for. I tell you, nothing less than placing the girl under the immediate and close care of the Herberts can save her reputation, and leave us some chance for the future. This black Assurance business, in which you know, Maria, I have been myself most grossly deceived, has done me inconceivable mischief—even with the booby St. Edward. He is incapable of forming any opinion of himself; but he has learned to interpret the whispers and sneers of the puppies whom he meets. But what of Emmeline?—has the young vagabond not consented to return to the country and give her no more trouble? I thought I had frightened him sufficiently."

"You are quite on the wrong scent, Barker: Emmy detests the impudent low-born varlet, whose only wish—to which he has probably been put up by some one—is to extort money out of her fears. And what has he to tell?—That he was an impudent, presuming, young rascal—and poor Emmy, a neglected girl—a child. Mrs. James Stocks spoiled the saucy boy, her pet tiger, and most unfairly neglected Emmeline; to whom

she fancied, I suppose, it was enough that she gave food and lodging, while our family was in a state of — transition. Thank Heaven! the laws of England are more watchful over the rights of a *wife*, whatever may have been her original station or that of her husband, than to permit St. Edward to shake off my sister, although she should have had twenty lovers before her marriage — that is, if he had any such wish — which, I am sure, he has not, poor simple fond boy! — I wish our worst fears were from that rascal Tom Groombridge. . . . You long for Mrs. Charles Herbert and her mother-in-law assuming the care of my sister — of the Countess St. Edward, for which poor I, it seems, am all unfit. You will be gratified; — and more — Mr. Charles Herbert is to assume the immediate tutorship of Lord St. Edward, for which Mr. Burke Barker is held quite as unqualified as is his wife to be the maternal companion of her own sister."

"What?" shrieked Barker, with a tone and glare which frightened his wife; but instantly commanding himself, he said in a quiet voice, "What do you mean, Maria? I am fatigued to-day — worn and chafed, and in no humour to be trifled with."

"I was never less in the humour for trifling, Barker. We are sold! That cunning fellow Gryphon, the Duke's solicitor, — how I have detested him since the interviews we had at the time of Emmeline's elope — marriage! when his abominable eyes, while he was at the civillest, plainly told me that he did not believe one word I said. I was sure, then, he hated us — and now he has done us; he has scented out those *post obits* you obtained from St. Edward for your city friends."

"Done what? pray, make haste, ma'am, and do for once be straightforward — forget you are a Cryppes."

"I will not be angry, Barker," replied the lady, in not the calmest voice. "I pity you, and despise your innuendoes. The plan is this — Gryphon's plan, though the duke — the old noodle — takes credit for it: poor dear Emmy sucked the whole out of her simpleton last night. He, you must know, is in secret communication with his grandmother, the duchess, or rather with her favourite maid, who was also St. Edward's nurse. Both the old women spoiled and petted the boy while they tormented him. It is not easy to say which is still the most dotingly fond of him — probably the nurse. The old duchess was bred at court and delights in all manner of petty strategy. She

would scheme to cheat the duke, were it but about the hour or manner in which her poodle is to be washed. Of course he has no idea that she has been guilty of the petty treason of sending messages and money to St. Edward by her trusty back-stairs plenipotentiary, with whom Emmeline has made friends. You know what an ingratiating, what a fascinating creature the countess is, when she wishes to gain any one."

"I know Emmeline's natural cunning transcends — but no matter — go on, Maria."

"Well, the development of the grand scheme is, that St. Edward and his wife shall immediately go abroad, accompanied by the whole Herbert family; travel for three or four years in a manner which becomes the rank and prospects of the parties; while the St. Edwards shall have all the while — mark the cruelty, the atrocity, the villany of the scheme, — no intercourse whatever — not the slightest, with us or with my family, — with Emmeline's family, — cut off from all possible connexion with us for three or four years, — for ever! I may say, — for if this unnatural scheme hold, St. Edward and his wife are lost to us. He is to pledge his honour to his grandfather and the other friends of the family, that we shall be to him as utter strangers, — and she — my sister, oh, monstrous! is to be graciously allowed the means of making some paltry provision for her parents of a few hundreds a-year, if — mark the condition — they agree to receive it in some retired part of the country, and through Mr. Gryphon."

Mrs. Barker paused, alarmed at the stony, fixed look of her husband, who said, "Go on — tell me all," and yet relapsed into musing.

"Is it not enough? — good mercy, Burke, what more would you have? — Herbert is to have a thousand a-year of salary for himself, and I know not how much for his ladies. — They travel in the first style — and the most brilliant reversary prospects are held out. — But let them alone. Emmeline is but a child, and will soon forget us, and St. Edward the most facile of young men. Give them these few years and he is the Herberts' property for life: the estates that *you* were to manage, Barker — the seat in Parliament that *you* were to hold — see now the event! But, goodness, love, how horrible you look! Have I done it? Did I not, as an affectionate wife, warn you against the awful responsibility of obtaining that match for my sister? Am not *I* the person, of all others, most to

be pitied? But no, no!" screamed the lady in another mood, and starting to her feet, "this infamous conspiracy, to tear my beloved sister—my dear brother-in-law—from their country and from us all; to crush our hearts—to wound us through our tenderest affections—never shall take effect. Monsters! Nature and law alike disclaim it. Can you not write something in the papers, Barker—you who are so clever—to defeat it?"

"Be quiet, and sit down," said Barker, sternly; and shading his brow and eyes with his hand, he was again lost in tumultuous thought. Too surely, as his wife had said, the ground had slipped from under him; yet such, in a mind of high intelligence, is the involuntary homage which error pays to rectitude, that, unlike his wife, he could not meanly heap reproaches upon the Herberts. That they would at once close with these tempting and most advantageous proposals he made no question; indeed, it never occurred to him to doubt of it; but neither did he question that every part of Herbert's conduct had been most fair and honourable. He had but one hope. It was placed, not in Herbert's new-born philosophy or his love of independence, but upon his imagined weak side; his overstrained delicacy on imaginary points of honour; and that overweening if latent pride for his wife, which might make him, if properly stimulated, revolt at the idea of her becoming even principal lady of the bed-chamber to Duchess Emmeline, and thus render the whole plan abortive.

Barker was roused from thought by violent ringing and knocking: and in a half minute the tall servant came in to say, that the country person, Mr. Bigsby, whom Mrs. Barker had appointed to come at half-past eight, was waiting Mr. Barker in the Sculpture-room. Barker nodded, and the man withdrew.

"Frantic idiot!—but I will see him; and provide for him too. There is a class of people—the very poorest creatures in intellect—with whom it is most dangerous to have any thing to do."—Mr. Barker's phrase would have been more correct in the slang sense, "most dangerous to do." "A man of any sense, who knew the world," he continued, "would have been quiet under his losses, or sought satisfaction at law: this drivelling shrimp runs about from coffee-house to coffee-house; nay, he goes to the newspapers, and does more mischief than ten men of any judgment would allow themselves to do." Another visitor was announced:—"Ha!

Edmund,—sit with your sister till I give audience to a lunatic."

Dr. Edmund Cryppes, who, in virtue of smooth manners, a handsome equipage, never off the streets and squares of the West End, great family industry, one fashionable, dashing, young patient, to break the ice with, and a most judicious and rather delicate system of puffing,—was become a rising accoucheur in the fashionable world, a man whose fortunes rested apparently upon a more secure foundation than those of any other member of his Talented Family, provided that he played his cards well. All depended on that, as his brother-in-law sometimes condescended to tell him. "There is Jack, your brother," Barker would say, "with much brighter natural parts—with many unquestionable accomplishments—gone to the dogs—and will go. No saving him. He has no discretion—no self-command—no self-respect. That foreign lottery business, which in other hands would have promised so fair, is blown, by his arrant folly; and himself—but I wash my hands of him—there is no serving a person of his kind—and I will not farther share his disgrace."

"Nor I," said the stately physician. "I shall contribute, like you and Polly, my mite, to send him to the United States; but if Jack will persist in coming back to London, to disgrace his family, I know what we should do."

The learned Doctor, seeing Barker absorbed, now began to make his diurnal report of the young countess's hopeful state, in confidential whispers to his sister. Lady St. Edward was certainly *enceinte*; an event of nearly equal importance to the House of Plantagenet and to the *Talented Family* of Cryppes. Her accouchement, if all went fair, might be expected to take place in about seven months." "Yes, Polly," said the facetious practitioner, "I shall have to congratulate you on the birth of your nephew, the heir to ducal honours, some time in February next. I shall have Emmy and young Mrs. William White, the rich old banker's young wife, (who takes such deep interest in the countess's progress,) confined in the same week. Tolerable work that; but Emmeline is really likely to be a good nest egg to me;—all the young wives connected with the city are so proud to be attended by a countess's physician. I shall certainly raise my fees forthwith."

"I wish you joy of her, if it last," said Mrs. Barker—always piqued at being thrown into the shade, though but for a moment,

by the younger sister whose fortune she had made.

"Polly cross and Barker silent," said the humorous Doctor. It was but of late days that Dr. Edmund had ventured to address his "intellectual" brother-in-law without the formal *Mr.* The omission was symptomatic. He went on—"But Emmy's first child may be a girl;—your sex are always forward, Polly,—but no matter, there will be plenty of 'em—fine thriving *planta genistas*. My mother had eleven of us, had she not, Poll? If the first prove a girl in spite of me, it may anticipate my time by from thirty to forty-eight hours;—your sex are always in a hurry to make a figure in the world, Mrs. Barker."

"Goodness, Edmund, what a chatterbox you have become—you who formerly durst not open your lips before *Mr. Barker*; and how *indelicately* you chatter—knowing how very fastidious my husband is—and he is not quite well to-night. . . . My dear, you have surely forgotten that the provincial person waits you. . . . Don't you think, Edmund, that the countess should have other professional advice besides yours? You are but young in the profession; and there is all the difference in the world between the Countess St. Edward and those city women you attend." Loudly as Mrs. Barker sounded her brother's praises, where so great an interest was at stake as her auntship to a duke, she had misgivings, which, however, Dr. Edmund treated with the utmost coolness, though Mrs. Barker's appeal to her husband at once gained him to her side. Mr. Barker indeed professed the greatest confidence in Dr. Edmund's skill and science; but for his own sake solely, he considered the responsibility too great, and thought that other advice was desirable.

While this important point was debated, the unhappy provincial Ex-Agent of the Middlesex and Surrey Philanthropic Assurance Company got out of all patience. He had been wandering in the neighbourhood of Barker's house half the day, exhausted, highly nervous, and in the most irritable condition. Without even the means of procuring proper refreshment, and unable to return to his distant lodging and come back at the appointed time, he lingered on for hours that seemed like heavy years, until the imagined author of his misery, having fared sumptuously, should condescend at last to give his victim an audience. About seven in the evening, becoming exceedingly faint, he went into a place—not a gin-palace, but a gin-crib, frequented by cab-drivers and

servants at livery—and paid his last twopence for a glass of gin and a morsel of bread. While he slowly sipped the unusual and harsh beverage, which supplied fuel to his previous nervous excitement, a gong was heard booming over the neighbouring gardens.

"My master's summons," said a person, who, like Bigsby, was seeking refreshment in this resort.

"Mr. Barker's place you are in now?" inquired the keeper of the gin-crib.

"He, the villain, the scoundrel!—is Barker called to his fat dinner by a *gong*, as if he were a lord?" cried the little quivering man, to whom, in his present state, this trifling circumstance was as the last drop which makes the full cup overflow. The man stared, but took up his change and walked off,—by no means disposed to become the volunteer champion of a master considerably in arrear with all his servants' wages, and of whom many queer stories were abroad.

Bigsby afterwards wandered about until the appointed hour, when he entered Mr. Barker's dwelling, if not absolutely intoxicated, yet under violent excitement; which increased, as he hurriedly paced the Sculpture-room, planning what stinging things he was to say; wondering what satisfaction he might obtain, and if he could get—provided he should condescend to accept of it—any part of his lost money to carry home to his wife, and their dunning landlady. There was little to soothe a man in this mood in those surrounding objects of expense, taste, and luxury, all of which had been procured, as he morbidly fancied, by his ruin. The sound of the gong, when he recalled his own now silent humble dinner-bell, and his incapacity to procure a meal, had awakened the lurking devil in his breast, and the other marks of Mr. Barker's splendour did not contribute to lay the demon to rest. After waiting in the Sculpture-room—the very name of which was maddening—for probably five minutes, which seemed an age, he furiously rung the bell: "Does your master know that *I* wait?—Mr. Robert Bigsby of —."

"Mr. Barker will be here presently, sir."

"Ha! very fine and handsome—those, those mirrors—those silk damask curtains, and *bullion* fringe!—May I have a glass of water?—What's that—what's that?" and he pointed to a statue of the size of life or larger, which stood in a recess behind the marble pillars at the end of the room.

"That, I believe, sir, is a statue of Justice, done by a Frenchman of the name of Canova,

which, I am told, cost Mr. Barker £1500 or £2000. My master has a fine taste for Virtue."

"No, sir, it is not Justice, sir; though she is blind. That's the devil, sir—the black devil—ha! At him—at him! It's Barker. There's his *gong* again. It splits my ears. They ring—ring." And the frantic man rushed forward, and smashed at the pieces of choice sculpture in the room, on which the small cane which he carried fell innocuous; but in his frenzy he shivered one large mirror, before the servant could rush upon and overpower him. This he would have been unable to do for any length of time had not Mr. Barker and the butler heard the uproar, and come to his assistance. There was now no doubt of the stranger's madness; yet the shrewd varlets present were not slow to extract a meaning from his incoherent ravings, which was any thing but favourable to the honour of their master.

In the meanwhile, Barker, believing him mad with liquor as well as with passion, which he partly was, soothed him as he best could, and promptly decided on his own line of conduct.

"You tell me, sir—nay, take more water—you are excited, Mr. Bigsby—it will cool you and do you good:—you tell me Mr. Charles Herbert warned you against this bubble office,—would to God, sir, he had warned *me*, who, in purse and reputation, am a much deeper sufferer than yourself. Mr. Herbert is one of my oldest and best friends; will you accompany me now, late as the hour is, to his private residence near Chelsea, and let us try whether his opinion of the circumstances of which you complain, and which, upon my honour, I deeply regret, does not change your mind as to my share of this damnable business? . . . I have a business appointment at my chambers at nine, and am behind already; but if you will take a crush in my cab—we can, when I have finished my business, take a boat, and reach Herbert's residence before ten. Come! I should be sorry to see you labour under such an unhappy prepossession for another night."

Bigsby looked anxiously in the face of the speaker:—could he trust to him? and yet what motive could Barker have to deceive him in the proposed visit.

"Come, come—Herbert understands business, and something of the rubs of life too: let him be umpire—and, by Heaven, if he gives it against me, I am ready to share with you to the last shilling I possess."

"That is fairly spoken, Mr. Barker—I shall attend you as you say: and my poor old aunt, who brought me up—who was more than a mother to me—whom I compelled, idiot that I am! to take her trifling savings out of the hands of the Duke of Plantagenet's steward, for which his grace generously allowed her five per cent. as she was the widow of a favourite servant—to take her little all from that safe keeping and invest—"

"Say no more, Mr. Bigsby," interrupted Barker—"I assure you I was deeply affected by reading your statement of the good old lady's case;—the Duke of Plantagenet's head-gardener's widow, was she? Don't let another word of it transpire: you are aware how closely I am by marriage connected with the Plantagenets: I may have something to say in the management of my brother-in-law's property by and by, and some pretty pickings to dispose of too:—come, my good fellow, you allow yourself to be too much overcome. The old lady's annuity I shall pay out of my own pocket—on condition that not another *hush* is heard about it, till the Company's affairs are wound up; I do not despair of a good dividend yet."

Bigsby shook his head, incredulous; and Mr. Barker went out, and in two minutes obtained a formal certificate from his brother-in-law, Dr. Edmund Crippes.

"Oh, mad as a March-hare! I can testify that—to smash your beautiful mirror, and destroy so much valuable property! But, really, Barker, you give yourself too much trouble about him: can't you send for the Police?—Know his friends in the north—Pooh!—who is to care for the relations of all their friends who choose to come up to London and take *delirium tremens*? And are you safe alone with him, Barker? You are a man of great physical courage—but to go alone, and by water, with a maniac at this hour—"

"Not a word—the servants—" and Barker made a signal of silence. "I must enjoin secrecy the most strict; there is always implied disgrace in such attacks: and if, as I hope, a few weeks restore the poor fellow's intellects—never great—no one need be the wiser. Don't sit for me to-night, Maria; I need not bid you be silent and secret."

With the certificate in his pocket, which enabled him, as he imagined, by the aid of a trifling sum of money, to deposit his companion in any private asylum for lunatics which best suited his purpose, Mr. Barker embarked with Bigsby, giving the boatmen

private orders where to halt. He had already apprized the keeper of a private asylum for the insane, which had a gate and stairs opening to the Thames, of his approach with a patient whose case demanded the utmost caution and secrecy. The house, surrounded by high-walled gardens, had fifty years before been the villa of a nobleman; and, in the twilight, it might easily, for one half-hour, pass for the residence of Mr. Herbert. More time was not needed: with the keeper he anticipated no great difficulty; and the patient was for the moment certainly mad. To make this more sure, Dr. Edmund Cryppes, who had no doubt himself, had got one of his brethren of the faculty to subscribe his own certificate.

Another half-hour past, and they were fairly afloat on the Thames, Bigsby muttering to himself—"I'll hear what Mr. Herbert has to say—he warned me—he is a gentleman—and though all the world were against me, I can't be worse—I can't be worse.—Poor Jane! She is ill, poor girl—and we parted in anger, as too often of late; but I may have cheering news for her when I return; and the landlady shall have my ring before her bracelets—poor Jane!" He sunk into silence, from which he was roused by the trivial circumstance of Barker unconsciously, and with little music in his mind, humming a fashionable opera tune, which stung him to rage.

"Ay, you can sing, sir—you can sing; you live in a fine house, drive your cab, and dress your lady, and strike your *gong*—while my wife, sir, Jane Stocks Simmons, born and bred in affluence, is sitting, cold and hungry, in our unpaid lodging."

Barker, at a loss what to reply, whistled with affected carelessness. The sounds appeared to jar on the exasperated nerves of Bigsby. He ground his teeth, and entreated Barker to desist from torturing him by those sounds, or he should go mad. Mr. Barker at once desisted, somewhat astonished to learn that he had been whistling; yet, so absent was he, that in another minute he unconsciously repeated the offence; and Bigsby started up in fury, and broke forth in a wild strain of execration and upbraiding, telling the boatmen, to whom he appealed, of his wrongs and losses, and of the despair and misery to which he had been reduced by the man before them.

Barker, fixed in his purpose, and knowing

that less than another hour would rid him of this petty source of annoyance for as long as he chose, restrained the expression of his indignation, and entreated and expostulated with his violent accuser, but in vain. "I will tell these men—I will tell them," he cried aloud, "of your damnable villany;—they are Englishmen,—they are honest, hard-working, hard-faring men;—they love fair play;—they have, like me, wives and children,—but they do not, like me, see them naked, houseless, and starving,—and through you, sir, you!—false, treacherous, smooth-tongued, remorseless hypocrite:—called to your sumptuous meal by your *gong*. Do its sounds drown the cries of your victims? Yes, boatmen, this fellow—this upstart beggar, who married the daughter of a fiddler, and made a lady of her, is called to his dinner by a *gong*, as if he were a duke, while Jane Stocks Simmons—"

"Push on, my lads," said Barker calmly; "the poor wretch is—as you see:—push on!"

"You would say that I am mad, would you, scoundrel?" cried little Bigsby, who seemed like one inspired; and springing to the throat of his enemy, he called out—"it is as false as the hell that yawns for you."

"Sit down, sir," replied Barker, beginning to lose temper, and pushing his puny assailant off—"Sit down in quiet, or by Heaven I will pitch you overboard—would you overset the boat? Strike out, my men, and here is a crown for you."

"Thank you, thank you, Mr. Barker," was the ready reply; and Barker, finding himself recognised, calmly said—"If this excited person has any thing of which he may justly complain, the tribunals of the country are open, and I am prepared to meet him there."

"Villain, again! cold, insulting, stinging, damned villain,"—cried the frenzied dwarf, shivering violently with emotion—"The grave is open—the Thames is open:—At the only tribunal to which misery like mine can appeal are you ready to meet me?—Then ho! for it."

"With the energy of madness he again clutched at Barker; and after a moment's grapple the little skiff heeled, and both were plunged into the river. One man, to save himself, sprung into Herbert's boat, which was passing at that moment, and the other dexterously recovered the balance of his own, though it was now half-filled with water.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WE now return to the homeward voyagers, whom we left on their prosperous way, admiring the young Harvest Moon rising broad and red through the hazy atmosphere.

In a boat passing in the opposite direction, and tugged slowly against stream and tide, loud and discordant voices were heard by Mrs. Linton and Herbert, as of those of men in anger; and soon words of fearful and threatening import were distinguished, while between them and the murky horizon, figures were imperfectly seen for an instant swaying hither and thither as they grappled; until, while one man sprung into Herbert's boat, with a plunge that made it heel, and placed the passengers in imminent danger, several seemed to be precipitated into the water.

Herbert's boatmen were at first enraged at the intruder, and shoved lustily off, in order to ensure their own safety:—"Halt!" shouted Herbert,— "ship your oars— you may strike down the drowning men,— a sovereign — a couple of them — to him who shall first rescue a fellow-creature!"

"Three, four, five, *ten o' them!*" shouted Marion, throwing out her arms like a sibyl inspired — "Oh what's world's gear to the dear life of perishing sinners! Oh what awfu' words were you! . . . There's a human face a bit ahead, bobbin like a herrin buoy;—Lord guide us!—there, there—now yonder;—ye fit about sae in this bit cockle shell;—ye'll surely whamle us a'!"

"Where? where?" cried Herbert, who had seized an oar, and who made the little vessel wheel and quiver in rapid evolutions, with probably more bravery than nautical skill, though the boatmen, keeping a sharp look-out, did not remonstrate with him, nor deprive him of a post, which said something for his Cambridge science.

"It was yonder—yonder," cried Marion, pointing — "and there — there again — just below us; I'm sure, I could swear it was the poor little man, the tailor's lodger, that I saw first. Oh, sirs, strive hard; and, as I'm a true woman, ye shall not lack your reward both here and hereafter." Herbert and the men pulled stontly for a few strokes in the direction specified, but nothing was to be seen.

The cry of "Men in the river," had now spread wide and far, and craft of all kinds, some of them with lumps, were already skimming about in every direction. Yet

some minutes had elapsed before one man was picked up, apparently little injured, and who had probably, after the first stunning plunge, sustained himself by swimming.

"Do I owe my providential escape to you, Mr. Herbert!" said the dripping person rescued, when hoisted into the boat: "your passing has been most critically timed for me; a maniac got into the boat with me, and had nearly drowned us all."

"Lord-sake, man, if ye have the heart of a man, help the other folks to save life and dinna think Mr. Herbert will listen to you while there's a darg like this at his door," cried Marion.

"What did you say, ma'am! — I do not, I beg pardon, perfectly understand Scotch," replied Barker, dripping and shivering, yet with a gentle sneer. . . . "For Heaven's sake, land me at all events—as well be drowned as die of cold:— your chance of picking up the lunatic is about as good as that of fishing up the Royal George.— He has been in the water a full quarter of an hour now."

Herbert, who was anxiously looking out in every direction, and calling to the people in the other boats, made no reply. He indeed began to despair; but he would not cease in his humane endeavours. Once or twice he flattered himself that he heard the voice of the missing man— now here, now there; and once a floating oar, which he had himself thrown out, deceived him. The boatmen gave as their opinion, that the tide and current must by this time have borne the man a good way off, and that, if found at all, it must be farther down the river, and probably with life extinct.

"That is the common sense of it, Mr. Herbert," said the impatient Barker. "Don't, for God's sake, kill a living and sane man for the chance of recovering a drowned lunatic."

Herbert was still silent: whatever sympathy he might have felt with the uncomfortable plight of his former friend, was neutralized by this speech. "Land me as quickly as possible, boatmen," proceeded Barker, in a more imperious tone: for he was irritated by Herbert's silence.

"The boat is the lady's and the gentleman's," said one of the rowers, more inclined to obey his paymasters than this imperious stranger.

"Once again I command you to row to the shore," said Barker haughtily. "I shall have you before a magistrate, fellow, for your

insolence ; and for thus detaining me at the risk of my life."

"The boat is the company's sir, and not ours," growled the senior boatman.

"Good-sake, man ! you were but even now within an ace of Eternity yourself. You may surely have some compassion for another perishing sinner, who, mad if he be, has maybe had good cause to drive him mad.—Do you think it is any pleasure to Mr. Herbert to be hazing and whirling about i' the dark, on the Thames here, in a bit cockle shell, if he could help it ? If the poor man be daft, he is just so much more the object of pity, especially to those who have brought him, poor soul ! to such a pass."

"You seem well informed of his affairs, ma'am," replied Barker, in a sneering tone.

"If all Lon'on be not so, it's not for want of his exposing the source of his calamity, high and low : I mean the unchanged rascals he has been the dupe of—ay, name and surname."

Those names were not inquired after by the former speaker ; and now a cry came across the river, "Picked him up !" and Herbert's barge was stoutly pulled to the landing-place on the Surrey side, whither the body of the poor man had been borne.

The whole party landed. "You are now at liberty to proceed whither you will, Mr. Barker," said Herbert, speaking for the first time to his old acquaintance ; and he civilly added, "the sooner you change your wet clothes the better. . . . Carry the body carefully into the first respectable tavern—get a surgeon—all the help possible—fly !"

"I'll go myself for help," cried Marion.

"And I," said Herbert, "will see that all that is possible is done here."

"I owe you everlasting thanks for the efforts you made to save me from the consequences of that unhappy maniac's frenzy," said Barker, while his teeth involuntarily chattered from cold and agitation. "Life, I fear, is utterly extinguished in the poor wretch—your efforts will prove useless."

"I hope not," replied Herbert. "But no means shall be wanting to restore him. Who are his friends ? He was in your company."

"I know little of him save his evident madness. I deserve my ducking for my folly in permitting him, in his excited state, to get into the boat with me."

"We have searched his pockets," said the boatman who helped to carry the insensible body. "Devil a ha'porth in 'em, save a

bundle of wet gilt bills of the famous Surrey and Middlesex Bubble Company—one of its gulls belike, who, as he could not get on by *wind*, tried to get off by water !"

The expression of Barker's face, the basilisk glance that shot from his deep-set eye upon the speaker, while he said, "You are a wag, are you ?" were not lost on Herbert.

In another minute, surgeons and apothecaries, to the number of a round dozen, hearing that a humane *rich* gentleman had picked up a drowning man, crowded to the tavern, where every means were employed for more than an hour and a half to restore animation. Meanwhile, Barker, wet as he was, lingered with Marion in the bar of the tavern, spell-bound, as it appeared, to the spot. He seemed to feel that his continued presence until the scene closed, was necessary to his own defence.

As waiters and assistants occasionally passed the bar, they were eagerly interrogated on the condition of the patient by Mrs. Marion and Mr. Barker, though from widely different motives. Their reports varied ; but at nearly twelve o'clock, Herbert himself descended, and sadly announced to Marion, that he had at last surrendered all hope.

"The will of the Lord be done !—and oh, the poor widow yonder !"

Mr. Herbert was somewhat surprised to find Barker still here. That gentleman had, however, partially dried his clothes, by standing before the kitchen fire, into which he had thrown the useless certificate, carried within his glove, which was to consign poor Bigsby to a mad-house. He was now in safe enough custody.

"Mr. Barker, I am afraid you have neglected yourself," said Herbert, touched by the appearance of the shivering man, who looked almost as like a corpse as the body laid out above stairs.

"I wished to see the end of it. . . . The miserable, frantic creature, who has paid so dearly for his folly, was an agent of that infamous company, of whose real character I, upon my honour, Mr. Herbert, knew as little as the unhappy person himself. In a professional capacity—one strictly professional—I was connected with the proprietors—scoundrels and swindlers !—for a short time, to my cost ; and the poor wretch fancied he owed part of his embarrassments to me. He was——"

"I know what he was," said Herbert, coldly ; and, turning to the mistress of the tavern, he gave her his card.

"And the funeral, sir, and the crowner?" inquired the landlady. "I do not see how our great room can be given up to-morrow for the 'quest, unless you have all over by one o'clock, as we are bespoken for a dance and a wedding-party."

"I hope that can be arranged."

"I'll take charge of the funeral in the meantime," said Marion, briskly, "and of the boatmen and the doctors. I have plenty of siller in my pouch this night, by chance, Mr. Charles; and ye must just let me for aince be your banker;" and Marion cheerfully counted out her cash, and found that the different expectants were more moderate than she had anticipated "Lon'on cormorants and river sharks" as likely to be.

"I must let you have your own way, my good friend," said Herbert, half smiling at the airs of business and modest patronage with which she proceeded. . . . "You have been kept far too late out; and now I must conduct you home: a walk will do us both good: a most painful duty, I fear, still awaits you."

"The widow! — ay, poor, yirning thing; she has gotten a real cause of repining and sorrow now."

"Will you have the goodness, ma'am, to take charge for me of a few pieces, to be applied to the use of the unfortunate woman to whom you allude," said Barker, feeling in the breast-pocket of his surtout for the pocket-book already sunk deep in the mud of the Thames. A sharp spasm contracted his features. He grew blind, and reeled as from a mortal blow. "Great Heavens! I am a ruined man!"

Herbert hastily supported him. He gasped for breath. A cold perspiration burst from his forehead.

"I fear you have met with some loss, Mr. Barker," said Herbert, gently; "but thank God for the preservation of life."

"I — I am undone! utterly undone! Every farthing — every document which I possessed that could," he paused, "that could clear my good name from the infamous imputations heaped upon me, was collected into that pocket-book; the contents of which I proposed to lay before you and Mr. Gryphon to-morrow. The swindlers have fled with their booty, and I am left in disgrace —"

He dashed his open hand on his forehead, unable to conclude the sentence, which Mrs. Marion mentally did for him, by thinking — "and I have lost my share of the plunder in the Thames. Light come, light go." It was

clear that, whatever might be the true cause, Barker's was no feigned anguish. He was hardly able to support himself to the cab, in which Herbert sent him home, considerably paying the hire in advance.

"God bless you! Mr. Herbert; inquire for me to-morrow."

"That's a *fey* man," said Marion, taking the arm which her cavalier kindly offered.

"It's no a common wanness of colour you; and the sharp traits of the face, and the wild flichterin' gledges of the eyne. I sat and watched him while ye were better employed, Mr. Charles. But I'm no tiring ye? I'm little used oxtering with young gentlemen. I have not been seen cleeked with man kind since I saw my bonny *protty-jee*, Jack Cripps, off by the Berwick smack. I'm a highly favoured auld wife w' my beaux. . . . But von *forspoken* man, Mr. Charles?"

"Pooh! 'Long ere the devil' — you remember your national proverb?"

"Ay, 'Lang ere the deil dee by the dyke-side,' but it comes at length, sir; that Dread Tribunal to which the despairing creature cited him — that day of awful reckoning — that day of consuming wrath: — Prepare us and be our Stay, sinners as we all are!"

There was a solemn pause, ere Marion resumed. "And to think how a gracious Providence brings things round, making the wickedness of man work its righteous will; and that you, sir, and your dear leddy, should be preferred and honoured, and brought again to wealth and respect, — but that ye never wanted, — and set in high places, and all mainly in and through the wicked contrivances and mawchinations of those who have bitten their ain bridle."

"So you, too, have heard of our promotion?" said Herbert, in some surprise; "and you congratulate me, it would seem, upon it."

"Mr. Gryphon was so good as to give me an inkling to-day, kennin the joy it would be to my heart to hear of any prosperity that might befall you or yours, sir."

"Have you so soon forgot your quotation of this evening, you fickle woman!"

"O freedom is a noble thing."

"Are you at that, Mr. Charles! Well, ye may be in the right. After the awful and warning scheme we have witnessed this same night, sir, what seems the value of this fleeting world, and all that it inherits? . . . And here we are at home; — and oh! how am I to tell that friendless, feckless woman of her bereavement."

"Gently as you can, dear ma'am. — I shall

write her friends to-night, and call for their address from you early in the morning. We must, I fancy, be prepared to attend the inquest on the poor fellow."

"How will Mr. Burke Barker stand that ordeal, Mr. Charles? how look on the corpse?"

"Barker has nerve enough —"

"And he'll need it. — But take you care of *yourself*, sir, — ye got a good sprinkling o' Thames water yourself, — mind I'm answerable for your safety to the leddies. Take a drop brandy and water, as hot as ye like, ere ye go to bed; were I myself the night, I would insist on your stepping up stairs to my Patmos, and preeing a Scotch brandy-posset."

Herbert gently smiling at these incongruous images, they thus parted; Marion letting herself in with her latch-key.

The tailor, his family, and lodgers, had probably been long asleep; but on the second landing-place a light twinkled under the door of Mrs. Bigsby's chamber. Marion tapped; and the door was partially opened by that person, who, in a sharp but muffled voice, whispered — "Pretty time of night, Big; how can you look me in the face? — leaving me alone in this odious hole, all day long, dying of one of my sick-headachs, and no one to offer me nothing. Are you not ashamed of yourself!" Poor Mrs. Bigsby had evidently been nursing her wrath, or trying to do so.

"Madam, you are under a sad mistake, — I am not your gudeman. But be patient and peaceful; on your husband's account ye will not be much oftener detained from needful rest here or elsewhere."

Marion knew that the unfortunate pair had parted in bitter anger; the wife full of repining, — the husband vowing that her upbraidings and reproaches were the keenest-felt of his sufferings, and what cruelly aggravated all else.

"O, good la! It is the old Scotch lady. I fancied all the lodgers a-bed, — I was watching for Bigsby, meaning to give him a good scolding — in fun you know, — all in fun. . . . Though matters have gone against him, there is not a better or kinder husband in England, — though I do love to tease him a bit betimes."

"I am truly glad to hear you speak so kindly of him," said Marion.

"Yes, indeed, I assure you; and I know that papa and my uncles, though they are excessively angry with Bigsby, will soon

come round, and make things straight again. We were so happy, and had every thing so nice about us; — I had a fortune of £1500, ma'am, and more to get. Had you seen us at —, ma'am, as Mr. Herbert and his lady did. No wonder I feel the change, — nobody knows us here, — there I could have got every thing I wanted from every shop in town. I had only to say, send in such and such to Mrs. Robert Bigsby. — You heard the row, I daresay, this morning, — these London rooms are such wretched lath and plaster things! It was unreasonable of him, don't you think, to ask me to give away my bracelets, — a bridal present? — but I have done it, ma'am. The landlady — what a horrid woman she is — must have money; — I was never asked for money in my whole life, till I came to London, — the bracelets are gone, and I don't miss them. I knew my poor husband was to be fagging about all day, trying to find out that black villain Barker, who has been our ruin, — so I got in something nice for supper, and a pint of wine, poor fellow, — he needs a drop of comfort, — and I am sure it is not his fault either, he stays so late; for he was always kind and attentive to me. I had a letter from my eldest sister yesterday; she thinks papa is relenting, — they have the children, and my father is very fond of them. I am the youngest of three daughters, and the first married. I was a great favourite once. But it is a sad thing for a married woman to have to go back on her own family, with such burdens. My mother thinks we should come home, — that is, come nearer home. Bigsby's poor aunt I told you of, will receive us, till something better turn up. Yet he was so very provoking about the bracelets, that I did not tell him this morning; indeed he put it quite out of my head."

"That, madam, was a sore pity," said Marion solemnly. "Had you told the distressed man of the glimmering light a gracious Providence was casting up out of dark despair —"

"Hist!" interrupted the unconscious widow, "that must be my husband now, — I will tell him, — I know it is wrong to be so impatient with him; but I must scold him first. Was it not shocking to leave me in this odious place all day — quite by myself, with no one to speak to me, — and the nice supper I got in, waiting so very long!"

Marion's melancholy duty seemed every moment to become more difficult. Silly and almost perverse as the young woman was, she was not altogether without heart, nay

there might even be warm attachment under the bickerings and mutual recriminations in which the silly pair indulged,—though there certainly was not that strong yet tender tie which is formed for the day of adversity. While Marion ruminated on how she was to disclose the awful truth, the house-bell was rung repeatedly and with violence; and the tailor, under the customary London alarm of "Fire," leapt from bed and pulled up his front window.

"That cannot be Bigsby. . . . Oh, something has happened!" said the alarmed wife rising, and beginning to tremble. Marion grasped her hand, and kept her on her seat, when she would have run out, and begged her to wait, and they would soon hear what was the matter. After a short sharp colloquy from the window, Marion's mortal antipathy, the tailor's wife, in only her night-dress, and the old plaid shawl which seemed her prescribed costume on all nocturnal alarms, knocked sharply upon the door, and then abruptly bounced in.

"La, ma'am, you are not a-bed then, and Missis Linton with you! Do you know what has happened? Your husband has drowned himself in the River."

"Inhuman wra-atch!" exclaimed Marion, extending her still vigorous arms to sustain the stricken woman, who fell into a deadly swoon.

"Goodness gracious, here's a to do!—weren't they a-quarrelling like dog and cat from morn to night?"

"Draw up the window, woman—let in the free air—get a basin of cold water:—Poor, silly, forlorn thing!" and Marion pressed the insensible body to her kind breast. "May be ye judge her by your ain stout heart, madam; *that* could take a husband's death more lightly." The tailor now entered half-dressed.

"Help me up stairs, Mr. Snipson, with this poor creature! I'll take charge o' her until she is in better keeping."

The tailor, who seemed at least in this instance to have more feeling than his lady, prepared to second Marion's purpose—contented to lose as a lodger the poor widow of the poor suicide, since he could retain her few goods for what was due to him of rent.

"I should not have disturbed the poor dawdle," said the tailor's lady, somewhat ashamed of herself, "if orders had not been wanted about the body; the people of the *Ship* can't have their best parlour taken up without knowing who is to pay. That's but

reasonable you will allow, ma'am, for people in a public way."

"I thought that was settled," cried Marion, indignantly. "I am answerable," she proceeded with great energy—"Mrs. Marion Linton, householder, No. 999, Fleet Street, is answerable for all just and reasonable charges."

This was perfectly satisfactory to the person below.

The poor woman was carried up stairs to Marion's apartments, still in a dead swoon; but by dint of the efforts of the whole party, who kindly co-operated, she began to give signs of returning sensibility; and then suddenly remembering her condition, she fell into a violent passion of hysterical grief, from the mere exhaustion of which she at last dropped asleep. Marion now requested her neighbours to go away, while the tailor's lady pressed her services, and protested that she would sit till daylight by the new-made widow, in case of whatever might occur.

"Who could have fancied the diddle-daddle body would take on so about it!"

"You, perhaps—a Lon'on-bred leddy o' strong nerves like you, would stand the drowning o' a gudeman better!" said Marion, sarcastically.

"Yes, faith, or the hanging either, had Snip and I lived like them," returned the woman, laughing. "Especially, ma'am, if I had a chance of my old admirer, Cripps, casting up to comfort me in my widowhood. I so like to tease Snipson about poor Jack:—where is he at present, ma'am? Is it true that he has a sister *really* married to a lord?"

"It is so said," growled Marion.

"I'm pretty sure of it, and I'll tell you how."

"Another time, if you please—I'll not detain you now. Jack, your friend, will cast up sooner than a bow o' meal—never fear him; and I am anxious now that this poor creature should get a sound sleep."

"Oh, beg your pardon, ma'am. I fancy my absence is considered as good as my company," said Mrs. Snipson, rising.

"Ye have said it, mem. I think these are the first words, Mrs. Snipson, we have exchanged for some months; and I have no desire to renew an acquaintance dropt for good reasons; but as ye are here on my floor-head, I may as weel warn' ye, that, if you can accommodate yourself elsewhere, I have other use for my premises."

"Oh, by all manner of means, ma'am. Our money is surely as good as your lodging

any day—plenty of houses in London, ma'am."

"So much the better for the tenants, mem," returned Marion, leading the way to the door, both ladies parting the very pink of politeness.

"That's the razor-grinding voiced, cockney woman I never could thole," was Marion's soliloquy. "Ay, maukin, ye are mewin—did ye think I was taking no notice o' you? Can ye not make out what a' this stramash in our lanely, quiet dwallin' is about? A picture of mortal life, pussey, in a sma' way. . . . And so ye aye hide yoursel below the big chair from Lucky Snipson. Ye are like your mistress wi' that quean, ye limmer—that very quintessence o' Lon'on impudence and Lon'on screwingness, and Lon'on brass;—ay, and as hard as that same metal. . . . What can she have heard of her gallant admirer, Jack Cripps?—I thought he had been in Holland."

So indeed he was, and in no comfortable plight, as the London public most characteristically learned early the next morning. On that morning Mr. Gryphon, always an early man, called on Herbert at his chambers, on his way to the bank. "Your eyes are asking what has brought me?" said he, when the first salutations were over. "I'll tell you:—But why have you stolen a march on me?—answer me that!—unless, instead of being at Chelsea, as I suspect you were last night, you were really returning from Richmond with a party of ladies, as that truthful scribe, 'your intimate friend and old school-fellow,' testifies in three morning papers."

"Who do you mean? Who is my intimate friend and old schoolfellow?—What ladies?"

"Why, the person you saved from drowning—for which neither the world nor the devil owe you many thanks—Burke Barker, I mean."

"Oh, yes, I had an adventure with him, sure enough—a melancholy one. Has it got into the papers already!—and a Barker edition of it, too, I daresay."

"Curse the cool impudence of that fellow!—his paragraph might dish us with the duke, if Jack, your friend, did not furnish the antidote to Barker's wolfsbane. You shall, first, see Jack's last: it is a tickler for the pride of my illustrious patron. I could really sympathize in his Grace's rage when he reads this: these fellows are enough, with their scribbling, to drive any man mad, let alone a Plantagenet."

Mr. Gryphon now produced, not a common newspaper, but a blurred printed sheet of whity-brown, decorated with several daubs of wooden cuts of the satirical kind.

"Jack can't, now-a-days, like his brother-in-law, command a half column of *Almack's Gazette*, but the penny-papers are open to him yet. I wish I could get a few copies of this, though;" and he read—

"INFAMOUS CONSPIRACY OF THE DUTCH AGAINST AN ENGLISH-BORN SUBJECT.—We understand, from unquestionable authority, that in consequence of an intrigue set on foot by the government of a neighbouring state, that would not greatly dislike to involve Great Britain and Holland in a quarrel, certain fat burgomasters of Rotterdam, have, under some extraordinary hallucination, been instigated to send to the *Rasp-haus* a distinguished English gentleman, the brother of Lady St. E—, the lady of the heir of the Duke of P—, as a COMMON SWINDLER.

"This infamous arrest has thrown several noble families into the greatest distress and confusion; though probably, before the remonstrance of the British ambassador has been heard at the Hague, *Meinheer* may retrace his steps, and offer the *amende honourable* to the gentleman to whom this gross outrage has been offered. The spirit of Old England has fallen indeed, under craven Whig misrule, if an insult is not instantly and amply atoned, which, in better times, would have been considered sufficient ground for an international war."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Herbert, laughing heartily. "Jack for ever! He really possesses a richer fancy than his whole tribe. Fancy Jack the cause of a war between England and Holland—it is superb! Poor fellow, in the *Rasp-haus*! Let me retain the interesting record to show to my wife."

"With the greatest pleasure; but I have an important use for it. There may, I have no doubt, be fifty 'd—d good-natured friends' of my illustrious client, happy to send him this broadside to relish his morning coffee, save that it is not likely to fall into any decent cleanly fingers west of Temple Bar. Yet some one, I prophesy, will send it in a neat wrapper, properly sealed, and marked 'Strictly confidential!'—my illustrious client delights in the phrase. The thing, you will see, will work like a charm. I only hope he may not propose the other side of the Andes, or the interior of Africa, for the place of your residence with Lord St. Edward, to keep him intangible to the Cypresses. But

seriously, Herbert, can a thing of this sort have any effect? Are the Dutch magistrates blockheads enough to bite?"

"In the present delicate state of our political relations, our ancient ally will not be fond of affronting the national honour," replied Herbert, laughing. "If this could be got into any leading paper, I should not say but that it might give Jack a hitch—for I fear he is in adversity, poor fellow.—But what of my 'old schoolfellow?' Isn't Jack that too?"

"A quite different affair: in three morning papers that information appears; the same in substance, but with each a different heading. Which do you prefer—simply, 'NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING,' from *The Times*; 'PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPE,' *Morning Herald*—"

"Never mind—read any that best tells the thing."

And Gryphon, commanding his shrewd countenance, read as follows:—

"ROMANCE IN REAL LIFE.—Last night, between nine and ten, as the Hon. Charles Herbert, of Lincoln's Inn, was returning by the water from Richmond with a party of ladies, their attention was attracted to a boat passing in the other direction, in which two persons were seen struggling. The alarm of the females may be imagined, when one man leapt into their boat, while all the others were precipitated into the river. One of the ladies, with the greatest presence of mind, threw out her parasol, which was caught by one of the drowning men, who, when taken up, proved to be Mr. BURKE BARKER, the celebrated barrister and journalist, the intimate friend and former schoolfellow of Mr. Herbert. To heighten this *Romance in Real Life*, it was found that Mr. Burke Barker's life had been placed in this imminent jeopardy by his humane attempts to prevent a lunatic, who had got into the boat, from committing suicide. We are sorry to add, that although, by the humane efforts of that gentleman, the unhappy maniac was picked up, the vital spark was for ever extinguished. The unfortunate man is understood to be from the north. He has left a friendless widow, to whom the gentleman, who had so nearly been his victim, has acted with the most delicate generosity."

"Damnably cool!" said Herbert, who rarely swore, and with whom oaths, when employed, were more than idle expletives. "It was, I have no doubt, this precious piece of mystification that Barker penned in his

wet clothes last night, in the bar of the Ship, and before we had ceased to attempt to recover the poor man."

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. CHARLES HERBERT, having written to the father of the unfortunate Bigsby's widow, and in few words, but with all the address and delicacy in his power, appealed to his paternal feelings, was about to proceed to Mrs. Marion's dwelling to procure the necessary directions for forwarding his letter, and to consult this sagacious friend about the arrangements for the funeral of Burke Barker's victim:—for in this light Herbert could not help considering the provincial agent, admitting that he might in part have been the dupe of his own ambitious vanity and imaginary knowledge of the world, or of the arts of the designing. Herbert had taken his hat to go out, when Mr. Gryphon had called upon him, with those morning newspapers in his pocket containing the paragraphs quoted in our last chapter; though his chief object was to remind his young friend of the engagement he had made in his name for next morning with the Duke of Plantagenet, when all the matters in debate were to be concluded. When Herbert simply narrated his last night's adventures as they had really taken place, and in contrast with Mr. Burke Barker's gloss or "*Romance in Real Life*," Gryphon, between amusement and indignation, exclaimed, "Hang the fellow! he might compromise us with the Duke, if proper precautions are not instantly adopted: but I am a match for him. . . . He is, though, an infinitely clever rascal—and so plausible withal. . . . Ten thousand pities but that Barker possessed enough of the alloy of vulgar, common-place integrity to give his reputation tenuity sufficient to stand the wear and tear of the world's ordinary handling—I do not stipulate for sterling probity, high principle, nice honour: a man gets on well enough without these qualities—we are no longer in the times of chivalry."

"Would not *gold* enough, without any alloy, do the turn?" said Herbert—"if my friend were believed to be really *rich*; if he were a *good* man?"

"Ay, indeed," replied Gryphon, with a shrewd smile, "if he *were* a *good* man."

"Or if his knaveries were practised under the common conventional sanctions—if they lay in the safe line of stock-jobbing tricks—

or gambling in Mark Lane, or in any sort of accredited *scrip* or *omnium*—any thing that good men call *speculation*.”

“Ay, ay, indeed,” returned Gryphon, now laughing freely. “But don’t be satirical, Mr. Herbert. How ill you understand business, by the way! You University men never do, in the large way. However, Mr. Barker is effectually blown:—even in the House I don’t believe he could have passed muster, although the Plantagenet interest had foisted him in.”

“Who is satirical now, my good sir?”

“Simple fact of his Majesty’s Commons, Mr. Herbert. . . . But there is no calculating upon the resources of a man like Barker, in a position which he understands so well as London, and all to which it is the key. If he issued proposals for a company for depasturing the mountains of the moon with Alpaca sheep, he would find people ready to take shares,—possibly a hot competition for them. Our retired suburban capitalists would peep through their glasses on the first moon-light night, and fancy the thing very promising, as they saw hills.”

“And yet, Mr. Gryphon, I must regret him,” said Herbert, with feeling:—“With abilities so great,—accomplishments so brilliant,—a knowledge of men, but especially of the weaknesses and bad side of human nature, which looks like supernatural,—to see that man the slave of the lowest, vilest ambitions,—capable of the meanest, basest acts to gain a paltry object! There was a time when I should have been proud to be called ‘the intimate friend’ of Burke Barker.”

“Hang his cool impudence! Your ‘intimate friend!’ From the commencement of his breakfast, until the conclusion of his lunch and his daily dutiful airing with her Grace and her poodle, the Duke potters over the newspapers till he has puzzled out an inconceivable deal of that diurnal trash which it is astonishing to find him still taking for gospel. If he fall on this paragraph it may prove troublesome to our plans and your prospects.”

“Am I not prudent in setting small store by prospects so easily damaged, Mr. Gryphon?”

“Nonsense! I won’t hear a word of this; the thing can easily be put straight, although his Grace should scratch his shins over the stumbling-block laid in his way, by the accomplished Mr. Barker.—Pray, hear me out,” he continued, seeing Herbert about to

speaking, “I tell you, once for all, that I will take no refusal from you. I have appealed to the ladies, I trust to their superior and nicer discernment. Besides, they are parties—principals, indeed, in the affair.”

Herbert, laughing at the pertinacity of his shrewd friend, at once agreed to this; and they walked together to Marion’s door, where Gryphon left him.

When admitted below, he ascended the stairs very quietly, feeling that, if not in the presence, he was in the neighbourhood of sacred sorrow. Marion also gently opened her sanctum to his gentle tap. Her spectacles were on; she had been reading her Bible, which lay open on a small table by the darkened window. She pointed to the inner chamber opening from her watch-tower parlour, and made a sign of quiet; but when Herbert whispered his errand, so far forgot her own injunction, as to exclaim, though still in a suppressed tone,—“This is like yourself, sir! kind and good; and ye were aye good and kind;—and the blessing o’ the Friend of the stranger and the widow, and o’ them that have none to help, will be about you, sir,—about you and yours.—Pussey, ye misleard limmer! will ye haud aff Mr. Charles.—Od, I’ll take the tangs to ye. What cares he for your phrasin’ and purrin’!”

“If example could make me good, if warning could make me thoughtful and thankful, I would be the most grateful of men,” replied Herbert, in an earnest undertone;—“but I do care for pussey’s fondness, and her welcome of me;” and the heart of pussey’s affectionate mistress glowed and melted as Herbert for a moment caressed her grimalkin, a condescension she did not afterwards fail to relate to Mrs. Charles,—politely remarking, while Violet laughed, “I would have thought nothing of it in you; but a grand, young gentleman, but the other day capering about in the Parks, or at the Clubs, or the hunts, like the other fashionable light-horsemen, sprauchlin’ up to my garret to write a letter for a poor widow woman,—and dawting my pussey.”

For that poor widow, Herbert meanwhile kindly inquired, and was answered in the set terms, “As well, sir, as can be expected,” to which, however, Marion added, “Wonderfu’ weel, sir!—wonderfu’, considering. Indeed I fear, Mr. Charles, that poverty is sometimes a great cooler of the affections. The forlorn thing is grieved for her silly *gudeman*, no doubt, but doubly so for the ill terms on

which they parted yesterday morning, never to meet again on this side Jordan. Oh, sirs, but we are short-sighted creatures! If we could but look forrit a wee bit, what a check would that be on our angry passions, and bridle on our unruly tongues!"

"She must indeed be greatly depressed, poor woman," said Herbert, while he addressed the letter as Marion directed him.

"Ay, but, on the other hand, I can see like a flickerin' o' consolation stealing through the darkness of sorrow, which is just so muckle the better. She must be, and very naturally too, thinking now of her chance of being tenderly welcomed back to a *bein*, comfortable parent-nest; and ye canna think of the diversion from grief—for I dare not call it comfort—that a bit widow's mutch, that's what ye call a *cap* or *hood* in Lon'on, has been to her, that I bought this morning, and the bit black brooch she had among her trash—the same Mrs. Snipson thought no' worth pawning."

Herbert now smiled, though gravely.

"And is not that just so much the better, Mr. Charles, that the feeblest spirit finds its ain suitable consolation. Now, if your dear young leddy had lost you, sir—which the Lord o' his mercy forbid!—what would the bravery of a' the widow weeds in Lon'on have been to her bereaved and broken heart?"

"Truly, these are *gruesome* images in a morning, Marion," replied Herbert, "especially to those bound like us on melancholy business. The Inquest is to be held at one o'clock, you are aware."

"Ye'll pardon me, Mr. Charles, but ever since I handed in my bit looking-glass, to let her try on her widow mutch i' the bed, and saw her study and admire her braid hems, I have been speakalatin' in my ain mind on the utility of dress and adornments to man, and especially to woman, in their fallen estate,—or at least to the frivolous part of them. If there had been no Fall of Man from his original condition, what sort o' town, I wonder, would this same big Babylon have been? Ne'er a tailor, nor a mercer, nor a millender, nor a hair-dresser in it. There would have been a clean annihilation, or a non-existence, of the half of our present human avocations; and the things we prize the most would have been no more thought of than the baby-clouts that lassie-bairns busk their Flanders dolls wi'. And what would have become of all my dainty ladies' toilet-wark?—Weel may they ca' it *toil-it*, for hard and sair do they toil themselves, or

their bond-slaves for them *toil* at it: decor- ing the vile body—pettlin' up food for worms."

"Not so fast, Mrs. Linton," replied Mr. Herbert, rising to go. "The *body* is not so very vile; and I plead for the hair-dressers: even in Paradise, ladies would have braided their tresses,—Eve at the Fountain,—though perhaps their hair-dressers might be their lovers: and men will, I hope, shave their beards, even after the millennium."

"You are laughin' at a daft auld wife's clavers and nonsense, Mr. Charles; and, troth, I deserve it."

"No, indeed: but these are questions for grave Scottish divines; and now you must follow me to the Inquest in good time."

"And give Mr. Burke Barker back his siller—if he appear. To me, yestreen, he looked like a man not lang for this world. . . . My proud, natural heart rose in me, sir, at the thought of the poor woman he has bereaved of all, being beholden to him, were it but for a bodle. I have ordered a' thing frugally, but decently, at my *own* charge; and if I am not repaid by the friends, I have stood greater losses in my time."

Herbert admired this burst of honest spirit; while he said that he would arrange with the undertaker.

"Deed and ye'll do nae sic thing, sir," cried Marion, briskly. "This is to be my job. Besides, it's all already settled. Hoot, awa, Mr. Charles! d'ye think a young gentleman like you can deal with these sharp Lon'oners like me, that's been up to the trap of a' kin-kinds o' them for thirty years and upwards? Na, na; ye had your ain way yestreen, and I'se have mine the day: time about is fair play, Mr. Charles." And the peremptory, and somewhat purse-proud old lady, jocosely shut her door, muttering blessings on her parting guest; and at the proper hour followed him to the Ship Tavern, where the Coroner's court had met; and where a barrister, who was a townsman and old schoolfellow of the unfortunate Bigsby, had taken his place. One material witness failed to appear; and this gentleman, to the great indignation of the Coroner, who hotly resented his interference, suggested that the Court should be adjourned till Mr. Burke Barker was compelled to appear, as he, as counsel, on the part of the friends of the deceased, wished to put a few questions to that gentleman.

This suggestion could not be attended to. A note just then received, addressed by Dr. Edmund Cryppes to the Coroner, mentioned

that Mr. Burke Barker was seriously indisposed; that he had been very ill all night, and that fever was apprehended, affecting the brain, from which the greatest danger might result if he were in any way disturbed.

"I protest against the proceedings," cried the barrister.—"Is the testimony of a notorious, impudent quack, the brother-in-law of Barker, to defeat the ends of justice?"

"Take down his words," exclaimed a person present, who was supposed to be in the interest or pay of Barker's associates in the Bubble Company; and it was as certain that the peremptory lawyer, really had been sent by parties having a different interest.

While this squabble over the dead body of poor Bigsby is going forward, we shall look back upon Mr. Burke Barker, whom we left shivering and miserable in the cabriolet in which Herbert had compassionately sent him home. That home he reached in less than four hours from the time he had left it; but already what revolution was there!

Before Barker had gone out, there had been something in his conduct exceedingly suspicious and inexplicable to his sharp-witted, distrustful helpmate. When whispering confidentially with her medical brother about the delicate state and brilliant prospects of the Countess Emmeline, Mrs. Barker had kept an eye on her husband's proceedings, especially when he carried away his desk to his own room. He and poor Bigsby had not disappeared for three minutes, when, from actual experiment, Mrs. Burke Barker convinced herself that the cash-box, which usually stood on a small table in her husband's dressing-room,—a box which had of late not been remarkably heavy,—was considerably diminished in weight. Papers lay strewn about, as if rejected, while others had been selected; and from the drawer of a *chiffonniere* in which Mr. Barker kept some valuables and a quantity of nick-nackery, several articles were gone. One of them Mrs. Barker, angry as it made her, in no ways regretted. It was the miniature of a pretty young girl, about which Barker, when rallied by his wife on its accidental discovery, could give no satisfactory account—about which he was grave, if not *mysterious*, though her brother Jack had told her that the picture of the girl, who so much resembled Violet Hamilton, was that of Barker's first love, and there was something more in the story,—“not,” Jack delicately said, “for ladies' ears.”

“That miniature gone! Then Barker

certainly meditates flight!” was his agitated wife's audible thought, as she hurriedly rummaged on.—“What am I to do? Whither to turn?—the *plate*, the lighter valuables!—Those are safe yet, and for this night I am safe:—My mother,—I can depend on her services in this dreadful emergency. What a heartless wretch to betray and abandon me thus.—But he never cared for me.”

In this crisis of her fate, Mrs. Burke Barker's courage and presence of mind did not forsake her. In less than two minutes her plans were taken.

In this gay family, every member of which, from the basement to the attic, was devoted to pleasure, and fond of public amusements, it was a frequent custom to present the servants with tickets to plays, and to a certain order of fancy balls. At the summons of the lady of the house, so soon as she had written a hasty note to her selected auxiliary, her active mother, and seated herself quietly and decorously at her work-table, the tall footman glided in like a zephyr, and presented to her the lighted taper required.

“Let the tiger take this note to Mrs. Cryppes in Half-moon Street. By the way, Mr. Dobbs, the newspaper has just reminded me of a promise to my maid—to Miss Bish. She has not had three nights of pleasure since Jenkins went and she came to me. I promised that she was to see Fanny Kemble in Juliet the first time Fanny appeared in that part. . . . Now I am thinking that as Mr. Barker is to be at Great Marlow all night, with Lord St. Edward, and as the Countess is to spend the evening with me, I never could better spare you all. The cook is a Methodist, and won't go to “the devil's house”—she may send up the supper-tray, and the boy can wait. Now, Dobbs, you must promise me to take the greatest care of the girls—Miss Bish and the two housemaids and the laundress—and to be early home, not later than one or two at the farthest. I have for some weeks suspected a sly flirtation,” continued Mrs. Burke Barker, looking exceedingly sly, and, as the tall footman thought, uncommonly gracious. He simpered in coy consciousness, and held down his head, being still comparatively new to London service, while his lady, studying her watch, proceeded—“she is a nice girl, and I have a great regard for her; but you must both be prudent, though even if you were to marry, that need be no immediate reason for your leaving my family.”

“You are too good, ma'am,” replied the

tall footman, bowing low, overpowered by his lady's condescension ; "and I mean nothing but what is honourable to the girl, ma'am—nothing, ma'am," and he drew up his head perkingly.

With a momentary glance of womanly contempt at this expression of the tall well-looking dolt's "honourable intentions" towards her clever and pretty maid—a person, woman as she was, so immeasurably his superior, as her mistress thought—Mrs. Barker proceeded with her own affairs.

Especially anxious to disarm the suspicions of her servant, should any be entertained, she said—"Well, make haste, and desire the girls to equip themselves. Bish must not be affronted at the other girls going along with you. I really cannot trust her alone, Dobbs—she is too pretty ;" and this was said so roguishly, that Mr. Dobbs drew up his neck-cloth, simpered worse than ever, and muttered "O Lord, ma'am, beg pardon ; surely you can't, ma'am, imagine—." So contradictory and conflicting a thing is human thought that Mrs. Barker, though absorbed in her own important affairs, could have boxed her tall footman's ears for uttering the impudent thought which her speech was so well calculated to excite. She, however, only said hurriedly—"The carriage may set down the girls somewhere near the theatre, before it is put up for the night, and the coachman goes home as usual ;—only be prudent all of you. This sovereign will frank you all to the second gallery. I must not give you a taste for extravagance, now that, in consequence of very heavy losses, Mr. Barker is limiting his expenditure for a time." Never had the delighted Mr. Dobbs seen his lady half so gracious and confidential, as he immediately told Miss Bish, when, jumping up at the welcome intelligence, she arranged her hair, exclaiming—"If we are only in time for the balcony scene !"

In ten minutes more the carriage, with four ladies inside, and Mr. Dobbs seated beside the coachman, was rolling on to the Haymarket. Miss Bish insisted on being set down at the very door of the theatre. She was not to be trundled off in the street, spoil her clothes, and perhaps lose half the balcony scene ! That scene was long past ; but there were others which detained Mr. Dobbs and his fair friends quite as long as Mrs. Burke Barker could have wished for.

The cook, besides her alleged Methodism, was suspected to love, not a glass, but many glasses, of gin, and, in consequence of this

infirmity, had been seldom of late permitted to go beyond the precincts of the area ; but the Countess was now momentarily expected to spend the evening with her sister, and being in a condition when ladies are privileged to have capricious appetites, and to eat at all hours, Mrs. Burke Barker graciously took her cook, who was a matron and a person of experience, into her confidence, and despatched her to the other end of London to hunt for a couple of *whitings*—two delicate *whitings*. She might go by any omnibus, or even take a coach, if necessary, but return without a *whiting* or *whitings* she must not, lest a future Duke of Plantagenet might bear a visible or hidden piscatory mark, in addition to his heraldic quarterings. The cook, curtsying for her crown-piece, promised to do her best, if she should knock up all Billingsgate, and proceeded on the way, on which Mrs. Barker, well loaded for one so little accustomed to porter's work, almost immediately followed ; leaving her dwelling, the lights all blazing, to the care of Providence and the police.

Professor and Mrs. Cryppes, whose migrations, like those of the rest of their family, were frequent, had at this time no house of their own. They had occupied, since the high alliance contracted by their younger daughter, "genteel lodgings," taken for them by their elder daughter, in a good street off Piccadilly. As their style was now humbler, so were their hours earlier than those of the dashing Barker family ; and not an hour after the latter had dined, the seniors were usually engaged at their nice little tête-à-tête supper. Let us now suppose Mrs. Cryppes thus engaged in her drawing-room, and her husband at a table apart, covered with sheets of music-paper, most intricately and elaborately blotted. The classical meal of supper is always the favourite repast of "The favourites of the public," whether players, musicians, or singers. Then the worrying business of their weary, if proud and brilliant, day is over, and then the exhaustion of both their physical and spiritual powers urgently require what Johnson pragmatically calls "the repairs of the table." Then, too, comes "the sweet of the night," which persons, whose vocation is the heavy one of universally pleasing, taste with such zest—the kernel of the twenty-four hours—whether the high-salaried theatrical *Star* banquets on the rarest dainties, and sips veritable champagne ; or the "Poor strollers," always social, procure a pot of stout to relish the Welsh rabbit or plate of hot tripe, over which they luxuriate.

To Professor Cryppes supper had ever been the meal of the gods—social, jovial, musical, enchanting! but to-night he scribbled on, neglecting this favourite repast, to which his lady was doing all honour. "Will you put away these papers and eat your supper, Cryppes, or as sure as dickens I shall order away the tray," said the professor's amiable partner, who had already had her full share of the lobster, and was deeply engaged with something equally nice.

"Be so kind as to mix me a glass of brandy and water—'screeching hot,'—and not disturb me, my love," replied the professor, not looking up, and scratching away, as for life and death, off and on those black lines, as if in a musical frenzy; "I have not had such a flood of sublime ideas for months."

"Stuff, Cryppes! has not your daughter, Barker, told you again and again, that in our present delicate relations with the Plantagenet family, that opera of yours cannot be allowed to appear, although you could get it produced, which you cannot."

"I can, and I *will*, Mrs. Cryppes," retorted the indignant composer, "as soon as the necessary alterations are made. The loss of my original Prima Donna, Mademoiselle Gabrielle, now Mrs. Charles Herbert, has given me inconceivable trouble; but when the airs are arranged for——"

"Don't tell me such nonsense," interrupted Mrs. Cryppes; "you will always be fobbed off by some excuse or other—now this, now that; but the real reason is, the manager didn't give a fig for your piece, until the marriage of my daughter, the Countess——"

"Pray, ma'am, be so obliging as to hold your tongue," said the professor, angrily; "you drive me stupid. . . . What an idea you have banished, Mrs. Cryppes!" and the disconsolate composer pettishly tapped with three fingers on his bump of music, and the other bumps in that vicinage, as if to woo back the evanescent or fugitive idea; then, throwing down his pen, he exclaimed, "It is vanished—gone!" He jumped up like a puff-ball, "Heavens! to what mischances are the rarest combinations of genius liable. Happy Beethoven, who could retreat to your den from vulgar annoyances! You cannot, my dear, guess the infinite mischief you have done to-night." The professor swallowed his hot punch at a gulp.

"Fiddlesticks, Cryppes! have your compositions ever produced one penny to your family? answer me that! The Plantagenet family——"

"Don't tell me, woman, of the Plantagenet family!" interrupted the angry professor, swelling and using vehement gesticulation. "My daughter has married a nobleman. I shall be the grandfather of a line of dukes. But there are more illustrious honours than these. Your husband is a man of genius, madam, whether you know it or not. What is the gaudy tinsel of nobility to the sterling ore of heaven-born Art, Mrs. Cryppes? Nature's nobility, Mrs. Cryppes: princes and sovereigns, madam, have bowed to musicians. My great Master, Beethoven, taught them to know their own place. See him on the promenade, the imperial family approaching! See Goethe! see the sneaking Poet, shrinking aside, and doffing his castor!—but the Master, what says he?—'I crushed my hat more furiously on my head, buttoned up my top-coat, and walked with my arms folded behind me right through the thickest of the crowd:—the officials made a lane for me,—Archduke Rudolph took off his hat,—the Empress saluted me the first:—*These great people know me.* It was the greatest fun in the world to me to see the procession file past Goethe.' There, ma'am, there! This is the homage which Rank pays to Art!"

"Now really, Cryppes, there is no enduring your nonsense," interrupted the lady. "Stuff your mouth with your supper, pray. Would you ruin our prospects with your folly? Beethoven, indeed! Are you Beethoven?—And he was crazy too,—what did he ever make of it? Even seven hundred a-year, properly secured for my life, is something. Polly turns up her saucy nose, to be sure; but I wish the great Mrs. Burke Barker may never be worse off. She would have me incite dear Emmy to fly in the face of that old rogue Gryphon's pecuniary arrangements, and refuse to accompany her husband abroad with these cunning Herberts; but I don't see what we would take by that. As well my daughter's affections be seduced from me by those who can and will give us something, as by the Barkers, who would keep her all to themselves."

Our Professor had experienced too many of the rubs of professional life, and the mischances of ambitious town adventure, to be altogether indifferent to prudential considerations, even when he talked the loudest of his exclusive adoration of Divine Art. But the longings of vanity, and any present gratification, always with him predominated over prudence and a future advantage, no matter how great. To complicate his perplexity, a

certain scheming manager — may the gods pardon him! — had this evening excited his inordinate vanity by a fresh proposal for his piece, and propitiated his previous anger by the blandest apologies, and promises to bring out his Opera, without delay, in the highest and most novel style of splendour as to *spectacle*, and with every advantage possible, from the first appearance in it of the most celebrated foreign singers that were to appear during the season. The compositions of an old-fashioned provincial organist of the school of Handel, did not promise much; but an opera by the father of a dashing runaway Countess, about to become the mother of a ducal race, was of some mark and likelihood to a man distracted to find popular amusements for an unamusable and capricious fashionable audience — a man in despair of having the boxes properly let. The overture of the manager, and the brilliant family prospects formally announced that morning by Dr. Cryppes to his exulting parents, had, coming together, been too much for the Professor's brain, and the consequent excitement had produced that flood of musical ideas which had cost him, in the first place, the loss of his supper. Yet he was so far impressed by his wife's representations, as to come down a peg, though he said, "If my daughter possess one spark of her father's soul, Musical Art may, in the future representatives of the House of Plantagenet, find munificent patrons, and England may yet see something deserving of the name of a National Opera. If my humble contributions at the commencement —"

"Humble enough, upon my honour, Cryppes," interposed the lady; "you have a head and so has a pin! — I wonder what keeps me from thrusting your whole trash at once into the fire! You have kept us beggars all your life with your folly; and now, when my daughter the Countess is about to help you to your bread ready buttered, you must fly in the face of the noble family. But if you are a fool, I am not;" and Mrs. Cryppes nodded her head many times with a most provoking air, as if she had taken some desperate but diverting resolution; and then, seizing the poker, she gave the fire an angry rummage, and flounced down.

A faint suspicion of the enormity, the petty treason meditated by Mrs. Cryppes against her liege lord, did steal over the mind of the Professor, but was dismissed as something too monstrous to be entertained. His sober reason suggested that the wife of his

bosom was no more capable of the unheard-of crime of destroying his immortal masterpieces, though they might be imagined to stand in the way of a paltry pecuniary advantage, than to poison the great composer they were to immortalize; so, merely saying, with theatric dignity and stern emphasis, — "Beware, madam! beware, Mrs. Cryppes! there are bounds to forbearance —" the Professor had proceeded to the supper-table to finish his punch, when, enraged at the implied defiance and menace, Mrs. Cryppes sprung up like a sudden whirlwind, crying, "I'll make a clearing of 'em once and for ever."

The Professor's first maddening impulse, as he dashed down the second tumbler which he had just emptied, was to assault his lady in a style going somewhat beyond the moderate correction of "his woman," — by the "Baron," sanctioned in such cases matrimonial by the authority of Judge Buller. Nor was it reason that restrained the impulse; but rather the self-preserving instinct of an author's vanity, which made him, instead of assaulting his wife, dash his hands into the flames to rescue some part of the blurred and blotted manuscripts, which he threw on the hearth-rug, and danced upon, while his lady indulged in half-forced bursts of spiteful and triumphant laughter, crying, "Dance away, Cryppes! will you have music?" and she began to sing, and kept singing, until the poor man dropt upon the carpet as if suddenly shot dead. This made the lady change her note.

At this instant Mrs. Burke Barker, looking particularly bulky, entered the room, wrapped up in her ermine-lined satin mantle.

"What, in Heaven's name, is all this? Is the chimney on fire? Is my father ill?"

"Only mad, I believe," replied Mrs. Cryppes, sulkily but faintly, and bending to assist her prostrate lord. "I merely — he provoked me so — threw a quantity of the lumber, with which your father will litter the place, into the fire — the scrawls he was to send to that cunning vagabond at the Opera House, to-morrow, who blarneys and butters him up for his own ends, that he is a Rossini, and a Weber, and all manner of stuff. — Get up, Cryppes, here is Mrs. Barker come." But Cryppes did not stir; and mother and daughter both became seriously alarmed, and the former violently.

"For any sake, mother, be quiet, and don't make a scene before the people of the house. Help me to raise papa, and he will

do well enough; but first put this parcel carefully out of the way. How I wish poor Jack were here to-night, he could be so useful to me at this time. Stay, papa is coming round now—"she raised her father's head—"and you must call a coach—a *roomy* double coach, and come instantly with me, mother: I have things to tell that will horrify you." This Mrs. Barker hoarsely whispered, while bathing her father's temples.

"My daughter, the Countess!" half screamed Mrs. Cryppes. "Has Emmeline,—the abandoned wretch,—has she eloped, then?"

"Hush, mother, for Heaven's sake; you have another daughter, though you seem to forget that. Emmeline is well enough—safe under the wing of the Herberts;—will be well enough for herself and them, whatever becomes of me—of the most ill-used and unhappy woman, this night, in London! Barker has deserted me, mother?—I am certain he has,—without leaving me even a message or one sixpence!"

This affectionate mother half shrieked, "The d—d villain!—but I always had a very bad opinion of him. He was so high and mighty, too—such a wonderful man—he despised my son, Jack—the best of all my children—my dear Quintin, who was ever affectionate and dutiful to me."

"You have reason to say so," returned Mrs. Barker, in a satirical tone.

"Hand over my salts, Mrs. Barker; your father is coming round; but he is so conceited and obstinate—he feigns ill, I am sure, just to tease me." The Professor was giving signs of returning sensibility, and Mrs. Barker, thinking chiefly of her own affairs, and no longer greatly alarmed for her father's condition, again urged her mother to accompany her—every moment was precious. "We can perhaps save a few trifles in the general wreck," she whispered, and Mrs. Cryppes pricked up her ears. "We shall lock up papa, and send Edmund to him as we go along. It was rash, though, to burn his compositions, poor old man! but he is coming finely round now."

Mrs. Cryppes, who had been a good deal flattered by her husband's swoon or fit, and who was now assured of his recovery, became enraged upon her own account. "Rash, Mrs. Barker!—rash, did you call your mother:—we are all rash betimes; but your mother will not be quite so rash as to accompany you in your pretty expedition, ma'am. D'y'e hear, Cryppes! get up, will

ye. Your wonderful son-in-law, the great orator, Mr. Burke Barker, who was to be a Member of Parliament and a Lord Chancellor, has bolted; just what I always expected of him,—the great man!—the wonderful genius, that despised my boy, Jack—left his fine lady wife there, to go on the parish—for she sha'n't come on us, I can tell her."

"I have deserved this—but, mother, not from you!" replied the wretched daughter and deserted wife, in a hollow whisper; and she unconsciously put the empty tumbler, lately used by her father, to her parched and burning lips.

"Don't be so furious, Mrs. Barker," said the mother, in a calmer tone. "There, Cryppes, you are on your feet again; lean down on the couch, and compose yourself; what a fool you are, to be sure." Mrs. Cryppes was by this time revolving that if she lost her Professor, that "infernal screw, Gryphon," as she termed the Duke's confidential agent, might fancy that a much smaller annuity, or retiring allowance, might serve for the Professor's amiable widow. "It was all your own fault, you know. But see the end of the Barkers—ha! ha! ha!" and Mrs. Cryppes laughed scornfully. "What claim have you on us, ma'am? What have you and your husband done for me or for my family, save to come between us and my daughter, the Countess, and her husband—your great and wonderful husband and you."

The overwrought passions of Mrs. Barker now first fairly gave way, and she fiercely exclaimed—"Yes, he was great—great and wonderful—*my* husband; and you have been his ruin among you—curse you for it—*curse* you all!"

Mrs. Cryppes, who now sat by her husband, affectionately holding his hand, stared at her furious daughter for a few seconds, ere she said,— "I fancied you had more sense, Polly. Be off now, and attend to your own affairs, I advise you,—if you can get a few trifles off safely, I shall try to take care of them for you, though, if I were personally seen, or in any way implicated in the business, my daughter, Emmeline—"

"My Emmeline, my child, my darling Countess," whispered the Professor, whose mind evidently wandered;—and he fixed his vacant and yet wild eyes on his elder daughter. Then all at once, as if moved by sudden recollection, he half rose, as if going to the fire-place, and next smote upon his forehead.

"Now, Cryppes, no more of that nonsense,

if you please:—I really won't stand it. What matter about that trumpery music, when here is your daughter deserted by her vagabond husband, like a parish pauper, and left to disgrace us all; what will the Plantagenet family——"

"Mr. Burke Barker absconded!" exclaimed the Professor, overwhelmed by this fresh calamity. He had ever entertained the highest opinion of his son-in-law's abilities, and his gentlemanly character, as he called Barker's specious manners. While Barker's tone of character only cowed and angered his vulgar mother-in-law, whom he treated with hardly disguised contempt, he had inspired Cryppes with respect and something like affection.

"Mr. Burke Barker abscond, — abandon his wife and his position!" he repeated, raising himself as if he had been thunder-struck, and fixing his inquiring, bewildered eyes on his daughter.

"Barker has bolted, sir,—this evening,—taking all the cash and valuables he could muster with him. Ask your daughter else."

"My mother *lies!*" shrieked Barker's frantic wife, in the hissing whisper of a fury. "Barker has not deserted me,—he will do—he has done nothing to touch his honour; who among your Plantagenets—the alliance which *he* obtained for your daughter—is to be compared with Burke Barker?"

"Leave my presence, you bold, unnatural hussy," roared Mrs. Cryppes. "You will dare to call your mother *liar*, you audacious woman, you! A pretty wife Barker has had of you, to be sure! no wonder he has left you;—and you to sit there, Cryppes, and hear your wife insulted!—Have you the soul of a cheese-mite?—Oh, if my son Jack were here!" and Mrs. Cryppes proceeded to get up a sobbing fit.

"You will drive me mad among you," exclaimed the Professor, now grasping his aching head with both hands,—while his daughter, wrapping herself hurriedly in her cloak, as if it were armour against Fate, abruptly ran out and down stairs. This brought her mother suddenly to her senses, and she followed, calling in a voice wonderfully composed, or wonderfully well-pitched to the ear of the House,—the lodging house, "I am ready to go with you, Mrs. Barker. Let me get my bonnet, the Countess will accompany us." She followed her daughter to the next coach-stand, and, without another word being interchanged, hired a vehicle intended to do the office of a baggage wagon, while the

Professor was left thus to soliloquize. "Barker ruined, and fled,—my son, Quintin, in disgraceful imprisonment,—but of that all Europe shall yet ring!—my daughter, Susan, degrading her family by a low marriage. And my opera!—my wife—But I repudiate her! Never again shall your mother, my Countess, share Professor Cryppes's bed or board.—Grandfather of a line of illustrious patrons of music. . . . Gad! there is some peg sadly wrong here," continued the wandering musician, tapping his skull; "I fancied I saw Emmeline before me,—my last hope,—the jewel of her house."

The Professor had fallen into the stupor of exhaustion, rather than into refreshing sleep, by the time that his lady and her daughter, so lately belligerent powers, but again united by a sound policy, had reached Mr. Barker's door.

To their mutual dismay, he had preceded them; and the cab-driver, and afterwards himself, were now attempting to force admittance into the blazing, enchanted castle, which seemed to contain no inmate. Mrs. Cryppes, with ready ingenuity, would have thrown all blame on the servants, but Mrs. Barker, with farther-seeing sagacity, imputed the whole to a mistake, which she explained; and Barker, ready to sink, was far too ill and too wretched to make any observation, even when he perceived a basket of plate standing packed in the hall, as if ready to be carried off. His condition—his return, which falsified all her own and her mother's suspicions, awoke some remorse, and even tenderness in the bosom of his wife, who, while she assisted him to throw off his still wet clothes, and to get to bed—and gave him copious draughts of water, for which he cried—could not help expressing her surprise and alarm. Had he attempted suicide?—he had certainly been in the water.

"Good God! Barker, have you been in the water? and you are burning——"

"In the *fire* and in the water," he replied. "But leave me in quiet, Maria—and don't, I entreat, let your mother near me—I shall be better to-morrow—don't alarm yourself needlessly—I was merely dragged into the water by the little madman with whom I left the house—and rescued, of all men, by Charles Herbert. . . . You will see it all in the morning papers. Good-night, now,—and don't sit up."

"Good-night—but I must sit:" and Mrs. Burke Barker kissed her husband's burning brow with something of pity and fondness,

and secretly repented all her sins of that night against him, and hoped that something might still save them. "Barker was a man of such extraordinary talents — could make himself so useful to any party —" and forthwith she went to listen to her mother's proposal still to secure the plate. It could easily be restored, if necessary, — but was better to be placed in safety, whatever should occur. Mrs. Barker offered no opposition; indeed the scheme had originally been her own. She saw her mother depart, in the hackney-coach which had brought her, with a load of pillage, and then took her place in the room adjoining her husband's, to wait the return of her servants from the theatre, and send Dobbs for medical assistance.

Next morning the summons of the Coroner, served upon Barker, first apprized his wife of the fate of Bigsby; and in part accounted to her for her husband's distress of mind. She shuddered for an instant at the catastrophe.

The Coroner, notwithstanding Barker's absence, refused to adjourn the inquest; and indeed the evidence of the boatmen, and of Herbert and Marion, was clear enough as to the manner of Bigsby's death; and the verdict, "Drowned himself in the Thames during a fit of temporary insanity," was after all the true one; since it was no business of Mr. Coroner's to trace the causes which had produced the fatal temporary aberration of the unfortunate man's mind. Marion produced from her ample pockets a pair of scissors which might have represented those of the Fates, and cut off a lock of hair to give to the widow: — and then all was over; and in another hour the remains of poor Bigsby were added to the mouldering heaps of a London burying-ground. It was a painful duty to Charles Herbert to attend as chief mourner. His only associate, save the undertaker's men, was Mr. Snipson, the tailor, who generously lost a couple of hours of time, and exposed his best black suit to the chances of a showery day, in paying this respect to his late lodger; or in "lighting a candle to the devil," as his wife described a piece of decent hypocrisy, meant to conciliate rich Mrs. Linton.

The various melancholy engagements of the morning had unfitted Herbert for study; and he lounged about in the Green Park till the hour he had appointed to meet at a bookseller's shop with Gryphon, and walk with him to Chelsea.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. GRYPHON kept true tryst. He was very carefully dressed in his dinner suit, and looked in good spirits, and altogether remarkably well. Charles Herbert also recovered his spirits on their walk; and they sat down to dinner a cheerful and even gay *partie quarrée*, agreeing to put off the grand debate till they had assembled at the tea-table. Every thing went off well. A showery morning had ended in a splendid evening, and every thing was in harmony. Marion's Tweed salmon was pronounced perfection; the pretty, becoming cap, which Violet had constructed for Mrs. Herbert, was exquisite; and that lady, who liked pretty caps, and looked well in them, said, "It is almost too smart to be thrown away on old Gryphon." That gentleman, seeing to-day, in Mrs. Herbert, an ally in the furtherance of his project, looked upon her with unwonted complacence. He had long known that the spoiled widow of his client, the late rich East India Director, was a very pretty little woman, in excellent preservation, though endowed, as he thought, with sufficient *hauteur*. But this day, Mrs. Herbert's manners to himself were as complacent and engaging as they had usually been distant and reserved, though scrupulously polite. She was even studiously complacent; — and a man who takes any interest in the discovery, soon finds out when a woman wishes either to repress or encourage his attentions. He began to have a vague idea that he had always done Mrs. Herbert injustice, or that she was not the person he had fancied, but, in reality, the gentle, sweet, and serene feminine creature that her stepson's reverence and fond affection had ever indicated.

Mr. Gryphon had certainly not of late seen this lady to the same advantage. Since her residence at Chelsea, and changed mode of life, she had improved in appearance. Her fine proportions were fuller and rounder; her complexion was clearer and more delicate; her looks and eyes were softer — and they were ever soft. Mrs. Herbert's meetings with Mr. Gryphon, since the death of her husband, had all been on business, and generally on annoying business; and she had perhaps owed the astute and cool-headed lawyer a slight grudge for his interference and disapprobation of the extraordinary will made by her husband, which left his son nearly dependent upon her generosity or whim. Now, this circumstance was buried

among past things. She had lost with her fortune the power improperly confided to her; and the ever-remaining proof that she had not abused it, was the warm and confiding affection of Herbert and his wife for their stepmother, with whom they lived in the same freedom and cordiality as with a beloved elder sister.

Mr. Gryphon was particularly gratified by the lively words addressed to him, when, as he opened the door for the ladies to retire, Mrs. Herbert, smiling irresistibly, said, "Don't be long, my gallant ally—for I am resolved that, with your aid, I shall conquer."

He lost not a moment, after the gentlemen were left to their wine, of commencing—"I had no idea of how charming a woman Mrs. Herbert is—even yet."

"Even yet! my good sir," returned Herbert, laughing. "What does the chilling qualification of *even yet* mean?"

"Why, she looks not more than twenty-seven; and must be, let me see—"

"My mother's personal beauty is her least charm. I scarcely now, I fear, think very much about even my wife's fresher beauty. I somehow am in love with the one—and love both for their altogetherness."

"What a happy fellow you are, Charles!—you may well afford to forgive him, if an old bachelor, after a family visit of this sort, should be a thought envious."

"Not envious, but *emulous*;—get such a home for yourself—only as much richer as you like—and don't envy your friend," returned Herbert, believing what he recommended utterly impossible; though Gryphon deserved a good wife, because he was likely to make an amiable and reasonable woman happy.

"Mrs. Herbert wont to be, or else I imagined so, rather on the high ropes with me; but to-day she is more than civil, she is almost kind; and what a change does kindness to one's dear self make in any, the plainest woman!"

"Anticipating your suit, perhaps, and letting you perceive that she means to be gracious," replied Herbert.

"My suit!" faltered the usually steady lawyer, with the look of momentary confusion which is the nearest approach that a man of his character ever does make to a modest blush. Their eyes met; and Herbert, for once, read a lawyer's hidden or incipient secret in his guilty face.

"Ah, you mean my suit for the Planta-

genets," said Gryphon, recovering himself. "Ay, she is on my side, I know—one strong proof of her discernment."

"And there is more sympathy," quoted Herbert, laughingly; but Mr. Gryphon was musing over his claret. Though he called himself by implication an old bachelor, he had in fact been a widower for more than twenty years. The death of his wife had well-nigh driven the hard-looking lawyer distracted; and the calamity had not been wholly surmounted for many years. The remembrance of his short-lived domestic bliss was still at times as vivid as ever; and such reminiscences had often, of late, been renewed, when, on a Sunday afternoon, he visited the Herberts. For many years Gryphon had been a systematic play-goer and patron of the drama in his own way. There had been a freedom and sociality about the theatre, after the labours of the day, which, when as yet *genteel* clubs were not, formed a kind of substitute for the domestic circle. But, as he grew older, he became fonder of his own fireside. Many of his early favourites had died out or disappeared from the scene; and actors were no longer what they had been. The taste of every inveterate play-goer is in a great degree conventional.

No new actor, even though really superior, can ever fill the place of Liston, or Incedon, or Emery, or Kemble, or Abingdon, or Farren, to an old play-goer whose first loves they have been. In the approaching season, Mr. Gryphon had almost made up his mind to avoid the theatre altogether. It was becoming an annoyance to sit out a play, and painfully to contrast the new twinkling stars with the vanished lustres of Old Drury. Yet the prospect of his long solitary evenings was lonely; and one could not every night of the week play backgammon with old Joe Smith. Here seemed the very woman to brighten a solitary fireside; though young-looking, not too young;—found in a happy home that, though to it she lent so great a charm, could spare her to another where she would hold the first place. One of Gryphon's great matrimonial misgivings, for he had several, was on the score of temper—and here he was safe. His own outward bearing was not of the softest; and he could judge very fairly of the real tempers of men under all exteriors; but he was afraid that in the lovely sex, under the most creamy and velvety, or sugar-frosted manners, ladies sometimes conceal qualities the most fatal to the forbearance, and ease, and companionable

cheerfulness which was all he promised himself in a wife. But here were unimpeachable sweetness of disposition, united to lively intelligence and elegant manners, and a really remarkable share of personal loveliness—for her years. And Mr. Gryphon wished these years were more and her beauty less; for then his chance might be the better of obtaining so delightful a domestic companion. But the modest Mr. Gryphon was, on the other hand, a thriving lawyer, and a wealthy man,—so he did not quite despair. This charming widow was comparatively poor and dependent; and her tastes were what is called refined, and her habits had long been expensive and self-indulging. Mr. Gryphon had too much sense and manhood to think of buying or bribing any lady to be his wife; but Mrs. Herbert, well and cheerfully as she had borne adversity, was, he knew, not insensible to those *agremens* of life, to which Charles Herbert and his wife, wrapt in the bliss of their mutual attachment—all the world to each other—still appeared indifferent. They might not perhaps always continue so, philosophers as they were,—and their mother had a better appreciation of the value of well-regulated luxury, as her present Plantagenet leanings demonstrated. Gryphon thought all the better of the lady for entertaining those tastes which he shared and could afford to gratify in her. So he mused, as he cracked fresh filberts; and remarked that his old housekeeper paid no attention to the dessert, which was always neglected where there was not a lady.

Herbert, who knew by experience that Gryphon liked to give his friends a glass of good wine, and to indulge himself with one or more, now pressed another bottle of the best, and now very old, vintage of his late father's diminished cellar; but Gryphon, though praising the claret, protested that he would not be kept longer from the side of his fair ally. "If I had your motive to move, Charles, my friend, I should become a Frenchman—go off with the ladies, sir!"—which gallant speech Herbert instantly repeated in the drawing-room.

As soon as the gentlemen appeared, Violet took her post by the old-fashioned round-about tea-table used in this house—a house of much ease, though of narrow dimensions and few domestics. She wished to cause no delay in the business of the evening, the gentlemen proposing to return to their respective chambers,—Herbert, to be ready for his studies in the morning.

Herbert made his stepmother take his wife's place at the piano, saying to Mr. Gryphon, "I am a stoic to music save when I steal out here to 'Paradise and the Peri,' so I cannot afford to lose a minute from the practice of my last new song. Play, mother, if you please, the accompaniment of my present favourite."

"Nay, Charles, you may surely select something more classic than that simplest of all simple Scottish melodies, to entertain Mr. Gryphon: this is not the kind of music he will relish."

"I should not wonder if the playhouse had corrupted his taste. Has it, Mr. Gryphon, taught you to prefer art, and low art too, to the loveliest nature? It usually does; but never mind, mother: we'll try to regenerate him. . . . The lady does not admire this simple style of music herself, to tell you truth, Mr. Gryphon; yet the particular melody is as light, airy, and tripping, as ever a Venetian canzonet. And *my* singing too," he added in a comic voice, and hemming to clear his throat: "you should really come to us oftener, to learn in what the charm of social music consists."

"I wish the ladies would only give me leave," said Gryphon gallantly, yet with a touch of sorrow in the tone of his voice. "I may say with poor Lord Dudley—though my forlorn case is much less surprising—that there is not a house in London to which I could go for a cup of tea."

"O, for that," cried Herbert, "you are almost as over-modest—if it be not rather 'the pride that apes humility' in both of you—as Dudley himself."

"Am I to play this then, Charles?" inquired Mrs. Herbert, while Gryphon hovered behind her chair, as if meditating the outrageous gallantry of turning the leaves of the music for her. He however shrunk back, but still stood behind the performer.

"I presume, I must gratify this peremptory married gentleman," said Mrs. Herbert, while her jewelled and very delicate fingers glanced like sunbeams over the keys; and she turned up her side face with a winning smile, as if asking Gryphon for permission to gratify Charles.

The melody, played with great spirit and lightness, deserved all the praise that Herbert had given it; and his heartfelt expression did it all the justice which the most exacting Scot could have demanded for the sweetest lays of Burns. It was the well-known little Scottish song—

My wife's a winsome wee thing.

Mr. Gryphon was enchanted; he made Charles repeat the song. He attempted it himself, whilst, Mrs. Herbert laughingly covered his blunders with the instrument, until he succeeded to the general admiration.

"Bravo!" cried Charles. "Try it once more;—if you are tired, *Maman*, I shall try to knock off the accompaniment."

"I can never tire of playing for Mr. Gryphon, if he really wish it," said Mrs. Herbert, again turning up an animated and complacent face to the lawyer, and commencing again; and then the Scotch fell to be translated by her. Herbert had a notion that the scholar understood the language much better than his mistress, but Gryphon took his lesson with the most edifying gravity and interest.

She is a winsome wee thing—
She is a handsome wee thing—
She is a bonnie wee thing—
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

"You understand this—the chorus, Mr. Gryphon?"

"I fancy I now do; but I understand no more of it."

I never saw a fairer,
I never lo'ed a dearer,
And neist my heart I'll wear her,
For fear my jewel tine.

"This is pretty plain, too: lo'ed is the Scotch for loved; and ——." Mrs. Herbert stopt, and cried out in some confusion, for Charles was smiling roguishly—"Take Charles for your dragoman."

Mr. Gryphon protested against the change, but did not push the matter too far; and Charles took up the last verse to expound.

The world's wrack we share o't,
The warstle and the care o't;
Wi' her I blithely bear it,
And think my lot divine.

For she's a winsome wee thing, &c.

"Your 'winsome wee wife' will make your other wife give Mr. Gryphon cold tea, Charles," said Mrs. Herbert, somewhat impatiently.

"I made tea too soon, fancying you bent on business; but it is pleasure you prefer," said Violet.

"Are we not wiser?" replied Herbert; "but that last stanza was *german* to the matter of our present business.—It contains my creed. Honour to the peasant-bard who brought such philosophy to our firesides, and in a garb so fascinating;" and having sung the air so often, Herbert now whistled it, while Mr. Gryphon placed a chair for Mrs. Herbert, and sat down by his "fair ally," on what she sportively named the Opposition benches.

"Well, lady and gentlemen," she commenced, "since I have the honour to open the debate, I begin by avowing myself a Plantagenet out and out—ready to support my opinion à l'outrance."

Mr. Gryphon's eyes sparkled with pleasure and approbation, while he said—"And I say ditto to whatever Mrs. Herbert says; and will to the best of my ability, by solid argument, cogent reason, and lucid statement, support her cause, — though truth from her lips——"

"Oh! if you come to ladies' lips, I say idle gallantry has no business with the question at issue:—at all events, we are still two against two. You see, sir, how cheerful and happy a poor affectionate family we are. Is it wise, mother, to risk this 'sober certainty' for any perilous good that can be offered us? What say you, my winsome wee wife? You speak now."

"Indeed, Charles, indeed, Mr. Gryphon," replied Violet, blushing, and shaking her curls in her pretty infantile manner, when slightly embarrassed, "you know best—far best. I have no opinion—none but yours."

"Most simply spoken, my dear little daughter," said Mrs. Herbert, somewhat piqued; and, turning to Mr. Gryphon, she continued—"These married folks, with their conjugal alliances, offensive and defensive, are more than a match for us simple single people, Mr. Gryphon. But can Mrs. Charles, being a married woman, have a voice potential in any important matter? Can she, being 'under coverture'—under which term English law disguises woman's slavery—have a vote independently of her husband? We are the majority still—two to one, Charles, two to one!" and the lively lady, in triumph clapped the delicate hands which Gryphon would fain have made captive. He, however, contented himself with taking less by his motion, and only said—

"Pardon me if I cannot hear my profession impeached without defence. Woman is a great favourite of the English law, as I hope to be able to convince you, ma'am."

The old lawyer seemed so much in earnest that Herbert was tickled by a sense of the ludicrous.

"Stand up for our shop, Gryphon!" he cried, sportively; "though it is hardly worth while to throw away an ingenious pleading; as I am certain that my mother, instead of a slavery, considers a well-assorted marriage as infinitely the happiest condition of every woman from sixteen to one hundred and six."

A great deal of badinage of the same sort passed, and the business had scarce been entered on, when an event occurred which gave a new complexion to the whole matter. A carriage was heard drawing up at the door, to Mrs. Herbert's great annoyance. She cried out, hastily—

"To tell the whole truth, though Violet has deserted me now, she almost promised Lord St. Edward and his wife, this morning, to accede, when they drove out together, to plead their suit. The young Countess is really an intelligent, interesting young creature. She is most anxious to leave London immediately, and do whatever the family of her husband thinks best; and he is the most charming, modest, ingenuous youth I have ever met with in his rank. They seem fondly attached to each other; and we, in short, cannot withhold consent. . . . But who can that be? It is really too bad to be liable to such inroads at all hours. This is one unhappy consequence of our present rather humble if happy style of living." She rose. "The Brabazons invited themselves to tea—but that was for to-morrow: I shall order that we be denied."

"They are admitted already, I fear," said Violet.

"Well, Heaven send me the luxury, if not of a regular fat porter lolling in my hall to defend my privacy and premises from obnoxious intruders, then, at least, a footman, or even a housemaid, who can tell a needful lie. This is so tiresome! These are among the mortifications attendant on poverty, Mr. Gryphon, which I feel peculiarly. It was so different in my past times."

Before Mr. Gryphon could sympathize with a feeling which he was not sorry to perceive, the Scottish housemaid entered, to say, that she could not help disobeying Mrs. Herbert's orders, for that the young gentleman below would take no denial—"he seemed in the greatest distress of mind." The girl herself had caught the contagion of the visiter's reported agitation.

"I am sure the young lord ails something very bad indeed, ma'am. Aue need not light a candle to see true sorrow."

Violet instantly sprung up, crying, "Emmeline must be worse: she complained a little this morning."

"Lady St. Edward has eloped!" ejaculated Gryphon, true to his character of a lawyer, and a hater of all the house of Cryppes, without one exception. Mrs. Herbert looked shocked; and Gryphon added, "or the Duke

is worse, and I am wanted. He had a touch of flying gout, and the announcement of another *expected* heir to his titles and estates ruffled him not a little. He will be pleased by and by at having one security more, though it come through a wrong channel."

"Not you, sir, are wanted, but Mrs. Charles," said the girl, eagerly; and Violet, obeying the natural impulse, ran down stairs.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE housemaid had attempted to usher Lord St. Edward into the small parlour which Violet, in honour of Swift, named her *sluttery*; but he could not remain there, and she found him looking deadly pale and haggard, leaning against the stair-rail.

He covered his face with his hands for a moment; but at the soft, tremulous sound of Violet's fluttering voice, while she whispered—"Lord St. Edward here!—how is Emmeline?" the distressed young man threw himself, sobbing, upon her neck, as if she had been his sister, the friend of childhood, and of long years; while, with difficulty, he articulated, "My Emmeline—my wife—my beloved:—she is dying—they have murdered her!—and she longs for you—she prays for your presence.—For pity's sake, madam, come to her—come with me!"

Violet trembled excessively, and became as pale as the speaker, whose hand she wrung, while she said, "Dear Lord St. Edward, be composed;—tell me all; surely I will go with you—to poor Emmeline."

She looked hurriedly round. The whole household were now in the hall; and the quick-witted and sympathetic housemaid, unbidden, flew off for her young mistress's shawl and bonnet.

"Lord St. Edward, endeavour to command yourself, and to inform Mrs. Charles Herbert of the real state of matters. I am certain she will do for your lady whatever is best," said Gryphon, who had known the young nobleman from his childhood.

"Oh, Mr. Gryphon, my wife,—my poor Emmeline!—she is dying—expiring, and in torture!—When shall I get home? Come, madam,—in mercy, come, she prays for your coming."

"Who, my lord, has injured your lady? try to tell us. Perhaps help may be got,—if you can only say what is wrong," persisted Gryphon.

"Her brother has done it all. He, wretch,—presumptuous, ignorant wretch,—he has

killed her,—and by such agony!—her beautiful face so distorted. O God, my God, have mercy!"

Violet's eyes were streaming, and she now grasped St. Edward's arm as if to drag him on, while the housemaid put on her shawl.

Mr. Gryphon and Herbert whispered together for a moment, while Mrs. Herbert, hastily embracing her daughter-in-law, whispered, "Dear love, go—but take care of yourself," and helped her to get ready. It was hastily agreed that Mr. Gryphon should accompany Mrs. Charles and Lord St. Edward; and that Herbert would follow in an hour or two to fetch back his wife.

On the short drive, they learned that the Countess had been for several days complaining of some slight ailment incidental to her condition, and that her brother had that afternoon ordered her a composing draught, the prescription for which he had written out himself. Her own servant—her "groom of the chambers"—had gone to have it made up at the shop of a respectable apothecary, and it had been administered by Mrs. Jenkins, the lady's-maid. In a very short time after taking the medicine, Lady St. Edward had been seized with spasms, which at last became so violent, that her alarmed maid went and told Lord St. Edward; and a surgeon of eminence in the neighbourhood was immediately sent for, who, on seeing her, rashly and harshly declared that she had been poisoned by a quack, and had not many hours to live,—that no skill could save her.

The frantic St. Edward flew himself to the family physician of his grandfather, in whom he had the utmost confidence, from having been attended by him in every real or grandmamma-imagined malady from his infancy. He was so fortunate as to find Dr. Blande just before he made his evening round of visits; and, on his suggestion, taking up an eminent physician-accoucheur on their way, not a moment was lost in hastening to the invalid. And all was done that the greatest skill and tenderness could accomplish to relieve the bodily agonies of the really interesting young victim of ignorant pretension.

While in the intervals of torture, the poor girl clung convulsively to her distracted husband, she also cried piteously for "Gabrielle—for Violette—for her kind, her only friend;" and, probably to spare St. Edward the sight of her extreme suffering, the physician humanely devised the expedient of despatching him to fetch this loved friend.

This done, and leaving the young Countess in the care of the other medical men, he thought it his duty to go to Plantagenet House to apprize his noble patrons there of the expected catastrophe, and to draw their attention to the condition of St. Edward. Little delicacy of preparation was needed in announcing an event which, however shocking to humanity at the moment, could not be regarded there as a very serious calamity, though it could hardly yet be talked of as a deliverance.

The Duke was annoyed and fidgety. He had yesterday resented the promise of an heir; but now he somehow felt himself personally wronged, and resented this promise being blighted. There was again but that one "puny boy" between him and the dreadful misfortune of the family honours going out of the *direct* male line. A composing draught was ordered for his Grace of Plantagenet, with an immediate foot-bath, and retreat to bed; and all for the simple circumstance of the threatened death of a musician's daughter.

The Duchess and her confidential maid were equally excited; but their fears were chiefly for St. Edward; though her Grace, having of late taken to what she fancied religion, could not but remark to her gentlewoman the visible hand of Providence in thus removing the presumptuous plebeian intruder into her princely house. She also felt some little curiosity to behold, before it had vanished for ever—been hidden in the grave—that fatal beauty which had bewitched her grandson:—Besides, it would look magnanimous, noble, *Christian*, to visit, and, on her death-bed, pardon the crime of the Cinderella Countess against the noble House of Plantagenet. Her Grace was of a forgiving disposition.

The Duchess of Plantagenet felt as if in a dream, when she found herself in a crowded bed-chamber, and saw her grandson—Lord St. Edward—the representative of all the Plantagenets, and of the accumulated honours of five centuries, kneeling by the bed-side of a low-born girl, the daughter of a fiddler, covering her hands with tears and kisses, and passionately addressing her as his beloved, his idolized wife—his darling Emmeline!—conjuring her to live—and frantically vowing to die with her! regardless, and apparently unconscious, of the noble grandmother's presence, who had thus graciously condescended—who had acted so noble and *Christian* a part.

A very lovely young woman, seated in the bed, tenderly supported the alternately convulsed and sinking frame of the poor sufferer on her bosom and in her arms, and wiped away the sweat of agony which rolled down the fair brow. The Duchess was human. Vexed and annoyed as she was, by the extravagant, and, as she thought, preposterous grief of her grandson, she could not, unmoved, look upon the dreadful sufferings which so strongly affected him, and think how soon they were to terminate in death.

But then there were so many strange faces around her—*low* people all. The emotions of the noble lady were curiously complicated. That young woman who sat in the bed,—she seemed a very gentle and lovely person as she shifted her pliant form from side to side, the more tenderly to support the dying girl!—yet she was no doubt a Cryppes, probably a sister; and, so strong is prejudice, that the Duchess drew back from the bed-side with loathing. Her matronly maid, probably divining her thoughts, whispered, “That young lady, your Grace, is Mrs. Charles Herbert.”

The Duchess was instantly relieved of her disgust, and even touched with sympathy. She softly approached the bed-side, and gently touched the kneeling St. Edward’s shoulder, while her maid whispered, “The Duchess, my lord:” St. Edward started up, and fervently wrung her hand, but in silence. The dying agonized girl also heard the whisper, and raised her large lustrous eyes to the face of the noble lady, with an expression never to be forgotten. Altogether there was something in the scene which took the feelings of the Duchess by storm.

“St. Edward, my dear boy, do be more composed,” she whispered, in an affectionate tone; “my physician is a man of the greatest skill,—*she* may do well yet.”

“My wife—my Emmeline!” again burst from the lips of the poor youth; “Emmeline, my angel, for what do you look? for what do you sign? I cannot bear those looks. I am with you, love: I will not leave you. Death shall not part us! . . . Grandmother, she beckons for *you*. My own angel, the Duchess will do whatever you desire. Will you not, grandmother?” and he impetuously drew forward the stately old lady, who was now shuddering with emotion. The poor girl clasped and tried to raise her imploring hands; while, in under-breathed tones, and in a voice which Violet long re-

membered as the most pathetic in which human speech had ever been articulated, she whispered,—“Oh, madam, pardon St. Edward! If it was wrong in him to love me, I shall not be long in your way.”

Emmeline was now tremulously drawing off her marriage ring—which she slipped on the finger of St. Edward, kissing his hand again and again, and clasping it to her bosom—and then, as if in an interval of pain, she sunk back on the bosom of Violet, tears now stealing calmly from under her closed eye-lashes. St. Edward burst out of the room, unable to suppress his frantic grief, nor daring to break in upon the hallowed tranquillity, in which his dying wife seemed at that moment to repose.

But the dreadful spasm soon returned—she fetched her breath hard, gasped, and became convulsed for an instant. The Duchess was now much affected. With Violet, to whom she had not spoken, she exchanged an earnest sympathizing look—and as the patient became easier, she kindly took her hand, while she said—“Compose yourself, my child—you may soon, I hope, be better.”

Emmeline smiled in ghastly sort, and shook her head.

“How condescending of her Grace!—what an angel of a lady is your lady the Duchess!” came to Violet’s ears, in the very audible whisper of Jenkins, to the great lady’s maid; and mournful as was the scene, she could, at the moment, almost have smiled.

The Duchess glanced disdain at the presumptuous, vulgar flatterer, whom she set down for yet another Cryppes, and, turning haughtily away, went to seek her grandson; whom she was determined, at whatever cost, to carry home with her.

Violet was now left alone with Emmeline, as Mrs. Jenkins had been attracted by a Babel of confused tongues, and other extraordinary noises ascending from below; where Mr. Gryphon, and the master of the hotel, under the positive orders of the physician, were defending the sick-chamber against all intruders—“Preventing the mother from seeing her dying child!”—an unnatural crime, which Mrs. Cryppes to her dying day repeated to the lawyer’s everlasting shame.

“Is St. Edward out of the room, dear Violette?” whispered the sufferer.

“He is, love—but he will soon be back.”

“Comfort him, Violette, when I am gone.

He is very good—very affectionate; no one knows how amiable he is, save myself. I have been very foolish—very wayward—wicked; but I loved him every day fondly and more fondly:—And only to-day—I was so happy, resolving to be good, and to make St. Edward happy, and hoping that you, dearest Violette, would teach me how.—And now—O my God! dying! and I am so young too—so young!"

St. Edward now glided in, and Emmeline saw him through her tears, and held out her arms. They remained for some time locked in that passionate, silent embrace in which Violet feared the sinking sufferer had breathed her last.

Emmeline spoke first—"My poor father—will you, St. Edward, be kind to the poor old man for Emmeline's sake? *He* will feel!—This is my last request."

While St. Edward sobbed out the tenderest assurances of devout attention to the smallest wish of hers, her eyes flashed with a preternatural brightness,—and, kissing his brow and fervently blessing him, she said, "Now I am happy; go now to the Duchess, and Mrs. Charles will send for you when I want you.—God bless you, dear St. Edward!"

"Emmeline, my angel, you are better," exclaimed the delighted young man—"you speak so firmly now."

"Yes, I am better—much better—perhaps I shall sleep now." St. Edward looked earnestly to Violet, as if questioning her; but the eyes which she cast down to avoid his glance, gave no encouraging response. He went away: there was a long dead silence; and the exhausted creature actually sunk into a kind of sleep—from which she was hurriedly roused by a loud noise at her chamber door. She had dreamt, she said, of her father crying, and of her mother and Jenkins scolding; and she was smiling at her dream when the noises, which were no dream-sounds, increased. There was a plunge at the door, and a rush of people into the room, and Emmeline was seized with another violent fit. The surgeon, called in from the adjoining room where he waited, relieved Violet from her distressing position, and entreated her to go out, or she would injure herself. The sight of Emmeline's agony—the distraction of the sounds and sights around, were indeed too much for her. She nearly fainted, and was assisted down to the drawing-room, where her alarmed husband received her.

In a very few seconds, however, she was

perfectly recovered, and would have gone back;—but the surgeon, who came to her, said that it was too late. "*All was over!*"

The young Countess had expired in that last fit—"into which," he said, "she had been thrown by the irruption of those savages." Gryphon now entered; and inquired with the greatest tenderness for Mrs. Charles Herbert—while to Charles he whispered, "What a dear, angelic creature is your wife! That detestable charlatan, Edmund Cryppes—is he to escape the hanging he so richly deserves?—he blames the apothecary—he blames the maid, who gave, he says, four doses to her mistress in one. But I blame him only; and if I were on the inquest, I know his fate——"

"His ignorance and presumption are likely to bring their own punishment," said Herbert, "not only to himself, but to others of the family."

"Ay, that it will," returned Gryphon, in an exulting tone. He indeed never pretended to be of a forgiving disposition.

"Well, my fine scheme is all up now; you must have had the second sight, Mr. Herbert," said Gryphon in a tone of chagrin; and he stalked about the room, where Herbert and his wife only waited till her shoes, which she had thrown off when supporting Emmeline, and her bonnet could be procured.

Mrs. Jenkins now entered, not with the required articles, which she was too much excited to attend to, but with a theatrical curtsy, to announce to Mr. Gryphon, that her Grace the Duchess desired to see him in the other drawing-room immediately.

"Can you find Mrs. Herbert's things, Jenkins?" said Herbert familiarly; but the waiting-maid of a Countess distanced him.

"Your servant, Mrs. Charles Herbert. Her Grace the Duchess hopes you are recovered, ma'am. I hope Mrs. Herbert, senior, is well? I have been proposing to call for her all the season, but your present quarter is so out of the world——"

Violet, who could be rude to no one, although she had wished to be so, was certainly not sensible of Jenkins's condescension, for she made no sort of reply. To her husband she said, as if unconscious of the waiting-woman's presence—"Poor Emmy, Charles; but she is past our regrets. Poor Lord St. Edward! I shall love him always: he has a warm and a very tender heart. You must try to-night not to let the Cryppesses annoy him. . . . Are they still above?"

"Yes, the vulgar low-bred creatures,"

replied Jenkins; "though both my lord and her Grace . . . Coming, ma'am! —"

And Jenkins ran to the other waiting-woman, who, she fancied, summoned her; and Herbert went out to see if he could do any thing for the distracted young widower, or,—curious concatenation!—find his wife's shoes. He soon returned—"St. Edward is gone, all the rest are above; and such a scene! Poor old Cryppes! But the harpy mother! Mrs. Barker at least assumes the decent garb of hypocrisy, if she does not feel."

"What strangely mingled beings we are," said Violet; "such a strange mixture of tenderness, selfishness, avarice, haughty pride, angry passions, and all bursting forth in the very presence of Death, with the more violence from the attempt to suppress their expression. I can never forget the scene amidst which this poor girl expired—her fluttering soul chased by their loud, fierce wrath."

Mr. Gryphon came back evidently much excited, and attended by a waiter, carrying a lighted taper, tape, and several sticks of wax.

"I thought my duty was ended, when I kept those people off until the breath was about out of the poor girl's body; but now I find I have to guard against their pillaging the corpse. Will you assist me to seal up Lord and Lady St. Edward's repositories and rooms, Mr. Herbert, to prevent a general skirmish and plunder being carried on by mother and maid."

"I really cannot again leave my own poor wife," said Herbert; "I have sent out a waiter to buy shoes for her poor feet."

"O, true!—I am a brute to think of it: then, God bless you both. I will see you early to-morrow. The Duchess, who is a very sensible woman, when she likes, has just been talking to me of another plan, which I think well of. My respectful compliments to my fair ally. I still depend on her co-operation."

Gryphon went off in haste to use his professional wax and tape; and, in a few minutes afterwards, Mrs. Cryppes, Mrs. Barker, and Mademoiselle Jenkins, entered in train; probably in right of the room having been that of Lord and Lady St. Edward, each holding a handkerchief to her eyes. Herbert and his wife chose to wait any where rather than longer here,—and they moved off.

"Stay, pray, one moment, Mrs. Charles Herbert," said the elder matron. "You know my feelings for the dear deceased—

ever my favourite child—the flower of my lovely flock. I am certain, ma'am, that after the tenderness and hospitality, with which you were treated in my family—like one of my own daughters indeed—no distinction made—that you must feel much for this sad bereavement—this first breach in a family so affectionate and united as ours;—and to think that I was too late to see my child!—And my poor husband, who so doted on Emmeline!"

"I am truly sorry for Mr. Cryppes, indeed, ma'am," said Violet, glad to have any thing to say with sincerity.

"But you were witness, this worthy soul tells me, to the promise my darling exacted from Lord St. Edward, to provide *handsomely* for her parents."

"Yes, indeed, Mrs. Charles was witness of that," said Jenkins, who had gone up stairs a violent anti-Cryppesite, and descended making common cause with Mrs. Cryppes against that "old Dragon Gryphon," who had actually turned them out of Lady St. Edward's room, locked the door, and put the key into his pocket.

"And a great deal of my undeniable personal property lying about," sobbed Jenkins, in rage. "And your lady's shawl and slippers too, Mr. Herbert; as if my late lady's mother, and *me*, her confidential young lady, were common thieves!"

"What sort of law and justice is that, pray?" put in Mrs. Cryppes. "Never was such impertinence heard of: O, if my son Jack were but here, let me see who would dare to insult his mother in this manner!"

"For Heaven's sake no more of this, mother," cried Mrs. Barker, really ashamed and angry. "What are such trifles to our ruin—I mean, to our irreparable loss;" and the subdued woman wept, leaning against the mantel-piece, and covering her face in a passion of seemingly real grief, which touched the hearts of the Herberts. When she was a little more composed, Mr. Herbert inquired for her husband.

"Very ill, indeed, Mr. Herbert,—so seriously ill, that but for this dreadful, this most unlooked-for stroke, I should not have left him to-night. That rash, unfortunate creature Edmund!—Such brilliant prospects as were opening to my dear sister, and ultimately to all her family. Barker was so warmly attached to Emmy—she was indeed more like his own child than a sister-in-law. How will he in his present condition bear this new stroke?" Mrs. Barker wept afresh.

"Good-night, Mrs. Barker," said Violet, in a little while, softly taking her hand; "believe me I feel for you, indeed—for your father——"

"You are going, then, ma'am?" interposed Mrs. Cryppes, and now sharply; "I presume you can make no objection to give the evidence Jenkins refers to?—Maria, my dear, you who are so clever a pen-woman, had you not better make a small memorandum of the thing at the moment, while it is still fresh in Mrs. Charles Herbert's mind?"

Mrs. Charles Herbert looked embarrassed, and her husband answered for her. "However the matter may stand, the discussion is surely premature, ma'am. . . . Come, my love, since Mr. Gryphon has laid an embargo on your shawl, I shall make free with his cloak for your use."

"Pray, Mr. Charles, since you are now a lawyer, or as good, will you tell me, has Mr. Gryphon any right whatever, by either Magna Charta or Habeas Corpus, to interfere with my lady's wardrobe? Is it not mine,—mine, sir, by the laws and usages of every genteel family in England?—And that a Duchess should demean herself to keep paltry rings, watches, and old clothes—for my lady, not being countenanced, had no valuable jewels——"

"My daughter's wardrobe was a very complete and valuable one, and almost as good as new," put in Mrs. Cryppes, sharply, taking the reply on herself; "far too valuable to be thrown to servants as cast-offs. . . . And as for watches and jewels, her own family—her mother and her sister——"

"Mrs. Cryppes knows far more about the law of such inheritances than I pretend to do, Miss Jenkins," interrupted Herbert, who had now taken his shoeless wife under his arm, determined to carry her to the coach that he had in waiting, rather than expose her to the scene which he foresaw; and which was heralded by Mrs. Cryppes's declaration of her intention to go to Plantagenet House, and see her son-in-law that instant, and tell him a piece of her mind of matters, and of the treatment she had received from his *pretty* agent.

Thankful was Violet when, still shoeless and unshawled, but with her feet carefully wrapped by Herbert in Mr. Gryphon's cloak, and her head leaning on her husband's breast, she found herself in a carriage and on the way home. Neither of them spoke much: their hearts were full, their thoughts busy. They were almost at their own door before

Herbert, uneasy at her continued silence, inquired if she was quite well.

"Quite well—for myself only too well—too blest. But what an evening has this been! We were all too gay and giddy at home this afternoon—and what a lesson!——"

"Not too gay, dear love—nor giddy at all—though so supremely happy that we may need sometimes to be reminded that we are mortal."

"And how gently the lesson comes to us," said the wife. "Those miserable people—but I am sorry for none of them save the poor old father."

"I met him on the stairs, poor old man. He did not seem to know me," said Herbert; "he was like a man distracted."

"And Mr. Barker, too, Charles. Surely you feel a little for him. Nature intended him for something so very different from what he has made himself."

"I cannot help that, Violet;—but there is my mother not to bed yet—very curious, I make no doubt. You, however, shall go to your room at once; and I will gratify her curiosity, and console her for the disappointment that awaits her; and then she will go up to coddle you; and you may, if you like, tell her Gryphon is in love with her, by way of consolation for the loss of that 'charming residence.'"

Violet almost scolded her husband: she was becoming every day less a heroine, and more a wife.

Meanwhile Mrs. Barker, finding it impossible to keep down the angry altercation between the mother and the maid, left them, and returned home wretched enough. An execution had been put into the house that morning, though she and her mother had provided pretty well against the impending event; and the people in charge were perfectly civil and accommodating. Her sick husband's apartment had been kept inviolate.

She was spared the pain of announcing her sister's death, and the downfall of every hope in that quarter, by finding Barker quite delirious. His mind had been wandering all that morning; and now his wife's presence irritated and made him so violent, that it was at length found necessary to call the men in charge of the furniture into his room, to prevent him leaping from the window to escape from the horrible demon into which delirium converted his wife.

It was with great reluctance, with heart-felt, if not wholly unselfish sorrow, that, two

days afterwards, Mrs. Barker consented that her husband should be placed under restraint, and saw him carried to the same private asylum for the insane, on the banks of the Thames, to which he had, some days before, devoted the unfortunate Bigsby. Her own sufferings, and his dreadful condition, had revived all the affection of the early days of their attachment; when the bold, dashing belle had been the proud mistress of the "talented Burke Barker."

The letter which, in a few days afterwards, she wrote to Mrs. Charles Herbert, begging, through the interest of the Herberts with Mr. Gryphon, that something might be done by Lord St. Edward for her father, concluded, "O Violet, do you not pity me!"

"Indeed I do pity her," said Violet to her husband; "adversity, while it has crushed her pride, has perhaps softened her heart.—And the poor old man;—he had some accident, she mentions, a few days ago: they fear injury to the brain. The mother she does not mention."

It is impossible to tell whether the injury received in his fall, the burning of his opera, or the shock of the sudden loss of his daughter, and the overthrow of all his towering hopes, had produced the fatal effect. But when Mrs. Cryppes went to her lodgings,—after all but pulling caps with Jenkins for those spoils, safe under Gryphon's seals,—she found her husband home before her, and, in a frenzy fit, covering the walls of the room with gigantic musical notes, which he boldly scratched on with burned corks, all the while chanting what he called *The Requiem*.

"As I vow, he has spoiled the whole of that nice new silver-ground paper!" cried the horrified lady of the Professor, on entering the drawing-room. "Cryppes, are you out of your mind?—how are you to pay for new-hanging the room?—And we must have genteel mourning, too, come from where it will, for my daughter the Countess."

Of the Professor, we can tell no more, until a few mornings afterwards, when Mrs. Marion Linton met him in Piccadilly, wearing a kind of fantastic shabby mourning, with plenty of streaming rusty crape. He then told her, with his usual pomp of manner, that he was going to see the *escutcheon* properly hung on Plantagenet House, before he attended the remains of his daughter, the Countess of St. Edward, to the family vault in Staffordshire, and had the *Requiem* performed; and then he most politely took off his hat, and, bowing low, wished her a good

morning, as he hurried off on this insane project.

"Puir, puffed-up, conceited creature!—scantly honest, too, as he and as every extravagant, needy man must often be,—my heart was wae for him!" Marion said, while telling Violet of the circumstance. "No doubt the Duke's flunkies would turn him from the door."

"He must be cared for—my poor master," replied Violet. "Lord St. Edward can't forget poor Emmy's last request."

The young man forgot none of her requests, and none of those whom she had loved. Herbert and his wife were the first persons that he saw, and this by his own desire; and the first time that he came abroad was to sit for several hours, sad, melancholy, and silent, by Violet's side. These silent visits were repeated almost daily, until gradually he could freely speak to her on the subject nearest his heart—the subject on which his lips were sealed to all others.

About a fortnight after Emmeline's death, Mr. Gryphon one morning came to Chelsea with Herbert, having directed old Marion to meet him there on business which required her presence.

"I am come, ladies," he said, "with a new project, of which I did not choose to tell Mr. Charles, save in the presence of my fair ally, though I do not anticipate his refusal this time. It has nothing to do with pecuniary matters. I have now myself the honour of being the Duke's Chamberlain, as I will probably be that of the future Duke."

"How delightful!" exclaimed Mrs. Herbert; "I congratulate you most heartily;—your position I conceive more enviable than that of the Duke himself—that charming place."

"Far too good for a lonely bachelor." Gryphon did not this time say an *old* bachelor.

"Cannot ye take a wife, then, sir?" said Marion, laughingly.

"But who will have me?—there's the misery, Mrs. Linton."

"Howt awa! ye may try, surely;—there ne'er was a silly Jocky but there was as silly a Jenny."

"Very complimentary, indeed: but if the silly Jocky were vain enough to aspire to a *clever* and *handsome* Jenny, what does Scottish wisdom say then?"

"Why, ye can still but try, sir:—bode a gown of gold, and ye'll aye get a sleeve.

'Faint Heart never won Fair Lady.' Try ye:—After all I have seen in my day, I would not answer for what any woman will do in the marrying line, till she's fairly speered. I would no answer for my very sel', for as auld as I am, if Jack Cryppes had but fairly asked me, and held at me——"

"Rare candour—admirable advice," cried Herbert; "don't you think so, Mr. Gryphon?"

Gryphon smiled rather foolishly.

"The business, Mr. Gryphon?" said Mrs. Herbert, somewhat impatiently; "I own I am curious to learn what Charles will not refuse and I will approve of—he was so ungracious to us last time."

"He will not refuse to accompany Lord St. Edward in a leisurely tour on the Continent, and a residence at Nice of a few months? Or, if that don't suit, merely accompany him, and leave him where the family oracle, Dr. Blande, fancies he will best spend the winter. The Duke makes this a special request—and poor St. Edward——"

"But my own poor wife, Mr. Gryphon: save for Violet, it would give me the utmost pleasure to accompany St. Edward, whom I really now like,—as well as I can like any young lord——"

"But can't you take your wife with you, my good sir? Heaven forbid that I should part man and wife, at least while they wish to remain together."

"That is charming," cried Mrs. Herbert, "and my friend, Lady Laura Temple,—your own cousin, Violet,—is now at Nice. You will all be so much the better of the trip,—made too with all the appliances and means of wealthy English aristocracy: that makes a vast difference in travelling."

Violet did look delighted for a moment,—and the eyes of the married lovers met, consulted, and congratulated, all in one instant of time.

"But you," she said, recalled at once, "you, *Maman*, how could we leave you alone so long?"

"Never mind me,—I shall enjoy the journey quite as much through your letters as if I were to make it myself."

"We'll take the greatest care of Mrs. Herbert," said Marion, jocosely, "till ye come back: will we not, Mr. Gryphon?" And Mr. Gryphon made as gallant a reply as his fear of offending the delicacy of the refined lady permitted.

Violet, after the happy arrangement had been concluded, expressed some surprise to

her husband that Mr. Gryphon had not included Mrs. Herbert,— "It must be all the same to the Plantagenets."

"He perhaps wishes to keep her at home to have her all to himself to court, while we are away."

"Fie, Charles! do you imagine that your mother would accept of Mr. Gryphon—or marry any man indeed?"

"Upon my soul, I do, Violet,—and no disparagement to the sex in general, nor to my mother in particular. She will marry a worthy, good-natured man,—to whom she will be every thing, and exceedingly happy, I make no doubt,—with at least £2000 a-year. And now when he comes a-wooing, as the Duke's chamberlain, to this small house,—backed by that carriage and 'splendid place,' of which she spoke so often while ambitious of it for me,—a ducal lodge it lately was,—and all those gardens and conservatories——"

"O fie, Charles, I'll never believe it."

"Till you see it, my little wife."

It was not, however, at last, for that "splendid residence," the carriage, the conservatories, &c. &c. that Mrs. Herbert did marry. O no! but from many combined, and all of them very good motives and reasons.

First, during the absence of her friends, Mr. Gryphon came very often with intelligence of them, or else to get her packets to forward; and, secondly, she discovered that besides being an able man of business, who had been of the greatest use in recovering Violet's fortune,—though it was hardly yet recovered,—he was a generous, and really in *essentials*, though a little *brusque*, a gentlemanly man. And it would be so delightful to be able to receive Herbert, Violet, and their children, for months together every summer, at that charming place,—and Mr. Gryphon was so much attached to them all;—so much in love too: But that was too ridiculous at their age.

The reasons, or rather assumptions, placed in the front rank in that awful and elaborate epistle, in which the lady's intention to take the matter into consideration was confidentially communicated to Violet,—with strict injunctions not to breathe one word of it to her husband,—were, that she was now convinced the alliance would really increase Mr. Gryphon's happiness almost as much as he anticipated; and that the connexion would be of advantage to those that were and ever would be dearest to her. And

finally, "One could not be so selfish as to live only for one's self."

We are sorry to be obliged to confess of our heroine, just when about to take a final leave of her, that she acted upon this occasion very like an ordinary woman, and at once showed the delicate and doubting epistle to her husband; though she certainly sharply reproved his saucy remarks and good-natured banter on the occasion.

In the postscript to a business letter which Herbert had occasion to write to Mr. Gryphon that same night, he said, "Persevere, old boy, and the day is your own."

Yet this was, after all, but a marriage of convenience, though one of the most auspicious of the sort; and the next attachment that fell under Violet's immediate notice surprised her much more,—and it was also much more provoking to be laughed at on this occasion; for the heroine was Laura Temple—the dignified, the grave, the high-souled Laura—who had once been all but attached—who indeed had been deeply attached to her own Charles, and yet accepted the suit of young Lord St. Edward. The parties had been thrown together a great deal at Nice, while the grief of the youthful widower was still vivid and green; and Lady Laura, herself out of health and spirits, had pitied "the poor boy," her cousin Ned; whom, some fifteen years before, she, a newly-fledged Almack's beauty, had romped with, and danced upon her knee.

Violet was also at times disposed to resent the transient nature of those feelings which left St. Edward, whose widowed sorrows had so shortly before deeply taxed her sympathies, free to imbibe, in a few months, a new and violent passion for a woman ten years older than himself. But that Laura Temple, having loved Charles Herbert, should love this weak and fickle, if very amiable and handsome lad—love him enough to marry him!—It was quite inexplicable, and somewhat teasing.

Mrs. Herbert, however, was enchanted with the prospect of her friend's match. It wanted but this, but Laura as the future Duchess, to make her own subordinate rank of the Chamberlain's lady perfectly unexceptionable. Such a friend, such a neighbour!

The delight of the noble grandparents of the lover was, if possible, greater than Mrs. Herbert's. This was just the match they would most have desired for St. Edward. With his unstable character, in present circumstances, Laura Temple was the very wife for him. What were a few years of seniority

in comparison of her many advantages,—and what was want of fortune to them!

Herbert had laughed so often at his wife's astonishment that "such things could be" where young, true, passionate love had once been, that she at length began to laugh herself, and to say with Marion, that nothing that woman could do in the line matrimonial should ever again surprise her. She had not been many days returned from Nice with her husband, and an important small personage, whom Marion called the *wee* French Moushie, Lady Laura and Lord St. Edward's godson, when Mr. and Mrs. Gryphon, who had avoided considerable awkwardness by having the knot tied a month before the Herberts returned, set out for the same quarter, commissioned to bring over the affianced bride of the happy St. Edward. Laura was met, as a mark of high consideration, by the Duke, one stage on the Dover road, and by the Duchess on the top of the stairs; introduced that night to many noble relatives and allies; and married, by special license, very privately at Plantagenet House, by the Bishop of London, next morning. Immediately after the ceremony they set off for one of the Duke's seats, Lady St. Edward enriched with more jewels, and with a more magnificent *trousseau* than any younger bride of the last three seasons.

Mrs. Gryphon immediately after the marriage drove to the old little house at Chelsea—it looked less now every time she saw it—to tell Violet all about the wedding, and to kiss the baby, which she indeed did every day a thousand times over. "Laura sends you her dear love, Violet, and this ring with her hair. She will not make you a common person by mere marriage cards, though I suppose when they return to town the Duchess means to honour you among the select few."

"Ah, poor, pretty, wild little Emmy Cryppes!" sighed Violet, "what has he made of her ring?" The new Mrs. Gryphon could not tell—did not much care. She continued, . . . "But my husband will tell you more when he comes. He is to receive the people of business to-day about the transference of your fortune. There no longer need exist any delicacy on any one's part in assisting you to get your own, which, situated as Lady Laura lately was, might have been painful. This is another beauty in this delightful marriage. . . . Your mamma is an heiress, baby. Yes, she is! You crow at that, you rogue, you." And how baby was kissed!

"Then now, our dear, kind old Marion can be repaid for all her friendly, her most generous advances, in carrying on the lawsuit," said Violet.

"Surely, if it does not vex the good soul to see you out of her debt. She has been of the greatest use to me in getting Mr. Gryphon's house into high order for you. I flatter myself you will be pleased with what we have done,—the good man, you know, new furnished it all for me. You will have ample accommodation for us when we visit town; and if Charles or you were to think of any country residence, while that large and splendid place can hold all the unborn generations of *our* grandchildren, I should never forgive you; and my husband would be worse angered, if you did not make ours your country-house. By the new-railroad we will be brought within four hours of you—just a morning airing."

"Little chance of our scruples standing in the way," said Violet, smiling, and rather amused at the frequency with which the late delicate and fastidious widow now cited "my husband," considering what had been her former feelings for the shrewd, gruff lawyer; but still more diverted at him already presuming familiarly to call his lady *Cecilia*, and sometimes *Cis*.

"As this will be your last dinner in the dear, old, little place, which I shall love for ever, and envy every body that lives in it, I have taken the liberty to ask Marion to come to tea. Mr. Gryphon knows that she is one of ourselves."

"Most happy will my husband be to meet the worthy, kind old lady; and I hope to prevail with her to visit us when you come down to us. She can fetch her pussey in a basket."

Mr. Gryphon, though both fond and proud of his wife, was not, on this day, in such violent haste to leave the dining-room as we have seen him, a year back. He had to talk with Charles about how his wife's fortune was to be invested, and about his own professional prospects. The interest and influence of the Plantagenet family were at Herbert's disposal in any line of ambition to which his inclination led; and Gryphon recapitulated the arrangement already made by their wives about the mutual visits—the common homes.

Herbert, though apt to be impatient of the "Plantagenet family," was certainly charmed with the addition to his own family connexion of the hearty lawyer.

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While they thus talked below, the ladies above were not tongue-tied. Mrs. Gryphon, who loved the theme, expatiated to Marion upon the grand wedding of the morning.

"The weddin's are going round the year," said Marion. "I must be looking out mysel'. There's the Widow Cryppes off the other week."

"Mrs. Cryppes married! who is the unfortunate man?" cried Violet.

"She is now Mrs. Michael Twig, of the Lunar Rainbow Tavern——"

"Mike Twig, the Professor's old servant!" interrupted Violet, in utter amazement.

"The very same; though latterly, as ye may remember, Michael Twigge, Esq., Actuary of the Crown and Mitre Philanthropic Life Assurance Society, and the only one of the Cryppes connexion, I believe, who has made in the long-run, a *baubee* by it, though he did pay a good 'prentice fee to Mrs. Barker for teaching him to sign his name. Mike had become a prize; and the widow had tried many trades before she condescended. First, she set up a genteel boarding-house with her dochter, for gentlewomen, at the West End. That would not do, though Sir George Lees pushed the establishment: then she tried a toy-shop and library at Brighton; next, got into the Fleet. The dochter, Mrs. Barker, is fit to crucify her; but the wilfu' widow has pleased hersel'. Jenny Jenkins—I ne'er could thole her either—and she, were at the pulling of caps for Mike; but the duds that she got from Mr. Gryphon, after a',—those that belanged to her lady daughter, and that fifty pound a-year the Lord has settled on her, if she keep hersel' quiet, bought a young gudeman for the widow; and the lass Miss Jenkins may go whistle for a joe, like mysel'."

Violet was shocked at this intelligence—nor pleased at her husband's levity, in being able to laugh at such a marriage when he was told of it.

"And poor Jack? for I have quite lost sight of him," inquired Herbert.

"Na, as this is the year of the queer marriages,—which comes round as surely as leap-year, when the lasses may court the men—I am no sure but Jack may put forth his parable to mysel' ere lang. He whiles, while you were abroad, did me the honour to borrow half-a-crown from me, more or less—for it's aye borrowin',—he has a spirit aboon begging. He got a bad rheumatism, puir chield, in that Dutch Bridewell, or it's as like from his scanty cleeding—an' if ye gave

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him a warm dud the day, it's sure to be pawned ere the morn."

"I fear poor Jack's best days are over," said Herbert.

"Indeed he's sair reduced—even Mrs. Snipson has cut him—a bad sign of his finances. . . . But I have gotten 'sponsible tenants in that quean's place. A decent weel-doin' tailor lad, frae my ain parish, wha gets a' the country news, and an auld *Kelso Chronicle*—it's a great treat to me. . . . But Jack,—poor chield! I have aye had a regard for him since he took refuge in my meat-safe.—The grand newspapers would have no more to do with him: he reported so many dreadful fires and accidents and bloody murders that had never happened, when he needed a few shillings at an odd time,—clever lies they were too!—But once he got up a railroad collision with tremendous loss of life and limb; and as there are enow of them without Jack's help, there was the deil to pay with the proprietors. After that he did wonderful weel for a few weeks in the comic song line about the sma' theatres, till he got as hoarse and roupy as an auld craw, with hard-living, poor ne'er-do-wes! and sleepin' out on bulc-heads and such like, which knocked up his trade as a vocalist."

"Is not this horrible," exclaimed Herbert, "of a fellow possessed of the acquirements of Cryppes?"

"What shall ye say, Mr. Charles: what is all the tawlent and genius under the canopy of Heaven, without a kennin' of mother-wit and good steady conduct?—'The stalk o' carle hemp in man,'—as our Burns well names the grand something of manhood—was aye wanting among the Cryppeses."

"Where is poor Jack now? I am rather surprised that I have not heard from him of late."

"Ye'll no need to lang for that, sir, if ance he kens ye are come back to town. I am whiles obliged to do the next thing to downright leeing to keep him aff ye;—a waffie like yon, disgracing a decent door, is more noticeable out hereabouts in the suburbs than in Fleet Street. After Jack lost the newspapers, both great and sma', and cracked his voice, he found another occupation for a time. Being in high favour with his ledly-mother, because he countenanced her in her mad-like marriage, while Mrs. Barker was fit to flay her alive—I believe he did it too, the wild scamp, mainly for the spree and fun o' the weddin';—weel; to cut my tale short, when Twig got his ledly's fortin', he opened a groat

billiard-table in connexion with the public-house, and Jack, promising to be steady, was appointed marker;—but Mike said he took too much liberty with the gentlemen: and in a row the other night between man and wife, where Mrs. Twig's viperish tongue got her a lounder or twa from her young gude-man, Jack's spunk got up, though he is no usually a warrior, and he thrashed his step-father soundly. The whole kit were carried off to the office,—and fancy the impudence o' the dog sending for me before Sir Peter to bail him forsooth! . . . If Sir Peter had no' kent me before, for a country-woman, and a 'sponsible and law-biding householder, I should have been downright affronted."

"Well done, Jack! then he really thrashed the fellow who struck his mother?—Something must be done for him—here is a sovereign for him," said Gryphon.

"Siller to him!—na, na, Mr. Gryphon; we must do better than that among us."

"Lord St. Edward won't hear the name of one of the family mentioned, so annoyed has he been of late with their epistles. I long since gave Edmund, by his orders, the means of leaving England to quack and kill women somewhere else, and put a stop to unpleasant investigations here. The small annuity settled on old Cryppes is to be continued to the daughter, Susan, a modest and respectable person with whom the father died; but as for poor Jack, who has written innumerable penny histories of his noble sister's adventures, with brilliant *cuts* to them, he is utterly odious to St. Edward. . . . What will you give, Charles—a-week—to pension Jack?—I volunteer five shillings, to be dealt out by Mrs. Marion at her discretion. I am sure she will not grudge the trouble. To solicit employment for him, of any sort, is quite out of the question, though he has most ingeniously suggested all manner of high posts, at home and abroad, that St. Edward, his noble brother-in-law, ought to procure for him."

"I'll give whatever Mrs. Linton pleases to mulct me in," replied Herbert,—"say a crown a-week, to begin with."

"I care no' if I birl my bawbee, and be an eighteenpence mysel," cried Marion, generously emulous: "he is sic a diverting scamp; and comes aye back to me with as blithe a face as if he were in the receipt of a thousand a-year, and never had done an ill turn in his born days. It's the impudence o' him that tickles me; but he's no just a

responsible moral agent. There's ower mony o' the sort in Lon'on."

"Is it right to encourage—does the worthless fellow deserve your kindness?" said Mrs. Gryphon; and Marion, fancying the lady perhaps grudged the money, cried—"Howt away, madam! if even a' of us that's gude folk, got but our deserts, we might be poorly off, I trow; but there is ower muckle siller offered me;—I'll no take aboon the half:—with an income of 11s. 6d. and his ain *industry*, Jack would get rampant,—he would soon be above my hand."

Jack's pension was accordingly settled at the moderate rate of one shilling a-day. He was made easy for the remainder of the merry life that was not likely to be a long one.

To Marion, his frequent calls became an event and an amusement—to scold; advise, dictate to, and finally to be often cajoled by Jack out of her own money, or of his allowance, long before it was due—to relieve his goods from pawnbrokers, to purchase for him warm flannel vests and stockings, again to be redeemed—to abuse him continually, and be really kind to him always—became with her a kind of habit, and almost an indulgence. But, to return,—

The special business of this evening was, repaying Mrs. Linton her advances for Herbert and his wife in carrying on their lawsuit; and Mr. Gryphon repaid her, calculating the legal interest to the last fraction, and paying not one fraction more. She was somewhat annoyed at first. It was like dis-serving her from those whom she loved so well; but as one's *own* honest money is seldom in the long run wholly unacceptable, Marion only remarked—"Weel, but what am I to do wi' it now when I have got it?"

"And how are we to show our warm sense of your generosity—of your *trust* in us?" said Herbert. "With my wife I include my mother and Mr. Gryphon. You are too rich and too independent in spirit to care for pecuniary reward. Is there any thing in the world that we could have the satisfaction of doing to gratify you, or to show our sense of your kindness and our gratitude?"

Mrs. Marion, though usually a very composed, self-possessed person, now seemed uneasy, and fidgety. She cleared her throat, then hesitated for a little, and at last said with some effort, yet solemnly, and with passionate emphasis—"Yes, Mr. Charles, there is one thing, and a great thing, that Mr. Gryphon and you could do for me:—

ye could help a sore-wronged woman to her *revenge*!" Marion enunciated the last word with strong emphasis, and with a peculiarly energetic expression of countenance.

Violet was half frightened.

"Merciful Heaven! you, Marion!—so kind a woman—so good a Christian!—*Revenge*!"

"Ay, hinny-bird—but I am but a woman for a' that; and slighted love is sore to bide—and revenge is sweet. I have lang thirsted for it; and now the time is come, if these gentlemen will befriend me."

Violet was at once relieved. Marion could never suppose *her* Charles capable of being the instrument of any serious wrong or revenge.

"Ye a', sirs," Marion continued, "partly ken my story, though ye may weel think an auld wife's love-tale a real farce. It was nane in those days to me. Ye may ken, or that young lady does, that I came to this hudge metropolis, that has grown beneath my eyne like Jonah's gourd in a'e night—now weel on to forty years since—a blate, friendless lass; wi' a toon purse, and a proud stomach hiding a sair heart. I had been slighted and scorned in the face o' the hail country-side; but I fought my ain way, wi' few to pity and nane to help me. And him I'll ne'er name, in this world at least,—has not, as I can understand, been without his ain trials and sorrows, with a thrang family and a back-gaun farm. I hope grace has been given me to forgie—but, oh! I cannot forget!"

Marion paused for a moment; and Violet slid to her side, and pressed and held her hard hand; and in a few seconds, with a slight expression of contempt for her own weakness, Marion went on with her story.

"They would fain, at hame yonder, have curried favour wi' the rich auld wife that slighted the friendless maiden; but that is neither here nor there;—and sair as the father had wranged me, I had ance liked him weel; and his innocent bairns had done me no skaith. There is aye, I can understand—the youngest o' them—was kirsened Robin, or Robert Linton, after my ain father. It was a compliment, nae doubt; or, maybe, a stroke o' policy. He's been bred for the ministry, that lad; and we'll no say where the siller came frae: the bit twenty-pound note or maybe twa o' them, that found their way down yonder about college time ilka year—from 'A weel-wisher,' or the like; till now the lad is ready for a kirk,—and a

brav preacher, as I hear :— sound doctrine, and gi'es them blads o' it ; and a rare gift o' utterance !— The father o' him was clever enough. — Now, if poor Marion Linton could do that for the young man that his mother, for whom she was slighted, could not compass, for all her gentle kin, would no' that be having my *revenge*, think ye, sirs ?”

“ I knew it of you,” whispered Violet.

“ It would indeed,” said Gryphon, delighted with the old woman's sense and spirit, and somewhat amused with the dramatic cast of her narrative. “ This is *true womanly revenge* ; and you shall have it too.”

“ Do but that for Marion, and merit all our thanks,” said Herbert, warmly.

“ Nay, it is you must do it, Charles— you and your wife ; and it well becomes you both. Make this your first request to the Duke ; and though he has no Scottish livings in his own gift, so anxious are he and the Duchess to show their sense of your wife's kindness, and of your exceeding kindness and care of Lord St. Edward, that, I am certain, he will manage it.”

In less than four months from this date, and while Marion was on a short visit with the Herberts, at that “ splendid place,” where Mrs. Gryphon reigned a little empress, the kirk of her native parish, having been vacant at the time when she first spoke of her *revenge*, was presented to her unknown *protégé*, the son of her faithless lover. Better still, “ the hail Water,” that is, all the inhabitants of that pastoral valley in which it stood, came to understand that the living had been obtained through the interest of a very rich old lady in London, who had gone a poor servant girl from the parish some time in the last century ; and who now presented the Session with a pair of handsome silver Communion Cups, and *mortified* a thousand merks for the poor. It was a great event in the valley ; where there may now be seen a “ Lassies' Sewing-School,” erected and endowed in the Kirkton by the same munificent Marion Linton ; and six cottages, in a row, by the burn-side, with kailyards, and ten pounds a-year annexed to each ; intended for single women, above fifty, of good character and cleanly habits— natives of the parish ;— a preference to be delicately given to such spinsters as had experienced the slights of deceitful and ungrateful man.

We have now given an good account of most of our leading personages, save that one of them who, in respect of intellect and pro-

mise, was the most important of all. Of the fate of “ the Talented Burke Barker ” there are still the most contradictory rumours, all of which Marion learned, as they arose, from her pensioner Jack, when he came for his solid Monday's breakfast, and his weekly allowance ; or when he paid her a visit of ceremony, on what he facetiously called “ a Collar day ;” that is, a day occurring in every four or five, on which Jack, like the Knights of his order, sported a half inch of yellow, well-stiffened linen, in contrast with his still flourishing black whiskers.

The most probable of Jack's reports was, that Barker had died in the lunatic asylum ; as his lady now presided in that dismal abode, the wife of Dr. Beddoes Blood, to whom it belonged. Polly Cryppes, still a young, good-looking, showy woman, of those plausible or flattering manners which attract so numerous a class of mankind, had got very intimately acquainted with Doctor Blood, when making inquiries after her husband. And the Doctor drove a good trade in his own line, and kept a carriage. True, it was principally used to *air* the insane patients ; but it was nevertheless a carriage ; and even before the marriage of Sir George Lees, with the rich widow of a Bengal indigo planter, had been publicly announced, Mrs. Barker's marriage took place.

By another account, which was also probable, Barker had escaped from confinement by climbing over the walls, and was found drowned in the Thames, near the spot where Bigsby lost his life ; but as often as Mrs. Dr. Blood offended her brother Jack, by refusing him the too oft-solicited half-crown, he told her, and even maliciously circulated a tale, which is still heard in certain London circles, — namely, that Barker had escaped from the madhouse quite sane ; and had gone first to Mexico, and then to Texas, where, under the name of Burke, he held high rank in the American marauding army ; and was now one of the leading men of the young republic — a very great man, indeed, was General Burke. It was probably a pure Jack-fiction, as Herbert humorously called Cryppes's inventions, as well as that Barker had sent for and married the Devonshire girl, the love of his youth ; a story invented for the amiable purpose of tormenting Mrs. Dr. Blood.

The day on which Jack went to announce his mother's death to that lady, so great was her satisfaction at the dissolution of “ the low connexion,” by which her mother, as she

said, "had disgraced her father's memory," that she gave Jack a half-sovereign, and entreated him to try to find out if Barker were really alive—if Blood had, indeed, deceived her by his reported death, and betrayed her into bigamy.

"So Poll is fmeditating an elopement to Texas," thought Jack, hastening to a favourite cellar-tavern to melt the half-sovereign in his mother's dirge-feast. "Whether Barker is a Texan chief or not, he'll have nothing to say to Poll. Heartless jade, not to drop one tear for the poor old lady!—though *mamma* was a sad vixen enough, to be sure."

Poor Mrs. Twig, maltreated by the young husband whom her intolerable tongue provoked, had died within the year, of gin and jealousy; leaving Jack her blessing, and a few silver coins which she had secreted beneath the mattress, and slid into his hand, in almost the last agony. In three weeks her place was supplied by Miss Jenkins, whose turn had naturally come round to play the part of mistress of the Lunar Rainbow.

Jack Cryppes, who kept spite against nobody, often visited his step-father and the new lady; and, in consideration of a plate of victuals or a glass of gin, stood voucher for all the extraordinary anecdotes of the great people with whom she had formerly been familiar, with which the present Mrs. Twig chose to amuse her new friends,—rarely enjoying the good fun.

The last "Collar day," and some years after this, on which Jack called in Fleet Street for his allowance, he was so much beyond his ordinary hour that Marion felt uneasy about the "scant-o'-grace," who all the spring had had a very bad cough, and been spitting blood, but who, apparently, was as gay as ever, while there was one penny-piece in his pocket, or while any one, on the faith of his weekly seven shillings, would give him credit to the value of threepence—the price of a roll and a glass of gin.

"Mr. Cryppes, ye have frightened me this time—ye are looking worse and worse. Mr. Charles Herbert insists that ye must go down to the country to your sister Susan for a while, to recruit. Mrs. Charles has written to her about you."

"Has she indeed?—Ah! she is a sweet, lovely soul.—I was in love with *La belle*

Gabrielle myself once: admired her prodigiously, 'pon my honour. We had such charming duets: . . . what a galaxy of beauty and talent under my poor father's roof then! Mrs. Charles Herbert, Mr. Burke Barker, my sister Polly—myself, quoth the devil, and dear Emmy;"—and here poor Jack was seized with a long and violent fit of coughing.

"Now, my friend, why will ye haver away that nonsense gait;—be quiet, and drink your coffee, and try to eat a bit—ye are burning with fever—ye are far from weel—I am really wae for ye, and wae'r to see you still so very thoughtless."

"Are you indeed?—you are a kind old lady.—And Charles Herbert and his wife?—she has written Susan about me? And paid me so handsomely beforehand for copying that music for her—I will finish it some time:—you are all good.—Perhaps if I had life to begin again, and such folks about me.—But hang it, no!"—

Why be melancholy, boys?

Jack sung, and gaily went on,—

"Why, old lady, is Charles Herbert like a dowager this morning?"

"The creatur is fey," thought Marion.

"D'ye give it up?" continued Jack.

"'Tis—*Because he has got a black silk gown.*"

"Mr. Charles a serjeant-at-law!" screamed Marion;—"and he is weel worthy o' being a Judge, let be a serjeant—ay, a Judge wi' a double gown?" Scottish good wishes could go no farther; a double gown presuming a double salary. "But O! be sober now, and eat some breakfast, will ye: ye are like the Laird o' Macfarlane's geese, wha liket their play better than their meat."

"Why is Mrs. Twig like her husband's sign?"—continued Jack in high glee—"D'ye give it up?—Because he has beat her into all the colours of the *Rainbow*—pounded her to immortal smash!" And the man of mirth, while heartily laughing, was seized with another violent fit of coughing; and, while gasping for breath, he pumped up from wasted lungs, more red blood.

"I cannot let the neer-do-weel out of my house this day—he might die in the streets," thought Marion.—Hard as he had worked for such a fate, poor Jack Cryppes, almost the last of the *Family of the Talents*, did not die in the streets.

CHRISTMAS AMUSEMENTS.

BY MISS MITFORD.

STORIES AND CHARADES.

Two or three years ago I went to pay a Christmas visit, about sixty miles off, to a family of old friends who were recently arrived from a long continental tour; and, after passing the season in London, had left it late in the summer for a fine old Gothic place, somewhat out of repair, which they rented from the guardians of a young nobleman.

Haddonleigh Hall was, as I have said, a fine specimen of the mixed species of architecture, singularly picturesque and imposing, which prevailed in the time of Elizabeth and James the First. Vast as it was, it comprised only a part of the original design of the "high and mighty prince, our well-beloved cousin," one of the wealthy favourites of the time, for whose habitation it had been constructed; as might be seen by a large drawing, something between a map and an architectural elevation, which hung over the chimney-piece in the great library, and was entitled "Haddonleigh Hall in its glory," although the erection had never proceeded farther than the present mansion-house, a magnificent old seat, with its marble halls, its oaken staircases, its long galleries, its spacious chapel and armoury, its terraced gardens, its noble avenues, and the wild forest-like demesne, rather a chase than a park, by which the stately building was surrounded.

Out of repair it certainly was, and scantily furnished, according to modern notions, for the greater part of the movables were coeval with the mansion; but the present occupant, a man of fine taste, and something of an antiquarian, liked it all the better on that account; and adding the sofas, screens, and ottomans, necessary to comfort, persisted in refusing to remove the carved, high-backed, ebony chairs, and massive tables, which harmonised so well with the panelled walls and ceilings and the rich Gothic windows. What had chiefly tempted him, however, to become its inhabitant, was certainly the contents of the old library, a collection of ancient and curious volumes, which, though somewhat tattered and fusty, contained, as he declared, more scarce tracts and rare editions than he had ever seen in a similar number of books.

Mr. Wilkins, such was the name of my worthy host, was a Welchman, of extensive

property, and ancient family; and was not a little proud of his Cambrian descent, although too fond of literary and antiquarian pursuits to bury himself in the Principality. His lady had been a beauty, and was still a fine woman, and the very essence of good-nature. In other respects, she was by no means remarkable: indeed, being of very sedentary habits, (she seldom moved from the corner of the sofa,) very gentle voice, and very few words, we were but too apt to forget that she was in company. The young people, five in number, whom I had not seen for many years, pleased and interested me exceedingly. Tom and Charles were two fine lads, from Oxford, thorough sportsmen; and Tom, in particular, very lively and intelligent. Of their sisters, Charlotte, the eldest, was a tall, fair, young woman, beautiful, gentle, and simple as her mother, whom she strongly resembled both in mind and person. Sophy was a pretty brunette, with something of her father's talent, directed, of course, to different pursuits; and Anne, the youngest, was a charming wild creature of sixteen or seventeen, not yet come out, though emancipated from the school-room and the governess, and left to run wild about the house, the general pet and plaything of the family.

Trees and children are, of all living things, those whose growth soonest makes one feel one's age: children especially. To sit under the shade of a pine of one's own planting, is nothing to being overtopped by a girl whom one used to dandle in one's arms, and fondle on one's knee. How short a time ago it seemed to me since Annie, Nannie, Nanette, (for by all those names the little lassie was wont and still continued to be called,) a damsel of some four years old, used to climb into my lap, and throw her arms round my neck, and beg for a story. And here she was, a young woman, the gayest of the gay, the wildest of the wild! Now riding races with one brother, now skating with another; now clambering the walls to peep into an inaccessible tower; now trying to lift the lid of the unopenable chest, in which, according to the story always told of all old houses in all countries, a bride hid in sport on her

wedding day, and was never found again until she had become a skeleton; now peering into a secret passage; now diving into a subterraneous vault; now attiring herself in a suit of armour; now chasing an undiscoverable and non-existent ghost: always the merriest, kindest, happiest, of all human beings! Annie was far less beautiful than Charlotte, and less talented and accomplished than Sophia; but there is a certain word called charming, with which beauty has little to do, and talents and accomplishments still less: and charming Annie was, to the full extent of that charming word.

I had expected that they would be full of balls and gaiety, and country parties, their neighbourhood being, though more stately and less populous than ours, well supplied with families equal in fortune and respectability to Mr. Wilkins himself; but I was agreeably disappointed, by finding them quite free from country engagements; and, except a friend of my host's, a bibliomaniac, the grave, abstracted Mr. Mortimer, a plain man of forty, with a splendid scholastic reputation, most literally a family party. It was clear that they visited none of their neighbours, and I could not help inquiring of Sophy "what could be the reason?"

"The reason," replied Miss Sophia, "is, that none of our neighbours have visited us. At first we were exceedingly puzzled at not being called upon, having taken all due means of announcing our arrival, by going out in the carriage almost every day, showing ourselves nicely dressed at church, and subscribing to the balls and the circulating library in the next town; whilst papa entered his name at a reading-room and billiard-club, and Tom and Charles became members of the hunt. We even went to milliners' shops where we wanted nothing, took Annie to a dancing-school, and talked to the governesses, and at the mammas, hugged an ugly little baby belonging to our next neighbour, sent for the apothecary, and invited the curate; so weary were we of our own company, so willing to be sociable. Still, however, nobody came; we were shunned like a pestilence; nobody curtsied to us at church; nobody spoke to us at the milliners'; nobody danced with us at the balls; the very nursery-maids seemed shy of trusting us with their babies; and we relinquished our attempts at forming new acquaintance in despair. At last the apothecary let us into the secret. There were two causes for our being *taboo*, as they say in Otaheite. First of all, this old house

of ours has a bad reputation. I don't mean because it is said to be haunted; for ghosts are generally considered as remarkably genteel and respectable persons, people of family and character; but because it has belonged, for the last fifty years, to a series of bachelor lords, whose female companions have been thoroughly unvisitable, and have really left a bad odour about the mansion. This was one reason; the other was in ourselves, or rather in our name."

"Your name?"

"Yes, or rather in the last syllable; the unlucky termination in *kins*. The folks hereabouts are rather more tenacious about family and station than is common in England; and a neighbouring place, Kinlay Park, having been let in succession to a Mr. Tomkins, who turned out to be a hosier; a Mr. Simkins, from Mark Lane; and a Mr. Hoskins, from Billingsgate, they have forsworn all intercourse with so plebeian a syllable, even although the three first letters be of some gentility. They will find us out in time," pursued Sophy, with great good-humour; "and then how they will stare at papa's long pedigree. In the meanwhile, we do very well as we are."

And very well we did; especially in the mornings, when reading, writing, drawing, working, driving, riding, and walking, besides all sorts of out-of-door sports for the young men, and battledore and shuttlecock for Annie, passed away the day-light hours rapidly and merrily; but in the evening I sometimes thought the young people would have been glad of a little variety. At this time, Mr. Wilkins and Mr. Mortimer usually joined us, the former going to sleep, and the latter sitting, for the most part, in complacent silence; Mrs. Wilkins and her lap-dog sate in equal silence on the sofa, and the young folks, too brother-and-sisterish for dancing, and too old for forfeits or blind-man's buff, tried music, tried billiards, tried chess; and after being thoroughly weary of them all, threatened to get up some Tableaux, only Tableaux wanted spectators; and talked of acting a play, which, besides the usual difficulties as to cast, involved, even more than the Tableaux, the want of an audience. At length some one reverted to the French charades, which they used to perform abroad, and the suggestion was hailed with universal approbation, the scene chosen, and an early evening fixed for the experiment.

On the next evening, as pre-arranged, we met in the great Oriel apartment to enjoy our promised charades. The recess, with an Indian screen before it, was devoted to the purpose of a greenroom; and we, the audience, assembled on one side of the fire-place, whilst the actors, after arranging their *properties* (two chairs and an easel) on the stage, and announcing what the scene was intended to represent, proceeded in their performance, with as little interruption as could well be expected—with none, indeed, for applause must not be called interruption.

CHARADE THE FIRST.*

SCENE THE FIRST. BEAUCHAMP'S *House*.

BEAUCHAMP *at the Easel*. Enter TALBOT.

Talbot. What, Beauchamp! at the easel this morning? This is a fresh accés. I thought you had forsworn painting ever since we saw the masterpieces of art at Florence and the Vatican.

Beauchamp. Ha, Talbot! Pray take a chair. Forsworn Art? Yes, as a pursuit, as an object of ambition and vanity, certainly yes. But as a record of sentiment, as certainly no. It is one thing to compete with the Titians and Raffaels in Venuses and Madonnas, and another to endeavour to transfer to canvass, however faintly, the real charms of a living beauty.

Tal. "An affair of sentiment!" Ho! ho! "A living beauty!" There is a lady in the case, then. Well! every man to his taste. I had rather follow the hounds on my good steed Bayard, over the Leicestershire country, and break my neck, if so it chance, in a fox-chase, than break my heart by pursuing the fairest nymph that ever wore petticoats. But every man to his taste. Do I know the lady?

Beau. I think not.

Tal. And may one inquire her name?

Beau. It is a name that suits her well; the sweetest name ever breathed by poet or lover — Julia.

Tal. Julia! Pooh! Her family name?

Beau. Vernon; Miss Julia Vernon.

Tal. Vernon. Oh! A daughter of the General's. One of the four Miss Vernons whom one hears of every where, with their tall mamma?

Beau. The loveliest of that lovely family. Oh, my dear Talbot! neither painting nor poetry can give the faintest image of her charms — "So soft, so sweet, so delicate she came, youth's opening rose —"

Tal. Spare me the poetry, I beseech you. I shall see the Goddess herself to-night at her aunt Lady Dashleigh's, and then you may introduce me.

Beau. I shan't be able to go to Lady Dashleigh's — An odious man-dinner at the Clarendon; and then the House — There'll be no escaping before the division. But I'll get Harry Lescombe to introduce you; and you must come to-morrow morning and tell me what you think of her. Take care of your heart.

Tal. Yes, I'll come. I'll be sure to come. I am sorry for this love affair, very sorry; for I thought we should have got you down amongst us at Melton Mowbray next season. You were talking of forming a stud: — but when once a man sets his heart on marrying — Let us look at her portrait, however. — I take for granted that it is her portrait.

Beau. A faint copy of the charms of the original. There! [*Displaying the picture.*]

Tal. Really I did not think you had been so good an artist. A very pretty bit of colour, indeed; very delicately hit off. Rather too much of the lily, though, to suit my taste. Is Miss Julia really so pale?

Beau. She has just as much colour as any woman ought to have — the maiden-rose tint. This cheek would bear a thought more — I can add it in a moment.

Tal. Yes; we all know that a little rouge is easily put on a lady's face.

Beau. (*seating himself at the easel*.) Hold thy irreverent tongue, and reach me yonder brush — not that — the farther one. Thank you. Now, you shall see in a moment — (*Painting*) Heavens! What have I done! The whole picture is ruin'd — spoil for ever! This is the brush with which I was adding the deepest shades to her lovely dark hair, the opaque brush — only see — ruined for ever! Don't say a word, my dear fellow. It's entirely my fault! Irredeemably spoil'd — A week's work — such a likeness — and ruined for ever! [*Exeunt.*]

* Perhaps it may not be wholly unnecessary to mention, that the fashionable amusement of acted charades resembles, but with greater intricacy, the well known French diversion of proverbs, of which last, by the way, a collection was published by no less a personage than Catherine of Russia. — The whole little drama is literally a riddle of that species called a charade; consisting, in the present instance, of a word of two syllables, the first of which is to be gathered from the opening scene; the second from the next; and the third or whole from the concluding one.

SCENE the SECOND. — *The same Apartment.*

Enter TALBOT to BEAUCHAMP.

Beau. How late you are!

Tal. A thousand pardons! I was kept at home by the sudden lameness of Bayard — You know Bayard? — finest hunter in England — cost me a cool three hundred last season — can't put his off fore-foot to the ground.

Beau. Very sorry. Were you at Lady Dashleigh's last night?

Tal. Yes. Sent for Colman. Colman thinks it's only a prick — touched in the shoeing — and advises one of his bar shoes; but my groom —

Beau. Did you see Julia?

Tal. Yes. My groom says —

Beau. Were you introduced to her?

Tal. Yes. My groom thinks, and he knows more of Bayard's action than Colman —

Beau. Hang Colman! Did you dance with Julia?

Tal. No. My groom says that Bayard —

Beau. Hang Bayard!

Tal. Hang Bayard! Really, Mr. Beauchamp —

Beau. My dear friend, I do not mean the slightest offence to your horse — finest animal in England! But do talk to me of Julia! Did you see her dance? Did you hear her sing?

Tal. Ye — es.

Beau. Well! and were you not charmed, enchanted? do you not think her exquisitely beautiful? her figure so light and graceful? her countenance so full of sensibility and sweetness? Is not she an angel?

Tal. A fineish girl.

Beau. And then, her singing, her dancing, her conversation?

Tal. Pretty fair.

Beau. Talbot, do you know of whom you are speaking? Pretty fair!

Tal. Why, to confess the truth, my dear Beauchamp, this Julia of yours is not altogether one of my beauties. She is too pale, too tall, too thin, too lanky, shows too much bone. I like a little flesh and blood.

Beau. Gracious heaven, what coarseness of idea!

Tal. And, moreover, I don't like the breed. I have a regard for you, Beauchamp; and I can't help giving you warning, that Mrs. Vernon is the most determined husband-hunting mamma in London; we all know that the General is as poor as Job, and as proud as Lucifer; and I have it from the best authority, that Miss Julia herself is as arrant a flirt —

Beau. Be silent, Mr. Talbot; be silent, sir. It was but yesterday that you were the cause of my defacing an imperfect copy of her divine features. To-day you would sully her spotless reputation. Go back to your groom and Bayard; they are your fit companions. Leave me, sir.

Tal. I take no notice of what you say, my good friend; because you are in a passion, and a lover has a madman's privilege: but I have an old regard for you, and I advise you not to be too hasty in your proceedings.

Beau. Out of my house, sir! get out instantly.

Tal. Take time to consider. Look before you leap.

Beau. Off with you, sir! In a passion, indeed! Impertinent puppy! I never was cooler in my life. I'll go to the General, and propose for her this moment! — Insufferable coxcomb! [Exit.

SCENE THE THIRD. — *Regent Street.*

BEAUCHAMP and TALBOT, meeting.

Beau. Ha! Talbot, my dear fellow! I am delighted to see you. I thought you had been hunting in Leicestershire.

Tal. Just ran up for a day or two, whilst the frost holds; and very lucky to meet with you, and wish you joy in person. You got my letter?

Beau. Yes. Have you had good runs this season?

Tal. Capital. I saw the happy event in the papers, and took my chance of writing to your house in town, to congratulate, and apologize, and so forth.

Beau. No need of apologies on your part, God knows! You are a good fellow, Talbot, a real friend. It is I that ought to apologize. Ah! if I had but taken your advice. But a man must follow his destiny.

Tal. I hope the fair lady is well?

Beau. We won't talk of her, Talbot. How is Bayard, that noble steed? Does he sustain his reputation?

Tal. I refused four hundred pounds for him last week. Where have you been since August? Did you go a tour?

Beau. Yes — to the Lakes.

Tal. A pleasant excursion?

Beau. All the pleasure of travelling, my dear friend, depends on one's company — I found it a confounded bore. By the way, I've a great mind to run down to Melton with you for a week or two. Could you put me in the way of buying some good horses? I shall certainly take to fox-hunting again.

Tal. I shall be delighted, of course; but what will Mrs. Beauchamp say?

Beau. Say! What right has she to say any thing? Don't talk of Mrs. Beauchamp—there's a dear fellow. Do you think you can help me to the hunters? Eh!

Tal. Why, I know that Dick Matthews had some to dispose of yesterday. I'll go and see about them.

Beau. I shall be eternally obliged to you. And hark ye, Talbot—dine with me at seven, and we'll settle about the jaunt into Leicestershire. I have some thoughts of taking a box there—a hunting box—just to run down to. Dine with me at seven.

Tal. In Harley Street?

Beau. Oh no, no! at the old place, the Clarendon—a bachelor's dinner at the Clarendon, my boy!—a snug bachelor's dinner!—*Au revoir!*

The charade was received as usual, with some laughter, a little praise, and much criticism. Every female present exclaimed against its deplorable want of gallantry, (need I say that the word is marriage?) and prophesied old-bachelorship, and all its evils, to the contrivers and performers. Some fault was found, too, with the bad spelling of the divided syllables; but this the actors, who had pleaded guilty to the first charge, defended stoutly, reminding their accuser, Miss Sophia, that one of her own most successful French charades, at Florence, had been Cléopâtre, of which the first syllable was represented by the key scene from Blue Beard, the second by the water spirits from Undine, the third by some pastoral of Gesner's, and the fourth by the well-known catastrophe of the asp, personated on that occasion by a Bologna sausage, the cold touch of which had, as one of them asserted, frightened Sophy, who took it for a real serpent, out of her wits. "Clef and eau for Cléo," pursued Tom, "and she to talk of false spelling!" And thereupon Tom, in a dudgeon, marched to the fire and sate down. But as the whole party, his fair critic included, pressed for another, his brother and he again retired behind the screen; and, after a little whispering consultation, during which Annie had been despatched for the weighty Memoirs of Pepys and Evelyn, which we had been looking over in the morning, and a little squabble for the choice of parts, both of them, (dramatically right, though morally wrong,) preferring the amusing coxcomb of the Admiralty, he who has left so individual and identified a portrait of himself and his foibles, to the

sage philosopher of Saye Court. After a little dispute as to parts, as the fashion is amongst great actors, they began Charade the Second.

CHÁRADE THE SECOND.

SCENE THE FIRST.—*St. James's Park*—1667.

MR. EVELYN and MR. PEPYS, meeting.

Mr. Evelyn. My worthy Mr. Pepys, how are you this morning?

Mr. Pepys. The better, assuredly, for the honour of meeting my good Mr. Evelyn. Will you take a turn in the Walk? I am waiting the Duke's leisure, who is, as you perceive, engaged with the King and Sir John Minnes.

Mr. Evel. Is there any thing new in town? I am but just landed at Whitehall, having come by water from my retirement of Saye Court, to dine at his new house with my Lord of Clarendon; and I address myself to Mr. Pepys for news, as the most absolute courtier both in statecraft and poesy.

Mr. Pepys. Oh, my good sir!—For affairs of policy, I must refer you to my Lord of Clarendon. They are too weighty for so slight a person as myself, Mr. Evelyn; but men may judge by straws which way the wind sets; and you may see my Lady Castlemaine yonder neglected and in the dumps. That star is on the wane;—but these matters are above my sphere. For the Muses, we had last night at the Duke's House a new play called the Tempest, one of Shakspeare's old drolleries revised and perfected by Dryden, wherein pretty Mrs. Nelly did really excel herself. How goes on the New Society, Mr. Evelyn? and, above all, your own great work on Forest Trees?

Mr. Evel. Slowly, my good Mr. Pepys—slowly. I shall be glad to show it to you some day at Saye Court, together with some other small pieces, if you can partake of my poor dinner at the old-fashioned time of twelve at noon. I hate these new-fangled hours, Mr. Pepys; these one o'clock dinners. Our fathers, my good sir, dined at eleven. But we are a degenerate race. These are signs of the times—awful signs!

Mr. Pepys. They are so, indeed, Mr. Evelyn. But, my good sir, I most respectfully take my leave. The Duke is beckoning to me.

Mr. Evel. A good day to you, Mr. Pepys! remember that we shall expect you at Saye Court with your first leisure, and not later than noon. A good day to you, sir!

[*Exeunt severally, bowing.*]

SCENE THE SECOND.—*Hyde Park, 1830.*

LORD JOHN LUTTRIDGE and MR. ADEANE,
meeting.—A Crowd on the Serpentine.

Lord John. Ah! my dear Adeane! how long from Vienna? Are you come to show off your Austrian Spread Eagles on the Serpentine?

Mr. Adeane. Why, really, my dear Lord, after the Danube, one can't think of figuring on these English puddles. Besides, the crowd! And I have left my Hamburg skates to follow with my trunks from Dover. Is there any news in this smoky, frosty, dirty London?

L. John. Why, not much, I believe. Bankruptcies in plenty — some talk of a general election, an early opera season, and a vast number of applications to subscribe to Almack's. But I am only just arrived myself — merely passing through from Holkham to Chatsworth.

Mr. Ad. Town seems quite empty.

L. John. Why, so I hear. And yet there can hardly be less than a hundred thousand persons in the Park at this moment. Really that officer skates well.

Mr. Ad. But when one says town is empty, one means that there is nobody whom one knows — nobody fit to be known.

L. John. Now it seems to me that there are a great many people whom one should like to know — I have not seen so many pretty women together these dozen years.

Mr. Ad. Does your Lordship think so?

L. John. Why, don't you?

Mr. Ad. Really no. English noses get so red in a frost.

L. John. (*Aside.*) English noses! The Lord have mercy on these travelled gentlemen!

Mr. Ad. And just look at that lubber. "English awkwardness on two left legs!"

L. John. Take care of your own legs, Adeane. You are getting on a slide. This place is as slippery as glass — Take care! He'll certainly tumble — there he goes. (*Mr. Adeane falls; Lord John helps him up.*) — I hope you are not seriously hurt. No bones broke. Can you walk?

Mr. Ad. Yes, yes! This sort of accident could never have happened to me abroad; but the moment a man sets foot on this wretched island — Does not your Lordship hear a cracking? We shall certainly be drowned.

L. John. There is not the slightest danger, except of your getting another tumble. That fall of yours has made you nervous. Keep

hold of my arm, my good fellow, and I'll pilot you to Terra Firma; and then we'll go to Brookes's to while away two or three hours before dinner. The sun is but just set. — (*Aside.*) He'll certainly get another tumble this travelled gentleman, with his "English awkwardness on two left legs." Keep hold of me, Adeane. Stick to me. I'll take care of you. — (*Aside.*) He'll never get off without another tumble. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE THE THIRD.—*A Study.*

Mr. Frampton alone, reading a Newspaper.

Frampton (*reading.*) "We are sorry to be compelled to state amongst the list of failures the firm of Fitzarthur, Dawson, and Co. The elegant taste and amiable qualities of the senior partner of this old-established house will render him an object of universal sympathy." — Sympathy! These newspaper writers are pretty fellows at a word! Sympathy, forsooth, universal sympathy! And Fitzarthur a bankrupt! the handsome, the graceful, the witty Henry Fitzarthur, the life of every circle, the chosen of Agnes Merivale, a bankrupt! an object of universal sympathy! Go to, Mr. Printer — I must feast my eyes once more on the paragraph. Fitzarthur a bankrupt!

Enter Servant.

Did not I give orders not to be disturbed?

Ser. A gentleman, sir, requests a moment's audience.

Fram. I am engaged.

Ser. He desired me to give this card.

Fram. (*after reading the card.*) Show him up. Fitzarthur himself! My old acquaintance Henry Fitzarthur — the bankrupt! the object, as the Morning Post assures us, of universal sympathy. It were sin and shame not to despatch him quickly.

Enter FITZARTHUR.

Now, sir!

Fitz. I have to apologize for an intrusion, which is, I fear, equally unwelcome and unexpected.

Fram. Waive apologies, sir; I hate them.

Fitz. So long a time has elapsed since we met, that my person is, perhaps, scarcely remembered by Mr. Frampton.

Fram. If I had forgotten you, sir, this paper would have recalled you to my memory.

Fitz. The unfortunate speculations of my partner —

Fram. You all, no doubt, can tell your own story. He perhaps might talk of his

partner's supineness. But that can hardly be your business with me.

Fitz. No, sir; I waited on you to request a favour, on which my welfare, and that of my wife and children utterly depend.

Fram. And you speak of your wife to me! Do you happen to remember, sir, the transaction on which we last met, the transaction on which we parted?

Fitz. I trusted, Frampton, that you had forgotten it.

Fram. Forgotten! I loved Agnes Merivale; I told you of my love; I made you known to her; and you, my friend (for such you dared to call yourself,) became my rival, my successful rival. Treachery such as that cannot be forgotten.

Fitz. At least, I trusted that an interval of ten years had swept from your mind all bitterness of recollection.

Fram. You thought me then a fool. Where is she now?

Fitz. In London.

Fram. At your house in Baker Street?

Fitz. That house, with all that it contained, is given up to the creditors. Agnes is in humble lodgings, suited to our fortunes.

Fram. You have also a house in the New Forest?

Fitz. I had.

Fram. A beautiful place, fitted up with the taste for which Agnes was famous—a fine library; a superb conservatory; prints and statues—you were a collector; pictures old and new—you ranked high amongst the patrons.

Fitz. I had these things.

Fram. Holly-grove—that, I think, was the name of your villa; a lovely spot: I passed it last summer. Agnes must have been fond of Holly-grove?

Fitz. Her very heart was in it—it was her home, the home of her children—Alas! they may soon have none!

Fram. Ay, this poor house of mine might have been her home, but it lacks these adornments. Here are no medals, no pictures, no coins, no busts! 'Tis an old spacious mansion-house, to be sure, and stands amidst a fair number of its own acres, but it is out of date, like its master. Frampton-hall could no more compete with Holly-grove, than plain George Frampton with Henry Fitz-arthur. We should have known our station.

Fitz. Be merciful, Frampton! Be merciful!

Fram. Yes! Holly-grove was a beautiful place. I saw Agnes on the lawn one evening last summer, in the midst of her children. There was a chubby infant, and two or three delicate girls, and a couple of sturdy boys, and the mother, handsomer than ever, in her stately and regal beauty, drest and appointed like a queen, with her retinue of nursery attendants, flowers under her feet, flowering shrubs over her head, the rarest exotics perfuming the air!—Agnes must have been happy at Holly-grove.

Fitz. Alas! alas! too happy!

Fram. The eldest child was a fine boy. Was he at school?

Fitz. At Eton.

Fram. Already! And of promise?

Fitz. Of the highest.

Fram. Intended for any profession?

Fitz. For the bar.

Fram. Indeed! Parents are apt to frame such visions: The bar!—Well, sir, what is your pleasure with me?

Fitz. This letter—If you would condescend—

Fram. The letter is not addressed to me.

Fitz. No, it is to your friend Lord B. A small place, for which I am every way suited, is now vacant in his department; and that letter, if presented by you, and backed by your intercession, would ensure it to me. I throw myself on your generosity! I implore your mercy! For the sake of the woman whom you once loved—

Fram. Hold, sir!

Fitz. For the sake of her poor children—

Fram. Those children, sir, are also yours. Have you no other channel through which to send this letter?

Fitz. None whatsoever.

Fram. No other resource? No other hope?

Fitz. None upon earth. It is the only chance that remains, to preserve us from starvation.

Fram. (tearing the letter.) Then starve!

Again the charade was over, and some applause was given to the climax of "malice" in the last scene. "False spelling though again, Tom," cried Sophia. "Never mind Sophy's criticisms," said Annie, "she's so clever, you know, and clever people will find faults where we simpletons see none; only give us another—pray do; and, dear Tom, let it be a little harder to find out. I like to be puzzled."

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