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VIOLET HAMILTON; OR, THE TALENTED FAMILY.

(Continued from our June No.)

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 Scotch 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 them 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 unconsciousness, 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 falling 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, were 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 anything 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 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, would fail. Every one admired and appreciated Charles. Only there might be much intervening drudgery, and a long time to hang on and persevere; 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, 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 gratest noble patron the world ever saw, is in imminent jeopardy. My pupil cannot continue 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, with a little sigh, shook her curls 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 requited 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 is 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 Crippes has had much about her that should make her apology,—if an untaught girl of her age is responsible for anything. 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 Mrs. Herbert's 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 prize so highly. I mind when we threw all such guts, garbage, and sossories 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 dainteth, I thought maybe the ledly 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 teay, when I have by chance a headache, or am tired going about my hoose 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 one 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 comes a' 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 Scotchwoman's" contemptuous pity would be received by its fair objects, if they could possibly be made to comprehend anything so incongruous or 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 dwinning 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 woman'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 leddy 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 neverout

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 itsel' yet, betimes; but heartless and humbled enough now, poor bit mannikin, and driven daft and donnert by a handleless, doingless, discontentit, repining companion; a wife being aye, Mr. Charles, either a crown of glory and 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' 'the carrige,' 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 unhangd 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 anything 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 Tailor's—that's Jack Crippes' 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 leddy'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," alid 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 wude 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 well 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 be 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 oblligingness."

"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 grandees o' the batch, and might have made weel out by it, too; that is, if I had not bought a life annuity from Mr. Barker's office with my 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, laughing, "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 blythesomer, 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 maundering 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 lowering, but calm and still, when Charles Herbert and his fair 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 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 self-same principle which makes Lady Macbeth, in the banquet scene, endeavour, by overacted courtesy, to cover the guilty 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 times 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 hôtel—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 pretty 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 compelled to look her best, as, in the storm of fate, her husband did his boldest.

"That frantic creature from the north, that

Bigby, 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 anything will, 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 impu-

dent, 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 guardianship 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 of 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, 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 obit*s you obtained from St. Edwards for your city friends."

"Done what?" pray, make haste, ma'am, and do for once be straightforward—forget you are a Crippes."

"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 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 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 reversionary prospects are held out.—But let them alone. Emmeline is but a child, and will soon forget us; 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; 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, whom Mrs. Barker had appointed to come at half-past eight, was waiting Mr. Barker in the Statue-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 anything 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 visiter was announced:—"Ha! Edmund, sit with your sister till I give audience to a lunatic."

Dr. Edmund Crippes, 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 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 come 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 the *Talented Family* of Crippes. 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 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 chatter-box you have become—you who formerly durst not open your lips before *Mr. Barker*; and how *indelicate* you chatter—knowing how very fastidious my husband is—and he is not quite well to-night. . . . My dear, you have surely forgotten the man 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 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 hour, 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 intoxicated, yet under violent excitement; which increased, as he hurriedly paced the *Statue-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 were procured, as he morbidly fancied, by his ruin. The sound of the gong, when he recalled his own silenced humble dinner bell, and his incapacity to procure a meal, had wakened 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 *Statue-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 shattered 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 another servant 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 were anything 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 things 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 Cripps.

"O, mad as a march-hare! I can testify that—to smash your beautiful mirrors, 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, with 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 apprised 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 Cripps, who had no doubt himself, had got one of his black 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 wound 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 Stokes 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 hear 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 that 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 villainy;—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 Simons"—

"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 anything 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 in-

stant 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 sybil inspired—"Oh what's world's gear to the dear life of perishing sinners! Oh what awfu' words were yon! . . . There's a human face a bit ahead, bobbin like a herrin buoy;—Lord guide us!—there, there—now yonder;—ye flit 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 stoutly 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 lamps, 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 this 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 neutralised 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 pay-masters 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—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 now 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 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 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

the night, by chance, Mr. Charles; and ye maun just let me for aince be your banker;" and Marion cheerfully counted out her cash, and found the different expectants more moderate than she had anticipated "Lon'on cormorants and river sharks" 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, yirming 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 a 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 here 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 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 yon; 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 litile used oxtering with young gentlemen. I have not been seen cleeked with man kind since I saw my bonny *proddy-joe*, Jack Crippes, off by the Berwick smack. I'm a highly favoured auld wife wi' my beaux. . . . But yon *for-spothen* 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 creatur 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 schene 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 hame;—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-head-aches, 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 London,—though I do love to tease him a bit betimes."

"I am truly glad to hear you speak so 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 everything 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 everything 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 before 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 is 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 strong attach-

ment 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. . . . O, 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 over 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, abruptly knocked sharply upon the door and then bounced in.

"La, Ma'am, you are not a-bed then, and Miss 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!—werr't they a quarrelling like dog and cat from morn to night."

"Draw up the window, woman—let in air—get a bason 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 now 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, as 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 day-light 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, could 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, Crippes, 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, maulkin, ye are mewling—did ye think I was taking no notice o' you? Can ye not make out what a' this stramash in our lanely, quiet dwellin' 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 lummer—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 Crippes?—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 schoolfellow,' 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 wolfbane. 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."

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 *Almacks' 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 hath 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 forever! 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 pro-

pose 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 Crippeses. But seriously, Herbert, can a thing of this sort have any effect? Are the Dutch magistrates block-heads enough to bite?"

"In the present delicate state of 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, and 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 school-fellow, 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 forever 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 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 the poor man's recovery."

(To be continued.)

A GARLAND OF POETS.

BY THE LATE JOHN GALT.

SHAKSPERE.

CREATOR! though to thee it was not given
To make from dust the flesh and blood of man;
Yet in the wonders of mysterious Heaven,
Thy gift was sanctioned with creation's plan;—
That gift which with the thoughts of living men,
Thou madest the mental beings of thy pen.
No, not in melodies of word and spell,
Which charm the hearing of this thrilling heart,
When Thou the sense of passion would'st impart;
No,—not in them only Thou dost excel.
The conscious mind in Thy entrancing page,
Beholds again as in a mirror shown
The bright resemblance of a passing age,
Things that have surely been, and hearts to Heaven
best known.

SPENSER.

Rare artist, Spenser! why so oft, with thee,
Do I aweary at thy beauties drowse,
And but the semblance of those feelings see,
That, stirr'd with life, would the rapt spirit rouse!
In vain, in vain, thy magic page I spread,
Thy well limn'd pictures I behold in vain;
The spell that's in them is in influence dead,
And I but feel a cold and polished chain.
At all the frost-work of thy wizard art,
Whose tinted lights admiring crowds enchant;
Charm'd yet reluctant sleeps the conscious heart,
And fancy pall'd can only gape and gaunt;
But still thy tapestries are rich and rare,
Gold brodered stuff, and done with sample care.

BYRON.

A wayward wight, an ens of smile and frown,
Lark of the morn and bulbul of the night,
An eagle still though far in darkness flown,
He roosts with bats, and wings the owl's flight;
Nor spectral dream nor wizard spell is brought
To gloom the fancies of his sullen muse;

The lurid visions of perturbed thought
Lower black around, and only these she views.
Lord of the caverns of the guilty breast,
To thee alone the special task was given
To paint a mortal damn'd for crimes confest,
And calmly waiting for his doom from Heaven.
Come, Byron, come, in the dread midnight hour;
Come with thy sorceries, come with thy power!

'CAMPBELL.'

Thou dropping honey-comb, sweet Campbell, ho!
Awake, arise, and bend Ulysses' bow;
All other suitors of the noble dame
Have fall'd in elegance, the grace of power.
Thine be the triumph in the trial hour;
The meed be thine,—the wedding hand of fame.
Delightful bard! to thy melodious rhymes
The muse of tenderness unwearied chimes,
And, charm'd by Hope, beholds the future scene
Show lovelier hues than "all the past hath been."
Bright gems of thought that glancing gleams surprise,
While ever shine, so glimmeringly, between
The tear-wet pathos of her gentle eyes.
Oh, for another song! says Nature, as she sighs.

BURNS.

Much lauded Burns, whose manly spirit show'd,
Perhaps too consciously, the pride of power,
Still at thy name my irking fancies goad,—
Sage of the plough and poet of the bower.
How proudly noble, muscular and stern,
Thou plied'st with flourishes the satyr's flail!
And, oh! how tenderly essay'd'st to earn
Rewarding wishes for the lover's tale.
Though few, ah, few! on thy courageous crest,
The beauteous pearls to some may seem to be,
Yet rich they are, the brightest and the best,
That e'er were gifted with simplicity.
Ill-fated poet;—but the morn's sweet bard
That soars to heaven is tenant of the sward!